

THE 

# REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

Issue 1 | 2022 | [www.gpv.is](http://www.gpv.is)

Joint Album Of The Year:

**sóley**

REYKJAVÍK  
GRAPE

VINE  
MUSIC  
AWARDS  
2022

## Re-ruption!

**News:** The headline says it all. It's going off again.

## Magnús Jóhann

**Music:** The hardest working man in Icelandic showbiz.

## Tarot Reading

**Culture:** Do we even want to know the future!?

## Skagaströnd

**Travel:** Ghost town or boom town?



**COVER ART:**  
Photo: **Magnús Andersen**  
Photo assistant: **Nína Solveig Andersen**

sóley, winner of Album Of The Year in the Reykjavik Grapevine Awards 2022, in an graphic nod to her amazing track "Sunrise Skulls"

Special thanks:  
**Ívar Trausti Jósafatsson,**  
**Kolaportið**  
**Marhallúsið**

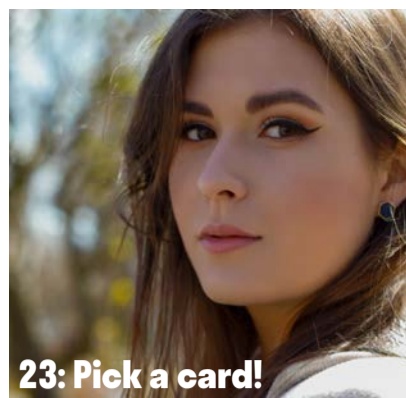
Photo for BSI montage:  
**Ugla Hauksdóttir**

Photo of Ármann for kef LAVÍK montage:  
**Hlynur Halgrímsson**



**06: Volcano's Return?**

**06: Slut shaming**  
**07: Here Comes The Sól**



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# First



It's that time of the year: The Reykjavik Grapevine Music Awards are in the house. After a harsh debate, a brutal fallout between members of the panel and a serious threat of full-blown cultural war, we have come to the conclusion that there was just far too much excellent music coming out of Iceland this year to keep things civil—a reality reflected in the final list of award recipients. For example, we have two Albums of the Year. And those two are perhaps the most revealing when it comes to the past year in music.

On one hand, we have the darkness of sóley's 'Mother Melancholia', which reflects the sombre vibe of another COVID year. On the other hand, there's the light and emotional pop of kef LAVÍK. That same brightness is delivered by the youngsters in Inspector Spacetime—our Artist of the Year—who encourage listeners to dance and bounce. Simple as that. The band has been like a beacon of fun, even in the heaviness of the pandemic. And that is no small feat.

Unintentionally we have established a battle between light and darkness in our award and we are left with the question: where do we want to go from here when it comes not only to music but art in general?

While amazing music continues to be produced, musicians' earnings have dropped by a staggering 87% since the start of

the pandemic. One doesn't have to have a PhD in anything to realise that this could dramatically change the industry in the coming years. There are many obstacles musicians have faced through the pandemic, but artists have risen through it all to provide sustenance for our pandemic-beaten souls.

Music is not only important for human beings, it's vital. It reflects us, the times in which we live, and the world around us. We would all do better to remember this simple truth. We hope that we are seeing the end of the pandemic and that the world can unite once again on the dancefloor, singing and bouncing, or going on soul-changing introspective journeys with musicians like sóley.

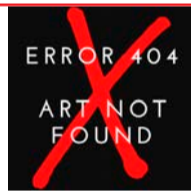
We hope you like our decision; if not, you can always check our honourable mentions in each category. And if you still feel raw about it, we'll be waiting.

Happy New Year to all of you.

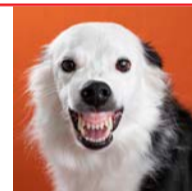
**Valur Grettilsson**  
*Editor-in-chief*



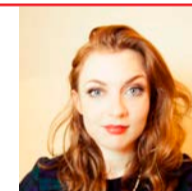
**John Pearson**, the Grapevine's culture editor, is a Reykjavik resident with professional backgrounds in live music events, broadcasting, scuba diving, journalism, engineering and underwater photography. We suspect that he just likes to collect job titles. He is a big fan of puns, alliteration and lists that have three things in them.



**Art Bicnick**, the Grapevine's video magician and photographer, is himself unphotographable. This is due to the fact that he consists mainly of stardust; a handy characteristic that enables him to float smoothly across rocky volcanic terrain, and through apparently solid objects.



**Polly** is a hard-working journalist by day and an enthusiastic ball-catcher by night. A five-year-old dachshund mix with an IQ of a five-year-old human, Polly is Chief Morale Officer at the Grapevine, and a regular contributor to the Grapevine Newscast on YouTube. Woof!



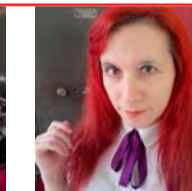
**Josie Gaitens**, journalist and YouTube Content Coordinator, is also an arts worker, musician and writer from the Scottish Highlands. She was once erroneously referred to as the Queen of Scotland by a Malaysian newspaper and has been falsely using that title ever since.



**Catharine Fulton** is a writer who has been involved with the Grapevine for many years—possibly too many—serving as journalist, food editor and news editor before settling on copy editor. When not wielding her red pen she's often found opining on Canadian politics (professionally), and bitching about Icelandic politics (for fun).



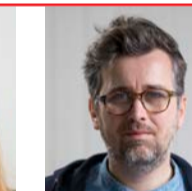
**Shuruthi Basappa** is one of Iceland's most knowledgeable foodies. She's covered local restaurants for years and has also been involved in various food competitions in Iceland, such as Food & Fun and more. By day, she works as an architect at Sei Studio.



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

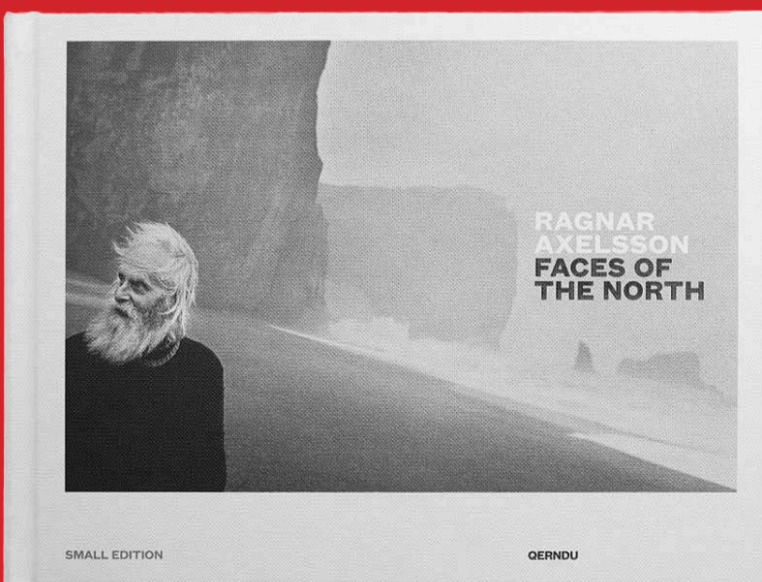


**Reetta Huhta** is a Finnish student who moved to Iceland to become an au pair, and decided to never fully leave the country. She aspires to become a journalist, and what would be a better place to start than Grapevine? You can probably spot her at Kaffi Vest, where she spends most of her free time.



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

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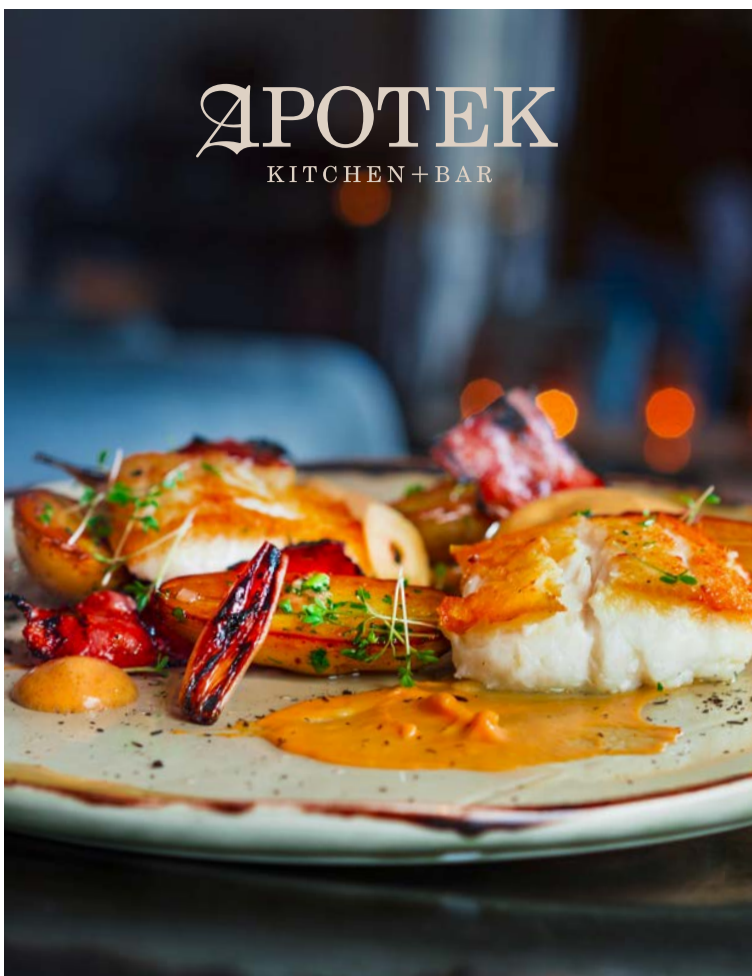


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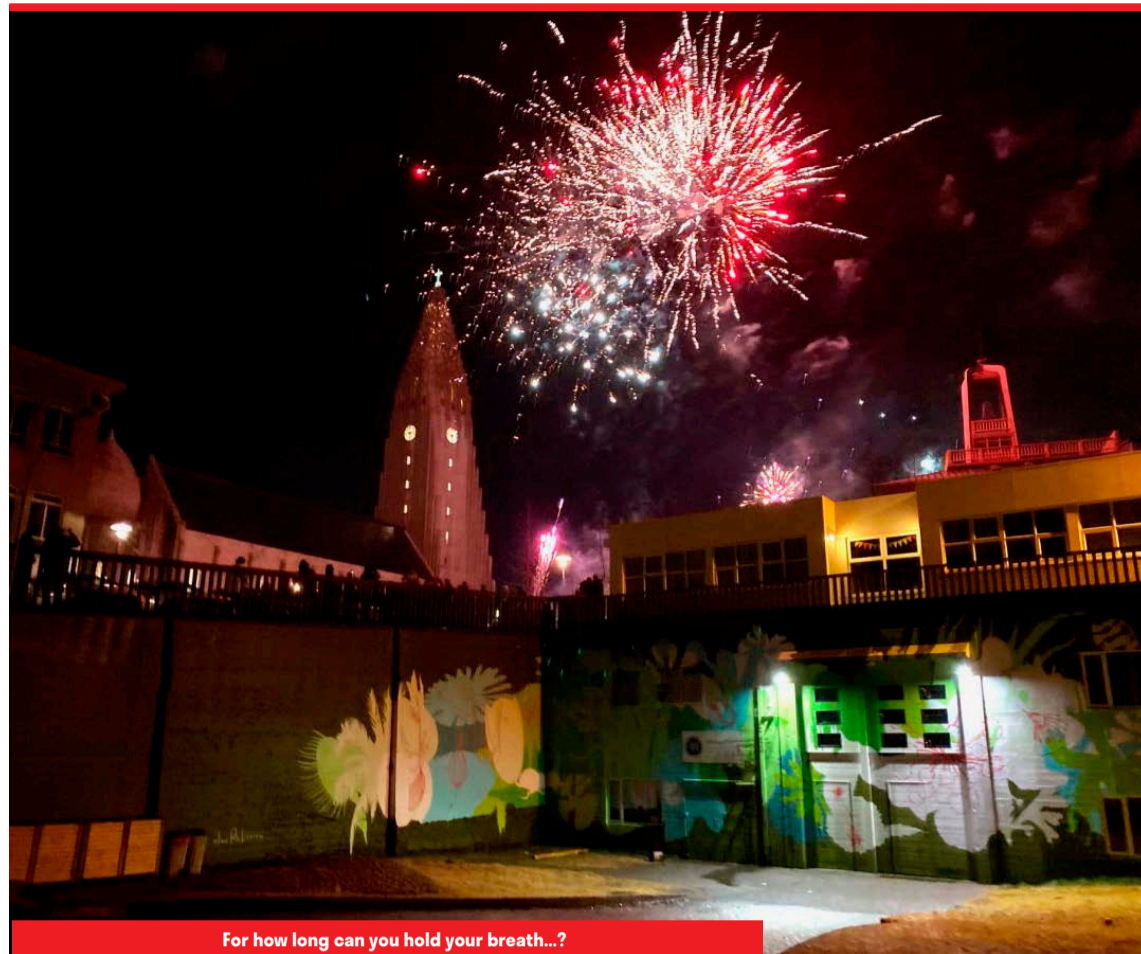


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For how long can you hold your breath...?

## What Are Icelanders Talking About?

The machine must be fed

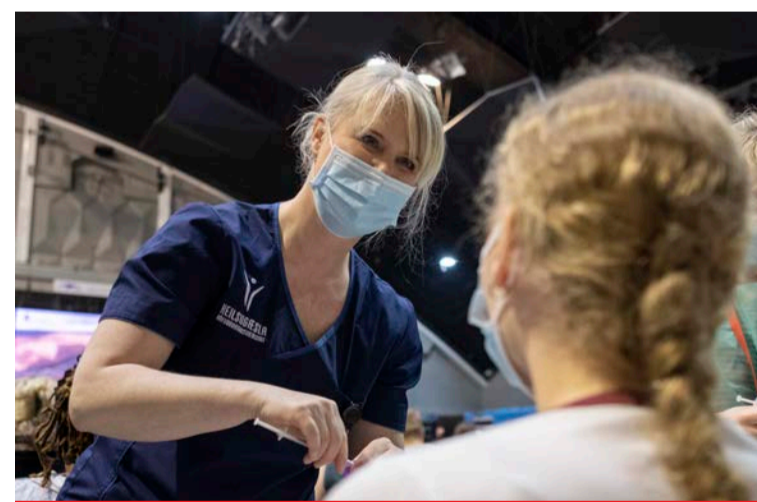
Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine** Photos: **Art Bicnick & John Pearson**

**NEWS** You've heard of COVID fatigue; now get ready for volcano fatigue. A series of earthquakes near Fagradalsfjall that began on December 21st caught more attention with international readers than it did with the locals. The quakes have since calmed, prompting a number of scientists to compare the situation to **the run-up to the eruption last March**—without explicitly saying that another eruption is on the way. This news has been greeted with more of a shrug than a shriek, probably due in no small part to the current disaster we have going on in the pandemic, which leads us to...

As the **Omicron variant** runs rampant across this country, Icelanders were more than a little bit confused by Minister of Health Willum Þór Þórsson announcing new pandemic “restrictions” that essentially amounted to little more than slightly lowering the social gathering limit and re-enacting the two-metre rule. This was followed by Minister of Schools and Children's Affairs Ásmundur Einar Daðason announcing that he was not going to extend the end of winter break for schools from

January 4th to January 10th, in the face of recommendations from chief epidemiologist Þórolfur Guðnason. Not only that, but he also told reporters that it was absolutely crucial to send kids back to school, despite this variant showing particular virulence amongst children. On top of all this, hospitals are already stretched to the limit, but many health care workers have had to go into quarantine or isolation on account of coronavirus infections or the risk of it. All this being the case, we probably shouldn't expect to get out of this pandemic any time soon.

**Fireworks** were briefly a hot topic in the run-up to New Year's Eve. As every year, there were people pointing out how polluting fireworks are, how they frighten animals, and how hazardous they can be in the hands of intoxicated adults. Whenever any of these things were pointed out on social media, there was always a cadre of people who balked at the suggestion of buying fewer or no fireworks, with some vowing to buy even more. Come New Year's Day, winds mercifully swept the heavy metals and other pollutants away (from us, at least), but already overstretched hospitals reported treating numerous firework-related injuries, and brush fires caused by fireworks erupted across a significant portion of South Iceland. 🇮🇸



Vaccinations are back in full swing at Laugardalshöllin



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We've seen this kind of thing somewhere before...

## Geldingadalsgos 2.0?

This is starting to look familiar

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine**

Photo: **Art Bicnick**

An earthquake swarm began in Reykjanes on December 21st; specifically, near Fagradalsfjall. Although the eruption in this area that captivated the world last March has since fizzled out, the seismic activity—and other data—gave scientists pause for thought. Events were starting to look a lot like those that preceded the eruption of early 2021.

### A wiggly world

It wasn't just the quakes that were making scientists sit up and take notice. Initially, they chalked the tremors up to the lateral movement of magma. But subsequent GPS measurements of the

land surface told a different story.

These measurements showed that, in the words of an update posted on the official site of the Icelandic Met Office, there was a surface deformation "very similar to deformation observed in the end of February this year when a dike intrusion was starting near Fagradalsfjall."

Scientists began talking to the press, and they all appeared to be on the same page.

### What do the experts say?

Björn Oddsson, a geophysicist with the

Civic Protection Agency, told reporters: "There is a lot of activity in the area that is being measured in earthquakes and changes to the land surface, that indicate that magma is gathering. We're just preparing for an eruption that could happen at any time."

Dorvaldur Þórðarson, a professor of volcanology and petrology at the University of Iceland, told RÚV: "If you

**"ALL THIS SAID, VOLCANOES ARE NOTORIOUSLY UNPREDICTABLE. AN ERUPTION COULD GO OFF BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, OR WITHIN THE NEXT HUNDRED YEARS, GIVE OR TAKE."**

look at the pattern of seismic activity, it's very similar to that which happened before the March 19th eruption. Both in the number of quakes and the power being released due to the quakes. But it's a lot less; it's maybe a tenth of what we saw earlier this year. So this is all just a bit calmer."

Salóme Jörunn Bernharðsdóttir, a natural disasters specialist at the Icelandic Met Office, gave MBL a

similar assessment, saying: "Last time, the more powerful quakes decreased, and then an eruption came rather quickly to the surface. We can expect the same thing to happen now, or see all new behaviour."

