Nonbinary people have always existed, all over the world, but are only recently getting noticed in Eurocentric countries. We explore what being nonbinary means, the challenges they face, and what needs to change for the better.
A recent comment on one of our YouTube videos complained that I should shut up about being trans and nonbinary; that it’s in fact straight cis people who are actually marginalised, and “frags” like me are taking over. There’s an old saying that goes “when you’re accustomed to privilege, equity feels like oppression.” I would argue that even pushing for equality also gets framed by the privileged as oppression. When I see how trans issues are framed by mainstream media, especially in the US and UK, as a journalist, I am constantly astounded at how editorial standards go right out the window when covering this topic. Seldom, if ever, are any actual trans people interviewed for these pieces. Repeatedly debunked cranks are given uncritical platforms for their hate. Small wonder that anti-trans legislation in the US, and hate crimes both there and Europe, have been running rampant. But we would be kidding ourselves if we believed this can’t happen in Iceland. There is a small cadre of bigots forever yelling about “only two genders” and “you can’t change your sex,” and we would be doing ourselves a disservice by pretending it’s not happening. This is why I will not shut up. This is why Pride is still important everywhere. So we hope you’ll enjoy the perspectives of three nonbinary Icelanders in this issue’s cover story. Though listening and learning, tolerance can flourish.

Hannah Jane’s Sentimental Sermon
Last year, Andie Sophia and I wrote our joint Pride editorial at the tail end of the widespread Black Lives Matter protests. I remember sitting at this same desk thinking that the hatred gripping our shared birth country couldn’t possibly get more extreme. If you had told me that in months, insurrectionists would storm our Capital Building encouraged by our then-President, I would not have believed you. But here we are. This year, the news is currently dominated by the Delta variant. Cases worldwide are exploding and the topic of social revolution has retreated once again to the background. For me, Pride 2021 was a light at the end of the tunnel, but now it’s once again, a quiet affair. So how does one celebrate Pride by their lonesome? Well, by remembering that Pride was not originally a party. It was a protest. Queer and reproductive rights in European countries have continued to decline horrifically. There’s been a massive uptick in anti-Asian and anti-Semitic crimes in the US and trans women continue to be murdered at a disproportionate rate worldwide. QAnon—and its hateful cousins—still flourish in the darkest corners of the internet, leaving a trail of victims in their wake. Bigotry is a rabbit hole and while it might not always be fatal, it’s always there. So love and listen to your neighbours. Humanity need not be so cruel.

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Give yourself at least half an hour before your planned arrival at the airport to complete the testing process. Visit us at Adalgata 60 in Reykjavínsbrau or at BSI Bus Terminal in Reykjavík. When you arrive, please have your QR code ready. The testing process takes about 15 minutes. The test results will be sent to you via email with a valid QR code that you can present in all countries that accept COVID-19 antigen tests.

NEWS

It probably goes without saying, but the big news in Iceland right now is the Delta variant of the coronavirus. Within a couple weeks of Iceland throwing aside all domestic restrictions and making the border considerably easier to cross, new cases began to crop up rapidly—even amongst the vaccinated. Single-day records were shattered, new domestic restrictions were put in place and popular August events were cancelled.

This seemed to give fuel to the small, but loud, anti-vax contingent in Iceland. It later came to light that while most of the new cases were amongst vaccinated people, the actual percentage of vaccinated people who subsequently became infected has not even crossed 1%. Even so, one woman loudly confronted a group of pregnant women in line to get vaccinated, becoming so unruly that police were called to escort her away. This person was subsequently doxxed by mainstream media and some questioned her mental health. This person was subsequently doxxed by mainstream media and some questioned her mental health. Just a reminder: some perfectly sane people can have wildly wrong and inaccurate views.

In other news, elections are coming up and recent polling is revealing some highly unusual possibilities for autumn. Iceland has almost never had a one-party ruling government; two parties are usually the norm. However, recent polling has shown that even a three-party coalition will be next to impossible. More shockingly, some of the possible ruling coalitions—if the recent polls are reflected in the voting results, that is—may be possible without the Independence Party. Iceland’s conservatives. This is huge news and it’s a surprise it isn’t more widely reported. The Independence Party has been a part of nearly every ruling coalition since the country became an independent republic in 1944; it took the literal collapse of the financial system to get them out of power.

In less exciting news, Gylfi Sigurðsson, a football player for Everton and the Icelandic National Team, is reportedly under investigation in the U.K. for sexual offences against a minor. Though he wasn’t named in the British press—they only said it was a “married, 37 years old and plays regularly with his national team”, which narrowed it down to two people, Gylfi being one of them—sources speaking with the Icelandic press did identify him. Gylfi was reportedly arrested, his house searched and some unnamed items were seized. Subsequently released on bail, he has denied the charges against him—whatever the nature of his reported crime may be. That will have to come to light later.

First

Words: Andie Sophia Fontaine

Photos: Soccer.ru/Wikimedia Commons
The taste of Icelandic lamb is unrivaled. Our pure bred lambs graze free in the pristine wilderness of Iceland, eating luscious green grass, berries and wild herbs such as red clover, Arctic thyme, sedge, willow, thrift and angelica. The end result is a tender fine-textured meat that is both naturally rich in Omega-3 and iron and infused with the flavor of nature. Icelandic lamb is a taste experience beyond compare.

www.icelandiclamb.is
The War Planet Cometh

On the evening of July 2nd, 2021, skies darkened across southwest Iceland. A loud crack reverberated through the sky, shaking the very earth below as a mysterious figure emerged from the clouds above.

Against the pale northern night, it darkened across southwest Iceland. Leading me to south as a cloak or tunic of the colour blár, which translates literally to “war globe.” From Old Norse, meaning “battle,” we have here a fine compound with hvinntur, or “gloves,” to denote a dangerous ball from outer space.

By the way, mythology nerds may recognize诡异 from víngríðr, literally “battle surge,” the planks on which the battle of Ragnarok is fought. EP

There is, however, another obscure word for a meteor in Iceland: Vígahnöttur, which translates literally to “war drum.” From Old Norse víg meaning “drum,” we have here a fine compound with hvinntur, or “gloves,” to denote a dangerous ball from outer space.

By the way, mythology nerds may recognize eagle—up to 100,000 ISK—so do be sure

At the border

Travellers to Iceland, including residents and tourists, must present a negative COVID test—either a rapid test or PCR—on arrival that’s not more than 72 hours old. This applies to the vaccinated and unvaccinated alike.

Failure to do so could result in a hefty fine—up to 100,000 ISK—so do be sure to come correct.

Domestically

Public gatherings are capped at 200 people. Masks are required in indoor spaces. People will be required to maintain a distance of one metre between one another. Restaurants, clubs and pubs can’t let new patrons enter after 23:00, with the last person required to leave at midnight. Pools and gyms are limited to 75% of their maximum capacity.

All of this is to be in place until August 13th.

But are vaccines safe??

You may have been alarmed to see recent news that most of the new infections for the coronavirus are among vaccinated people. This point might have you questioning the efficacy of vaccines. Don’t fret: there’s more.

According to data provided to reporters by the Directorate of Health, when the total number of vaccinated people and the number of those who subsequently caught the virus are taken as a whole, the effectiveness of these vaccines comes into focus.

In any given group of people vaccinated by a particular vaccine, the percentage of those who later contracted the virus never surpassed 0.18%. Furthermore, even amongst the infected, their symptoms have been far milder than those unvaccinated.

So rest assured: vaccines work and you should get yours if you haven’t already.

Words: Andie Sophia Fontaine
Photo: Art Bicnick

Get Grapevine Merch!
Ullr, The Hanoi Rocks Of The Norse Pantheon

The Grapevine has never forgotten these rock gods

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen

Remember Hanoi Rocks? Man, they rocked! To this day, I can't get enough of "Boulevard of Broken Dreams." You feel me?

Stop lying. I know you don't remember them—if you even have any idea who they are.

A brief history of (glam) time

For the uninitiated, Hanoi Rocks was a Finnish glam rock band from the 1980s. The group has been cited as a major influence by bands you might have actually heard of, such as Guns N’ Roses, Poison, and Motley Crue. Unfortunately, despite their prolific musical impact, Hanoi Rocks had a rather short-lived career—debuting in 1979 and calling it quits in 1985 after the tragic death of drummer Razzle following a party at Vince Neil’s house.

So while Hanoi Rocks arguably pushed a new sound, spawning some massive hits for other bands—c'mon “Paradise City” baby!—no one outside Vince Neil’s house. The band’s influence by bands you might have actually heard of, such as Guns N’ Roses, Poison, and Motley Crue. Unfortunately, despite their prolific musical impact, Hanoi Rocks had a rather short-lived career—debuting in 1979 and calling it quits in 1985 after the tragic death of drummer Razzle following a party at Vince Neil’s house.

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The existence of nonbinary people is gaining slow but steady recognition in many Eurocentric countries—Iceland included. While we celebrate the fact that Iceland officially allows for a third legal gender marker—X—and has somewhat relaxed their naming laws, most of the challenges nonbinary people face have more to do with the reality of living in a society that only accepts a binary view of gender.

In this feature, we spoke with three nonbinary Icelanders—Ari Logn, Regn Sólmundur Evi and Reyn Alpha Magnúsar—about their experiences with their gender identities, the challenges they face and what needs to change and how.

**WHAT DOES ‘NONBINARY’ MEAN ANYWAY?**

Simply put, nonbinary is an umbrella term for a set of gender identities that do not adhere entirely, or at all, to the binary male and female. As it is not a “third gender” but a category in itself, many nonbinary people can have very divergent gender identities from one another—agender people, bigender people and fae gender people are a few examples. Far from being a recent trend or fad, nonbinary gender identities have existed in many cultures around the world for millennia, with examples including the ‘Yan Daudu of sub-Saharan Africa, the Nádleehi of the Navajo people and the Fāafafine of Samoa, to name just a few.

The “recentness” of nonbinary gender identities in Europe and North America is only relative to most Eurocentric cultures. For many cis people in these countries, and even for many binary trans people, nonbinary people are a “new” concept that they are just now beginning to know.

In Iceland, nonbinary people are legally recognised, at least as far as gender markers in the National Registry are concerned. Naming laws have also been slightly relaxed; names are no longer relegated to only for men or only for women, and some gender-neutral names have made it into the lexicon.

Still, legal and societal challenges persist. In the course of our interviews, the patterns that emerged include the challenges of living in a community that sees gender in purely male or female terms, the desire to not want to make anyone uncomfortable by simply being yourself, the gendered nature of the Icelandic language and the lack of representation of or education about nonbinary people.

**IT’S TIME TO SAY IT LOUD: NONBINARY PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS EXISTED.**

Words: Andie Sophia Fontaine Photos: John Pearson

When asked what nonbinary gender identity they abide by, Regn and Ari Logn describe themselves as agender—that is, lacking any gender at all—while Reyn is not entirely sure. “I describe myself as agender,” Ari Logn says. “I just don’t feel like ‘woman’; it never fit me, it never belonged to me, in the same way ‘man’ didn’t either. Everyone around me sort of linked in with ‘womanhood’ and ‘manhood’ but I just didn’t. That’s the only way I can describe it. I just dress how I think is nice and that’s it. I don’t feel like I have a masculine or feminine spirit, I just... am.”

