THE SLEEPING GIANT AWAKENS

All eyes in Iceland, and around the world, are watching for when—or if—a volcano will erupt in Reykjanes. We break down what's happening, what could happen, and what the worst case scenario might look like.
By the time you are reading this, the volcano in the Fagradalsfjall’s volcano system in Reykjanes might very well have erupted. It will most likely not be a dangerous eruption and will potentially become one of our new famous tourism hotspots: A view that’s pleasant for the eye, but life-threatening if you get too close.

Should that be the case, the eruption could have very positive effects on the economy, especially when the borders open up again in May, as the government has said will happen, but let’s see how that goes. Unfortunately, COVID-19 is still looming and our progress in the fight toward eradicating it from Iceland could disappear quickly if we are not careful.

That said, if and when the eruption goes off in the Reykjanes peninsula, scientists say that we will be entering a 100 to 400 year period of unrest there and we will possibly—and very likely—see more volcanoes in the area within the next years and decades after. This does not have to be a negative factor, but it will affect our daily lives.

Icelanders have always had a complicated relationship with their home country. Somehow, regardless of where or when, Iceland always looms in the back of our minds. How should we dress before we go out so we don’t suffer from the coldness? How are the roads? Are they passable? In a realistic future, we might now have to check a gas forecast following the weather forecast. Do we have to keep our kids inside today? Is a gas mask a smart investment? Will I look like a psychopath with a gas mask? Will our kids look like a northern European version of ’Children Of The Corn’?

It sounds like there’s a high price to pay to live in such a beautiful country, but for us, it’s not really. Don’t forget that Icelanders are incredibly inventive and creative when it comes to solving complicated situations. Icelanders were never better than after the financial crash in 2008. Before that, our small country was catapulted into the 20th century by WW2 and subsequently built a good awwd fair society based on education, and above all else, peace. Art is highly appreciated here and we have incredibly talented artists in all genres all over the world.

To summarise, Icelanders have a deep and respectful relationship with their country, nature, and heritage, and this perhaps, above all else, reflects the psyche of Icelanders in the best way. In the past, we’ve used the difficulties of our country to our advantage—creating one of the most prosperous and egalitarian societies in the world. So regardless of what happens now, Iceland will rebuild and find a new path to success.

So enjoy the fires—when they finally break out—and remember that the same fire burns inside all Icelanders, as well as those that love this harsh island in the north.

Valur Grettisson
Editor-in-chief
In the Westfjords of Iceland, what we call "downtown" others might refer to as "the Arctic." Call it what you will, we just live here.

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The good news is: for a while there we stopped talking about the coronavirus. The bad news is: we started talking about earthquakes and volcanoes. Starting with an earthquake swarm that began on the Reykjanes peninsula on February 3rd, people were decidedly worried as tremors with a magnitude greater than 3 were shaking on a daily basis. Much speculation was made as to whether a volcano was about to erupt in the geologically active region, summarily dismissed as pure conjecture. But then on March 3rd, scientists measured strong indications that an eruption was on the way. Since then, magma movement has measured strong indications that an eruption was on the way. Since then, magma movement has been detected, some of it as shallow as one kilometre beneath the surface, but at the time of this writing, there’s been no eruption. Not to worry, though: even if it does happen, it will almost certainly be what is known as a “tourist volcano”—decidedly photogenic eruptions of lava spewing into the air, or slithering along the ground, but no ash cloud, and certainly not anywhere near any populated areas or important infrastructure. And seeing how conveniently close to the international airport it is, who knows? Maybe this will re-boot our flagging tourist industry.

Nowadays, everybody wanna talk like they got somethin’ to say, but nothin’ comes out when they move their lips, just a bunch of gibberish, and Icelanders act like they forgot about the coronavirus. That’s right, after a couple of weeks of reporting “no new domestic cases yesterday,” we began to grow smug and complacent. Conservatives began calling out politicians for not lifting the current domestic pandemic restrictions. And then late in the first week of March, two people tested positive and both of them were outside quarantine at the time. At least one person, at the time of this writing, has since been diagnosed, having been in indirect contact with one of the other cases. Worst of all, it seems at least one of those diagnosed attended a concert at Harpa. Fortunately, anyone who’s been in even passing contact with these folks has been put in quarantine and has been tested. Another group infection on the way? Possibly. Lifting the restrictions this month? Not bloody likely.

On a lighter note, COVID-19 vaccinations have been going well. At the time of this writing, 17,710 Icelanders have received a full round of shots, with another 16,607 awaiting their second doses. Once they do, nearly 90% of the population will be fully vaccinated. According to the government’s schedule, everyone in Iceland should be vaccinated by June.
NATURALLY PURE

ICELANDIC LAMB – BEYOND COMPARE

Icelandic lamb roam free in the pristine wilderness of Iceland grazing on wild berries and herbs like red clover, Arctic thyme, sedge, willow, thrift and angelica resulting in it having an unrivaled flavor profile. Infused with the flavor of nature, Icelandic lamb is fine-textured, tender and naturally rich in Omega-3 and iron. Icelandic lamb – an exceptionally pure taste experience.

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Two new domestic COVID-19 cases were detected on March 8th, according to the latest data from covid.is. Both of them were outside quarantine at the time of diagnosis. One of those diagnosed was an employee of the grocery store Hagkaup in Garðabær, Vísir reports. This person worked stocking items during the night shift, and was working over the weekend before they tested positive. Due to the nature of their work, they had little to no contact with customers and the entire store has been sanitised.

And then it spread

Two people were diagnosed with the virus while outside quarantine, and are indirectly connected to a person who tested positive at second screening on March 4th. Testing tracing is also zooming in on a concert held at Harpa on March 5th.

On March 9th, it was further reported that a pizza delivery driver for Pizzan in Kópavogur tested positive, and all of their co-workers were subsequently put into quarantine. This driver was making deliveries over the weekend before their diagnosis.

Act now

Chief epidemiologist Þórður Guðnason declined to say definitively whether or not a fourth wave was on its way. He did say, however, that this recent spate of infections was proof that following guidelines, both domestically and at the border, is the key to eradicating the virus from Iceland. As it stands now, domestic restrictions are scheduled to be relaxed slightly on March 7th. With this latest outbreak, this is now increasingly unlikely. Þórður emphasised the importance of acting quickly to contain the spread before a fourth wave has a chance to form.

Global warming is on everyone’s mind. Summers are getting hotter, glaciers are melting and greenhouse gases are filling the skies with smog. Living on a rock in the North Atlantic makes you feel relatively untouchable by the chaos across the world but one day the sea will rise and Iceland will be hit hard. We asked Halldór Björnsson of the Icelandic Meteorological Office how he thinks rising sea levels will affect the country.

‘Iceland is rising rapidly in some locations which affects the relative sea level change. In some locations, especially along the south east coast of Iceland the rate of rise is so fast that it is doubtful that these locations will experience any sea level rise. How much sea level will increase there depends on several things, such as the warming of the ocean, the melt of glaciers and icesheets (in Greenland and Antarctica), and changes to the gravitational field due to the ice melt. The last item is quite surprising to many, but the current size (and mass) of say the Greenland ice sheet affects gravity around it in such a way that it keeps sea level higher than otherwise. Once the ice sheet melts this effect diminishes with this effect that sea level may drop close to the ice sheet, but rise more elsewhere.’

Chief epidemiologist Þórólfur Guðnason emphasised the importance of acting quickly to contain the spread before a fourth wave has a chance to form.
Mímir, Bodyless Brainiac

You bet his Reddit Karma score is higher than Ásgardur

Upon receiving the task of writing about one of the many gods of Iceland, I was tempted to be as basic as basic can be in selecting my deity. Póð would have been an easy one, same with someone like Loki.

But no, that’s not how I roll

In all of my wisdom (of which there is little), I went out of my way to pick a God that doesn’t have its own movie or upcoming TV show. So bring to you Mímir, the god of wisdom and Ásgardur’s true 200IQ Reddit user.

Mímir Knows Best

Mímir was a water spirit who resided by a well at the bottom of the Yggdra-ur’s true 200IQ Reddit user.

Superpowers: Astonishingly clever, very portable

Weaknesses: Lack of body, being a bit of a pushover, being not smart

Modern Analogue: Astonishingly weird prison

The guy on Owen Tyrie comments exchanges Words:

Photo: Adobe Stock

“Rúsínan í Pylsundanum”

Ever had a hot dog filled with raisins? Doesn’t sound good, does it? Still, Icelanders have the saying “Rúsínan í Pylsundanum,” which translates to “the raisins in the tail of a hot dog.” It’s sort of a vague way to describe something good or unexpected, and like everything that doesn’t make sense or is just plain stupid, we got it from the Danes—our former oppressors. More specifically, it was adopted from a poem by Danish poet Christian Winther, which we won’t mention because we don’t want to give any Dane free publicity.

Anyway, for some maddening reason, ages ago they used to put a raisin at the end of black pudding sausages, which those savages thought was a sign of true culinary prowess. Apparently, this was an unexpectedly great thing—hence the saying. VG

Well ackshually...

For most people, this would be where the story ends. However, we are dealing with immortal gods who are capable of using black magic to bend the universe to their will. So upon receiving Mímir’s head, Óðinn used some magical herbs and sang to Mímir to bring him back to life. Wonder what song he sang… “Staying Alive” perhaps? “Get’Cha Head In The Game”?

Over the next aeons, Óðinn kept Mímir’s head close by, seeking counsel from him as he used to back when Mímir had two legs to stand on. The great and mighty Óðinn would even go out to put his own eye in Mímir’s aforementioned well-known home, believing that the waters would give him divine knowledge. That’s one way to keep an eye on all of Ásgardur.

Well, here’s a heads up now because I’m afraid we are heading to the end of Mímir’s story, as very little is known about what happened to him after he became Óðinn’s magic eight-ball of sorts. So perhaps it’s best if I stop writing here before I get… abscond of myself. Sorry, couldn’t resist…
By the time you read this, a volcano may have erupted in Reykjanes, Iceland's southwestern peninsula and the home of the Keflavík International Airport. It's also possible that the magma currently moving under the surface of the Earth has retreated, or that it's still moving but hasn’t breached the surface yet. At this point, all we have are best estimates. That’s just the nature of the science of earthquakes and volcanoes.

