

The Reykjavík Grapevine



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Issue 12 2023

Best before August 25

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On the Cover

BDSM is a hot button issue. But kinsters aren't freaks – at least not more freaky than anyone else. This issue's cover feature article explores the BDSM community and the role it plays. For the cover, Grant Woods' iconic 1930s painting "American Gothic" was given a kinky makeover through the Photoshop stylings of Art Bicnick and the knotty talents of Alfreð Jónsson (@master_cinch) and Katrín Íris.



Editorial Getting to know you

WORDS Catharine Fulton, Editor in Chief

I fancy myself a jack of all trades. I'm an expert in a few things, but I know a passable amount about quite a lot of things. One of those things, I'll admit, was not BDSM. Oh no, does that make me vanilla?

While I wasn't harbouring any negative thoughts about the BDSM community, I knew very little about their inclusion in the larger queer rights movement or about the way members of the community view themselves, their identities and their lifestyles. So it was a valuable learning experience to get to know – at least through the recording of an interview conducted by Rex Beckett – three members of the board of the Icelandic BDSM Organisation.

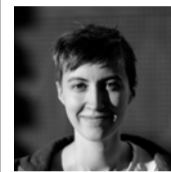
Their openness, candour and vulnerability in discussing their sexual identities and the struggles of their community is an inspiration.

As we go to print and into the finale weekend of another eventful Pride week in Reykjavík, I know I'll be keeping an eye out for the red ropes of the BDSM group marching in the Pride parade and cheering a little louder now that I'm a little more knowledgeable about everything they stand for and their role in Iceland's larger queer community.

Whether you're familiar with BDSM, you're kink-curious or you're perhaps a little vanilla, too, turn to the feature on page 12 to marvel at the strength and bravery it takes to stand for a largely misunderstood group of individuals.

Happy Pride! ■

Contributors



CATHERINE MAGNÚSDÓTTIR

Catherine studies culture and literature in Iceland and came to the Grapevine for the internship but ended up freelancing for the magazine. When she's not trying to reconnect with her Icelandic roots, she's usually watching video essays or attempting to finally come up with that one good story idea that she can actually finish writing.



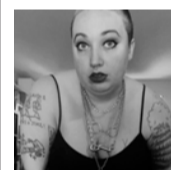
JÓHANNES BJARKI BJARKASON

Jóhannes Bjarki is a Reykjavík local, straight out of Grafarvogur. Having been active as the frontman of the post-punk band Skoffín and in the post-dreifing art collective, Jóhannes is fascinated by the Icelandic music scene. Among his interests are politics, history and pop culture.



IRYNA ZUBENKO

Iryna is a Ukrainian journalist working at the cross-section of media and technology for the past five years. While still figuring out what to do in life, Iryna's love of travelling, unspoiled nature and Scandi design has brought her to Reykjavík. One day she'll write a non-fiction book.



REX BECKETT

Rex Beckett has been a fixture in the Reykjavík culture scene for over a decade as a longtime music/art writer and as former synthpunk diva Rex Pistols. They are currently working on a series delving into the influence of Garfield on queer millennials.



SHRUTHI BASAPPA

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

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What The News!?

Rainbows And Xenophobia

A selection of news stories making headlines these last few weeks

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason
IMAGE Art Bicnick

With Reykjavik Pride starting on August 8 and running until August 13, city authorities decided that it wasn't enough having only one flag-coloured street in town. So to inaugurate this year's pride, Vegamótastigur – a small alley running between Skólavörðustræti and Laugavegur – was painted in the colours of the trans flag.

Rainbow streets seem to be making the desks of policy-makers around the country, as the town of Akranes painted the longest rainbow-coloured street in Iceland, a whopping 400 metres. Remember, the longer your rainbow-coloured street is, the more you support queer people.

OF VOLCANOES AND VIOLENCE

News of Iceland's most recent volcano has been few and far between, as the national Met Office ruled the Litli-Hrútur volcano to be officially finished on August 5. Despite the lack of magma flowing from the volcano, the area is still considered

dangerous as only a thin layer of crust protects the still molten lava underneath.

Citizens of Hafnarfjörður were shocked to hear loud sirens throughout their neighbourhood when the special forces were called to the scene in Hafnarfjörður's Velírnir. A man threatened people with a knife and broke a window in his apartment. The police were on the scene for three hours and managed to subdue the man and provide him with medical care. No one was hurt.

Every year, the biggest event happening at the beginning of August is the Merchant's Day weekend (Verslunarmannahelgin). As one of the biggest travel weekends, people flock everywhere around the country in search of good vibes. Þjóðhátíð, the local village festival in Vestmannaeyjar, is undoubtedly the most popular one, tracing its history back to 1874.

In recent years, the festival has garnered a not-so-savoury reputation due to the high number of reports of physical and sexual assaults taking place. This year, things seemed to have slowed down, as RÚV reported only a handful of drug cases and physical assaults were reported during Þjóðhátíð.

Only one case of sexual violence was reported to the police. To be clear, that is still one case too many,

as only 10-13% of sexual assaults are ultimately reported.

BESTEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

Blessing Newton, a survivor of human trafficking, who has lived in Iceland for five years, is now to be deported, RÚV reported. Originally hailing from Nigeria, Blessing was sold in a sex trafficking scheme to Italy, from where she fled to Iceland. Her application for asylum was overruled.

Earlier in August, she was made to sign an agreement stating she would leave the country within 30 days. Due to the new law on foreigners, which Alþingi passed earlier this year, refugees whose applications are overruled will be deprived of social assistance and basic healthcare. It is yet to be determined what the Icelandic state will decide in Blessing's case, as the state does not have a bilateral agreement with her home country.

Approximately 2,700 individuals have applied for asylum in Iceland in 2023, which is an increase from last year. Unnur Sværisdóttir, chairman of the Directorate of Labour, said in an interview with RÚV that more housing is needed for the applicants. 2,270 individuals are living in supplied accommodation, and more people are expected to arrive later this year. ■



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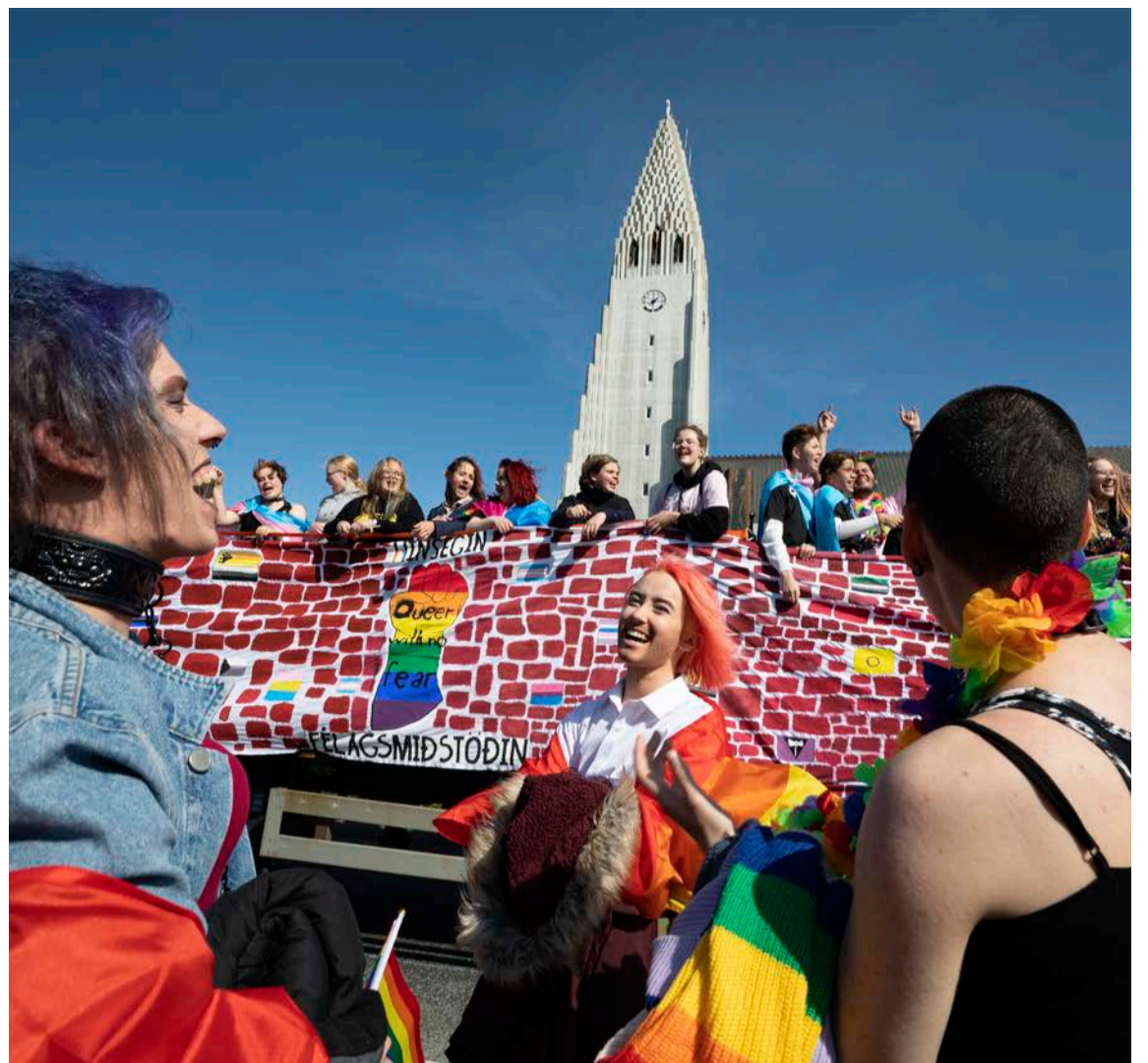
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Ask An Expert

How Did Reykjavík Pride Happen?

We asked a co-founder of the festivities for the low down

WORDS Catherine Magnúsdóttir
IMAGE Art Bicnick

Iceland enjoys one of the queer friendliest reputations in the world and it just so happens that another Pride festival is happening as this issue goes to print. But how did such a small nation in the middle of the North Atlantic establish such a vibrant scene, with events that lure people from all over the world to celebrate? And why is Reykjavik Pride in August instead of June? We went to Heimir Már Pétursson, Co-founder of Reykjavik Gay Pride, to learn more.

“**T**here has to be a distinction between Reykjavik Pride and some protests that had happened before,” Heimir begins. “Samtökin ‘78 – established in 1978 – had held two or three very low key marches, which were more like protests than parades, down Laugavegur. Maybe 40 to 60 people took part in each one. But Hinsegin dagar í Reykjavík, now called Reykjavik Pride in English, is an independent entity. It was established in 1999 when a few elderly gay men remembered that it would be 30 years since Stonewall on June 27 that year.” The anniversary had been initially commemorated by Samtökin ‘78 with an outdoor program (though no parade) at Ingólfstorg with about

1,500 people in attendance, Heimir recalls. “At that time I was not connected to this at all, I was just an observer. But as a journalist and also working in PR, I realized that there had been a change in the atmosphere – in the attitude of the people of Reykjavik. The work that Samtökin ‘78 had been doing changed the attitude of the public and so I contacted my friend, who was one of those aforementioned elderly gentlemen, and told him, ‘you know, we have to start to prepare for a real Pride next year. Reykjavik is ready.’” By coincidence, InterPride, The International Association of Pride Organizers, was holding its first European annual meeting in Glasgow in October, 1999, and Heimir was sent to learn more about how to connect to the movement internationally and how to host Pride and get outside institutions involved.

“I came back with a lot of ideas. Samtökin ‘78 were very afraid of taking on more financial obligations, so I said, ‘You don’t have to. We’ll just establish an independent entity called Hinsegin dagar that has nothing to do financially with Samtökin ‘78,’” he recounts. “So, a group of us started in late 1999 to prepare for the first Reykjavik Gay Pride to be held in 2000.”

With the City of Reykjavik backing them up from the start, drumming up business interest in the pink króna and attaining sponsorship, the first official parade was set up behind the police station by Hlemmur.

“People said we would be laughed at because it would be such a small parade,” Heimir says. “To which I said ‘No, we will make a 300 metre long parade that no camera can get in one shot so it will always look big no matter what.’”

Well spaced and with 12,000 people behind the parade, it was huge by Icelandic standards and has only grown since.

As to why the event is in August, Heimir points to practicality. “June, of course, has Iceland’s national holiday on the 17th, after which Icelanders go on summer holiday. Meaning July is no good because nobody would be here. So, we looked at August. The first Monday of August is Fridagur verslunarmanna (a bank holiday), so we chose the week after because then everybody is back in town after travelling. Since school is coming back up for the kids, everybody will be at home.”

