

THE 

Issue 10

2020

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REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

THE NEVER BEFORE HEARD HISTORY
OF ODIN'S RAVEN MAGIC, IN WHICH...

Sigur Rós Survives

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES
IN PROTEST ARRESTS

THE ASCENDANCY OF ULTRAFLEX

THE GOVERNMENT-SANCTIONED
AMOUNT OF YULE LAD CONTENT

... & MORE





COVER PHOTO:
The cover image is a home-brewed homage to a faint memory of what mid-century scandinavian film posters looked like.

Based on stills from the Odins Raven Magic concert recording in Paris, 2008.

Photocollage by Sveinbjörn Pálsson.



08: PROTEST = ARREST

07: Hel, Half-Zombie Full-Sex Icon

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First

EDITORIAL



New Year Different Mankind



What will change in the new year? Well, everything—or not so much. The whole world connected for a moment over the dreaded coronavirus. We saw what leaders and nations are made of. And what's perhaps more important, we were reminded of how united we are at the end of the day. Scientists broke records developing a vaccine within a year. That's no small feat for science or humankind.

The pandemic exposed our worst and our best at the same time. Icelanders can be proud of their politicians, who listened to top scientists when needed.

But we were also reminded of how underfunded our healthcare system is. Icelanders of my generation have been raised up to believe it was the best in the world. It is not. The reason is decades of politicians underfunding the system in hopes of privatising it bit by bit.

The pandemic is also a rude awakening to the fact that the whole world can be flipped upside down in a matter of weeks. Nothing stays the same forever. It's a simple sentence to write down, but no one understands it fully until we've been slapped across the face with it.

Soon, the hope is that the virus will

seem like a distant dream. That everything and everyone will get back on their feet. That tourism will come back. That we will be able to visit our loved ones when we want. And that the economy will bloom.

It will be easy to put this behind us and keep on going like nothing ever happened. But this is when the real work starts. We have to reorganize how we are doing things. Global warming is still on the rise. The gap between the rich and the poor is still growing. And the importance of good health care that can take care of our brothers and sisters

can't be underestimated. This our wake up call. And from what I have seen and read and experienced myself in this pandemic, I'm more optimistic than pessimistic. Let's wake up, do the work and make a better world in memory of those that have died from COVID-19.

Merry Christmas and happy new year. Thank you all for reading our magazine and supporting the Reykjavik Grapevine. 🍷

Valur Grettisson
Editor-in-chief



Megan Massey is an award-winning QWOC poet from Bedford, England. She writes about women, magic, and the Indian diaspora. She recently graduated from the University of London with a BA in Creative Writing. She is currently in law school.



Hannah Jane Cohen is based out of Iceland by way of New York. She's known for her love of Willa Ford, David Foster Wallace, and other such "intellectuals." Her visionary work is known for expanding the definitions of emotion, introspection, and above all else, taste. Hannah is also the current Drag King of Iceland, HANS.



Polly is a hard-working journalist by day and an enthusiastic ball-catcher by night. A four-year-old dachshund mix with an IQ of a five-year-old human, Polly has been the official Chief Of Morale at the Grapevine for eight months and is a regular contributor to the Grapevine Newscast on YouTube. Woof.



Iona Rangeley-Wilson is an English graduate from the UK. She writes children's books, but has decided to also go into journalism on the absolutely minuscule off-chance that her first book doesn't immediately turn her into a multimillionaire. Her hobbies include getting up late and indulging in illusions of grandeur.



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 Funkþátturinn radio show, or sits at a table in a Laugardalur café, drinking copious amounts of coffee and thinking about fonts.



Art Bicnick is an international man of mystery. He moves like a shadow through the subcultures and soirees of Reykjavik, never still, often ghosting the scene in a puff of blue smoke—the exhaust fumes of the elusive, well-travelled Bicnick Mini.



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



Jess Distill is a musician, artist and wannabe writer from St. Albans, England. As a long time lover of Iceland, and recent copywriting diploma graduate, Jess came to the Grapevine to expand her writing portfolio whilst seeing if she could hack it as an Icelandic resident.



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

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7 COURSE

CHRISTMAS MENU

STARTERS

Icelandic landscape

Lamb tartar, pickled red onions, smoked cream cheese, dill oil, vinegar snow

Cured salmon

Fennel cream, dill mayo, raspberries, roe and rye bread

Deer tatakí

Pickled red onions, enoki mushrooms, crispy Jerusalem artichokes, truffle & yuzu mayo

Pan-fried giant scallops

Pine tree, green pea purée, beurre noisette

MAIN COURSES

Duck breast

Celery purée, apples, pickled fennel and cherry sauce

Grilled beef tenderloin

Roasted carrots with pistachios, artichoke & white chocolate purée and Christmas beer hollandaise

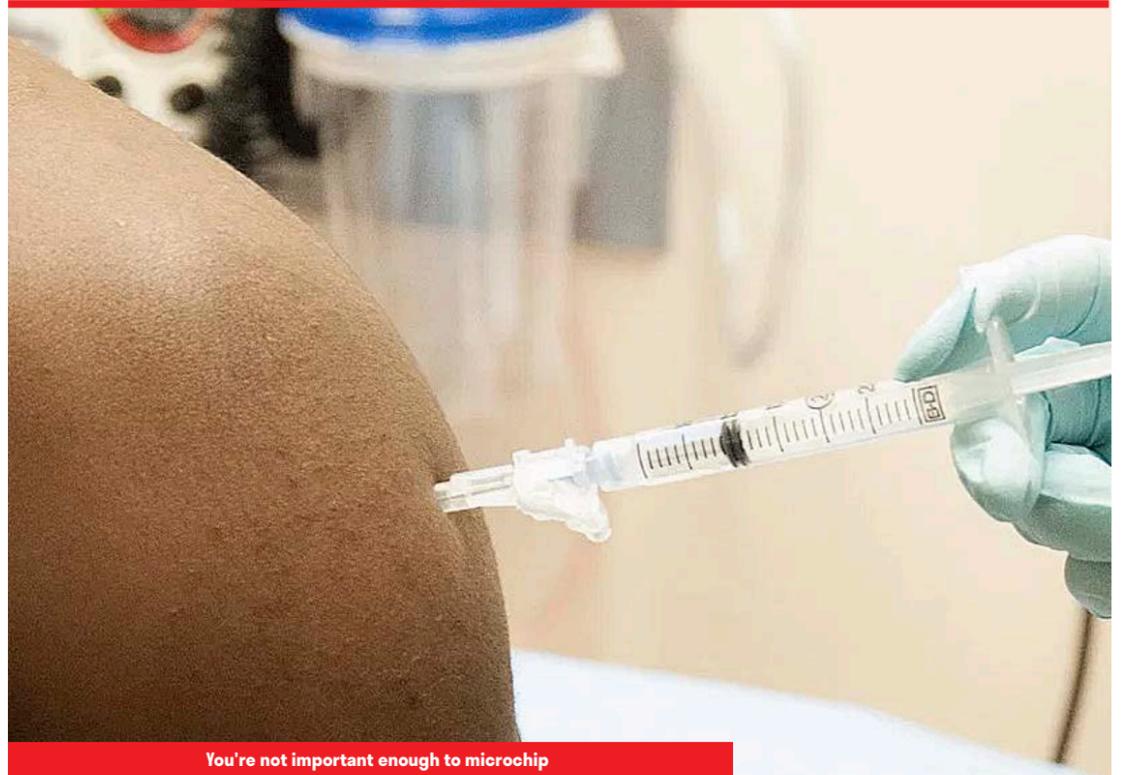
CHRISTMAS DESSERT

Christmas "ball"

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You're not important enough to microchip

What Are Icelanders Talking About?

The topics that are getting people banned from the comments

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine** Photos: **Adobe Stock, 'Highlander'**

NEWS You can always tell when a particular issue in Iceland is really getting people talking when their Facebook profile photo frames start changing. One of the biggest topics being argued about right now is the proposed **Highlands National Park**. On the one hand, it seems like a good idea to preserve one of Europe's largest last known wilderness areas. On the other hand, the idea has been met with concerted pushback from rural municipalities and tourism industry workers, amongst others, both of whom believe the park would encroach upon small towns and small businesses alike. While the Minister for the Environment has tried to smooth things over, Parliamentary President and historic firebrand Steingrímur J. Sigfússon characterised the critics as a "whining minority" trying to get their way. And that's why a good portion of your Icelandic friends now have Facebook profile frames which read either "I support the Highlands National Park" or "I am the whining minority".

Much like the rest of the year, **coronavirus** continues to be a hot topic, with one particular flash-point flaring up between **swimming pools and gyms**. Earlier this month, the Ministry of Health allowed for the relaxation of some pandemic restrictions,

which included the re-opening of swimming pools—arguably more important to Icelanders than opening pubs. However, gyms remain closed, as they have been since October. Gym owners have been decidedly upset about the matter and have even **threatened to sue the state** over the closures. Meanwhile, public broadcasting service RÚV reached out to a literal chemistry professor to ask whether chlorinated water, such as that found in pools, kills the virus (it does) by way of explanation as to why one would be open but not

the other. When the gyms will open again is as yet undetermined.

In more optimistic coronavirus news, it looks like **a vaccine will be here soon**. After making a deal with Pfizer, one of the producers of a coronavirus vaccine, the Minister of Health announced that vaccinations could begin around New Year's eve. Some 170,000 doses will be made available over this period of time, which should be enough to cover 85,000 people—not too shabby for a country of 350,000. Those being prioritised include frontline health care workers, and individuals with conditions that make them especially vulnerable to the virus. But **do Icelanders even want to be vaccinated against coronavirus?** Turns out: **yes, pretty much all of them**, according to the most recent poll on the matter, which showed some 92% say they either will definitely or probably take it. 🍷



Highlander at a protest, yesterday



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The Highlands, yesterday

bill earlier this month, but it now seems unlikely to pass.

What's the issue?

A number of rural municipal territories are covered by the park's proposed area, with some of these municipalities raising objections that it constitutes the national government running roughshod over small rural towns.

Another issue raised was the cost and where exactly the money will come from. Guðmundur himself says it will likely cost close to a billion ISK over the next five years to establish the park, but believes tourism money and employment opportunities within the park will help offset the costs.

Tourism and freedom of movement

Perhaps the biggest objections being raised comes from the tourism industry. The Highlands National Park proposal is currently the hottest topic within groups such as Bakland Ferðabjónustunnar, a Facebook group for tourism industry workers, who are worried the national park will restrict freedom of movement and add more red tape to their operations.

A long ways to go

There is little doubt that Icelanders love the highlands. Poll after poll has shown that most Icelanders want to protect one of Europe's last remaining wildernesses.

However, given the number of raised objections, the strength of the push-back and the numerous issues that are still unresolved, it is quite unlikely that the Highlands National Park is going to become a reality any time soon.

ASK AN
Economist
Q: How Come We Have Inflation-Indexed Loans In Iceland?



If you've ever attempted to buy a home in Iceland, you may have noticed inflation-indexed housing loans on offer. If you rent, you may have an agreement with your landlord that your rent may change from month to month because the landlord took out such a loan on the property you're now renting. Inflation-indexed housing loans are fairly uncommon in Europe, so what makes Iceland so special? We asked Þórir Gunnarsson, an economist at the Icelandic Confederation of Labour, to explain.

"Inflation in Iceland has been great, compared to the general inflation rate in Europe. It's not too long ago that depositors lost their deposits and credit institutions on loans due to persistently high inflation.

"Credit institutions are now careful not to lose out on loans with indexed loans or spreads due to inflation on non-indexed loans. The inflation premium is added to the interest rate on non-indexed loans and the interest rates are therefore higher here than in a stable price environment. Indexed loans spread the risk of inflation with increasing principal over the loan period, but at the same time lower interest rates that otherwise can be offered.

"The debt service burden of indexed loans is lower in the beginning and the loans are an option for those who enter the real estate market to take out loans that would otherwise be difficult to support. Young people have applied for indexed, 40-year equal-payment loans due to a lower debt service burden in the environment of high interest rates and inflation. Real estate buyers get more expensive housing with indexed loans but pay for it with interest on the principal, which rises with prices over the loan period. Younger people who enter the real estate market with indexed equal-payment loans are then offered to refinance with rising income and have the option of converting to non-indexed loans."

Controversy Surrounding Proposed Highlands National Park

MPs question the wisdom of the move

NEWS

The Icelandic highlands is one of the largest undeveloped areas in all of Europe, covering some 40,000 square kilometres of Arctic desert, glaciers and mountains.

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

Photo: **Art Bicnick**

It is then probably unsurprising that the government wants to make the highlands a national park. However, the proposal has been met with concerted criticism and is being hotly debated in Parliament—even amongst parties within the ruling coalition—and objections have also been raised by rural

municipalities and tourism industry workers.

How it started

The establishment of a highlands national park was part of the joint policy agreement of the then-newly elected ruling coalition—the Left-Greens, the Independence Party and the Progressive Party—in November 2017. Minister for the Environment Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson formally introduced the

LOST IN GOOGLE TRANSLATION



"Egg Weapon"

News Television Radio Agenda KrakkaRÚV RÚVzero Sports Cut

He was supposed to be in quarantine and attacked a man with an egg weapon

Attacked a man with an egg weapon, stole his car and robbed a shop

October 27th, 2020: "He was supposed to be in quarantine and attacked a man with an egg weapon" (RÚV)



The simulation is failing and once again a glitch in the matrix has been revealed to the Grapevine team via the ever-psyhic medium of Google Translate. Automatic translations of news articles between Icelandic and English have been exposing

cracks through to the alternate Reykjavik that we cannot see—and this time, Reykjavik's AI is plagued by a gang of egg weapon wielding criminals:

29th September 2020: "Attacked a man with an egg weapon, stole his

car and robbed a shop." (Vísir)

October 27th, 2020: "He was supposed to be in quarantine and attacked a man with an egg weapon" (RÚV)

A brief look into Iceland's news archives revealed that these egg-assassins have been around for longer than we thought:

16th July 2018: "Police are looking for a man who was seen with an egg weapon."

26th September 2013: "Fifteen arrested – seized egg weapons."

Do these egg weapon fighters present themselves as one group? Where do they procure their egg weapons? Or is there only one egg weapon, implying the existence of one more powerful and ultimately superior "man with an egg weapon"? If so, where is he now and what does he want?

We at the Grapevine imagine that

the weapon is used to propel eggs, but concede that it could also be a non-egg based weapon traditionally used against eggs. A hard-boiled egg might produce the most force, but a raw egg would presumably require the bigger cleanup.

In reality: The Icelandic 'eggvopn' actually means blade, but Google Translate is totally convinced it means 'egg weapon.' Absolutely positive. Every single time. **IRW**

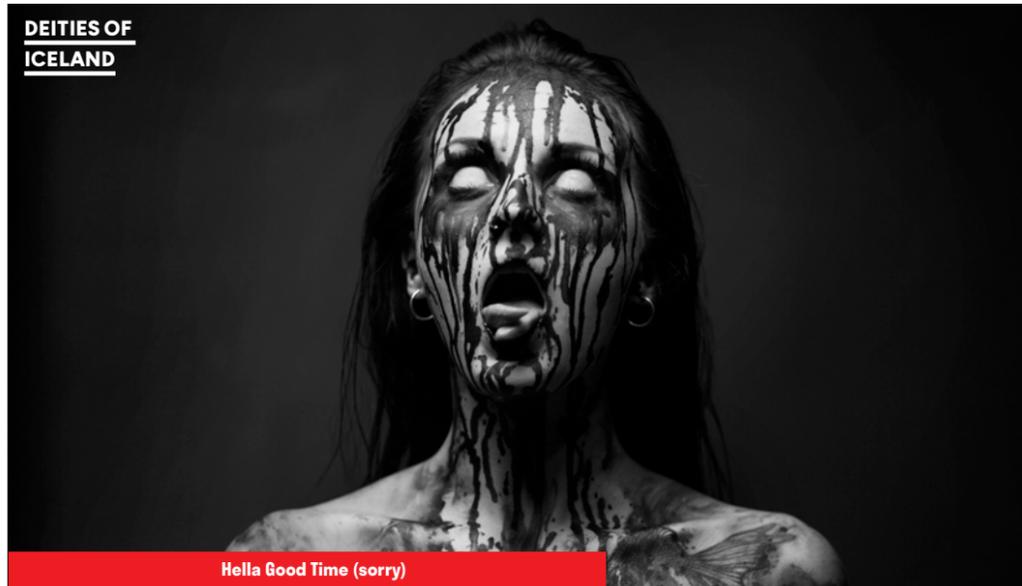
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DEITIES OF ICELAND

Hella Good Time (sorry)

Hel

The goth loner half-zombie Queen

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen
Photo: Adobe Stock

Get on your knees, mortals, for now, it is time to talk about Hel—ruler of Hel, daughter of Loki and someone who is described on nearly all websites mentioning her as having a “gloomy, downcast appearance.”

Superpowers: Owns a hellish underworld.
Weaknesses: Susceptible to sulking. Very few friends. Half-zombie.

Modern Analogue: Weird loner goth kid who becomes a dictator and punishes preps.

Gloomy and downcast

To be fair, we understand why she’d be gloomy. Apparently, the deity was known for being partially decomposed with the legs of a corpse and the face and torso of a living woman. We don’t want to judge, but that probably limits her dating pool. We’d be gloomy, too.

Along with the aforementioned gloomy exterior, it was also said in the Prose Edda by Snorri Sturluson that

her expression is perpetually grim and fierce. We can only assume this was due to her parentage. See, Hel was the daughter of Loki and Angrboda, a giantess, and therefore the sister of wolf Fenrir and serpent Jormungand. Based on our intuition, we highly doubt this was a particularly nurturing and supportive environment to grow up in. In fact, we’d hazard a guess and say that it might have been a pretty chaotic place and the world should probably be grateful that Hel only ended up “grim” and “fierce” and not “a fucking serial killer.”

Unfortunately, due to lack of info, we don’t know a ton about Hel’s daily activities. She’s rarely featured in most of the Nordic myths, which is probably due to discrimination against goths, and in fact, the only myth she plays a large part in is that of the Death of Baldr.

The tale of the death of Baldr

Baldr was a very cool god who everyone liked, much like Tom Hanks or Meryl Streep. Unfortunately, he died. The story of how he did so is super long and convoluted but the TL;DR of it is that Loki got this blind dude to slam dunk on Baldr with some mistletoe. Don’t ask questions. That’s what happened.