All this said, volcanoes are notoriously unpredictable. An eruption could go off by the time you read this, or within the next hundred years, give or take. We will keep doing what we always do: waiting to see what happens next. 🍷

ASK AN

## Expert

**Q: What Is The Future Of The Icelandic Language?**

Words: **Reetta Huhta**



Photo: **Art Bicnick**

*Relative to the global population, Icelandic is spoken by only a handful of people. As English continues to prop up its status as the lingua franca of the West, we at The Grapevine were wondering what the future of Icelandic looks like.*

*We sought an answer to this question from Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson, professor emeritus in Icelandic Language and Linguistics.*

*Eiríkur told us that since Icelandic is used in all the domains of society, (for example in government and administration, education, media and cultural life), it's on firm footing in Iceland and should therefore be safe. However, during the last decade, Iceland has gone through dramatic societal and technological changes that have led to a massive increase in the use of the English language in the community, which has in turn increased the external pressure on the Icelandic language.*

*According to Eiríkur, the survival of Icelandic depends entirely on its users. The language community needs to value Icelandic by raising awareness of its cultural importance. It is also vital to put more effort into teaching Icelandic to immigrants.*

*If the language community doesn't continue using Icelandic in all domains of society and teaching it to foreigners, the language might lose its position and become endangered. However, Eiríkur points out that English is not the enemy, and that Icelanders should respect people's right to speak it if they haven't learned Icelandic. If the community continues valuing Icelandic, it can have a prosperous future.* 🍷

LOST IN GOOGLE TRANSLATION

# Old Sluts Taking Over

Browsing through RÚV's website, you come across a headline stating that people in Hrísey and Grímsey are living under a fear of old sluts taking over the islands. Confused, you rub your eyes. Are Iceland's northern islands overrun by promiscuous geriatrics?.

As you read through the sentence again, your inner feminist stirs. What is this misogynistic bullshit in the newspaper? Why are these people referring to women as 'old sluts'? This is in no way acceptable, it's 2021 for God's sake!

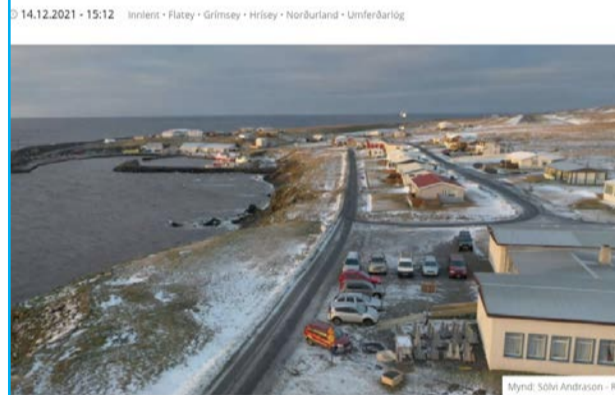
And more so, why are they referring to old sluts specifically? Apparently it's okay to be a slut, but a young one with perky body parts and no wrinkles. That is exactly what's wrong with today's world: women are not allowed to grow old, whereas men are like wine—they get better as they age.

You are appalled. What a load of crap! Furiously you open the article and proceed to find out what other horrifying statements it makes about ageing women.

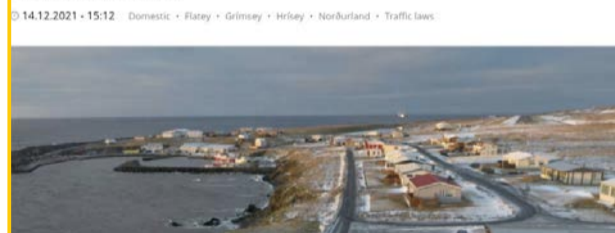
A closer look calms your blood pressure. The article is not about sluts—young or old. The residents of these islands are actually afraid of old junk, but Google Translate has fooled us yet again.

The Icelandic word 'drusla' means some sort of junk, although it can also denote a slut. In this case, however, Google has made a mistake when deciding which meaning to pick. **RH** 🍷

Óttast að Hrísey og Grímsey fyllist af gömlum druslum



Fear that Hrísey and Grímsey will be filled with old sluts



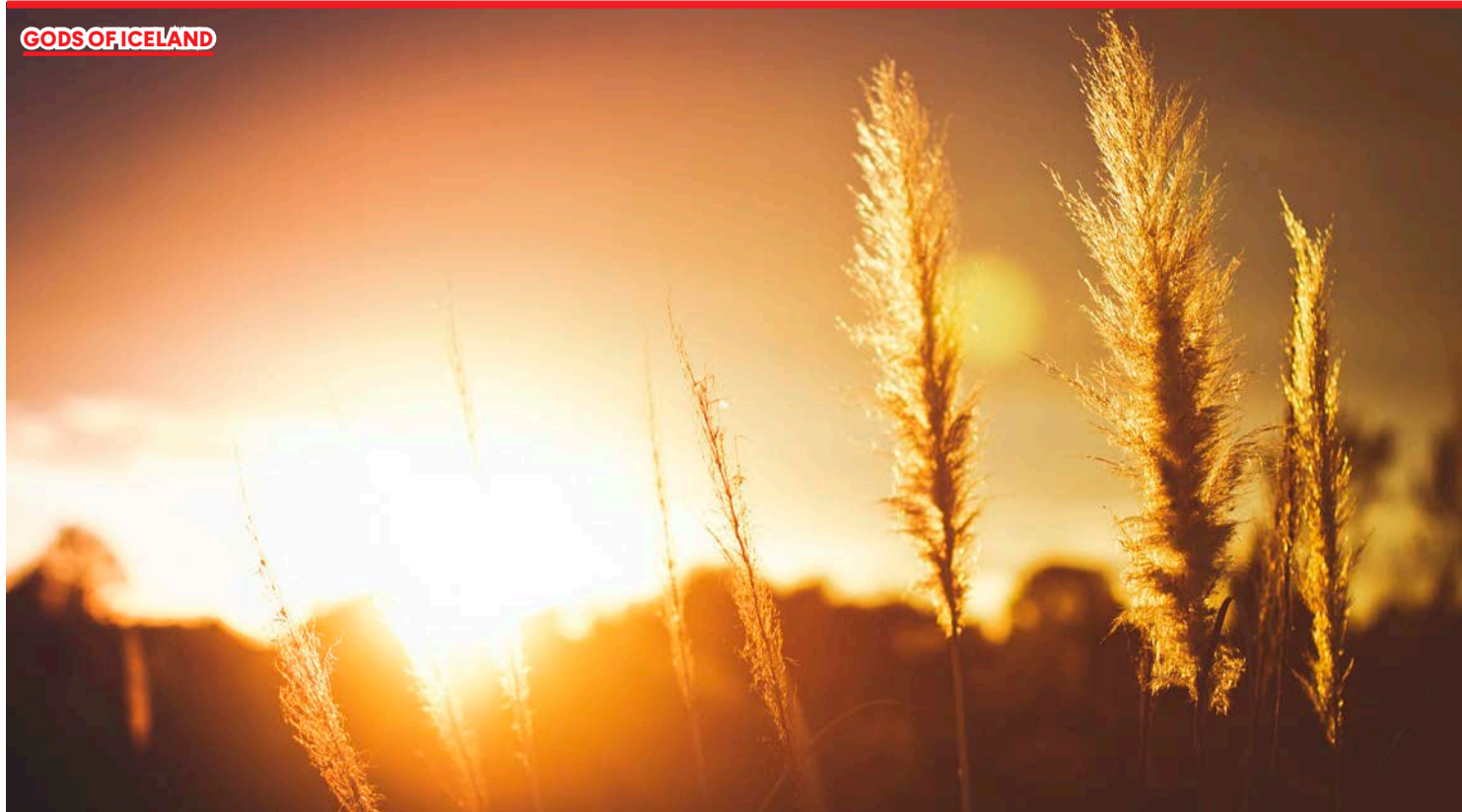
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GODS OF ICELAND



# PRAISE THE SUN

Sól, Goddess of the Sun

Words:  
**Andie Sophia  
Fontaine**

Image:  
**Creative  
Commons**

In many languages that have gendered nouns, the sun is often gendered male; this is the case in Latinate languages, for example. However, in many Germanic languages that still retain gendered nouns, (English apparently having moved beyond this concept), the sun is female, and Icelandic is no exception. In fact, to Norse pagans the sun wasn't just a feminine noun; she was a goddess in her own right: Sól.

Sól had an auspicious beginning. Fathered by Mundilfari, (whose name has the perplexing meaning of "the one moving according to particular times"), along with her brother Máni

(which literally means "moon"), it wasn't her original intention to become a goddess. She was just so beautiful that Mundilfari named her after the sun.

This didn't sit well with certain other gods, who decided to punish Mundilfari by making Sól carry the literal sun in a chariot across the sky. Which, when you think about, doesn't seem like much of a punishment. She took to the job as if she were made for it. In a way, you could say she was destiny's child.

But if you've ever wondered why time flies so quickly, it's because Sól is relentlessly pursued by a wolf named Sköll. Like Beyoncé, yes, Sól has a

dedicated hater. On occasion, he even catches up with her, which is why we have solar eclipses.

During Ragnarök—a kind of Nordic End Of Times event—Sköll eventually catches Sól and swallows her whole. However, a daughter of Sól, who is reportedly just as beautiful, takes up the crown and continues the sun's journey again.

The entire myth just shows that you can't keep a good woman down for long. And if you think you can, well, you must know nothing about her. ♡

**Superpowers:**  
Literally brings us the sun

**Weaknesses:**  
Wolves

**Modern Analogy:**  
Beyoncé

## NEW MUSIC PICKS



**Ægir**  
**'Tem End Lopo'**  
This four-track release takes as its theme the cyclical rhythms created by a piece of vinyl once the stylus is sitting in that perpetual loop next to the label. Using that sound as a foundation, Ægir morphs samples from the record into fever-dream soundscapes that you can't bear to be in, but won't contemplate leaving. **JP**



**Brynjar Daðason**  
**'Pretty Late'**  
Brynjar's debut album is an engaging set of sparsely arranged pieces for electric guitar. Having studied composition in Reykjavík, he then enlisted some of the country's best-respected musicians, including bassist Skúli Sverrisson, to work on this project. Radiohead's Johnny Greenwood is cited in Brynjar's biography as an influence, but his gentle, precise playing style is also occasionally reminiscent of The Durutti Column's Vini Reilly. And that's praise indeed. **JP**

### JUST SAYINGS

# "Áfram með smjörið"



Important note: there is no salt in this butter

There are a few ways to carry on. You could do it like a proper Englishman and keep calm at the same time. But if you'd rather eschew all that posh nonsense, we have the solution for you. The saying "Áfram með smjörið" literally means "forward/on with the butter". Icelanders are, of course, a nation of farmers and we have so many sayings connected to butter that it's almost sad. But the saying "on with the butter" just means to carry on. Icelanders use this saying often and they love to translate it, since it makes absolutely no sense in English. **VG ♡**



**Gyða Valtýsdóttir**  
**'Ox'**  
Gyða's latest album may be her most personal work to date, and that's saying a lot for a composer known for the warm intimacy of her work. This is music for a candlelit night at home with a loved one, or for staring out of the window at the rain by yourself. It will warm your heart, and cleanse your soul. **ASF**

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Words:  
Valur Grettisson  
John Pearson  
Andie Sofia Fontaine  
Reetta Huhta

Images:  
Magnús Andersen

# THE NINTH ANNUAL THE

# REYKJAVÍK GRAPE— VINE MUSIC AWARDS 2022



## ARTIST OF THE YEAR: INSPEC- TOR SPACETIME

Inspector Spacetime materialise unexpectedly in the middle of the Grapevine Awards party, and tumble out of their time-travelling British phone box. We suspect that they'd actually set the controls for late-nineties London clubland—their spiritual home—but once it dawns on them that they've won our Artist Of The Year award, the trio of energetic young danceheads couldn't be happier.

"This is a huge honour that I didn't expect us to have," says Elías Geir Óskarsson, *de facto* leader of Inspector Spacetime, (only because he's the one who answers the group's emails).

"Yeah I was not expecting this either, and I'm really honoured!" Egill Gauti Sigurjónsson chimes in. He formed the group with Elías back in the early stages of the pandemic, shortly before they recruited Vaka Agnarsdóttir to sing and complete the Spacetime trio.

"It's a great title to have," says Vaka, "and I love that people love us!"

With one remarkable album, a couple of great videos and twelve months of unmissable high-energy gigs under their collective belt, Inspector Spacetime have earned the accolade. However their eponymously titled album nearly never saw the light of day, due to the fact that Elías accidentally deleted all the recordings. Oops. Elías...?

"I'm very proud of it! Because we had to do it again," he says of his finger-slip, and the subsequent process of

re-recording the album from scratch. "We did it better. If I hadn't done that, maybe we wouldn't be here today."

The world would certainly be musically poorer had Inspector Spacetime never travelled back and changed the past for the better. The album, which finally emerged at the start of 2021, is an energetic, eclectic bounce around all the best touchstones of dance—from the sweet UK two-step of the song "Hitta Mig" to the frenetic drum 'n' bass of the titular track—and all stops in between.

In a year of firsts and new experiences for Inspector Spacetime, a definite highlight was their biggest gig yet at LungA Festival in Seyðisfjörður. Besides the novelty of being put up in a hotel—and we do hope that they hit that minibar hard—the band also got a taste of what might be in store for them when they played the town's gymnasium.

Egill recalls the surreal experience: "People in the front were asking us to take a selfie with them, like famous people!" "Yeah," laughs Vaka, "they were riding the barricades with their phones!"

The idea of future celebrity might take a while to settle with the band members. In the meantime, they can survey this year's achievements with pride.

"It's crazy," Egill reflects on their award. "I remember last year Briet was Artist Of The Year. I really didn't think that we would win the next one."

It's well-deserved, Inspector Spacetime. And welcome to your own party, which we suspect has only just started. **JP**

**Honourable mentions:** Hipsumhaps, kef LAVÍK, BSÍ, Bára Gísladóttir, Bjarki

## BEST CONCERT: RAVE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

2021 was nothing less than a rollercoaster ride for anyone trying to organise a party or, god forbid, a concert. Countless events were cancelled due to COVID-19 and many had to change their settings to adjust to whatever the rules were at the time. But one party, one concert, was a smash hit: the rave, BUXUR (simply means pants) at the artist-run space Fúsk.

A group of artists, and even an international techno star, were the brains behind the operation held last summer in Gufunes. Among them were Elsa Jónsdóttir, one of two artists in the art gang called Krot&Krass, and Atli Bollason, a visual artist and sometime musician.

"Well, we wanted to have some kind of an opening party," Elsa explained when asked about the thought process behind the rave that attracted hundreds of partiers. "Bjarki [Rúnar Sigurðsson] suggested that we would have a rave," Elsa says.

"This is such an unbelievable space, the location is perfect and, in theory, we could have just done whatever. But instead of going for a cocktail party, why not rave?" Atli adds.

Elsa explains that, while ultimately a success, it was no easy task to pull off. Dozens of volunteers helped ready the space and, true to the spirit of Fúsk, the whole undertaking was a community project.

The rave quickly attracted international attention and turnout was incredible. But this was far from the end for this exciting venue. Elsa says that the group is aiming to host an art festival in the area next summer where you will find everything from architecture to experimental concerts.

As for BUXUR, Elsa and Atli couldn't be happier. "Everything went our way," Atli said "Covid restrictions were actually lifted days before the event, and the weather was so nice. There was a fog on the bay lending everything a mystical air, and painting the whole site in hues of pink once the sun started setting. It was an all-day celebration of being together, of music and art and dancing, and of accomplishing something together." **VG**

**Honourable mentions:** sóley Livestream from The University of Iceland, Björk Harpa concert, Kaleo Live at various places dir. Hörður Freyr Brynjarsson, Bony Man - Cinnamon Fields Concert at Kex 2021, Plúto DJ Streams, GusGus live from Sundlaugin



## ALBUM OF THE YEAR: 'MOTHER MELANCHOLIA' BY SÓLEY

'Mother Melancholia' is a dark, deep exploration into the feeling of the end of the world, imminent death and destruction, as well as the complexity of a feminist riot surging within the heart of a woman. This is an unusually visual album, almost like a film without the film. It also shows incredible depth within sóley as a musician. In some ways, she says that she has broken free from the box that she had built around herself the last decade, intentionally or not.

"After I finished my record deal with my publisher, I felt like I had a new sense of freedom. This is not to be understood like I had any problems with my record company or other albums, but in some senses, being without a record company, freed me from the pressure of the music industry," she explains. "I was starting to find myself in a box that wasn't right for me. Perhaps it's this feeling that you have to please the invisible listener, the one you think is there, sitting on the other side of the screen, listening and judging what is right and wrong in art. But then I reminded myself to never underestimate the listener. It's really interesting how the music industry can be helpful in some ways, but also destructive in others," she explains.

The result of her newfound freedom is 'Mother Melancholia', an album that is dark, haunting, slow and, most of all, without compromise. Asked about this, sóley laughs: "Well, I wasn't trying to make a difficult album to listen to." And she is absolutely right, because there is a beautiful ethereal atmosphere above all the dark tones, like a colourful sky in the winter darkness.

"I'm scared shitless when it comes to death," she says, "and that's the spark for this album. The album is also born from my obsessive interest in movies. The title itself is a homage to the two movies, 'Mother!' and 'Melancholia'. That's when I found some connection in the album and the feeling that I had within myself."

She says that the movies inspired her to ponder the complexity of Earth, God, the end of the world. And being a woman. "I found some feminist riot within myself, a strong feeling I want to work more with," she explains.

sóley self-published the album, a process she says was a tough learning experience, but one that saw her grow as a person and an artist. Asked if she was afraid that her new approach and the resulting darkness would alienate listeners, her answer is simply no.

"As long as you are proud of what you do, it doesn't really matter," she says. **VG**



## ONE JO WATCH: ÁRNÝ MARGRÉT

To be fair, Árný Margrét was a no-brainer for this category. She has only released one single, yet she has captivated Iceland's folk scene with her soft voice and intimate lyrics. She has already cut a deal with the legendary UK record company One Little Independent, which was the first to release Björk in the 90s.

At her core, Árný Margrét is simply a young woman from Ísafjörður, in the harsh Westfjords region, where the sun doesn't manage to crest the tall mountains in the winter, and the threat of an avalanche is part of everyday life.

"I grew up in Ísafjörður. When I was six or seven, I learned to play a classical piano, but never really connected with this. But when I got my guitar, at 14 years old, I connected immediately," she says in a soft voice.

She learned the guitar and practiced writing songs until she was confident enough to share her work. That's when she sent one of her songs to Högni Egilsson, frontman of the legendary band Hjaltalín. He was so taken by the song that he invited her to meet him.

"We met a lot when I visited the city, and we played together," she says. Their collaboration ended up as a song in the documentary 'Priðji Póllinn', about Högni and his battle with manic depressive disorder. It was clear that Árný's musical career was taking off.

"I didn't really think that I would become a musician," she says. "This happened so quickly. I was finishing school last autumn but COVID-19 closed the world off. The winter in Ísafjörður was hard and plain nasty and I was working in my parents' bakery. I just sent Högni the song, and then all of sudden, he introduced me to Kiddi in Hjálmar."

Kiddi is one of Iceland's best known and respected music producers and once a member of the Icelandic reggae band Hjálmar, which was incredibly popular in the late noughties.

"I met with Kiddi and we just recorded ten demos. I forgot my lyrics on the floor, and he called me later and asked if I didn't want them back. And, perhaps, to record more demos, so we did ten more," she explains.