“I always thought that it had to be done not as a protest,” Heimir says. “It had to be done with joy as our weapon. It should be the greatest celebration people of Reykjavik had ever seen. With the parade, we’re thanking those who have come before us, celebrating their victories, our culture and our history. We’re showing solidarity with those who are not as fortunate as we are in Iceland and reminding ourselves and society that freedom and rights are never won in a single battle. They have to be fought for constantly.” ■



Do Shit

Become A Local Celebrity

The útlendingur’s ongoing guide to getting shit done

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGE Ágúst Halldórsson / TikTok

OK, so you’ve been living in Iceland for some time. You have a kennitala, you started a company, you learned the language. Maybe you even mastered small talk and made an Icelandic friend. Now it’s time to take it to the next level and become a local celebrity.

It may seem like a tall order. Maybe, you’re thinking, you don’t have the musical, acting or sporting chops to garner island-wide attention. Well, you’re in luck, because fame – at least of the online variety – takes less talent than it does poor decision-making skills.

Take one Ágúst Halldórsson, who spent one day in early August kayak-

ing from his home on the Westman Islands to Surtsey and then filming a completely oblivious and self-indulgent TikTok of himself standing atop the island’s highest peak. Topless. Bleached bouffant blowing in the wind. All set to The Stone Roses’ anthem “I Want To Be Adored.” Class.

I know what you’re wondering: how did one dumb TikTok of some backwater dude bro secure Ágúst’s celebrity? Well, Surtsey is an island created by a volcanic eruption that lasted from 1963 to 1967. It’s a designated site for the study of biocolonisation that only a very small handful of scientists are permitted to access. We don’t want to judge a book by its frosted tips, but we’re venturing to guess Ágúst isn’t one of those people.

So if you’re hella thirsty for celebrity, get out there and do something stupid. Post it on social media. Heck, leak it to the media yourself. It’s the middle of summer. It *will* get picked up and you *will* be famous. Enjoy that limelight. ■

Footnote: Our friend Ágúst is being investigated by police for his Surtsey trip (I know, buzzkills!), so perhaps consider a still-stupid-but-less-illegal get-famous-quick scheme. Hey, it’s only a matter of time until Reykjanes erupts again.

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Money Moves **It's Company Time!**

Traversing the landscape of bureaucracy in search of a shiny ehf

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGE Art Bicnick

Whether you sell handicrafts or make music, it turns out that you can start a company – most likely a private limited company, known as “ehf.” We spoke with Rannveig Lind Bjargardóttir, a Specialist in the Department of Collection and Registers at Skatturinn, to help us navigate the process without drowning in bureaucracy.

GV: WHAT ARE THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND STEPS NEEDED TO START A COMPANY IN ICELAND?

In order to establish a company in Iceland you will need an Icelandic ID number (*kennitala*) or a System ID number (*kerfiskennitala*) if you do not have an Icelandic ID number. To apply for a System ID number, form 17.62 (application of a system ID number) is sent along with the registration documents for the com-

pany. A System ID number does not grant the same rights as having a *kennitala*, only the ability to establish a company and take on roles in the company such as director or executive manager.

If the applicant has a *kennitala* and an electronic ID, they can apply for the registration of a new company online through our service portal via *skatturinn.is*. The process is quicker (3-5 business days) than providing us with registration documents on paper or via email (10-14 business days).

Before establishing a company, we recommend familiarising yourself with the rights and obligations associated with the legal form you intend to apply for. For example, different rules apply to private limited companies and limited partnerships in terms of personal liability. It's important to know the main differences in order to decide what sort of legal form might be suitable for your business.

According to Law No. 138/1994 on private limited companies, the founders must be of legal age and their estate must not be under bankruptcy. All executive managers and the majority of directors of an EHF must be domiciled in Iceland. However, exceptions apply if they're domiciled in the EU or an OECD member state.

The minimum share capital of an EHF is 500,000 ISK. A state-authorized auditor or an independent person who provides assurance that the capital is paid will need to sign Form 17.21 (application for a new private limited company), confirming that the share capital has been paid. Please bear in mind that the share capital is not paid to Skatturinn.

GV: WHAT'S THE COST OF STARTING A BUSINESS IN ICELAND, INCLUDING LICENCES, PERMITS AND OTHER EXPENSES?

The registration fee is 140,500 ISK. Along with form 17.21, you need to submit Articles of Association (*samþykktir*), Founding Agreement (*stofnskrá* or *stofnsamningur*), Minutes of the founding meeting (*stofngerð*) and Form 17.27 on the registration of the Beneficial Owners of the company.

Templates of these EHF founding documents and other legal forms can be found on our website in Icelandic. These documents need to be provided to us in Icelandic according to the law, although the text of translation on the papers is allowed. These documents are created automatically within the system if standard options are chosen in the online registration process of an EHF.

Once the company has been registered, any changes on the company registration, for instance, name, change of directors, domicile, share capital, etc., is done via the company registry – either online if its an EHF or by providing us with relevant forms via email or in person. Changes to registration cost 3,700 ISK, irrelevant of the number of changes if they are all notified at the same time to the registry.

GV: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COMMON MISTAKES OR OBSTACLES BEGINNERS MIGHT FACE?

There are far less mistakes if it's done online, mainly because the system sort of creates documents for you. However, we are constantly seeing that people get confused about the registration of the beneficial owners, they tend to choose the wrong kind of ownership.

Registering a beneficial owner of a company is a legal requirement and it's important that the type of ownership chosen for the beneficial owner when registering a company is in line with the founding documents. For example, if individual A is the founder and sole shareholder of company B, then A is considered to have 100% direct ownership and 100% direct voting rights of company B. If the

sole shareholder of company B is another company, C, and A is the sole shareholder for company C, then A is considered to have 100% indirect ownership and 100% indirect voting rights in company B.

GV: ARE THERE ANY INDUSTRIES THAT ARE PARTICULARLY POPULAR AMONG NEW BUSINESS REGISTRATIONS IN ICELAND?

It's hard to pinpoint just one industry – there is a lot of diversity in the business scope of new companies. It varies from tourism companies, construction, creative purposes and everything in between.

You should explore the sector your company will be operating in very carefully. Different rules apply for different sectors, some of them are heavily regulated and some of them are not. For example, in the tourism industry, where you're dealing with people and moving people around, you will need all sorts of extra permits regarding transporting people, safety measures, etc. We always try to do our best to guide non-Icelandic speaking nationals through the steps. ■

Read more about the process and register a company at skatturinn.is



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Side Hustle Of The Issue

The Podcaster

"It's called Backwater Bastards and it's the galaxy's greatest best friends show of all time."

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGE Art Bicnick

I speak with Taylor Garcia van Biljon well beyond traditional working hours, as she joins me from her makeshift home studio. Here, she spends countless days and nights working on an ENNIE-nominated podcast with friends. This is her side hustle, even though it sometimes feels like a lot more.

Taylor Garcia van Biljon, 33, UX Designer & Researcher

During the day, I work on software and apps. At night, on the weekends and whenever I can get two minutes, I'm working on my podcast with two other people that both live in different countries. The podcast that we're making is basically a sci-fi comedy improv narrative play. We're telling a really cinematic story – there's a lot of voices, sound design, music and ambience. It's about six years old now.

DO WHAT YOU LOVE

I've never done anything like this before. But I had a friend, who was a fan of podcasts like this. He said, "I think we could do it." None of us really had any background. But we were all working in creative fields – everybody was a concept artist, an illustrator, or a graphic designer. We thought we could tell cool stories together and then we never stopped. It's finally making some money after all this time, but really, we just do it because all day we make stuff for other people and we really don't get to make anything for ourselves. This is just what we love to do.

"WE DO THIS AT NIGHT"

Sometimes it's hard just to manage the day job by itself, but this – we do this at night. Once I log out of my day job, I come home and start my second job. It takes up weekends, nights, sometimes we travel and go to conventions and that takes months to plan. We're on a network now, so we have a bit of a motivation to keep producing content. There's only three of us and we each do probably five people's worth of jobs. One of us manages all of the sound design, the editing and then we have social accounts, hosting, the website and all of the collaborative work.

My favourite thing is that I get to make something with people that I love. We definitely put more money into this than we get out of it. It's not a lucrative side hustle, but it's amazing to choose what you want to make and completely control it. We control every aspect of it – from what content we put out, how we do it, what it sounds like, what our art looks like, what we say about ourselves, even the principle of what

kind of ads we'll accept on the show, who we work with, and when we do it – all of it is up to us. That feels incredible.

It has made us better communicators and better problem solvers. The show is improvisational, so we're constantly trying to get ourselves out of problems. We're braver people. At this point, we're making better art than when we started, which is gratifying to look back and remember how horrible and rough the process was. We made some weird stuff in the beginning.

There's nothing about the making of it that I don't like. It's more how challenging it is to put out good product and have people find it. Discoverability is really challenging – the way that social media works, it's up to how much you're willing to pay for ads. Or if you have an existing platform – if you're a celebrity, or you're independently wealthy, you're in. But if you're a regular person, good luck. We're regular people, so we just keep making stuff.

THE POD CODE

Don't buy the fancy equipment first, make stuff without it. The first show that you make is going to be awful. Just do it and get it out of the way. You'll make something really incredible after that, but you have to make a horrible show first. These are the rules. ■

Check out Taylor's podcast: backwaterbastards.com

Want to share how you're making ends meet? Email us at grapevine@grapevine.is with the subject line "Side Hustle." We'll happily keep your identity anonymous.

RAMMAGERDIN, ÍSLAND 1940

- 1 *Eden Blanket*, designed by Aníta Hirlekar. Made in Reykjavík from pure Icelandic wool.
- 2 *Arctic Blanket*, designed by Sigrún Halla Unnarsdóttir. Made in Reykjavík from pure Icelandic wool.



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Islanders An Old Book Collector On A Rescue Mission

Did you know that to restore old books, they are submerged in water?

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGE Art Bicnick

There are very few things that can help us look back at history better than an old book. How was it made? Who owned it? How long did it take them to handwrite these letters? While Eypór Guðmundsson's day-to-day job may not reveal his hidden passion, his home office certainly does – Eypór finds, collects and restores old books. With a personal collection spanning several hundred volumes, Eypór gives us a glimpse into the restoration process – it isn't as straightforward as you might think.

I'm a security specialist and close protection officer by profession. I have been working in this field for almost 20 years. I first got interested in old books as a child. I grew up on a farm in Borgarfjörður, where two or three hundred years ago, there was a printing press. After learning about that I got interested in old books.

When I started collecting old books, I thought it was useless to only collect them – put them on a shelf and let them collect dust. I learned on my own how to restore and protect them. By reading books, watching YouTube videos, talking to people with

more experience, asking questions, practising a lot and making my own books, I got kind of good at it.

ANTIQUARIAN BOOK HUNT

There are two companies in Iceland that specialise in antiquarian books. One is Bókin on Hverfisgata where two specialists, Ari and Eiríkur, work. The other is Bókakaffið on Ármúli, where Bjarni and Jóhannes offer really good consulting about old books.

After doing this for many years, people are now contacting me on their own – that's how I find and restore old books. There are a lot of old Icelandic books all around Iceland, many thousands probably. I just haven't found them all, yet.

I prefer to collect old Icelandic books from the early 1900s and older, especially, from the old Icelandic printing locations, like Hólar, Skálholt, Hrappsey, Leirárgarðar, Beitistaðir and, of course, from Viðey. I actually grew up in Beitistaðir. Books from Leirárgarðar and Beitistaðir are the most rare books that you can find in Iceland. That's what I specialise in today. The books that were printed there were mostly non-religious, primarily handbooks for farmers.

BIBLICAL TREASURES

I have a lot of Bibles in my collection. The mission of many book collectors in Iceland is to collect the oldest Bi-

bles, like Guðbrandur's Bible, Steinn's Bible or Þorlákur's Bible. I don't look at those books. I collect other old Icelandic Bibles and I also have a lot of foreign Bibles. The oldest book that I have is an English Bible, printed in 1595. I have Bibles printed on Viðey and in Reykjavík. There were 1400 books of that type printed in Viðey and I have seven of them. My mission is to restore them all. But it takes a long time to restore one 1400-page Bible because you have to take it page by page, wash each page in water, and then dry them. When I did that, it took me eight days, eight hours a day.

BRINGING BOOKS BACK TO LIFE

When I find a book that is maybe 300 or 400 years old, it's not always in the best shape.

The first step in the restoration process is pouring water over the pages or washing the pages. This is good for the pages because the pages from the old days are about 80% cotton. Pouring water on them helps to clean the paper. The cotton is restoring itself, and the pages will be much stronger after the cleaning process. The water that I use can be warm. It won't affect the pages in any way other than restoring them.