While all of Iceland is geologically active, this is a story about Reykjanes, whose name literally means “smoking peninsula”, if that gives you any indication of just how active the area is. Here, we examine a timeline that begins on February 23rd, when a series of significant earthquakes began to ripple through the area, culminating in the first signs, on March 3rd, that a volcanic eruption may be on the way. From here, we'll look at best case—and worst case—scenarios. The good news is there's little to worry about. The bad news is things are still up in the air; at least, at the time of this writing.

How active are we talking about?

First time arrivals to Iceland almost always disembark at Keflavík International Airport, and then drive or take the bus on to Reykjavík. Along the way, the first thing you notice are the immense lava fields which stretch all the way to the horizon. You’d be forgiven for thinking that this lava only cooled down moments ago for how fresh it appears, and geologically speaking, it is quite fresh. The area is fed by five volcanic systems—striking considering its relatively small size—and much of the lava we see there today came from the notorious Reykjanes Fires, which lasted from the 10th to the 12th century. In fact, between 1210 and 1240, some 50 square kilometres of this region was covered in lava.

The first indications that we were entering a new period of instability arguably began in January 2020, when a swarm of earthquakes were measured around Mount Purbjöfn, one of Reykjanes' many volcanoes. At the time, there were grave concerns that an eruption was imminent, but ultimately nothing came of it and, after a week or so, the volcano fell off the radar. While Mount Purbjöfn is no longer in the current discussion, Reykjanes certainly is.

How it kicked off

In the early morning hours of February 23rd, a 4.3 magnitude quake 7km beneath the surface and 3.6km east of Fagradalsfjall struck. This was followed seconds later by a 5.7 quake near Keilir. Since then, earthquakes of a magnitude of 3 or greater have been a daily occurrence. Reykjanes is geologically active relative to the rest of the country, but the size and frequency of these quakes has raised concerns nonetheless. Not so much in terms of devastation—Icelandic infrastructure, including homes and buildings, are famously designed with earthquakes in mind, and the safest place you can be in Iceland during an earthquake is indoors—but more in terms of what these events could precede.

On March 3rd, scientists announced that it was increasingly likely that a volcanic eruption was on the way. This was based on GPS measurements and other data points that indicated magma was moving very quickly beneath the surface of the Earth in relatively the same area the earthquakes were centered.

Iceland’s earth scientists are normally very reluctant to speculate on the possibility of a volcanic eruption, even in the midst of an earthquake swarm, so just the fact that they were using language such as “increasingly likely” drew international attention.

The quiet science (until it isn’t)

The science of earthquakes and volcanoes is normally a quiet affair, some might even say repetitive, the vast majority of the time. This sentence was echoed by Baldur Bergsson, a specialist in monitoring at the Icelan-
Kristín Jonsdottir, earthquake hazards coordinator at the Icelandic Met Office, told Grapevine’s Reykjavík Grapevine on March 4th, the day after scientists announced an eruption was now more likely. “It’s essentially a couple of eruptions and the magma coming up. There’s very little ash. The good thing about this scenario is that, what we’ve seen so far, is that they’re far from the roads and far from the populated areas. So if we model the system of the magma flowing, it is not going to reach the populated areas and it’s not going to reach the roads. As the situation is now, from our modelling, this is what we presume.”

Páll, director of the Iceland centre for the Earth on which we stand, a professor of volcanology and petrology at the University of Iceland, echoed these sentiments in a separate interview with the Grapevine, when asked how scientists determine just how dangerous an eruption may or may not be.

“We use a lot of different tools for that,” he said. “First of all, we use geological history and our knowledge of previous events. When we look at any one area, we think in terms of worst-case scenarios. When we know that, we start to think about, ‘Oh, what measures do we need to put in place to make sure that people are safe? And what measures can we put in place in terms of response?’

Páll also cited the eruption of Hekla, describing it as a very explosive eruption. “If you’re there, you don’t have any response time. So our assessment in that case is, if you suspect there’s an eruption imminent, you evacuate the whole place and get everyone to safety. That’s quite a dramatic and drastic measure, but that’s the best we can do at the moment anyway.

‘In Reykjanes, it’s quite different, because we know from the history of eruptions here that most of those eruptions are fairly moderate in size, and they’re mostly effusive, lava-producing eruptions. Our main concern there is not the explosive activity but the lava flow activity. We need to know how much time we have in a lava flow crisis, and that, of course, depends on where the lava comes up relative to populated areas or important infrastructure. In a nutshell, we use the worst-case scenario to make sure we have the right response to ensure everyone’s safety.’

It’s a gas

Of course, lava is not the only danger that can arise from an eruption. They also release toxic gases, especially sulphur dioxide, also called SO2. For populated areas around the region where a possible eruption could occur, we do not need to worry about gas in particular,’ Kristín told us. “From our modelling—and again, we are using the models based on the best knowledge of what kinds of eruptions we can expect in the area, and our knowledge from previous eruptions—the gas we aren’t concerned about is SO2, sulphur dioxide. It’s not very nice. It can hurt a bit in the throat. The most probable scenario is that, what we’ll see here, is SO2. It’s not very dense, and also where we are farther away from the lava, it gets diluted. So the most probable scenario is that there will be days where this will be annoying. People with underlying conditions, such as asthma, will have to take care of themselves. Importantly, the Icelandic Met Office will show gas pollution forecasts. It depends on the wind. We’ll just have to take it one day at a time.”

For an average eruption of an average duration, the level of pollution could become uncomfortable for people. Páll told the Grapevine. “For a big eruption, it may reach a level where you would have to react to it and move people away from the area. Gas pollution is an issue. But how big of an issue it is really depends on the scenario, and if you have a very long-lasting eruption—which we can have on the Reykjanes peninsula, we’ve had eruptions there that have lasted many months, years and even decades—depending on your position relative to the event, that may be a major problem. Then again, the likelihood of such events happening in our lifetime is very small.”

When asked about how an eruption could affect drinking water or geothermal energy—which relies on underground water heated by magma to turn turbines—Kristín also assuaged fears. “We think all the scientists are looking into this,” she said. “Right now, there isn’t a great concern about this. The main drinking water does not come from this area.”

How can we know?

Despite hard headlines that you might see elsewhere—such as any particular volcano being “overdue” for an eruption—volcano science is still in large part based on history, predictive models and best estimations. Even with all of our advanced technology, knowing when a volcano may erupt is still illusive. “We are still not able to predict exactly when an eruption will come,” Páll continues. “They are very few events that we can actually observe. We have to use remote sensing technologies, using tools that can give us information on what’s happening in the Earth. It’s a bit like trying to measure the movement of clouds based on secondary data.”

Earthquakes are not property of the magma. Páll said. “We are only concerned as a consequence of a stress build-up in the crust. We don’t see the magma move. You can see the clouds move, but we try to do the same thing (with magma), but with far less clarity. That’s one of the reasons why we haven’t yet gotten to the point where we can forecast or even predict volcanic eruptions. Each eruption, which is basically one laboratory...
"The experience can be unnerving, because it's not something you can do anything about and the whole earth is shaking, but there's basically nothing to worry about."

is very useful for that purpose. That's why we want to learn as much as we can from such events. We'd like to be able to have such exercises every day, but it's not possible, because nature doesn't work on that timescale."

The timescales of individual systems are different," Pórvaldur says. "Hekla erupts very often. Volcanoes on the Reykjanes peninsula go into this stage of unrest and eruption every 200 to 400 years or so, and that period can last some 200 to 400 years. It's episodic. It's not a constant unrest. You can have a period of unrest that lasts for a few months and then it calms down, and you repeat that over a period of two or three decades, and then it goes quiet for 70 or 80 years, and then it picks up again.

For us, it's a very long period of time," he points out. "For the volcano, it's a constant time. It's a totally different timescale. It's both fascinating and difficult to grasp, this long timescale. Especially when volcanoes, when they actually kick in, then they switch gears and everything is happening on a timescale. When the processes kick in, there are processes happening over milliseconds to determine if you're going to have an eruption explosion or an effusion eruption. This is the challenge of studying volcanoes.

What's the worst that could happen?

- Despite assurances from Kristín and Pórvaldur that an eruption happens, it will very likely not be a devastating event, Pórvaldur was nonetheless quite willing to discuss what the worst case scenario for a Reykjanes eruption could be.

"In terms of danger to the population, let's just make an assumption that we have an eruption site where lava comes up it will flow towards a populated area," he says. "In terms of the Reykjanes peninsula, the worst case scenario is we would get a very strong fountaining eruption at the very beginning, which would produce lava that would move at very high speeds, downhill, on the order of 30 to 60 kilometres per hour. So that case, if you look at the peninsula, the distance from an eruption site to a populated area is on the order of five to 10 kilometres. The response time then would be around one to three hours. If you take an average eruption, the response time would be there to ten days or so. But the worst case scenario I'm describing would be a very unusual event. However, even in those cases we would have time to respond. That's the important thing. You may not be able to save a lot of one thing, but you would definitely be able to get away from it.

So we would have plenty of time to evacuate people from an eruption area in Reykjanes. But where would these people go?

"It's very unlikely that a fissure will open up and cut off all roads," he says. "There would always be routes to exit. You may have to go the long way around in some cases, and maybe go to Keflavík and that area. Lava is never going to go there. That would be an eruption of dimensions that we have never seen in Iceland. Let's say you were in Vogur or Grundarfjörður, and you get cut off from going towards Reykjavík, you can always go towards Keflavík and you would be safe over there. Of course, we can't rule out that we would have a megaeruption on the peninsula, but that's very very unlikely. Even then, you would have boats to get everyone out.

Funding scientists!

"The experience can be unnerving, because it's not something you can do anything about and the whole earth is shaking, but there's basically nothing to worry about."

"There would always be route out. You would never be trapped," he says. "It's very unlikely that a fissure will open up and cut off all roads," he says. "There would always be routes to exit. You may have to go the long way around in some cases, and maybe go to Keflavík and that area. Lava is never going to go there. That would be an eruption of dimensions that we have never seen in Iceland. Let's say you were in Vogur or Grundarfjörður, and you get cut off from going towards Reykjavík, you can always go towards Keflavík and you would be safe over there. Of course, we can't rule out that we would have a megaeruption on the peninsula, but that's very very unlikely. Even then, you would have boats to get everyone out.