I also describe myself as agender, in a way that I don’t feel a connection to womanhood or manhood,” Regn says. “But I tried out different gender identities that go under the nonbinary umbrella. I had tried genderqueer, which is itself a pretty big umbrella, but it wasn’t exactly on point. I thought I was trans masculine for a while: like maybe a feminine trans man or even androgynous trans man, but that didn’t fit, either. So I landed on the agender term, but it doesn’t really reach all parts of me. I feel like I have a gender of some sort, but it’s just not really connected to femininity or masculinity. It’s more like something very different. I haven’t found a term yet. The closest I got was apragender [a gender identity that is neither male, female, nor “something in between’]. But I go with agender because people understand it a bit more. I don’t feel any connection to traditional femininity and masculinity.”

“I don’t really have a specific label for my experience of gender,” Reyn says. “I originally landed on agender. At the time I thought I didn’t really care about gender expression
"You see around you society putting expectations on you. It puts in your head that you have to do things a certain way to be a successful human."

or how people saw me. That changed pretty soon and I felt ‘agender’ wasn’t appropriate anymore. Since then, I haven’t really been able to come to a conclusion about it. I don’t have much of a strong gender identity, which would point to agender, but still I’m not completely sure. It’s a tough call to make. I sometimes use the label ‘trans feminine’ because I think it describes me well most of the time. But otherwise I’m just comfortable with nonbinary.”

When asked to describe what gender even is, things begin to get more nebulous. Ari Logn describes themselves as a gender abolitionist, citing how the concept “seems to completely control what we are ‘allowed’ to do or be.” Regn believes that “each and every person on this planet has their own gender,” as no two people will have the same understanding of what their gender—whether assigned at birth or discovered in time—means to them. Reyn, for their part, takes a whimsical approach, saying, “I always think of this sign I’ve seen in pictures from some Pride parade which said: ‘People think gender is male and female, when actually it’s just a big ball of wibbly-wobbly gender-wendie stuff.’ I agree with that.”

If you’re raised in a binary community, how do you even come to understand that you’re nonbinary? For many, it comes from either chance representation, or simply meeting other nonbinary people.

“I never heard the word ‘nonbinary’ until I met other nonbinary people,” Regn says. “I was a really androgynous child. People wouldn’t mistake me for a boy but I felt like a boy most of the time, since I was like 8 or 9. I also realised really young that I was pansexual. I came out in 2018, when I was 20. I was working with children at the time and there was this tiny little child who pointed at me and said, ‘You’re a woman!’ and I never felt so confused in my entire life.

“Then I went into this self-reflection, asking myself if I was being a misogynist, like, do I hate women? Why don’t I want to be a woman? I was a really big feminist, I was the president of the feminist committee at MII [Menntaskóli við Hamarháls, a secondary school]. So I thought of course I don’t hate women, I love women. What is this? Why am I reacting like this? This sent me into a spiral of an existential crisis, and was really reflecting.”

They continue: “Then I met a queer person at [the nightclub] Gaukurinn during the summer, and they were like ‘how do you identify?’ and I said ‘I think I identify as nonbinary and it felt so good to say that. I let people use whatever pronouns they wanted, so I was always ‘she’ for half a year after that. After I came out, I became so much more confident in myself, so I started asking people to use they/them, or hán in Icelandic.”

“I have this memory of seeing Boys Don’t Cry as a kid,” says Ari Logn. “I was just amazed. There was something in my brain that was like ‘I connect to this.’ I watched a lot of things as a kid and I hadn’t connected to anything like I did to this. I didn’t even really know about gender at that age; I just saw it and thought ‘this makes sense.’”

“Having that experience as a really young person, it took me some time to realise how transgender related to me, though. My life hasn’t really been very traditional, so I really didn’t have gender expectations put on me by family, apart from you have a vagina so you’re a woman. If there had been pressure, actually; I feel good about that. But you notice society putting expectations on you, which subconsciously puts in your head that you have to do things a certain, very traditional and capitalist way to be a successful human. That has definitely had an impact on me, and that’s why I felt such relief when I realised I could just be me. I’d say that in the last five years since coming back to Iceland I’ve definitely settled a lot more into being comfortable in my skin as a nonbinary person, I would say it’s definitely safer for me to be who I am here, compared to the UK. I have a lot of privilege as a white Icelander.”

“NOT WANTING TO BOTHER ANYONE”

A common theme that came up in these interviews was not wanting to make binary people feel scared or uncomfortable when confronted with the reality of nonbinary people. This desire to spare the feeling, real or imagined, of binary people can keep many nonbinary people in the closet, months or even years after understanding their own gender identities. Another closeting force is growing up in a binary culture and having societal expectations based on one’s assigned gender at birth foisted upon you.

“When I hit puberty I had a lot of guy friends, and they sort of expected to become a woman,” Regn says. “They kind of all slowly evaporated around me, which was really hard, so I became preoccupied with male approval, which is really bad for anyone. I became really obsessed with becoming as feminine as I possibly could; I wore dresses all the time. I did a lot of traditionally feminine things even though I didn’t really care for them. That led to eating disorders, depression, I was just very sad all the time.

“Then I went to MH, which is a school that has a reputation for [allowing students] to be whoever [they] want to be. When I figured out that I was nonbinary, everything just fell into place and made sense in a way that I could actually feel comfortable with myself. Being my whole, true self, which is so liberating and I still feel so blessed that I actually came to this conclusion. I’ve never looked back.”

Add’s Reyn, “I think if there was any external pressure, it would have been from society as a whole, media and maybe some friends—most of my friends for most of my life have been straight cis boys, who have a tendency to maybe think more about these things than some other groups might.”

“I wasn’t really bound by these things at all, but I did start to notice after I realised I was nonbinary that these expectations are everywhere. Continuously being labelled by gendered terms by other people. You can never just be a person. I think that’s what bothered me the most, because I wasn’t following gendered expectations. Coming out helped with that, because I could finally have a reason for not wanting people to address me in certain ways. I think also, to some extent, it alleviates some of the pressure to conform to societal norms. It was mostly just a relief to be able to stop pretending that there was nothing going, so as to not rock the boat before I was ready. People understand better now why I feel the way I do and why I’ve been the way I am.”

“I think a lot of people are scared of nonbinary people, because we’re not comfortable. Ari Logn says. “We’re outside of society’s comfort. I’ve sensed in people that I’ve encountered this uncomfortableness. I don’t really know how to address it though. I’ve tried, like ‘hey these are my pronouns, no big deal, if you want information I can give it’. And I try to give information but some people will just make you feel bad about even stating and asserting your pronouns or identity. Passingly enough I’ve encountered a lot of well meaning people who think that because I’m not woman, I’m automatically ‘man’. It’s the other default, I will have men, more of the time, asking if it’s OK to use ‘he’ instead. I’ll say ‘hán’ and they’ll hear ‘hann’. It’s like they really realised that it’s ‘not woman’ so they go to ‘the other one’. But there’s more than just man or woman.”

“CONFRONTING MISCONCEPTIONS”

Even after coming out, nonbinary people will very often find themselves having to continuously educate binary people on who they are and what their gender identities mean.
“A lot of the time when I tell people I’m nonbinary, or a woman, some people assume that I’m intersex,” Regn says. “And that’s if people know what intersex is, which is not common. I’ve also had people tell me ‘you can’t be nonbinary; you’re wearing a dress and makeup.’ I feel like they don’t understand that even if we look at the binary, there’s no right way to dress a man or a woman; you can be a man in a dress or a woman in a suit, so I can be nonbinary in a dress with makeup. When I’m wearing more masculine clothes, people are like ‘so are you a man today?’ Also when I tell people I’m nonbinary, some people think that nonbinary is just one gender, like a gender in itself. But it’s an umbrella term. You can be just nonbinary in itself, but there are so many other identities under there. A lot of the time people can’t get their head around that there’s no connection to the binary there, because people have been taught that there is a binary and nothing else so it’s really new to people. I get that, and I always approach this topic kindly and gently, because I don’t want to scare people off. I want people to understand more than them scared.”

“I think this thing treating nonbinary as a third gender option right next to man and woman is pretty common,” Reyn adds. “Sometimes they’ll think this third gender is called by its pronoun, like ‘There are three genders: karl, kona and hán.’ I’ve also had people say something to me in masculine language terms, correct themselves, but then switch over to feminine. It’s still wrong; it’s just a different wrong.”

**ICELANDIC CHALLENGES**

Like many languages, Icelandic is heavily gendered. This applies not just to pronouns, or the genders of certain nouns, but even adjectives. Fortunately, Icelandic does recognise a gender-neutral case, which has made the language more flexible for nonbinary people than languages that may recognise only two gender forms. However, Icelandic still has plenty of room for changes to accommodate everyone and some neologisms have been invented—most notably, hán, a gender-neutral pronoun. “I am a language enthusiast, and I have such a big love for Icelandic,” Regn says. “It’s such an amazing, beautiful language. Because I love the language so much, I acknowledge the need for change, because languages are supposed to serve the people using them; not the people using them serving the language. Languages are supposed to be accommodating. So I think all the new words that we’re seeing right now are all such powerful words that I can’t wait to hear being used regularly. When I first started wanting people to use hán, I also felt a bit uncomfortable with it and I understand it totally, but other people are just going to have to get used to it.”

“There’s plenty of room in Icelandic for gender-neutral speech,” Reyn says. “I think the efforts that have been made so far have been very successful. Hán of course being the most popular gender-neutral pronoun for referring to people. To me it’s just very natural sounding, easy to say—in fact I sometimes use it accidentally for everyone.”

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

When it comes to what needs to change in our society that might make it more inclusive of nonbinary people, representation plays a big role. “What I feel is that there is a huge lack of nonbinary role models,” Regn says. “I don’t see myself anywhere, except [in] these very fringe culture spaces deep on the internet. Not being able to see myself in any role models is pretty hard. I think that’s the reason why I didn’t come out until I was 20. I probably would have realised sooner that I was nonbinary if there were a discussion about it.”

But even within the context of representation, the kind of representation also matters. “We’ve definitely gotten better at nonbinary representation, too, but I think it lacks diversity,” Regn says. “Almost every nonbinary person who gets represented is a thin, white, androgynous person, or a thin, white, AFAB [assigned female at birth] person. There’s not a lot of representation of AMAB nonbinary, or those who are disabled, fat, or people of colour. It’s this white, very slim, Eurocentric people in black shapeless clothing. And I hate that.”

“It think it’s got a lot to do with societal attitudes,” Reyn says. “Visibility of nonbinary people plays into that because, traditionally, if nonbinary people are covered at all, it’s about how special they are for being nonbinary. It’s slowly changing for the better. But I’ve also been seeing more and more nonbinary stories [in traditional media]. It’s not much, but it’s a big improvement. People still are very clueless, so they need to be exposed to this more. People have to learn—that’s the root of most problems, because they don’t know what to say to you, how to treat you, how you want to live your life, and that just makes it really hard for everyone. Especially for people who are marginalised and aren’t understood, it’s exhausting to continuously have to explain yourself, every time, to everyone.”

“There’s also the naming laws in Iceland. I only have half of my name legally recognised due to them. I think it has more of an effect on people than people realise. Official organisations and companies, everywhere you go, being called something that you do not wish to be called. The laws don’t control what people are named; they only control what people are named officially, so effectively, it’s just making the National Registry inaccurate. It doesn’t serve us as well as it should. Because of these senseless limitations on people’s names and gender markers.”