The next step is to dry the pages and proceed with the restoration process. When I'm restoring torn pages,

I have to glue them with a special Japanese paper that is really thin. This will prevent the pages from tearing further. I take a little bit of glue and put the Japanese paper on top. The glue that I use is a special book-binding glue with no acid. Everything that we use in old book restoration has to be acid-free. Every time I work with a book, I have to clean my hands thoroughly with soap to wash away any acid residue.

Then I bind the book together. I wouldn't say it looks like new, but almost. How long it takes to restore depends on each book. If it's not in a bad condition, it might sometimes take one day. When I'm restoring a book, I want to do as much as I can, but also as little as possible. I want to have it as close to its original condition as possible.

UNEXPECTED FINDS

I found pieces of skin in a book I was restoring, and these fragments are likely around 500-600 years old. We don't actually know what they say but it looks like they are rhymes. It's written in Old Icelandic, or Old Norse. In the same book, I also found a rescript from the old Icelandic lawbook named Jónsbók. The letters are so beautiful. It's hard for me to read it but I can understand a few words.

There's one book I got in the middle of COVID – an Icelandic book from 1837. The reason I bought this book

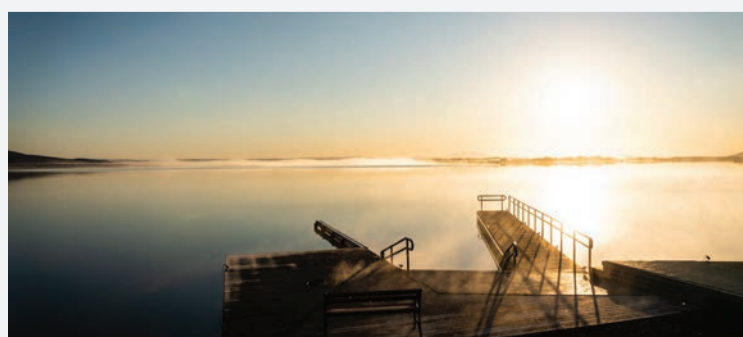
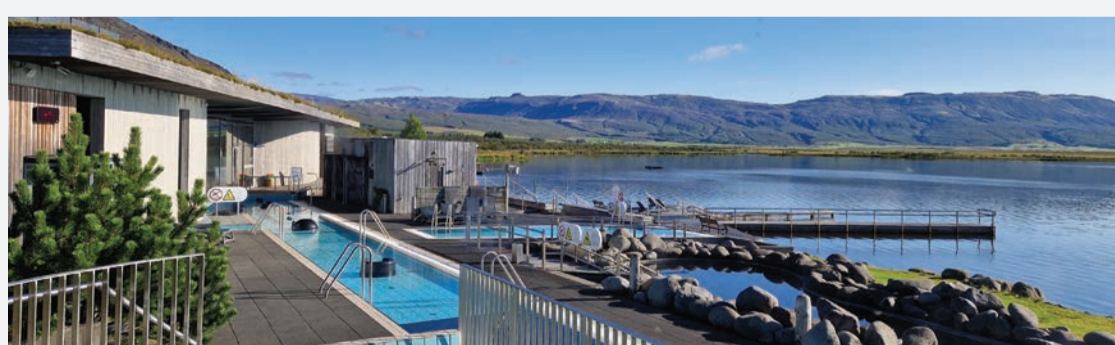
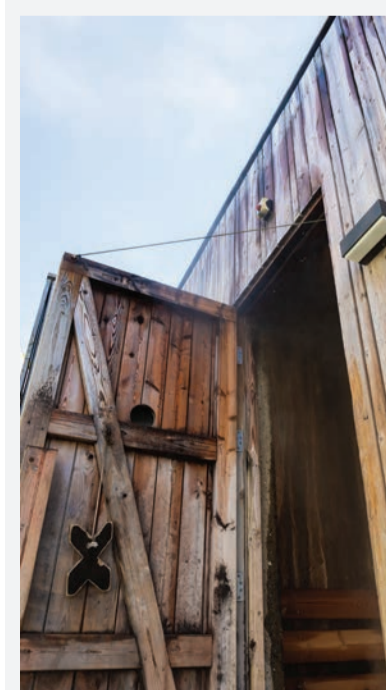
was because of the cover, which was quite unique. While going through the book, I came across a letter that had been laying in the book since 1907. You can see the name of the person who wrote the letter and the place where he lived. It's really common to come across letters like this in books. Often, I can't resist and have to track the book to find out who owned it 100-300 years ago.

In that particular letter, the person was asking people not to come by his farm as a measles outbreak was going through Iceland. Opening this book and finding this letter in the middle of COVID was a pretty special thing. One hundred years ago, the person who wrote this letter was actually talking about a similar situation.

TOO MANY BOOKS

I don't sell the books that I collect and today I only have a few books that I'm restoring for others. Collecting old Icelandic books and restoring them is a kind of a rescue mission that I'm on. It's a time-consuming hobby. There are many books that I haven't started with yet – if it's going to take me eight hours a day, it might take me a lifetime. ■

Follow Eypór's rescue mission on Instagram: [@oldicelandicbooks](#)
Follow our YouTube channel to see his book restoration process in more detail: [@rvkgrapevine](#)



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Feature Bound By All Things Kinky

Exploring BDSM in Iceland and how it fits into the larger queer community

WORDS Catharine Fulton
(with files from Rex Beckett)
IMAGES Art Bicnick

when asked for an official line on the practice. “It’s always the question that is asked in every interview and every time we’re being talked about, but it’s so hard to define it. It’s so different for everybody.”

For some, Margrét says, gesturing to herself and her fellow board members, Jón Thoroddsen (Nonni) and Katrin Íris, there’s no question that it’s an orientation. “Some people really burn for it and have it as a very intrinsic part of themselves,” she says. “But it can also be something you do to spice up your sex life or whatever. So I think first you have to kind of split [those groups] – BDSM as an orientation and BDSM as stuff you do. Because the acronym alone only stands for the stuff you do. It’s not really descriptive about the reasons *why* we do it.”

“We have sometimes tried to define BDSM as everything you do that is sexual or for sexual, romantic or intimate purposes that is outside the box of what is considered ‘normal.’” Margrét explains. “And that box is expanding a lot.”

A TUMULTUOUS UNION

Both the “stuff” being done and the reasons for exploring BDSM have seen the global community embroiled in debate every time Pride month – internationally in June, but August here in Iceland – rolls around. As the “love is love” messaging of international Pride festivities works to ensure marches are “family-friendly,” conversations around the presence of kink, BDSM, nudity and other expressions of sexuality at Pride are reignited annually.

Pearl clutches question the harm being inflicted on children exposed to pup play gear, harnessed

or collared individuals, or the odd bare bottom at Pride parades. While Iceland is often spoken about as a forward-thinking and open society, it hasn’t escaped the debate about the appropriateness of BDSM at Pride or within the larger LGBTQIA+ community.

Though an official entity since 1997, the Icelandic BDSM Organisation became a partner association of Samtökin ‘78, the national queer association, in 2016 in a vote bookended by drama and heated debate.

“Conservative groups talk about ‘slippery slopes,’” says Nonni about the larger debate around the inclusion of BDSM under the Samtökin ‘78 umbrella, “but respectability politics are a slippery slope. I think that’s really important to remember.”

The board of BDSM in Iceland first expressed interest in affiliating with Samtökin ‘78 in 2015, but the associ-

ation was concerned it would cause turmoil within their core community and instead advised the board to take some time to introduce itself and its motivations to the larger queer community.

wanted cooperation and formal inclusion, seeing that many of us were already queer in other ways and that kink has been a part of the queer community since, well, since forever,” recalls Margrét, who was a board member at that time as well. Indeed, kinksters and the BDSM community have been active in the queer rights movement since Stonewall.

The board’s application at Samtökin ‘78’s 2016 general meeting was successful – albeit briefly. Once their inclusion was publicised, a group of older LGBT folks, who Margrét says had long been inactive within the community, took offence and turned to technicalities in the queer association’s charter to deem the general meeting – and, by extension, the vote about BDSM in Iceland’s affiliation – null and void.

So a second vote was held and again the BDSM group was admitted, though by a smaller margin of support. The vocal opposition still did not let up and managed to force a third vote.

“It was the biggest general meeting ever,” Margrét says. “People were angry and friendships were falling apart – it was horrible. But in hindsight it was also cleansing, as there had been an underlying bitterness

that hadn’t been addressed for years which was now in the open, with us caught in the middle.”

The third vote was also in favour of the BDSM group’s affiliation with Samtökin ‘78. It has stood since.

Nonni recalls that a number of people who had initially been opposed to the inclusion of BDSM within Samtök ‘78 came around rather quickly and some even approached Margrét about their change of heart. Margrét even recalls one older gay man raising his hand at one of those fateful general meetings to ask whether BDSM’s affiliation meant the community could finally talk about sex again.

“You know, [many Samtökin ‘78 members] were so tired of the white-washing and ‘love is love’ and all that,” Margrét shares. “The message that ‘we’re just like everybody else,’ and taking all the sexual energy and the queerness out ... That had been the discourse for so many years that people were feeling bored. So many people were relieved when BDSM came to Samtökin. It was like a breath of fresh air – I had heard that verbatim.”

“Having this big latex-clad elephant in the room forced people to kind of admit that queerness is not just ‘love is love,’” Margrét continues. “Queerness is being disturbing.”

Fortunately – for the entire queer community – BDSM has since been formally and warmly welcomed by Samtökin ‘78. Since being brought under the umbrella of the queer association, the Icelandic BDSM Organisation has enjoyed fruitful and supportive cooperation, using Samtökin ‘78’s headquarters for

What is BDSM? Typically considered sexual preferences and practices that include elements of control, submission or pain, it stands for bondage, dominance, sadism and masochism. It’s kink, it’s control, it’s an exploration of sexual desire. It’s pleasure and pain and pleasure derived from pain. It’s role play, power exchange and humiliation. It’s intimacy and sex.

If you’re blushing right now, you’re not alone. BDSM remains taboo for large swaths of the population – even within the LGBTQIA+ community. It’s a sexual preference. But is it an orientation? Is it queer? What is BDSM really?

“The last chair of the organisation and I, we’ve had this conversation I don’t know how many times,” says Margrét Nilsdóttir, chairperson of the Icelandic BDSM Organisation,

Having this big old latex clad elephant in the room forced people to kind of admit that queerness is not just “love is love.” Queerness is being disturbing.



their meetings and workshops, being included on a recent placard on queerness in Iceland, and marching in the annual Pride parade – the group's theme this year is “BDSM is the thread that binds us together.” Expect a lot of red rope.

KNOWING YOURSELF

Asked how long they've known they were kinky or into BDSM, Margrét, Nonni and Katrín all express that they were born aware of their preferences and their needs and requirements for sexual and emotional fulfilment.

“I was born,” Nonni says of how he got into the lifestyle. “I actually grew up, went through puberty really late, so that was around 17 or 18. But before that, I knew there was something special – probably since I was five-years old.”

Katrín shares that she became sexually active at a fairly young age, but it wasn't doing anything for her. “I thought for a long time that I was asexual, because I was like, ‘wow, this is so fucking boring. What the fuck is this?’ And then I met a guy who was a lot older than me, and he showed me all these different things. I was like, ‘Whoa! This is me! This makes sense.’”

“Because I just thought everything I was doing was bad,” she continues. “And I was hurting myself for masturbation – you know, self harm and doing horrible things. I needed this more experienced person to be like, ‘it's okay, this is a thing.’ I realised then there's nothing wrong with it, but it took a few years to really settle in.”

Margrét and Nonni both share the experience of being intrinsically

drawn to power dynamics and hierarchies from a young age. Nonni is a submissive, while Margrét describes herself as “the greediest type there is of sadomasochist.” They would scour libraries when younger, looking for history books that detailed

ADVOCATING FOR COMMUNITY

Now firmly owning their identities and sexual and romantic orientations, the board members head up efforts to advocate Iceland's larger

Some people really burn for it and have it as a very intrinsic part of themselves. But it can also be something you do to spice up your sex life or whatever.

slavery and other unbalanced power dynamics, drawn to the domination detailed in the accounts. It was very much an exploration done in secret.

“I thought this was something I was taking to my grave,” says Margrét. “I was not going to share this; it was just fucked up. I knew of something that was called ‘BDSM,’ but that was just horrible and disgusting. I didn't want to go there, so I was really trying to distance myself from all that. I just envisioned latex and ball gags and the gimp from *Pulp Fiction*. I thought it was depraved, evil – without even knowing anything about it.”

That changed when she found herself at an event with some friends of a friend who were open about being kinky, discussing the dynamics of their own relationships. “I was like, ‘Holy shit, they're just doing that and they're still good. She's not an evil person? This is working for them and they're happy?’” She continues: “I talked to him privately about it – he was the first person I basically told.”

BDSM community, leading workshops, hosting events and ensuring a balanced and accurate public discourse about the community and their values.