The result is incredible, setting Árný Margrét on the brink of breaking out. She already has a management company planning upcoming tours in Europe and the US, so it's only a matter of time before her voice is unleashed on the world. Oh, and a new single will drop in January or early February. We at The Reykjavík Grapevine can't wait. **VG**

**Honourable mentions:** Brynja, Kvíkindi, Vill, Inspector Spacetime

## ONE TO WATCH: SUCKS TO BE YOU, NIGEL

“The name is kind of just, nonsense,” says Krummi Uggason, one of the founders of the grassroots punk band, Sucks to be you, Nigel. The Reykjavík Grapevine Music Awards panel chose the band as one of two artists to watch this year. In some ways, an unorthodox selection for the panel, since the band is not even a year old and hails from a small underground scene. But they have used their time in an incredibly efficient way, publishing their first album, ‘Tína Blóm’, earlier this year. The album is humorous raw punk, with titles like, ‘Is It Un-PC To Cut Children In Two?’. The answer is “yes,” if you’re wondering. It’s also highly illegal, in case you’re still unsure.

Putting their music to the side for the moment, our first question upon meeting with the band is simple: Who the hell is Nigel? Are you talking about Nigel Farage?

“A lot of people have asked us about that,” Krummi answers and his bandmates chuckle. “Me and Vigfús [Þór Eiríksson] were driving, and this was a running joke, like saying, it sucks to be...whatever. All of a sudden, we saw this number plate, and the name appeared to us in traffic: It sucks to be you, Nigel.”

The band is young. Krummi and Vigfús started it and found some band mates in the COVID-summer of 2020. But this is punk, and stuff moves fast, so they lost some members and gained some others. But it wasn’t until they found Silja Rún Högnadóttir that everything came together.

So you’re the singer, I ask? “Well, I consider myself more of a screamer than a singer,” she explains. And what a powerful screamer she is. She is a long time friend of Krummi and Vigfús, but it took time for them to realise that she was the perfect fit for this odd band.

“We asked her if she was up for singing for us after the former singer quit,” says Vigfús. “I told them that I couldn’t really sing,” Silja explains. But they answered, in true punk DIY style: ‘Well, it doesn’t really matter!’”

Asked how they managed to record an album in such a short time, they say that it’s more or less thanks to their good friend Hlynur Sævarsson, a member of Icelandic indie band Trailer Todd.

Asked about the future, Silja says that they don’t want to take themselves too seriously. “We’re just playing and having fun ourselves. We love to play concerts,” she says. “It’s liberating.” **VG**



## SHOUT OUT: MINNINGAR

Every year, the Grapevine Music Awards give a shout out to someone who has made the musical world a better place over the preceding 12 months. But for 2022, we’re highlighting a project that set out to make the actual world a better place too.

So we doff our caps to Minningar, a collective that evolved around musicians Daniele Girolamo and Eyrún Engilbertsdóttir, who met while studying music in Reykjavík. They decided to create a project to document the tragic beauty of Icelandic glaciers as they disappear due to human indifference, which led to the magnificent album ‘From the Ocean/To the Ocean (Memories of Snæfellsjökull)’.

After teaming up with Eyrún, Daniele had a chance encounter with location sound recording expert Magnus Bergsson—a man renowned for his work capturing the audio of natural environments. “I asked him one night if we could create some musical art from what he was doing,” says Daniele, “and he agreed”. Daniele then asked musical synthesis innovator Úlfur Hansson to complete the project team “because I love his music, and he’s an amazing composer and musician.”

The quartet decided to focus on Snæfellsjökull glacier in West Iceland. They named themselves Minningar—which means “memories”—to reflect their mission to create an audio document of what may soon be gone.

Weekends spent recording in the field yielded hours of pristine natural sounds; wind, water and shifting ice all contributing to the rich soundscapes captured by Magnus. Many of those recordings were earmarked to appear on the album in their raw form. Others acted as guiding scores for the three musicians when they later laid down studio tracks to accompany the natural sounds. The rule was that the music should never eclipse the sounds of nature. “The subject is the field recording,” says Daniele, clarifying the priorities in that creative process. “Our music is like a frame.”

A cave on the glacier also offered the chance to record music on location in a unique acoustic, which Daniele wasn’t able to resist. “I was thinking of bringing the cello that day, but we had so much stuff for recording,” Daniele recalls. So instead he took a kalimba, (a small thumb-piano), as a more portable alternative, and created a track for the album.

‘From the Ocean/To the Ocean (Memories of Snæfellsjökull)’ is a sonically striking work; evocative of the wild expanses at its source, and poignant in the message that it carries. Its powerful effect isn’t lost on Eyrún. “The whole project has been very eye opening for me, sonically and just showing a new way to play,” she says. “It’s very different to the other projects that I’ve been working on.”

The experience—along with the audience reaction to the album, and their live performance of it—has inspired Minningar to continue their work. Recordings are currently taking place on Sólheimajökull glacier for a second album due later this year. **JP**

**Honourable mentions:** Cell7, Inspector Spacetime, Ólafur Arnalds, DJ Sley og Jamesendir, Pósthúsið



## ALBUM OF THE YEAR: KEF LAVÍK

Musical duo kef LAVÍK have been lauded by Grapevine for a few years now, even before they were willing to disclose who they were. But Einar Birkir Bjarnason and Ármann Örn Friðriksson have dropped the defining party album of the year in 'Eilífur Snjór í Augunum', and that's part of the reason why they've won our Album of the Year award.

We were able to track down the elusive Ármann and we had just one question in mind: who are you guys anyway? Why the mystery? Turns out, they're far more approachable than you might think.

"Our defining characteristic is that we are friendly guys making art pop," Ármann tells us. "We're from the countryside of Iceland, Höfn. One chef and one computational engineer trying to be funny and emotional at the same time."

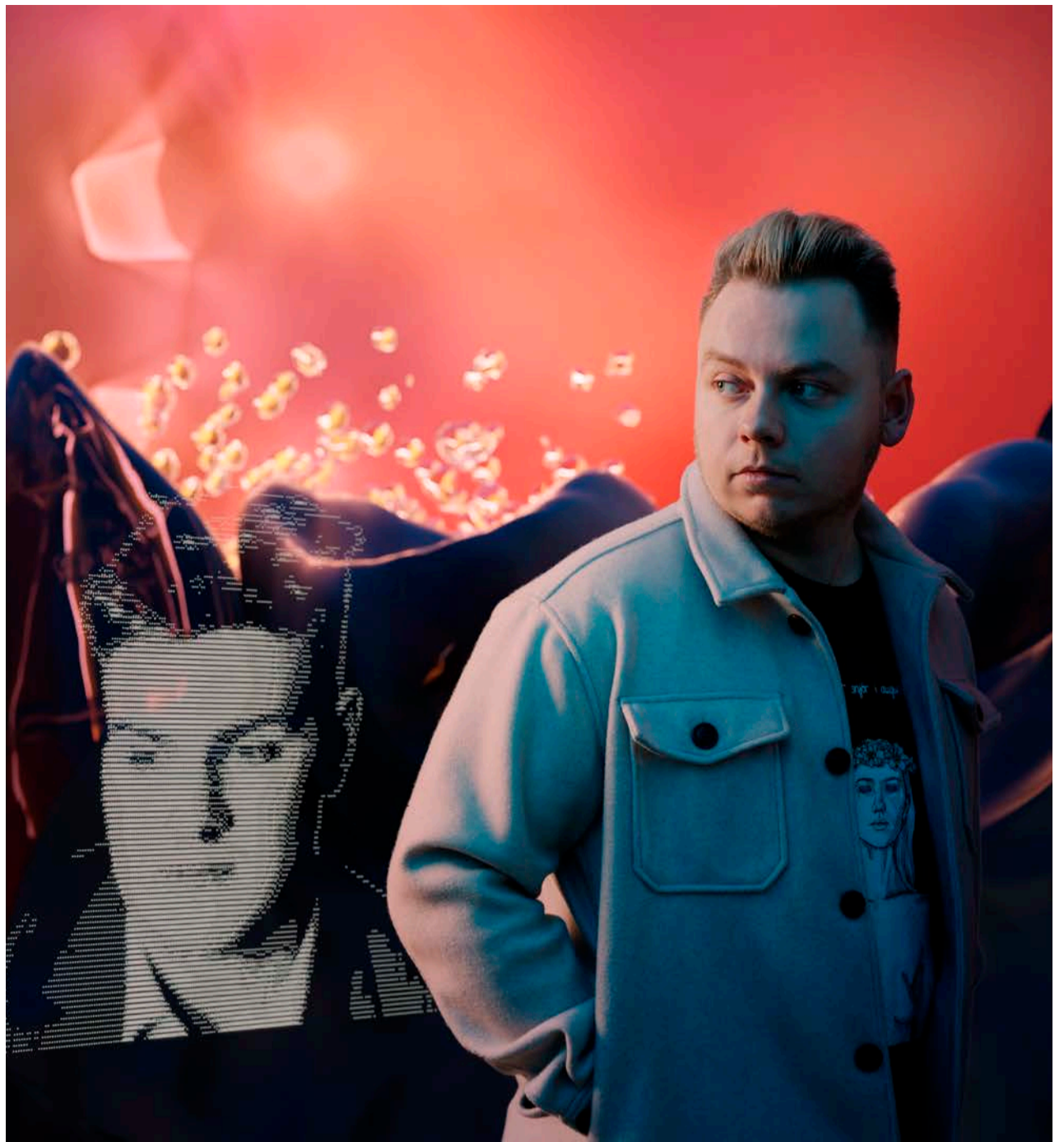
What makes 'Eilífur Snjór í Augunum' special is it sounds like it was written for a stir-crazy populace itching to get out and party as the pandemic concludes its second year. It turns out this was just an accident of fate rather than the album's intent.

"I think the album is really based on six months in 2019," Ármann says. "So it's really, really pre-pandemic. When the pandemic started, we switched projects and made [the EP] 'Heim Eftir 3 Mánuði í Burtu.' But this album had been ongoing for two years before we released it, and the lyrics are really only about pre-pandemic stuff. But I guess it's good to release music that's based on partying and getting your jam on in the pandemic. I think that's the music that really resonates with people right now, rather than the serious stuff."

Ármann was nearly speechless upon learning kef LAVÍK had won this award, but somehow managed to tell us: "We are always happy to get recognition for our process. We're just happy to accept this award and get recognition for this album."

'Eilífur Snjór í Augunum' is one of two albums of the year. **ASF**

**Honourable mentions:** Stundum Þunglynd...en alltaf andfasísk - BSÍ, Youiverse - Possimiste, You Stay By The Sea - Axel Flóvent, SKRATTAR - Hellraiser IV, Aron Can - Andi, Líf, Hjarta, Sál



**Honourable mentions:** Sin Fang - Soy Un Animal dir. Magnús Leifsson, Ógisslegt - Skrattar Dir. Frosti Runólfs, Dansa og Bánsa - Inspector Spacetime, 'Crystallized' - The Vintage Caravan, Vesturbæjar Beach - BSÍ, russian.girls - The Dance (LHÍ graduation collab piece), russian.girls - Halda áfram

## VIDEO OF THE YEAR: MÁNI SIGFÚSSON

Kælan Mikla are a band with a very particular visual aesthetic, and it came as no surprise to the awards panel that one of last year's strongest videos was theirs.

Their track "Hvítir Sandar", which translates as "White Sand", is a collaboration with French band Alcest. Stylistically it blends Kælan Mikla's trademark dark take on early eighties alternative with Alcest's "blackgaze", (that's an unholy confluence of black metal and shoegaze, in case you're wondering). The mood of the track is slow and epic; the sound rich in texture, dense yet expansive.

To translate these elements into visuals Kælan Mikla got in touch with Máni Sigfússon, a director with a strong track record of working with Icelandic artists of an independent bent. But it wasn't the first time that Máni had worked with the band.

"They had just started out," Máni recalls of their first collaboration, "and Iceland Airwaves festival was making these promo videos. They paired directors with bands to do stuff. I worked with them on an announcement clip, and they came back ten years later and said that they wanted something similar for their video."

That request for "something similar" has resulted in this sumptuous slow-moving mix of live and computer generated images. Flecks of light hover and dance; surreal fabrics slither and morph. The three band members are represented only in oblique terms: either as shrouded marble mausoleum statues or in extreme close-up, allowing stark, high-contrast studies in the detailed texture of hair, skin and blood.

"In terms of concept the only thing the band wanted was texture," Máni explains, "and we talked about having the video in black and white. It's shot in colour, but everything is black and white. The band members are painted white."

The threads of some of these distinctive stylistic themes run through Máni's work, which started some 14 years ago when he made his first music video for his brother Sindri, (also known as the artist Sin Fang).

"I was in film school in Amsterdam, and as soon as I got back to Iceland my brother, who was in the band Seabear, asked me to do a music video for them. And after that the requests kept coming, and haven't stopped since," Máni says.

Icelandic artists such as Ásgeir, sóley, Ólafur Arnalds and Jóhann Jóhannsson have all trusted Máni to weave their music into the magic of his visuals. But The Rolling Stones and Shawn Mendes have also knocked on his door to create video packages for their live shows. So given his day job at an ad agency, Máni always has numerous professional plates spinning—including a new Seabear video to coincide with their first album release in 12 years.

Musicians just keep coming back to him for more; check out the Grapevine's crowned Video of the Year and you'll see why. **JP**



## SONG OF THE YEAR: VESTUR-BÆJAR BEACH

The song Vesturbæjar Beach by BSÍ is not only our Song Of The Year. It is, in some ways, the most telling song about the COVID year of 2021. It describes awful summers in Iceland, as well as the will to do the best in whatever the situation is. It was also a break-out track for a new band that has become one of the most exciting in Iceland; an incredible fact, if only for the reason that the two band members—Silla and Julius—had no idea how to play instruments when they started the band.

“It’s never really summer in Iceland,” Silla explains, and adds that the song was a humorous attempt to create more summer for her homeland. The video itself underlines this, with hilarious settings where the bandmates try to sunbathe on roundabouts in crappy weather.

Silla and Julius didn’t expect that the song would get the attention it did in Iceland, and Silla actually first noticed it when she was at a family reunion. “Then someone asked, so you’re making music?” Silla says and laughs. “And I didn’t really understand what was going on until some nieces and nephews started talking about it.”

The band just released their album—‘Stundum Punglynd...En Alltaf Andfasísk’ (“Sometimes Depressed... But Always Antifascist”) and they are already preparing to release more music. “We are working on something,” Silla answers the journalist cautiously when asked if more is on its way.

Whatever the plan is, the band is now on the map, and nephews and nieces are paying attention, as well as the nation.

**Honourable mentions:** Á hnjánum - Hipsumhaps, Skin - Vök, Manstu - kef Lavík, russian.girls - Halda áfram, SKRATTAR - Drullusama

## YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD THIS: SUNNA FRIÐJÓNS

Listening to Sunna Friðjóns’ new album, ‘Let the Light In’, is to be transported to another world. The mystically flowing songs evoke scenes that are easy to retreat into when you feel the need to escape this pandemic-infused reality for a moment. It’s no wonder that this year’s You Should Have Heard This award goes to Sunna.

It’s rare to come across music that paints such vivid pictures in your mind. When music is composed for movies, the films are usually created first and the music is added afterwards. Sunna’s albums do just the opposite: it’s like you’re constructing a film in your mind around the music you’re hearing.

“People tend to say that my music feels like it should be a part of a movie,” Sunna laughs, adding that it’s actually a dream of hers to compose a soundtrack for a film that she connects to.

Sunna’s music could be categorised as Chamber Pop, as she is using instruments typical to chamber music to form modern melodies. Her background in classical music pushes through in her compositions, but she’s freed herself of the strict rules of the genre.

“I feel like I never belonged in that box. However much I loved the music and playing in youth orchestras, I didn’t fully fit in it. I needed to find something that would suit me better,” Sunna explains.

Sunna’s music is based on how she perceives the world and energies around her. “I try to translate my feelings into music. Even when I’m not certain how I actually feel about something, the outcome makes sense when it’s put into a musical form,” she describes.

This translation process results in cinematic pieces where every little detail matters, with each adding a little something to the aural world being created. Filled with particular sounds and moments, the songs truly are more than the sum of their parts. “I’m very sensitive to sounds and want to add texture to my music through them,” Sunna says.

Sounds are not the only thing Sunna is sensitive to. She’s very aware of the energies around her, which has led her to become a healer as well. She has experimented with combining the two fields together, and in the future we will see more of her signature group healing concerts. “I won’t stop making music as is, but I do want to organise more of these healing events,” she promises.

We’re happy to hear that Sunna will continue to make more masterpieces. After all, she seems to have managed to transfer her healing abilities to her music, too—whether it was intentional or not. **RH**



### PANEL

Alexander Jean de Fontenay - Music expert, DJ and art student  
Arnar Eggert Thoroddsen - Journalist and PhD in Socio-musicology  
Hannah Jane Cohen - Former cultural editor at Reykjavik Grapevine and performing artist  
Mina Richter - Cultural journalist at Fréttablaðið and a musician  
Valur Grettisson - Editor-in-chief at The Reykjavik Grapevine

# Farmers Market

ICELAND



OUR STORES IN REYKJAVÍK: FARMERS & FRIENDS



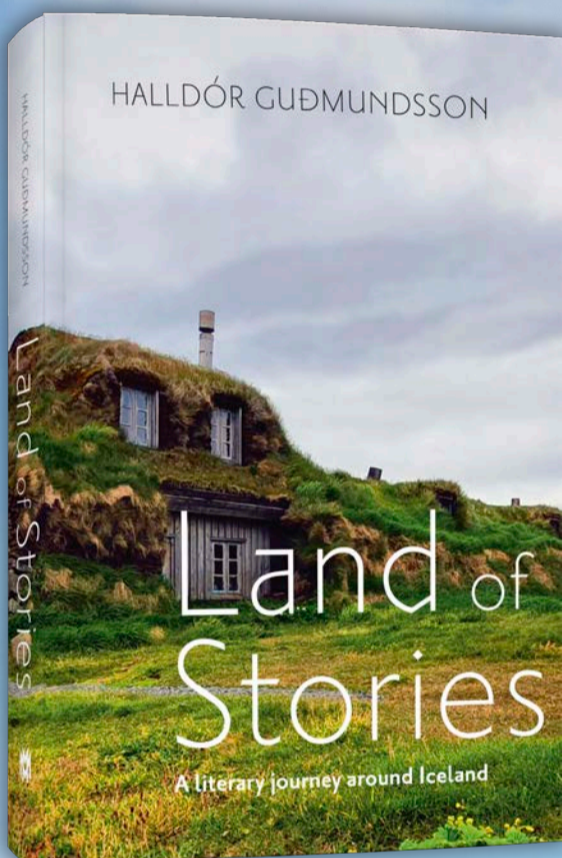
Laugavegur 37



Hólmastóð 2 / Grandi

[WWW.FARMERSMARKET.IS](http://WWW.FARMERSMARKET.IS)

# A LITERARY TOUR AROUND ICELAND



Storytelling is probably the most important cultural tradition in Iceland and a lot of its places have enthralling tales to tell.