So Baldr, now deceased via shrub, is sent to the domain of Hel. He’s followed by Hermod, his brother, who pleads with Hel to let Baldr—who is now also gloomy and downcast—go. Hel says that she will happily let him go if everything in the cosmos weeps for him.

The Gods then go all Avengers, mobilise and get everything in the cosmos to weep for Baldr.

Well... not everything. Loki, being a dick as usual, pretends to be the giantess Tokk and decidedly doesn’t weep for Baldr. Why does he do this? Probably just to be a dick. That said, maybe he just wanted his lovely daughter Hel to finally have a super cool friend like Baldr for all of eternity. Wouldn’t that be sweet? It would, but we still think he was probably just being a dick.

And with a father like that, who can blame Hel for being gloomy? We certainly won’t. Loki was probably a distant and untrustworthy caretaker, so it’s natural this Goddess would be full to the brim with Daddy Issues. That said, we’re a magazine, not a tabloid, so we won’t speculate. We’ll just wait until we die and journey down to Hel to ask the woman herself how she feels about Lana Del Rey. Then we’ll know.

Anyway, that’s the story of Hel. All hail the goth queen. ☘

GRAPEVINE PLAYLIST



KARÍTAS - The Girl That You Want
 Last year, she made us sad with her debut EP ‘Songs 4 Crying’. Now she’s back with an equally sad number. ‘The Girl That You Want’ is a dreamy slow-burn harmonic/trap ballad that’ll bring you back to when you were insecure and went for bad people and went through heartbreak, dramatic and low-key self-destructive. We wish we didn’t relate, KARÍTAS, but we so do. **HJC**

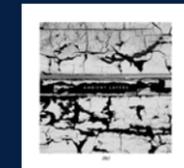


Fortið - Son of a Barren Land
 Fortið is a project by Einar Eldur Thorberg, an elder of the Icelandic metal scene known for his work in groups like Potentiam (their track Bálsýn” is an absolutely must-listen for any foreign metalheads reading this article). But in contrast to Potentiam’s synth-y melancholy, Fortið has a more rocking black/death metal sound and “Son of a Barren Land” jumps between beautiful atmospheric sections and furious traditional black metal like the best of ‘em. Ain’t nothing better than some good ole’ internal turmoil, right? **HJC**



Röskva - Laug
 The title track of Röskva’s new album, “Laug” has energy,

but in the most serene way: electronic and synth-y with enchanting vocals. Sometimes dance-y, sometimes euphoric, sometimes reflective—the release has it all. Röskva’s bandcamp reveals, “This album was never meant to be released,” but I’m really glad it was. **MM**



Herdís Stefánsdóttir - Þoka
 The nuanced ethereal soundscape of Herdís Stefánsdóttir’s “Þoka” manages to feel at once both delicately toned-down as well as warmly imposing. Truly, the composer’s debut off her upcoming album is the perfect soundtrack for early December. Let it play during a long snowy twilight walk and indulge in the beauty of nature and loneliness. **HJC**



Atli Örvarsson - Flying (Talos Remix)
 Atli Örvarsson dropped his first solo album ‘You Are Here’ back in July. “Flying”—a delicate, yearning piano ballad—has now been given a rather cinematic makeover by Talos. We particularly like the vocals, which have a sort of primal-pining feel that oscillates between strength and solemnity in a weirdly empowering manner. Also, you can dance to it, but in a very dancel-you-die kind of way. Hey—remember dancing? **HJC**



JUST SAYINGS

Icelandic entrepreneur/politician, yesterday

„Að fá uppreisn æru“

The Icelandic honour system is complicated. If you have a shitty reputation, it will literally be more difficult for you to get a job than for those that have a good reputation. This can be especially true in smaller towns. But if you have been an idiot, pissing everybody off—or worse—there is still hope. The phrase “Að fá uppreisn æru” literally means restoring your honour. We even have

this term integrated into our laws, in English that would be a pardon, but we use the legal term ‘uppreist æra’ when pardoning. Honour has always been a big thing in Iceland and many even quote a verse from our old Edda Poems, Hávamál, that says: “Orðstír: deyr aldregi: hveim er sér góðan getur.” Meaning, your reputation will outlive you. In short; don’t be an asshole. **VG ☘**

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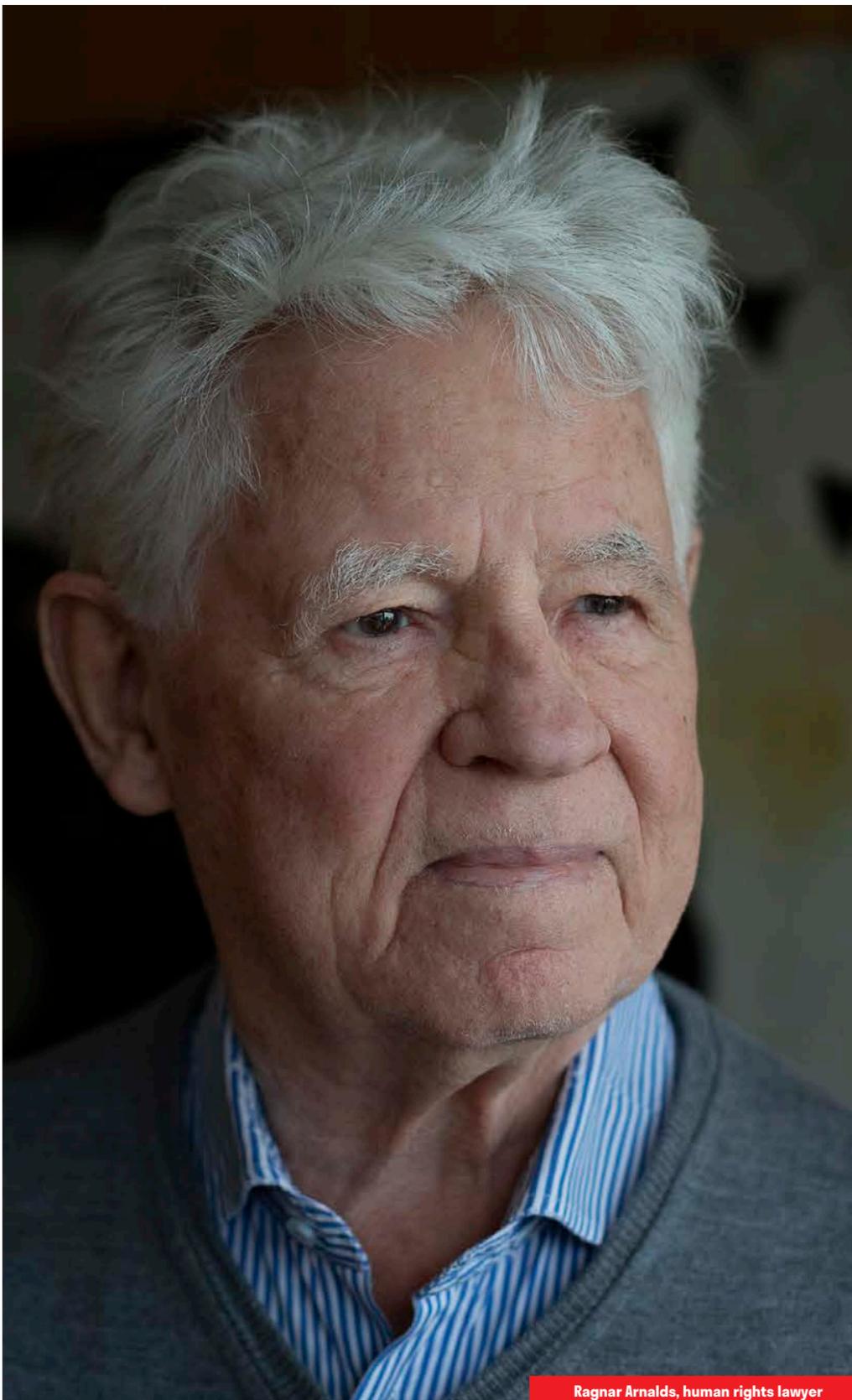
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A Stacked Deck: Police, Courts And The Right To Protest In Iceland

Iceland's legal system needs to change to ensure democracy

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



Ragnar Arnalds, human rights lawyer

Icelanders have developed a positive reputation for their protests. Praised for having driven a government out of power, for pressuring authorities to prosecute bankers and for organising the draft for a new constitution, to any outside observers it would appear as though protesting has become an acceptable, even respectable, way to exact change in Icelandic society.

However, in the course of several interviews with lawyers and activists alike, the Grapevine found that police have sweeping powers to arrest, that courts take a very narrow interpretation of police power at the expense of these protestors, that prosecutors often severely limit or outright restrict defense lawyers' access to the evidence against their clients, and that appealing these cases has such a high threshold that they can have a chilling effect—all of this sometimes in breach of the Icelandic constitution and European human rights laws.

How did things get this way, and what must be done to bring Icelandic law in line with the principles of a democratic society?

Article 19

Much of the issue rests upon Article 19 of the Law on Police, a single sentence with far-reaching implications:

"The public is obliged to obey orders which police give, such as in traffic control or in order to ensure law and order in a public space."

This article has not only been used by the police to justify arresting people participating in peaceful protests—something which is supposed to be protected by Articles 73 and 74 of Iceland's constitution and other international laws—the courts have often times taken a very narrow interpretation of this law; asking only if a police order was disobeyed, not if the order was lawful or even justified in the first place.

Elinborg Harpa Önundardóttir and Borys Ejryszew are two activists currently facing charges that include violating Article 19 [Note: at the time of this writing, Borys has been convicted of violating Article 19 and ordered to pay over 300,000 ISK in legal costs. He plans to appeal]. Elinborg and Borys have worked extensively with Icelandic refugees who have organised for better living conditions and fair treatment by Icelandic authorities. Efforts to bring these grievances directly to the Directorate of Immigration (ÚTL) in March 2019 were blocked by around a dozen police officers.

"We were saying, 'Well, we're going in, we have every right to go in there,'" Elinborg recalls. "Then the police took out the pepper spray and were ready to use it. It says that in the police report from that protest, that they were ready to use the gas when people were 'threatening to break in' to ÚTL during opening hours."

The demonstrators then decided to change tactics: as police had prevented them from bringing their demands to immigration authorities directly, they opted instead to demonstrate at Austurvöllur, the square in front of Parliament.

Austurvöllur, ground zero for protests

Austurvöllur has been the scene for numerous protests in Icelandic history. It was there that the famed "pots and pans revolution" grabbed international headlines as Icelanders gathered in the thousands. It was also the scene of the largest protest in Icelandic history,

when some 23,000 people showed up in April 2016 to call upon the government to resign in the wake of the Panama Papers revelations.

At that protest, police simply observed proceedings and held the line. But when about two dozen protestors arrived at Austurvöllur on March 11th of 2019, police response was vastly different.

"We got to the point where the refugees decided that they would like to try occupying the Parliament square," Borys recalls. "When the refugees were trying to set up their tents, the police came over and pushed people around, taking the camping equipment. And then, for whatever reason, the unit commanders came up with the idea that the demonstrators wanted to start a fire. They confiscated a pallet that people had brought, believing that the refugees were going to use that for a bonfire, but that isn't true—we mainly used it to sit on as insulation from the ground. It was March and it was freezing. After they took the pallet, the police further decided they wanted to take away the cardboard banners, too. This is when the police line approaches and starts pushing people around in a very aggressive and escalatory manner."

Met with no resistance, the police nonetheless began using force against the protestors, including the use of pepper spray, sometimes against people attempting to leave the scene. All of this was captured on video. Two arrests were made.

How peaceful is a protest supposed to be?

Despite public outcry against police violence at this small demonstration, organisers decided to switch tactics.

"After the police riot, people were quite stressed and tired, so we decided it was time to do something peaceful and symbolic," Borys says. "We organised a silent performance where a bunch of refugees and their friends stood in front of Parliament with their hands marked with 'no deportations' and tape over their mouths. There were parliamentarians passing through, so no one was stopping anybody. But the police decided this was also an unlawful protest and, citing the 19th, they came over, shouting in Icelandic to a crowd of people—many of whom don't speak the language—and arrested three entirely random demonstrators, one of them Elinborg."

Tactics were changed again, with organisers deciding this time to take their concerns to the Ministry of Justice, which holds authority over ÚTL. This would take place in the form of peaceful sit-ins, held during opening hours, in the lobby of the Ministry.

Over the course of three sit-ins, no arrests were made; police dragged people outside of the building and left them there, sometimes using force. The fourth sit-in was a different story.

"The fourth time around they arrived at the Ministry when we had been protesting for about 10-15 minutes," Elinborg says. "They came in shouting at us to get out or we would get arrested. They did not explain on what premises nor did they tell us that the ministry was closed. Then they gave us all of 3-4 minutes before they began arresting people. We were asking them to give the orders in English as well, because in the arrests before, the order [to disperse] was only given in Icelandic."

Out of bounds

Helga Baldvins Bjargadóttir, a lawyer working on Elinborg and Borys' cases, is amongst the lawyers the Grapevine spoke to who believe Article 19 is interpreted too broadly by the police and too narrowly by the courts. She provided a list of cases heard by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) that handed down rulings which not only affirm the right to protest—they also would completely overturn, or radically change, Article 19, and with it the verdicts handed down by Icelandic courts on numerous occasions.

Helga explains that Article 19 is supposed to carry exceptions, as outlined by the ECHR, and that the police are supposed to take notice of international obligations, such as human rights obligations, in the course of their work.

"In that regard, they can manage control of traffic, they can forbid people from staying in certain areas, or ask them to leave," she says. "They have this authority, and if this had been people entering the Ministry drunk and disrupting the peace of the staff in that way, the police would have the full authority to ask them to leave and, if they didn't, to arrest them. But in the protestor case, the police don't regard that the protestors have constitutional and human rights to protest and freedom of expression. Their actions need to be balanced in regard to these rights."

Helga also points out that when the police step out of bounds, they should be held liable.

"[The ECHR] also talks about how when the police have this power to give orders to protestors and arrest them if they don't obey, that this goes against the initial goal of the legislation. If you're going to arrest protestors, you have to have something real that they've done other than disobeying police orders. The police have to be preventing a crime, there has to be chaos or people in danger for them to be able to intervene in a case like that."

A narrow view

Sigrún Ingibjörg Gísladóttir, a lawyer at the law offices of Réttur, agrees that the police sometimes overstep the power that Article 19 grants them.

"Essentially, you can have an article that states there's a public obligation to follow police orders, but that does not mean the obligation should be absolute," she says. "It's an obligation that needs to be considered and interpreted in light of other rights and obligations. Even if it's absolute in language, that doesn't mean it can be absolute in practice, because it needs to be interpreted in light of superseding laws, such as the constitution and rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, as the European Convention of Human Rights is an international agreement that has been legislated into Icelandic law. These are laws that supersede a general law such as Article 19. Essentially, Article 19 needs to be used while respecting the rights encoded in these higher laws, such as free speech and the right to protest."

Aren't protests supposed to be inconvenient?

One of the people who have championed reform in this area is lawyer Ragnar Aðalsteinsson. He has long fought for the rights of protestors,

having defended the so-called Reykjavík Nine—a group of protesters accused of "violently" entering Parliament during protests in December 2008.

"The Icelandic courts tend to say that any inconvenience made by protestors needs to be stopped," he told us. "But the ECHR has stated inconvenience is a natural consequence of protests, and that the state must understand this and not interfere unless everything goes too far."

Another good example of this is the case of Ragnheiður Freyja Kristínardóttir and Jórunn Edda Helgadóttir, the latter of whom is represented by Ragnar. In May 2016, they stood up on board a plane set to deport an asylum seeker. The plane was, at the time, standing still on the runway, with boarding not yet complete. As they stood, they began speaking out loud about the fact that a person was being wrongfully deported on that flight. Jórunn was quickly restrained by passengers and flight attendants and both were arrested.

"The District Court concluded we had caused 'severe disruption of public transportation' without substantial reasoning for this," Ragnheiður recalls. "The judge in fact concluded that we did not cause any delay of the plane, or not a severe delay at least, but that we did indeed cause 'discomfort' and 'unease' amongst the flight crew and passengers. This is one of the defenses in Appellate Court: no passengers have ever given their testimonies in this case. Which is very unfortunate, since there were 170 passengers on that plane, and none of them were asked to come and give testimony. The other peculiar thing is that people have very seldom been prosecuted for this and the times that people have, they have been acquitted."

What counts as evidence

While the prosecution can seemingly offer any number of arguments in protest cases as to why a given protestor or group of protestors should be convicted, arguments from the defense often fall on deaf ears.

Borys experienced this firsthand, saying that in regards to his case, "The only thing that made it into the final verdict was the testimonies of the police. The judge seemed only interested in whether police gave an order and whether it was obeyed. That's it."

Borys and others had raised concerns about the possible existence of racism within the Icelandic police force having some role in how the police have responded to the refugee protests, bringing up the excessive use of force throughout many of refugee organised demonstrations. In speaking with Grapevine, Borys also pointed out the new "border patrol van" rolled out earlier this year, wherein one of the officers talked openly about targeting "Albanians and Romanians." This concern, amongst many others, was summarily dismissed by the court.

"[The judge] refused to call in the unit commander [Arnar Rúnar Marteinsson] for further questioning about the justification for the police using excessive force and especially the ensuing arrests—a thing that happened only during the last sit-in and therefore in need of further justification," Borys says. "The judge was only interested in whether the police gave an order and whether it was obeyed or not and entirely disinterested in whether [police] actions violate any higher laws—which in our opinion they did. The arrests that ensued go against both Icelandic constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human



Sigrún Ingibjörg Gísladóttir, lawyer

"If you're going to arrest protestors, you have to have something real that they've done other than disobeying police orders."

Rights.”

Ragnheiður ran into similar obstructions in trying to defend their case.

“All of our defenses—the freedom of expression, the right to protest and your obligation to help a person who is in danger—whether the judge agrees with them or not is one thing,” she told us. “But a judge should definitely, if they disagree, give their reasons for it. This is very important in any precedent that they’re setting; to explain how they came to their verdict. This was totally lacking in the District Court. Our defenses were answered in one sentence, which was ‘the freedom of expression is under certain restrictions, so this defense cannot be applied here’. So essentially going to the Appellate Court is wanting to challenge that, to challenge a verdict that didn’t give any reason to why our defenses were being dismissed or not agreed with.” [UPDATE: The Appellate Court has ruled in their case, giving them a two year suspended sentence and 1 million ISK in legal fees. They are at the time of this writing undecided on their next steps.]