Never fear, Civil Protection is here

Rógnvaldur Ólafsson, spokesperson for the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management, is a part of the team that would be key to these evacuations. In the same Reykjanes Newscast where we spoke with Kristín, Rógnvaldur was optimistic. "I think we're pretty safe," he said. "We have good modelling and we know what we're dealing with. We know what kinds of eruptions we can have and roughly where. All the infrastructure is there and they have planned for these kinds of events. We do not expect buildings to collapse. You might see some fractures in some buildings, but total collapse of buildings is not something we expect to see. The experience can be unnerving, because it's not something you can do anything about and the whole earth is shaking, but there's basically nothing to worry about."

To Pórvaldur, this is all a part of the job.

"Basically when you break it down, it's the same situation," he said. "You can even compare it to what we do regarding COVID-19. We're quite used to dealing with situations like this. Of course, it's always a challenge [to have this possible eruption site] close to the largest populated area in Iceland, but we haven't seen anything in the modelling or predictions that are great cause for concern. Just like with COVID-19, we always know something we give that information to the public. So you don't have to worry about that's something we're not telling you."

As the situation is now, Kristín says, we're all doing our best with what we have:

"There's a lot of uncertainty at this moment," she told the Newscast. "We have to follow the data and make sense of what's happening. We are doing our best to include the best scientists to work on this and come up with a consensus of the most likely scenarios. But we just have to wait and see."

For his part, Pórvaldur believes the science of volcano prediction will only get better.

"We have to integrate systems that are measuring the geophysical scale of things, with geodetic measurements, and along with volcanological measurements and data," he told us. "It has to be an integrated thing. Remote sensing might play a very important role in that, especially when we can get better at looking at deformation using satellite based observations. I think, in the long run, this kind of thing, on the other hand, might be the key to reliable eruption predictions, just like they've been the key to reliable weather forecasts."

One would expect that for a geologically active island nation like Iceland that such scientists would have all the money they need. When asked if this was the case, Pórvaldur was quite clear.

"Oh, absolutely not. We never get enough funding," he told the Grapevine. "Of course we want more money! The truth is, and it's sad to say as it's true for many other places as well, the science is generally underfunded. We appreciate the things that we get and we're thankful for it, but we need much, much more. I think society would benefit from investing in scientific research in general because it's the classical way of preventing harmful things that may affect us."

Surely members of parliament would want to make sure that volcanologists have all the money we need, right?"

"Absolutely," Pórvaldur says. "Earth sciences in general and volcanology in particular have been struggling to get funding over the last five years. There's many different reasons for that, and one important part of that is how they set up who gets funded or not and another part is that we haven't looked well enough after our own interest. There's always two sides to everything. The current situation is a good exercise for us, in the response time, but also is a good reminder for the community that lives in the Reykjanes peninsula that they do live on an active volcano, and you should take that into account when you're planning things."

All this being the case, perhaps the current situation will remind those holding the purse strings that the earth sciences in Iceland are crucial to our survival. However the current situation plays out, that much should be abundantly clear by now.
Finally, a new comedy night! Yipee! 2020 has had us all for laughter (and a vaccine). 2021 is here with some actual giggles (and vaccines). Anyway, this twice-a-month comedy series will feature a rotating roster of comedians trying out some longer material for upcoming solo shows. There’s no telling what they make sure to show up early.

**March 18th & April 1st - 20:00 - Loft Out Loud Comedy Night
**March 12th-21st - Bíó Paradís

German Film Days

German Film Days is back with German Film Days! The lineup of the festival is spectacular, and the German Embassy in Iceland is back with German Film Days. The German Film Days, which take place during the month of March, are a great opportunity to explore German cinema and culture. This year, the festival features a diverse selection of films, including dramas, comedies, and documentaries. The lineup of the festival is spectacular, and the German Embassy in Iceland is back with German Film Days.

**March 10th - 4:00 - HJC

**March 12th - 20:30 - Karpa - 3:90 ISK

**Without Listening**

**Magnús Johann Release Concert**

**March 12th - 20:30 - Magnús Johann Release Concert**

**Without Listening** by Magnús Johann. Magnús Johann is one of those constantly-on-repeat-at-the-Bíó Paradís-offers albums in 2020. Meandering through a murky area between post-classical, improvisational jazz and dark electronics, you could perhaps call his work "glo-fi." Magnús has a deep understanding of sound transitions and how you can meld them together into endless forms. Read a feature here with his long-awaited release concert, and so are we.

**March 19th - 20:00 - Ich Bin Ein Film-iner

**ich Bin Ein Film-iner**

**German Film Days**

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**March 12th-21st - Bíó Paradís

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The Raw Power Of Pop Baroque

Erró's energy flows through Icelandic art in a new exhibition

Words: John Pearson Photos: Art Bicnick

The name Erró is often followed by the phrase “Iceland’s most famous artist,” a custom which can leave the uninitiated perhaps feeling a little under-informed, or even philistine. For Erró’s work isn’t given the unmissable civic prominence awarded, say, to Miró or Gaudí by Catalonia.

Thankfully the Reykjavík Art Museum is perfectly placed to bring the unenlightened into Erró’s warm glow, given that it possesses over four thousand pieces of his work. The newly-opened ‘Raw Power’ exhibit displays a selection of these alongside work from 15 other Icelandic artists, encouraging the viewer to draw comparisons, discover connections and witness Erró’s influence on the collective creativity of his native culture.

Physically separate, creatively connected

Erró left Iceland as a young man to study art, eventually relocating to New York in 1964 where he befriended pop-artists Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol, and began to develop his own style of painted collage appropriation. Later on, he ventured back across the Atlantic to find himself appropriated by European creative culture, eventually becoming subsumed by French art history while residing in Paris.

Birgir Snæbjörn Birgisson—Reykjavík artist, and erstwhile technician at the Reykjavík Art Museum—curated ‘Raw Power’ at the request of his former employer. He remembers being lectured on Erró when he was an art student in France.

“I was studying in Strasbourg at the time,” he recalls.

“They were covering the French art scene, and Erró was mentioned. By chance, the professor remembered that I was in the class, and pointed out to the class that actually Erró was Icelandic. And that told me how embedded he was in the French art scene.”

Art philosopher Arthur Danto once described Erró as “bringing pop art into its flamboyant baroque,” a description which further cemented his place in the continental European tradition.

This appropriation by other cultures—and Erró’s absence from Iceland for most of his life—have perhaps tended to foster the perception of a remove between the artist and his homeland.

“I never felt that the separation was at his request,” says Birgir. “I mean, he regularly gives his works to the City of Reykjavík. When the decision was made to house his archive here and have a permanent show, maybe the separation comes from that. Maybe it’s because mixing him with other artists was never an option, until now.”

The chance for ‘Raw Power’ arose when the museum announced similar shows focussing on Icelandic painter Jóhannes S. Kjarval, and Icelandic sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson. The Erró exhibit completes this triptych.

“I had pointed out the idea behind ‘Raw Power’ to the museum a few times, and I’m not the only one,” Birgir points out. “Hopefully this exhibition will open up the chance for more Erró shows tackling narrower themes, such as politics.”

“Iggy Pop art

The show is named after a small post-pop-art collage produced by Erró in 2009, featuring an appropriated cartoon depiction of Detroit musician Iggy Pop. Fitzingly then, the title of the exhibition is itself an appropriation. ‘Raw Power’ is the title of the...
third album released in 1973 by Iggy and his band, The Stooges, a record that was hugely influential on punk and in the lyrics of which Iggy famously claimed the title “world’s forgotten boy.” It was Kurt Cobain’s favourite album—a love shared by Birgir.

“It didn’t start with the title, of course, but the title came soon and it hit the tone,” he reflects. “Power is something I’d say that we all relate to when we think of Erró’s work, and the rawness is maybe the extra spice to it.”

**Juxtaposed with Erró**

The work of the fifteen chosen artists in Raw Power is interspersed with that of Erró himself, arranged in ways that encourage the viewer to make connections and draw threads between pieces.

The presence of Erró’s ‘The Tomato Soup’ in the exhibition makes a clear connection to arguably the world’s most famous piece of pop art—Warhol’s ‘Campbell’s Soup Cans’—and is a reminder of Erro’s role in that scene. Erró produced his own soupy opus the year after his partner-in-appropriation Warhol put his cans on display, cheekily re-appropriating an appropriation. Erró draws attention to Erró’s ‘The Tomato Soup’. The ‘Shrimp Cocktail’ is hung next to ‘United Army’, one of Erró’s appropriations of Maoist propaganda.

“Flashbacks are repeated around the room. The title, etched into the painting in Polish, is from a 19th century poem by Adam Mickiewicz. The poem touches on the notion of national borders—and identities—shifting due to politics and conflict. Mickiewicz considered himself to be Lithuanian, but from a modern perspective he would be Belarusian.

“But then Mickiewicz wrote in Polish,” Lukas expands, “and he is a national poet of all of those countries. So already his artistic identity is pretty complex.”

To connect Lukas’ work with an overtly political aspect of Erró, Birgis places it next to ‘United Army’, one of Erró’s appropriations of Maoist propaganda.

“This is about creating, or re-writing, history through painting,” Lukas says of the connection between the works. “Mao is visiting Venice; something that never happened. But it is something that could have happened if world history had gone a different way.”

**Icelandic diaspora**

Reflecting the idea of an Icelandic creative diaspora, a couple of decades ago Icelandic artist Sara Riel went to Germany. ‘Mausfrau’—one of her contributions to ‘Raw Power’—represents her time dodging the police as a tagger in Berlin. She now divides her time between Reykjavík and Athens. But even during her Berlin period, Sara’s connection to her homeland remained strong.

“I don’t ever not want to be an Icelandic artist,” Sara explains as she sits in the Greek sunshine. “That’s why I moved back to Iceland from Berlin. I wanted to write this into my own cultural history.”

When asked about Erró’s influence, Sara says that the generational gap between the master and the younger artists creates more of a remove than any geographical situation.

“I think Erró has influenced us all,” she suggests, “even though we don’t want to admit it. He’s like a grandfather to us, which makes him something of a distant character.”

Lukas Bury, another ‘Raw Power’ artist, is a new Icelandic with Polish-German roots. His self-portrait ‘Lithuania, My Fatherland!’ sees him dressed in a traditional Icelandic sweater, surveying an Icelandic landscape.

The title, etched into the painting in Polish, is from a 19th century poem by Adam Mickiewicz. The poem touches on the notion of national borders—and identities—shifting due to politics and conflict. Mickiewicz considered himself to be Lithuanian, but from a modern perspective he would be Belarusian.