“We are kind of trying to define BDSM for ourselves,” Margrét says of the organisation's public relations and outreach efforts. “Popular culture has kind of made one image and we've tried to correct that a little bit.”

“And then there's the advocacy for kinky people that might be facing discrimination – like a public defender – because people are afraid to speak up and say something,” she continues. “It used to be that you could make fun of kinky people and nobody did anything about it. Nobody came and said, ‘Hey, this is not okay.’ So we've kind of been that entity.”

The BDSM in Iceland board has had to be particularly active in recent months with broader conversations in media and parents' groups

about sex education in the schools and the inclusion of conversation about choking and the young person exploring what feels good and what they enjoy.

Nonni says it's at times like that when he loses the day on social media, following the discourse and dispelling myths about BDSM. “That has happened a couple of times when we've just had to be everywhere, following everything and just answering a lot of shit.”

Luckily, for members of the BDSM community who may find themselves discriminated against for their orientation or lifestyle, the law is on their side.

“I contacted [Jafnréttisstofa, the Directorate of Equality] a few years ago to ask them, theoretically, if a person would be fired from their job for being BDSM oriented, would that be considered on the same grounds as being fired for being homosexual or another sexual minority group,” Margrét shares, “and I got a clear ‘yes’ on that.”

Conservative groups talk about “slippery slopes,” but respectability politics are a slippery slope. I think that's really important to remember.

“Well, we are protected by law, but we don't necessarily *know* that we are protected by law,” Nonni interjects, comparing prejudice against BDSM to treatment of other queer groups. “We don't really face the same kind of discrimination ... There

are groups in society that are really against this, but no one's gonna beat you up for holding hands or whatever. It's different.”

Still, Nonni shares that he has seen people's BDSM orientation or lifestyle used against them in child custody negotiations and other legal matters, either by shaming the orientation during negotiations or threatening to expose a person's orientation if certain demands aren't met.

By advocating for the community at large and educating the public about what BDSM actually is – and isn't – the organisation takes the sting out of the accusations that are sometimes flung to inflict shame and social damage.

“If you're not proud and out enough to kind of step up, people are going to keep thinking ‘Yeah, so it is disgusting. If it wasn't disgusting, you wouldn't be hiding yourself. So you must be ashamed,’” Margrét explains. “So I think it's, I think it's vital that we take control of what is being

written about us ... We have to have a say and a voice – and that doesn't happen unless we step up.”

KEEPING THINGS SAFE AND CONSENSUAL

One defining feature of play parties



and informal gatherings – called “munches” in the BDSM community – in Iceland is their distinct lack of drugs and alcohol. The use of substances is actually something that surprised Katrín about the BDSM scenes in other countries in which she has played.

“When I went the first time to Torture Garden, it was my first big event and people were getting shit faced,” she recalls. “I was like, ‘whoa, is this allowed? There’s no drink limit?’ They have dungeon monitors looking out for people, but they’re not asking ‘Are you intoxicated or are you on drugs?’”

She explains that the entire experience was fine until the wee hours of the morning when the event was ending and “a lot of men were getting desperate.” It was then that she was being grabbed and picked up by men with whom she had engaged in consensual activities earlier in

the event. A dungeon master had to intervene.

“He said, ‘girl, just get out of here.’ Up until that I was just fine. I was alone most of the night. I had played some sadomasochistic games, which was fine. But the clinginess at the end of the night was too much because people were so drunk.”

“The mentality at parties [in Iceland] is if you’re going to have a drink, you’re going to do it after you play,” Nonni adds. “And if you’re only there for observing, I think it would be frowned upon if you’re drinking more than a couple.”

The drinking culture may differ at privately-hosted parties, but even in those settings intoxication isn’t the norm. “That’s mostly newbies,” Katrín adds. “Mostly new people that maybe drink too much at those private parties.”

SAFETY AND CONSENT

Whether or not substance use is happening at BDSM play parties and munches, other factors can impact the safety of participants. Namely, if someone in attendance is an abuser. Because, despite what some rampant discourse about the BDSM community projects, the acts being engaged in and the power dynamics being consensually explored are not abusive in and of themselves.

“It’s all based on consent,” Margrét explains. “Consent is the key there. Because, you know, sex without consent is rape. So, hitting a person without consent is violence. With consent, it’s just you hitting a person.”

As in every other interpersonal dynamic in the world, abusers can find ways to inflict abuse on another. This is also the case in BDSM relationships, where an abusive individual is

perverting what is meant to be a mutually consensual and fulfilling relationship into something that is solely about satisfying their own wants or needs. But abuse and BDSM are not two sides of the same coin.

“These abusers, they might very well be kinky as well,” Nonni says. “I mean, they can present themselves as part of the community. But there’s this No True Scotsman thing often going on, like if you’re into BDSM, you can’t be an abuser because they are mutually exclusive. But that’s a naive take.”

Consent occurs with communication. “I think it lies in communication and the intent of the game,” Katrín says. “I think the whole thing is non-abusive when both agree to it, and both are ready to commit to

rious or currently BDSM-closeted individuals to explore the community.

“I think it’s a very good community [in Iceland],” Nonni says. “I’m listening to podcasts and I’m reading stuff on FetLife and it seems that a lot of communities are sort of fractured, or they’re very exclusive. And I think we have a very welcoming community. I think there’s a lot of people who feel welcome. Even if they’re just kind of kink-adjacent. They just kind of feel welcome within the BDSM community.”

“I think that’s true,” Margrét adds. “I think a lot of people are drawn to the BDSM community, not because they’re so overly kinky, but because of the acceptance and inclusion.”

If you’re not proud and out enough to kind of step up, people are going to keep thinking “Yeah, so it is disgusting. If it wasn’t disgusting, you wouldn’t be hiding yourself.”

[addressing failures] if they happen. Usually, they don’t happen. But I go into the scene knowing, this could hurt me and this could happen, but I trust myself, I trust my partner. So I’m willing to take the risk. And I know he will be there for me if something happens.”

However, the presence of abusers within the scene has kept some from participating actively. One person who spoke with the Grapevine under the condition of anonymity shared that they have not participated in official parties or munches out of fear their abuser – who was also convicted – was still participating.

As Margrét explains, “people have turned to us and said ‘I don’t feel safe in those events, because my abuser is there and can something be done?’ And it depends on the host that is hosting the event, because we cannot, as a board, say ‘you cannot allow this person at your event.’ It’s a grey area even to kind of tell the host that a person is an alleged abuser.”

“But if a victim of abuse decides to press charges and if that would evolve in such a way that our testimony would be worth anything, then we would engage.”

DIVING IN

With BDSM in Iceland hosting formal workshops and get-togethers around ten times per year, there are plenty of entry points for BDSM-cu-

All three agree the best way to be involved is to attend an event and engage others in conversation. They warn, however, that it’s sometimes less sexy than people anticipate. “Why are they talking about *Star Trek* for hours?” Nonni jokes, with Margrét adding “I thought there was kink. Why are people talking about *Dr. Who* and *My Little Pony*?”

A TRIBE FOUND

Whatever misperceptions are floating around about BDSM in public discourse and popular culture and no matter if the inclusion of BDSM groups in Pride events continues to spark debate and sow division, there’s no denying that those four letters are part and parcel of the identities or lives of countless people around the world, including an estimated 4,000 in Iceland.

As Margrét concludes, “I have never experienced this kind of belonging to any group. I’ve always felt like an alien or an outsider or like I could not really let people see me. I thought if people could see how crazy I was they would run to the hills.”

“Then, getting into the BDSM community, it was instantly my tribe. I just looked around and had this connection with people that I never felt – a kind of belonging to something bigger than myself, which was huge for me; almost spiritual. It was a really big thing for me. And I think I never lost that kind of sense of solidarity with this community.” ■

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Seigla Chamber Music Festival 2023
SEIGLA CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
August 11 – 13
Harpa

It may seem like the total opposite of the Pride vibe, but anyone close to classical music knows that it's as gay as a picnic basket. So if marching through the streets to Lady Gaga isn't your bag, head to Harpa and delight yourself with the finest annual celebration of chamber music. This year's meticulously curated program focuses on storytelling through music, with folk and fairy tales, and exploring how poetry and literature influence music. Don your finest 18th century drag and feast your ears. RX



CULTURE NIGHT
August 19
all over Reykjavik

The light nights have left, the blue nights are dwindling and soon the darkness shall fall. But first, we party! The annual Culture Night ("Menningarnótt") is actually a whole day and night of fun and festivities all over the city, including open programs in many museums, bouncy castles and games for kids, free outdoor shows, public art and waffles. Oh, so many waffles! You can do a waffle tour of the city! It all ends with a bang, a kickass (albeit slightly gauche) fireworks show. It might mean the summer's over, but the party's just begun. RX



Culture

Behind The Masks

The exhibition GRÍMUR uncovers queer history

WORDS Rex Beckett
IMAGE Supplied by The Nordic House

House showing the fervent jubilation of their friends and community. When the exhibition opened, management of the institution recoiled at their images of unabashed queer exuberance, telling the artists to remove the "distasteful" works from the show. Kjetil and Gøran, both in their early 20s at the time, told them to get fucked, packed their show and left. The exhibition was up for just two days.

Forty years later – also the 40th anniversary of the scientific isolation of HIV – the show rises again at the Nordic House.

"In 2019, I curated an exhibition at the City Center Library about art in relation to Samtökin '78," says Ynda Eldborg, curator of the exhibition now called GRÍMUR ("Masks"). "I was going through the Reykjavik municipal archives and that's when I came across this exhibition. I had never heard of it. I was speechless"

She describes the revelation as "an absolute Nirvana moment." She contacted the artists, asking them to take part in the 2019 exhibition, and they gladly obliged.

"I was a bit pissed off but I was not really angry," she says about learning how the exhibition was shut down. "I saw it as a victory, as a contribution to queer history. I thought, 'I'm just gonna grab this concept and move forward,' rather than wasting time on being angry."

Ynda's mission to bring queer art to the forefront in Iceland has been a long and fraught journey, much like the ongoing fight for queer rights. After living in the UK for 15 years and completing a PhD in art history, she returned to Iceland in 2014 and began trying to curate exhibitions in all the major art institutions.

"I introduced programs to all the museums," she says. "I either got a 'No' or they would say 'There's a board meeting next week and we will decide then,' and then nothing happened. So I just gave up."

Rather, she forged ahead on her own path, determined to fulfil her mission. In 2022, the Living Art Museum (Nýló) opened their doors to her and co-curator Viktoría Guðnadóttir to put up their show *On Display: Queer Above Others*.

From there, the ball started rolling and she struck a deal with Kjetil and Gøran that when finished with the exhibition at Nýló, they would be her next show. She contacted the Nordic House's director, Sabina Westermöller last autumn, who welcomed her with open arms. The exhibition opened August 10, in the prime of RVK Pride week, and runs until the end of September.

"This exhibition is also a dialogue with the '80s, but it also is a dialogue to what is happening here today in terms of trans people, particularly transwomen," she says, emphasising the importance of the exhibition's timing. "They are facing the same hate as gay men in the '80s. It feels like we keep on repeating."

"We're trying to create an intimate space or conversation between the viewer and the pictures," she says, walking through the exhibition of A4 sized portraits full of intimacy, attitude and sensuality. "This is such an important part of the queer art history of Iceland. You see the joy. Friends just fooling around and having a good time."

The show is a profoundly poignant celebration of resilience, solidarity and survival. Both gay as in happy and queer as in fuck you. ■

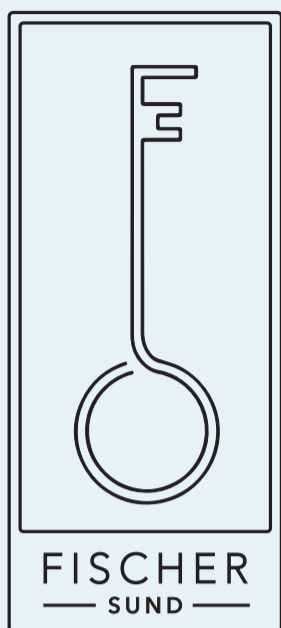


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Inger Blix Kvammen / Ingrid Larssen / Solveig Ovanger
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When the '80s rolled in, the queer community could never have predicted that over the next decade, the HIV/AIDS epidemic would tear through and decimate their population. As the death toll rose – largely ignored powers-that-be – it was joy, beauty and love that held the community together.

In 1983, queer Norwegian visual artists Kjetil Berge and Gøran Ohldieck arrived in Iceland to display a photography exhibition at the Nordic



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Film Feature

Doubling The Thrills

With two films on the horizon, director Erlingur Óttar Thoroddsen is set to make a splash in cinemas

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGES Art Bicnick & Supplied Film Stills

During my research prior to the interview, I was slightly confused about the genre of Erlingur Óttar Thoroddsen's upcoming film. Is it a crime drama? Is it horror? It wasn't until later that I found out about Erlingur's plan to release not just one, but two movies this autumn. Although the primary focus of our ensuing conversation was the film with the earlier premiere date, I can assure you that there's more to anticipate.