Can we see the evidence against us?

One of the primary elements of any trial, civil or criminal, is that of discovery: that the defense team and the prosecution have equal access to all evidence in a trial, whether that evidence goes towards or against an accused’s guilt or innocence. In the course of our investigations, we found that the defense team is often severely restricted in terms of what evidence they have access to.

In the case of the Ministry sit-in arrests, for example, Elinborg and Helga confirmed that they had requested the entirety of the video security footage of the protest in question. Instead, they were offered a single video screenshot.

“The prosecution said that they have investigated this case fully, but they don’t see the point in getting all the tapes [to me],” Helga confirmed. “So now the justice is deliberating on how he’s going to rule on all the access to these tapes.”

“[Access to discovery] is a problem, I agree,” Sigrún says. “We’ve had cases about the obligation of the police to reveal their evidence. Especially in the criminal cases that we had after the crisis in 2008, where there were a lot of documents and the prosecutors choose which documents they wanted to present to the court and the defendant’s lawyers were saying ‘well we want to see all of the documents, what if there’s something in there that is actually beneficial for my client?’ That right has not been confirmed by the Supreme Court.

“Instead, the police can, to some extent, limit access to documents. More generally speaking, there is no absolute right to equal access to all evidence gathered by the police. With things like videos, you don’t actually get access to them; you go to the police to look at them, which we’ve been arguing breaches the Equality of Arms principle; that there should be equality in the court room, so you should have access to all the same files and have the same kind of access to them.

“The thing is,” Sigrún continues, “under the Icelandic Criminal Procedural Act, the prosecution is under a legal obligation to remain neutral and this means to present both sides; whether it indicates the defendant is innocent or guilty. It’s something that’s complicated and has been discussed by

lawyers in this field, for a long time.”

Surely you can appeal, right?

The right to appeal is another important function of a democracy’s judicial system—that if you were found guilty in a lower court, you should be able to appeal the matter to a higher court. That function also exists in the Icelandic court system, but it can get a little bit complicated when it comes to protest cases.

“We have this both in criminal cases and private cases, that in order to bring a case before the Appellate Court in Iceland, they need to meet a minimum threshold of a sentence,” Sigrún explains. “Generally, in criminal cases, this means you’ve been sentenced to prison, or that you were ordered to pay a fine in excess of around 1 million ISK; it’s indexed, so it changes slightly every year. But this is not absolute; there is an exception, and that exception is if you have a case—both criminal and private—that you believe was wrongly adjudicated, or if you believe it’s important for society or yourself to get the Appellate Court’s judgement, then you can request a grant of appeal. We’ve seen this in cases such as those that concern freedom of speech, where people have been found guilty of defamation and ordered to pay compensation well below 1 million ISK, but nonetheless been granted an appeal. ... But it isn’t without risk because if you lose the appeal, you will likely end up increasing the costs.”

Helga agrees, adding that the daunting prospect can have a chilling effect on even going forward with an appeal in the first place.

“They could make an exception because it’s a principled case of human rights, but if they’re denied, they have to go to the Supreme Court,” she says. “It will be very interesting if [these cases] go to the ECHR. They talk a lot about the chilling effect. So even if the fine is only 10,000 ISK, if the legal fees are like 600,000 ISK, this has a chilling effect. It prevents people from being able to exercise their freedom of expression. I think the ECHR would look at this as a punishment in itself.”

What needs to change

Elinborg emphasises that the broad use of Article 19, its narrow interpretation by the courts, and other issues have been an ongoing problem in Iceland for a long time.

“This is how it’s been for years now,” she says. “There have been people persecuted many times before for precisely this, breaking the 19th article and nothing else. It seems like the Icelandic courts just want to keep it that way. They don’t look at it in terms of ‘why was the order given? was it reasonable?’ They don’t care. They just ask ‘was the order given and did you obey it?’ If you didn’t, you’re guilty. This is what we’re dealing with. It’s up to people in society, I feel, to decide if it’s something they find acceptable. Because obviously the court system itself isn’t going to change it.”

“I would like to make Article 19 stricter, and provide directly that citizens only have to obey the orders if the behaviour is unlawful,” Ragnar says. “You have a right to express your opinion, individually or in a group, and that needs to be balanced against the inconvenience that the protest might have resulted. I would like to see the Icelandic courts go the same route as

the European Court of Human Rights in accepting there’s going to be some inconveniences involved in most protests.”

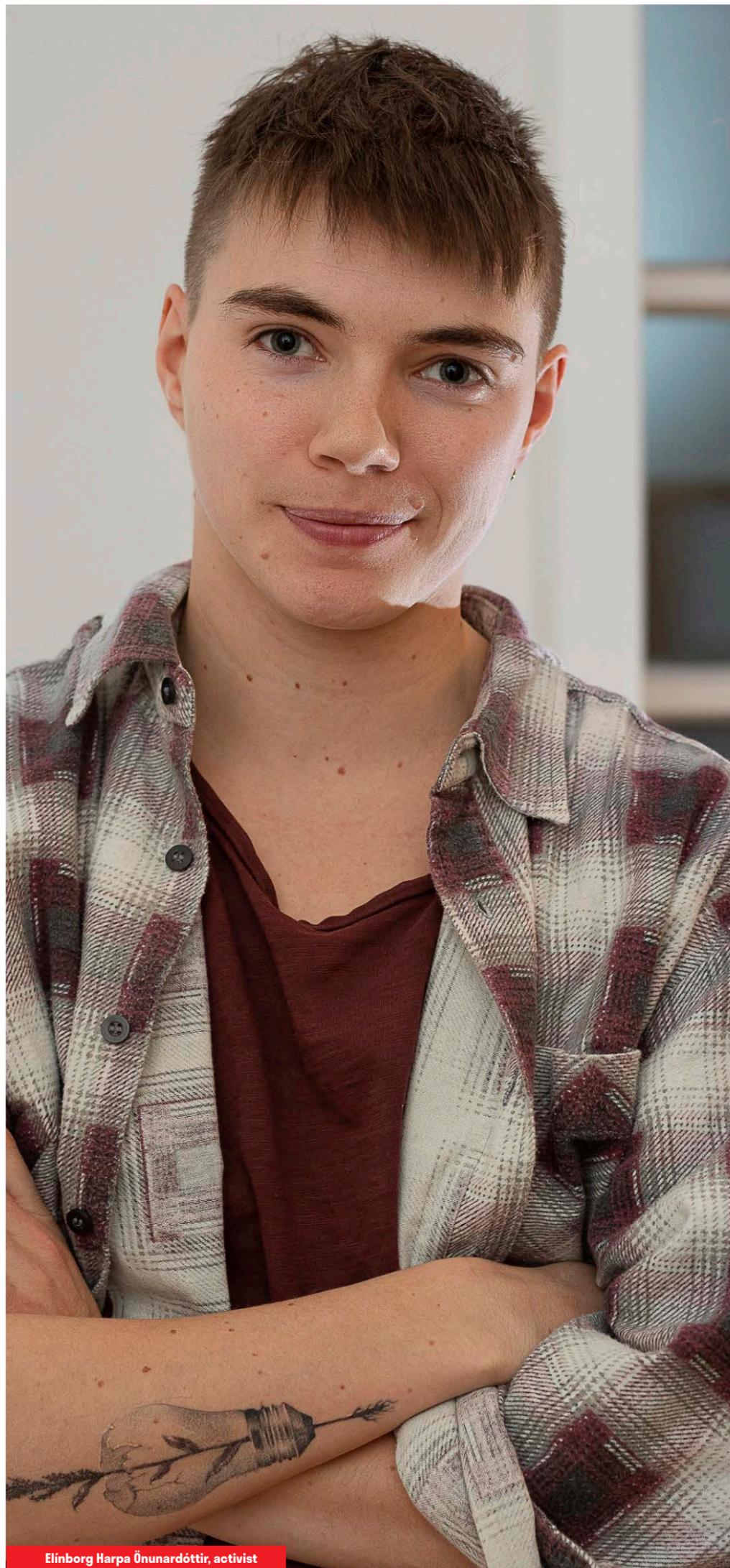
For her part, Sigrún envisions more comprehensive changes on multiple levels.

“The most important role is played by the judge,” she says. “That the judge follows what we have said in our society are the principles that we’re supposed to walk through to come to a conclusion. It’s really important that the District Court judges go through the correct procedure in finding someone guilty. It’s not like people are never guilty and should never be found guilty, but the correct path must always be taken to finding someone guilty. There

was once an English judgement that said something to the effect that ‘the appearance of justice is equally important as justice itself.’”

Helga, in fact, would like to see the matter brought all the way to the ECHR, in the hopes of bringing some much-needed reforms to Iceland.

“I want to take this all the way [to the ECHR] because comparing the Icelandic court cases to the ECHR; well, we’re out of control with our police orders here,” she says. “It’s not in line with what’s normal in a democratic society.”



Elinborg Harpa Önunardóttir, activist

Sigur Rós Survives

Endings, Eddas and 'Odin's Raven Magic'



Hilmar at the laptop, Steindór chanting, the giant stone harp at the bottom of the picture

The end is nigh.

You feel it in your bones. Each time you read the news, each time your phone beeps with fresh tidings of another catastrophe, there's a sense of unravelling, a sense that we can't possibly keep hurtling from one disaster to the next. Civilisation is exhausting. Give us some catharsis. Just let the whole thing splatter onto the pavement already.

The problem is that history never runs out of new corners to turn. The end times never really end.

"In the Eddas, Ragnarök is the end of the world, but what it actually means is that when something comes to an end, something new begins," says Georg Holm, the bassist of Sigur Rós and one of the band's two remaining members.

'Remaining' being the operative word here: for some years now, it's been unclear whether or not Sigur Rós had ceased to exist, following several public scandals and, most notably, the departure of drummer Orri Páll Dýrason amid sexual assault allegations in 2018. There hasn't been a studio album or a tour since the release of 'Kveikur' in 2013; keyboardist Kjartan Sveinsson left around the same time and front-

man Jónsi remains conspicuously absent, currently holed up in Los Angeles pursuing his own projects.

And yet...

It's December, one year into a global pandemic, and I'm on a Zoom call with Georg, Kjartan and long-time collaborator María Huld Markan Sigfúsdóttir (of Amiina fame). The band have just released a new album, the long-awaited 'Odin's Raven Magic'—ORM, for short.

Admittedly, "new" is a strong word here. In a release schedule that can best be described as glacial, 'Odin's Raven Magic' was first composed in 2002 and performed just a handful of times, surviving only in whispers, legends and bootlegged YouTube clips. The new release was actually recorded live in Paris and mastered in 2008, with the band inadvertently deciding to sit on it for 12 years.

"There was a lot of other stuff going on and it sort of fell between the cracks," explains Georg. "It was always meant to come out, but I guess it took a lot longer than anyone expected. It's very fitting that the album is being released now, though. It's music that is really old and is all about the end of the world. It's the end of 2020 and

hopefully 2021 will be something completely different."

Apocalyptic warnings

Unpacking ORM is no easy task, largely because it is so unlike any other Sigur Rós release. It is perhaps one of the band's most collaborative efforts to date. The piece was originally conceived of by Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson, a veteran composer as well as the current allsherjargoði (chieftain) of the Icelandic heathen organisation, Ásatrúarfélagið. Hilmar was commissioned by the Reykjavík Art Festival in 2002 to produce an orchestral rendition of "Hrafnaldur Óðins," a lost chapter of the Poetic Edda and the inspiration for the album's name. Hilmar, on a self-described crusade to have the poem reinstated as part of the Edda, asked the band to join the project. They immediately said yes.

With less than two weeks to put the piece together before the festival, the team enlisted Steindór Andersen, one of Iceland's foremost epic poetry rhyming chanters. They then called Páll Guðmundsson, a sculptor and the inventor of the steinharpa—a ma-

rimba constructed out of stones—and headed straight out to the countryside to begin composing.

As only one member of Sigur Rós—Kjartan—is able to read music, it quickly became clear they would need outside help, so María jumped in to oversee the arrangements—or, as she puts it, "save Kjartan from a nervous breakdown."

From there, this beautiful—if inaccessible—text began to take on new life.

A shot across the bow

In many ways the album and the text on which it is based are warnings from the past; shots across the bow into an uncertain, terrifying future.

Just as the album was composed years before its release, the poem was discovered centuries after it was first written. It was proclaimed to be a forgery in the 1980s and disqualified from editions of the Poetic Edda until 2012, when new scholarship certified it to be authentic and possibly even hundreds of years older than the other Eddic poems. (It has only recently been included in published editions of the Edda.)

Info

'Odin's Raven Magic' is available on streaming, vinyl and CD at shop.grapevine.is

Words:
Ciarán Daly

Photo:
Provided by
Sigur Rós



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The original text—which forms the basis of the lyrics to Steindór's hypnotic chanting—tells the story of the end of the world. The imagery of the poem, which scholars suspect to be missing its beginning and end, paints a story of decline, in which the world is freezing over from north to south. And while the world freezes, the gods feast, oblivious to their own doom.

"It was an apocalyptic warning," says Hilmar. "Perhaps the people of the time felt it in their skins. Today, of course, Iceland is involved in environmental issues surrounding hydro-electric power and the destruction of the Highlands. We are being warned again."

A hibernating beast

'Odin's Raven Magic' is much bigger than just a Sigur Rós album. It's a truly collaborative effort. Steindór is a commanding vocal presence, almost relegating Jónsi to the sidelines as he leads the listener through the eight stanzas of this ancient text, while the steinharpa and the orchestra are so dominant as to almost make the band itself seem like backing musicians.

"As an outsider, it was an interesting project to take part in because of the complexity of it," María says. "As well as the band and all their instrumentation, there is a sculptor that never performs on stage, then the chanter in a musical setting that he is not

used to, and glueing it all together is an orchestra and a choir. So part of the reason it went into hibernation was because it was just such a beast. Everyone had to step out of their comfort zone."

"The beauty of this is that all the people involved don't recognise it as their own work. It's so collaborative that it's become an independent thing," she continues. "The poem is just timeless and it's more relevant than ever before, because it explores the end of the world. It's been very interesting to actually look deeper into the poem—I didn't have the time to actually look deeper into the poem at the time because it was just mayhem trying to cram it all together."

The elephant in the room

While the new release is a long-awaited and welcome addition to the band's discography, it's a relic of an earlier Sigur Rós, and in some ways, the elephant is still in the room. They have only met online to make decisions about things like cover art and t-shirts. "It's not like we came together like a football team and decided to release it," Kjartan laughs. And, as we speak, there's no fixed plans for the band's future—no upcoming releases, no new projects, and

no calendar. But then, perhaps there never has been.

"When you look at someone's career, you might start to think about how something was thought through and you might think it's all calculated," María says. "But I don't think things are calculated. You just react to what's happening. I'm in a band that has changed members so dramatically over the years that nobody knows what it 'means'. It's more like an umbrella or a musical force that just... continues."

"No one's counting members," Georg says. "People come and go. It's free-form. Through the years we have approached each record as a separate project, and they've always been done differently—not necessarily by sitting down and discussing what we are going to do. Things change and you create in a different way. People change as well. Times change. Your own attitude to life changes."

Weathering the storms

Sigur Rós were founded in 1994, which, for this writer, means they have been active for an entire lifetime. In that time, Icelandic society has undergone massive tectonic shifts. The band has seen almost three of the country's six presidents come and go, survived the rise and fall of entire industries and lived through the country's transformation from a backwater in the North Atlantic to a global tourism hub and back again.

"Every generation has this feeling of Iceland changing so fast, but at the same time, the core doesn't change."



Maria Huld Markan, composer

“Iceland has moved at such a speed since the two world wars because it was a very poor country at the turn of the century,” says Kjartan. “Everything changes very fast these days and has been for the last eighty years.”

“Except the politicians,” Georg interjects.

Kjartan continues: “So it’s exciting, but at the same time it’s reckless.”

“When we were filming [the tour movie] ‘Heima,’ I remember we came home after touring just before the [2008 financial crash] and we were like, ‘What’s happening here?’ Everyone wanted to be a banker and we

felt like we didn’t know our own country,” explains María. “Every generation has this feeling of Iceland changing so fast, but at the same time, the core doesn’t change.”

“We like things to happen fast, sometimes without thought, and it’s exciting in ways but it’s always the same feeling that you get stuck with when things aren’t done carefully. Which could be said about this album. It never would’ve been done if people had actually thought about what they were doing.”

“The beauty of this is that all the people involved don’t recognise it as their own work. It’s so collaborative that it’s become an independent thing.”

Like the Edda, Sigur Rós’ music has always spoken to the enduring elements of life on this island, channelling its geophony, the wind-battering rhythms echoing from the past into today.

“With Sigur Rós, you never know what will happen. Things just kinda fall into our laps and we don’t overthink it,” Georg says. “Something could happen tomorrow or in ten years. We just never know.”

‘Odin’s Raven Magic’ is a message bottled in a distant past, a reminder of the things that endure: old friends, old poems, old ways. Like the steinharpa, which is said to never go out of tune, the band’s spontaneity and the spirit of creativity that drove them to write ORM, also endures. Perhaps we needed reminding. Perhaps they did too. ☺

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Words: The Grapevine Gift Givers Photos: Art Bicnick & Various Studios

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Pastel Flower Bouquet

Pastel Flower Studio, Hverfisgata 50

Flowers die but a dried flower bouquet from hidden gem Pastel Flower Studio will last forever. The runner-up of Grapevine's 2020 Best of Reykjavík Hidden Gem award, Pastel is a charming little studio that creates unique (and incredibly trendy tbh) arrangements that reference classic Icelandic nature in unexpected and innovative ways. So for that aspirational Nordic style moment, grab a bouquet of muted jewel tones, put it

in a very minimalist vase and present it to your stylish friend with a bottle of natural wine. Bonus points if you add a round trip ticket to Berlin for when 2020 ends.