One corner of the exhibition space full of raw power.
Best of Reykjavík

Where To Get Your Grapevine Tattoo
You can even just get our logo! We love free advertising!

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen
Photo: Art Bionick

The last few years have seen a boom of tattoo parlours around Reykjavík. In fact, there’s now so many that we likely don’t have the space to feature them all here, which we sincerely apologise for. That said, here’s a diverse selection of what this city offers. (Email that GV ink to grapevine@grapevine.is)

Islenzkja Höfuðstofan
Íslenzka Höfuðstofan

This classic shop caters to all styles, with a roster of artists that serve up everything from realism to new-school and more, all done beautifully. We’d particularly recommend the hand-poked pieces by Hálfa (@hálfahönufélag). Reikiavík’s resident icelandic genius. Not only are they gorgeously ornate in that straight-out-of-800-AD-way, but they might save you from evil spirits.

White Hill Tattoo
Laugavegur 25

For illustrative, watercolour and similarly bright and ethereal works, head to White Hill. The one and only Marlena (@marle-

na_sweet_hell), formerly of Sweet Hell is a master of this stuff, who you can trust to give you jewel-eyes animals surrounding by flowing pastel clouds or other enchanting things like that. That said, we’d particularly like to compliment Hrefn Maria (@haria_art) on the gothy blackwork she’s got going on. As an (internally) goth magazine, her devotion to the darker arts must be celebrated (sullenly).

Street Rats Tattoo
Hverfisgata 52

Runner-up for our Best of Reykjavík 2020 award for Hidden Gem, Street Rats Tattoo is the personal playground of Kristófer, a.k.a. Sleepover Tattoo (@sleepovertattoo). He does that sort of full-on thick traditional shit that never goes out of style. Think naka ladies, skulls, snakes and spiderwebs. You know, devil-may-care things that make you look cool.

Valkyrie Tattoo Studio
Fiskilóð 31

First off, this studio no doubt has the best view of any in Reykjavík so we’d love to offer to switch offices with them. Second off, this is another place that runs the gamut of styles beautifully. It’s notably a great place for nerds, as they have a dedicated artist joel (@geeks_ ink) who does, as you could guess, geeky shit.

Black Kross
Hamraborg 14a, Kópavogur

A really, really, really good place for old school. Actually, the artists there do everything well, but their old school is particularly *chef’s kiss*. In my experience, people who like Black Kross are weirdly culty about it—like they only get tattooed there and go a lot and just really love it—so watch out, they might be putting something in the ink. (For legal reasons, that’s a joke.)

Memoria Collective
Hverfisgata 52

Another place that does most styles and does them really well. That said, Ballí’s (@ballíbláinn) got some particularly stellar neo-traditional and Deborah Lilja (@treesperits, tattoo) just started serving up some anime stuff which we—an office stacked to the brim with untranslated manga—love. We must also shout out the black and grey work of Emil Dun (@emil.dun.tattoo), who has tattooed the author of this article many times. No favo-

rism here, folks.

Bleksmiðjan Tattoo & Piercing
Kringlan 7

Located next to Kringlan, Bleksmiðjan is an

other fan favourite. Ingi (@bleksmiðjan), Ingí is a go-to for colour-realism, which you don’t see a ton of in this country. Also, notably, Bleksmiðjan has some amazing piercing people (@bleksmiðjan.piercing) who can do everything from smiles to dermalis. No word as to whether or not they can install a $24 million pink diamond in your forehead, though.

Apollo Ink
Silmúl 3

Apollo Ink is probably the number one place for black and grey realism in Reykjavík, considering most of the artists here specialise in it and just do it really fucking well. Adrian Chou’s (@adrian.chou.art) surrealistic take on the style is particularly trippy, but seri-

ously, Jesus Christ, everyone here is just really good ain’t they? Isn’t realism supposed to be super hard? Where did they find these people?

Reykjavík Ink
Frakkastígur 7

The one. The only. No doubt a downtown institution by this point. Reykjavík Ink is a tried-and-true locale that has been serving the local community faithfully for 13 lucky years. Pro-tip: They get really fantastic guest artists, so keep an eye on their Instagram to see who’s coming over.

Ireumi Ink
Laugavegur 69

Great location. Classic team. Takes walk-ins daily. That’s kind of like the golden trio for a good ole’ tattoo parlour, yeah? If you need an even sweeter deal, they are also now offering 20% off big black and grey arm pieces for March. So you really have no excuse do you? I mean it’s downtown for God’s sake.

Also Check Out:

- aura reykjavík: The new studio on the block. We’re excited to see what 2021 holds for them.
- Ritual Tattoo: Another great bunch that seems to get some truly unique guest artists. Follow on Instagram (@ritual_tattoo_ice-

land) to keep up.
- After 6 Tattoos: Kind of a supergroup collective featuring @uglybrothers, @sleepless ink, @mottandi and @kocane_ wayne. Message on Instagram to talk about your groundbreaking ideas.
- Other various Instagrams to follow: @chrisstattattoo, @hopingnopolice and wow there are so many people right now please don’t be sad if we forget anyone. !

Note: Anyone who gets a Grapevine tattoo gets a free your subscription to the Grapevine and an article dedicated to them. We’d prefer it in that blackwork with red lines we know you’re testing after right now. E-mail for designs.

Apollo Ink opened in 1979 was the first restaurant of its kind in Iceland, a restaurant with a true Italian atmosphere. Apollo is known for good food made out of fresh raw materials, good pizzas baked in front of the guests, good coffee and comfortable service.

Hornið opened in 1979 was the first restaurant of its kind in Iceland, a restaurant with a true Italian atmosphere. Apollo is known for good food made out of fresh raw materials, good pizzas baked in front of the guests, good coffee and comfortable service.
Perfect Day

Dance, live & have the time of your life

Margrét Rán

Margrét Rán Magnúsdóttir is most often found fronting Vök, Iceland’s premier purveyors of hoard-dream pop, but she also makes music for films. Margrét’s beautiful, viscerally soundscapes underpin R Song Called Hate’, the powerful Hattari- Eurovision documentary which recently got its cinematic release. Here’s how Margrét’s perfect day in Reykjavík would be spent.

Breakfast in Birkenstocks

First thing in the morning, I would wake up to beautiful sunshine through my window. My cat, Emma, would be cuddling me, which she never does in real life. Then I would put on my Birkenstocks, walk to the kitchen and make a delicious pour-over coffee and oatmeal banana pancakes, while listening to Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong. I love these slow tempo mornings!

Lunchtime life-chats

It’s lunchtime and I’m feeling quite social, I’m in love with a place called Von Mathus, which is by the sea downtown in Hafnarfjörður. So I’d go over there, meet with friends, get the fish of the day and talk about life. Then I’d jump over to Café Pallett— which is in the same building—get takeaway coffee and drive to Hvaleyrarvatn for a nice walk in the sun.

Artisanal afternoon

I keep daydreaming about building something out of wood, like a dinner table or something. I don’t know anything about carpentry, but I want to be able to do it! So I’d go to my fantasy wood workshop where I’m surrounded by all this crazy beautiful wood and I would build myself a table. And my best friend, Svannahildur, would be there. She’s been battling cancer so she would be totally healthy and cancer-free. And we would just be laughing hard because obviously we’re amateurs, and don’t know shit about woodwork.

Hot night, cold mojitos

Later on I’d go to the lovely Sólir Yoga, where I’ve been doing mind-blowing hot yoga classes. Then I’d head over to Hafnarfjörður and take a long hot and cold shower, after which it would be time for me and Bryndis to pack our bags. We’d put Emma in the car and go for a quick delicious pizza at Flatey in Garðar. Then I’d drive to Hvaleyri. There, I’d wake up to beautiful sunshine in the heat of the night! So that this perfect day by blasting music on the summerhouse porch, dancing in the heat of the night! So that would be my perfect day. It’s a really good one—and a long one!

Vital Info

Useful Numbers

Emergencies: 112
On-call doctors: 1770
Dental emergency: 676 0505
Two free: 99 98 5222-888 561000

Post Office

Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

Opening Hours - Restaurants

Bars open at least 10-18, 24h in the centre.

Public Toilets

Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green-poster covered towers located at Hamrahlíðgarður, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavík Art Museum, Lækjargata and by Eyvindsson. On Baldarshafnargötu Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavík City Hall and the Reykjavík Library.

Public Transport

Most buses run every 20–30 minutes. Fare: 600 ISK adults, 240 ISK children. Buses run from 07-24:00, and 10-14:30 on weekends.

Public Toilets

Venue Finder

Perfect Day: Day in Reykjavík

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Mid-morning music

I tend to be more creative earlier in the day, so mid-morning I’d go to my studio in Hafnarfjörður. There, I’d work on something existing—probably a Vök song, because I’m finishing the album right now—that I can feed off the next few days. I’d listen to it over and over again, until I can’t stand it. I love that!

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The Map

Dining

1. Plótó Pizza
Hagamælar 67, 107 Reykjavík
Love pizza, but don’t think they’re quite big enough? Why not dive into an 18 inch pie from Plótó? Or, if that sounds a bit much, opt for their shareable slice and drink deal; and when we say “slice”, we’re still talking about a quarter of a pizza here—you won’t go hungry.

2. Duck B Rose
Austurstræti 14
Duck B Rose is the hip and happening place that opened across the street from Apóli last May. The new cafe serves light fare influenced by French and Italian cuisine. With neon signs and roses on the walls, the chill cafe is certainly inspired by romance. Try the duck pizza. Their vegan rigatoni is also orgasmic.

3. Fjallkonan
Hafnarstræti 1-3
Fjallkonan is an artisanal burger shop with clothing store Húrra Reykjavík, Yuzu’s condiments converted two deliciously intriguing. Real-talk: you can imagine on a hero sub. Most metres are just looking for a great selection of fresh meat, fish and vegetarian options. Fjallkonan does these well. Also, the veggie burger, double-cooked fries, and beetroot and feta are just looking for a great selection.

4. Café Babalú
Skólavörustræti 22
A staple for all Reykjavíkians Babalú offers comfort food for folks on a budget as well as a Star Wars themed bathroom (seriously). Their chilli will blow your mind and their chilli will blow your mind. For those who are previously mayo-averse Grapevine’s recc is the Slýslumannabúðir with extra cucumber. Intend to have a duck gorg on your Hlíði in the comfort of your bed before falling asleep on a sauce-covered pillow? Carry that beautiful sub like a newborn child in your arms.