Ultimately, nonbinary people just want the same as any other human being might; the freedom to be their authentic selves, to have the same rights and representation as anyone else, to be included in the language of the community—and most of all, to feel free to be happy just the way they are.
The IKEA KALLAX shelving unit stands at 77 centimetres high. With four square shelves and a variety of muted colours, it’s one of those IKEA pieces you’ll find at probably every single house in Scandinavia. That said—it usually holds books and knick-knacks. You probably haven’t seen it used for acrobatic stunts and ballet choreography, but that’s exactly what audiences found at “Three Men From The North”—one of the biggest hits of this year’s Reykjavík Fringe Festival. The show was made by the Nordic Council—a circus troupe composed of juggler Merri Heikkilä from Finland, Swedish aerialist Jakob Jacobsson, and resident Icelandic circus guru Bjarni Arnason. The group won the coveted Grapevine Prize at the 2021 Reykjavík Fringe awards, but the show is so fantastic we’d happily write about them, award or no award.

Accidents happen

“It’s a tableau of things that we as northerners have in common,” Jakob says, distilling the circus performance down into a few words. “Adding to that, coming from the north means handling emotions and dealing with things in a certain way—there’s a precision and methodology there that we bring to the show.”

‘Three Men From The North’ journeys through many Nordic stereotypes, from the funny—a juggling act with accordion choreography—to the serious, such as a multidisciplinary cooperation and reflection, not in an aggressive way, but in a rather show different ways of approaching those topics,” Jakob explains. “We don’t try to evaluate or cast judgement but rather show different ways of approaching them. Hopefully, it gives people a bit of space to reflect, not in an aggressive way, but in a way where people can arrive at their own conclusions.”

Vulnerable masculinity

One of the most affecting aspects of the show though is the trio’s nuanced exploration of masculinity. Nordic men have often been associated with being both stoic to the point of irrationality, but also rather whimsical. In “Three Men From The North”, Merri, Jakob and Bjarni take this dichotomy in stride.

Word(s): Hannah Jane Cohen Photos: Art Biwick & Joanna Jakubek, Provided by RVK Fringe

BONUS

IKEA, Black Coffee, Saunas & Juggling

Tea, those are IKEA fabric storage bins they are wearing.
Creating Possibilities In The Underground
The National Theatre Of Iceland provides a stage for marginalised artists

Words: Brittnee Kiner Photos: Art Bicnick

Recognition of Iceland’s vibrant arts culture radiates across the globe—as does the assumption that the scene has always been as diverse as it is today. In reality though, much of Reykjavik’s underground artists have always been just that—underground. It’s only recently that traditionally “low” artforms, like burlesque, cabaret and drag, have begun to depart from the confinement of queer bars and other diversity-friendly venues. Now, they’re knocking on the door of leikhusid.is, Iceland’s National Theatre.

Key to this radical change is Gréta Kristín Ómarsdóttir, Creative Director of the National Theatre Basement, Kjallarinn. After a year-long renovation of the space—which was long kept alive by improv performances—she’s ready to reopen, pulling aside the velvet curtain of the historically non-diverse institution to make room for what she refers to as “raw art.” And what’s “raw art”? Well, it’s the kind of culture that has always existed in the margins, but now it’ll be given the same respect and attention as culturally main-stream theatrical and operatic performances. And it’s about time.

Cultural capital
“Queer culture was practically non-existent [when I grew up],” Gréta explains. “That has a lot to do with why it’s important to me and why I have a passion for it; I wasn’t born with any cultural capital.”

Gréta was born in a small town, she explains, so exposure to queer culture was minimal until she moved to Reykjavik. This led to a bit of a crisis of identity—representation matters. “Being a queer person, I had this identity that didn’t really relate to what was expected of me. So, I had to sort of make my own,” she says. Eventually, Gréta stumbled into the academic world, which allowed her to create, reshape and understand her own identity. “That’s how I came into the theatre. I see it as a tool to recreate what’s possible.”

Fostering a future
Alternative art forms, Gréta emphasises, have long struggled to make their way through the doors of institutions like the National Theatre, which has focused on more conventional performances. “Historically and politically, theatre is about creating possibilities for people,” she says. “We have to be aware when we’re working in theatre, we’re actually creating meaning—especially for a public institution that’s funded with public money.”

Of course, the queer community also pays taxes, making their representation equally valid. Therefore, Kjallarinn is about to present one of its most dynamic and diverse stages yet. “We also have to be aware of what stories we are telling,” she explains, passionately. “This is a place where [artists] can grow and elevate their form.”

Radiating warmth, Gréta admits that she hopes to “create a family here and give the artists an opportunity to grow. I want the audiences of the National Theatre to get something that they don’t expect.”

It’s also for queer people who have been marginalized but have found glamour in their grievance to create their own culture,” she says. And now they can share that with the world.

Restoration of old charm
Stepping into the dimly lit Kjallarinn, you would never guess that its wooden and warm details endured a large scale renovation this year. Gréta and her team managed to revive the space, restoring its original charm. The entrance even underwent a facelift. “It’s no longer like you’re coming to the dentist,” she laughs. Hints of nostalgia pervade, though, with a touch of vintage class; you can almost smell the glamour emitting from the wall panels.

While creating a comfortable space for the public was important, above all else Gréta wanted to give artists a nice place to perform. And starting in September, guests will be able to catch matinees along with drag brunches next spring hosted by the legendary drag queen Gógó Starr. The atmosphere will be mild by day, Gréta explains, but the space will transform into a speak-easy style theatre by night, equipped with a full bar. Cocktail names will be adorned with references to the shows of the night, such as “Burlesque Spritz” or “Improv Mule.”

Under the pavement
Gréta’s ultimate goal is to create an elevated space for marginalised artists. “All of these scenes have grown so much in the past five years, such as the drag scene in Iceland—it has just blown up,” she continues. “Kjallarinn is a classic joint—it doesn’t have sticky floors and you don’t have to rely on tips to actually survive working in this field. I just wanted to do my part to add to this already blossoming scene.”

Whether you’re creative, queer or just curious, take a moment to step below the streets of Reykjavik into the revitalized Kjallarinn, opening soon. Cabaret, burlesque, drag artists and more will transform the once bland basement into a vibrant playground of entertainment and expression.

See the schedule for upcoming shows at kjallarinn.is/lekhusid.is.

A neon sign and burlesque? We’re in

The Grapevine
Issue 08—2021
A neon sign and burlesque? We’re in
Time For Your Wallet To Come Out!

Your guide to Reykjavík’s queer-owned businesses

How can you best support queers? With your money, obviously. To be honest, there were WAY too many queer-owned spots to choose from in Reykjavík, so here’s a selection of our favourites.

**Café Babalú**
Skólavörðustígur 22

Many a Grapevine interview has been conducted in the cozy upstairs seating area of Babalú. Warm and cheery, Babalú is a Reykjavík institution, serving up lovely coffee and even lovelier vegan carrot cake. So if you’re looking for a post-parade pep up, get some caffeine and conversation at this Grapevine favourite. They also have a Star Wars themed bathroom. And what was Princess Leia if not a fundamental queer sexual awakening?

**Modus Hár**
Stórköltíð 33

Hair is toqueers what ‘Friends’ is to cisgender straight people. To get it done by people who do it right, head to Modus Hár. Owned by a queer couple, the place has a great vibe and can serve up pretty much anything you want. They are also a big supporter of the local queer scene, which must be applauded. For northerners, there’s also a location in Akureyri and for those far out in the countryside, the same owners also operate harvorur.is which is our favourite online store for hair care in Iceland.

**Barónessan**
Barónsstígur 27

Flowers! Queer-owned flowers! Look, if you’ve spent any time on lesbian TikTok, you know queer ladies love some peonies. So pick some up at this downtown flower boutique and wow your partner with a bouquet, along with a handmade vegan dinner and screening of some Sarah Paulson show. Queer ladies love Sarah.

**Pallett**
Strandgata 75, Hafnarfjörður

Just because you’re in Hafnarfjörður doesn’t mean you can’t contribute to the Gay Agenda™. Tucked away in the harbourside town, Pallett Coffee Shop serves up flaky pastries, delightful veggie sausage rolls, and some truly spectacular coffee. Bring your queer British friends. They’ll freak out (respectfully and quietly, of course.)

**Hyalin**
Hverfisgata 35

Along with candles, tarot and astrology, queers also notoriously love to cook. Owned by a French couple, this shop sells high-quality French products as well as other hard-to-find delicacies for the gastro-inclined. Don’t have time in the midst of the festivities to stop by the store? You can also order online at hyalin-shop.com. We’d love it if you got some goods for us too and dropped them by the office, btw.

**Æsir Cannabidiol**
Hverfrísgata 39

It’s 2021. Happiness is out of control. Gay-owned CBD oil has taken the country by storm, meaning that no one is riddled with bodily or mental pain after too much dancing at the various Pride drag shows. Civilisation rises. Britney is freed. Carly Rae Jepsen’s ‘Emotion’ is finally given the respect it deserves. Life is good.

**Sæta Húsi**
Laugavegur 6

OK, SÆTA HÚSI IS QUEER OWNED. WHAT? The Grapevine office’s Pride Department freaked out after learning said information because we love Sæta Húsi. So if you’ve been drooling over that luscious Thai-rolled ice cream on Instagram, we have good news! This queer-owned spot is ready to serve deliciously fresh rolled ice cream, mixed with all sorts of candy and fruit. Also, they are queer-owned. Awwww <3 <3

“What was Princess Leia if not a fundamental queer sexual awakening?”

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**Horníð**
Voted the Best Seafood Restaurant in Reykjavík for the 10th time!

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

Lunch offers every day.
Open every day from 11:00 to 23:30
For reservations call 551-3340

**Sæta Húsi**
Laugavegur 6

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“What was Princess Leia if not a fundamental queer sexual awakening?”

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**The Reykjavík Grapevine**
Issue 08— 2021

Best of Reykjavík
Close-up: enjoying a light and tasty breakfast while following the news, until my thoughts turn to the tasks that await me: writing a paper, preparing a lesson, practicing guitar. Morning is for letting oneself be engrossed by one’s projects, the pleasure of seeing them progress, of getting things done, of acquiring new skills, but also of developing ideas, testing them, seeing where they take me.

**Walking & remembering**

It is also essential to follow what is happening in intellectual life, to be alert to what can possibly be of use to me in my work. Equally important is to be creative in adapting to it my needs. Working with ideas and managing to explain and illuminate some aspect of reality is a privilege. I enjoy physical activity, preferably in the form of contest. Midday is the row, the number is the column.

**Acting & thinking**

It is also essential to follow what is happening in intellectual life, to be alert to what can possibly be of use to me in my work. Equally important is to be creative in adapting to it my needs. Working with ideas and managing to explain and illuminate some aspect of reality is a privilege. I enjoy physical activity, preferably in the form of contest. Midday is the row, the number is the column.

**Perfect Day**

*Words: Erik Pomrenke, Professor Emeritus*

Dance, jive & have the time of your life

Torfi Tulinius

Torfi Tulinius is a professor of Icelandic Medieval Studies at the University of Iceland. He completed his PhD at the Sorbonne in 1992 and has written extensively on the Icelandic family saga, with an emphasis on genre and form.

We muse with him on his ideal day and, by extension, the good life.

**Walking & remembering**

Humanity remembers the past and projects itself into the future. This ability is a blessing and likely one of the reasons for mankind’s success as a species. As all blessings, however, it has negative aspects. Too often, we are so busy mulling over the past or worrying about the future that we forget to seize the moment in all its warmth and beauty. My best possible day would be one of fully lived moments.

**Waking up in a bright room and remembering a sweet dream while seeing a loved one still slumbering close by. Enjoying a light and tasty breakfast while following the news, until my thoughts turn to the tasks that await me: writing a paper, preparing a lesson, practicing guitar. Morning is for letting oneself be engrossed by one’s projects, the pleasure of seeing them progress, of getting things done, of acquiring new skills, but also of developing ideas, testing them, seeing where they take me.**

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**Public Toilets**

Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green-poster covered towers. There are: my wife, my family, my friends. Though they enrich our lives, they are also a privilege.