This book is a round trip around the country, with thirty stops at such places along the way.



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Fine Restaurant

## How About Veganuary?

The best places in town for vegan food

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

It's sad but true: when a lot of people talk about “vegan food” or “vegan restaurants,” what they all too often mean is “vegan analogs of my favourite Western foods.” While there's no disputing the tastiness of a good vegan burger done right, there are cultures all over the world who have been making food without animal products for millennia.

So let's give them some love, shall we?



### Hraðlestin

Numerous locations, but we like Lækjargata 8

Consistently one of the best places for Indian food, (itself a super broad umbrella), they've got something for everybody here. Their expansive menu can be a little overwhelming, but you can't go wrong by just ordering the vegan thali—a platter of many smaller portions of some of the best food you'll ever taste. Round it off with a vegan masala chai and roll yourself happily home.



### Noodle Station

Laugavegur 86

You've just trundled off the bus at Hlemmur after a long and harrow-

ing journey into town. You're tired, you're cold, you're hungry and you're vegan. You want—nay, need—to eat now. What do you do? You walk no more than half a block from where you are to Noodle Station and order the vegetable bowl. You can even add some of your favourite extras for just a few coins more.



### Ali Baba

Austurstræti 12a

If you have a hankering for some good Syrian food sans animal products, then this is a great choice, especially for takeaway. Take your time savouring the falafel plate, or get the fully loaded falafel wrap up in your face. Friendly, affordable and consistently tasty, it's absolutely a top pick, whether after a night of partying or for a quick lunch break.



### Krua Thai

Skólavörðustígur 21a

Already a respectable Thai restaurant in its own right, Krua Thai goes one step further for those avoiding animal products. For literally any dish on their menu, you can sub-

stitute the meat with tofu. Is tofu Thai? We don't know, but it tastes like whatever you cook it in, so it makes for a fine substitution in any of their sumptuous, tasty dishes.



### Fine Restaurant

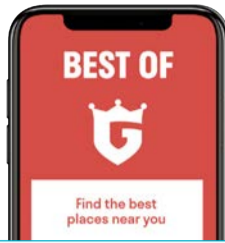
Rauðarástigur 33

You could be forgiven for having never heard of this Szechuan restaurant located just a few blocks south of Hlemmur. Heck, you might have even walked right past it numerous times without over noticing it. But Fine Restaurant is an absolute gem: cozy, reasonably priced, and consistently better than the more popular choices in town for Chinese food. We highly recommend their mapo tofu, which will make you forget about all your troubles, if only for a moment.

There are likely many places we've forgotten. All we ask is that when looking for vegan food, you explore beyond the boundaries of seitan burgers. You won't regret it. 🍴

January 7th — February 3rd

# In Your Pocket



Reykjavík Map

Places We Like

Best Of Reykjavík

## Perfect Day

Dance, jive & have the time of your life



Words: **Reetta Huhta**  
Photo: **Art Bicnick**

### Elísabet Pálmadóttir

*Elísabet Pálmadóttir works as a specialist in natural hazards at the Icelandic Met Office. During the course of this year, she has been busy explaining the acts of Fagradalsfjall volcano to us common people. She is probably the only person whose perfect day includes a natural disaster.*

#### Woken by the dog

Even though I really love my job, I enjoy the first day of vacation a lot. So my perfect day would be the start of a holiday after a long week of shifts at the Met Office. My dog would wake me up around nine or ten, beginning an easy morning. My husband and I would cuddle for a bit before feeding the dog. I might also make a celery juice for myself if I feel like it.

### Walking, brunching and napping

When our dog would have eaten, we would take him out for a walk in sunny weather. We would either walk along the shore near our neighbourhood, or go for a hike. Our neighbourhood is right next to the sea, and we often walk around the shore since our dog loves to swim. We would have a ball with us and we'd throw it to the sea, and he would fetch it. However, if we would be longing for a hike, we would head to one of the many mountains near Reykjavík, like Úlfarsfell or Helgafell. Anyhow, the three of us would be walking outside for at least an hour before returning home.

After the walk, I would go to the gym to do some hot yoga. After a refreshing yoga session, I would have brunch with my sister and friends—preferably somewhere within walking distance from my home, so I could have a few drinks on the side. Back home after brunch, I would enjoy a moment by myself. I would

probably take a nap to recharge my energy for the evening.

### Staycation on the side of an eruption

On a perfect day, my husband and I would have booked a hotel for the night, so after my nap we would head there and just chill for a while. We would have also reserved a table at a nice restaurant, where we would go in the evening.

After the satisfying meal, we would travel to see an eruption that would have started during our dinner—because naturally the perfect day of a volcanologist includes a natural disaster. Ever since I was a kid I've been obsessed with volcanoes and eruptions, and witnessing them truly makes my day. We would hike to the volcano and watch the mesmerising lava flow together for a good while before returning back to the hotel and falling asleep on the comfy bed. 🍷

## Vital Info



### Useful Numbers

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

### Post Office

The downtown post office is located at Hagatorg 1, and is open Mon–Fri, 09:00–17:00

### Pharmacies

Lyf og Heilsa, Fiskislóð 1, tel: 561 4600  
Lyfja, Hafnarstræti 19, tel: 552 4045

### Opening Hours - Bars & Clubs

Under current pandemic restrictions bars can stay open until 21:00

### Opening Hours - Shops & Banks

Most shops: Mon–Fri 10:00–18:00,  
Sat 10:00–16:00, Sun closed  
Banks: Mon–Fri 9:00–16:00

### Swimming Pools

Sundhöllin on Barónsstígur is an outdoor swimming pool with hot tubs. For more pools visit [gpv.is/swim](http://gpv.is/swim)  
Open: Mon–Thu 6:30–22:00, Sat 8:00–16:00  
Sun 10:00–18:00

### Public Toilets

Public toilets can be found at Hlemmur and in the round kiosks on Ingólfstorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavík Art Museum, on Lækjargata and by Eymundsson on Skólavörðustígur. Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavík City Hall and the Reykjavík Library

### Public Transport

Most buses run every 20 to 30 minutes  
Fare: 490 ISK adults, 245 ISK children.  
Buses generally run 6:00–24:00 on weekdays and 7:00–04:30 on weekends. For more info visit [www.bus.is](http://www.bus.is)

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**A**

**STEREO**



Cocktails  
Craft Beer  
Vermouth Menu

**B**

**VONARSTRÆTI**  
ECO STORE



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Oral care	
Hair care	Refill

Laugavegi 27 • 101 Reykjavík

**C**

**Wine bar & food**



**VINSTÚKAN TÍU SOPAR**

# The Map

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

## Dining

### 1. 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? We'd particularly recommend the Parma Rucola, which serves up all the parma ham goodness you could wish for. For those journeying outside the city, they've also got a location in Akureyri.

### 2. Chikin

Ingólfsstræti 2

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 spicy Twister. 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 Africa goodness, and much more.

### 4. Kaffi Laugalækur

Laugarnesvegur 74a

For many a young parent, the cafe stop at the end of a long stroll is the proverbial pot of gold. Kaffi Lækur is especially popular with new parents, with a special kids' corner for crawlers and drawers. The generously topped chicken and pesto 'litla gula hænán' and the 'shawaramabake' are our top lunch picks. Also, if you're keto, don't miss 'em,

### 5. Brauð & Co

Frakkastígur 16

First off—don't miss Brauð & Co's pretzel croissants unless you really don't want to have a spiritual experience. We also swear by their "snuður"—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

Pórsgrata 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 boatload 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 textbook crème brûlée topped with an envious snap.

### 7. Hlemmur Mathöll

Hlemmur

Once a bus station and now a bustling food hall—we love a repurposed space. Hlemmur Mathöll 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

Bergstaðastræti 4

For those of us longing for dim sum in Reykjavík, cravings have often had to be satisfied with daydreams of visits past to dim sum houses of Chinatowns abroad. But then Dragon Dim Sum arrived with their fare, which is the perfect marriage between Icelandic 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

Grandagarður 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

Austurstræti 9

Have you ever wanted to have lunch and do your laundry in a public place? You're in luck. The Laundromat Cafe on Austurstræti 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. Nauthóll

Nauthólsvegur 106

Just behind the University of Reykjavík overlooking the Nauthólsvík geothermal beach is Nauthóll, the definition of a hidden summertime gem. The restaurant is one of those places that downtown Reykjavík rats might call "too far away," but with the advent of public scooters, you can arrive there in style in but 15 minutes. Without hyperbole, there probably isn't a better outdoor view in the city than this place—and their Scandinavian fare is good too.

## Drinking

### 12. Prikið

Bankastræti 12

Prikið 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 3:00 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 atmosphere, great drinks and a 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 tipples.

### 14. Húrra

Tryggvagata 22

Húrra is BACK! ARE YOU SERIOUS? YES, WE ARE! After a despairing absence from the local scene, the beloved favourite has returned with a vengeance. Seriously—in the few weeks they've been open, the bar/venue has already had shows from heavyweights like Skrattar, Skóffinn and Mannveira. Stop by for vibes, alcohol and other fun things like that you know. Also, their bathroom renovation is pretty crazy.

### 15. Veður

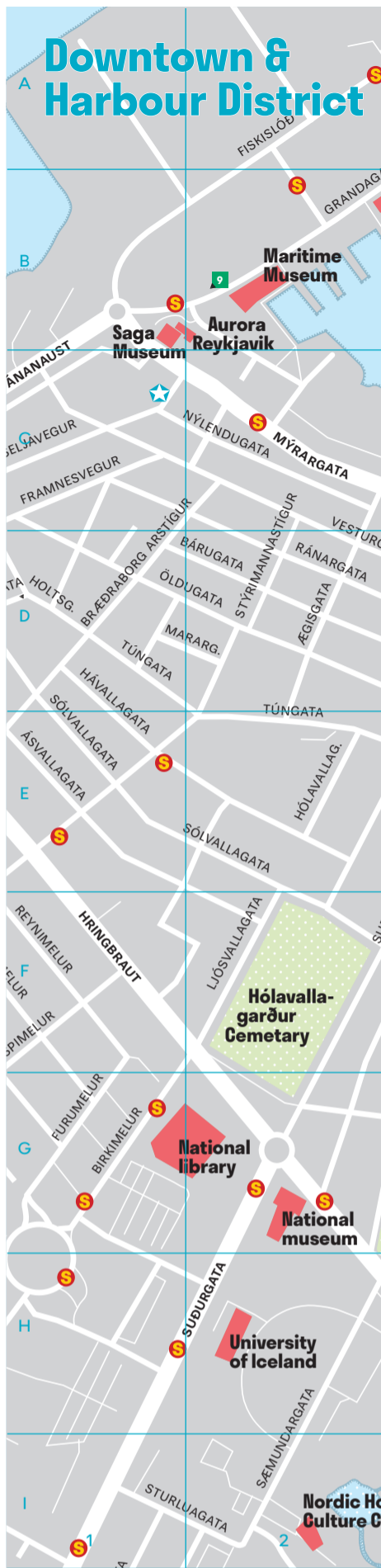
Klapparstígur 33

This charming, low-key, hole-in-the-wall serves up some great cocktails and a dedicated crowd that has grabbed the heart of the Grapevine, even though we are a magazine and not humans. If you feel fine relaxing and chatting, it's still a nice and sophisticated bar, but they've also got an edge. Sometimes they play punk music. \m/

### 16. Íslenski Barinn

Ingólfsstræti 1a

Of the many nation-themed drinking



establishments in Reykjavík, The Icelandic Bar is the only one that is also a restaurant. Go there at night and maybe you'll meet an elf 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—Bókabúðir Máls og Menningar 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. Takk fyrir.

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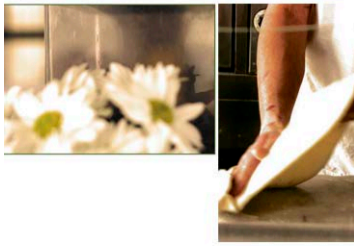
**New In Town** ☆



**Héðinn**  
Seljavegur 2, 101 Reykjavík

If the restaurant scene in Iceland was a multiverse, Héðinn would be the one with the elegance of Dr. Strange and the flashy, cool vibe of Tony Stark. The interior design at the place is out of this world, but at the same time grounded and firm. The restaurant has half of the Icelandic national team of chefs at the helm, producing mind boggling dishes that could unexpectedly tear a rift in your universe. Héðinn is one of Reykjavík's most ambitious projects, and a must-visit. **VG**

**I**  
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Skólavörðustígur 15

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**F**



**FÓTÓGRAFI**  
Souvenir shop  
Skólavörðustígur 22



**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 hosts some of Iceland's best hard rock bands on the weekends.

**19. Petersen svítan**

Austurstræti 12

The sun is finally out, which means it's time for your annual pilgrimage to Petersen svítan. Never been? Well, make sure to bring your sunglasses

because this place has one of the best views in Reykjavik and also very fashionable clientele. Look over the city and have a beer in almost entirely direct sunlight (!!!!!!!!!!!).

**Shopping**

**20. Íslenska Húðflúrstofan**

Ingólfsstræti 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 (@habbanerotattoo). Not only are they gorgeously ornate in that straight-out-of-800-AD-way, but they might save you from spirits.

**21. Nielsen Sérverzlun**

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 cosy towels and all the candles you could desire. Stop by, grab something for a gift and don't forget a little something for yourself.

**22. Fótógrafi**

Skólavörðustígur 22

Fótógrafi 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

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.

**23. Stefánsbúð/p3**

Laugavegur 7

Stefánsbúð 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**

Rauðarárstígur 10

Lucky Records is probably the biggest record shop in Iceland, with

shelves upon shelves of new and used vinyl and CDs on offer. If that's not enough, they're notorious for their expert 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/athleisure 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 because they know what they are doing and are damn good at it.

**H**

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101 Reykjavík



## Renaissance Man

Magnús Jóhann: pianist, producer, composer, arranger, synth wizard, vibes dude and the hardest-working man in Icelandic showbiz

**Words:**  
John Pearson

**Photos:**  
Dóra Dúna

Magnús Jóhann is a tad late for his Grapevine interview. Not rockstar late, you understand, although given his emergent position in the Icelandic music scene he could probably pull that kind of crap and get away with it, if he wanted. But that's not really Magnús.

Instead he politely excuses his mild tardiness, revealing that he has just been for a COVID test in order for him to play six gigs in two days; clearly, Magnús is a musician with a remarkable work ethic. And a refreshingly candid one, to boot. "I guess if I'm super honest I almost forgot about this," he says of the interview as he settles in. "But I'm very happy that I didn't."

### No tinkering, no tarting

The theme of candid honesty permeates 'Án Tillits', the remarkable record that Magnús made last year in collaboration with legendary bass guitarist Skúli Sverrisson. All ten tracks were laid down live by the pair in a single day, with none of the overdubbing, tarting and tinkering that can rob a performance of its vital organic nature. Instead this was an exercise in two elite musicians being present in the studio together, and simply weaving their magic to capture a moment.

"In this day and age when everything can be edited and fixed, it feels refreshing to do it this way," Magnús

reflects. "Just like 'OK, we're together in the studio. And the takes are just gonna be the takes. And no bullshit.'"

The resulting record is a beautiful bullshit-free jazzy blend of Magnús' piano and Skúli's acoustic bass guitar, based on scores sketched out by Magnús for use as improvisational springboards. Skúli has decades of experience as a professional musician, working with the likes of Laurie Anderson and Ryuichi Sakamoto, and was always the collaborator that Magnús had in mind for 'Án Tillits'.

### Mutual appreciation

"He has incredible chops," Magnus says of his musical counterpart. "What I really like about him is that Skúli is one of the most accomplished and most skilled, dexterous musicians I know. Like he can play sixteenth notes at 300 beats per minute, but it's never about musical showmanship; he plays what is being called for."

The admiration is mutual. The pair met in 2018 when Magnús needed a tutor for the final year of his studies at FÍH/MÍT, a jazz conservatory in Reykjavík. He approached Skúli who agreed, having been impressed by the

potential he saw in Magnús. Their professional relationship grew as the mentorship developed, with the album emerging from the music that Magnús composed for the two of them to play at his graduation concert.

### My generation

Since graduating Magnús has released a solo album but also carved himself numerous other niches in Iceland's musical landscape, reflecting his skills not just as a composer and keyboard player, but as a producer, arranger and musical director; he even played vibes on last year's album by Ingibjörg Turchi. Consequently he has become the go-to guy for many young Icelandic musicians—such as GDRN, Bríet and Hipsumhaps—who need someone with the experience and

the chops to take their craft to the next level. But, crucially, also someone who is still in their early twenties, and is rooted as much in Icelandic hip-hop as in *le conservatoire*.

"I tend to get involved with my generation of musicians when they're doing big shows, or want to start playing with a band or something," he says. "Then I'm one of the guys that has experience in arranging some of that modern music for performance. Programming the playback, synthesiser sounds, drum pads and so forth. So I've been heavily involved in that whole scene in various different ways."

### You might need a sit down after all that

Asking Magnús about current and future projects elicits a dizzying torrent of examples, including: a solo album sculpted from material he wrote for a theatre piece; a score for a short film; a piano and vocals duet record with GDRN; and the release concert for 'Án Tillits', denied so far to him and Skúli by the pandemic.

It sounds like his recent experience of six gigs in two days will have been a good rehearsal to get Magnús through the next 12 months. It's already in his diary to meet up with The Grapevine at the end of 2022 to tell us how it all went. Let's hope he remembers. 🍷

You can buy a vinyl copy of albums by Magnús at [shop.grapevine.is](https://shop.grapevine.is)

**"In this day and age, when everything can be edited and fixed, it feels refreshing to do it this way. We're together in the studio. The takes are just gonna be the takes. And no bullshit."**

## Event Picks



### ★ Dark Music Days Festival

Jan 23rd to 29th - Multiple locations and prices

Dark Music Days, a festival which has been celebrated in Reykjavík for the past 40 years, returns this month. As usual it features an eclectic line-up of

performers, from the Iceland Symphony Orchestra to Sóley, and from Aulos Flute Ensemble to former Gusgus mainstay President Bongo.

This year promises premiere outings of work by composers from Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Great Britain and Japan, performed across a range of Reykjavík venues which include Harpa, Hallgrímskirkja, the Nordic House and Landakotskirkja. But Dark Music Days is not just about musical performance. This year organisers have organised a seminar on the position of women in composition, and a lecture series called 'Podium' in which artistic directors present their recent music projects. **JP**



### ★ Marriage Bliss

Jan 15th - 20:00 - Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum - 3000 to 4500 ISK

The Seigla music festival was created by the Icelandic Schumann Society to celebrate 19th century German composer Robert Schumann. Marriage Bliss, (Hjónabandssæla in Icelandic), is an event in which soprano Hlín Pétursdóttir Behrens and pianist Erna Vala Arnardóttir explore pieces connected to Schumann's home life and his relationship with his wife, Clara. **JP**



### ★ Knitting Evening

January 19th - 20:00 - Kex Hostel - Free Admission

Drop into this knitter's circle and see what you can create, given a little wool and a pair of needles. Everyone is welcome—from beginners to experts—and naturally the event is inclusive, so crocheters are also very welcome. Bring your own tools and yarn, and enjoy a crafty discount at the bar. **JP**

## January 7th — February 3rd

# Upcoming Events

Events are currently subject to pandemic restrictions, and may change at short notice. Please check with the venue before travelling.