5. Deig
Vegamótstæti 4
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 otherTRAIN

Downtown & Harbour District

11. The Coocoos Nest
Grandagarður 23
Nestled in a refurbished fishing hut in Grundi, The Coocoos Nest is a cozy and airy cafe, offering California casual brunch, lunch, and dinner, with an Italian twist. With large windows and light wood throughout, this is perfect for a lazy Saturday gezget or an afternoon ‘aperitivo’ after work. If you are in that part of town, head over for a warm-up.

12. Vinstúkan Tiú Sopar
Laugavegur 27
The charming basement bar focuses on natural wines as well as wines from smaller producers and lesser known regions. They have twelve bottles open at any one time, and the selection changes daily, so you truly never know what you’re going to get.

13. Aldamót Bar
Kirkjutorg 4
Taking over the famed Klaustur place, in case you’re like, in the future. Safe tables and table service. This classy and relaxed. It’s become aультура Culture Center in the past 30 years, it won’t disappoint. Even midnight, The Coocoos Nest is a cozy and airy cafe, offering California casual brunch, lunch, and dinner, with an Italian twist. With large windows and light wood throughout, this is perfect for a lazy Saturday gezget or an afternoon ‘aperitivo’ after work. If you are in that part of town, head over for a warm-up.

14. Kiki Queer Bar
Laugavegur 22
IT’S OPEN! Yup, Kiki is a love-it-or-hate-it situation, but if you’re looking to dance to the greatest hits of the past 30 years, it won’t disappoint. Even though right now there is no dancing, they are re-opening up with tables, something else now. For the Icelandic-indow. For the Icelandic-

15. Miami Bar
Hverfisgata 33
With a sharp aesthetic that’s miles away from any other joint in town, Miami serves up pure vice with a splash of cosmopolitanism and a dedicated ping-pong room in the basement. If that’s not enough, they also offer Cuba Libre on draft. So sit back, drink, and you’ll feel pure vice in “South Beach” minus the massage rooms and mountains of cocaine.

16. Mengi
Öðinagata 2
Mengi’s closet 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
Part flower-child, part spiritual and with a whole lot of whiny thrown into the mix, this cozy and hand-crafted bar is so intimate it makes you wanna sleep the day musing about goodes, lunar cycles and tarot card readings. You can do this all and more while sipping on their excellent house cocktails and an excellent slice of vegan cake. So for an after work
drink. That’s when this place thrives.

18. Kaldi Bar
Laugavegur 20b
IT’S OPEN! Yup, a small, stylish drinking hole popular with the after-work business crowd, Kaldi is a great place to feel a little classier and drink with dignity. The beer selection is top-notch, and the handcrafted interior tips the scales of upscale rustic charm. You can be certain that conversation will rule, not loud music. You also might meet important people, fall in love, and move to Saltjarnarnes.

19. American Bar
Austurstraeti 8
Football fans will rejoice in seeing the row of screens perennially tuned to sports channels above the bar, while troubadour aficionados will find in American Bar a great spot to listen to classic country music. Grab a rib and be happy.

Shopping

20. Myrkraerk Studio
Skólabíólsstígur 3
This hole-in-the-wall artist-run space is a true treasure for those seeking some edgier artworks. Featuring a rotating cast of Reykjavík’s best underground artists, including Freyja Elf, Solvið Palsson, Boot Foot Toys and Ángimir Sigurðsson, it’s a feast for the eyes with art covering nearly every available piece of space.

21. Hildur Hafstein
Klapparstígur 40
Hildur Hafstein is known for her slightly hippy, slightly witchy vibe—a lone jewellery shaman within the Icelandic scene. Filling a niche all her own, her mix of delicate jewellery with unusual shapes is truly a delight. Stop by her tucked away Klapparstígur studio to experience the magic in person.

22. Aftur
Laugavegur 39
Aftur is a mecca for Iceland’s stylish gothy fashionistas. Whilst most of the young Reykjavík crowd is wearing baseball caps and 90s throwback pieces, the older ones are often seen in flowing black capes and dresses. If you are into this particular look, this place is gold.

23. 12 Tónar
Skólabíólsstígur 15
This city-centre record store is something of an institution, offering the unique experience of having the store staff ask about your music taste then sit you down with some headphones, and a pile of Icelandic records. It’s also a label that puts out many top Icelandic artists. A must-visit Reykjavík store. Note: They also have a small bar and occasionally some shows.

24. Tulipop
Skólabíólsstígur 43
Tulipop serves up everything from lamps to wallets all covered in the cutest monsters you’ve ever seen. The Icelandic brand’s flagship store is an explosion of pastels and neon. Seriously, Tulipop is the cutest.

25. 66° North
Laugavegur 17-19
66° North is the OS brand in Iceland, donated by everyone from rural farmers to downtown Scandinavians. Pencils their wares and it’s obvious why—their quality and aesthetics is impeccable. These are pieces that will last you not only your lifetime, but probably your grandchildren’s.

Party Every Night. Cocktails!
Live Music. Live Sports Coverage
50 different kinds of beer.
Kitchen open from 11.00.
Ribs - Burgers. Chicken Wings!
On his debut effort, Axel Flóvent returns home

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen
Photo: Art Bicnick

You won’t find Axel in a pub or shop. Perhaps Axel Flóvent’s debut album ‘You Stay by the Sea’ is the album 2020 needs, even if it doesn’t know it yet. After the chaos of 2020, Axel’s calming, homey tones feel like a retreat into the quiet, carefree warmth of childhood—the folky indie-pop that reminds us of the unpretentious humaneness of the genre. It’s an effort that feels most apt for a twilight walk through a foggy city. Slow and mournful at the beginning, it journeys into a large, aching soundscape and echoes with Axel’s resigned plea of, “Maybe you’ll find it”—with each repetition more heartbreakingly than the last. Even so, there’s still a note of warmth in Axel’s voice. You get the feeling he doesn’t just hope you’ll find it—he’s sure you will.

Tourist—Axel’s first single from the album—is particularly emblematic of this. It’s a pining song that feels most apt for a twilight walk through a foggy city. Slow and mournful at the beginning, it journeys into a large, aching soundscape and echoes with Axel’s resigned plea of, “Maybe you’ll find it”—with each repetition more heartbreakingly than the last. Even so, there’s still a note of warmth in Axel’s voice. You get the feeling he doesn’t just hope you’ll find it—he’s sure you will.

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March 19th - 20:00 - Harpa - 2,400-5,700 ISK

At the time you are reading this, the Iceland Symphony orchestra could be Grammy winners or Grammy should have been winners. We don't know because this is being published pre-Grammys. Either way, they will celebrate. Pop the champagne. Sip a pajama. IJC

Sycamore Tree
March 19th - 20:30 - Harpa - 4,990 ISK

Sycamore tree—the duo of Ágústa Eva Erlendsdóttir and Sunnar Hilmarsson—is bringing the good ole' Americana to Harpa. Expect dramatic lyrics about loss and homecoming, that country singer thing they do where they raise the note at the end of the note and even a harmonica. You have it! IJC

Sonic ADHD

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The Rules Of A New Dimension

Kristín Morthens' 'Gegnumtrekkur' pulls you through the window into another world

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen  Photos: Art Bicnick

Exhibit 'Gegnumtrekkur' by Kristín Morthens will be up at Þula until March 28th

‘Gegnumtrekkur’—the title of Kristín Morthen’s newest exhibition at Þula—directly translates to ‘the Bernoulli Principle.’ It’s a physics term that describes stack effect, or how differences in pressure affect the flow of substances in an enclosed environment. Basically, it’s an extrapolation of the law of conservation of energy—that total energy must remain constant always.

But to be blunt, it’s not exactly the type of thing you might immediately interpret from Kristín’s paintings. Her works are a whirlwind of heightened, jewel-toned, chaotic abstractions, teaming with unlimited potential and kinetic energy. They don’t scream balance, but rather push the limits of equilibrium in a fantastical, space-age way that seems completely outside the realm of physical laws. Does the conservation of energy even exist in her works? It’s difficult to say.

“If you open two windows in the same space, the different air pressures of the wind and the air pressure inside will cause one window to get slammed shut,” Kristín explains, walking around the airy exhibition room. “So for this show, I wrote an imaginative text where this happens. I’m in a house and I open two windows and because of the air pressure, I get sucked out of one of those windows and journey into another reality.”

Beautiful but dangerous

This new reality is rife with symbols that indicate the rules of Kristín’s dimension. Some are the same as ours—hierarchy, power, love, and emotional and social contracts. “But all of this is in an alien, timeless space, so, for example, you have this shape here,” she explains, pointing to the top of a work entitled ‘Pyrnúdar-vígsmál’ (‘Gravity’ or ‘Weight Law’), “It’s both the sun but it’s also a wheel saw blade. So at the same time it’s something that’s vital, that creates life, but it’s also fatal and dangerous.”

Another shape that constantly reappears in the series resembles a hand curved around into a circle with long jagged fingers. It immediately brings to mind a Fibonacci sequence set into the form of a claw—another mathematical law that may or may not exist in Kristín’s universe.

“Another shape that constantly reappears in the series resembles a hand curved around into a circle with long jagged fingers. It immediately brings to mind a Fibonacci sequence set into the form of a claw—another mathematical law that may or may not exist in Kristín’s universe.”

And perhaps it’s here that the previously elusive Bernoulli Principle is seen in all its glory. For in ‘Brennisteinn,’ the kinetic energy of the flexing hands perfectly counters the potential energy of their almost-touching—the first law of thermodynamics triumphantly presented against a background of Prussian blue.
Diana scholar—is a Brunnsviki favourite. In fact, you might have read about her in our last issue. Now, she’s here with a solo exhibition at Hafnarhúsið presenting more than 100 new sculptures made over the past two years. You read a story that 100 new sculptures could never have. So come experience her work. The museum’s new cat, found in the paintings, his technical reproductions, Instagram pics and more put into physical form, exploring issues as vast as post-colonialism and institutional discrimination to good old’ humour. If you want to study up before the show, the museum is in English pottery and is full of surprises. As Audur told the Grapevine, ‘that’s what gives me the inspiration for this show."

Clay 1930 - 1970
While ceramic art has followed human history in Iceland, the early 20th century—presents a not-to-miss exhibition of ceramic art from Iceland.