**Public Transport**

1. **Blackbox Pizza**
Borgartún 26
Blackbox is a solid competitor for best pizza pie in the city. Thin crust, inventive toppings, delivery—what else could you ask for? Well, particularly recommend the Parma Rucola, which serves up at the parma ham goodness you could wish for. For those journeying outside the city, they’ve also got a location in Akureyri.

2. **Chikin**
Ingólfsstraeti 3
This ain’t your mama’s KFC. No, Chikin—Reykjavík’s first dedicated hot chicken and bao joint—manages to be at once both totally sophisticated foodie cuisine and also food that’ll definitely fill the hole in your soul you usually quench with a spitz. So grab some chicken with pickled daikon, shiitake mushrooms, miso mayo and lots of other delicacies.

3. **Hosiló**
Hverfisgata 12
A newcomer on the block who has certainly made a big stir! Hosiló is a small spot—seating around 30 patrons at full capacity—that offers an eclectic rotating menu of local fresh food. The offerings feature meals from around the world, from French cuisine to Northern African goodness, and much more.

4. **Kaffi Laugaleiur**
Laugavegur 74a
For many a young parent, the cafe stop at the end of a long stroll is the proverbial pot of gold. Kaffi Laugur is especially popular with new parents, with a special kids’ corner for crawlers and drawers. The generously topped chicken and pesto ‘littla gula hænan’ and the ‘shwaramabare’ are our top lunch picks. Also, if you’re keto, don’t miss ‘om.

5. **Braud & Co**
Frakkastígur 16
First off—don’t miss Braud & Co’s pretzel croissants unless you really don’t want to have a spiritual experience. With some seasonal offerings like “snúður”–cinnamon bread rolls smothered with a sugary glaze. They take it a step further and stuff the classics with blueberries and whatnot, eliciting inappropriate satisfied moans. Get there early to snatch a warm one.

6. **Snaps**
Pórgata 1
Year after year, regardless of how many restaurants open and close, Snaps remains a timeless classic. Be it lunch, date-night dinner, lazy weekend brunches or a boisterous Christmas work party, Snaps is the perfect venue for a boastload of memories. Steady standbys include the deeply savoury onion soup (with a union of its own we suspect), the house-made fries with crispy rosemary that begs to be a meal on its own, and a tartaboul créme brûlée topped with an amorous snip.

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

8. **Dragon Dim Sum**
Bergstaðabraut 4
For those of us longing for dim sum houses of visits past to dim sum houses of Chinatowns abroad. But then Dragon Dim Sum arrived with its fans, which is the perfect marriage between localland ingredients and labouring of Asian dim sum passion. Don’t miss their bao or shao mai, and don’t worry, their carrot vegan dumplings are also sublime.

9. **Lamb Street Food**
Brandagardur 7
Pure Icelandic lamb with a middle eastern twist—that’s what you’ll get at this juicy local eatery where pure kebab is served up with no processed meat. For all you vegans though, never fear, the fresh made salads and hummus are equally wowing. This ain’t your regular kebab spot.

10. **Laundromat Café**
Ingólfsstaður 8
Have you ever wanted to have lunch and do your laundry in a public place? You’re in luck. The laundromat café on Austurstraeti is open (again) for business. Whether you want brunch, a sandwich, or a burger, they have a quality selection of food made to order. Their brunch ain’t nothing to scoff at either.

11. **Nauthólsvöllur**
Nauthólsvegur 74a
A small spot—seating around 30—Uncle with his family run this gem. The restaurant is one of those newcomers—it’s Project X. Their outdoor smoking area should be applauded too. Hang out long enough and you’ll be sure to buddy up and find an afterparty.

12. **Prikid**
Bankastræti 12
Prikid is the bar version of the “I’m going to bed early tonight vs. me at 3 a.m.” meme. At 22:00 you’ll have a bunch of regulars relaxing at the bar sipping brews, but arrive at 03:00 and it’s Project X. Their outdoor smoking area should be applauded too. Hang out long enough and you’ll be sure to buddy up and find an afterparty.

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

14. **Húrra**
Tryggvagata 22
Húrra is BACK! ARE YOU SERIOUS! YES, WE ARE! After a desparingly absent from the local scene, the beloved favourite has returned with a vengeance. Serious. In the two weeks they’ve been open, the bar venue has already had shows from Icelandic bands, like Skrattar, Skoffin and Mannveira. Stop by for vibes, alcohol and other fun things like an occasional 420 puffing session, or sometimes their bathroom renovation is pretty crazy.

15. **Veður**
Klapparstígur 33
This charming, low-key, hole-in-the-wall serves up some great cocktails and a dedicated crowd that has grabbed the heart of the Braópevne, even though we are a magazine and not humans. If you're looking for a good time, chatting and chatting, it’s still a nice and sophisticated bar, but they’ve also got the vibe sometimes they play punk music! /m/

16. **Íslenzki Barinn**
Ingólfsstraeti 1a
Of the many nation-themed drinking establishments in Reykjavik, the Icelandic Bar is the only one that is also a restaurant. So there at night and maybe you’ll meet an all or Björk or something—that’s all people know about Iceland anyway.

17. **Mál og Menning**
Laugavegur 18b
Wait, a new bar/music venue? Yup! And you thought the pandemic had destroyed all culture in this town. But never fear—Bökkaböð Mál og Menning is here. There’s live music most nights, from DJs to jazz, and during the day, the legendary Bókin is operating from the basement. Seriously—we anticipate this place will be a game-changer in the local cultural scene. Talk wy!"
18. Dillon
Laugavegur 30
A mix between grunge and classy, Dillon Whiskey Bar dominates their little stretch of Laugavegur. Crammed most nights with rockers, metalheads, and tourists looking for a place to mumble AC/DC songs into their beer. Dillon boasts a wide selection of over 100 whiskies and for a place to mumble AC/DC songs on the weekends.

19. Petersen sütan
Austurstraeti 12
The sun is finally out, which means it’s time for your annual pilgrimage to Petersen sütan. Never been? Well, make sure to bring your sunglasses because this place has one of the best views in Reykjavík and also very fashionable clientele. Look over the city and have a beer in almost entirely direct sunlight!!!!!!!!!

Shopping
20. Íslenska Húfðurþúfóuna
Ingólfstorg 3
This classic shop caters to all styles, with a roster of artists that serve up everything from realism to new-school and more. We'd particularly recommend the hand-poked pieces by Habba (aðhúðbannaettatattoo). Not only are they gorgeously ornate in that straight-out-of-800-AD-way, but they might save you from spirits elsewhere in Iceland and all of them have a slightly different, edgy take on the island, instead of adding to the abundance of touristy subjects.

21. Nielsen Séverzlon
Bankastræti 4
Way more than your average design store, Nielsen is filled to the brim with knick-knacks from all over, from gorgeous diaries to cozy towels and all the candelles you could desire. Stay by, grab something for a gift, and don’t forget a little something for yourself.

22. Fötográfi
Skólavörðustígur 22
Fötográfi claims to have been one of the first photo galleries in town. While its interior is tiny, there’s a surprising number of photos to be found inside. The pictures on display are mainly shot in Reykjavík or

23. Stefánnsbúð/p3
Laugavegur 7
Stefánnsbúð showcases local designers and second-hand high-fashion finds (hello 1990’s Gucci!) as well as accessories from quirky international brands. Fun and zany, you don’t know what you’re going to find but you know it’ll be exciting.

24. Lucky Records
Rauðhórsstígur 10
Lucky Records is probably the biggest record shop in Iceland, with shelves upon shelves of new and used vinyl and CDs on offer. If that’s not enough, they’re notorious for their export staff whose knowledge goes far beyond the latest Björk or Sigur Rós offerings. In fact, it’s best if you just let them take the lead.

25. Húrra Reykjavík
Hverfisgata 18A
This minimalist streetwear ateliers store serves up a mixed selection of classic items and trendy cuts. They were massively hyped when they opened a few years ago and have stayed hyped beyond their knowledge of what they are doing and are damn good at it.
Music

“Every walk in the mountains or the forests is a black metal moment. Black metal is an echo of nature in my books.”

Untamed Negativity
Adrian Brachmann’s explosive entrance to black metal

Words: Erik Pomrenke
Photos: Provided by Adrian

Album

Listen to Adrian’s work at nidstöng.bandcamp.com and akthganaheth.bandcamp.com.

For the last two years, Iceland has been cursed with a deluge of heavy albums and EP’s, bursting upon us like rats pouring out of Nosterрат’s crypt. With various projects, including Akth Gánaheth, Níðstöng, Fimbólpul, Spectral Full Moon, Úlfhéinn and others, the appearance of the mysterious Adrian Brachmann on the Icelandic Black Metal scene was sudden and prodigious.

It is not often that a musician emerges ex nihilo with so many ideas and his corpus to date represents something of an omnibus of contemporary extreme music, dabbling in dark ambient, black metal, hardcore punk and noise. Clearly, Adrian is not a man who spent his lock-down watching Netflix.

Raw productivity

“Currently, I have four main projects going,” Adrian says, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. “Two of them are black metal projects and two are what one would call dark ambient or dungeon synth. While they all have a common influence, I definitely see them as completely different ideas.”

Adrian is something of a black metal traditionalist, citing bands like Darkthrone, Edguy and Celtic Frost as important influences. But his traditionalism is by no means small-mindedness and he fervently listens to everything from hardcore bands like Integrity and G.L.S.M. to Berlin-school ambient and neofolk. “Outside influences can lead to great results from time to time,” he admits. But with regard to his own creative projects, he generally stays true to metal.

Of course, not all of us heard rare Norwegian demo tapes. So for readers unacquainted with these niche subgenres—what does Adrian’s music actually sound like? “Raw, cold and primitive,” is his terse response.

What is Icelandic black metal?

Like so many artists, Adrian draws inspiration from the landscape and nature of Iceland. That said—he’s originally from Germany and only moved here some years ago—"I’ll consider my music Icelandic insofar as Iceland has been the environment that surrounded me when I wrote and recorded it." Adrian states. “Iceland itself has had tremendous influence on how the environment of Iceland. That said—what does Adrian’s music actually sound like? “Raw, cold and primitive,” is his terse response.

ICELANDIC GOURMET FEAST

Followed by 7 delicious tapas

- Smoked puffin with blueberry “brennivín” sauce
- Icelandic Arctic Char with peppers-salsa
- Lobster tails baked in garlic
- Pan-fried line caught blue ling with lobster sauce
- Icelandic lamb with beer-butterscotch sauce
- Minke Whale with cranberry & malt sauce

And for dessert
- White chocolate “Skyr” mousse with passion coulis

8.990 kr.
**August 6th—September 2nd**

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

**Friday August 6th**

**REYKJAVÍK PRIDE**

Shameless! A Proud Comedy Show
With Emi Taylor & Jono Duffy
20:00 Järnbærinn

Drag Strip: Lady Bunny, Sherry Vine, Nakilin & More!
20:00 Sámi Bio

Apocalypsep----- Pride Drag Show
20:00 írskurinn

Gay Jester
21:00 Mál og Manning

Gay Cruise
18:30 Elding Whale Watching
OJ Poggerur Johanna
20:00 Kex Hostel

**Saturday August 7th**

**REYKJAVÍK PRIDE**

Pride Parade!
14:00 Reykjavík
Party Karaoke - Pride Edition!
20:00 Sáukarinn

Cyer
20:00 Kex Hostel

Drag brunch
11:00 Sámi Bio

Your Silent Radiance - Seigla
12:00 Hallgrímskirkja

**Monday August 9th**

Kruull
20:00 Mál og Manning

Karooe Party!
20:00 Sáukarinn

**Wednesday August 11th**

Mulinir Jazz Club: Arctic Swing Sextet
20:00 Harpa

Continue
20:00 Sáukarinn

**Tuesday August 17th**

Karaoke Party!
20:00 Sáukarinn

Wednesday August 18th

Jack & Joey
20:00 Sáukarinn

Thursday August 19th

The Office Pub Quiz
19:30 - 21:00 - I

Sip on a nice Merlot with an oaky af-

Black Forest Cake with a cherry in the center

The Crow’ alone in our rooms).