Send upcoming event details to: [events@grapevine.is](mailto:events@grapevine.is)

### Friday January 7th

**Pulp Fiction - Party Screening**  
21:00 Bió Paradís  
**Pétur Kristján Memorial Concert**  
20:00 Bæjarbíó  
**Power Paladin**  
20:00 Gaukurinn  
**Circuleight featuring the music of Högni Egilsson**  
12:00 Harpa  
**Iceland Symphony Orchestra - Vienna Concert**  
19:30 Harpa  
**Jóel Pálsson Kvartett**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Saturday January 8th

**Iceland Symphony Orchestra - Vienna Concert**  
16:00 & 19:30 Harpa  
**Óskar Guðjónsson Move Quartet**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Sunday January 9th

**Dance For Children - Dagdraumer**  
15:00 Borgarleikhúsið  
**Reykjavík Big Band - The Golden Age of Swing**  
20:00 Harpa  
**Ólafur Sverrir Traustason Trio**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Monday January 10th

**Mánudjass - Monday Night Jazz Jam**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur  
**Freysteinn**  
20:00 Mál og Menning

### Tuesday January 11th

**Duo Plus Trio**  
19:30 Salurinn  
**Rögnvaldur Borgþórsson Trio**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Wednesday January 12th

**Sigmar Þór Trio**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Thursday January 13th

**Nýdönsk**  
20:00 Bæjarbíó  
**Iceland Symphony Orchestra - Young Soloists 2022**  
19:30 Harpa  
**HJAL quartet**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Friday January 14th

**Nýdönsk**  
20:00 Bæjarbíó  
**Skuggakvartettinn**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Saturday January 15th

**Nýdönsk**  
20:00 Bæjarbíó  
**★ Marriage Bliss**  
20:00 Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum  
**Skuggakvartettinn**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Sunday January 16th

**Scenes From Childhood**  
14:00 Harpa  
**Chamber Music Club**  
16:00 Harpa  
**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa  
**Kristjana Stefáns Trío**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Monday January 17th

**Mánudjass - Monday Night Jazz Jam**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Tuesday January 18th

**Andrés Þór & Hilmar Jensson**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Wednesday January 19th

**University Welcome Week Festival**  
22:00 Gaukurinn  
**Dúó Edda - The World Stage**  
19:30 Harpa

### ★ Knitting Evening

20:00 Kex Hostel

### Thursday January 20th

**Thunder Purple - The Music Of Deep Purple and Uriah Heep**  
20:00 Bæjarbíó  
**Chamber Music Club**  
16:00 Harpa  
**Iceland Symphony Orchestra - Shostakovich and Barber**  
19:30 Harpa  
**Sunna Gunnlaugs Quartet**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Friday January 21st

**Los Bomboneros**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Saturday January 22nd

**How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes**  
19:00 Harpa  
**Out In The Islands - Island Concert 2022**  
20:00 Harpa  
**Böss**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Sunday January 23rd

**★ Dark Music Days Opening Event**  
16:00 Ásmundarsalur  
**★ Bára Gísladóttir - Viddir (Dark Music Days)**  
20:00 Hallgrímskirkja  
**Katrín Halldóra Sings the Songs of Jón Múli - Release Concert**  
20:00 Harpa

### Monday January 24th

**★ The Emotional Carpenters - Just a Closer Walk With Thee (Dark Music Days)**  
20:00 Harpa  
**★ Podium (Dark Music Days)**  
13:00 Nordic House  
**Mánudjass - Monday Night Jazz Jam**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Tuesday January 25th

**Art Break - Love Nourishes And Hurts**  
12:15 Harpa  
**★ Podium (Dark Music Days)**  
13:00 Nordic House  
**★ The Caput Ensemble (Dark Music Days)**  
20:00 Harpa  
**Baroque, Opera, Jazz - Tíbrá Series**  
19:30 Salurinn  
**Ólafur Jónsson Trio**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Wednesday January 26th

**★ Women In Composition (Dark Music Days)**  
13:00 Nordic House  
**★ Aulos Flute Ensemble - Insight (Dark Music Days)**  
17:00 Nordic House  
**Wako**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Thursday January 27th

**★ Iceland Symphony Orchestra - Journey Without Destination (Dark Music Days)**  
20:00 Harpa  
**Craig Taborn**  
20:00 Salurinn  
**Wako**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Friday January 28th

**★ Iceland Symphony Orchestra - Bára and Gunnar Andreas (Dark Music Days)**  
12:15 Harpa  
**★ John McCowan and Matthias Engler - The Cartography Of Time (Dark Music Days)**  
17:00 Harpa  
**★ Heiða and Tinna - En Núna? (Dark Music Days)**  
19:30 Harpa  
**★ Nordic Affect - Surfacing (Dark Music Days)**  
21:130 Harpa  
**Skuggamyndir Frá Býzans**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur

### Saturday January 29th

**★ Sigurgeir Agnarsson - Nánd (Dark Music Days)**  
15:00 Harpa  
**★ Sóley - Harmóník (Dark Music Days)**  
17:00 Harpa  
**★ Reykjavík Chamber Orchestra (Dark Music Days)**  
20:00 Harpa  
**Látún**  
20:00 Skuggabaldur  
**Icelandic Dance Troupe - Hvila Sprungur**  
20:00 Borgarleikhúsið

### Sunday January 30th

**Circuleight featuring the music of Högni Egilsson**  
12:00 Harpa

### Thursday February 3rd

**Live Music Happy Hour**  
18:00 Jörgensen Kitchen & Bar

## MUSIC NEWS

The annual Kraumur Awards were announced in December. The list is a good indicator of what's on the rise in Iceland's grassroots music scene, and we have to say that some really good stuff is emerging. Reykjavik Grapevine's cover star for December, Skrattar, scored an award for their rock album, 'Hellraiser IV'. The complete list of award recipients is so varied that Icelanders should be rejoicing that the local music scene is so healthy. Making the cut is everything from electro artist like Eva808, to indie rock like BSI, to metal like Ekdikéris and punk like Sucks To Be You, Nigel, who also scored a One to Watch accolade in the Grapevine Awards. And then there is the party band Inspector Spacetime, who also won our Artist of the Year award. And finally The Kraumers recognised jazz artist Tumi Árnason. The future is truly bright in every category. **VG**



Remember the early noughties? Barely, right? But it was a weird time in Icelandic music. On one hand, we had brilliant bands like Sigur Rós and Múm ruling the international indie scene, but back home, youngsters were obsessed with bands like Nylon and Skítamóral (shitty morals). These bands were called sveitaballahljómsveitir (country bands) by Icelanders. Nylon was a girl band inspired by all the girl bands in England at the time and had more or less the same impact in Icelandic culture. That is, none. But one of the band members from Nylon, Alma Goodman, kept on and now lives in Los Angeles, where she has harnessed her pop talents to become something of a hit machine. She wrote the song "When I'm Gone", performed by none other than Katy Perry, (the one who has a beef with Taylor Swift), and it's a pretty nice pop song. Before that, Alma also wrote music for K-Pop heartthrob Baekhyun. In short, Alma is becoming Iceland's biggest international pop writer. So, suck on that, Sweden **VG**

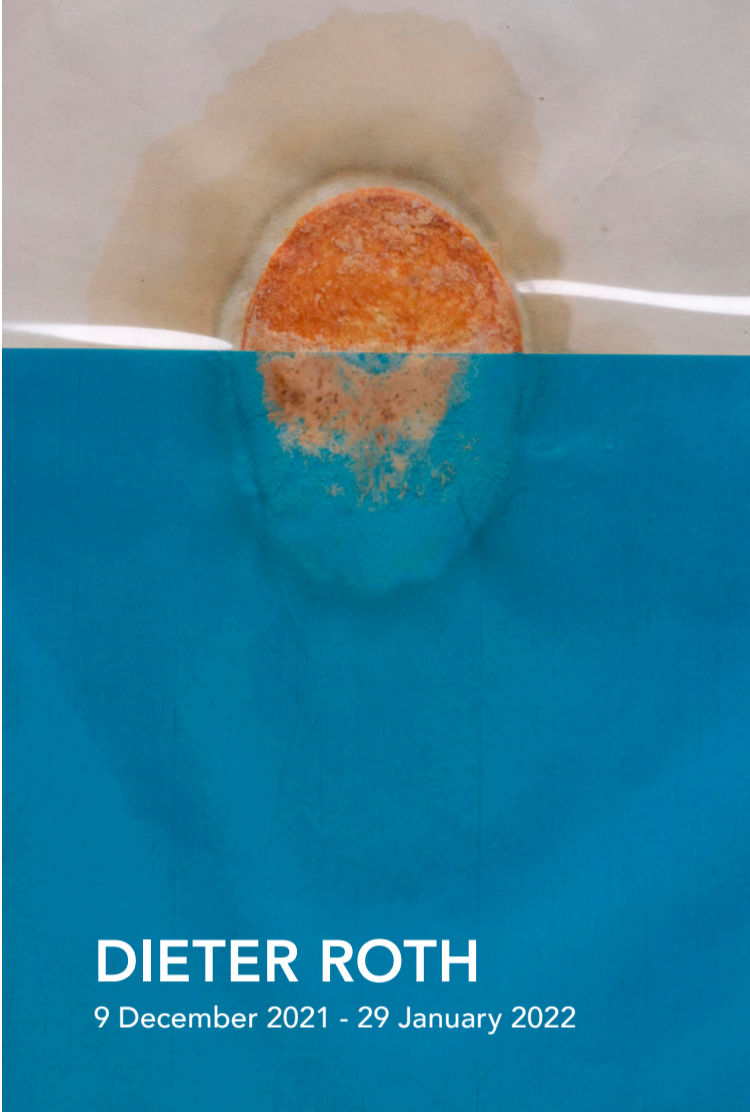


And to the bad news. The Composers' Rights Society of Iceland (STEF) reported that the Icelandic music scene has lost 87% of its earnings since the beginning of COVID. These numbers are downright shocking, and show just how brutally the pandemic has impacted the music industry. The chairman of STEF is urging politicians to roll out more support for the industry, and points out that other Scandinavian governments have stepped up to bolster hard-hit cultural industries throughout the pandemic. Meanwhile the mentality in Iceland has been that artists should simply quit, and find a day job. **VG**

i8

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101 Reykjavík  
Iceland  
info@i8.is

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## DIETER ROTH

9 December 2021 - 29 January 2022

# Art



## A Very Cultured January

Some of the more intriguing exhibitions this month

Words: [Andie Sophia Fontaine](#) Photo: [Art Bicnick](#)

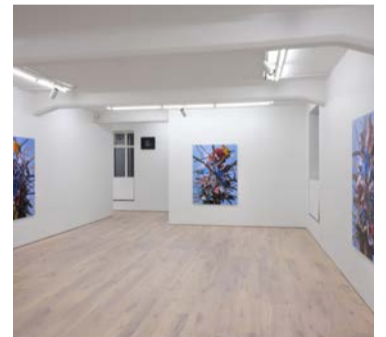
been, and always should be, deeply weird.



### Fylgjur

[Kling&Bang, until January 23rd](#)

In Icelandic mythology, a fylgja was a kind of guardian, a spirit guide and protector who followed generational lines, often appearing as an animal or a woman. In this group exhibition from Halldóra Einarsson, Hanna Kristín Birgisdóttir and Smári Rúnar Róbertsson, these artists will undoubtedly explore the concepts of myth, generational baggage, and the cultural markers that follow us all. As Kling & Bang never disappoints, this is another exhibition well worth checking out.



### Redeconstruction

[Hverfisgallerí, until February 12th](#)

This is a solo exhibition by Hrafnkell Sigurðsson, with a very compelling backstory. The artist says he was living in Siglufjörður last year, working at a remotely located hotel and feeling entirely detached from Iceland not to mention the rest of the world. But then an avalanche struck—not for the first time in the area, and certainly not the last. Visiting the site of destruction, he observed how nature had effectively deconstructed the things built by human beings, which in these works, he re-assembles and deconstructs again. Ergo, redeconstruction. It's absolutely worth your time in these bleak winter days. 🇮🇸

30.10.2021–20.03.2022

# A Bra Ka Da Bra

## Töfrar samtímalistar

The Magic of Contemporary Art



**Hafnarhús**  
Tryggvagata 17  
+354 411 6410  
artmuseum.is

**Open daily**  
10h00–17h00  
Thursdays  
10h00–22h00

Although the winter solstice was last month, bringing more moments of daylight with each passing day, January can still be an awfully dreary month. The lingering darkness is only abating incrementally, and the weather is arguably worse than in December. To save your brain from sensory deprivation, it is highly advisable to seek out stimulation indoors, and there are few better places to do that than art galleries.

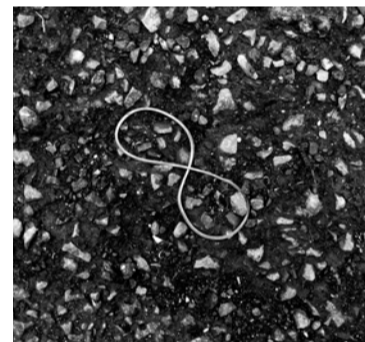
However, Reykjavík is positively brimming with galleries and museums, making it very daunting to parse it all and figure out what's worth seeing. To that end, we have compiled some of the very best stuff currently being shown in our fair capital.



### A Bra Ka Da Bra – The Magic of Contemporary Art

[Hafnarhús, until March](#)

If you only have time for one exhibition, you could do a lot worse than making it this one. It boasts a couple of dozen artists of diverse backgrounds, with works spanning multiple media. You can easily spend an afternoon checking out everything on offer, and come away feeling very cultured indeed.



### AD INFINITUM

[Gerðarsafn, January 14th until March 27th](#)

Rent a car—or better still, hop on a public bus—and get down to Kópavogur for this very special joint exhibition of acclaimed visual artist Elín Hansdóttir and renowned musician Úlfur Hansson, (probably best known as the inventor of the magnetic harp). By their powers combined, they have created an enigmatic exhibition guaranteed to delight both eyes and ears alike.



### Dieter Roth

[i8 Gallery, until January 29th](#)

You can't go wrong with the classics. This Swiss-German artist has been exciting and intriguing people for decades, and he apparently had a special place in his heart for Iceland, too, as this exhibition attests. Mostly it focuses on his works on paper, but it spans multiple genres and decades—specifically the 60s and 70s. A fine reminder that art has always

## Art Picks



### ★ Public Pools

Jan 22nd to Sep 25th - Museum Of Design & Applied Art, Garðatorg 1, 210 Garðabær

The outdoor, geothermal pool is where strangers cross paths and the most interesting public sphere meet, it serves a purpose similar

to the plaza in warmer climes, the pub in England or the café in France. It is a source of wellbeing, and a part of everyday life. This exhibition traces the development of public pools in Iceland from the beginning of the 20th century, when the focus was on learning, hygiene and physical education. It illustrates how play later became a key element, then

brings us to the present when a pleasurable, spa-like experience is often the goal. Architects and designers of various disciplines have taken a part in shaping this story, in collaboration with the public, the staff at the pools and the municipalities which operate them. The result—a collective effort by society—is design at its very best. **JP**



### ★ Dieter Roth

Until January 29th - i8 Gallery, Tryggvagata 16

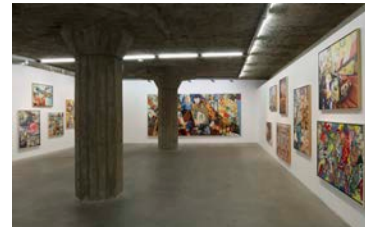
German-born artist Dieter Roth moved to Reykjavik in the 1950s to marry a local lady and, being one of Europe's leading postwar artists, he inevitably had a strong effect on Icelandic creative culture. This exhibition offers some of the artist's finest pieces with a focus on sculpture and paper media. **JP**



### ★ Muggur

Until February 13th - National Gallery of Iceland, Frikirkjuveg 7

Guðmundur Thorsteinsson led a full life, though it was cut short by tuberculosis. This exhibit presents a wide selection of his work, created under his artist name Muggur, including scenes from his global travels, images of a merciful Christ curing the sick, and Muggur's fantasy worlds where princesses live in castles and trolls lurk. **JP**



### ★ Erró The Traveller

Until Mar 27th - Reykjavik Art Museum, Hafnarhús, Tryggvagata 17

Guðmundur Guðmundsson—ubiquitously known as Erró—has arguably the highest international profile of any Icelandic visual artist. His activities have taken him all around the world. This exhibition—selected from work that he has donated to the Reykjavik Art Museum—is curated around a travel theme. **JP**

## January 7th — February 3rd

# Art Exhibitions

For complete listings and detailed information on venues, visit [grapevine.is/happening](https://grapevine.is/happening).

Send your listings to: [events@grapevine.is](mailto:events@grapevine.is)

### Opening

#### EXETER HOTEL GALLERY

##### Daughter Of Ice, Light and Fire

Inspired by natural forces, French artist Georgette Yvette Ponté portrays the beauty of Iceland through the female torso. The paintings take on a new dimension in the dark, when the silhouettes of the women take on the colours of the aurora borealis. This pop-up exhibition is in Reykjavik for one day only, so pop it in your diary.

- Opens on January 29th
- Runs until January 30th

#### GERÐARSAFN KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM

##### Ad Infinitum

Icelandic artists Elín Hansdóttir and Úlfur Hansson work in Berlin and New York respectively, but have come together to create this installation exploring the borders between the art that we see, and that which we hear. Elín's approach is to create challenging immersive visuals, while Úlfur's specialism in audio creation leads him to create sounds specific to the space.

- Opens on January 14th
- Runs until March 27th

##### Past Perfect

Although he now lives in Sweden and was educated in the USA, artist Santiago Mostyn grew up in Zimbabwe and Trinidad and Tobago. This exhibition of photography and video media explores that experience, employing footage of historical events, politicians and cultural figures. Past Perfect is a landscape where stories of colonialism, slavery, legends and personal experience converge.

- Opens on January 14th
- Runs until March 27th

#### HAFNARBORG CENTRE OF CULTURE AND FINE ARTS

##### A Few Thoughts on Photography - Vol. III

Photographer Hallgerður Hallgrímsdóttir explores how taking a photograph can seem so simple—"just the push of a button"—making the resulting image almost an objet trouvé rather than a creation. But creative it is; mysterious and emotional, with aesthetics and instincts coming into play. And yet, at the same time, the process of photography is decidedly rooted in

the scientific.