Where The World Is Melting
Gerður Kristjánsdóttir presents a mid-career retrospective, Gerður Kristjánsdóttir presents a series of paintings which dissect the ways our world is changing.

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The Art of Making A Stand

'A Song Called Hate' shows Hatari emerging stronger from their Eurovision maelstrom

Words: John Pearson  Photo: Film Still & Art Bionick

If you live in Iceland the chances are that you’ll know Hatari. If not, they may well have gatecrashed your consciousness in 2019 when they represented Iceland at Eurovision in Israel—and lobbed a cheeky agitprop grenade right into the heart of the world’s biggest pop party.

Hatari used the platform to denounce Israel’s treatment of Palestinians. Their protest, in which they revealed Palestinian flags on live TV during the Eurovision finale, was seen by some 200 million people around the world. This principled stand—and the maelstrom it provoked—are at the core of Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir’s powerful documentary, ‘A Song Called Hate’.

Cutting through to the mainstream

At first glance, Hatari might appear to be a joke—an artist Ragnar Kjartansson comments in the film, “most art projects are basically jokes gone too far.” As if to address that idea, the film opens with Hatari lynchpins Matthias and Klemens trading phrases which might describe their multifaceted creative project.

‘Hatari is a lament that is screamed into the wind,’ Matthias articulates. ‘Hatari is a relentless scam,’ deadpans Klemens in response.

‘Hatari is a fabulously unpredictable, anti-capitalist, industrial, art performance collective,’ Anna Hildur offers, when later invited to add her perspective. ‘Although to some degree, they are indescribable.’

And she would know, having already made a TV documentary about them before their Eurovision journey began. ‘A Song Called Hate’ builds on that existing relationship. ‘I wanted to make a film about the art of making a stand,’ she continues. ‘But my question was, “would Hatari cut through to the mainstream?” It was a huge task that they took on.”

Palestinian pressure cooker

When they arrived in Israel, Hatari’s friend and collaborator—Palestinian artist Bashar Murad—showed them around his world in the West Bank town of Hebron. It is one of armed occupation and a lack of basic freedoms for Palestinians. Although he is clearly an ally, on-camera Bashar puts pressure on Hatari for greater commitment to their protest. Adding to this, pro-Palestinian movement BDS lobbied the band to boycott Eurovision—rather than attend and protest—and Hatari’s open talk of dissent provoked intense pressure from Eurovision organisers, right from the start.

The film captures the moments of stress and self-doubt which result, showing the Hatari mask slipping as they step out of character. Anna Hildur thinks that this was a decision made out of necessity, rather than a premeditated move on the part of the band.

‘Out there, the pressure became immense,’ says Anna Hildur. ‘They were on the brink of exhaustion and the reality was that they just needed a break from time to time to collect their thoughts. So

I think that what they discovered out there, and the pressure of the situation, made that decision for them.”

In the film, that pressure climaxes just after the group’s act of protest, as individuals begin to realise the gravity of what they have just done and the resulting potential threat to their personal safety. If Hatari had ever been a joke, in that moment the joke isn’t funny anymore.

“It was very raw and you see that in the film,” Anna Hildur recalls. “Some members of the group were definitely going through a breakdown, and it affected everyone.”

Return & reflection

Having escaped Israel physically unharmed—if not mentally—their return to Iceland provided an opportunity for artists and filmmakers to reflect on their experiences.

“It was strange reviewing material after we got back,” says Anna Hildur. “I relived some of the high-pressure moments so strongly that the tears just ran down my chin. You don’t have time when you’re filming to take it in, but I realised afterwards just how difficult the journey was.”

Hatari also emerged from their Eurovision maelstrom shaken, but certainly stronger and wiser.

There's a decision made out of necessity, rather than a premeditated move on the part of the band.

Amidst the chaos of their Eurovision journey, the group was confronted with intense pressure from BDS and Eurovision regarding their protest.

Anna Hildur, Hatari's friend and collaborator, expressed concern about the potential threat to their personal safety, which led to a decision to cut ties with Eurovision.

In the film, viewers are invited to reflect on their experiences, understanding the gravity of their acts and the impact they had.

Matthías said that this experience was something that cuts time in two—a before, and an after.” Anna Hildur concludes, “And as he says in the film, ‘I’ve never taken anything so far.’ I think that, for all of us who went through it, this was a life-changing experience.”

Anna Hildur forgot her latex mask at home.
The dawn of an eSports era in Iceland

Words: Owen Tyrie
Photos: Hlynur Hólm Hauksson & Grétar Örn Guðmundsson

Whether we wanted it or not, eSports is on the rise. Across the world, tournaments pack stadiums while players win millions of dollars and international fame just by popping off in the virtual world. Iceland is no different, though naturally on a smaller scale. Nonetheless, players are gaining recognition, more people are watching than ever before and kids all over the country dream of becoming the next online superstar.

Dusty eSports lead Iceland’s competitive gaming scene with their CounterStrike Global Offensive (CSGO) team slaying in all domestic competitions. Bjarni Guðmundsson, the lovely ginger CSGO team captain along with the team’s ever smiling part-time coach and ex-player, Gunnar Ágúst Thorodósen, have taken note of the rise in popularity and are now visualising a future where eSports take centre stage.

Leading Iceland’s eSports scene

The popularity of professional gaming on this little rock is in no doubt, Gunnar emphasises, due to CSGO.

“When you look at the viewer-ship on Twitch, you can see that most people here in Iceland are tuning into CSGO. It’s the same across all Scandanavian countries. For us in Iceland, I think it’s so popular because it has the longest legacy; people in Iceland have been playing it for so long and we have had semi-professional players dating back since the original 1.6 version of Counter Strike, before Global Offensive (CSGO) was out,” he explains.

Dusty eSports are currently on a hot streak in Iceland, having won almost everything there is to win since October 2019. But being the best in Iceland isn’t enough for Bjarni and his squad. As of now, the team is in the ESEA Main Division league, just shy of being recognised as a professional team. “We’re always doing better and better in the international scene, but we’re not quite where we want to be—our goal is still higher,” says the captain.

Gunnar is quick to add that their success has gained the attention of eSports fans in Iceland. “It took a while before people started paying attention to [Dusty] Gunnar explains. “It wasn’t until the third season of the Icelandic league when people would tune into our streams and give us online support.”

“Yeah it was definitely after that third season when people started to notice me online and even in the street,” Bjarni admits, a shy smile on his face. “I’ve been called out in Reykjavík quite a few times by people who recognise me, especially if I wear something with the Dusty logo on it. It’s a weird feeling.”

But it’s not just the players and coaches who have noticed the growth of the sport across the world, but the government too. The Icelandic government recently provided the Icelandic Electronic Sports Association with 10 million ISK to develop coaching courses in electronic sports for jobseekers. It’s a topic Bjarni is passionate about—he clearly believes these new initiatives will change many people’s perspective on eSports in general.

“I think the biggest thing is that this will help remove the stigma around eSports. The funding will help us get more coaches, buy more computers and, most importantly and not just play games 12 hours a day.”

Gunnar assuredly adds that this will not just help remove the stigma around eSports but will help competitive young and old. “Younger players will have an easier time becoming proper gamers now that there’s more infrastructure around it and older players who have stopped competing can stay involved in the scene by helping the new guys,” he adds. “For me, this is awesome and I think having paid coaching roles will attract a lot of people into a new career.”

Dawn is breaking on a new era for eSports in Iceland. In the not so distant future, kids might be begging their parents to take them down to the eSports café to hone their skills, aim and reflexes. A career in eSports might be as highly respected as other athletes. These new celebrities will no longer be recognised by their name but instead by their online alias. The argument that gaming is not a professional career is outdated and now, being a professional gamer is a reality for many. Or should we say, a virtual reality.
Artist Playlist: Huginn

Here’s a playlist to make you feel all the feelings

Words: Huginn & Hannah Jane Cohen Photos: Art Bicnick

Artist Playlist

Check out Huginn on all streaming platforms.

Huginn plays those weirdly special easy-going autotune hip-hop jams that kind of work in every situation. It’s actually kind of eerie. Anyway, he just dropped his newest track ‘Geimfarar’ in late February, which you can check out on all streaming services.

We sat down with him to talk about some of his favourite Icelandic tracks.

Trúbrot - Án þín

This song is one of my all-time favourites. It’s been a part of my life ever since I remember and I love everything about it—the lyrics, the melody and the story behind it. I’ve actually tried doing my own version of it many times, but I’ve just never done it justice. I’ll keep trying! (Eivør’s cover of it, though, is amazing.)

Friðrik Dór - Hlið við hlið

Friðrik Dór is the goat, in my opinion. He’s got hits on hits on hits. I didn’t know about Quarashi until 2006-7, while I lived in Denmark, but I just remember thinking how cool it was that they were from Iceland. When I started listening to them, I could finally show my friends Icelandic rappers in English and brag about it at school and that did a lot for me. The attitude in this track is very Eminem-like, who was my hero then. If I walked into the classroom with this in my ear, I would feel like I was the man. I might have been the only one that felt it, but it counts! And the song still rocks today.

Quarashi - Stun gun

I didn’t know about Quarashi until 2006-7, while I lived in Denmark, but I just remember thinking how cool it was that they were from Iceland. When I started listening to them, I could finally show my friends Icelandic rappers in English and brag about it at school and that did a lot for me. The attitude in this track is very Eminem-like, who was my hero then. If I walked into the classroom with this in my ear, I would feel like I was the man. I might have been the only one that felt it, but it counts! And the song still rocks today.

Valdimar - Yfir borgina

“Yfir borgina” is just the perfect song. I was 16 when this song was released, I think, and I’ve listened to it ever since. It can make me feel sad, hopeful, thankful and more. To be honest, I don’t even understand everything he’s saying with his fancy Icelandic, but I wholeheartedly agree with him. I love you Valdimar.

Hjaltalin - Það komst við hjartað í mör

Legendary. It brings up nostalgia. This song impacted me a lot when I was a “heartbroken” teenager and probably affected the type of music I wanted to make in the future. The pure emotions and honesty in it just speak to me.

Trúbrot - Án þín

Trúbrot - Án þín

Our kitchen is open
17.00–23.00 sun.–thu.
17.00–24.00 fri.–sat.