Fischer Solid Perfume

Fischer, Fischersund 3 & shop.grapevine.is

From packaging-free shampoo to a special perfume section, Grapevine-favourite Fischer serves up a sensory, highly aesthetic shopping adventure. To be frank, basically, everything they offer would be a stunning gift, but there's something about the personal, long-lasting nature of perfume that really makes our heart melt. All of Fischer's perfumes are vegan, alcohol-free, paraben-free and made with organic ingredients—more importantly, said ingredients will remind the

recipient of your eternal love and superior taste every time they use it. While we're fans of all their scents, we're particularly enamoured by n.8, which, among other things, is supposed to smell like "Arctic wind blowing through hair in a damp pine forest." Mom'll love it.



Ragnar Axelsson 'Arctic Heroes'

Bookstores around Reykjavík & shop.grapevine.is

'Arctic Heroes', the latest photography book by Ragnar Axelsson, or RAX, is an intimate 40-years-in-the-making documentation of the Greenlandic sled dog. That said, even referring to the project as a "photography book" feels reductive. Ragnar spent decades getting to know Greenlandic hunters and hearing deeply personal stories about their intimate relationships with their dogs—a select few of which were put in the book alongside hundreds of photographs. Flipping through the pages is truly a visceral experience, allowing you to enter a remote world that feels lost in time. Hopefully, we will all be able to travel again soon, but until then, indulge in some canine escapism. Woof.



Farmers Market Socks

Farmers Market, Laugavegur 37 & Hólmaslóð 2 & shop.grapevine.is

What could be better than giving someone the gift of warmth? Everyone loves to receive socks for Christmas and these ones from Farmers Market are the perfect stocking stuffer. We all know somebody who walks around with holes in the bottom of their socks—and cold feet really are the worst—so why not help them out and set them up for a warmer 2021? They'd appreciate it a lot, trust us. The designs of these Farmers Market socks are also wholesome and folksy af, and with their vintage vibes, they're the perfect accent to any cosy outfit.



66°North Recycled Backpack

66°North, various locations & shop.grapevine.is

This backpack is made with leftover fabric, meaning it reduces waste and is better for the planet. We love to see it. This is the perfect gift for your friend or relative who is so conscious of their carbon footprint that they carry around zero-waste cutlery, a reusable coffee cup and cruelty-free vegan hand soap at all times. What better way to show them you support their virtuous plight than by gifting them something they can carry it all around with? The backpack comes in 10 different colours, including stark neons, silver and black—so there's something for everyone, including you and your cyber-goth squad. 🐾

BEST OF REYKJAVÍK

Unmissable RVK Bites!



The Pretzel Croissant at Brauð og Co.

You don't need to be in love with pretzels or croissants to love this hybrid, found at one of Reykjavík's stand-out bakeries. Here, elements of Germany's shiny, knotted invention have been merged with France's national pastry to produce something wholly different. You get hit with the almost-bitter malt flavour of the pretzel before being embraced by the buttery goodness of the croissant. You'll thank us later.

An Ice Cream Sandwich at Skúbb

The Grapevine's love of Skúbb is no secret and it's no big conspiracy; they simply make the best ice cream in the country. Vibrant flavours, natural colours, creamy texture—they are consistently wonderful. The parlour rotates their flavours quickly so it's difficult to guarantee the availability of a specific flavour (also: don't make me Sophie's Choice this thing). All we ask is you slap your flavour of choice between two of their rich, freshly-baked chocolate chip cookies.

The Lemon Poppy Seed Doughnut at Deig

As with Skúbb, it's hard to make any promises about availability at Deig due to the bakery's love of innovation and surprising flavours. The good news is that you'll rarely see a misstep there as all of their stuff is amazing. Stop by, and Deig'll fix you up with a chocolate cake cruller, crème brûlée doughnut or some other fried delight. But if you get a chance to taste their glazed, almost cakey, lemon poppy seed doughnut—leap on it like a werewolf.

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“My mother is a crazy cat lady who sometimes thinks she runs a shelter for lost or abandoned animals.”

Words: Valur Grettisson
Photo: Art Bicnick

Roald Eyvindarson

Roald Eyvindarson is a journalist, husband and dad to the most wonderful little girl in the world. Bearing the same first name as one Roald Amundsen and one Roald Dahl, he feels under constant pressure to excel in life. Roald—Eyvindarson, not Dahl—is also a publishing director at *Birtingur*, Iceland's largest magazine publisher, and editor-in-chief of *Gaicyceland.is*.

First thing in the morning

Sex. No, not really, just decided to throw that out there to get your attention. No, my perfect day starts at the gym—**World Class Laugar**—at 6:15 a.m. I'm an early riser and going to the gym is a great way to get the blood flowing. After practice, I'd enjoy a cup of black coffee. I've been drinking coffee since the age of four and can't imagine life without it. Like someone once said: "I'm not addicted to it, we're just in a committed relationship."

Lunch

Lunch is with the hubby at **Kaffivagninn**. It's a diner-like restaurant located on the docks at **Grandi** and it's one of my favourite places in Reykjavík. Someone described it as, "the complete opposite of a gentrified hipster hangout" and that's exactly what I like about it. Just a bunch of old sailors, people coming from AA-meetings and the occasional tourist. After having seafood soup, which is sublime by the way, it would be fun to take a stroll around Grandi. There are so many cool places there.

In the afternoon

My daughter started kindergarten this fall and it would be great to pick her up and get to spend some quality time with her. Take her to róló, play football and go visit my parents. My mother is a crazy cat lady who sometimes thinks she runs a shelter for lost or abandoned animals and my daughter loves every one of them.

Early evening

Coffee with friends at **Mosfellsbakarí**. Everyone should have a Bjartmar, Snorri and Bjóssi in their life. They beat yoga and therapy.

Dinner

Indian or Thai takeaway from **Hraðles-tin** or **Krua Thai** with the hubby, our daughter and her two mothers. I recently found out that she loves RuPaul as much as she loves Peppa Pig, so maybe we'd all watch an episode together. Going with the family to the old-fashioned restaurant **Laugaás** would also be a great idea. I've loved it since I was a kid. The creamy "gratin au gellur" is a delicacy, the checked curtains an absolute hoot.

In the heat of the night

You do realize I was at the gym at 6:15 am so I'd probably have to be a coke addict to be awake this late? So, at this point, I've probably gone to sleep feeling great after a wonderful day. 🍷



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Useful Numbers

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Post Office

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

Pharmacies

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

Opening Hours - Bars & Clubs

Bars can stay open until 23:00 on weekdays and weekends until further notice.

Opening Hours - Shops & Banks

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

Swimming Pools

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

Public Toilets

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

Public Transport

Most buses run every 20–30 minutes
Fare: 480 ISK adults, 240 ISK children.
Buses run from 07-24:00, and 10-04:30 on weekends. More info: www.bus.is.

Venue Finder

Venues

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

Austur	Austurstræti 7	D3	Kaffibarinn	Bergstaðastræti 1	E4
American Bar	Austurstræti 8	D3	Kiki Queer Bar	Laugavegur 22	E5
Andrými	Bergþórugata 20	G6	Loft	Bankastræti 7	E4
B5	Bankastræti 5	E4	Mengi	Öðinsgata 2	F5
Bió Paradís	Hverfisgata 54	E5	Nordic House	Sturlugata 5	H2
Bravó	Laugavegur 22	E5	Ölsmíðjan	Lækjargata 10	E3
Curious	Hafnarstræti 4	D3	Paloma	Naustin	D3
Dillon	Laugavegur 30	E5	Papaku Reykjavík	Klapparstígur 28	E5
Laugliner	Naustin 1-3	D3	Prikið	Bankastræti 12	E4
English Pub	Austurstræti 12	D3	R6013	Ingólfstræti 20	E4
Gauririnn	Tryggvagata 22	D3	Röntgen	Hverfisgata 12	E5
Hard Rock Café	Lækjargata 2a	D3	Reykjavík Roasters	Karástígur 1	F5
Hressó	Austurstræti 20	D3	Stofan Café	Vesturgata 3	D3
Iðnó	Vonarstræti 3	E3	Tjarnarbió	Tjarnargata 12	E3
Kex Hostel	Skúlagata 28	E7			

Museums & Galleries

ART67	Laugavegur 67	F7	The Penis Museum	Laugavegur 116	F8	
Ásmundarsalur	Frejyugata 41	G6	Kirsuberjatréð	Vesturgata 4	D3	
Aurora Reykjavík	Grandagarður 2	B1	Kling & Bang	Grandagarður 20	A4	
Ásgrímur Jónsson	Museum	Bergstaðastr. 74	Listastofan	Hringbraut 119		
Berg Contemporary	Klapparstígur 16	E5	Living Art Museum	Grandagarður 20	A4	
The Culture House	Hverfisgata 15	E5	Mokka Kaffi	Skólavörðustígur 3A	E5	
The Einar Jónsson	Museum	Eiriksgata	Museum of Design	and Applied Art	Gardatorg 1	
Galleri List	Skipholt 50A	H10	The National	Gallery of Iceland	Frikirkjuvegur 7	
Hafnarborg	Strandgata 34, 220		The National	Museum	Suðurgata 41	
Hverfisgalleri	Hverfisgata 4	D4	The Nordic House	Sturlugata 5	H2	
i8 Gallery	Tryggvagata 16	D3	Tveir Hrafnar	Baldursgata 12	G4	
			Wind & Weather	Window Gallery	Hverfisgata 37	E5

A



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Wine bar & food



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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. Austur-Indíafjélagið

Hverfisgata 56

Still going strong 20 years on, Austur-Indíafjélagið is an institution. Make a meal out of the delicate salmon pollichathu, kozhi mappas and kulchas and share it family style. Keep your eyes peeled for the vegetarian and vegan dishes as well.

2. Gaeta Gelato

Aðalstræti 6 + Hlemmur Mathöll

Gaeta Gelato is owned by recently-arrived Italian transplants with nearly 25 years of experience as gelatai. Their artisanal and authentic flavours, from blueberry to Piedmontese hazelnut, are made with fresh and well-sourced Icelandic ingredients. Though only recently opened, Gaeta Gelato has already won over a crowd of committed regulars.

3. Sæta Svinið

Hafnarstræti 1-3

With big portions and a tasty menu, this hip restaurant offers everything you might desire, from crispy broccoli and big bowls of mussels to a great leg of lamb and a taste of lobster. Try and get a seat upstairs: it'll be like dining under a starry sky in the most romantic, dim-lit set-up.

4. Valdís

Grandagarður 21 & Frakkastígur 10

This beloved ice cream parlour—which has a Grandi and downtown location—makes everything in-house each morning, and you can tell. If you like liquorice, try Tyrkisk Peber. While it looks like liquid cement, it tastes heavenly. The spot doesn't have a large seating area, so take your cone on a stroll along the harbourside or enjoy it in a parked car, Icelandic style.

5. Bastard Brew & Food

Vegamótastígur 4

This downtown drinking hole is something of a beer and bar-food palace. It's an English pub style environment, without the sense of history, but with eleven beers on tap, a great happy hour, and the phenomenally good 'Fat Bastard' burger on offer, it's a firm Grapevine favourite. Their tacos are pretty notable, too.

6. Noodle Station

Laugavegur 103

Billowing clouds of coriander scent are a mouth-watering introduction to Noodle Station. Choose beef, vegetable or chicken, and add an extra spice or flaky chilli sauce until your nose runs, your tongue throbs and your gums howl. It's bar-style stool seating and cheaper prices (for Reykjavík) attract prudent solo travellers.

7. Grandi Mathöll

Grandagarður 16

Grandi Mathöll has an immediately comfortable feel, with various stools, benches and couches scattered through the space. There are nine concessions and a bustling, social feel as people meander between the vendors, who shout out names as their orders are ready. Our tip: Vegan food from Spes and friend chicken from KÖRE. Everyone's happy!

8. Vitabar

Bergþórugata 21

This old-school burger 'n' beer joint is right downtown—near Sundhöllin—but feels like a real neighbourhood bar. Its unassuming exterior hides a cosy, no-frills dining room, where you'll mostly be surrounded by locals. For once.

9. Salka Valka

Skólavörðustígur 23

For a piece of good ol' Icelandic fish, there's no better spot than Salka Valka. The restaurant serves up a steamed fillet in their Fish Of The Day meal, with the fish options depending on what is the freshest available. They also have potentially the best plockfiskur in the city, some stellar soups, and—quite recently—a pizza menu.

10. Bæjarins Beztu

Tryggvagata 1

Icelanders have a weird obsession with hot dogs—trust us, you won't understand until you've been here. It's universally agreed though that the tiny stand Bæjarins Beztu serves the best one. Pro-Tip: When they ask what toppings you want, say "All." This is the only way to eat it.

11. Mama

Laugavegur 2

Nothing tastes better than ethics, which is why we love to try the rainbow salad and "nicecream" bowls at Mama, a plant-based restaurant with big dreams. The company is

proudly environmentalist—they hope to use their profits to invest into land so that the kitchen can become self-sufficient. The restaurant also doubles as a wellness space offering a whole host of yoga sessions and breathing workshops. Have your plant-based prayers been answered?

Drinking

12. Röntgen

Hverfisgata 12

Röntgen is a party bar in the purest sense, with a rowdy dance floor, delicious cocktails and a fanbase that's just growing and growing. Run by the legends behind Húrra (RIP), Röntgen unexpectedly grabbed the runner-up for the Best Goddamn Bar category at the 2020 Best Of Reykjavík awards. We stan.

13. Lebowski Bar

Laugavegur 20a

This fully carpeted bar honouring the "Lebowski" Lebowski (not The Dude, man), is a nice place that offers two vibes: start the night nice and cosy with an artisanal White Russian, and end it on one of the rowdiest and most underrated dance floors in the city. Yup, Lebowski is a great place to hang at, but that could just be, like, our opinion man.

14. Jungle Cocktail Bar

Austurstræti 9

The verdant Jungle Cocktail Bar came in like a tropical storm last winter. Devoted to the elevation of all things cocktail culture, some of Jungle's stranger offerings over the past months have included a kale cocktail, but there's no shortage of level-headed concoctions like the signature "The Bombshell" (tequila, rhubarb & vermouth) along with any classic you can name.

15. Port 9

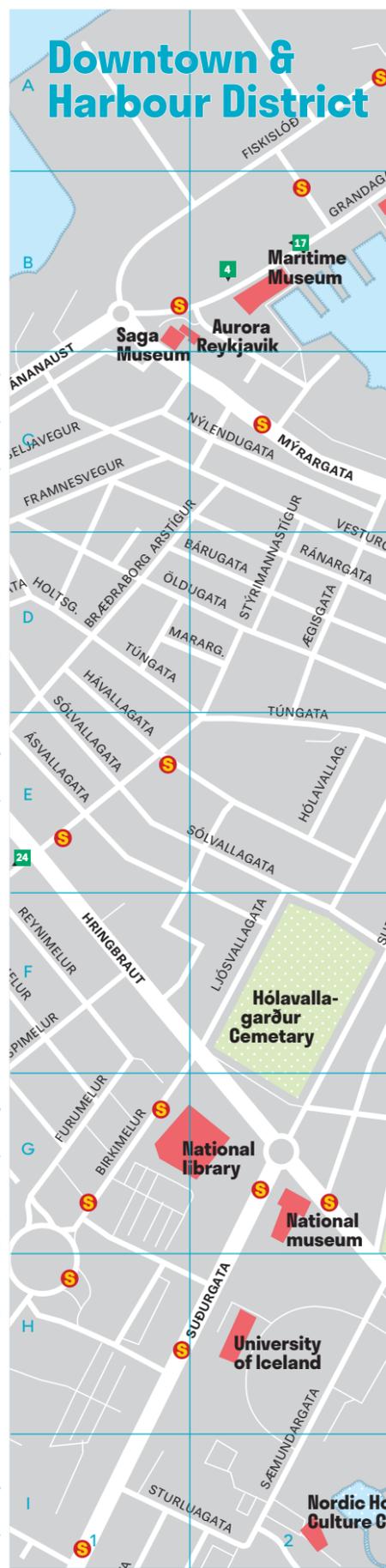
Veghúsastígur 9

Cosy and tucked away with a secretive vibe, Port 9 is a true hidden gem, hosting a delicious wine list as well as potentially the most intimate atmosphere in Reykjavík. It also has a nice balcony—the ideal locale for sipping some Pino in the summer sun.

16. Mengi

Óðinsgata 2

Mengi's concert room is more white cube than dive bar. The programme encourages new collaborations and experimental performances, so even if you know and love the work of the musicians you're seeing, you might be treated to something brand new on any given night.



17. Luna Flórens

Grandagarður 25

Luna Flórens is Iceland's only "gypsy bar." Part flower-child, part spiritual and with a whole lot of whimsy thrown into the mix, this cosy and hand-crafted bar is so intimate it makes you wanna spend the day musing about geodes, lunar cycles and tarot card readings. You can do all this and more while sipping on their excellent house cocktails and an excellent slice of vegan cake.

18. RVK Brewing Company

Skipholt 31

Yes, there is a bar on Skipholt, and yes, it is one that you need to check out. The RVK Brewing Company has slid

E

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New In Town ☆



Hildur Yeoman
Laugavegur 7

The Grapevine's 2020 Best Clothing Store winner and patron saint of Icelandic fashion Hildur Yeoman recently relocated from her cosy Skólavörðustígur boutique to a large, prominent Laugavegur storefront. We couldn't be happier for her because were we not a magazine, we'd clothe ourselves everyday in her characteristic dreamy patterned dresses, lush textured sweaters, spacey body-cons and beautiful tailored coordinates. So stop by for your fix of Yeoman along with Vanessa Mooney jewellery, bright candles and more. **HJC**

under the radar since it opened, but now, we're here to bring it out of the shadows. The brewery and beer hall offers a varied list of brews, most of which they make themselves locally. Come and experience your new beer-addiction.

19. English Pub

Austurstræti 12

True to its name, the English Pub offers many different kinds of lager on tap and a whiff of that genuine UK feel. Try the famous "wheel of fortune" where one can win up to a metre of beer with a single spin while a steady team of troubadours engage the crowd in classic sing-alongs every night. The only thing missing is the salt & vinegar crisps.

Shopping

20. Hildur Yeoman

Laugavegur 7

Hildur's got a fresh new boutique on Laugavegur. As well as selling her own designs—womenswear characterised by flowing shapes made from fine fabrics with colourful, distinctive, busy prints—Hildur Yeoman's boutique also features sunglasses by Le Specs, jewellery by Vanessa Mooney, French tea, and other interesting trinkets.

21. nomad.