- Opens on January 22nd
- Runs until March 2022

### Ongoing

#### NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

##### Of The North

'Of the North' (2001) is created from Steina Vasulka's archive of video recordings of Icelandic nature, shot from macroscopic and microscopic viewpoints. So from microbes to crashing waves and melting ice, this is a visual document of the formation and destruction of our planet.

- Runs until January 9th

##### Hello Universe

It's 2021, and we're so over Earth; cue the entrance of Finnur Jónsson. The avant-garde art of Finnur—the first Icelandic artist to address outer space in his works, in the early 20th century—presents the artist's unfettered interpretation of the marvels of the celestial bodies. Always remember: we are but matter experiencing itself on a pale blue dot.

- Runs until January 9th

#### KLING & BANG

##### Flygjur

This non-profit artist run space, established by a group of artists some 18 years ago, presents a new group exhibition by Halla Einarsdóttir, Hanna Kristín Birgisdóttir and Smári Rúnar Róbertsson. Although Icelandic, all three artists all now live and work in Holland and Germany. At 6pm on the opening day Halla Einarsdóttir will do a performance. We're not sure what kind of performance—the information we have about this exhibit is teasingly enigmatic—so maybe just rock up and see...

- Runs until January 23rd

#### EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM

##### Permanent Exhibition

In 1909 Einar Jónsson—described on the museum's website as "Iceland's first sculptor"—offered all of his works as a gift to the Icelandic people, on the condition that a museum be built to house them. The resulting edifice, constructed just over the road from Hallgrímskirkja, now contains close to 300 artworks. There is also a beautiful garden with 26 bronze casts of the artist's sculptures to enjoy.

#### REYKJAVÍK CITY MUSEUM

##### Settlement Exhibition

This permanent exhibition—where Viking ruins meet digital technology—provides insight into Reykjavik's farms at the time of the first settlers. Archaeological remains uncovered on site dating back to 871 AD surround you.

#### HAFNARBORG CENTRE OF CULTURE AND FINE ARTS

##### Songbirds

On a trip to Cuba some time ago, Icelandic artist Katrín Elvarsdóttir noticed caged songbirds adorning windows of local homes, as many tourists to the island do. In her work, Katrín compares the loneliness of these isolated birds with the human experience of isolation.

- Runs until January 16th

##### Long Are The Trials Of Men

Porvaldur Þorsteinsson was a highly prolific artist who made use of most artistic media over his career, including music and writing in the form of novels, plays and poetry. However this retrospective exhibit features the visual aspects to Porvaldur's creativity, focusing on the sculptures, installation pieces, paintings and video which bear testament to his diverse creativity.

- Runs until February 20th

#### REYKJAVÍK MARITIME MUSEUM

##### Fish & Folk

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

##### Melckmeyt 1659

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

#### GERÐARSAFN

##### Debatable Lands: Dialogues From Shared Worlds

This is a mid-career retrospective of the 20-year collaboration between artists Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson. Snæbjörnsdóttir and Wilson approach their art partnership with an ecological and pluralistic view. In a research-based practice, they prompt discussion and thought about our changing world, and our own human role in those changes.

- Runs until January 9th

#### CULTURE HOUSE

##### Treasures Of A Nation

The Culture House was built in 1909, and was the first purpose-built gallery in Iceland. Towering above the surrounding town at the time, it was a popular spot to take in the natural vistas which have inspired local art-

ists for centuries. This exhibit brings together a selection of paintings from the National Gallery, all inspired by Iceland and created from the 19th century onwards.

- Runs until May 31st

#### GALLERY UNDERPASS

##### Matador

Matador is a game of real estate created by artist Einar Garibaldi Eiríksson, and resembles the pastime known internationally as Monopoly. In both games, contestants buy land with unreal money, then use more unreal money to build houses and hotels on it. The object is to screw other people over when an unlucky roll of the dice lands them somewhere that they didn't choose to be. Sound familiar?

- Runs until January 31st

#### REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

##### Yfirgefin List

Derelict farmsteads in the Icelandic countryside have long inspired Guðmundur Óli Pálmason, who documents them using old photography methods and uses the images to create fragments from the past. The artist often leaves these works where the photo was taken for anyone to find and take home, leading to the exhibition title which translates as "abandoned art".

- Runs until January 30th

#### REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - KJARVALSSTAÐIR

##### Opus-Oups

Artist Guðný Rósa Ingimarsdóttir lives and works in French-speaking Belgium. The word 'opus' denotes a piece of artwork, while 'oups' is French for 'oops'. Paired together the words demonstrate that art that can come from seemingly incon-

sequential things. Often employing found, forgotten or formerly used materials, Guðný Rósa brings the essence of 'opus-oups' to life.

- Runs until January 16th

##### Budding Earth

Sculptors Carl Boutard and Ásmundur Sveinsson explore natural design, where things take form through the interplay of rule, repetition and deviation.

- Runs until February 6th

##### Kjarval And The Contemporary

This site of the Reykjavik Art Museum is named after the painter Jóhannes S. Kjarval, indicating his central role in the story of 20th century Icelandic art. Kjarval's influence is highlighted by his work being placed in conversation with pieces by contemporary Icelandic artists such as Ragnar Kjartansson and Guðrún Einarsdóttir.

- Runs until January 16th

#### HVERFISGALLERÍ

##### Reconstruction

Following a devastating avalanche in Siglufjörður, artist Hrafnkell Sigurðsson saw opportunity among the damage. Nature might smash lives, but perhaps it's the role of art to put them back together. Perhaps once our reality has been dismantled, categorized and analyzed, art is the only way to reassemble it.

- Runs until February 12th

#### REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM - HAFNARHÚS

##### A Bra Ka Da Bra -

##### The Magic Of Contemporary Art

This exhibition aims to open the world of contemporary art up to a new generation. The titular magic word links magic and art in the wonder that both can conjure up in children and young people.

- Runs until March 20th

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verði dásamleg

The band Flott were overjoyed to close the show

## Comedic Closure: Áramótaskaupið's Enduring Success

Iceland's legendary New Year's Eve satirical  
chucklefest hits home

Words: **Josie Gaitens** Video stills: **RÚV**

There is arguably nobody in Iceland more relieved that it's 2022 than director Reynir Lyngdal. It's early in the new year, and debate around 'Áramótaskaupið' (sometimes translated to English as 'The New Year's Lampon') will probably rumble on for another week or so, especially since, as Reynir says, "this year's was a little less... cosy than last year." But bruised egos will heal, some new scandal will arise, and both Iceland and Reynir will eventually get to move on.

### A national treasure

For the uninitiated, which basically means anyone who doesn't live in Iceland, Áramótaskaupið, or simply 'Skaupið', will mean very little. It's an annual satirical sketch show, broadcast every New Year's Eve since 1966, that pokes fun at

the 12 months prior and the main political, cultural and newsworthy figures that have featured in them.

The big opening and closing musical numbers and cameos from famous Icelanders are eagerly expected.

But Skaupið is far more than the sum of these parts. It's a national institution, and it has the figures to prove it. The show has some of the highest ratings in the world, the record being set in 2002 when an unbelievable 95% of the population tuned in. For the hour that Áramótaskaupið is shown on TV, Reykjavik, which for the entirety of New Year's Eve is under

a constant barrage of firework explosions, goes quiet, like WWII's famed Christmas ceasefire. Whole families curl up to watch together—people of different generations and cultural reference points who would never otherwise laugh over

"Whole families curl up to watch together—people of different generations and cultural reference points who would never otherwise laugh over the same things."

the same things. Unsurprisingly, the advertisement slots are the most expensive on television; it's basically Iceland's SuperBowl.

### "The temperature of the year"

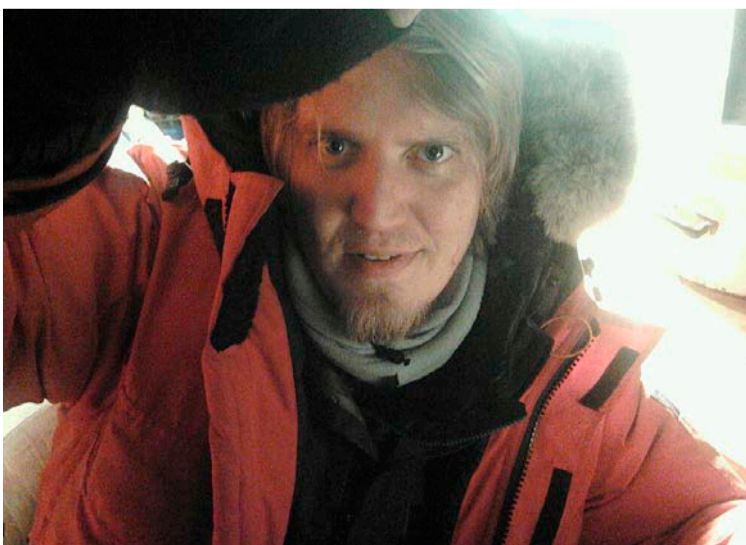
Making Áramótaskaupið is a huge responsibility but Reynir doesn't have to shoulder it alone. He works with a team of writers who dissect the year and piece together a show. "There's always a little bias towards this end of the year, because you're closer to it," Reynir says of this process. "With events from January and February it's easier to see what is still relevant and therefore important. But later in the year it all gets very close."

It's a well-worn cliché to compare each Skaup to the previous year's edition, but even Reynir readily admits the difference between the 2020 and 2021 shows. "The main task, when we get in the room together, is to take the temperature of the year. Last year was about togetherness and pulling together. This year..." He breaks off and laughs, a little wearily. "I would call it cabin fever," he finally says, wryly.

### TikTok vs. TV

The fascinating thing about Áramótaskaupið, however, is its enduring success in the age of TikTok. Reynir puts this down to the ever-evolving cast of writers, actors and directors involved in producing the show: "I've been doing this for three years, and each year we try and bring different people in. You might expect to see an actor playing a particular politician, but perhaps that politician hasn't done anything noteworthy that year. Or maybe we bring in a different actor altogether, just to make things a little bit different."

You might wonder if looking over a year's worth of news is a rather bleak experience, especially considering the content of the past 24 months. When I ask Reynir what he thinks is in store for the next 12 months, he talks about the need to hold the rich and powerful to account, his concerns around climate disaster and the desire for the world to be better for his kids—but his parting words are positive. "Because of the show, having to view everything all together, it feels different," he says. "Personally, I feel hopeful." 🍷



Please check to ensure that no comedians are left trapped inside your TV



# Guiding Others Through Tarot

If you've ever wondered what happens during a reading, here's your chance to find out

**Words:**  
Reetta Huhta  
**Photos:**  
Natalia Grociak  
and  
Justina  
Skorupskaitė  
(Instagram:  
@shotby.juste)

Strolling through the shops of Reykjavík, you might have noticed that Tarot cards are sold in many places. The cards can be used as a way to tell fortunes, as they are believed to yield mystic powers and esoteric wisdom that is revealed to those who have mastered the art of Tarot. I paid a visit to one of these people, Natalia Grociak, who has become an expert on the topic. What started as a fun hobby has evolved into a part of her daily life, through which she's able to help others.

## Modern day fortune teller

Interested in hearing what the cards have to say to me, I set up a date for a reading with Natalia. Upon arrival at her apartment, I cannot help but notice that this place is home to a spiritual soul. Warm tones of the decor together with all the plants and art pieces welcome you into a serene yet mystical scene. This is exactly what you would expect from a venue where fortune tellings take place—apart from the lack of crystal balls, of course.

Natalia guides me to the living room and offers me a seat near the coffee table. She puts on calming, meditative music and lets me pick incense to further set the mood for the reading. As the dark, flowery smell suffuses the room, Natalia lights candles and gathers everything needed to the table: a bowl of crystals and several different card decks.

"Each Tarot deck is split into two parts: Major and Minor Arcana Cards. The Major Arcana are the pillars of Tarot, representing the archetypal figures and themes that have the biggest influence on our lives. The Minor Arcana cards in turn work as a tool for the reader to explain the issues of the Major Arcana cards in detail. It enables the reader to see the person's situation in depth," Natalia explains.

Natalia arrays all the decks on the table and reaches out to the bowl of crystals. She selects crystals from her collection and places one on top of each card pile. When I ask the reason behind this practice, she tells me that the crystals are said to keep the deck's energy in place throughout the process.

Now we're all set for the reading that will tell me everything I need to know about the upcoming year. "Okay, let's figure out what the main energies are for your inner self, work and love life in 2022," Natalia says and starts shuffling the Major Arcana deck. I get to draw three cards from it, which will work as the base for the reading.

## Reading the cards like an open book

Apparently the Chariot represents my inner self, Justice is work I will do and, last but definitely not least, Death describes my love life in 2022. "Don't be disturbed by the last card; death actually represents transformation," Natalia calms me down. "Let's see how the other decks explain these cards that you picked," she continues.

Natalia shuffles the decks with accustomed hands and picks up any that are dropped during the shuffling process. She fills the coffee table with these cards and explains what each of them mean by themselves and how their denotation changes when they become a part of the reading as a whole.

Unlike the other Tarot readings I've received from my friends, there's no Googling involved in this one. Natalia knows everything by heart. It's astonishingly easy for her to explain the details and move on to describing the bigger picture of the reading. She remarks on every little thing, such as the fact that I drew a lot of cards featuring the numbers eight and nine. That suggests this year is going to be about

abundance and self mastery—which I obviously welcome with open arms.

## Using her talents to help others

"I've always been quite spiritual and interested in everything mystical," Natalia says. "As I started to learn the art of Tarot, I felt like this was something I needed to share with others."

She began reading the cards for customers when she worked at Bodega. That's when she realised she can help others with her talent. "People have told me that my readings have clarified certain situations they've been in, or that they've gotten an answer to a question they had in mind," Natalia remarks. "I truly believe that doing Tarot can nudge you into the right direction in

life."

However, not everyone is open to Tarot. Natalia has encountered her share of skeptics. "Nobody has to believe in anything they don't want to, and I understand that Tarot is not for everyone. However, it would be great if these people could recognize that there's a lot of us who find these readings helpful and guiding."

Maybe the whole point of Tarot is not to get airtight revelations of one's past, present and future, but to be a tool to help people reflect on their lives. My future might not look exactly like the reading I got, but one thing is for sure: Natalia's reading gave me confidence and hope for 2022. 🍀

If you're interested in getting a reading, you can contact Natalia through her Instagram account @moon\_astery.



Natalia Grociak

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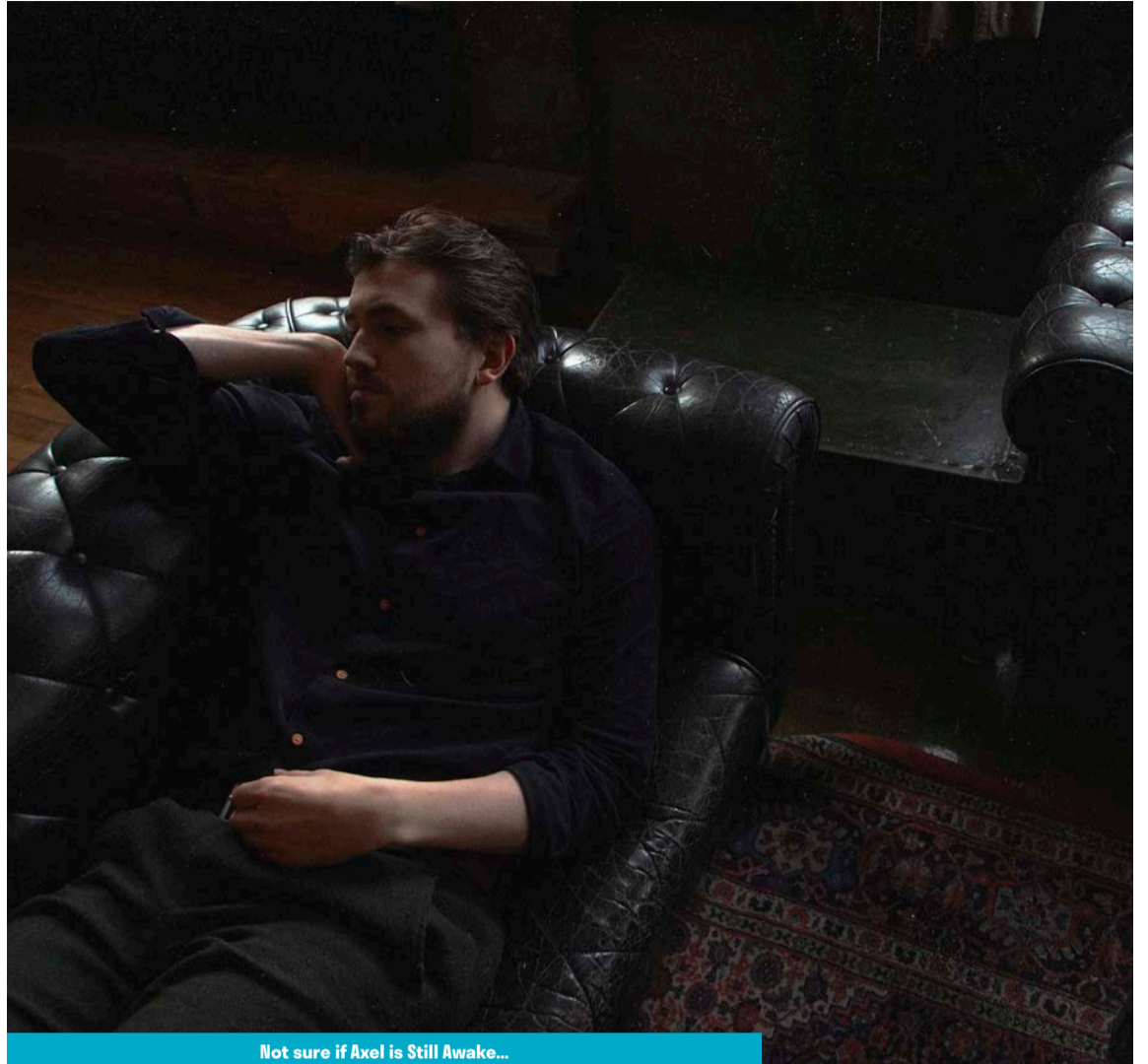
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Not sure if Axel is Still Awake...

## An Intimate Journey with Axel Flóvent

He walks us through 'You Stay By The Sea'

Words: **Valur Grettisson/Axel Flóvent** Photo: **Provided by artist**

### Info



Axel Flóvent's newest album, 'You Stay By The Sea', has been attracting a lot of international attention—and for a good reason. It's a beautiful journey through his inner life, from overthinking stuff (we have all done that) to friendship that slowly fades away. Axel's intimate approach has caught the eyes of the Reykjavik Grapevine as well, and we asked the artist to explain, track by track, where he's coming from. Here's what he had to say.

### Tonight

The first thought I had when writing this was that I wanted to write a song that would set the scene and create the mood going into the record. I initially wrote the song as an ambient intro. A few years later, the piece evolved into a song on its own. "Tonight" is about the path to stability.