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makes world’s best sushi

Socialize with the locals

The Reykjavík Grapevine
Issue 03 — 2021

Music

Not pictured: The mixtape Huginn sent us

hits, I think young people are still discovering this song today and I think that will continue. I lived in Denmark when “Hlíð við hlið” was released and it blew my mind. I couldn’t get enough and soon even my Danish friends got onto Friðrik. I think Friðrik plays a big part in my vibe. It was a huge win for me when we released our song “Einn Tveir” together. A timeless song.
Cheap Food
ISK–Vegan option
Nachos, wings &
Every day 15-18
1,000 ISK And Under
keep your wallet feeling
Happy
A selection from
Every Happy Hour
in 101 Reykjavík
Get the complete Happy Hour listings!
Download our free app Appy Hour in the Apple and Android stores

Cheap food
Here are some deals that’ll keep your wallet feeling happy and full.
1,000 ISK And Under

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<td>Tungisinn</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>17:00 to 20:00</td>
<td>750 ISK</td>
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Hard Rock Cafe
Every day 15-18
Nachos, wings & onion rings - 990 ISK
Dominos
Tuesdays–All day Medium Sized pizza with 2 toppings - 1,000 ISK–Vegan option
Sólon
Monday - Friday
11:00 - 14:30
Soup of the day - 890 ISK
Tapas Barinn
Every day
17:00 - 18:00
Half off of selected tapas
Various prices

Boil / Le Keek
Every day–All day
Doughnut, coffee & bagel - 1,000 ISK

Shalimar
Monday - Friday
12:00 - 14:30
Curry - 1,250 ISK
Vegan option

São Tomé
Every day–11-15
Chicken wings - 1,190 ISK
“Dirty” Fries - 1,390 ISK

Sólon
Monday - Friday
11:00 - 14:30
Caser Salami - 1,490 ISK

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

Apotek
Every day
11:30 - 16:00
Two-course lunch - 3,390 ISK
Three course lunch - 4,390 ISK

Get Grapevine Merchant!

Featured Drinking Hole
Gokurinn
Tyruggata 22

Shows and a great happy hour to match. From 16:00 to 19:00, pick up Gylltur, Kókur and wine at 800 ISK and White Ale and Bólndi at 1,000 ISK. Then sing along to Music In Chains or some shit like that. 🎵
You would think that a nation that is both as obsessed with literature and as seismically active as Iceland would write a lot of stories about volcanoes. But that’s not actually the case. Granted, there are some. The excellent story “Eldmörn: A Starfish on a Red Volcano” focuses on the love affair of a geologist on the brink of a supervolcano going off not only in Reykjanesskóli, but also in her heart. It’s better than it sounds, trust me. But if you look at the grand scheme of Icelandic literature, we tend to write mostly about the weather and, occasionally, avalanches. Very rarely are volca-

nces mentioned. Even the writers of the sagas were more obsessed with nonsense gossip about the chieftains rather than the roarin g volcanoes all around them. Seriously, I’m surprised more geologists don’t complain—re ally, who gives a S%&@ about King Haraldur’s hair? Seriously! But in the current apocalyptic atmosphere of Iceland, we decid ed to take some time to suggest some possible novels that other people (not us, we’re busy watching ‘The Crown’) could write.

### Eyjafjallajökull

Let’s just get this out of the way. Obviously you all know this vol ca no, it’s the one that stopped air traffic before COVID-19 even got the idea. And truly, what a glorious display of raw power it was. Finally, Iceland proved that it, a small rocky island in the middle of the goddamn Atlantic ocean, could stop the world for a second. It’s the moment drama was made for. And for sure there are some movies about it, but no Icelandic writer has yet to accept the chal lenge of writing about it. But lucky for you, we’ve crafted a potential plotline: Farmers have had their world turned upside down by the ash, which cues that classic Iceland rural depression rumination. Then there’s a murder in the midst of the chaos, and also lovers that the natural disaster keeps apart, but then they find a way to be to geth er (maybe by stowing away on a tugboat crossing the Atlantic? Rowing?). The scenery around the volcano at the beginning of the eruption was downright nightmarish, so throwing in a few hauntings would be the icing on top. Because who killed the farmer in the begin ning? A ghost. Or wait, not a ghost, just the despondent mother of one of the lovers covered in the ashes of one of the lovers, who was actually a ghost this entire time. There you go— a love story that’ll be as convoluted as Padmé and Ana kin but with the loving cynicism of ‘Lost In Translation’. Bestseller?

### Heimaey

Ok, there are some books writ ten about the famous eruption at Vestmannaeyjar’s Eldfell, as this is by far the most dramatic story of all. Around 5,000 people woke to discover there was an active volcano going off just a couple of metres away from their bedroom window. It’s nothing less than an incredible achieve ment that sailors got the people away from danger in only hours. And what’s more— nobody died. The fact that there isn’t some sort of War and Peace-length thriller about this is just insane. Add in some sort of moral ambiguity about saving one citizen who had, I don’t know, murdered their former lover and you’ve got the telltale signs of a Nordic Book Prize. For can one human make the decision as to whether or not another human is worthy enough to be saved from a natu ral disaster? Do we have that power? I don’t know. Ask Sartre.

### Hekla

Possibly the weirdest volcano on the list, but a good fit if you want to do some weird fantasy with a dash of realism. Hekla goes off regularly and it’s not that threat ening for anyone other than whichever poor sheep find them selves wandering in her hills.

But that mountain’s got a se cret: It’s (allegedly) the gateway to hell. So perhaps write some sort of weirdly uncomfortable locals with noticeable physical and vo cal quirks, throw an outsider into the mix, and wait for the moment when the eruption starts and go o ’e! Join the blacksmith mysteriously whispers, “Oh that’s no thing to worry about. The real de mons are inside the walls.” Then there’s some sort of silent medita tion when the main character realizes he’s stayed too long in the town and therefore can only take up farming and slowly fade into the scenery. Yes, basically ‘Dune’ mixed with ‘Woman Of The Dunes’. We never said we were creative.

### Katla

This is the scary one. This is the one that can take a town, eat it alive in fifteen minutes, and worst of all, stop air traffic. Located under Mýdalshjalljökull, the heat alone from this eruption would start a brutal flash flood that could swamp Vík i Mýrdal away in a split second. In fact, were it to blow, people would have fifteen minutes to get their loved ones into their cars just to stop the hell away. Bárðar Sandbó is currently making a Net flix series about the mountain, but there are no books about this incredible threat that Icelanders live with every day. And what’s more, this volcano is due to blow and could go off anytime now. Of course, a thriller would be the natural choice, but that seems kind of expected, yeah? So go crazy and write a comedy. Perhaps a re telling of ‘Candide’, but instead of having your protagonist basi cally get fucked over at every oppor tunity, just have them totally thrive in the wake of the eruption. That’s right! Let’s bring back Icel niais! No one (especially not those from the Nordic literature tradition) would see that coming!

It really writes itself, so for just a moment, allow yourself the fantasy of accepting your Nobel Prize with the line: “Take that Karl Ove Knausgård! No struggles here!” Yay volcanoes!

### Holuhraun/Bárðarbunga

This volcano was in such an iso lated place that it didn’t even have a name. It didn’t even bother any one, just sat there roaring while no one noticed. Sounds a little bit like a YouTube comment er who doesn’t believe in the moon landing and is just there, yelling alone online at bots, only to later find out in the end, the volcano stops, just like his life.
Fancies is where we talk to Reykjavík’s most fashion-forward figures about style

Anthony Hoang Duy Nguyen

Anthony Hoang Duy Nguyen (18) is a highschool student who plans on studying fashion design.

Wearing:
- Mesh shirt from AAH Midnight Club
- Pants from Black Tai
- Shoes from New Rock
- Jewellery from eBay

Describe your style in 5 words:

Favourite stores in Reykjavik:
I honestly don’t shop in Reykjavik much—I shop online. Everything I’m wearing right now was bought online. But if I would shop here, I’d probably go to vintage shops like Spúútnik and Fatamarkaðurinn.

Favourite piece:
These shoes. They’re iconic. I got them when I went to Denmark in 2019 and honestly, they’re pretty comfortable so they are my everyday shoe. They’re my babies.

Something I would never wear:
Skinny jeans. They just look uncomfortable. Not gonna lie, I used to wear them a lot and I’m not going to get rid of those, but I don’t like the look where it just looks like you have spray painted your legs. Do you know that British look where you wear those super skinny jeans with cuts in them? I’m like guys, that looks horrible. Also, I would never wear fast fashion.

Lusting after:
I’ve been really into western and Asian looks right now. I actually just ordered some western cowboy boots from New Rock and a Chinese shirt. I’ve never owned something Chinese, but I kind of want to show my culture now. I want to represent my heritage. I guess I’ve always been following trends but if we all did that, we’d all look the same, so I’ve stopped doing that because I want to do something different.

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen
Photo: Art Bicnick

Fjallkonan is a new lively restaurant & pub in the heart of Reykjavik offering a selection of Icelandic and international dishes from local ingredients.
Casual and cozy atmosphere yet still fun and festive. Stop by for snacks & drinks, lunch or dinner.

Icelandic Delicacies

Must try dishes

LAMB & FLATBREAD
Slow cooked lamb, traditional Icelandic flatbread from the Westfjords, carrot puree, pickled red onions, horseradish sauce

ARCTIC CHARR & BLINI
Lightly cured arctic char, chickpea blini, horseradish sauce, roe, crispy lentils, yuzu-elderflower dressing

ICELANDIC PLATTER
Puffin, crowberry gel
Minke whale, malt glaze
Lamb tartar, chive mayo

THE LAMB BURGER
Bacon, mushroom & date duxelle, pickled red onions, pickled cucumber, rucola, smoked cheese, fries

SKYR ETON MESS CHEESECAKE
White chocolate “Skyr” mousse, meringue, raspberries, raspberry sauce

Fjallkonan welcomes you!

Happy Hour 15-17 every day
Falafel For The Soul

Chickpea brings a homely touch to the downtown dining scene

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen Photos: Art Bicnick

The birth of Chickpea

Maria Maximciuc started Chickpea along with her husband Ar- tion Drusca and their best friend Veaceslav Sirghii. The couple moved here unexpectedly from Moldova nine years ago after falling in love with the country on what was supposed to be a short trip here. Since coming to Iceland, Maria has had a few different jobs, but in the back of her mind, she always wanted to start a restaurant. And so, when she found herself without a job at the beginning of the pandemic, she took it as a sign to finally make her dreams come true. “I remember my husband said, ‘So isn’t it the best time to finally do what we want to do?’” she says, laughing. “And so we started looking for a location.”