A self-proclaimed "movie kid" with a profound passion for horror films, Erlingur confesses.

"I grew up watching a lot of movies. Instead of playing sports, I was inside watching TV." In his teenage years, he would make short movies with his VHS camera. "As I got older, it became more serious. At a certain point, I realised that maybe there's a career here." A decade later, Erlingur, now an alumnus of Columbia University, has written and directed a number of short movies, as well as features such as *Child Eater* and *Rift (Rökkur)*. Autumn 2023 will be particularly busy for Erlingur as he

shot back in 2021, post-production delays have seen its release date slide. "It's a coincidence that *Kuldi* started filming the year after *The Piper*, but they're coming out at the same time," he says. "I thought *The Piper* would probably come out last year."

Even though we met to talk about *Kuldi*, I'm curious to hear about *The Piper*. "It's my version of a mainstream horror movie," Erlingur explains. "It's basically an American movie even though it wasn't shot in America, and most of the actors are from the UK, but it's set in America."

There's not a lot of horror either in books or movies in Iceland. Being a horror kid, I'm always very excited when anybody dips their toes into that.

prepares to premiere his next two features.

THE DOUBLE FEATURE CREATURE

How come two of Erlingur's films - *Kuldi (Cold)* and *The Piper* - are coming out one after another, with *Kuldi* premiering on September 1 and *The Piper* slated for a bit later in the autumn?

"The weird thing about COVID was that from 2020 until now, it's been the busiest time in my career," Erlingur admits. While *The Piper* was

The storyline revolves around a flautist working for a symphony orchestra who accepts an opportunity to complete her late mentor's concerto. "In the process of writing the third part of this concerto, she starts to realise that there's something inside the melody itself that is dangerous," says Erlingur.

HAUNTING LAYERS

Circling back to *Kuldi*, Erlingur explains it's based on an eponymous crime novel by Yrsa Sigurdardóttir (published in English as *The Undesired*). "I wouldn't call it a crime

SPOOKY PASSIONS

I meet Erlingur on an unusually sunny day in Reykjavik - the neighborhood coffee shop is bustling with tourists, so we take a walk to the nearby sculpture park. Erlingur has spent the past decade splitting his time between the USA and Iceland, but during COVID, he made the not-so-unusual decision - at least among Icelandic filmmakers - to return home.



drama," he elaborates. "It's more of a psychological thriller with some horror elements."

Kuldi was one of Yrsa's initial forays into incorporating horror elements in her books. "Unfortunately, there's not a lot of horror either in books or movies in Iceland," says Erlingur. "Being a horror kid, I'm always very excited when anybody dips their toes into that." He admits he was thrilled when approached to work on the film.

"The book is really good – it's very twisty and turny with a lot of fun surprises. Once I finished reading it, I was like, 'I would love to make this into a movie.' Like a lot of Yrsa's stories, *Kuldi* has two narratives that kind of come together," Erlingur explains. There's a modern-day part that centres around a man named Óðinn, who is investigating deaths that occurred decades ago in a home for juvenile delinquents. "He's also dealing with the aftermath of his ex-wife's suicide, and his teenage daughter, who used to live with his wife, now lives with him," he continues. "He's trying to deal with all this new pressure in his life."

The second part unveils what actually happened at the institution through the eyes of a young maid. "She feels she's always being watched, and she feels like maybe the place is haunted," he says.

Even though the story is fictional, "it kind of touches on things that definitely did happen," admits Erlingur. "Iceland and a lot of other countries have these bad histories with juvenile homes where, decades

later, people come forward and talk about all the abuse and violence that happened to them as kids. This home in the movie and in the book is fictional, but it's definitely inspired by those things," he says.

STORYTELLING INTEGRITY

The film is a collaborative effort between Iceland and Belgium, boasting a predominantly Belgian camera crew but an entirely Icelandic cast, including notable names such as Jóhannes Haukur Jóhannesson, Sara Dögg Ásgeirsdóttir and Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir.

Erlingur draws a parallel between the novel and a labyrinth, characterising it as a multifaceted tale with numerous characters. "When you take a novel like that, you always have to cut something out; other-

"I tried my best to write and visualise the film, in the same way that I felt when I read the book," Erlingur says. "Obviously, the book is the blueprint, but as any director, or writer, I'm influenced by a number of things. You always want to bring something of you into the film," he reflects on his motivation for taking on *Kuldi*, "It deals with the themes of people versus the system, people versus these institutions like the juvenile homes. And then the other thing that I'm always drawn to is how reliable is the narrator? Do we believe that what they're seeing is true?"

The director assures that captivating plot twists are in store for both devoted book readers and avid film lovers. "Hopefully, people who are fans of the book can watch the film and still be surprised because there are some changes. And the other

Condensing everything in a way that still makes sense and felt true to the book was probably the biggest challenge.

wise it's going to be a 10-hour movie," he says. "Condensing everything in a way that still makes sense and felt true to the book was probably the biggest challenge." Another, according to Erlingur, was shooting the film in two periods, summer and winter. "In the end, that was great. I really liked doing it that way. There were a lot of headaches logistics-wise, but the shooting, pre-production, and filming went smooth."

way around, if people like the movie and want to check out the book, I think they'll still find the book very engaging. The twists will still be surprising because some of them in the book are not quite the same as we have them in the film," Erlingur concludes. ■

Kuldi premieres September 1 in all major cinemas in Iceland. Keep an eye out for the release announcement of *The Piper*.

Smiðjustigur 10 / Klapparstigur 16, 101 Reykjavík
Artists Björn Roth, Dodda Maggý, Finnbogi Pétursson, Haraldur Jónsson, Hulda Stefánsdóttir, John Zurier, Katrín Elvarsdóttir, Kees Visser, Monika Grzymala, Páll Haukur Björnsson, Rintaro Hara, Rósa Gísladóttir, Sigurður Guðjónsson, Steina, Woody Vasulka, Þórdís Erla Zoëga
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Pablo Jansana
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August 18– September 30

Menningarnótt / Culture Night 19th of August

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Mini-auction · Artists at work · Raffle

Lína Rut exhibition · Instagram Streetdrop

Scavenger hunt for children · Music

Open from 12 to 7 pm

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Culture Galore

Happy Birthday, Reykjavík!

The annual Culture Night celebration is ready to party

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGES Roman Gerasymenko, culturenight.is

becomes one massive stage for its annual Menningarnótt festival.

Culture Night in English, the festival is a huge city-wide one-day celebration of Reykjavík life and culture. In fact, it's held to mark Reykjavík's birthday. You see, it was a glorious summer day in 1786 that is considered the date the city was formally founded. Sorry, Ingólfur Arnarson, your arrival in 874 pales in comparison to the Danish king granting Reykjavík a trading charter.

So on Saturday, August 19, Reykjavík will celebrate its 237th birthday – we don't think it looks a year over 220 – and the party will be as big and bombastic as ever.

"Menningarnótt is a celebration of Reykjavík," says Guðmundur Birgir Halldórsson, a project manager of events with the City of Reykjavík. "We celebrate the birthday the first

Saturday after the 18th – or on the 18th if that's the case – and we do it with this participatory festival. So we try to invite city inhabitants and other guests to put on their own shows or events and we try to help them do that."

"So, basically the stage is the city centre and people apply to get a little part of the city to put on their event."

BIG TIME PARTICIPATION

While Landsbankinn furnishes grants for roughly 20 inhabitant-run events each year, public interest in contributing to the party atmosphere around the city on Menningarnótt is such that Guðmundur and his team are continuously updating the online agenda almost right up until the morning of the festival, as submissions for more and more self-funded happenings land in their

inboxes.

"We are very open to applications," says Guðmundur. "We try to not have it too commercial. We think culture should reflect the inhabitants of Reykjavík. So, we aim for diversity and an expression of culture in many senses."

"Sometimes it's just somebody who has just started playing the violin and wants to show it off and then also it could be an artist who's been at it for many years," he continues.

And that mishmash of production values and cultural expressions on display is just what makes Menningarnótt such a special day for the city centre. Whether you check the event schedule and plan your day meticulously down to the minute to hit all the most interesting happenings or you simply go for a wander and stumble across something

charming or crazy or hilarious, you're sure to have a good time.

PLUS, WAFFLES

And then there's the waffles. The humble waffle, with its heart-shaped segments, is the unofficial symbol of Menningarnótt, with households lugging their dining tables into their front yards, tethered to their homes with extension cords to run their waffle makers and feed hungry passersby.

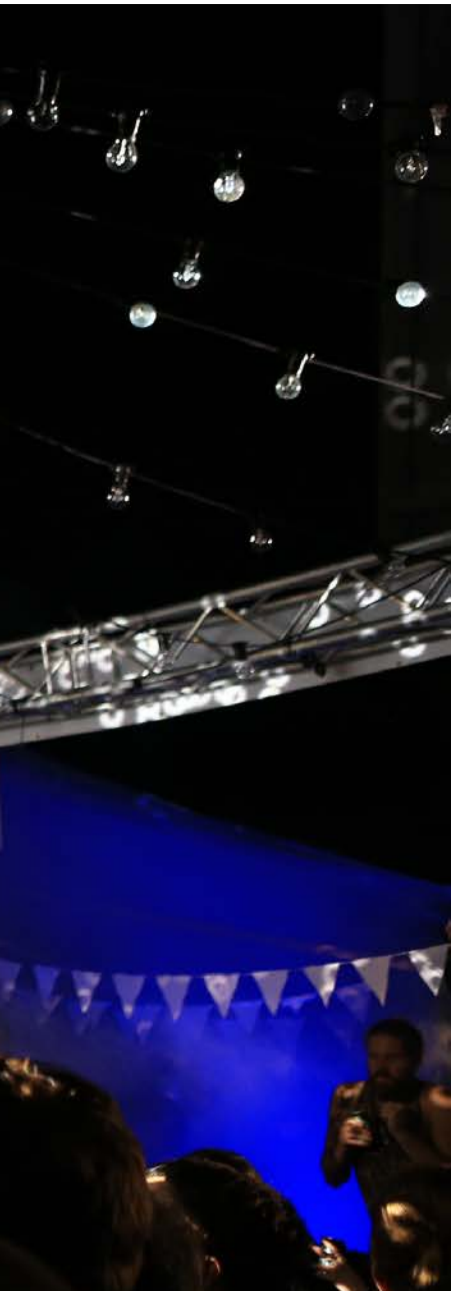
It's a real treat, and Guðmundur estimates tens of thousands of waffles – with jam and whipped cream, of course – are devoured each year to mark the city's birthday.

"I think it started way back when the festival started in maybe 1996," Guðmundur says when asked about how waffles became so synonymous with Menningarnótt. "The

August is a wild month in Reykjavík. Unlike the rest of the world, August is when Iceland revels in all the rainbow-hued glory of queer celebration and love in its annual week-long Pride celebration. But the fun doesn't end there. Oh no! Because just one week after the Pride Parade, when Reykjavík is still finding confetti in every crack and crevice, the city

For Those Who Couldn't Cross the Sea

10.06. – 03.09. 2023



people planning the festival thought of it being an Icelandic tradition to invite guests in for coffee or cake or waffles. So it grew into this idea of the people of downtown inviting guests into their houses for coffee and waffles.”

NOT ENOUGH TIME

As for what Guðmundur is most looking forward to at this year's Menningarnótt celebration, there seem to be too many things to list.

He drops that DJ Margeir's annual party on Klapparstígur is going to be bigger and more fabulous than ever, the phenomenal Coney Iceland Circus will take over Iðno, and Grapevine favourite underground event space R6013 will come out of the basement to occupy Ingólfsstræti for live performances. The entire event will be topped off by a massive fireworks display from the harbour – but we can attest it'll be visible from almost everywhere in the city centre.

“This would be a perfect Groundhog Day,” Guðmundur says with a laugh. “To be able to do it again and again to see all the stuff you missed. I try to make a list, but sometimes it's also just fun to just walk somewhere and be surprised. It always happens that I see performances that weren't even on the schedule, like somebody just showing up with a saxophone.”

Find the full schedule for Menningarnótt – check back often for updates – at Culturenight.is

THE GRAPEVINE'S MUST SEE MENNINGARNÓTT HAPPENINGS

While we're very much on the side of wandering around and just experiencing the vibrancy of Reykjavik on

Menningarnótt, there are a number of already published happenings that we're going to try our damndest not to miss on August 19.

Baktus and the Ghost Cat Scavenger Hunt (10:00 - 22:00 on Aðalstræti): It seems downtown celebrity cat Baktus has been encountering a ghost cat. This scavenger hunt lets you search for the spooky kitty on Aðalstræti while getting to know the history of the city.