### Driving Hours

This is about getting in one's own way because of overthinking, analyzing one's wrongs, and letting fear get in the way of following one's own needs.

### Tourist

This song is about trying to reach the unreachable, to hold on to something when you know you should let go.

### December Traffic

It's about a friendship that faded away; the doubts, the wonders, and all the places the mind goes after a relationship disappears from one's life.

### Blood

This track is about not confronting negative energy, so it just lingers inside. And the longer it stays, the worse it gets, and it feels like it's swimming inside the blood and slowly becoming a part of yourself until a change happens.

### Fall Asleep

The song is a journey through an anxious mind and finding comfort in the discomfort. Even though you know it feels alright, you're still worried, and the worries keep coming, filling the space.

### Still Awake

This song is the high after the low. It's about the motivation that picks me up after a few dark days. It's an answer to "Fall Asleep." It's essentially about how everything is great now and wishing everyday was like this until the low returns and I can't fall asleep again.

### Indefinite

It's important to keep listening and learning, no matter how de-

fining one's opinion is. Seeing the light that's on the other side and fighting the limited mind to get further.

### How Can I

When I was living alone in Brighton, I was very isolated. I felt distant from everything I cared about and made music to find clarity and fulfillment in the absence of everything I loved. "How Can I" is about self-care and what happens without it.

### Haunted

It's about the fear of the unknown being heavier than the reality and recognizing that the things I taught myself to avoid are, most of the time, the things I needed the most in my life.

### Fireworks

Is about an end to something meaningful – both the sadness of its finality and the relief to be able to move on from it to something new without the lingering doubts.

### You Stay by the Sea

The title track is, appropriately, the story for my album. The song summarizes what I'm going through, looking at different kinds of anxieties I've carried with me and finding my way back home. The album, 'You Stay by the Sea,' is this peaceful state of mind that keeps me safe from it all. 🍷

Guess what? You can grab your copy of these album on [shop.grapevine.is](http://shop.grapevine.is)



Due to the effect of the pandemic on bar and restaurant operations, these happy hour details may change. Please check directly with the business before travelling.

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in 101 Reykjavík

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**BÍO PARADÍS**  
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Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

**BREWD OG**  
Wed-Sun 14:00 to 17:00.  
Beer 990 ISK, Wine 990 ISK.

**COOCOO'S NEST**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 1000 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK.  
Includes an appetiser.

**DILLON**  
Every day from 14:00 to 19:00.  
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**FJALLKONAN**  
Every day from 15:00 to 17:00.  
Beer 790 ISK, Wine 990 ISK.

**FORRÉTTABARINN**  
Mon-Sun 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 850 ISK.

**GAUKURINN**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

**HOTEL HOLT BAR**  
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Beer 800 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK.

**KALDI**  
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Beer 850 ISK, Wine 850 ISK.

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

**LAUNDROMAT**  
Every day from 20:00 to 22:00.  
Beer 650 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK.

**LOFT**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 750 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

**LUNA FLORENS**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 1000 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK.  
Includes your choice of free appetiser.

**MIAMI**  
Tue 15:00 to 00:00.  
Wed to Sat 15:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 750 ISK, Wine 990 ISK.

**PETERSEN SVÍTAN**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 1,000 ISK, Cocktails 1500 ISK.

**PRÍKID**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK.

**PUBLIC HOUSE**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00 then 23:00 to 01:00.  
Beer 890 ISK, Wine 890 ISK.

**PUNK**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 850 ISK, Wine 850 ISK.

**RÖNTGEN**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 900 ISK.

**SÆTA SVÍNID**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 790 ISK, Wine 890 ISK.

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

**SKÚLI CRAFT**  
Every day from 12:00 to 19:00.  
Beer 900 ISK, (four tap beers), Wine 900 ISK.

**SÓLON**  
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.



### FEATURED DRINKING HOLE

**STUDENTAKJALLARIN SÆMUNDARGATA, UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND**

You don't need to be a student to get into this gem of a booze basement, tucked beneath the big glass building at Háskóli Íslands. And the reward for finding

it is one of the cheapest bar drinking experiences in town, with beer starting at 650 ISK, and wine at 850 ISK during happy hour. Flash a student ID from any university anywhere in the world, and the price of beer tumbles even further. 🍷

**SPÁNSKI BARINN**  
Every day from 14:00 to 20:00.  
Beer 750 ISK, Wine 750 ISK.

**STÚDENT-AKJALLARINN**  
Everyday from 15:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

**SUSHI SOCIAL**  
Every day from 17:00 to 18:00.  
Beer 645 ISK, Wine 745 ISK.

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

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

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

# Cheap Food

Here are some deals that'll keep your wallet feeling happy and full.

### 1,000 ISK And Under

**Hard Rock Café** ISK  
Every day 15:00 - 18:00  
Nachos, wings & onion rings - 990 ISK

**Dominos**  
All day Tuesday  
Medium sized pizza with three toppings - 1,000

Selected tapas half price

**Deig / Le Kock**  
Every day - All day  
Doughnut, coffee & bagel - 1,000 ISK

### 1,500 ISK And Under

**Hamborgarbúlla Tómasar**  
All day Tuesday  
Burger, french fries & soda - 1,390 ISK

**Gló**  
All day, every day  
Bowl of the month - 1,290 ISK  
Vegan option

**Shalimar**  
Monday - Friday 12:00 - 14:30  
Curry - 1,290 ISK  
Vegan option

**Sæta Svinið**  
Every day 15:00 - 18:00  
Chicken wings - 1,190 ISK

**Sólon**  
Monday - Friday 11:00 - 14:30  
Ceasar salad - 1,490 ISK

**Lemon**  
Every day 16:00 - 21:00  
2f1 Juice + sandwich 1,095 ISK  
Vegan option

**Uppsalarir**  
Every day 11:00 - 14:00  
Burger & fries - 1,390 ISK  
Vegan option

### 2,000 ISK And Under

**Sólon**  
Monday - Friday 11:00 - 14:30  
Fish of the day - 1,990 ISK

**Matarkjallarinn**  
Monday - Friday 11:30 - 15:00  
Fisherman's fish soup - 1,990 ISK

### 5,000 ISK And Under

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



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## ICELANDIC GOURMET FEAST

Starts with a shot of the infamous Icelandic spirit Brennivín

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- Smoked puffin with blueberry "brennivín" sauce
- Icelandic Arctic Charr 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



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## Books

# Fire Photographers

Books about volcanos in Iceland

Words: **Valur Grettisson** Photo: **Art Bienick**

*The Geldingardalur eruption provided unique experiences for hikers and tourists, but it also piqued the creativity of photographers who ventured out to capture the blazing hot moment in time. Luckily for those who didn't make it out to the eruption in person—and those who did, but want a better way to remember the experience than their dodgy iPhone pics—a handful of amazing photography books have been published with Geldingardalur as the star.*

*Our so-called fire photographers range from the little-known snappers to household names and distinguished geologists. Here are the books we're loving from them right now.*

made it into Icelandic news when he captured the eruption under the northern lights—a very rare shot, considering the months over which the volcano erupted. Over the past two decades, Max has photographed Etna, Vesuvius and Stromboli in Italy as well as Bromo in Indonesia, making him probably one of the most experienced volcano photographers on this list.



We can't stress enough how much we like Sigurgeir Sigurjónsson's photography. His unique eye for Icelandic nature even teaches Icelanders a thing or two about the beauty and complexity of the country. He has published books that are as important for the Icelandic souls as the old sagas (check out 'Lost in Iceland' and 'Small World Iceland', for example). But this list is about fire, not ice. Sigurgeir's book, 'Volcano Island', is mainly focused on the incredible eruption of Eyjafjallajökull and its impact on the surrounding area. It was a dramatic event, not only in Iceland but for the world, when this small volcanic island stopped air traffic between North America and Europe for almost a whole week.



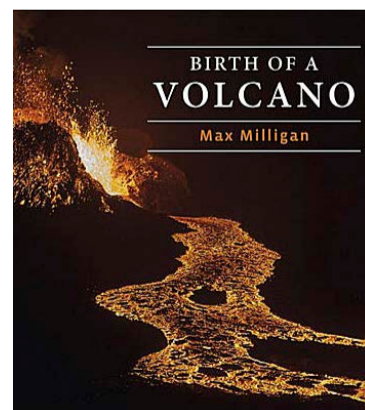
Ari Trausti Guðmundsson is a household name in Iceland. Not only is he one of the country's most distinguished geologists, he's also a former member of parliament and he ran for president a few years ago, although, without luck. He is also the brother of Erró, one of the most renowned visual artists Iceland has ever produced. Ari Trausti has written dozens of books, ranging from fiction to science. In this book he combined his geological talents with those of one of Iceland's best photographers, Ragnar Th. Ragnar received international attention when he captured the brutality of the eruption in Eyjafjallajökull in 2011. Ragnar and Ari Trausti are regular collaborators, having produced four books connected to Icelandic nature that spans from Vatnajökull glacier to the northern lights. This latest publication is a safe bet for those wanting beautiful imagery of the volcano, a deep history of the area and an understanding of the eruption.



Belgian photographer Jeroen Van Nieuwenhove is perhaps the least known name on this list, but he also offers an intriguing insight into the volcano in his book, 'New Earth: A Photographic Journey of the Geldingadalur Eruption'. He shot the volcano from a more intimate perspective over the course of his 44 hikes spanning the life of the eruption.

The book is Jeroen's attempt to share his own experiences with the volcano with the reader, with text written in the style of a personal diary from his many visits. Check this one out for a more personal approach to a massive natural event. 🍷

Guess what? You can grab your copy of these books on [shop.grapevine.is](http://shop.grapevine.is)



British photographer Max Milligan is perhaps not a household name in Iceland—yet—but he's a regular visitor to Iceland, photographing everything from landscapes to the world's first female president, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir. He published his book, 'Birth of a Volcano', last year after making the difficult hike to the eruption with 11 kilos (24 lbs) of equipment on his back every time. Max also

Sæta Svín  
ICELANDIC GASTROPUB

# Happy HOUR

15-18

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

# Edda Hulda Ólafardóttir

Words: Reetta Huhta  
Photo: Art Bicnick

Fancies is a Grapevine series where we highlight an individual with supreme style. Our latest subject is Edda Hulda Ólafardóttir (25), a law student at the University of Iceland and second-hand fashion lover obsessed with jackets and coats.

#### Wearing:

- Faux fur coat: Extraloppan
- Co-ord set: Red Cross
- Shoes: Kalda shoes
- Earrings: Spúútnik
- Ring: Gyllti Kötturinn

#### Describe your style in five words:

My style can be many things and it changes all the time, but if I had to summarise it in five words I would say it's colourful, extra, funky, chic and fun. But as I said, my style is many things and it varies from time to time and also according to my feelings.

#### Favourite stores in Reykjavík:

The majority of my clothes are bought second-hand, so definitely all the thrift shops around town, like the Red Cross, Spúútnik, Extraloppan and Lóla Florens to name a few. I also love Hildur Yeoman's clothes, she's an Icelandic designer and has a boutique in Laugavegur.

#### Favourite piece:

I have to admit I'm obsessed with jackets. My favourite one is probably a violet faux fur coat that I thrifted from Extraloppan. I have a crazy amount of jackets and coats and I was always joking that when I buy my 100th jacket, I will have to throw a party. So when that happened, I celebrated the achievement with my friends. I had lined my coats in the living room, and all my friends picked one to wear for the night. It was such a fun night.

#### Something I would never wear:

That's a hard question to answer, because I might not wear one thing by itself, but when it's paired with something else it might look good. Also, my style is constantly changing, so something that I wouldn't find wearable right now might become the thing I'm obsessed with next week. But if I had to mention one thing I'm pretty sure I will never put on, it would be Crocks.

#### Lusting after:

Faux fur hat for the winter! I really need it, but I haven't found one yet. 🐾

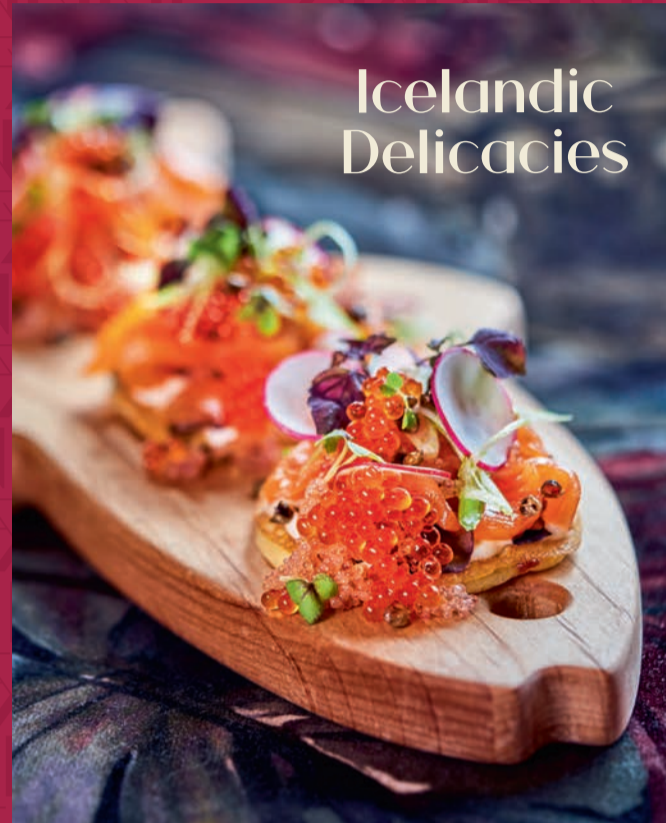


## FJALLKONAN

KRÁ & KRÆSINGAR

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 cosy 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 CHARR & BLINI

Lightly cured arctic charr, chickpea blini, horseradish sauce, roe, crispy lentils, yuzu-elderflower dressing

#### ICELANDIC PLATTER

- > Puffin, crowberry gel
- > Minke whale, malt glaze
- > Lamb tartar, chive mayo

#### THE LAMB BURGER

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

#### SKYR ETON MESS CHEESECAKE

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## Food



## Wine & Dine in the Lap of Luxury

Exploring all things fine and refined at Iceland's first five-star hotel

Words: **Shruthi Basappa** Photos: **Art Bicnick**

Few projects have been awaited with such bated breath as the opening of The Reykjavik Edition—and the wait has been worthwhile. A combined effort by the Ian Schrager Company and Marriott International, (yes the same Marriott with luxury chains such as the Ritz Carlton in its varied portfolio), Reykjavik's Edition is the latest outpost of the bold chain that prides itself on bringing together high-quality design and unique dining experiences rooted in the local, but with a global flair.

Iceland is a unique travel destination by all accounts. This island—remote until recently—has quickly risen to the top of every list, while continuing to be expensive as heck. The steep prices don't always translate to luxury and, in a country with a pronounced vacuum in this particular segment, Edition seizes the opportunity and delivers some genuine "aha" moments.

### Twinkly winter's night

Delayed intermittently due to various factors, the hotel quietly opened its doors in 'preview mode' in November last year. The construction itself has been a matter of much local debate and discussion, and curiosity has been high.

While you can walk to the Edition from Harpa, I recommend the harbourside walk instead. Crossing over from Hafnartorg, the harbour flanks you on the left, making for an enjoyable stroll to the main lobby. The entire building complex oozes newness; I swear I imagined I could smell the shuo sozi ban cladding. Designed by local firm T.ark in partnership with Ian Schrager Company design and the esteemed NY practice Roman and Williams, the design team delivers on its promise of sophistication that embraces you from the start. The atrium's LED lit

awning makes for a twinkly winter's night welcome, only outshone by the warm reception by the bellhop.

### Lobby Bar

Open 12pm to 11pm

As at other Edition properties, it is best to kick things off with a drink at the Lobby Bar. A staple of the chain, an extended lobby beyond the reception is home to a retro modern bar. It does feel a bit awkward placed between two main entrances, but hey, it's called the Lobby Bar for a reason. On my many visits, I have enjoyed well executed cocktails, although the mocktails are equally pleasing. The bartenders will fix you exactly the drink you have in mind and the regularly replenished bowl of house-made chips warrant a drink ... and another and another.

### Tölt

Open 6pm to 10pm

Named after the distinctive gait of the Icelandic horse, Tölt is a speak-easy-inspired, password access only, walnut bubble of plush bar, serving curated spirits and unhurried discreet service. The pandemic has meant that openings have been disrupted but I can see its intimate ambience being quite the draw.

The Edition when at full service will also have a rooftop bar, a disco and spa replete with hamams. For now, the Lobby Bar and Tölt are available for guests staying at the hotel and walk-ins.

### Tides Cafe

Open 6am to 5pm

For early birds, Tides Cafe offers in-house baked goods and house

drinks. The kanil snuður and vinarbrauð are moreish and super-local, but leaving without a cardamom snuður would be inexcusable.

### Tides

Breakfast 7am to 11am

Lunch 12pm to 3pm

Dinner 6pm to 10pm

It would be an understatement to say that Tides takes your breath away. While the rest of the hotel is well designed, it is clear that the restaurant is meant to be its crown jewel.

### Focused on familiarity

Roman and Williams bring their signature tactile richness, juxtaposing a striking timber coffered ceiling with fluted concrete columns, holding aloft the restaurant in a golden glow of warmth. The restaurant has the most Instagram-friendly lighting, and is a dream to look at no matter where one is seated.

sumac  
GRILL +  
DRINKS



Laugavegi 28  
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sumac@sumac.is  
sumac.is





### Great variety

While breakfast is wonderful, dinner is truly memorable. You are warmly greeted and escorted, and the maitre'd—most likely Alex—is likely to make small talk; a welcome trait for service in Iceland. If you're a regular, he'll remember you. A GG Martini, is a must—Gunnar's own recipe by way of Bombay is a potent, stiff drink that isn't fooling around. The non-alcoholic drinks are grown up as well, eschewing sugary sweet syrups in lieu of fresh, natural flavours.

The wine list straddles old and new worlds with a smattering of natural wines, (be warned of the steep pricing). Choices by the glass may be limited, but what they do have are often hard to find in Iceland such as Samartzis Estate

Merlot & Mouhtaros from Greece. I was a little disappointed to find no dessert wines offered by the glass, which can make dining out as a couple or on your own a tad less exciting, (especially when a bottle of Argentinian Vinyes Oculis from Tomás Stahringer is on offer). But as I have come to learn, there is nothing a polite request won't fix. Veronika, the sommelier, is especially good at making such requests happen.

### Mind the grilled chicken

The lamb tartare with whimsically small flatkökur is a great start, if you haven't already had too much of the complimentary milk bread. Celebratory Icelandic produce is centre stage. There is cod; dover sole currently makes an appearance; a superb whole lamb shoulder cooked so tenderly that it fell apart with a sigh; and a very Christmassy-looking stuffed grilled trout with garlic butter, its expert cooking proving the kitchen's skills with the Josper grill. Beef choices are from the US but their origins are

worryingly unclear, a detail I hope the restaurant will redress; knowing the providence of produce does make for a more enjoyable dining experience.