Frakkastígur 8f

A relative newbie to the Laugavegur scene, nomad. was a surprise runner-up for the Best Design Store at the 2020 Best of Reykjavik awards. They have a fantastically curated selection of books, lamps, candles and more. Plus, the owner is a photographer and often has exhibitions on the lower floor.

22. Wasteland Reykjavik

Ingólfsstræti 5

For super á la mode downtown Reykjavik looks—i.e. cheerleader uniforms, Guy Fieri t-shirts, and astronaut-esque jumpsuits—this second-hand store is the go-to.

23. Lucky Records

Rauðarárstígur 10

Lucky Records is the punky, underground horse of the Reykjavik record scene. It's one of those shops that is easy to get lost in—expect to easily spend an entire afternoon perusing their selection.

24. Melabúðin

Hagamel 39, 107

For foodies looking for artisanal deli meats, fresh figs, rare cheeses and all sorts of unexpected, hard-to-find treats, Vesturbær's beloved Melabúðin should satiate your desires.

25. Pastel Flower Studio

Baldursgata 36

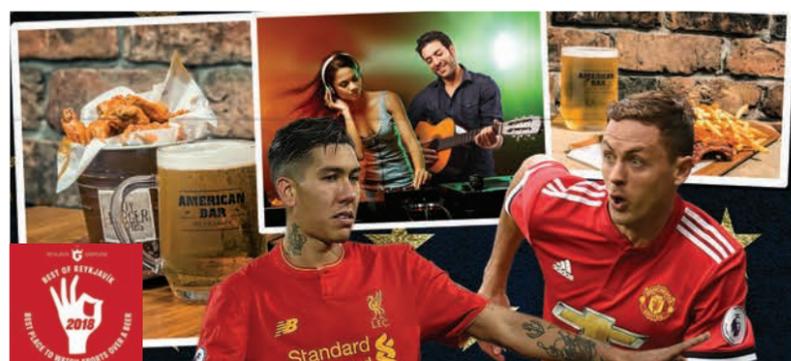
Pastel Flower Studio is only open on

Fridays and Saturdays from 13:00 to 18:00—so plan accordingly. The studio uses cut, dried, and fresh flowers to create unique arrangements that reference classic Icelandic nature in an unexpected and innovative way. Trust us: You won't find a florist in the city that's in any way comparable.

26. Street Rats Tattoo

Hverfisgata 37

Kristófer, a.k.a. Sleepofer Tattoo, has proven himself to be a fresh, experimental artist whose works have become a somewhat coveted symbol in the city. So if you're looking to get your travel tattoo, go there. It's way more interesting than a Vegvisir.



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The leopard puffin in its natural habitat

“You’ve never seen someone swim sarcastically in a lake until now.”

the iconic vintage clothes featured in their music videos. “Oh, we have done so much shopping,” Katrín says, naming HUMANA in Berlin as one of their favourite spots. Ultraflex say they also borrowed a lot of clothes from the band CYBER, who are good friends of theirs.

Favourite tracks and future plans

When it comes to their favourite track on the album, Ultraflex agree on the aforementioned “Work Out Tonight.”

“Production wise, ‘Work Out Tonight’ is my favourite,” Kari says. “The beat and the bass is just so good. It’s just really groovy.”

“If there’s one song that best describes Ultraflex it’s ‘Work Out Tonight,’” Katrín agrees. She also names “Man U Sheets” and “Papaya” as other favourites.

In fact, ‘Visions of Ultraflex’ has so much vision that it’s no surprise the band are already working on new music. “We have a new theme for our next album,” Katrín says. “I don’t know if we are gonna—are we gonna reveal it, Kari?” Kari laughs and shakes her head. While we wait, fans of Ultraflex can look forward to more upcoming music videos from the band, who will be releasing a video for every song on ‘Visions of Ultraflex’.

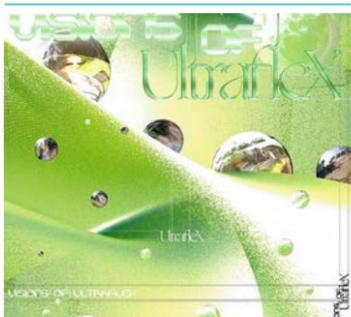
Ultraflex Just Wanna Have Fun

The group talks their debut album, fashion, and what the future holds

Words: Megan Massey Photo: OKAY KAYA

Album

Stream ‘Visions of Ultraflex’ on all platforms.



Inspired by Soviet aerobics videos, Ultraflex’s debut album ‘Visions of Ultraflex’, is sure to get you up and moving. You only need to check out the band’s defining single “Work Out Tonight” to be lured into their pop disco world. This track is a certified bop, with its whirlwind of techno beats, groovy synths and dreamy vocals, plus the music video increases the amount of upbeat Soviet energy to a level almost off the scale. Reminiscent of an 80s home video, it offers a combination of cool irony and chic aesthetics, featuring cycling shorts, vintage track jackets, gym socks, neon high heels and blue eyeliner. The band’s too-cool attitude and detached facial expressions will make you feel like you really are at the gym—you’ve never seen someone swim sarcastically in a lake until now.

An album to sweat to

Ultraflex is comprised of Katrín Helga Andrésdóttir (a.k.a. Special

K and a member of Reykjavíkurdætur) and Kari Jahnsen (a.k.a. Faraó). The dynamic duo broke onto the scene in May with their dance debut “Olympic Sweat,” which, like “Work Out Tonight,” was accompanied by an equally dance-y music vid. This single preceded the release of their debut LP which came out on October 30th.

“I think our main goal was to have as much fun as possible,” Kari says. She’s all smiles, dressed in a comfy sweater: a toned-down version of the moody neon-clad sports star she portrays on film. “We decided we wanted to make danceable music, disco, club stuff; and for the visuals we had this idea to take inspiration from soviet aerobic videos that I was hung up on at the time.”

The pair admit they weren’t really sure what to expect when they started this project, but they’re very pleased with the result. “It’s much better than we thought it would be,” Kari says. “It’s going really well and we’re having a lot of fun with the project.”

Working together

The writing and recording process for ‘Visions of Ultraflex’ all happened before the pandemic hit, but many of the singles were released while Katrín was in Iceland and Kari was in Germany. “I think we’ve done a really good job of working together from different countries,” Katrín says. The pair explains that they hold daily Skype meetings each morning. They clearly run a tight ship. “I think Katrín brings a lot of

the humour, especially in the lyrics,” Kari says. (See the track “Full of Lust” for reference: “You’re not really my type but this is your night / Can’t find the guy that I like and you’re the second best.”) Kari also compliments her bandmate on her eye for visuals. Katrín has proven her talent for aesthetics in her solo projects, as well as with Ultraflex.

“Kari is a producer and a very successful one,” says Katrín. “She’s a DJ and she DJs a lot of obscure

disco.” Katrín describes Kari’s production as “musical joyfulness”. Holding a mug of warm oat-milk matcha in her hands, she adds that Kari is also the “master of matcha”.

Ultraflex: fashion icons

Collaborating comes easily to Kari and Katrín, who work together like spandex and leg-warmers. Speaking of spandex, fans have probably been wondering where Ultraflex sourced

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Event Picks



Í Sæng Saman: Loft Hostel Live Sessions ★

January 10th, 12th, 17th, 19th & More! - Loft Hostel YouTube & Facebook

This project is a series of live session recordings aptly named “Í Sæng Saman,” which roughly translates to “in bed together.” Fitting as it perfectly describes both the nature of the project and the current reality we find ourselves

in. The live sessions feature Salomé Katrín, RAKEL, Guðmundur Arnars, Sandrayati Fay, Supersport! and Dymbrá. There is a huge production team around it and these sessions will be recorded at Loft Hostel. Because of the pandemic, it will be live on the Loft Hostel Facebook page and YouTube channel. Salóme Katrín kicks things off on January 10th. Guðmundur Arnars will perform the 12th. Dymbrá the 17th, Supersport the 19th, Sandrayati Fay on the 24th and finally Rakel on the 26th. **VG**



Black Sundays: ‘Suspiria’ Film Screening ★

December 27th - 20:00 - Bió Paradís - 1,600 ISK

Oh wait—this whole fucking pandemic wasn't scary enough for you? Well, maybe arthouse horror with dancing witches is more your vibe. If you get too afraid, just remember director Dario Argento's famous quip to a journalist about gore: “It's not blood, it's red.” **HJC**



Bubbi Morthens Þorláksmessutónleikar ★

December 23rd - 22:00 - Online! - 2,000 ISK

How would you go about explaining Bubbi Morthens? He is the top selling recording artist in Iceland, bar none. A former fish worker, Bubbi became famous for songs about the struggles of small Icelandic fishing villages. He's like Bruce Springsteen... except Icelandic. **HJC**



MUSIC NEWS Ólafur Arnalds is following the drop of his newest album 'some kind of

peace' with a new short film 'When We Are Born,' slated for a 2021 release. The short film is directed by Vincent Moon and is primarily a dance performance. The choreographer is the legendary Erna Ómarsdóttir, who will work in collaboration with the fantastic Iceland Dance Company. Ólafur has already proven himself to be one of the best electro-classical-genreless artists in the world, and we couldn't be more excited to see his foray onto the short-film screen. A one-minute long trailer has been released and it looks pretty incredible. **VG**

Our music listings page is on hiatus, because... reasons.



Limitless, Effortless, Genreless

Magnús Jóhann refuses to be defined

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen Photo: Art Bicnick

Single

Check out 'Without Listening' on all streaming platforms.



“Basically, the whole beginning of this whole album process was not a single note of music, it was the cover,” Magnús Jóhann states. He's referring to his recently released effort 'Without Listening,' the cover of which shows a haphazardly constructed half-built house in an industrial wasteland. It's from a series called 'Waiting,' which documented construction after Iceland's economic crash.

“It's a photograph that my oldest brother, Ingvar Högni Ragnarsson, took that was hanging in my bedroom so it was the first thing I saw in the morning and the last

thing I saw before I went to sleep. One day, I thought ‘that might be a nice cover’ and then I had to start writing music because I had found a cover,” he laughs. “As soon as you've decided on some aesthetic or visual aspect, you immediately put yourself in some sort of mood. And that was the atmosphere that inspired the music.”

Two-sided tones

And like the differently coloured materials peppering the house on the cover, Magnús's album is a surprising and delightfully contrasting sonic experience. Meandering through a murky area between post-classical, improvisational jazz and dark electronica, you could perhaps call his effort “genre-fluid.” But regardless of what soundscape the pianist is dipping his toes in, there's an undeniable

“Magnús Jóhann” thread about it. One that shows a deft understanding of sound, transitions and how you can meld them together into endless forms.

“I feel like the album is kind of two-sided,” he admits. “There's a jazzier, more instrumental side with drums and saxophone and then there's this ambient, totally electronic side. The most challenging thing about making it was how do I combine all of these sounds to tell a whole story?” He pauses. “I had to create a sonic world to fit them both.”

For Magnús, this collage of sounds is the culmination of a lifetime of musical consumption. Raised in a family of classical pianists, 70s rock devotees and hip-hop heads, Magnús was exposed to many sounds at a young age. As a teenager, he dove headfirst into jazz and piano, which he later studied at the university level.

Nowadays his work is even broader. Next year, he plans on releasing a film score, theatre score, as well as a collaboration with Skúli Sverrisson. At the same time, he's producing works for Auður, Hipsumhaps and even played on the most recent Auðn release.

“It all represents different sides of me, but that's what I represent—a lot of different things. I don't want to be limited to one thing,” he concludes.

Introverted music

Releasing 'Without Listening' was a three-year effort for the artist, who began writing the album in late 2017 and then spent the next years recording and refining it. And while, of course, the midst of a global pandemic was perhaps not the best time to release it, Magnús sees a silver lining to the timing.

“It's introverted music. The ideal listening situation is alone at home, so it's good for your self-isolation or quarantine.”

“It's introverted music,” he explains. “The ideal listening situation is alone at home, so it's good for your self-isolation or quarantine.” He pauses. “So it made sense for me to release it now. If not now, then when?”



The tallest dance-pop artist in the world, Daði Freyr, made a statement to Entertainment Weekly earlier this month that he will never perform the hit song “Ja Ja Ding Dong” again. The song became an unexpected smash this year after Netflix released Will Ferrell's comedy about Eurovision, entitled 'Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga,' which was mainly shot in Húsavík (which is the title of another great song from the movie). Anyway, Daði performed “Ja Ja Ding Dong” once online but he has boldly claimed—despite massive pressure from fans—he will never do it again. We suppose it's a big nei nei ding dong from him now, dawg. **VG**



Möller Records may not be a household name, but it's more or less the flagship of electronic music in Iceland. And what's more, they are coming up on their ten year anniversary, which they'll celebrate with an anniversary album—on vinyl, of course—which they are currently crowdfunding through the Karolina Fund. If a decade isn't enough to celebrate, it's also their 100th album. Möller Records was founded in 2011 by Árni Grétar (Futuregrapher) and Jóhann Ómarsson (Skurken). Later on, Stefán Ólafsson (Steve Sampling) and Frosti Jónsson (Bistro boy) joined the team. They have worked with over 50 artists over the past decade. Pretty good for a small homegrown label. **VG**

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A Cinematic Collection Of Souls

The Icelandic Love Corporation
on 'Psychography'

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen**

Photos: **Provided by the Icelandic Love Corporation**

A teenager lies on the floor feeding herself popcorn with her feet. A woman in a glamorous outfit hopelessly sweeps a room filled with sand. A man presents a plate of burnt kleinur donuts to an empty kitchen. Welcome to 'Psychography,' one of the Icelandic Love Corporation's latest cinematic works, which is being featured at the 'When The Globe Is Home' exhibition at the Gallerie delle Prigioni in Treviso, Italy until the end of February.

The grand video

The 18-minute long extravaganza is based on a participatory performance by the group in 2016. While the now-duo has dabbled in many different mediums over the years, this was their first, as they describe it, "grand video."

"We had this opportunity to make this performance in the countryside at an old farm that used to be a settlement from the Viking Age. It was also occupied by the British army during the war, so there's a huge saga, or history connected to the land," Eirún Sigurðardóttir explains. Jóni Jónsdóttir, her partner in the corporation, agrees.

"We had a psychic or medium with us at the start of the project. We wanted to see what a psychic would feel coming into this old house that hadn't been lived in for

years, to see if there were some images or anything that we could start working with," she says.

The Hidden Woman & The Farmer

Fortunately, the psychic saw a plethora of images, which provided a framework for a few of the characters featured in the film.

"For example, there is a character that we call the Hidden Woman," Jóni says. "The psychic saw this Hidden Woman that was protecting the land, but couldn't move away from it."

"There was also a very damaged, not-so-happy spirit that was locked inside the house. He was so angry and so hostile that the psychic said we should not work in the house and never sleep in the house because things would start to happen," she continues. "There is a character in the movie, which is not based on this guy exactly but has a bit of him. It's this farmer with a big shotgun. He feels trapped inside his own feelings."

All of these characters exist in different dimensions of the house, somehow locked to the land itself. Take the aforementioned girl with her popcorn. "She's trying to get out the window and run away but she gets caught in the net and pulled back in," Jóni exclaims. "It's a little bit like our 'Hotel California.'"

The national costume of the Earth

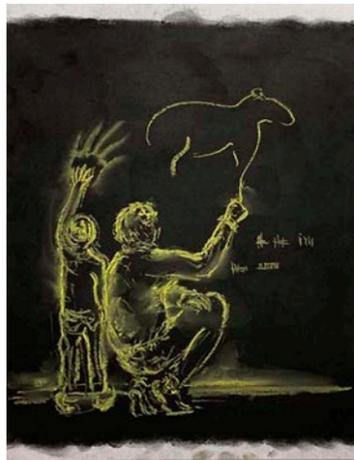
Jóni and Eirún feature in the film as the Madams—two stoic women dressed in the Icelandic national costume reimagined in camouflage. "They have been there forever. They are almost like the Earth themselves. We are dressed in camouflage and in a national costume, so maybe we're in the national costume of the Earth," the two explain. "Of course it has this violent side because [camouflage] is very much connected to war, as is nationality. So it's not only peaceful—it's a mix."

The aforementioned exhibition the film is featured in seeks to explore the relationship between the near and the far, the collective and the local—the "Home" and the "Globe." The gallery itself is housed in an old prison. This, both emphasize, is somewhat of an Easter egg. "Our characters are maybe not in a prison, but somehow they are locked in their dimension," Jóni concludes.

In Icelandic, the title of the film is 'Sálnasafn', which loosely translates to a collection of souls. 'Psychography' is their interpretation of his concept in English. The wordplay brings to mind an intricate connection between the psyche and geography. "Not only the geography of the land but of the soul," the two conclude. "The landscape of the soul." 🇮🇸

The Icelandic Love Corporation's 'Psychography' will be featured at 'When The Globe Is Home' exhibition at the Gallerie delle Prigioni in Italy until the end of February. You can explore the exhibition virtually on their website.

Our Picks



★ Do It (Home)

Until December 26th – Online event hosted by the Reykjavik Art Museum!

This interactive online exhibition, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, invites the viewer to follow instructions set out by 55 artists. Visitors engage with the art in a practical way, led by artists from the comfort of home. It was first conceived in 1995 and re-launched in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to keep the experience of art alive at home. Etel Adnan, Chino

Amobi, and Alvaro Barrington are among the 55 featured artists—it's a long list, these are just the first three in alphabetical order, no favoritism intended. So this holiday, no need to step outside and brave the crowds for some art. Just Do It (At Home). **MM**



★ Bæ, Bæ 2020

Until Dec. 23rd - Núllið

This Christmas exhibition features work for sale from twenty up-and-coming Icelandic artists: a mixture of art school graduates

and self-employed creatives. Artworks of all disciplines will be available—photographs, paintings, fashion design and more. Plus, all money goes directly to the creators! **MM**



★ Gleðileg jóll!: Christmas Exhibition

Until Dec. 23rd - Ásmundarsalur

Ásmundarsalur is the resident hangout for the artistic-minded intellectuals of Reykjavik so if they have some Christmas exhibi-

tion, we assume it's rather hip and well-curated. Around 300 works will be for sale, you that you can email us at grapevine@grapevine.is to deliver us a gift. Thanks. **HJC**



★ 100% Wool

Until Jan. 31st - Museum Of Design & Applied Art

What's our favourite four-letter word? WOOL! Icelanders will proudly tell you that they

have the best wool on Earth. Seriously, to call it integral to the foundation of this country would be downplaying the importance of the material. So celebrate wool. With wool art. **HJC**

December 18th-January 14th

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

Ongoing

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

Solastalgia

In this immersive installation, explore a mix of augmented reality with contemporary art, multisensory effects and cutting edge sound design. Enter a mysterious future in a post-human Earth where only a mysterious digital cloud has survived. Do you still have faith in technology? (No.)