The Vintage Caravan
Aug. 28th - 21:00 - NÓ - 4,000 ISK

Psychedelic rockers The Vintage Caravan released their fifth album, "Monuments," last April and now that we’re all vaccinated, they’re finally having their highly-anticipated release show. So expand your mind (no drugs required) and take a trip that’ll probably include a lot of fringe and guitar solos.

**Saturday August 28th**

Brennuskot Fest
13:00 Kex Hostel

The Vintage Caravan
21:00 NBH

Jón Jónsson
20:00 Harpa

Reykjavik Jazz Festival: LILJA & Kath-

rine Windfelt Sextet
20:00 Kex Hostel

Reykjavik Jazz Festival: hist og
22:30 Harpa

Coney Island Show
20:00 Sáukarinn

Iceland Country Music Festival 2021: Axel O Stofnun Steinar
20:30 Bahjiráþ

**Monday August 30th**

Reykjavik Jazz Festival: Hrómar
20:00 Harpa

Iceland Country Music Festival 2021: Coney Island Show
20:00 Harpa

**Thursday August 26th**

Iceland Country Music Festival 2021: Klaufer
20:30 Bahjiráþ Valdimar
20:30 Harpa

GRÁH
20:00 Sáukarinn

DJ Sílva Ægisdóttir
20:00 Kex Hostel

**Friday August 27th**

Friday August 27th

Portugal. The Man
20:00 Kex Hostel

Saturday August 28th

You Silent Radiance - Sei
20:00 Sáukarinn

**Saturday August 29th**

**Sunday August 29th**

**Monday August 30th**

**Tuesday August 31st**

**Wednesday September 1st**

Swedish conductor and pianist Mikael Östberg has been named Con-

ductor-in-Residence at the Iceland Symphony Orchestra for the upcom-

ing season. There are many projects on the roster, including an abridged

version of Mozart’s Magic Flute, new symphonic music by Négoi Sphéron

and the Icelandic premiere of Björn Bjarnason’s ‘From Space I Saw Earth’. According to our research, it’s not about Jeff Bezos. NIC

**Friday August 6th**

Music

**Brennuskot Fest 2021**

Aug. 27th - 13:00 - KEX Hostel - 4,500 ISK

A new festival? Count us in. Brennuskot fest, based at KEX Hostel, is all about the darkest, gloomiest and most eerie tunes around, meaning it’ll be a good palate cleanser from all the outre acoustic music you usually get in the Icelandic summer. Featuring a lineup of Grapevine’s goth favourites Kañel Miika: U.K. doom drones Biolum, Dutch black metal duo Doedensweer, other Grapevine favs PORT, and more. It’s best to dim the midnight sun with some much needed leather and lace. Dress to depress. (But don’t forget to have fun.) (Or don’t.) Fun might be anti-goth in your view.)

(Not in ours.) (We love fun and also crying to needed leather and lace.

PORT, and more, it’ll be

(No drugs required) and take a trip

that we’re all vaccinated, they’re finally having their highly-anticipated release show. So expand your mind (no drugs required) and take a trip that’ll probably include a lot of fringe and guitar solos.

**August 6th—September 2nd**

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Send your listings to: listings@grapevine.is

Any mansion for the upcom-

**MUSIC NEWS**

The recent uptick in COVID-19 cases meant that the many festivals of Icelandic summer-

ness—Iceland’s beloved party weekend, have been cancelled or rescheduled. Reykjavík—the largest one—has been postponed and is cur-

rently expected to be held sometime at the end of the summer. All tickets are still valid but they can either be refunded or transferred to the 2022. Inquiries have similarly been
cancelled with an option to either have your ticket refunded or opt to do-

egrate the music to the audience affected.

Reykjavik’s Grapevine men’s line
held earlier and—you guessed it—tick-

s will be valid for next year’s festival or renounced. Lastly, the newest festival on the market—Saulurinn’s Hjókipa Stugur-

has been rescheduled for Harpa October 7th to 10th. The lineup and
tickets will remain the same, though there is an option to refund. So, as you guess 2022 will be fun. Thanks, Delta.

The Reykjavík Grapevine

Issue 06—2021
Queer Teens! To The Streets!

The shining, inspiring family of Pride’s Queer Street Theatre workshop

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen
Photos: Art Bieneck

Street Theatre

Check out the Queer Street Theatre at @youthpridestreettheatre on Instagram and @youthpridestreettheatre on TikTok.

“There is so much self-expression here—I feel very free!” Freya, a member of the new teenage Queer Street Theatre workshop excitedly gushes. Though it’s just her fourth day in the program, the group—all queer and between the ages of 15 and 17—already seem like a family. “It’s been great,” Syd, another member, chimes in. “It’s been great, but it’s also so full of ideas and energy. And they are so confident.”

Over Reykjavík Pride, the teens will take to the streets daily to perform. The workshop has quickly become more than just an outlet for choreography or comedy for the group. It’s a much-needed oasis, a place where they, as queer youths, can find their own tribe—people who understand them on a level many others won’t.

“I think it’s super fun to have people to just be idiots with. That doesn’t happen enough,” performer Þórhönnur adds, smiling broadly. “Social anxiety? Bye!”

Trombone solo?

“They are just so full of ideas and energy. And they are so confident,” project facilitator (and resident ‘Cool Aunt’) Kimi Tayler raves of the group. “Yes, we were definitely not that confident.” Pride Festival Manager Sigurður Starr Guðjónsson adds, laughing. “But to be that age and so out, proud and loud. I love that we are able to give a platform for that and I hope that it inspires others just as much as it inspires us.”

From the get-go, the plan was to have daily performances throughout Pride from the 3rd to the 8th of August. That said, Kimi and Sigurður couldn’t have anticipated just how passionate the group would be.

“They want to do everything and more,” Kimi says. “Today, I went out for lunch and I came back and they weren’t there. Then I got a message, ‘Kimi, come to Hallgrímskirkja!’ I go there and they are in the street doing dance routines.” She beams—an extremely proud aunt. “They’ve come up with some really fun and joyful ideas, but there are also some quieter performances. They are really intensely reflecting on their community,” Kimi continues. “They want to have a dance party one day and something like a memorial the next. It’s amazing to see such different reflections.”

The group is certainly a multi-talented bunch. They’ve got singers, dancers, actors, roller skaters, an award-winning rapper and even a trombone player, which Kimi—a former trombone player herself—is particularly obsessed with. “They were practising a number from Moulin Rouge and at one point I’m like, trombone solo here?” She laughs.

A force of nature

For Kimi and Sigurður, working with the teens has also made them re-examine their own queer experiences. “I wasn’t out [at their age]. And the dialogue was so different. I certainly didn’t have a queer group of friends growing up because nobody was out. So it’s really lovely to be around young people who are expressing who they are through their art. And they have such clear voices.”

“It’s almost overwhelming at times,” Sigurður adds. “You can’t help but think, ‘Oh, if I had that or this if I was everywhere!’ Just think of all the crap you could have skipped by figuring yourself out then.”

Seeing the relationships they are building together as a group, just watching them dancing as a group outside Hallgrímskirkja. They were like a little force of nature,” Kimi concludes. “When they are doing that, nothing can touch them. And that makes my heart warm.”

RAGNA RÓBERTSDÓTTIR
10 June - 28 August 2021

101 Reykjavík
info@i8.is
www.i8.is
101 Reykjavík
Tryggvagata 16
i8 Gallery
+354 551 3666

@i8gallery
www.i8.is
13.05.–03.10.2021
As If to Demonstrate an Eclipse

Document:

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Document:
**Art Listings**

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**Aug 8th - Sept 2nd**

**Artistic opportunities for the imagination**

The Reykjavík Grapevine Issue 08—2021

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**Shoptalk**

While you might be used to seeing the legendary artist’s kaleidoscopic works gracing the walls of the most established art galleries, this time, she’s taken it to the remote island of Hrísey in Blónudur in Northern Iceland. Set in the natural cuspacity of the small island, the artificial nature of her large-scale hair is put in stark context. For those familiar with Shoptalk’s style, she uses vibrant artificial hair to create alien worlds that’ll make you feel you’re entering a new dimension—one where the walls crawl with dizzying cotton candy and sickly sweet skies. We’d like her to redecorate a government office and plan on crowdfunding efforts at the nearest opportunity. Pick donate, folks. No, seriously.

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**Our Picks**

**Hulda Vilhjálmsdóttir**

Aug. 14th-Sept. 4th - Hulba

If Pila is putting it up, you know it’s good. This exhibition features Hulda Vilhjálmsdóttir’s explorations of nature and abstract, old and new. She’s one of the most exhibiting artists and 40 groups exhibitions on her record. With her hard worker REC you won’t miss this work explores the passage of time.

**Voyage**

Until Aug. 28th - T Gallery

Your favourite gas-station cum-gallery is here with a new exhibition, this one by Sigtryggur Sigrason. This show explores a world of transitions one by one, through a hard worker REC.

**Traveler**

Until Oct. 17th - Hafnarhús

The title Traveler refers to the location in the Viksæla where gods meet to reassemble the world. The exhibition focuses on a massive group of artists show their work reflecting on the new millennia. Unison. Karin Baldur will be in attendance.

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**Opening**

**GALLERY PORT**

Guðbjörg Mia & Jóhanna Kristbjörg Gullbjörg Mia and Jóhanna Kristbjörg come together for this upcoming exhibition. There’s scant information on it right now, but knowing Gallary Port and the duo’s impressive resumé. - Spans on August 7th, 2021 - Runs until August 19th, 2021

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**Ongoing**

**NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND**

**Of the North**

‘Of the North’ (2001) is created from a collection of video recordings, mostly of Icelandic nature—either the surface or microscopic views microbes, as well as crushing waves and melting ice. Filtered and an array of natural phenomena relating to the formation and destruction of our planet. –

**HELUNGE UNIVERSE**

2021 and we’re over Earth. Enter Farin Fætur Álmsó. The avant-garde art of Fætur—the first Icelandic artist to address outer space in his works, in the first half of the 20th century—presents the artist’s unfettered interpretation of the marvels of the celestial bodies, which are the theme of this exhibition. Always remember: We are but matter experiencing itself on a pale blue dot.

- Runs until January 9th, 2022
- Death is Elsewhere

Ragnar Kjartansson’s opus ’Death is Elsewhere’ made its debut in 2019 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Now, it’s back in the artists hometown for a summer-long residency at the National Gallery Featuring as few musicians as you can imagine, the seven-channel video installation sees a single song loop. Filmed around the summer solstice in southern Iceland. ’Death is Elsewhere’ is a referential work that turns a romantic cliché on their head with irony, nihilism and absurdity to spare.