Regardless, may I draw your attention to the grilled chicken. Meant to be shared by two, but really it serves four, this dish best encapsulates the spirit of Tides. A familiar dish takes on an edge by being served deboned, whole, with a luscious sauce poured tableside. Were it not for the elegant settings, it's a dish I would tear into barehanded. The grilled to-share dishes are all served with a side of vegetables. I am particularly fond of the nutty kabocha squash served alongside them, with the seeds also roasted and ground, adding a certain *je ne sais quoi* to the sesame strewn sauce.

### What they do, they do well

As with the rest of the menu, desserts are a refined take on homey classics. Like the carrot cake, which takes on a rich fruit cake appearance, or the chocolate ice cream with black pepper and olive oil.

Does some of the fare at Tides scream dated? Sure. It may not be a bold, mould-breaking menu, but what they do they do so very well. What is groundbreaking about The Reykjavik Edition, however, is the sterling service—from the bellhops to the maitre'd to the waiters to the bartenders, and everyone you encounter from check-in to breakfast service the day after. Not once does it falter. Sure the early days of its opening made for delightful social studies for the observant. The awkwardness of guests unaccustomed to coat checks, and the sometimes stiff reactions to small talk, (which I find absolutely refreshing), have now given way to awed responses—"It's like you are not in Iceland!" It is disappointingly telling if one thinks of good service as something that only happens abroad. This alone makes Tides and the whole of the hotel a cut above the rest, and I fervently hope they will continue to be so. 🍷

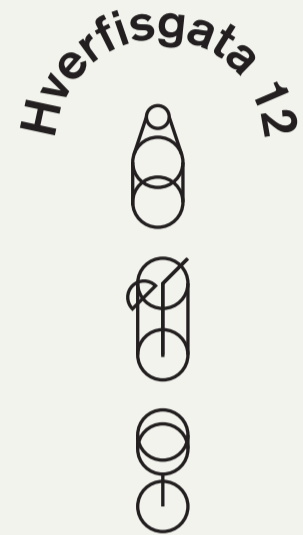
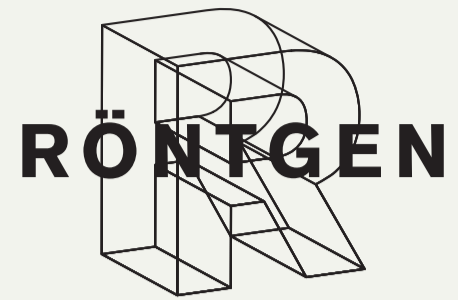
*The Edition Reykjavik*  
Visit the hotel at Austurbakki 2

"The entire building complex oozes newness; I swear I imagined I could smell the shuo sozi ban cladding"

ed. Do linger by the bar; the alabaster-bronze Eric Schmitt chandelier alone warrants a visit. Designed to transition from breakfast to lunch and dinner, it is a clever use of space going from night to day without losing any grandeur.

Chef Gunnar Karl Gíslason, of Michelin-starred restaurant Dill, is a consulting chef and has designed the dining experience as a focussed showcase of familiarity for the global traveller, seen through the Icelandic lens. Chef Georg Halldórsson brings this vision to life.

The morning quiet, particularly a dark Icelandic winter morning, is an alluring thing. The world is slower and service is quieter, but no less attentive. Immersed amongst all that gentleness, it is only fitting that breakfast also be a tender affair. Expect a superb salmon on rye toast. If smoked fish isn't your cup of tea, how about a zingy carrot-seabuckthorn smoothie to chase down a bowl of fragrant tarragon granola and skyr? There are soft boiled eggs with toast if, like me, you are nostalgic for simple fare that harks back to childhood. Although the English muffin was amiss, I enjoyed the eggs benedict with silken hollandaise, the single egg portion ample enough for one. At about 5000 ISK for two, it's a luxurious start to the day in a beautiful space, and with exemplary service it's something I cannot recommend enough.



Happy hour / 4–7pm  
Beer / Wine / Cocktails



REYKJAVIK GRAPEVINE  
BEST OF REYKJAVIK  
2020  
BEST NEWCOMER BAR

# Travel

## Arcadian Arts

A night in the northern town of Skagaströnd raises questions about Iceland's identity

Words: **Josie Anne Gaitens** Photos: **Art Bicnick**



**Travel distance from Reykjavik:** 260 km

**Car provided by:** [gocarrental.is](http://gocarrental.is)

**Accommodation provided by:** [salthus.is](http://salthus.is)

Iceland was, until recently, essentially rural. Rapid urbanisation after 1900 changed the country forever and despite Iceland being revered for its beautiful landscape, 94% of the population live in towns and cities. Icelanders are, in effect, tamed.

How do Icelanders see themselves now? As the stoic farmer, resourceful and determined? Or the bright, fast-walking urbanite, animatedly holding court in Kaffibarinn? These images reject one another, and politically too, the lines between countryside and capital are stark.

### To the north

Skagaströnd sits on the western shore of the Skagi headland. In the early December weather, the drive here is anything but tame. The roads are icy and snow snakes across them in treacherous corkscrews. We arrive after nightfall and Skagaströnd twinkles welcomingly as we descend into the town.

We're here to film, and to see what Skagaströnd has to offer us, visitors from the big smoke. We come with our own expectations; I, country-raised and always threatening to run off to a farm somewhere, am instantly charmed. My editor, the city boy, condemns Skagaströnd as a ghost town. We are probably both right.

We're staying at Salthús Guesthouse. Once a building for salting cod, it now hosts tourists and visiting artists alike. The rooms are warm and smart-

ly decorated and the shared kitchen looks over the harbour below. It's also minutes from the pool, our first port of call. You can tell a lot about a community from its pool.

### Fighting loneliness

The pool is tiny but impeccably clean, and we're offered coffee as we soak. The air is freezing and the coffee provides a welcome kick. We strike up conversation with the only other occupant, who turns out to be the local priest. She extols the town's virtues; the beautiful church, the fishing, the museum. Covid never reached Skagaströnd, she informs us, but its impacts were still felt here. Loneliness is an issue, and she made sure to check on older residents during lockdown. Beyond the village there are farms spread all round the cape, and an ageing population inhabits them. But the priest is cheery.

After the pool we set about finding somewhere to eat. We pass the pier on the way, which, even on a Friday evening, is busy with small fishing boats unloading their catch. Every so often a lorry thunders into the village ready to receive the next batch.

### Food for thought

Harbour Restaurant is beautifully decorated. There is one other table, a large family. No tourists. The food is well-cooked, if not exciting. As a visitor you always hope to see local produce featured on the menu—varieties

of fresh fish or cheeses from nearby farms. But there is instead the usual lamb, burgers and pizza. At the end of the day, tourism here is limited, both from foreigners and Icelanders. When locals go out, they just want a decent, normal meal.

The pub, Hólanes, is an unexpected building, a log cabin in a landscape bereft of trees. A few people are drinking in disparate duos, and a TV is blasting covers of pop songs. We commandeer the pool table, the barman offers us control of the music and suddenly it's a real Friday night. I've never played pool and so I am, unsurprisingly, terrible. People offer me tips and eventually we've made friends with half the bar. When closing time comes we invite the two left to join us for a night-cap.

### Creative thinking

The young men are filmmakers, and, what's more, they're here as part of an incredible arts programme, NES residency. In 2008, while the country was falling apart due to the financial crash, the council here responded to the closure of the fish processing plant in a creative way. They converted

the building into a large arts space, and invited creators from all over the world to come to Skagaströnd. In a village with a population of 470, more than 100 artists may visit in a year, to paint, sing, film, photograph, dance, sculpt and breathe more life into the town.

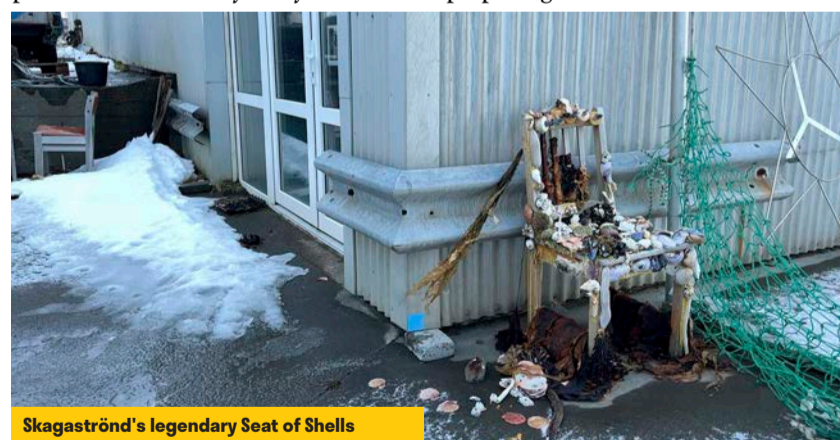
It's fitting that it's here, not the city, that we are faced with this juxtaposition: new and old, frivolous artist and mundane worker, fisherman and poet. But Skagaströnd rejects this tiresome debate. A couple of centuries ago, Icelandic farmers entertained themselves during haymaking with self-composed poetry, attempting to outdo each other with the complexity of their alliteration. Art and labour were intrinsically intertwined.

The sun rises late; it's close to the solstice. From the little kitchen window I watch the town appear in the gloaming, street by street. Finally the streetlights go out and the mountain above the village glows orange and pink in the winter light. It is astonishingly beautiful. The harbour below is busy as always, with fishermen jostling in bright yellow waterproofs. On the pier are two young filmmakers preparing to shoot. 📸

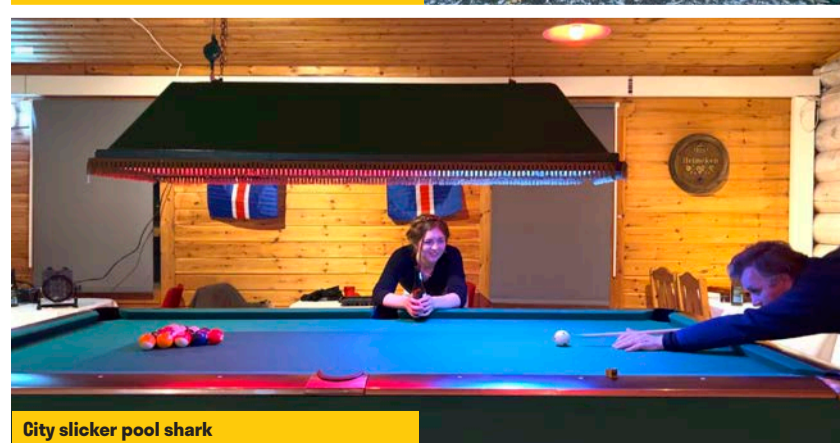
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Countryside road signs can be a little confusing



Skagaströnd's legendary Seat of Shells



City slicker pool shark

# 2022 Edition

The only article you need to read

Words: **Andie Sophia Fontaine** & **Josie Gaitens**

In this edition of Horror-Scopes, our mystic mind readers are tapping into the anthropomorphised positions of stars to tell you what 2022 has in store for you. This is 100% scientifically accurate. Look it up if you don't believe us.

## Aries

Don't know what to tell you, Aries, since, no matter what we say, you're not going to listen if you happen to disagree with it, so let's just assume we said this'll be the best year of your life and keep that confirmation bias chugging happily along.

## Taurus

This will be the year you are finally rid of the awful stench arising from a co-worker micro-waving fish in the office kitchen. Because you'll be working from home.

## Gemini

For 2022, you will finally get into a series at the same time everyone else is. So long, late-to-the-party syndrome; hello hype train!

## Cancer

For the love of all things holy, throw out those "underpants".

## Leo

You started 2020 by announcing it was your, "Year to shine," and 2021 by saying, "So long Covid!" For 2022, we'd like you to stop making predictions. Leave that to us, please.

## Virgo

You begin January 2022 as you do every new year: naked in the bathroom of your parents' house,

carefully removing every single one of your body hairs with tweezers. Only when this task is complete can you start the new year as god intended: smooth and hairless, like a happy baby newt.

## Libra

"It's New Year's? Honestly I hadn't noticed, haha. What's this? Oh it's just the hottest, most popular bullet journal that I've already filled with meticulous plans for the coming 12 months. Colour coded, of course. No, you can't touch it."

## Scorpio

Time to start howling at the moon, I guess.

## Sagittarius

After watching 'Don't Look Up' over the holidays, you are unsure what energy is best to take into 2022: the burning fury at living in a technologically stupefied and inherently unjust world, or the burning desire to make out with nerd Jennifer Lawrence. We're here to tell you: definitely both.

## Capricorn

The start of the new year belongs

to you, dear Capricorn, so make sure you start it right. Dust your anime girl figurines. Wash your dakimakura (seriously). Re-organise your manga collection in alphabetical order. This is your year to get organised.

## Aquarius

Everyone wants a hot goth gf. But has anyone asked the hot goth gf what she wants? Make your wishes and desires known this year. Even to those who should know better. You'll be glad you did.

## Pisces

You know that one family member who leaves passive-aggressive comments on your Facebook posts? Who will share poorly-sourced anti-mask articles and tag you in them? Who cannot seem to stfu about who the U.S. president actually is? Good news: this is the year you piss them off so bad they block you for good. 🍷

WELL, YOU ASKED



## Let There Be Enough Light To See By

Words: **Josie Anne Gaitens**

### What is your favourite Icelandic word?

I did a quick poll of the office, and the general consensus is that the most beautiful is the Icelandic word for midwife, "ljósmóðir," which literally means "mother of light." Less commonly used but also lovely in sentiment is "ratljós," which translates to "enough light to see by."

\*\*\*

### How much do you miss the sight of the volcano, 1 – 10. Because for me it's a 12.

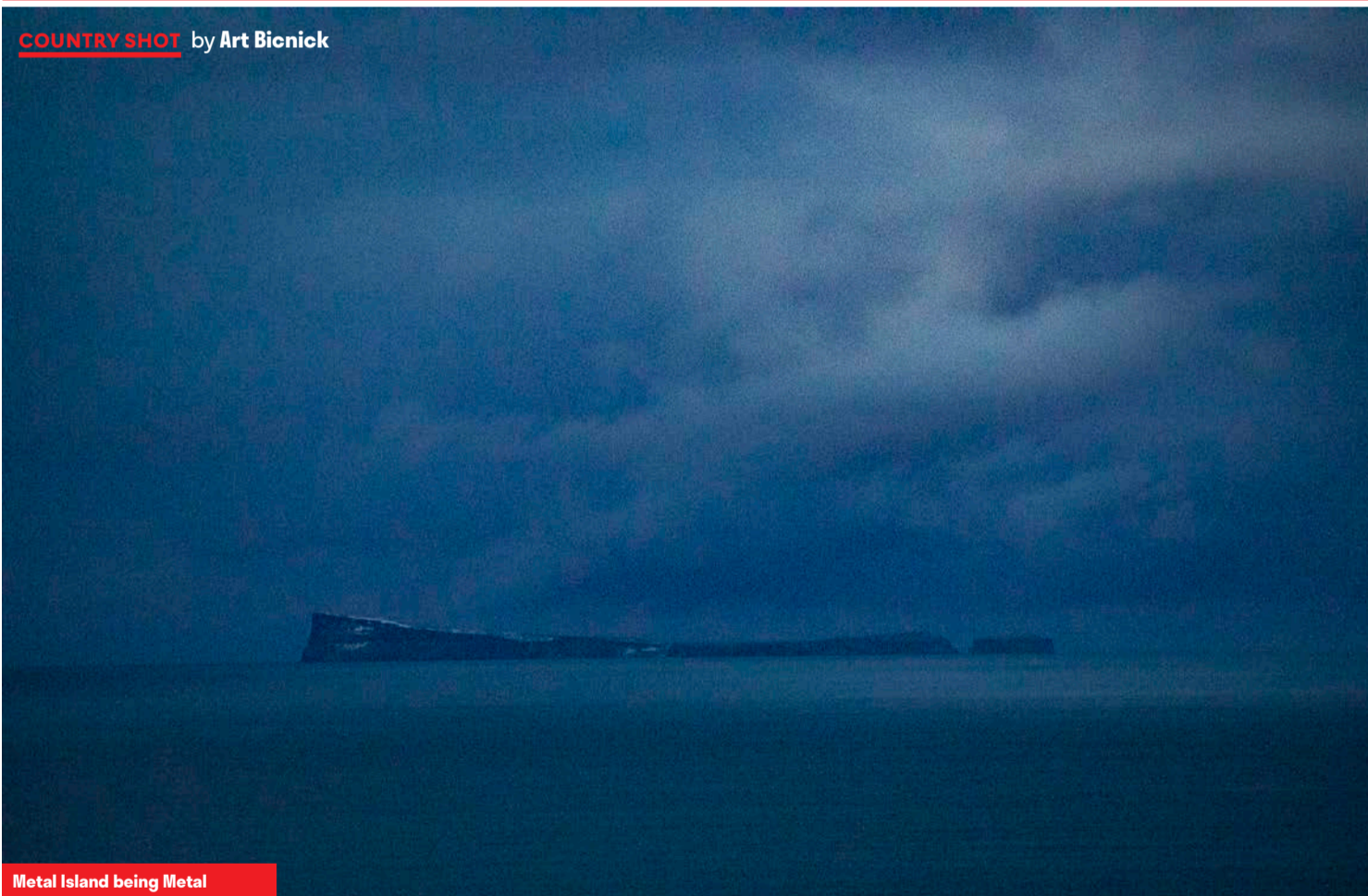
I'm with you there, buddy. I miss her so much, it actually feels as if the volcano and I have endured a drawn out and heart-rending divorce that resulted in her making off with the kids and the Porsche, leaving me rattling around the home alone, playing Phoebe Bridgers on repeat. I just want you back, babe.

\*\*\*

### Do you like fireworks for celebrating the new year?

There is nothing Icelanders love more than fireworks. Only the Search and Rescue teams are allowed to sell them, so it's also part of a big fundraising effort. You'll see crowds of men huddled around these temporary stores the week before New Year's Eve, delightedly comparing rockets and firecrackers like kids in a sweet shop. And I say, let them. Let's fill the night with a thousand stars as a grand and futile gesture of light in the darkest days of the year. A glorious middle finger to the heavens to protest the bleakness, the perpetual night, the aching cold, and the fact you didn't receive the lopapeysa you wanted for Christmas. Amen. 🍷

COUNTRY SHOT by Art Bicnick



Metal Island being Metal

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**“Naturally the perfect day of a volcanologist includes a natural disaster.”**

Elísabet Pálmadóttir, specialist in natural hazards at the Icelandic Met Office. **p15**



**“OK, we're together in the studio. And the takes are just gonna be the takes. And no bullshit.”**

Magnús Jóhann, composer, musician and no-messing producer. **p18**



**“Don't be disturbed by the last card. Death actually represents transformation.”**

Natalia Grociak, tarot reader. **p23**

## One of 25 wonders of the world

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