• Runs until January 10th, 2021

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 February 14th, 2021

High Plane VI

Katrín Sigurðardóttir has for some years been exploring the effects of perception in her installations and works. Here, she dismantles a classic theme of Icelandic paintings: mountains, the blue of distant vistas, and the obsession with Icelandic nature.

• Runs until January 3rd, 2021

Threads Of Art

Celebrate the centenary of the birth of textile artist Ásgerður Búadóttir. If you thought there wasn't a rich contemporary textile scene, you have no idea just how experimental this medium can be.

• Runs until January 24th, 2021

Electromagnetic Objects

The "Electromagnetic Objects" are a collection of works by Woody Vasulka and the audio artist Brian O'Reilly. According to O'Reilly, "the works use sources excavated directly from the output of the Electromagnetic Objects, as well as further manipulations using Tom Demeyer's ImX software, developed with input from Steina." Sounds complicated, but we still stan.

• Runs until December 31st, 2020

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.

REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM

Settlement Exhibition

As Viking ruins meet digital technol-

ogy, this exhibition provides insight into Reykjavik's farms at the time of the first settlers.

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Distance and Intimacy. Contemporary Icelandic Photography.

What happens when you look at a photo for a really long time? How much more do you see? This exhibition invites viewers to find out, with a selection of contemporary photos that walk the line between social media and high art.

• Runs until January 10th, 2021

Nocturne - Hrafna Jóna Ágústsdóttir

Hrafna Jóna Ágústsdóttir's photography exhibition Nocturne takes its viewers on a creative fairytale night wander through Icelandic cityscapes. Explore the mixed emotions of the night: secretive and uncanny, but also at times warm and beautiful. Ordinary suburban scenes take on a surreal magic when daylight disappears and is replaced by the cool glow that falls from streetlights and windows.

• Runs until February 1st, 2021



REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM

Fish & Folk

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

Melckmeyt 1659

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

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART

Bird Artist In Residence

Well, really all the info here is in the

title. Sigurbjörn Helgason makes birds. Big birds. Small birds. Birds made of wood. Birds made out of reindeer horns. Lots of birds. Now you can watch him do it live in the museum shop at the Design museum.

• Runs until December 30th, 2020

HARBINGER

Core Temperature

Fritz Hendrik IV's new solo exhibition is locked. By that we mean it's literally locked, as in patrons can't enter the room, only stare from the windows. Entitled 'Core Temperature,' it deals with the expectations, fate, and disappointment relating to global warming and the pandemic. Serious shit.

• Runs until December 25th, 2020



REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

Erró: Cyborg

This series of the great Erró was inspired by technology, science and the combination of the human and the mechanic. In particular, it examines how technology invades the body and how the human body adapts to the machine. The images offer questions concerning the borderlines between human beings and technology.

• Runs until December 31st, 2020

Gilbert & George: The Great Exhibition

Perhaps two of the most influential contemporary artists of the last five decades, Gilbert & George are known for their pioneering performance pieces, bold photo-based graphics and anti-elitist "Art for All" ethos. At this special exhibition, come challenge the prevailing bourgeois ideas of taste and decorum while empowering gays and other minority groups. What else could you want?

• Runs until January 3rd, 2021

REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

Jóhannes S. Kjarval: At Home

Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarval (1885-1972) was one of the pioneers of

Icelandic art (the museum is literally named after him) and is one of the country's most beloved artists. His connection to, and interpretation of Iceland's natural environment is thought to have taught Icelanders to appreciate it anew, and to have encouraged pride in the country's uniqueness and the world of adventure to be discovered within it.

• Runs until December 31st, 2020

Sigurður Árni Sigurðsson: Expanse

In this mid-career retrospective, Sigurður Árni Sigurðsson presents a series of paintings which dissect just how we view the world around us. Sigurður's works are known for exploring the limits of our field of vision and how that forms the basis of our worldview.

• Runs until January 24th, 2021

GALLERY PORT

Christmas Exhibition

50 artists—all beloved by Gallery Port—present their wares for your holiday perusal. Prints, sculptures and more will be on offer for you to buy and give to your friends and relatives... or keep for yourself.

• Runs until December 24th, 2020

GERÐARSAFN KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM

SCULPTURE / SCULPTURE

Presenting: two solo exhibitions by artists Ólöf Helga Helgadóttir and Magnús Helgason. The aim of the series is to explore contemporary sculpture and the development within three-dimensional art, not only as an important part of art history, but also as a living visual language within contemporary art. The series is intended to honor the sculptor Gerður Helgadóttir (1928-1975), who Gerðarsafn museum is named after.

• Runs until February 28th, 2021

HAFNARBORG

What Meets The eye

A retrospective of works by local goldsmith and artist Gunnar Hjaltason. He painted in oil, acrylics and watercolour, but this exhibition will focus on his prints. The images depict landscapes, town views of Hafnarfjörður and the Icelandic nature

• Until January 31st, 2021

Hafnarfjörður:

Works from the collection

The exhibition is a selection of works from the Hafnarborg collection that all showcase Hafnarfjörður in a unique way. Few towns in Iceland are as picturesque as Hafnarfjörður and the nature surrounding it also offers spectacular points of view. And we're not just saying that because our editor is from there.

• Runs until March 7th, 2021

FLÆÐI

FLÆÐI CHRISTMAS MARKET 2020

Your favourite ALL-IN-CAPS gallery is here with a Christmas market. Not interested in heading inside? Don't worry—all the works will be available online at flaedi.com.

• Runs until December 23rd, 2020

LIVING ART MUSEUM

NÝLÓ Light Bazaar 2020

As is the trend in 2020, the Living Art Museum's annual Light Bazaar is moving online. Brighten the dark winter nights with some beautiful art. View and buy the works of over 40 contemporary artists on ljosa-basar.nylo.is and help raise funds to support the Living Art Museum. The Marshall House will also be hosting an open storage and pop up home for the Bazaar during opening hours.

• Runs until December 30th, 2020

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ART HÖNNUNARSAFN ÍSLANDS

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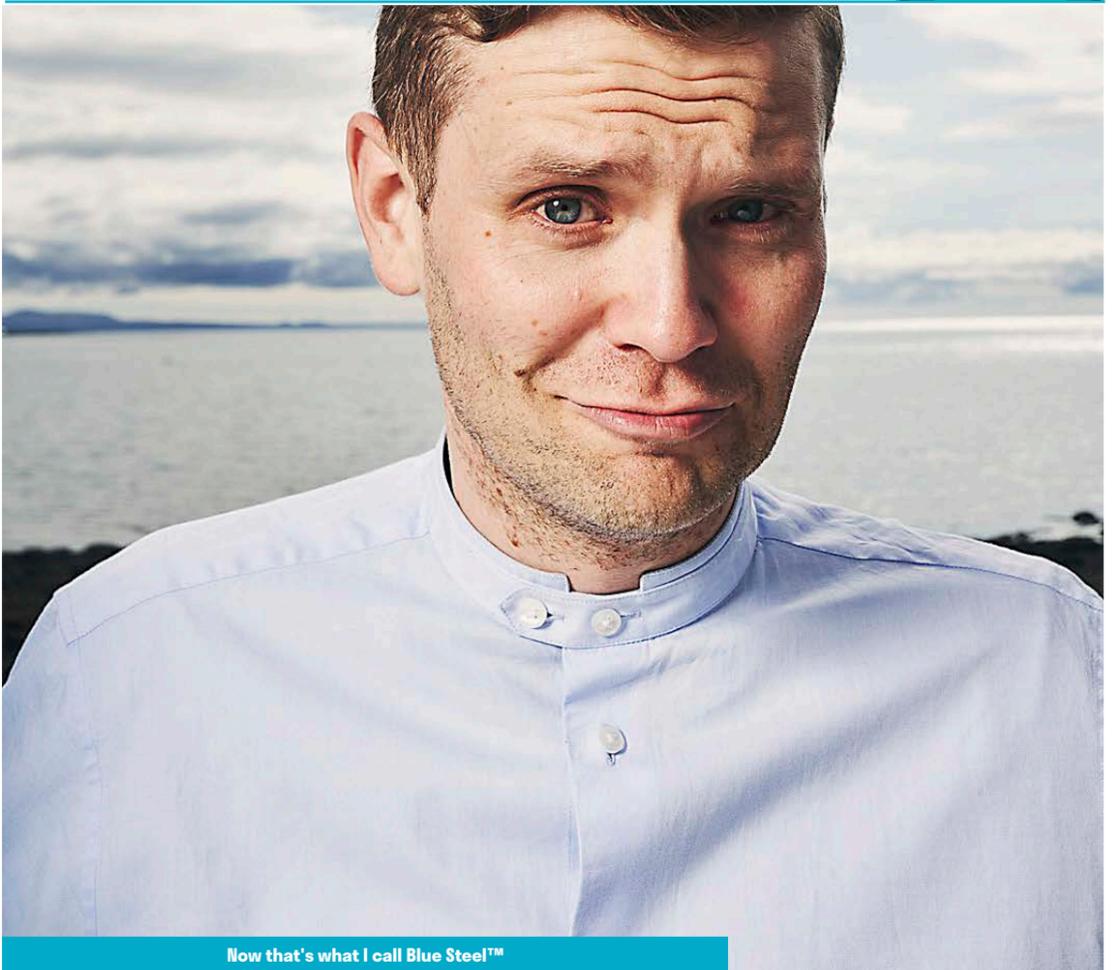
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Now that's what I call Blue Steel™

Iceland On The World's Biggest Comedy Stage

Pardon our editor-in-chief's take on Ari Eldjárn's first Netflix stand-up special

Words: Valur Grettisson Photo: Hörður Sveinsson

I'm just going to say it and I know that this might result in the stand-up community in Iceland (and maybe one eccentric historian) disowning me—and maybe I deserve that—but here goes: Icelandic stand-up has been a goddamn tragedy throughout the years. But don't despair, there is one man working hard to get us on the world map. This is, of course, Ari Eldjárn, who just premiered his first Netflix special, 'Pardon My Icelandic.'

Iceland comedy history in 30 seconds

Stand-up comedy in Iceland has more or less been an odd slapstick situation throughout the years from Ómar Ragnarsson, who just danced while reciting rhymes like he was strung out on amphetamines, to Spaugstofan, who made tacky political jokes that were more like a series of dad jokes than commentary, to the boozy Rádíus bræður, who gave us intellectual humour under heavy influence from Monty Python and booze, to finally Fóstbræður, the surreal comedy group lead by our former mayor, Jón Gnarr, that was also under the heavy influence of Monty Python.

Imperialists... am I right?

But Ari Eldjárn is different. His

comedy—rather than going for niche Icelandic political jabs or Monty Python-inspired rabble—is more about Scandinavian stereotypes in general. He made headlines as the first Icelandic comedian to get his own Netflix stand-up special, and while cynical readers might say everyone and their grandmothers get Netflix stand-up specials nowadays, we want to state that Iceland does have a population of 360,000 people, so one of them getting a special is like 400 Netflix-specials per capita compared to the U.K. Now it seems pretty big right?

So let's talk about 'Pardon My Icelandic'. Ari's warm and friendly comedy translates pretty well to the worldwide screen. His humour, which in this special revolves around Scandinavian quirks, brilliantly nails Iceland's Scandi neighbours, like the robotic emotionlessness of the Finns and the unbearable tone shift at the end of every sentence in Norwegian.

"Danish people are an absolutely insufferable bunch of pompous softies who speak the most hideous language in the world."
- Editor-in-Chief of the RVK Grapevine

unveils what most of the world has somehow missed, which is that Danish people are an absolutely insufferable bunch of pompous softies that speak the most hideous language in the world. But, you know, imperialists, right?

With his observations, Ari unveils the characteristic funny-but-extremely-petty national soul of Icelanders, which is usually lost in most of the cutesy international media attention the country gets.

We could be imperialists too

But to be critical, Ari's stand-up is not perfect. In the middle of the one-hour long special, he does seem to lose track for a moment though he does later regain his vigour. The part about how Danish people make up strange jokes about Iceland is perhaps too niche for an international crowd. And nobody in Iceland cares about Himmelbjerget anymore. That mountain is more of a tragedy than a joke.

But overall, Ari's show reminds us that he is truly the comedy king of Iceland and he sails his first special pretty safely to harbour. A little too safely, actually, and that could be a criticism in itself, but who can blame him for playing it safe on the biggest stage in the world?

He does give one hope that comedy in Iceland does not only have a bright future, but that it could actually conquer the world! Which is also a weird quirk in Icelanders; we are the world's smallest imperialist-wannabes. You can run with that in your next show, Ari. ♥

Most importantly though, he



“We’re not just saying it’s sustainable. We really want to show you why.”

Áslaug Magnúsdóttir and two of her most patient models

Take Action

Áslaug Magnúsdóttir’s Katla brings sustainability to the forefront of fashion

Info

Check out Katla at katla.com and on Instagram at [@katlaforce](https://www.instagram.com/katlaforce)

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen

Photo: Art Bicnick

Áslaug Magnúsdóttir wears a lot of hats. When she talks, she’ll transform from a shrewd businesswoman to a staunch activist to a forward-thinking consultant to a good old fashioned fashion-devotée—often mid-sentence.

A veteran of the fashion world known for co-founding Moda Operandi, the luxury direct-to-consumer webstore that more or less changed the game for high-end retailers, as well as her early work at Gilt, another game-changing webstore that brought luxury flash-sales to the online world, you can’t help but desperately want to know Áslaug’s next move. She has a finger firmly on the pulse of fashion. If there’s anyone who can predict the next wave, it’s Áslaug.

Today, she’s wearing a sweatshirt from her new brand Katla, which debuted earlier this year with a mixture of everything from cosy separates to gorgeous flowing sundresses. The print is a play on the traditional Icelandic butter logo; the word smjör being replaced by Katla. On the back reads ‘Áfram með smjöríð’—an old Icelandic saying that translates to “On with the butter.”

“I interpret it as ‘Take action! Or Move!’” Áslaug explains, sitting back at her kitchen table, a cup of coffee in her hand. And perhaps, there could be no better catchphrase for the brand.

Taking responsibility

“I wanted to try to create a brand that was as holistically sustainable as possible,” Áslaug says on the origins of Katla. “As I looked at the industry, there are many people trying to do beautiful sustainable brands, but it’s such a small part of the landscape.”

And there were even fewer brands, Áslaug noted, that were focused on be-

ing entirely and comprehensively sustainable. “When I started this, people said to me, ‘Try to focus on just doing one part of sustainability really well,’ like focus on environmentally-friendly fabric or ethical labour practices or animal-cruelty free. But for me, that didn’t really ring true,” she says. “I felt like if I’m creating something new from scratch, I may as well try to do it as well as I can from a sustainability standpoint.”

Because the fashion industry, she explains, is a large culprit in global pollution—and one that is often ignored by the general population. “The fashion industry is the second most water-polluting industry in the world and responsible for 10% of all carbon emissions—worse than airlines and ships combined,” she says, a note of incredulity in her voice. You can tell the statistics bother her, no matter how many times she’s shared them.

One of the largest contributors to fashion’s enormous environmental impact is that overproduction has become accepted as a necessary and integral part of profitability. “[For your average brand], every season there is a 30-40% overproduction of clothing. That’s because of the system we’ve created around how you sell fashion. Manufacturing is typically happening months in advance of a season, often far away and without acknowledgement of what the end consumer is going to buy. So brands kind of take a bet—they don’t want to have too little so they end up always having too much of certain things,” Áslaug says. “A lot of it gets thrown out. There’s unfortunately a lot of inventory that is burned every season. Things do get put on sale and there are outlet stores, but there’s still a significant amount that gets left over and that’s a lost opportunity as

well: If you have to put a big percentage of your fashion on sale, clearly you were overproducing.”

The focus on seasons and trends, she continues, also contributes to this. “We—[the industry]—have said that a fashion item loses its relevance after five to six months and then it’s discounted and no longer relevant and has to be taken out of the store.” She pauses. “That’s a message that needs to change. And more and more people are rethinking that.”

An ethos of transparency

No doubt, Áslaug is one of them. From Katla’s inception, Áslaug has ensured that every step—from designs to consumer life—has a foundation in sustainability.

For design, Áslaug decided to forgo temporary trends and instead focus on pieces that would stand the test of time. Sustainability did not have to become a liability; in fact, it was easily compatible with this ethos. “I wanted to create something that was beautiful, that I wanted to wear, that’s fashion, but at the same time has this timeless element and has quality. It lasts, and you can wear it again and again,” she explains. “We’re not making gowns that you’re going to wear just once. It’s things you’ll keep in your wardrobe for a long time.”

In production, Katla is careful to use environmentally-friendly fabrics or completely animal cruelty-free textiles as a rule, rather than the exception. As for manufacturing, the brand has opted out of the aforementioned overproduction model, instead favouring a mixture of on-demand and small-batch manufacturing.

“We try to move as much as possible to on-demand, which means

that we are not building inventory, we are making the garments as [orders] come in,” Áslaug reiterates. “I realise that for that to be a feasible business model, you have to be able to do it really fast, so we partnered with factories in the US that can do that in a two to three day turnaround... and we have tracking numbers on all the items.”

She promptly points to a patch on the sleeve of her sweatshirt. It has a QR code, and above that, an embroidered number that says KFO01.

“You can go and type that on the site and see the history of the garment. Like where did the garment come from? Who manufactured it? What are the environmental certifications tied to the fabric?” She says, smiling. It’s clear that now we’ve come to a facet of Katla that Áslaug is particularly proud of—a personal flair that distinguishes Katla from the pack.

But perhaps what most distinguishes Katla from the rest of the sustainability-driven brands is their resale-recycling program.

“We tell customers ‘please don’t throw the garment away if you decide not to use it, send it back to us, we will pay for your shipping, and we will give you a 20% credit for the original purchase price towards your next purchase’ So that’s an incentive to send it back. And then, if it’s in good enough condition, we resell it,” she explains. “Then, you can see in your tracking number the digital passport of this garment. We don’t use people’s names, [but it shows] the first buyer was in Reykjavik then it went to New York.”