The restaurant was always going to be based around falafel, Maria explains. “My husband loves falafel. He was always making it for friends from scratch and they’d say, ‘Oh my god, it’s so good. You should open a restaurant!’” she says. Heeding their friends’ advice wasn’t a stretch — Artion is a professional chef, and he and Veaceslav have worked in the industry for many years pre-Chickpea at restaurants such as Cocoos’s Nest. “And here in Reykjavik,” Maria continues. “You really couldn’t get that good falafel made from scratch anywhere.”

And so Chickpea was born. “Every morning, the boys come here to start making the dough and baking the bread, and then we make the falafel base,” Maria says, smiling. “And many of the ingredients, she emphasises, are locally sourced. She then explains where the kimchi recipe comes from—it’s a family secret, given to Maria and Artion by their beautiful friend Renee from Taiwan.

The soul of Chickpea

And no doubt, the eatery has achieved its goal. When I arrive, it’s in the midst of the bustling lunch rush. And though there are few seats—even fewer right now due to the gathering restrictions—all are taken up by those happily munching on pitas or salads. The portions are generous, I note; the moment my falafel and salad land in front of me. I’ve opted for the classic falafel, but rather their spicy version with kimchi along with their crispy chickpea salad. Upon first bite, I know immediately that absolutely everything—from the aforementioned falafel to the delicate pita to the tangy kimchi—is freshly made, and I can’t help but take a moment to savour it. Hey, it’s not every day you’re treated to such a prized trio.

The falafel very much brings to mind the fresh bites you’d find on the carts of the Middle East—and the salad is equally as visceral. While large, neither are particularly heavy and though I’m undeniably full after my meal, I’m still energetic. I’m particularly excited to try more of their salads in the coming weeks. The downtown area currently doesn’t have a dedicated salad place—but Chickpea could easily fill that niche. “We love the zero waste ideology and have a mindful kitchen,” Maria says. “We’re offering biodegradable packaging with all the food taken away and are using environmentally friendly soaps and cleaning products inside.”

As I leave, I note they also have homemade kombucha on offer. And while I kick myself a bit that I didn’t grab a glass to pair with my meal, I’m pretty confident I’ll be back soon, so it seems Maria was right when she said they made this place for the locals. “This is our soul. All of our hearts are here,” Maria concludes. “Chickpea is made for us and the customers to enjoy.”
Eva Michelsen is showing me around Eldståðid—Reykjavík’s latest commercial kitchen for food entrepreneurs and small producers. The kitchen is a modern all-white and stainless steel affair, with only the synchronised movements of people tempering chocolate, shaping patties and packing kormas hinting at the industrious air of what really goes on in its quiet, sanitised spaces.

I first met Eva Michelsen, a spirited food tech entrepreneur, when she was organising the Nordic Kitchen Workshop in 2018. Over the next two days, amongst a room full of food start-ups, participants shared the trials and hurdles of getting their product to market. Between now and then, she has gone on to start Eldståðid, a commercial kitchen impressive not only for its ambition, but also for bringing six food vendors to store shelves in just six months of operation. So I choose to recognise names on their shelves in just six months of operation! So if you recognise names on their shelves in just six months of operation! So if you recognise names on their shelves in just six months of operation! So if you recognise names on their shelves in just six months of operation! So if you recognise names on their shelves in just six months of operation! So if you recognise names on their shelves in just six months of operation!

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But when there is MATIS, the government-run kitchen, why Eldståðid? “They’re a test kitchen and they only allow one producer at a time,” Eva clarifies. “There is limited storage space. Eldståðid, on the other hand, is a fully equipped commercial kitchen where up to three producers can work alongside one another at a time.” We have shared infrastructure and offer a community and network of shared experiences, she shares. Why should someone choose Eldståðid and not go it on their own instead? “Do you have 15-16 million krónur?” Eva quips, bluntly. “I did the numbers and if I had to take on a loan, I simply wouldn’t have done it,” she confesses. “The hurdle for a lot of people is knowing where to start,” she explains. “What are the rules, what is packaging, what is a quality handbook? It can all get overwhelming. Because I am responsible for a lot of the things at Eldståðid—fire safety, insurance, pest control—the undertakings of the producers are a lot easier,” she explains.

“I was a governmental agency, I couldn’t say no to anyone, but being privately run like this, I can stipulate my own conditions—for instance, we don’t allow deep frying, we are flexible with our opening times. We can do what we want to, when we want to,” she laughs jokingly.

Culinary community

As we walk around the facilities, Eva excitedly shares that they are looking forward to new blast chillers, as the swanky coolers are already proving insufficient due to the rising demand for a spot at Eldståðid. “There is a growing waiting list,” she beams proudly.

There is a tangible barrier to entry for novice home cooks looking to scale their operations. When legislation and licenses can stifle that entrepreneurial spirit, Eldståðid is a “one-stop shop,” as Eva succinctly describes. With their Icelandic and English policy in place, it has naturally proven popular with New Icelanders wanting to share their taste of home as well.

Besides the kitchen area, there is an event space, conference and meeting rooms. “Each month we get a food entrepreneur to tell their story. We’ve had Óskar from Omnom, we’re expecting BitaViking next,” Eva shares. “I know first hand how paralyzing it can be to take that leap of faith. So this is about creating this network, to create these shared experiences.”

“What we offer is a community,” she concludes.
A Rainy Day Out

Iceland doesn't care about your travel plans, you simply bend to its will.

Words: Owen Tyrie Photos: Art Bicnick

We had a great plan for this month’s travel feature: a road trip along the south coast of Iceland, a journey to Náuthisagil waterfall and telling the fascinating yet haunting history of the ravine. Unfortunately, things don’t always go as planned here, for what we didn’t count on was that bitch Mother Nature.

Rain rain, go away

The Grapevine’s photographer Art Bicnick and I set off for our adventure at 9:00 sharp on a grim, grisly, grey Friday. At first, it was a breathtaking drive along the coast; an ethereal fog lay low over the mountains, giving the entire area a mysterious kind of vibe as the sharp, black, jagged cliff faces peered through the mist as if they were circling—something that is quite rare in his wisdom, decided we should venture a little further and visit another waterfall further along the coast. This one was a bit more well known than Náuthisagil, he explained. Its name? Seljalandsfoss.

Yeah, we know you’ve seen this waterfall before

So after a short and uneventful drive down the road, we made it to the equally empty car park next to Seljalandsfoss. As in Náuthisagil, the intense rain had a huge effect on the waterfall. It was more powerful than I’ve ever seen; so powerful that trying to walk behind the waterfall soaked me in a similar fashion to being sprayed by a hundred Super Soakers. Nonetheless, it was a sight to behold. The water was flowing fast, crashing down hard and creating a spray so powerful, it felt like I was being slapped across the face by a wet flannel. Lovely.

The water at Seljalandsfoss comes from the Eyjafjallajökull glacier and splits off into three different falls along the cliff face. Seljalandsfoss is by far the most popular of the three due to the fact that it can be easily circled—something that is quite rare for a waterfall. Art once again had the great idea to go slightly further along the cliff to see the third waterfall that flows through a canyon, similar to Náuthisagil. This waterfall is known as Gíjufoss and, like Náuthisagil, you can walk inside the canyon to get a closer look. But, in what was becoming the theme for the day, the downpour made the river too strong for us to walk through.

At this point, we were both sick of everything going wrong on our little adventure so we decided to sack it all off and grab coffee.

To Skool for cool

When you think of quality coffee, you probably don’t think of coffee made in the back of an old American school bus. But I love to be proven wrong and in this case, boy was I wrong. Skool Beans opened last summer and is run solely by Holly Keyser; a bubbly gal who moved to Iceland a few years back. She bought the bus from an expedition group for only 100,000 ISK and drove it to Vik where it now sits underneath the tall cliff faces that line the coast.

Holly opened the place in Vik because she felt as if the Icelandic people often get overlooked when new businesses come to the country; “In my four years of being here, I have seen lots of new and exciting things popping up, which is great but sadly, it’s all for tourists. I wanted to give something back to the locals and they’ve really helped me out by coming here for coffee,” she explained.

Holly was very keen to stress the purpose of the bus as it was something very important to her; the bus wasn’t just going to be like any other food truck. “The focus of the bus is ethical products at ethical prices,” she says. “I wanted to create a cozy environment away from the stresses of the world, where you can get warm and enjoy quality coffee.”

Holly rents her own coffee and imports another from a fairtrade source. Also, her variety of tea was just exceptional—over 30 different types! To cap things off, she even had Yorkshire Tea for Britanixers like myself on offer. Score!

So while the day may have gotten off to a bad start—what with all the rain and flooding—climbing aboard the old US school bus and being greeted with a selection of fresh delicious coffee and snacks made it all worth it. So we at the Grapevine cannot recommend this cozy cafe enough after a long day adventuring. A+ for Skool Beans! And a big fat F for nature, o
The World According to the Grapevine

The Grapevine's team of amateur astrologers journey through the universe, enshrining the capricious abyss of space every month just to bring you this short zodiac.

HORROR SCOPES

The Future Is ~Hazy~

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen & Andie Sophia Fontaine


Don't Hesitate!
Act Now!
* You only need to type the URL in once

31 The Reykjavík Grapevine
Issue 03—2021

Buy instant noodles? Maybe what can this be extrapolated better options for wall art. So your wall. It's true, there were consciousness. Yes, Taurus, you're onto an elevated stage of consciousness. Yes, Taurus, you're onto an elevated stage of consciousness.

**Fight Club** poster fell off the wall. There might be a plague and everyone in January, 2020, don't you? Don't be some sort of mystical monster. Or maybe... The writing of the stars can get messy sometimes.

**Gemini**

You're not sick because of the vaccine shot. You're sick because you only eat potatoes and coke and.
"There was only one game of this genre that I played and it was gay porn."

Brokat Films, who will soon be exhibiting at Kling & Bang, on their childhood.

"I wanted to make a film about the art of making a stand."

Director Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir on her new documentary following the rise of volcano-punk-magma-plather-establishment-loving-all-around-good-lads band Hatari.

“Oh my god, it’s so good! You should open a restaurant!”

Maria Maximciuc, owner of falafel-spot Chickpea, reveals what friends used to tell her husband before they opened the eatery.

Glacier Walks & Ice Climbing
FROM SKAFTAFELL, VATNAJÖKULL N.P.
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