What we do in the shadows (11:59 - 20:00 at Hverfisgata 50): An exhibition of neon paintings – they glow under black light! – from Jóna Dögg and Bíu. DJs get the party started at 16:00.

So, basically the stage is the city centre and people apply to get a little part of the city to put on their event.

GRAB the SUN (12:00 - 16:00 at Grandagarður 2): The mobile print studio “Brumm Brumm” invites guests for a live screenprinting performance and an exhibition “GRAB the SUN” in an old camper. Guests can follow the process of silk-screen printing and see how it is done. The exhibition will bring guests sunlight to enjoy the late summer atmosphere.

Songs for Children with Ólöf Arnalds (13:00 - 15:00 at Mengi): Mengi and singer-songwriter Ólöf Arnalds host a special song event for children. The idea is for children and parents to sing along with Ólöf to beloved songs that the children know. If your child has an idea for songs to play in the event you can write an email to gummi@mengi.net.

Óli's vinyl record market (13:00 - 19:00 at Þórsgata 21): Óli is selling his extensive record collection – one of the largest in the country – of more than 40.000 vinyls. Everything must go!

Ceramics, textiles and ravens (14:00 - 20:00 at Stikar, Vatnsstigur 3): three female artists open their studio and workshop to passersby.

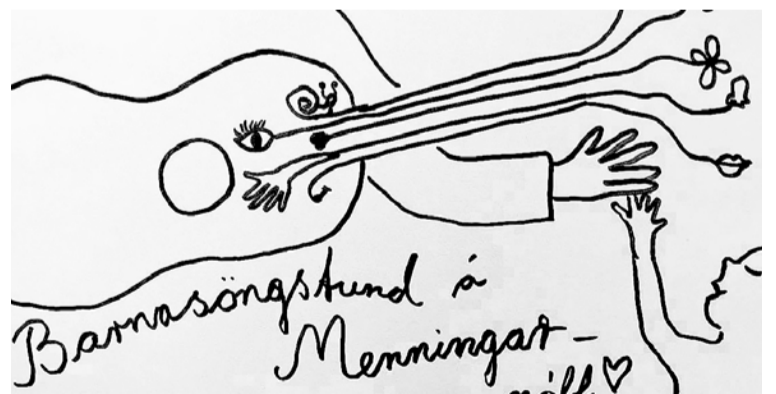
Step into the role of a Water Carrier on Culture Night (14:00 - 15:00 at Aðalstræti 10): Water carriers in Reykjavik fetched water from wells like Ingólfsbrunnur in Aðalstræti and delivered it to people's homes. They also shared news and stories while at the wells and played an essential

role in the town's functioning. Try your hand at water carrying!

Open Garden (15:00 - 17 at Bergstaðastræti 27): DJ Truecutz and Tíbrá invite you to their garden. Drinks available from Lady Flórens food truck and vintage shop.

Improv-a-thon (15:00 - 22:30 at Hverfisgata 19): Improv Iceland kickstarts their fall season with the yearly Improv-a-thon in The Nationals Theatre Theatre Cellar Club. Nothing is decided in advance, anything and everything can happen and every show is both the premiere and finale.

Dance explosion in Hallargarður (15:00 - 17:00 at Frikirkjuvegur 11): Come dance in a garden! ■



Centre Map

We're here to fill you in on our personal favourite places around town – and a few to consider avoiding.

Dining

1 NAPOLI
Tryggvagata 24
We love places that do one thing and do them damn well. This takeaway place is a case in point. Napoli offers sourdough Neapolitan-style pizzas with a menu to match – think margherita, quattro formaggi, parma, calzone – plus vegan options and magnificent sandwiches. Look out for their lunch offer, every day from 11:30 to 15:00. JT

2 GAETA GELATO
Aðalstræti 6 & Hlemmur Mathöll
Gaeta Gelato is at the centre of a heated ongoing debate at the Grapevine office about who makes the best ice cream in the country. For those keen on the deep tastiness of Italian gelato, this place is IT. They are also located right smack downtown, so you can take that icecream for a stroll – we suggest a stroll to their other location for another scoop. JT

3 PLANTAN
Njálsgata 64
This cute little neighborhood cafe is 100% vegan and does a few things right: their soup of the day menu updates every week and uses seasonal produce, they mastered the plant-based cheese bun recipe to perfection, and this might be the most hearty vegan brunches in town. Look out for the daily bun and coffee deal, it truly is like a warm hug. IZ

5 CAFÉ BABALÚ
Skólavörðustígur 22
This quirky café hangout is a great choice when you're looking for a cozy, chill experience. Decked with kitschy decor and plush chairs, the café is perfect for a refuge from an instant shower of rain. If you're looking to snuggle up with a book and a good cup of coffee, look no further. JB

6 BAN THAI
Laugavegur 130
The absolute GOAT – as they say – in Thai cuisine in Reykjavik. Ban Thai's menu is dotted with little symbols of chili, denoting the spice level of each course. You're welcome to order a level-5 chili course, but do so at your own risk. JB

7 GRÁI KÖTTURINN
Hverfisgata 16a
This no-nonsense downtown staple has been serving Reykjavik dwellers quality breakfast food since 1997. Tucked away in a cute cellar, the diner boasts retro Icelandic design charm, while its menu is far from outdated. Pancakes, bagels and frying oil all have their special place at Grái Kötturinn. As Grái Kötturinn closes at 14:30 every day, it's not a place for nighthawks, but early-birds. JB

8 CHICKPEA
Hallveigarstígur 1
This Mediterranean-inspired restaurant is a great place for a quick bite. Servings are generous and the

food nutritious, meaning you'll go full well into the day. They do wraps, falafels, and all kinds of salads exceptionally well. Prices aren't extremely steep, but nothing to write home about either. JB

9 KRÓNAN
Hallveigarstígur 1 & more locations
If you're ever in a pinch while looking for something cheap to eat if you're downtown just go to Krónan and pick out some flatkökur. Flatkökur goes great with everything. Be it the Mediterranean/Icelandic fusion of lathering some with hummus, or turn it into a poor-man's pizza with pizza sauce and cheese. Honestly, the flatkaka is an empty canvas for you to paint your wildest dreams on. JB

10 JÓMFRÚIN
Lækjargata 4, 101 Reykjavik
Icelanders may have a love-hate relationship with the Danes, but let's be honest, who can resist craving a delicious smørrebrød every now and then? If you get what we are talking about, there's no better place in town for an authentic Danish smørrebrød than Jómfrúin. This family-run restaurant specializes in serving Danish and Scandinavian dishes, and to top it off, it boasts a fantastic outdoor terrace where you can relax, sip a beer and complain about politics overlooking the Icelandic parliament. IZ

Drinking

11 APERÓ VÍNBAR
Laugavegur 20b
A wine bar that is both opulent and accessible? Yes please. The small team at Aperó remember the orders of regulars and make first-timers feel like regulars. If you know what you like, Aperó will tick your boxes; and if you're new to wine, the sommelier will soon unite you with your ideal glass. CF

12 KEX HOSTEL
Skúlagata 28
The former biscuit factory now serves as a trendy hostel, with a bar, restaurant and a live concert space. There's always something going on, and if not, it's a great spot to grab those after-work drinks. With a rotation of foreign tourists who stumble onto a heavy metal show happening in the restaurant, you're always bound for an enjoyable experience. JB

13 KAFFIBARINN
Bergstaðastræti 1
No words are needed for Kaffibarinn. The hangout spot for the who's who of Reykjavik. Frequented by Blur members in the 90s, drug dealers, and middle-managers, Kaffibarinn is an establishment in itself. JB

14 VITABAR
Bergþórugata 21, Iceland
If you're staying in Reykjavik more than a few days, you ought to find your own dive bar – this is ours. It seems like the time froze at Vitabar,

but we love it that way. People come for their famous blue cheese burger, but stay for a few pints and delicious fries. Sometimes I wish Vitabar discovered craft beer, but I go back nevertheless – for a late night bite and Thule on draft. IZ

15 VÍNSTÚKAN TÍU SOPAR
Laugavegur 27
There are a few bars in Reykjavik that have learned how to do wine right, and Vínstúkan Tíu sopar, although located in the middle of the chaos and tourist buzz of Laugavegur, is one of them. Craving Pét-nat? In the mood for orange wine? Ready to explore small Slovenian wineries? You name it – the bar's staff will be ready to come up with suggestions that will suit any pocket. Don't get me started on their small bites to pair with wine – I'm already dreaming about their grilled peppers and torched broccoli with salted lemon. IZ

Shopping & Activities

16 BÍÓ PARADÍS
Hverfisgata 54
Sometimes the smell of popcorn fills the air of Hverfisgata, as if beckoning you to come inside. You succumb and find yourself in the cutest art house cinema with colourful posters on the walls and vintage-looking bar straight outta Wes Anderson movie. There's always a film screening and you rarely need to book tickets in advance, so enjoy the old school walk-in experience and one of the best Happy Hours in town. IZ

Random Spots

17 EINARSGARÐUR
Laufásvegur 79
This little green space nestled into the curving juncture of Laufásvegur and Gamla Hringbraut is an oasis in the city. Exposed to full sun seemingly all the time, it's a peaceful spot to stroll through, climb trees, luxuriate on the grass or toss the ball for your four-legged friend. Don't do that last thing, though. It's not allowed. CF

Be Warned

18 101 BISTRO
Austurstræti 3
The bistro on the corner of Ingólfs-torg and Austurstræti that has a plaque outside saying, "Come in and try the worst [insert popular food item] that one guy on Tripadvisor said we had", or something like that. It's a trap, do not go there. That plaque has been in the same spot ever since Hrunið. RG

19 SBARRO
Austurstræti 17 & Vatnsmýrarvegur 10
"What is this shit?" is how Greil Marcus famously opened his review of Bob Dylan's 1970 album in Rolling Stone. It is appropriate here. It



looks like pizza, it is sold as pizza, it's priced like foie gras, but it tastes like salted shit. Avoid. RG

20 REYKJAVÍK FISH RESTAURANT
Tryggvagata 8
Our beef with this place has to do with their "plokari" (Traditional Icelandic Fish Stew). The fish stew is what you make out of fish leftovers and potatoes, adding bechamel sauce, topped with cheese and then baked. It's generally a good dish, a great way to avoid wasting food and it costs next to nothing to make. Taste wise, there is nothing wrong with how Reykjavik Fish makes their "plokari", the problem is that the volume you get for the price is unacceptable; a tiny cast iron pan of fish stew for 2.690 ISK. An outrage. RG

21 LEBOWSKI BAR
Laugavegur 20a
A joke that's gone too far. The longest lasting theme bar that sprung up during a theme-bar craze many years ago. The Dude does not abide. RG ■



Spot This La Barceloneta★

Templarasund 3

There's nothing quite like a really good family meal, where everyone is laughing and gossiping and roasting each other, all while tucking into some nice wine and delicious food. That's the vibe that paella and tapas aficionados La Barceloneta bring to their recently opened downtown home. Started as a catering service in 2021 by two families and a Spanish masterchef, their success bringing the old Spanish seaside "Chiringuitos" culture called for a brick and mortar home. Bring your family – blood or chosen – and have a fabulous feast!

Opening hours:
Wednesday to Sunday 17:00 - 22:00



Art Exhibitions

11.08–24.08

Gallery openings, happenings, showings and pop-up exhibitions all around the capital region

Opening

ÁSMUNDARSALUR

Julie Lænkholm – Andvakandi
Ongoing artwork measuring 144 square metres and consisting of Icelandic herbs, all of which can be found in the Icelandic highlands. The finished piece will be permanent.

Opens August 18
Ongoing, permanent

BERG CONTEMPORARY

Pablo Jansana – From One Day to the Next
Works by Chilean multidisciplinary artist Pablo Jansana (b. 1976). This is Pablo's first solo exhibition in Iceland. He uses eclectic materials in his art including resin, aluminium, wood and clay.

Opens August 18
Runs until September 30

HAFNARHÚS (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)

D49 Helena Margrét Jónsdóttir
Helena Margrét Jónsdóttir (b.1996) is a visual artist based in Reykjavík. Her medium of choice is painting, through which she interprets mundane and everyday consumerism.

Opens August 24
Runs until October 22

KJARVALSSTAÐIR (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)

Our Art
Group exhibition of works from the Kjarvalsstaðir archive selected by the public in an online vote.

Opens August 19
Runs until October 10

KORPÚLFSSTAÐIR ART STUDIOS

Interplay
Group exhibition of sculptors on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of sculptor Ragnar Kjartansson (1923-1988).