“It provides another level of transparency,” she continues. “We’re not just saying it’s sustainable. We really want to show you why.”

Áfram með smjöríð!

Áslaug’s growing interest in sustainability over the years has also mirrored an internal interest to reconnect with her country, which she’s also sought to showcase in Katla’s designs.

“I had been working in New York and London, in big cities, and barely ever going out into nature,” Áslaug says. “Then I started a few years ago coming back [to Iceland] for longer periods and reconnecting with nature ... and I realised—wow, this was an important part of my life as a child and I lost touch with it. I found that it grounds me. It makes me stronger to be in nature. So I kind of rediscovered Iceland in a way.”

She brought his newfound enthusiasm to her work in Katla. “Iceland is one of the countries at the forefront of sustainability in terms of our energy consumption. People are very aware and have this love for nature here. So I thought it’s a good time [for Katla] and there’s nowhere in the world you can get more beautiful photographs!” She bursts out laughing. “This is where I’m from! It’s time to embrace it. When I was young I was trying to get out of Iceland and now I’ve finally learned to love it in another way and bring that to the world.”

And perhaps, there’s nothing that better represents this journey—both external and internal—than the butter sweatshirt. It’s an iconically Icelandic reference and one that has strong associations for Áslaug.

“This was in my home. We had this in our fridge everyday,” she says. “The sentence ‘Áfram með smjöríð’—I thought, oh my god, yes, that’s hysterical! It’s so Icelandic and it’s so relevant for what we’re doing.” She smiles. “Take action! Move!”

sushi) social

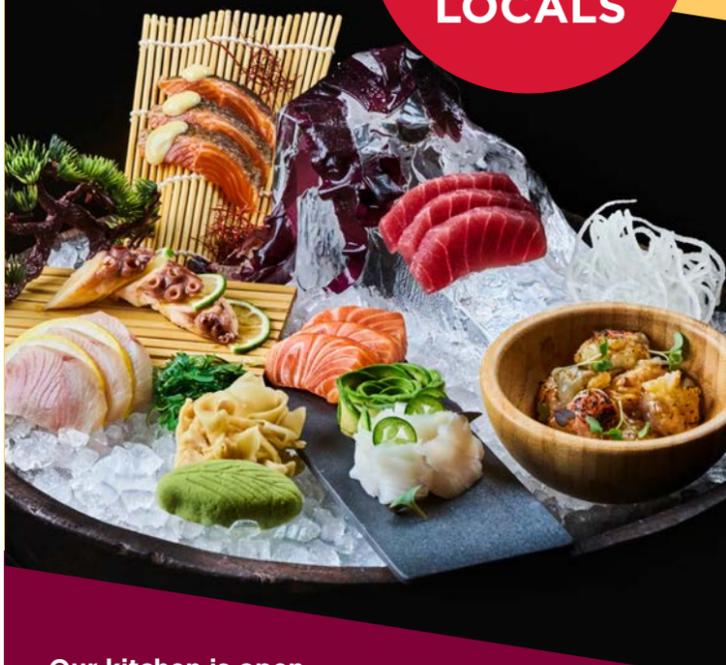
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Rex Pistols, *disarmed*

‘What Love Is’ By Rex Pistols

Lugosi, don't be afraid of this art

Words: **Hannah Jane Cohen** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

Track By Track

Stream 'What Love Is' on all platforms. Cassette version on myrkfaelni.bandcamp.com



Goth isn't dead, people. It's alive and thriving in downtown Reykjavik in the form of Rex Pistols, who recently dropped 'What Love Is,' a soundtrack for the lace-gown-wearing introspective romantic heroines of the world. To satiate our synthcore goth needs, we sat down with Rex herself to go through the album track by track.

'What Love Is' is an exploration of love in all its forms and how it has shaped my inner emotional world, my psyche and how I navigate life. Ultimately, it's an album of love songs, but mostly not centred around romance. The album was conceptualised, written and recorded over the course of months—partly before lockdown, partly during—where love was all I could think of. I found it and I lost it over and over, while my deepest friendships prevailed as the most important love relationships I have.

Don't Be Afraid of my Heart

A call to my friend and lover who could not let themselves catch up to my love in time. It was a relationship where there was love, but just different kinds. Not unrequited, just out of sync.

Water Dance

Abandoning myself to my deepest fears and desires in a dark, cavernous watery canyon. I wrote this song in my head, humming to myself while floating alone in the hot tub at my old gym, which was in a super dark grey room.

Pray For Love

My complete frustration of repeated unrequited romance, deceit and disappointment. I have had only a small handful of romantic relationships, but mostly a series of doomed love affairs, and this was me being fed up with it.

Draumur

The loves I meet in my most realistic dreams that disappear the moment I wake. I'm a very active dreamer. I meet everyone I know in my dreams and they feel so real. It can make waking life very confusing, especially when it comes to the way I feel about people.

Lunar Palace

An orbiting fantasy world for one

who does not believe in the after-life. I imagined this place in my dreams as well, and it looked like a cross between the ivory tower in *The NeverEnding Story* and the moon kingdom of *Sailor Moon*.

Laws of Passion

My unbridled urgent desire to devour another body, my ravenous sexual hunger that requires immediate release. We were two months into lockdown and I was horny as fuck.

Cosmic Intimacy

The purity of my connections with my friends that no time or space can come between us, where we converge mentally in perfect sync, where we meet each other with no judgement, just unconditional love and acceptance.

Glittering Moon

An ode to the truest love in my life, my best friend in the universe, who is always with me no matter where we are. The title of the album also is derived from the name of a video art piece we made together based on one of the funniest moments we've ever had together.

White Gold

A farewell to someone beloved, in the moment when they began to leave their body. The entire album started from this song, which came to me the night I learned that my grandmother was dying. If the album is a package, this is the ribbon around it.

Don't Be Afraid... Reprise:

Just a reminder: believe that our love won't tear us apart.. ♡

**A GUIDE THAT
FUCKS YOU UP**

A selection from
**Every
Happy
Hour**
in 101 Reykjavík

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16:00 to 19:00.
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APOTEK
Every day from
15:00 to 18:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Wine 990 ISK.

BASTARD BREW
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 500 ISK,
Wine 700 ISK.

BEER GARDEN
Every day from
15:00 to 19:00.
Beer 500 ISK off
draft beer!

BRAVÓ
Every day from
11:00 to 20:00.
Beer 700 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

CAFÉ BABALÚ
Every day from
19:00 to 21:00.
Beer 690 ISK,
Wine 795 ISK.

DILLON
Every day from
14:00 to 19:00.
Beer 600 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

FJALLKONAN
Every day from
15:00 to 17:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Wine 990 ISK.

FORRÉTTABARINN
Every day from
16:00 to 19:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

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

IDA ZIMSEN
Every day from
8:00 to 10:00.
Coffee 400 ISK.

ÍSAFOLD
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 600 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

**JUNGLE COCKTAIL
BAR**
Every day from

17:00 to 20:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

KAFFIBARINN
Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine (On Wed.)
800 ISK.

KAFFIBRENNSLAN
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 550 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK.

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

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

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

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

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

**PAPAKU
REYKJAVÍK**
Every day from
16:00 to 22:00.
Beer 690 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

PRIKIÐ
Every day from
16:00 to 20:00.
Beer 600 ISK.

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

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

Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

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

ROSENBERG
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 950 ISK.

RÖNTGEN
Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 1,000 ISK.

SÆTA SVÍNID
Every day from
16:00 to 18:00.
Beer 890 ISK,
Wine 990 ISK,
Cocktails 1,500
ISK.

SECRET CELLAR
Every day from
19:00 to 21:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

**SESSION CRAFT
BAR**
Every day from
12:00 to 19:00.
Beer 790 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

SKÚLI CRAFT BAR
Every day from
12:00 to 19:00.
Beer 900 ISK,
Wine 900 ISK.

SLIPPBARINN
Every day from
15:00 to 18:00.
Beer 500 ISK,
Wine 750 ISK,
Cocktails 1,200
ISK

SPÁNSKI BARINN
Every day from
14:00 to 20:00.
Beer 650 ISK,
Wine 850 ISK.

SÓLON
Everyday from
15:00 to 18:00.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

SUSHI SOCIAL
Every day from
17:00 to 18:00.
Beer 645 ISK,
Wine 745 ISK,
Half-priced
cocktails.

TAPAS BARINN
Every day from
17:00 to 18:00.
Beer 645 ISK,
Wine 745 ISK.

VEÐUR
Every day from
12:00 to 19:35.
Beer 800 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.

ÖLSTOFAN
Every day from
15:00 to 20:00.
Beer 750 ISK,
Wine 800 ISK.



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patrons, and
feel free to buy
boxed wine and
Moët at the same
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Ceasar salad -
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Lemon
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sandwich

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Vegan option

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Vegan option

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And Under**

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11:00 - 14:30
Fish of the day -
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11:30 - 15:00
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soup -1,990 ISK

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And Under**

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Every day
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Two-course
lunch -3,390 ISK
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lunch - 4,390 ISK

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At Prikið
if you order two
adult meals

At Haust
the buffet is
free for kids





Brian and a drawing of a cat (left)



The Father Of Icelandic Christmas

Brian Pilkington brings the Yule Lads to life

Words: Iona Rangeley-Wilson Photo: Art Bicnick

Books

Pick up Brian Pilkington's Christmas books at the Grapevine store at shop.grapevine.is

When you ask a child in Iceland what the Yule Lads look like, you might expect them to show you an

old Icelandic book—something as old and ancient as the tale of the Yule Lads themselves. But while the troublemaking brothers are rooted in Icelandic history, the Yule Lads have a much more recent co-parent: a Brit from Liverpool named Brian Pilkington. It is Brian's illustrations that have

come to define the appearance of these age-old characters. Trolls, giants, elves, the Yule Lads and the Yule Cat: though steeped in history, they have been renewed and redefined by Brian's books.

Brian first came to Iceland in the 70s. Now, he spends his days in his studio in Skerjafjörður, writ-

ing stories, painting landscapes and creating wonderful folkloric illustrations—and particularly spectacular holiday images. Brian has written countless books about Icelandic Christmas. Amongst his best-known are 'The 13 Yule Lads of Iceland' and 'The Yule Cat—A Seasonal Makeover'. Whilst the earliest mention of the Yule Lads can be traced back to the seventeenth century 'Poem of Grýla,' the pictures Icelandic children associate with these characters today are entirely Brian's invention.

In fact, Brian sees his Yule Cat illustration as a kind of self-portrait. "Because I'm grumpy and vicious, too," he jokes, "and he's got a beard and moustache and goatee like mine. So we're basically the same persona."

If you look closely at the front cover of 'The Yule Cat—A Seasonal Makeover,' you'll see Brian's reflection in the red bauble hanging from the Yule Cat's neck: bespectacled, holding a paintbrush, glinting in line with the Yule Cat's disgruntled frown. There's something oddly relatable about the mischievous nature of Iceland's Christmas characters, then. It's not a tradition that aspires to perfect sweetness: the wry darkness is appealing.

A Christmas calling

Brian was first attracted to Icelandic Christmas stories as a kind of artistic calling. "When I first came to Iceland I was obviously very aware of what was going on at Christmas time and I realised no one else was doing anything with these characters anymore," he explains, sitting amongst his piles of books and paintbrushes. "So I figured somebody had to sit down and start doing drawings and write books about them. And if no one else was doing it, then it fell to me."

The Yule Lads aren't as friendly as more international Christmas characters like Santa Claus. Whilst Santa leaves presents in childrens' stockings, the Yule Lads harass and steal: they peep through windows, lick spoons, bowls and pots, slam doors and steal skyr and sausages. Their mother, Grýla, likes eating naughty children, whilst the Yule Cat's child-based tastes fall on those who have not been gifted any new clothes. The characters are more comparable with Dickens's Scrooge than any jolly, laughing Father Christmas. For the same reason, Brian emphasises, they're also more interesting to draw.

Appealingly imperfect

"They're not quite as nice as Father Christmas, but they're not hideously awful at the same time," explains Brian. "They're more fun to draw than a jolly Santa. Scowling expressions, tatty old clothes." Brian doesn't like anything "too sweet and saccharine" and finds these Icelandic characters more enjoyable precisely because they're imperfect and therefore realistic.

Nostalgia & reinvention

Of course, writing for children is an inherently nostalgic act that fits well with the nostalgia of folklore—that's another reason why these "ready-formed characters" are so charming to someone like Brian. He turns back to childhood and to old, traditional children's stories simultaneously. Then he readjusts and reinvents them: making the Yule Lads and the Yule Cat new was an excavation as well as an invention. Jóhannes úr Kötlum's 1932 poetry book 'Jólin Koma' established the thirteen canonical Yule Lads as we know them today, but they had lain untouched since then. Jóhannes's book had tiny, black and white illustrations—lovely in their own right, but nothing close to the colour and liveliness of Brian's pictures.

"There was a big element of having to create these people for the first time," says Brian, and he made sure he perfected them. "I applied myself to doing loads and loads of drawings of cats to find one I was comfortable with. I reassessed him and gave him more colour, lightened him up and made him more of a tabby cat."

Brian Pilkington projected these characters back into the public eye, turning the pencil sketches of ancient poems in the lively, colourful, characterful illustrations that Icelandic children know and love today. 🐾

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

DJ Dóra Júlía

Words:
Hannah Jane
Cohen

Photo:
Art Bicnick



Dóra Júlía Agnarsdóttir (28), a.k.a. DJ Dóra Júlía, is a DJ, radio host and art history master's student.

Wearing:

- Outfit and scarf by Hildur Yeoman
- Bag from flea market in London
- Shoes by Melissa
- Jewellery by Gucci, Vanessa Mooney and Hendrikka Waage

Describe your style in 5 words:

First off, coordinates. I love everything match-y. Then, comfy—I am not going to wear something that doesn't make me feel good. But also, I'm always a little glamorous. Last, I'm a bag-lover and a jewellery-lover. I started doing fashion interviews like this when I was 16-17 and my answer about my style is still the same: I wear what I want when I want! Sometimes I wake up and want to wear a pink dress so I wear a pink dress! Even if it's just a Monday morning at home.

Favourite stores in Reykjavik:

If I got this question a few years ago, I would have said that I usually only shop when I go abroad, which isn't really mindful. But now I really appreciate the Icelandic fashion scene. It's been coming out strong. I love Hildur Yeoman; she's a creative genius! I also love pop-up shops like Sif Benedicta's right now. You have to keep your eyes open. I haven't been shopping a whole lot this year but I definitely appreciate Icelandic fashion more than ever. You have so many talented women here. I love Yeoman, Katlaforce, Sif Benedicta, Hendrikka Waage, and others. I also love—it's not a clothing store—but Nomad On Laugavegur. My favourite item of this year was a cosy candle from there. They also have amazing books.

Favourite piece:

This Yeoman set is one of my favourites because I bought it this summer when I had a lot of DJ gigs lined up so it was a symbol of hope for me that I'd be able to work. I love all my clothes though. I try to be really mindful when I'm shopping that it's going to be something I can use and hopefully next generations can too.

Something I would never wear:

I don't think so. I'd never say never!

Lusting after:

A bright orange coat from Saks Potts. It's been on my wish list for a couple of years and I'm hoping to buy it for myself one day! But right now, I'm kind of just lusting after a vaccine. 🍷

FJALLKONAN

KRÁ & KRÆSINGAR



CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON TEA

EVERY DAY 14:30-17:00

Blueberry scones

Whipped Icelandic butter and two types of jam

Confit duck on Icelandic flatbread

Duck confit rillet, caramelized apples, Malt sauce, orange sauce

Arctic charr & blini

Chickpea flatbread, lightly cured arctic charr, horseradish sauce, roe, crispy lentils, yuzu elderflower dressing

Beef carpaccio on crisp bread

Truffle and mushroom duxelle, parmesan chips

Christmas sandwich

Glazed ham, carrot and green bean mayo

SWEET

Skyr Eton Mess cheesecake

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

Pristur chocolate cake

Icelandic liquorice chocolate Pristur, chocolate, vanilla ice cream and whipped cream

Cup cakes

Red Velvet
Chocolate fudge

Sarah Bernhardt cookies

Macarons

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With a glass of Prosecco	4.890 kr. per person
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Food

Here's to a vaccine!

A Christmas To Remember

A pandemic is no dampener on festive spirits

Words: Shruthi Basappa Photos: Art Bicnick

Christmas Dining

Various restaurants

In stark contrast to the decadent jólahlaðborð extravaganza of the pre-Covid years (think 10-course menus spanning quail to langoustine, wines and spirits to match and languorous evenings stretching late into the night), this year's pandemic-tinged festivities are a tad sober in spirit. Nonetheless, festivals stir up a passion for the pastoral even in the most Scrooge-like hearts. In a year to forget, it is hardly a surprise that we strive for a Christmas to remember.

The Christmas Buffet 101

A steadfast tradition in Iceland, the Christmas buffet is no stranger to change, evolving from a traditional buffet, to its fine dining format in recent years. Where staff were once ferried on private boats to Viðey for their annual festive feast, Covid Christmas is a staid but not tame affair.

Conversations with friends and family quickly reveal that the jólahlaðborð has indeed adapted—think at-home dinner kits by in-house chefs or restaurants catering to a new normal with spiffy take-away menus and shorter set courses for on-site dining, custom goodie boxes and the virtual online party replete with entertainment by local celebrities in lieu of danc-

ing the night away. While this does rob the joy of the traditional guess-who-kissed-who-they-shouldn't-have-games, virtual beer tastings and cook-alongs are something we could all get behind.

In keeping with the Grapevine tradition of handpicking a selection that reflects various sensibilities, this year, we sought out four restaurants that have been pushing the envelope in the pandemic, making quick-footed changes, following ever-changing protocols and restrictions with none of the limitations dampening that Christmas spirit.