- Runs until September 19th, 2021
- ENRI-JÖNSSON MUSEUM

Exhibition

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

**REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSTADIR**

Eternal Recurrence

Jóhannes S. Kjarval—a key figure within the Icelandic art scene. The whole museum is named—is put in dialogue with a number of prominent contemporary Icelandic artists including Sigurður Elinson, Ragnar Kjartansson, Steina and Eggert Peturssons. - Runs until September 19th, 2021

**HAFNARBORG DISCOTHEQUE**

Anffnumr Amazone’s exhibition presents an installation that draw inspiration from the ambiguous imagery of Icelandic night club culture in the social, political and economic right. While this is a reference to revelry, we have here is nonetheless a rather dismally disquieting. There is no grit and glamour to be found here, only the subtle indication of something that has already happened. - Runs until September 19th, 2021

**REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM**

Fish & Folk

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

- Runs until September 19th, 2021
- Mómalækur 1650

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

- Runs until September 19th, 2021
- National Museum of Iceland—Asmundarsafn

Sveinsson’s work explores the miocene environment, with an aim of displaying the growth of the Icelandic art scene. The whole Hafnarhús becomes the setting for a powerful exhibition of new work by Sveinsson. It may be considered to be in the lead for their generation, and assumptions can also be made about the larger context of Icelandic and international contemporary art.

- Runs until September 19th, 2021
- National Museum of Iceland—Asmundarsafn

Sirpa Sigrún Sigurðardóttir

A Modern Perspective

Behind the Scenes — Natural Dyes: Object of Desire

A collaboration between Singapore and Iceland, ‘Object of Desire’ will travel between both countries with an exploration of things: i.e. the desire, distribution, and reproduction of things.” Anti-consumers rejoice.

- Runs until August 28th, 2021

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**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND**

Kristín Magnúsdóttir

Backyards, sheds, clothes-lines and now and then, a cat. Photographer Kristín Magnúsdóttir trains his lens exclusively on a narrow, enclosed space of the urban landscape: the backlot of residential areas in the older parts of Reykjavík.

- Runs until August 28th, 2021

**NORDIC HOUSE**

Rockscramblers

Rockscramblers is inspired by the illustrated poetry of poet Mats Söderlund and illustrator Kathrina Skarðs. On view are the illustrations and poetry in their original forms and one can interact with a mysterious recording of Söderlund himself, a cave where young visitors can have a cozy time (?) and a new, Climbing Wall.

- Runs until September 5th, 2021

**Eternal Recurrence**

Eternal Recurrence

Jóhannes S. Kjarval—a key figure within the Icelandic art scene. The whole museum is named—is put in dialogue with a number of prominent contemporary Icelandic artists including Sigurður Elinson, Ragnar Kjartansson, Steina and Eggert Peturssons. - Runs until September 19th, 2021

**REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS**

Icelandic Art in the 21st Century

In 2021, Reykjavík Art Museum focuses on the microenvironment, with an aim of displaying the growth of the Icelandic art scene. The whole Hafnarhús becomes the setting for a powerful exhibition of new work by Sveinsson. It may be considered to be in the lead for their generation, and assumptions can also be made about the larger context of Icelandic and international contemporary art.

- Runs until October 17th, 2021

**BERGARSAFN KOMPÚSARVARAFN**

ART MUSEUM

Object of Desire

A collaboration between Singapore and Iceland, ‘Object of Desire’ will travel between both countries with an exploration of things: i.e. the desire, distribution, and reproduction...
"I think it's a comedy made by people who want to be making an action movie," Hannes Pór Halldórsson laughs, referring to his upcoming directorial debut 'Leynilöggja'. His name probably rings a bell—but from a totally different sector. A professional footballer and goalkeeper of the Icelandic national team, Hannes is unarguably most famous for saving a penalty kick from Lionel Messi in the World Cup in 2018. However, defending the goalposts is not his only passion—he has long been in the filmmaking industry, directing numerous advertisements and music videos. Now, he's finally here with a full-length feature.

Jack-of-all-trades
"I've been working as a filmmaker for 15 years. But now I've made my first feature film—which was always my goal—and earlier than I expected," he says. 'Leynilöggja', he explains, is a comedy-action-drama, which is quite atypical for Icelandic filmmaking.

Icelandic films often have this tendency to be quite slow and depressing. Many of them are good—but they're not always fun," Hannes describes. "The core concept was to make an action movie placed in the small city of Reykjavik. None of the things happening make sense [...] but because we're making a comedy, we can allow ourselves everything."

The movie—which Hannes co-wrote with Nina Petersen and Sverrir 'Sveppi' Pór Sverrisson—is a romp through the lens of a cop. "The cop's name is Bússi and he is the number one badass cop in Reykjavik. But then there's another guy, the best cop in Garðabaer, and they're rivals. The two towns don't like each other," Hannes explains. "Then the two cops have to deal with a mysterious series of bank robberies, where nothing seems to be stolen. So they must partner up and there's a lot of tension between them."

Of course, there's a twist—no spoilers here—that Hannes promises will surprise viewers. "He needs to get over his own prejudice," Hannes elucidates. "There is a journey and we are taking the subject seriously. We really worked on giving the movie soul."

Movie/football balance
The idea for 'Leynilöggja' arose ten years ago, when Hannes took part in the popular Icelandic comedy show "Auði & Sveppi". Just for fun, Sveppi and Hannes created a rough trailer for 'Leynilöggja' and the idea was stuck. "We had been talking about it for years after the trailer came out. In fact, we were contacted by movie companies in Iceland, so we wrote the first draft back in 2012. But then I became a professional football player and was abroad for six years and the project just fell to the side," Hannes says. Eventually, the production company Pegasus contacted the duo and the first seeds for success were sown. Now, 'Leynilöggja' will premiere at the Locarno Film Festival, while screening in Icelandic movie theatres at the end of August.

This was a fun movie
Above all else, Hannes hopes this film will bring some laughter and joy in these difficult times. "I think people are thirsty for some fun movie entertainment, so this is a fantastic time to come out with Leynilöggja," he muses. "I just want people to say, 'This was a fun movie.' That's my number one goal," he concludes, pulling down his sunglasses and smiling. "But if it leaves something behind and raises some questions, that's a nice bonus."
Definition Please?

Backwards or forwards, Ólafur Kram has a sound all their own

Words: Hannah Jane Cohen Photos: Art Bicnick

Music

Check out Ólafur Kram on all streaming platforms and catch them live at Toolraiser.

The winners of this year’s Músíktilraunir, Ólafur Kram quickly became a local favourite in the Reykjavík scene. Serving up a cacophony of genres, the band—which consists of trumpeter and singer Birgitta Björg Guðný Magnúsdóttir, guitarist and singer Eydís Egilsdóttir Kvaran, bassist and singer Guðný Margrét Eyjólfs, keyboardist and singer Íðunn Gígja Kristjánsdóttir, and drummer Sævar Andri Sigurríðarson—has made a brand of punk all their own.

Ólafur Kram was originally called Gaia, but the group went back to the drawing board after many Icelanders had trouble pronouncing it. They spitted other potential band names, but nothing felt right. Then, at the unlikeliest of times, inspiration struck—or rather, noitaripsni did.

"On Christmas night, I had an epiphany. It was like a lightning bolt from the sky that ‘Mark Ruffalo’ backwards is ‘Ólafur Kram,’" Birgitta laughs, causing the rest of the group to break into giggles.

"I think it’s an appropriate name in that our lyrics and the words we pick are very decisive and particular," Eydís says. "There are many words hidden in our lyrics, so it’s appropriate that our band name is wordplay."

"Braðbrit is more proper," Guðný asserts, smiling. "It’s more educated." This then prompts a lively discussion on where and where it’s acceptable to use either term—a very Ólafur Kram moment.

"We always put our own flair on everything, which I think is this chaotic feeling," Eydís muses. The others agree, describing their music as "educated punk."

"We’re the result of coming from very different musical backgrounds. Like Iðunn has a lot of jazz in her musical background while I just listened to Taylor Swift," Guðný laughs. "We have people that are very skilled and educated in their instruments and others that are new."

"The group’s sound is, as they emphasise, ever-changing, so much so that they even regard their debut release ‘nefrennsli / krossaflens’ as more of a time-capsule of their sound at that particular time. In fact, they play most of those songs completely differently nowadays."

"We always put our own flair on everything, which I think is this chaotic feeling."

"Once we tried to write a waltz for couples to dance too, but then it wasn’t a waltz, it was a screaming song," Guðný says, laughing.

"For us, in everything we do, we go in every direction we want," she concludes.

An idyllic moment for the group

Another idyllic moment for the group, complete with a dog-friend

"An idyllic moment for the group"

"We always put our own flair on everything, which I think is this chaotic feeling."

"An idyllic moment for the group, complete with a dog-friend"
Once you start, there's no turning back.

Words: Erik Pomrenke & Mannveira
Photos: Elvar Ö. Egilsson

Pick up Mannveira's 'Vítahringur' at record shops around Reykjavík or online at darkdescentrecords.bandcamp.com. You can also listen to it on all streaming platforms.

At the origin of every genre lies a raw energy that defies rules and norms, but inevitably, even the most extreme become restrained by convention. Mannveira’s latest release—surprisingly their debut, although the band has been around for 10 years—rediscovers the purely manic misanthropy at the heart of black metal with some new influences, including some truly fucked up death industrial ritual cult shit in the intro and a generally more consonant and affirmative tone throughout. So if you're looking for a soundtrack for tearing someone's head off, here you go. We sat down with the group to talk about the album track by track.

**Ópin rúfajögnina**

Originally this song was just a riff that we jammed on during soundchecks and used to fill our timeslot, but we all felt that it deserved to be worked on a bit. And after a solid 45 minutes or so of collective stankface and thumbs-upping, we had a song. It's just the kind of dirty, sinister mid-tempo ball slapper that we all like, so it made perfect sense as an opener to the album.

**Í köldum faðmi**

Setting the tone for the rest of the album, “Í köldum faðmi” is about embracing self-destruction, i.e. willingly digging your own grave. The song itself flows surprisingly well considering how many different ideas were thrown at it. It also wasn’t supposed to be the longest track of the album, but c’est la vie. The intro (as well as the rest of the ambient breaks on the album) were done in collaboration with D.G., who was a tremendous help in creating this album.

**Vítahringur**

"Vítahringur" was the first song we started writing on the album way back in 2015. It’s a slow moving, heavy mood-ruiner in case anyone was having too good of a time in the first half. It’s also a constant reminder of how long it took to get this fucking album done.

"Vítahringur" is also more or less the idealistic hub of the entire album—it’s all about finding solace in misery and the rude awakening when you realize there is no turning back.

It also has a guitar solo, which is fun?

**Framtíðin myrt**

Akin to the idea of no turning back, “Framtíðin myrt” is an abstract ode to ensuring there is no going back, as well as ruining the path ahead. The years that it took to get this album out into the world squeezed some of the post-teen angst and fury out of us, but not all of it, so this song was sort of inevitable. Possibly the least dissonant track of the album with probably the most nihilistic ideas behind it. Then again, not a lot of positivity throughout the album.

**Kverkatak eilífra martraða**

Very much the conclusion of the whole album, “Kverkatak eilífra martraða” is just an ugly, hateful pit of riffs and misery that dissolves into nothing toward the end. Very much a fitting end to “Vítahringur” as a whole.

The latest strain of Mannveira

"Vítahringur" is a slow moving, heavy mood-ruiner in case anyone was having too good of a time in the first half. The best of Icelandic produce with a nod to Japan and South America. Modern Icelandic flavours, share plates and award winning cocktails.
Here are some deals that’ll keep your wallet feeling happy and full.