Opens August 12
Runs until August 26

LITLA GALLERY

Kristbergur Ó. Petursson & Oddrún Pétursdóttir – The Garden & Time
Exhibition of paintings by sibling artists, honouring their paternal grandmother and her home, known in her community as "the little fairy shop."

Opens August 17
Runs until August 27

PORTFOLIO GALLERY

Ýmir Grönvold – It's My Life
Works created over the past two years, giving hints and provide an insight into Ýmir's own existence.

Opens August 12
Runs until September 3

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Julia Hechtman – Not Once
A series of short video portraits showing personal stories of local Icelanders, about specific locations and a sense of place.

Opens August 19
Runs until October 22

Ongoing

ÁSMUNDARSAFN (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)

Mentor: Ásmundur Sveinsson and Carl Milles
Sculpture.

Runs until September 9

CAFÉ PYSJA

Skúlpúrveizla
Group exhibition by the Sculptors Association
Runs until September 3

GALLERY FOLD

Ásta Sigurðardóttir – Dúkrístur
Lino cut works
Runs until August 31

GALLERÍ GÖNG

Litka – SUMAR
Paintings, group exhibition
Runs until August 29

GALLERY GRÁSTEINN

Karin Lykke – Vulnerable Nature
Watercolour paintings
Runs until August 15

GALLERÍ GRÓTTA

Björg Eiríksdóttir – FJÖLRÖDDUN
Paintings, drawings, video, and textile works
Runs until August 18

GALLERY SKILTI

Lukas Bury – Zigaretten nach Berlin
Installation
Runs until December 15

GERÐARSAFN (KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM)

Rósa Gísladóttir – FORA
Sculpture
Runs until September 17

GERÐUR

Sculpture works of Gerður Helgadóttir from the museum's collection.
Runs until December 31

GERÐUBERG CULTURE HOUSE

Art Without Borders – All Roads Open
Multidisciplinary group exhibition
Runs until August 31

GLERHÚSIÐ REYKJAVÍK

Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir – From Heart to Stone – Circle of Sight
Ink drawings, sculptures, sound installations; open on Sundays only
Runs until September 17

HAFNARBORG CENTER OF CULTURE AND FINE ART

Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson – On a Sea of Tranquillity
Textile works
Runs until September 3

Elisabet Brynhildardóttir – Hesitant Line
Drawings
Runs until September 3

HAFNARHÚS (REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)

D48: Dýrfinna Benita Basalan – Chronic Pain
Mixed media
Runs until August 20

Kaleidoscope: Icelandic 21st Century Art
Multidisciplinary group exhibition
Runs until December 31

Erró – Cunning Scissors
Works spanning the entirety of Erró's vibrant art career
Runs until December 31

Collection Creatures
Digital & 3D artworks
Runs until January 2024

HÖFUÐSTÖÐIN

Saturday Workshop
Open art workshops every Saturday during the summer
Final workshop August 26

Shoplifter / Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir – Chromo Sapiens
Installation, colourful whole body experience
Permanent exhibition

I8 GALLERY

Karin Sander – Idioscapes
Installation, 3D landscape maquettes
Runs until September 2

I8 GRANDI

B. Ingrid Olson – Cast of Mind
Installation, mixed media
Runs until December 20

ICELANDIC PRINTMAKERS ASSOCIATION

Hjörtur Matthías Skúlason – Storm
Textile sculptures
Runs until August 15

LISTHÚS ÓFEIGS

Hafú – Wild Grass
Paintings
Runs until August 23

MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND APPLIED ARTS

Ýrurari – Presence
Textile works, installation
Runs until August 27

Nina Gautadóttir – Weaver in Residency
Textile works
Runs until August 27

Habitations

An exhibition of miniature apartments created by 4th graders from Garðabær
Runs until September 10th

At Home in the Design Museum
Over 200 examples of Icelandic design from 1900 to the present
Runs until March 2026

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND

Sigtryggur Bjarni Baldvinsson – Into the Valley in Late Autumn
Watercolour paintings
Runs until August 27

Rúf – Glassrain
Installation
Runs until September 17

The Thought of Drawing
Drawings by Jóhannes S. Kjarval
Runs until October 1

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND

Rúnar Gunnarsson – An eternity in a moment
Photography
Runs until September 9

NORDIC HOUSE

For Those Who Couldn't Cross the Sea
Multidisciplinary group exhibition
Runs until September 3

GRÍMUR: A Censored Exhibition
Photography, slide show
Runs until September 30

SUMMER STUDIO: a creative space for families
Interactive open arts workshop
Runs until September 30

PHENOMENON GALLERY
Greta Vazhko – Forgotten Feelings
Multimedia installation
Runs until August 13

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Giita Hammond – View From The Sea
Photography and video work
Runs until August 13

And Now In Full Colour!
Colour photo from Iceland 1950-1970
Runs until September 10

THE SCULPTURE ASSOCIATION GARDEN

Brynhildur Þorgeirsdóttir – Jarðrask / Earth Disturbance
Sculpture
Runs until September 2

SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON MUSEUM

The Gift of Children
Portraits and reliefs
Runs until Autumn 2023

From Various Sources
Sculpture
Runs until Autumn 2023

Y GALLERY

Emma Heiðarsdóttir – Open Endings
Installation, mixed media
Runs until August 31

Art Picks



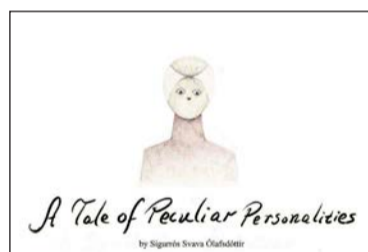
Eva Isleifs – The Earth Is My Bed
Opens August 12
Kling & Bang

The term pareidolia is a phenomenon in which someone perceives meaningful images out of random patterns or shapes. Like how the front of cars all have faces. Everyone sees that right? Visual artist Eva Isleifs experiences this particularly with clouds, applying her perceptive peculiarity to explore the paradigmatic warning signs in our current environment. Using a vast array of scattered superimposed objects, the show is a discourse around the fraught planet that we idly sit on. RX



Patty Spyraokos – Desert Island
Opens August 12
Gallery Port

What do the Chicago Imagists, the Icelandic landscape, 80s déco, and a Magnetic Fields song all have in common? They have Reykjavík-based American artist Patty Spyraokos, that's what. In her new exhibition, the multimedia sculptor and painter blends these elements together along with the concepts of isolation of many kinds, obsessively holding onto things and using leftovers of past pieces to create new works. This highly eclectic and enigmatic mix has us highly intrigued – and so too should you be. RX



Sigurrós Svava Ólafsdóttir – A Tale of Peculiar Personalities
Opens August 17
Núllið

A tale with no beginning nor end, a story with blank spots where others leave their imprint – this is much like the story of life itself. This vast existential pondering is the very concept of Sigurrós Svava's work-in-progress graphic novel, which she will preview in her new exhibition. Currently raising publication costs with the Karolina Fund, the show will allow viewers of all ages to see how they can immerse themselves in the world she's built, and make it their own too. RX

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If you're putting something on for the general public, send us a line to: events@grapevine.is

Friday August 11

Fógetarnir, Diamond Dolls & Kisimja
21:00 Dillon Whiskey Bar

Pride Karaoke
20:00 Gaukurinn

Seigla Festival
20:00 Harpa – Eldborg

Pearls of Icelandic Song
12:00 Harpa – Kaldalón

Snorri Helgason
18:00 Havarí

Young Queer Voices
17:00 ÍDNÓ

Mighty Bear
21:00 ÍDNÓ

DJ Óli Dóri
23:00 Kaffibarinn

Boy
21:00 Kex Hostel

Lewis Capaldi
18:00 Laugardalshöll

Teitur Magnússon
21:00 Le Kock

Loft Karaoke
20:30 Loft Hostel

MERCHBABE x Sleepofer
17:00 Street Rats Tattoo

Saturday August 12

Clothes Market Garden Party
13:00 12 Tónar

SLEIKUR 3.0
22:00 Bíó Paradís

Páll Óskar Pride Ball
22:00 Gamla Bíó

Pride Party Blowout
20:00 Gaukurinn

Organ Summer Concert
12:00 Hallgrímskirkja

Seigla Festival
13:00 Harpa – Eldborg

RVK Pride Closing Concert
15:00 Hljómskálagarðurinn

DJ Margeir
23:00 Kaffibarinn

KGB
20:00 Kex Hostel

DJ Karítas
17:00 Telebar

TRAP Performance & Reading
12:00 Tjarnarbíó

Sunday August 13

BDSM Party
20:00 Gaukurinn

Organ Summer Concert

17:00 Hallgrímskirkja
Seigla Festival
14:30 Harpa – Eldborg
Lamp Vader
22:00 Kaffibarinn
Like A Virgin! Open Drag Stage
20:00 Kiki Queer Bar

Monday August 14

Pearls of Icelandic Song
12:00 Harpa – Kaldalón

DJ Árni E
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Tuesday August 15

Karaoke Night
20:00 Gaukurinn

Pearls of Icelandic Song
12:00 Harpa – Kaldalón

DJ Ómar E
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Mozart Flute Quartets
20:30 Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Wednesday August 16

StripLab Drawing
20:00 Gaukurinn

Pearls of Icelandic Song
12:00 Harpa – Kaldalón

Ballantines Vinyl Wednesday: King Lucky & Uncle Sam
22:00 Kaffibarinn

The Múlinn Quintet
20:00 Múlinn Jazz Club

Thursday August 17

Ring of Gyges & Proximity
20:00 Gaukurinn

Pearls of Icelandic Song
12:00 Harpa – Kaldalón

Icelandic Tango Music
20:00 Harpa – Norðurljós

DJ Día
22:00 Kaffibarinn

DJ Lilja
20:00 Kex Hostel

Þordís Petra & Band
20:00 Ölver Sportbar

HASAR & Ungi Besti
20:00 Röntgen

Friday August 18

Karaoke Party
20:00 Gaukurinn

Pearls of Icelandic Song
12:00 Harpa – Kaldalón

Jónbjörn & Viktor Birgiss (Lagaffe Tales)
23:00 Kaffibarinn

DJ Óli Dóri
20:00 Kex Hostel

Arto Lindsay & Anne Carson

19:30 Mengi

Saturday August 19

Culture Night Open House
13:00 Harpa

Ólöf Arnalds
16:00 Hotel Holt

KEX Culture Night In The Port
15:00 Kex Hostel

Geisha Cartel & ClubDub
23:00 Kex Hostel

MOMENT: DJ Margeir & Friends
14:00 Klapparstígur

Arto Lindsay & Anne Carson
19:30 Mengi

Harmony – Dance Performance
17:00 Tjarnarbíó

Sunday August 20

Morjane (FR)
20:00 Gaukurinn

Organ Summer Concert
17:00 Hallgrímskirkja

DJ André
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Monday August 21

Comedy Night
20:00 Gaukurinn

Pearls of Icelandic Song
12:00 Harpa – Kaldalón

Silja Glömmi
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Tuesday August 22

Karaoke Night
20:00 Gaukurinn

Pearls of Icelandic Song
12:00 Harpa – Kaldalón

Fu Kaisha
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Wednesday August 23

Reykjavík Jazz Festival
19:00 Harpa – Norðurljós

Pearls of Icelandic Song
12:00 Harpa – Kaldalón

Ballantines Vinyl Wednesday: Terrordisco
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Thursday August 24

Geðbrigði, BKPM & Slacker Essentials
20:00 Gaukurinn

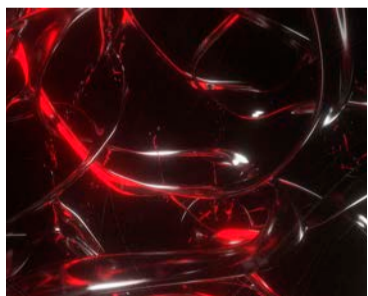
Reykjavík Jazz Festival
19:00 Harpa – Norðurljós

DJ Hendrik
22:00 Kaffibarinn

Quiz Night with Davíð Roach
20:00 Kex Hostel

See more at events.grapevine.is

Event Picks



SLEIKUR 3.0
Saturday August 12, 22:00
Bíó Paradís
2.500 ISK

Earlier this year, the SLEIKUR club series strutted into town on stripper heels serving a queer haven for the true freaks. Now hitting a third edition on Pride night, the all-queer produced party will be next level cunt with iconic DJs Yamaho and Lolli Hjö, The Clubkid aka Ása Kolla, and Fusion Groove keeping the dance-floor hot all night. Hosted in collaboration with Hinsegin Heift & R.E.C. Arts RVK, the venue is fully accessible for all bodies and the safe-space care-crew will ensure no hateration or holleration in his dancery. RX