The Non-Traditional One

Where: Makake

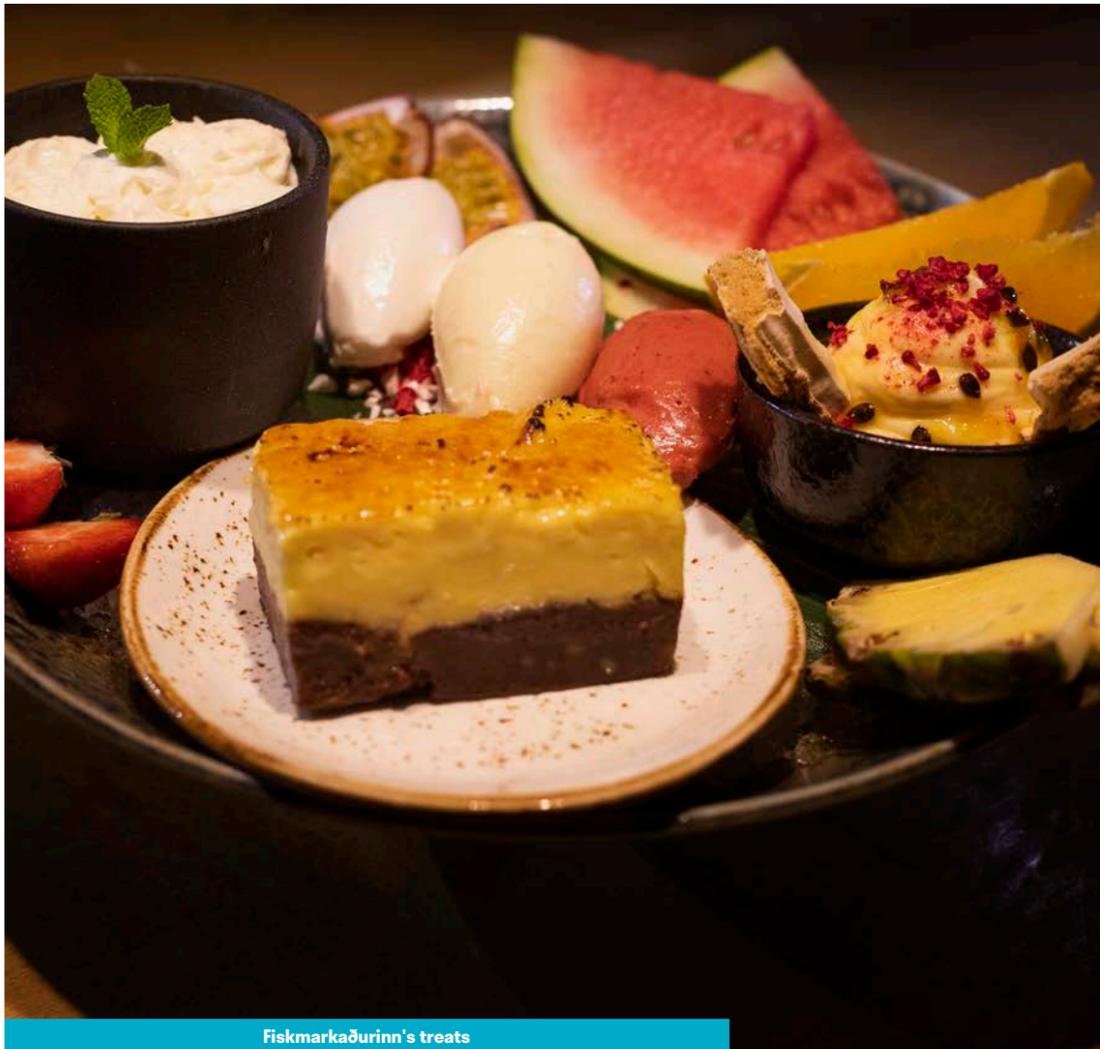
A Korean inspired all-you-can-eat brunch, this is perfect for those craving a ticket to lands afar. The menu is extensive and the kitchen handily suggests ordering 2-3 dishes at a time, allowing you to pace yourself between the tteokbokki and the japchae. The latter are sweet potato noodles stir fried with generous slivers of fresh ginger and the former are chewy rice cakes that are all bite and a textural treat. The time in-between dishes is perfect for grazing over the banchan, an essential part of any Korean meal; the mayak eggs are particularly good. Soft boiled eggs are marinated overnight in a sweet rice syrup, soy sauce, garlic and other seasonings, perfect to top over steamed rice,

with a thimble of cabbage kimchi, spicy and funky, or laced with intervals of turmeric hued pickled daikon. The hotteok are made to order and arrive piping hot, with a brown sugar sauce ladled over the pan-cooked stuffed bread. Makake sneaks a bit of gochugaru into their stuffing, their surprise heat a nice foil to the miso in that sugar sauce. Service is warm and attentive, the format ideal for a pandemic treat, where fewer people, small dishes and a long afternoon all serve as a reminder that good dining experiences are still to be had.

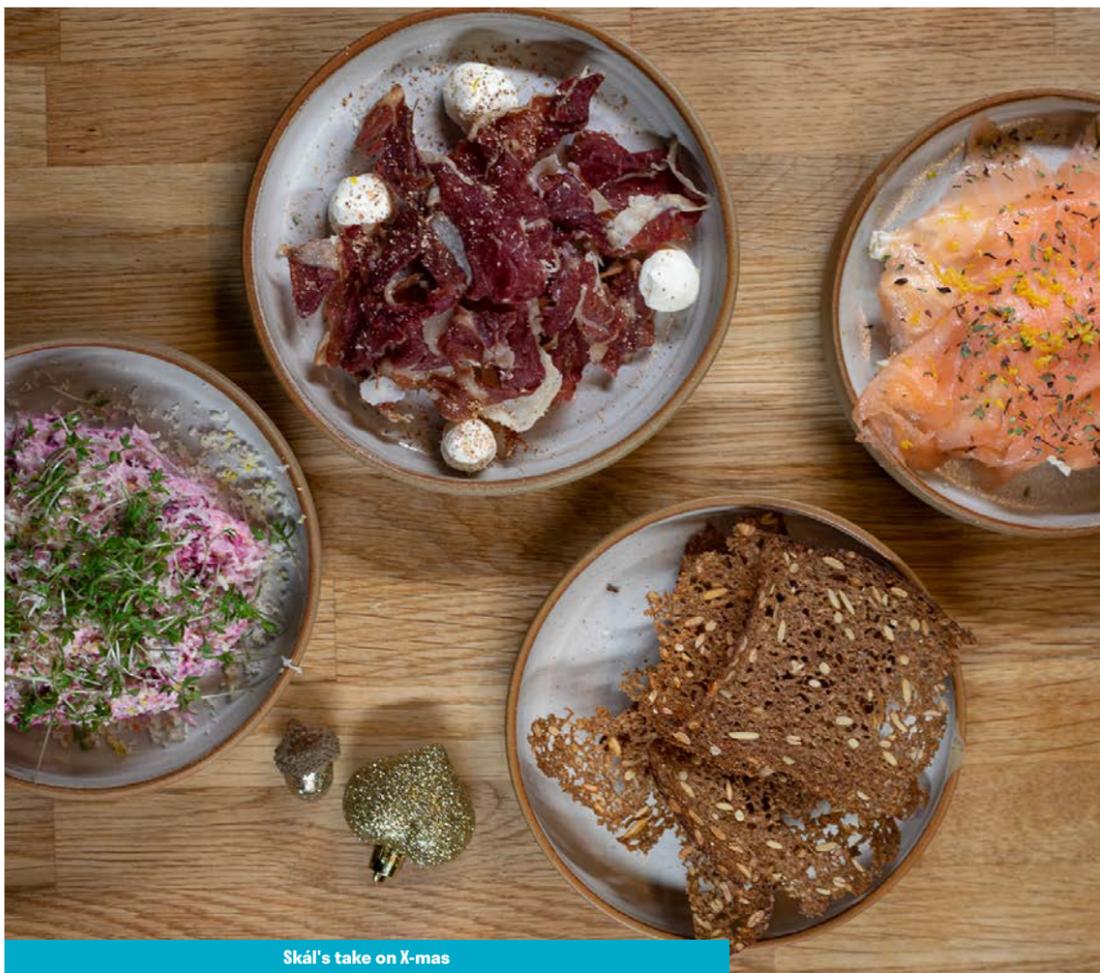
The Traditional One

Where: Grand Brasserie

At the Grand Brasserie, chef Úlfar Finnbjörnsson has crafted a smart, perfect for at-home decadence with his Christmas platter. This is old-school, Icelandic festive food done well, tugging at all the right strings. The anise-crusted salmon subtly evokes liquorice, the dung smoked version is delicate and, paired with the laufabrauð, makes for a snappy bite. The reindeer terrine is studded with pistachios and the goose liver pate is velvety smooth. These are high quality ingredients treated with respect and the elegant morsels are an ideal precursor to your Christmas feast. Orders are on a 48-hour notice, so hurry up while you can.



Fiskmarkaðurinn's treats



Skál's take on X-mas

Traditional, Yet Contemporary

Where: Skál!

Chef Gísli Matthías Auðunsson is known for taking the deeply Icelandic and making it oh-so-of-the-moment. And he does it yet again with this year's take-away menu. A small yet satisfying affair, the starters are really the stars here (a warm, cardamom scented braised pork cheek with barley is perfectly lovely too). The laufabrauð is a traditional recipe, culled from a sous-chef's grandmother. This one is chock full of cumin, the best kind if you ask us. Wispy layers of mandarin-hued cured salmon are draped over chunky batons of horseradish-dressed rutabaga, the raw on raw is a contradiction of textures and

flavours. The hangikjöt is doubly smoked, ribboned with fat and is mellowed momentarily by the muscat creme. The winner-repeater however is the sild. The underrated herring comes into its own at Christmas, and here it is reminiscent of the Russian 'herring in a fur blanket' except, lighter, fresher and almost spring-like. Pink with beets, brightened with fresh horseradish and sourcream and peppered with cress, this is a dish we came away wanting to recreate.

A Little Kiss From Asia

Where: Fiskmarkaðurinn

While we are firm fans of the Grillmarket X-mas menu, we decided to shine light on its sister Fishmarket, who more than holds her own.

Special mention has to be made of the staff, who weren't just attentive but followed safety protocols to the T. With a focus on wild caught produce, this year's menu stays true to the restaurant's love affair with flavours of the East. Devoid of farmed salmon's pronounced fattiness, the wild salmon is lightly cured, lightly charred. There is wild duck served two-ways and roast deer with trimmings. But the highlight of the evening remains the wine service. The festive menu can be paired with maverick South African winemaker, Pieter H. Walser's Blankbottle Winery—none of the bottles mention the varietals or blends except for the vintage. A fitting pairing for the year this has been. 🍷



SNAPS

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WELL, YOU ASKED



How 2 B Cool N Hot

Questions & Answers: **Megan Massey**

Got a burning question? In desperate need of advice? We at the Grapevine are here to help.



How old is too old to be sleeping with a stuffed animal?

If you can read this you're too old.



Boys like me so much they don't want to date me. What should I do?

Baby, I hate to say it, but it's time for some tough love. There are two possible explanations for what's going on here. Either you're so hot that boys don't wanna date you because they're only interested in marrying you (in which case, my advice is to just choose a hottie and lock him down).

However I highly, highly doubt this is the case. It's more likely that you're just a little bit...average. To combat this, you should try to make yourself more attractive and interesting. I could tutor you on how to be hotter but the classes are pretty pricey and I can just tell from the way you typed your question that you deffo can't afford it. I can also tell that becoming more attractive is going to be a difficult feat, so maybe just focus on becoming more interesting. You can do this by picking up an intimidating-yet-sexy hobby like archery. Honestly, I don't have much advice for you because I'm actually very pretty and also a model so I've never experienced this myself.



If I stay in the bath for long enough will I dissolve into a broth?

It depends. If you're a snaccccc then hell yeah—come on in, the water's fine! If not, then you'll turn into a weird smelly mess and probably also get sucked down the drain. Sorry to be the one to break it to you. Stay Strong. 🍷

For advice, send your quandaries to grapevine@grapevine.is

HORROR-SCOPES

Bingeing Every Vanessa Hudgens Christmas Movie Ever

Words: **Two Sagittarii & An Aries**

All hail "The Knight Before Christmas." We are not worthy.



Aries

Aries, we respect the hustle you've put into perfecting "Into The Unknown" for your annual family Christmas karaoke. Unfortunately, due to a bad run-in with 40 years of smoking, your grandma has been deemed high-risk and karaoke is cancelled. But don't panic Aries, there's just no way you could ever belt it out like Idina and rock that riff like Aurora. Pathetic.



Taurus

I bet a quasi-pagan like you is awaiting Yuletide whilst lamenting Christmas consumerism, but maybe it's time to admit that if you can't beat them, you might as well join them. You secretly love 'The Polar Express' and you know what? That's okay. The hot chocolate scene is pretty lit, and if you're honest with yourself you'd rather watch that than 'The Nightmare Before Christmas' (which you've been playing

on repeat since Halloween in an attempt to uphold your witchy aesthetic).



Gemini

You're not special for not liking Christmas, Gemini. You've announced this every year to seem edgy and every year no one has cared. Unlike Emma Roberts in *Holidate*, no one is going to fall in love with you because of your pick-me girl Grinch vibes.



Cancer

Hanukkah HELP!: What can you, a shiksa goddess, do to turn from a Macca-don't to the star of all eight nights? It's easy, just use your Goy-YUM charm to marry a nice Jewish boy like Joseph Gordon-Levitt or Seth Cohen. Mazel Tov and welcome to the family. *squeezes cheeks*



Leo

Yes Leo, you were right. Despite what your bitchy roommate says,

you ARE Cameron Diaz in *The Holiday*. And despite what those bitchy Hollywood bigwigs say, you WOULD kiss Jude Law.



Virgo

The stars have something very special in mind for you, Virgo. They wouldn't tell us what, but we're pretty sure it involves buying a one-way ticket to a generic yet quaint European country with a monarchical system and somehow getting in the way of a certain prince or princess. Get ready for your emotional barriers to be broken down and to learn something poignant about the true meaning of Christmas. Because you're worth it.



Libra

The best way to get in touch with your inner Grýla is to blast Ariana Grande's "Greedy".



Scorpio

Scorpio, just because you can sell your hometown to a mall developer doesn't mean you should. Get ready to be visited by Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future. It's about time we saw some character development.



Sagittarius

For a born and bred Sagittarius like yourself, the holidays are merely an excuse to drink, eat

treats and reconnect with childhood flames. This year is no different, except your alcohol tolerance is off-the-roof, you've eaten way too many sweets to care and your childhood flame is currently in quarantine. Blast.



Capricorn

Realising that you've already put a lot of energy into organising Christmas festivities—you even got your lights up before your neighbours!—treat yourself by getting plastered at the family dinner and calling out your racist relatives. In front of their kids.



Aquarius

It's that time of year again: time to remind everyone, both in person and across social media platforms, that Christmas actually has pagan roots and is derived from the Roman holiday of Saturnalia. We assure you, people are very grateful for this reminder and do not at all roll their eyes every single year when you bring this up.



Pisces

Too scared to tell your family that you stopped celebrating Christmas years ago, you will once again buy a round of gifts for your relatives, send thank-you cards and dutifully report for family dinner in the most hideous Christmas sweater you can find. You can always tell them next year, right? 🍷



CITY SHOT by Art Bicnick

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Travel

Ice Flow, Nowhere To Go

Exploring the ice caves of the Vatnajökull glacier

Words: Iona Rangeley-Wilson Photos: Art Bicnick



Travel distance from Reykjavik:
380 km, Route 1

Tour provider:
localguide.is

Accommodation:
fosshotel.is

Car provided by:
gocarrental.is

“Are you underwater!?” my mum’s Whatsapp pings through on the last wisp of 3G available in the Sapphire Ice Cave.

I’m not—but she’s right, I could be. Carved into dimples by the wind, the intensely blue ceiling looks more like the ripples of a lake than any form of ice I’ve ever known or seen before. Jess, Art and Tinna, our guide from tour company Local Guide of Vatnajökull, have all disappeared around the corner. I hold back, unwilling to dip my not-particularly-waterproof shoes into the glacial stream that twists into narrow tunnels somewhere beyond them.

Race from Reykjavik

Sitting in the Grapevine offices just over a week ago, wrapped in a blanket and gazing passive-aggressively at the broken radiator in the corner, I asked myself the question any sane intern would eventually ask themselves: I may have spent two and a half months in Iceland, but have I really seen enough ice? And without a visit to the ice caves of the Vatnajökull National Park, the answer would of course have been no.

This was the existential gripe our

resident photographer Art sought to fix when he drove us interns 400km east to the Vatnajökull glacier. He spared no horses, fuelled by the bare essentials of Route 1 travel: black coffee and sheer, steely determination. Plus a mild to moderate amount of Taylor Swift playing on the bluetooth speaker, intermittently drowned out by the sound of studded tyres skidding through the snow. To be fair, he said he didn’t mind.

Now I am, for all intents and purposes, alone in an ice cave. It’s probably not where I expected to be on a Saturday afternoon in November. A hole in the ceiling surrounded by icicles lets the outside light through like a chandelier, the walls are glowing a deep blue, and the wind which made it difficult to walk down by Jökulsárlón has disappeared completely. There is only silence, and the faint trickle of water.

Gals on tour

These caves, Tinna explained, change every year, formed by the meltwater canals that run off the glacier in the summer. This is the second year the Sapphire Ice Cave has been accessible,



One ring to cool them all...

but it has changed shape since last year, shifting one hundred metres or so further back into the glacier.

Eventually the torchlights return and Jess and Tinna reappear. They are shortly followed by Art, who frantically asks me to shine my torch against the ice to help him get a photo, then puts his foot in a stream of glacial meltwater. For some reason, all I can think of is The Tundra Rap from The Mighty Boosh: Ice flow, nowhere to go, Lost in the blinding whiteness of the tundra...

The sun has almost disappeared when we return to Local Guide’s gigantic Ford—they call her Kata—us thudding back over the rocks towards the

glacier lagoon. Jess and I sit in the back eating Haribo Peaches and wonder aloud whether we think the hotel will have cocktails. By the time we reach Art’s rental car it has started snowing. The wind blows the flakes towards the windscreen and in the headlights they look like fireworks.

The hotel, thank goodness, had cocktails—and more importantly a two for one happy hour deal on prosecco (It was Jess’s birthday). With a glass in each hand, we headed to our hotel room, put on our hotel-issue dressing gowns and had both passed out from ice-cave-prosecco induced exhaustion by 10 p.m. 🍷

Support the Grapevine!
View this QR code in your phone camera to visit our tour booking site



A cold day at the office for Jess & Iona