### 1,000 ISK And Under

- **American Bar**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
  - Bier 850 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.
- **Aptek**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.
  - Bier 890 ISK, Wine 990 ISK.
- **Bastard Brew**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
  - Bier 500 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.
- **Brikvi**
  - Every day from 11:00 to 20:00.
  - Bier 700 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.
- **Brewdog**
  - Wed-Sun.
  - 14:00 to 17:00.
  - Bier 990 ISK, Wine 990 ISK.
- **Cafe Babalu**
  - Every day from 19:00 to 21:00.
  - Bier 690 ISK, Wine 790 ISK.
- **Deilok**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
  - Bier 600 ISK, Wine 850 ISK.
- **FJallkonan**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 17:00.
  - Bier 890 ISK, Wine 990 ISK.
- **Forrettabarinn**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
  - Bier 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.
- **Izlenki Barinn**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.
  - Bier 700 ISK, Wine 700 ISK.
- **Iba Ziemi**
  - Every day from 8:00 to 10:00.
  - Coffee 400 ISK.
- **Jungle Cocktail Bar**
  - Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.
  - Bier 800 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK, Cocktails 1,500 ISK.

### 1,500 ISK And Under

- **Kaffibarinn**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 20:00.
  - Bier 750 ISK, Wine (On Wed.) 800 ISK.
- **Kaffibrennslan**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
  - Bier 850 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.
- **Kald**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.
  - Bier 850 ISK, Wine 850 ISK.
- **Kex Hostel**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 19:00.
  - Bier 700 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.
- **Laundromat**
  - Every day from 20:00 to 22:00.
  - Bier 650 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK.
- **Lost**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
  - Bier 700 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.
- **Miami**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 19:00.
  - Bier 700 ISK, Wine 800 ISK, Cocktails 1,200 ISK.
- **Piriksd**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
  - Bier 600 ISK.
- **Public House**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 19:00 23:00 to 1:00.
  - Bier 890 ISK, Wine 990 ISK.
- **Punk**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.
  - Bier 890 ISK, Cocktails 1,500 ISK.
- **Peterisen Svin**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.
  - Bier 800 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK, Cocktails 1,500 ISK.
- **Rosenber**
  - Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.
  - Bier 170 ISK, Wine 850 ISK.
- **Sólon**
  - Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.
  - Bier 800 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.
- **Sushi Social**
  - Every day from 17:00 to 18:00.
  - Truffle potatoes 1,000 ISK.
  - Avocado fries - 690 ISK.
  - Lobster sushi, ribs & more - 890 ISK.
- **Tapas Barinn**
  - Every day from 17:00 to 20:00.
  - Bier 800 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK, Cocktails 1,500 ISK.

### 2,000 ISK And Under

- **Shalimar**
  - Monday - Friday.
  - 12:00 - 14:30
  - Curry - 1,290 ISK
  - Vegan option.
- **Salsa Sushi**
  - Every day.
  - 15 - 18
  - Chicken wings - 1,190 ISK
  - "Dirty" Fries - 1,390 ISK.
- **Sólon**
  - Monday - Friday.
  - 11:00 - 14:30
  - Caesar salad - 1,490 ISK.
- **Lemon**
  - Every day.
  - 16:00 - 21:00
  - Zff - Juice + sandwich.
  - 1,095 ISK
  - Vegan option.
- **Uppsali - Bar and cafe**
  - Every day.
  - 11-14
  - Burger & fries - 1,390 ISK.
  - Vegan option.
- **Matarkjallarinn**
  - Monday - Friday.
  - 11:30 - 15:00
  - Fisherman’s fish soup - 1,990 ISK.

### Featured Drinking Hole

**Luna Flórens**

Every wanted to indulge in some holistic herbal cocktails while being surrounded by sparkly crystals and tarot cards? Luna Flórens is the place for you! Located in Brandi, it’s an oasis of green luscious plants where witchy mystical incense awaits to calm your stressed soul. Try the Moscow Mule Thyme with homemade ginger beer and be enchanted!

Happy hour at Luna Flórens is from Tuesday to Sunday at 18:00 to 20:00. See you there.

### Hotel Recommendations

**Reykjavik Grapevine**

Issue 08 – 2021

**The Reykjavík Grapevine**

[Head for the Heart of the City & Stay Like a Local]

From urban chic to simple & snug, each hotel offers something a little different.

Whatever your preference, the one thing you’ll always find is heartfelt hospitality and an authentic Icelandic experience.

Welcome to the family center hotels

[www.centerhotels.com](http://www.centerhotels.com)
Up in the Rocky Mountains of Wyoming, a pickup truck pulls over and out steps a pair of cowboy boots. A man saunters toward the camera and, tipping his brimmed hat, begins to lecture about historical language change and umlaut mutation.

Far from a graduate school-fueled Lynchian fever dream, this is the work of Dr. Jackson Crawford, a man who has quietly become a minor internet celebrity by teaching Old Norse on YouTube. Incidentally, he also wears a cowboy hat.

From academia to YouTube

“There just wasn’t a lot of good accessible information about it,” Jackson explains. While he was teaching at the University of California Berkeley, Dr. Crawford had a revelation: although he was teaching one of the most popular undergraduate offerings, there was very little reliable information about it online. Also, like many graduate students, he was broke.

“It’s like what they say about restaurants, you can get it cheap and fast, but it won’t be good. You can get it fast and good, but it won’t be cheap,” he explains. “And then the information that was easy to get was often these gurus online shouting at you about how ‘Thor wants you to get buff. So I thought, well, there’s a niche here for someone who’s hovering over you while you read it, but sometimes we have weird pride when reading, like I can’t go back and check this.’

Not a Viking, not a cowboy

Finally, one must ask—what’s with the hat?

“I wanted people to see that you don’t have to decide to be a Viking to be interested in this stuff. I’m really just being myself.”

Jackson, wishing you all the best from the Rocky Mountains of Wyoming

Interestingly, the do and ran words may be responsible for the past-tense of regular verbs throughout the Germanic languages, as one of the leading theories why Germanic languages end their past tense verbs with -d and -t is that these early Proto-Germanic speakers may have had constructions analogous to “walked,” which eventually shortened to “walked” with time.

Picking up the sagas

Of course, Dr. Crawford doesn’t just teach about language. One subject that most attracts people to both Iceland and Dr. Crawford’s channel is the Icelandic family sagas, a literary genre that is half history, half artistic invention. For many people, this medieval literature can seem inaccessible, and Dr. Crawford has made it his mission to open this world to those who wouldn’t otherwise be able to access it.

“One tip that I would give is don’t be afraid to reread. You know, these stories were made by and for a culture where people’s families ties were clearly very prominent in everyone’s mind; you could keep track of these genealogies really easily. A saga will mention someone as an eighth cousin in Chapter 1 and when that person comes up again in Chapter 44, you’re just supposed to remember this. There’s no guardian angel of sagas who’s hovering over you while you read it, but sometimes we have weird pride when reading, like I can’t go back and check this.”

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Dr. Crawford received his PhD in Old Norse and Historical Linguistics at the University of Wisconsin and taught at UCLA, UC Berkeley and University of Colorado. You can check him out at youtube.com/jackuncraford.

Audience

Words: Erik Pomrenke
Photo: Provided by Dr. Jackson Crawford

Old Norse. New Audience

Dr. Jackson Crawford’s Curious Path From Academia to YouTube

Jackson is a man with a seemingly endless love of words and the rules that govern them was born.

“Something I always think about is ‘just be!’” says, “Because it looks so alien on the surface. You learn how to say ‘et’ but don’t necessarily realize that it’s English; that thou art. These languages are so closely related that they have the exact same irregularities in the be verb. To me, that’s just such a telling piece of deep connection.”

One of Dr. Crawford’s favorite etymological coincidences concerns the English words do and do.

The English verb, do, and German tun, surface quite consistently throughout the Germanic languages, but this root is conspicuously absent from Scandinavian, which instead use derivations of gera. Through history, this verb did eventually find a place in English, although as Dr. Crawford describes it, it is a neglected corner of our language, the word gur. So when we gear up and get ready, we are quite simply “doing.”

Jackson, wishing you all the best from the Rocky Mountains of Wyoming

Family resemblance

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Picking up the sagas

Of course, Dr. Crawford doesn’t just teach about language. One subject that most attracts people
Oddný Svava Steinarsdóttir (24) is a graphic designer, kindergarten teacher and drag queen Lola Von Heart.

Wearing:
- Jacket from Gallerí Sautján
- Some old shirt and cardigan
- H&M Men pants
- Rakel Tómasdóttir scarf
- Random jewelry
- Doc Martens—they’re old, withered, torn and loved

Describe your style in 5 words:
First off, sizeless. We all know clothing sizes are a myth! The number on your clothing is not the number for your body, it’s just the number for sizing the actual fabric, so even though I might be size whatever, I’m still going to probably have clothes that are every size between, up and down. I don’t buy clothes for the size, I buy them for how they look, so a big part of how I dress is wearing oversized things like that. Next up, unisex and neutral. I love browns, blacks, greys and whites. Old—both in how they look and also just old. I also mix patterns like nobody’s business.

Favourite stores in Reykjavík:
Definitely Extralopan. I really love old clothing that people don’t want to use anymore and either they fit me perfectly or I get to modify and change them. Otherwise I really love H&M Men. The best pants that ever fit me are at H&M Men. I also love Fatamarkaðurinn and Ýflí kótturinn.

Favourite piece:
These pants are my favourite pants for sure, but this is just basically my favourite outfit. That said, I think my favourite things are knit sweaters. I’m always cold, for one, so they keep me warm, but they look good with a dress, pants or whatever.

Something I would never wear:
Cheetah print.

Lusting after:
A nice faux leather chest harness. Also, low Doc Martens.

Oddný Svava Steinarsdóttir
Words: Hannah Jane Cohen
Photo: Art Bicnick

Fjallkonan is a new lively restaurant & pub in the heart of Reykjavík 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 purée, pickled red onions, horseradish sauce

ARCTIC CHAR & 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
- Puffin, crowberry gel

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

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

Happy Hour 15-17 every day

FJALLKONAN WELCOMES YOU!
What does Reykjavík love more than building hotels? Food courts, of course! It was with tempered stomachs that we approached the latest gastro-court in Reykjavik, Borg29 Mathöll. How soon it all melted away as we sampled dish after dish that was, without exception, excellent. Every offering has an idea behind it and an energy of playful competition runs throughout the place. Chefs check out what everyone else is doing, keeping the standards high, while the open layout keeps everything beautifully on display. The view isn’t bad either.

Yuzu

You ever try something and immediately think, “Yeah, this is going to be a problem for me.” Well just take one bite of a Yuzu burger and you’ll be worried for your wallet, as this place is something you’ll crave on the daily. The gastro-burger joint already made its mark on the dining scene with its Hverfisgata location, but now they’ve got a smaller locale at the food hall, with a selection of crowd favourites. So what’s our obsession? No doubt the Stóri Yuzu. It’s a Big Mac tribute burger in honour of the travel restrictions, which has prevented many from getting the real thing. Eating one is somewhat of a spiritual experience, as it manages to quench that primal urge for good ole’ fast food, while also being distinctly high-end. Of course, the Chili burger is another favourite. Basically everything here is amazing.

Bál Vín og Grill

Award-winning chef Hafsteinn Ólafsson is not resting on his laurels with his latest project, Bál Vín og Grill. Bál, meaning fire, features a variety of grill classics like skewers, steaks, and fish. But where Hafsteinn’s eye for presentation and attention to detail truly shine are the small dishes and appetizers; these are dishes clearly made by someone with passion, taste, and a sense of play. The dishes are perfectly curated, with modern classics like parma-wrapped dates and more adventurous offerings for the discerning foodie, like chicken pâté and beef tartare. I admit, before my time at Bál, I had never sampled a tartare. But with a creamy horseradish and delightful flatbread, this may now be a new addiction.

La Masa Taqueria

The taco has a storied history in Iceland. In fact, you could probably do a dissertation on that topic alone. But whatever chapter you’ve stopped writing at, add another for La Masa Taqueria. Created after owner Einar Örn Einarsson went on a taco-fueled journey through Miami, the selling point for this place is their fresh tortillas, which use corn directly imported from Mexico—in fact, it’s the same one that wowed Einar in Miami. You won’t find anything like it in Iceland. The fish tacos are a must, but seriously, they could serve us anything on those tortillas and we’d be pleased. In fact, if La Masa could drop off some tortillas at the Grapevine office, we wouldn’t complain.

Wok On

It’s Wok On, baby. We all know you’ve been in that situation where all you want is noodles. In fact, we’re stressed about making this issue right now, so we’d like to gorge ourselves on some noodles. But as longtime Wok On eaters, we swear they are the best place to cure everything from unquenchable hunger (their portion size tho) to the worst hangover to a hankering for creativity, as you can put anything you want on your noodles. But for us, it’s all about the Kóngurinn—egg noodles with chicken, beef, broccoli and much more—as the dish that never gets old. That said, when half our office was on Keto (yes, that actually happened), the Keto special was many times savoured for its zucchini noodle carb-like wonder. Rock on.
You’re torn: on the one hand, you could grab a delicious burger; on the other hand, you could make the “healthy” choice. Luckily, Svala has solved this dilemma. The smoothie bowls are filled to the brim with things like succulent nuts, granola, fruits, and chia seeds—we particularly loved the Prince Charming—meaning you get to feel full and better than your fellow lunch patrons without sacrificing taste. And then there’s the drinks. Everything from the green smoothie to the Boom beet juice (a must-order) felt like a want, not a should.

Oh yeah, there’s sushi too. Named after that elusive fifth basic taste, this restaurant is the place to order the 10 piece Chef’s Special. Take away your own choice and let the professionals decide what is the freshest and most delicious of the day—they know what they’re doing. And then there’s the drinks. Everything from the green smoothie to the Boom beet juice (a must-order) felt like a want, not a should.

Hipstur, as you might imagine, serves up stylish, international dishes. The offerings, however, are not simply fusion-for-the-sake-of-fusion, but intelligent twists on tradition. The bacalao, for instance, is a traditional Iberian dish with roots firmly in Iceland. With a side of focaccia (made in-house, of course) and the overall quality, it represents a great value. Also on offer are vegan dishes with wide appeal, including a delicious open-faced sandwich piled high with a forest floor’s worth of mushrooms, horseradish, onions, apples and other goodies.

The crust is fired to perfection in a real oven (with flames and all) and the toppings are without exception high-quality and well-paired. Try the parma ham loaded with greens for something light and fresh, or the pizza Natale for gooey, meaty indulgence.

Pronto Pasta has been in dire need of a proper pasta place for years so you can just imagine the excitement when Pronto Pasta arrived. A full-on fresh-pasta-cooked-right-in-front-of-you, it’s got that local Italian charm that has been sorely lacking in the Reykjavík food scene. While you can’t go wrong with a Bolognese, here’s the secret: Get the mushroom pasta, with lovely cream sauce, and put some shrimp on it. This dish was recommended not only by the chef of Pronto, but the owners of Borg29 (and Wok On) and Yuzu, along with other local foodies we talked with after. Seriously, conversations after we mentioned we stopped by Borg29 included, “Did you get that shrimp mushroom pasta?” Yes, we did.

Natalía Pizza

God bless Iceland, but they don’t exactly know how to make a pizza. The Domino’s here has a pizza with dates and cream cheese on it, for Christ’s sake. But Natalía pizza goes back to the source, circumventing Scandinavian misconceptions of what this flatbread means to the world.
As the Icelandic landscapes are already famous on social media, Mother Nature added a freshly blazing volcano to the roster of awe-inspiring scenery. However, the recent eruption in Geldingadalur isn’t the only reason to visit the Reykjanes Peninsula. If you can’t manage a multi-day venture into the Highlands during your drive around the country, we have a hidden gem for you only 30 minutes away from Reykjavík.

A little Landmannalaugar

The Reykjanes Nature Reserve—part of the UNESCO Global Geopark—is home to Sogin, an area that resembles a mini Landmannalaugar, one of the highlights of the Highlands. Nearby, there’s also Lambafellsgja, an astonishing lava canyon in the midst of the peninsula’s seemingly endless lava fields. Both mystical treasures promise an escape from the masses, as only sheep accompanied us on our journey through the reserve.

Dancing in a Duster

Journeying around Iceland, it’s easy to question which century you’re in. Paved roads can be a treasure to come by and hidden gems are no exception. Travelling to less popular spots like the Reykjanes Nature Reserve certainly doesn’t promise to be the most comfortable, but we didn’t come for comfort. There’s nothing quite like bouncing around in a Dacia Duster on the pitted, gravel road to the reserve—it almost feels like a dance. Be sure the vehicle you’re travelling in is 4x4 with high clearance because the rocks show no mercy. But with palms sweating and tires crawling, we eventually made it to the end of the path. While there were previous unsuccessful attempts to harness the area’s geothermal energy, there’s now a gravel lot at the end of the road, Vígðinarvelli, featuring the abandoned drilling area. If you’ve made it this far, give some kudos to that Duster that everyone picks on—no one said it would be easy.

Winding through the valley

Stepping out of the car, the bright green scenery astonished us with sharp mountain tops. Compared to other Icelandic landscapes though, it was nothing unusual—or so we thought. We set off and after hiking around the edge of a luscious green hill and following a couple of munching sheep, a steamy geothermal patch blessed us with that beloved sulfur smell, which can’t help but make one wonder what slumbers below the earthly surface under your feet. Making our way through the narrow valley, following a small rippling water stream—quite an atypical occurrence on the peninsula—we were met by colourful clay patches covering the ground as we moved towards Sogin.

The clay shone in numerous dazzling shades of orange, white and blues at the entrance of the natural depression of Sogin. It’s, to put it simply, otherworldly. The vibrant natural coloring of the ridges surrounding the landmark stands in stark contrast to the typical green grasses and desolate lava fields lying beyond the site. But apart from some grazing sheep leaving their trails around the area, not a single human soul lied in sight, emphasizing just how lonesome and remote are the wilds we stood in the midst of.

Putting the ice in Iceland

Iceland hasn’t always been as warm and cozy as it is today—it actually used to be cold, believe it or not. Or well, it used to be cold-er. The last ice age began around 2.6 million years ago, ending just 10,000 years ago. During that time, much of the island was covered in an ice sheet, but there were a lot of eruptions going on beneath the vast glaciers. The diverse hues of Sogin, a depression in the cliffy ridges, were developed from such a subglacial eruption. As magma met ice, it led to a thermal explosion. The shadows and sheer size of the gorge make the hike even more eerie on a rainy, hazy day. Since the canyon is quite shallow, we decided it was time to face the storm that awaited us beyond its protection.

As you’re tagging along on the pilgrimage to the Reykjanes’s newest attraction—yes, the volcano—consider stopping at Sogin and Lambafellsgja. Often skipped by the tourist crowds, you’re likely to be joined only by sheep. Like the rest of the country, this area is truly a gem and must be treated as such. So take your trash and never leave more than footprints—the elves will thank you!
**Post-Covid CALAMITY!**

*Words: Total Astrology Experts Alina & Hannah Jane*

The amateur astrologers of the Grapevine were having a blast in the post-COVID cosmos until Delta struck. But how will you do when this all inevitably ends? The stars speak.

**Aries**

Aries... There’s a limit to how much people want to hear about how miserable your COVID experience was. Everyone was there. Literally everyone in the world experienced the pandemic and most others didn’t have Netflix, Disney+, Hulu, Amazon Prime and HBO Max subscriptions. Use your empathy. We know you have it in you.

**Taurus**

It’s a shame your sourdough starter didn’t survive the pandemic, but we admire your courage in the face of adversity. Use this opportunity to start a new life, for there’s a lot of other options out there. A kombucha scoby perhaps?

**Gemini**

It’s natural to feel confused in this new NEW normal. Are you supposed to hug people? For a Gemini, that’s a daily struggle. Please, don’t feel pressured to show the affection you’ve always lacked in your cold, dark soul. Others can sense the insincerity and, to be frank, it’s off-putting.

**Cancer**

Well... despite being vaxxed you ended up the unlucky one who got COVID after restrictions were lifted. Our constellations recommend you stay away from Instagram and Twitter this month to protect your mental health. No one wants to see others dancing in a club while you sit on your sofa and cough.

**Leo**

Finally! It’s safe to hold a karaoke mic. Wow the crowd with your “Wuthering Heights” interpretation, complete with the original choreography.

**Virgo**

Take a deep breath. We all know when this all inevitably ends? The Delta struck. But how will you do in the post-COVID cosmos until Delta is gone? Our constellations recommend you keep your distance but start your sentences with “Heyrðu” and loudly blurt out “Ha” if you didn’t quite catch something.

**Libra**

We’re etheeral all-knowing beings. Pisces. We see the bottles of hand-sanitizer in your purse and watch you discreetly apply- ing them under the table after you’re socially pressured into shaking someone’s hand. Welcome to your new life. There’s a lot of conspiracy Facebook groups we think you’d love.

**Scorpio**

The reason you haven’t received any party invites isn’t because they aren’t happening.

**Sagittarius**

Well it took about two hours after your Jensen vax for you to totally forget about the past year and resume your reckless behaviour of kissing people on the cheek and taking puffs of stranger’s cigarettes. We’d recommend watching out for the Delta variant, but knowing the charmed luck of Sag (despite being fucking idiot) we bet you’ll be fine. Can’t say the same for Virgo.

**Capricorn**

Hide. The stars urge it.

**Aquarius**

It’s an understatement to say that people are excited to finally see some live music again. Take advantage of this by forming the solo post-brutal tech death project you’ve always dreamed of.

**Pisces**

We’re otherwise all-knowing beings. Pisces. We see the bottles of hand-sanitizer in your purse and watch you discreetly apply- ing them under the table after you’re socially pressured into shaking someone’s hand. Welcome to your new life. There’s a lot of conspiracy Facebook groups we think you’d love.
“It was like a lightning bolt from the sky that ‘Mark Ruffalo’ backwards is ‘Ólafur Kram.’”

Ólafur Kram—Iceland’s resident Ruffalo aficionados—talk language, wordplay and their own brand of educated punk. P23

“You learn how to say ég er, þú ert, and don’t necessarily realise that it’s English: thou art.”

YouTube star Dr. Jackson Crawford is one of the internet’s most celebrated resources for all things Norse. But how did he get there? P26

“Eating Yuzu is somewhat of a spiritual experience.”

If you haven’t eaten at the Berg29 food hall yet, you’re an idiot. P20-29

One of 25 wonders of the world

Blue Lagoon geothermal seawater is unlike any other water on the planet. Born deep underground, this natural marvel is rich in silica, algae and minerals—the elements that give the water its extraordinary powers. Discover the water. Experience the wonder.

BLUE LAGOON
ICELAND
bluelagoon.com

Glacier Walks, Kayaks, ATVs and Snowmobiles
ALL IN ONE PLACE
Book online or call our sales office from 9:00am - 4:00pm
mountainguides.is • info@mountainguides.is • Tel: +354 587 9999