Páll Óskar Pride Ball
Saturday August 12, 21:00
Gamla Bíó
4.500 ISK

If you have never had the full RVK Pride experience, then oh honey, you have missed out on the absolute best entertainer in Iceland. Every year, we shiver with anticipation for Páll Óskar's uniquely extravagant parade closing float and it has never disappointed. Every year's float is funded by his Pride blowout concert, which feels like a disco ball exploding all over you. Have a quick disco nap after the parade, then get ready to dance. RX



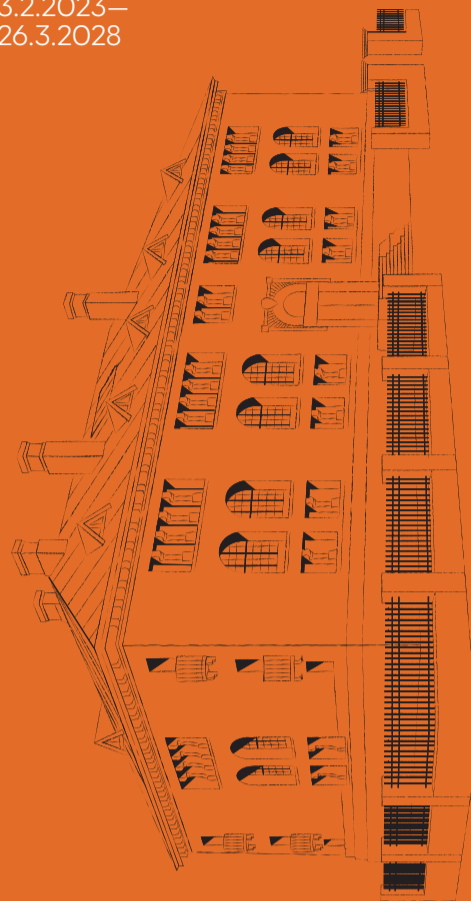
Two Nights of Arto Lindsay
August 18 & 19, 20:00
Mengi
5.000 ISK per night, 8.000 for both

New York has always been one of the main arteries of cutting-edge music, and Arto Lindsay was among those emerging from the '70s experimental scene. A wildly prolific musician with a distinctive gentle voice, he came to prominence with his no wave band DNA and his CV just unfurled from there. He will hold court for a two-night extravaganza of experimental music and poetics with some close friends, including celebrated Canadian poet Anne Carson. RX

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Music News



President Of Iceland Honorary Guest At Wacken Open Air

Just when you thought President Guðni Th. Jóhannesson couldn't get any cooler, he goes to a metal festival in Germany. That's right, President Guðni travelled to the Wacken Open Air festival, which played out in the village of Wacken in northern Germany August 2 to 5. Four Icelandic bands also performed at the festival – Krownest, Vintage Caravan, Skálmöld and Sólstafir – which is a

record number of Icelandic artists performing at the annual celebration of dark sounds. In light of this, the President was invited as an honorary guest by the festival's organisers. President Guðni received a tour of the festival site, before greeting the musicians backstage. Additionally, he participated in a panel discussion on the Icelandic metal scene and its ties to Nordic cultural heritage.



Marvaða Record Label Opening New Venue

The newly established record label Marvaða jump started their operations in early July. A female-led and focused creative nucleus, they released the track "IDDORARPI" by Greenlandic artist VARNA GL. A stellar composition, rooted in Varna's Inuit heritage, the track is produced by neonme – the moniker of artist Salka Valsdóttir. It's evident

that the label has attracted talented individuals to its operations. In addition to releasing and supporting artists, Marvaða is set to open a music venue in Grandi. Not only will it operate as a live venue, but plans to run it as a studio are also in the works. The creative hub is set to open in September.



Högni Egilsson Releases Netflix Series Katla Soundtrack

The album *Music for Katla*, the soundtrack to the Netflix series *Katla* by Baltasar Kormákur and Sigurjón Kjartansson, is now out on vinyl. Musician Högni Egilsson composed the soundtrack, which was recorded with the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Daniel Bjarnason. *Music for Katla* is available on vinyl via Erased Tapes

and electronic copies are available through Netflix. The TV series came out on Netflix in 2021, starring musician Guðrún Ýr Eyfjörð (GDRN) as main character Gríma who searches for her sister amidst a volcanic eruption. A release party will be hosted in 12 Tónar, Friday, August 11, at 19:00, where Högni and GDRN will perform select works. ■



Festival Fun

The Eighth Gate Of Hell

Norðanpaunk, Iceland's biggest DIY festival in the world

WORDS Francesca Stoppani
IMAGE Sólrún Sif Sigurðardóttir

HAIL TO THE VOLUNTEERS

Norðanpaunk is a utopian community that only exists for a few days every year. It's the kind of place where a bunch of dark souls listen to their deranged berserk music and then crawl to their tent with a bottle of delicious Tópas. There are always challenges, and as long-standing organizers and founder Árni Þorlákur Guðnason highlights, "It is not possible to create something like this without struggle."

The locals agreed to this unusual gathering, giving him the keys to the community hall to be turned into the eighth gate of hell. Well, rumour has it that the community gradually grew fond of this strange event.

Norðanpaunk is mainly and purely its people, and we are all Norðanpaunkers, as Jónas from the organising committee points out. Being a volunteer-based organisation, the festival relies on many people – both veterans and newbies – to help out throughout the whole process.

It is a place to atone for your sins and receive them back anew with a bunch of complimentary dirt, grass and sludge.

One does not simply go to Norðanpaunk. Firstly, because it is held two and a half hours away from the capital and the Icelandic public transport system is almost non-existent and dubiously reliable. Secondly, Norðanpaunk is more of a mindset, with its inside jokes and its special atmosphere permeating the pre- and post-festival, where the unexpected can and will happen – as it has since 2014.

Norðanpaunk has the status of an association and is executed through volunteer work, funded through a yearly membership fee. This year, they also received a culture grant. Árni grew up in Laugarbakki and without his connection to the place and its community, I would probably be writing about something else. Maybe some unhinged techno festival in Hvolsvöllur, what do I know?

Hildur is the main cook for the festival, the enchantress behind the warm healthy meals served free of charge to the *paunksters*. She took part in organising the very first one back in 2014 and hasn't missed a year yet. "We had such great food the first two years, courtesy of former Norðanpaunk cook, Linnea," Hildur says. "Her cooking is partly responsible for me switching to a vegan diet."

A UNIQUE GIFT SHOP IN THE HEART OF REYKJAVÍK
LAUGAVEGUR 12b theheartofreykjavik.com





ell

Within the organization, there's a fairly flat hierarchy. It is based on the principle that those who do the work make the decisions. If you take care of lights, you decide on lighting. If you're a volunteer, you can have a say in how the lineup turns out. Those who come to meetings make the decisions. "The core group is around 12 people at the moment, but we have different work cells, such as food or safety," says Árni. "We have a wide spectrum of people pitching in."

It is also worth mentioning that Norðanpaunk enforces a safer space and harm reduction policy.

YOU CAN SMELL THE SEA

Of the international artists I spoke with, many just fell in love with the place, the people and the concept and have decided to return. This year, the French music collective La Harelle brought its holy trinity of black metal, going as far as designing special Norðanpaunk merch for the performing bands Mór, Sordide, and Iffernet. They all delivered anger, despair and pain – not au chocolat – that everybody devoured, hungry for more.

"Our first experience playing during the 2022 Norðanpaunk edition was just perfect. We found what we love in music, humanly and in terms of ideas and visions," recalls D. from La Harelle. "It was a unique moment, and we couldn't have been happier than coming here once more, bringing all our friends to play."

Apparently, they all have a secret wish and plan to attend the 2024 edition, but "I wouldn't like this festival to be known too much more, so shhh," concludes D. To be fair, he did know his answers were going to be published in a magazine, so no shade on that front. "It has the feeling of a big family reunion," says Christoffer from Dödsrit, Swedish/Dutch black metal

royalty who crushed the audience's spirits with their set on the first day of the festival.

"It is a special festival because it takes place in the hall of a small village. The size of this village is very bizarre to people outside of Iceland," comment Bob and Mink from the Dutch band Fluisteraars. Fluisteraars was founded in 2009 and held their first live performance this year in Laugarbakki. They deemed Norðanpaunk a fine and intimate setting in a very inviting country. Then they add: "It is something beautiful. The small deserted places. We did not expect the festival to take place in the community centre and on a campsite. But when you are there, you are immersed in the good atmosphere set by the crew. We saw an arctic fox run across the road and a band member was attacked by seagulls. You can smell the sea."

That is something beautiful – the small deserted places. We saw an arctic fox run across the road and a band member was attacked by seagulls. You can smell the sea.

DIRT, GRASS AND SLUDGE

From mind-blowing noise performances to strange rituals to chase away one's demons around the iconic end-of-night bonfire towered by a giant sword, Norðanpaunk manages to bring together people of all ages and musical tastes. "It is quite incredible how heterogenous all of this is," said somebody at some point – but at that moment, I was barely able

to recognise faces.

"I thought it was going to be more punk-centric. What was very cool was the massive diversity of bands," comments Erik from Aerial Ruin in a wind-propelled voice message. "I really enjoyed every set that I saw, which is a rare thing to happen."

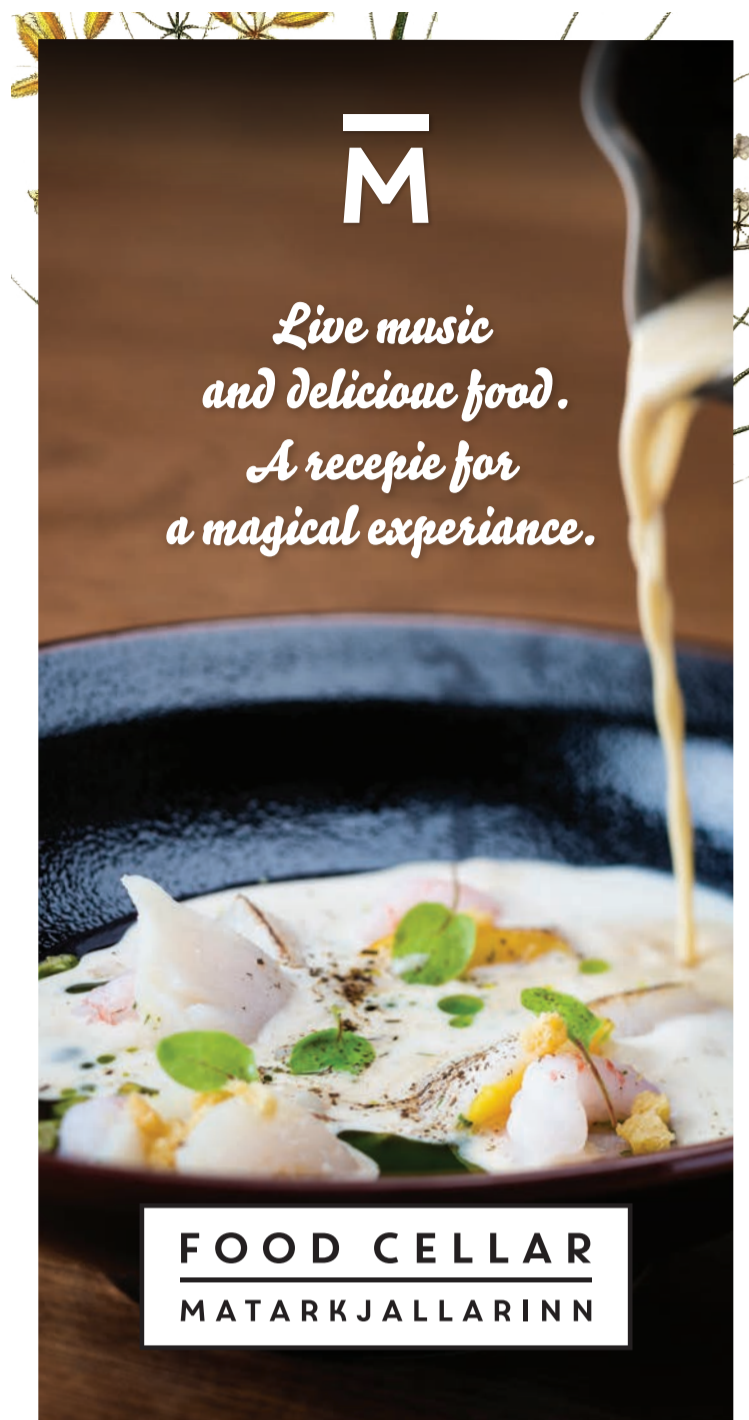
One of my personal highlights must be the waffles in the gas station/guesthouse/handicraft shop next door to the festival venue, Langafit. The guesthouse also has a camping ground where the Norðanpaunkers make the magic happen, usually in a semi-liquid state.

So, again, one does not simply go, and come back whole. Norðanpaunk stays, like a fragment of glass under the foot. Or like the scar from a joint which somebody put out on your arm (consensually) for fun. It is a place to

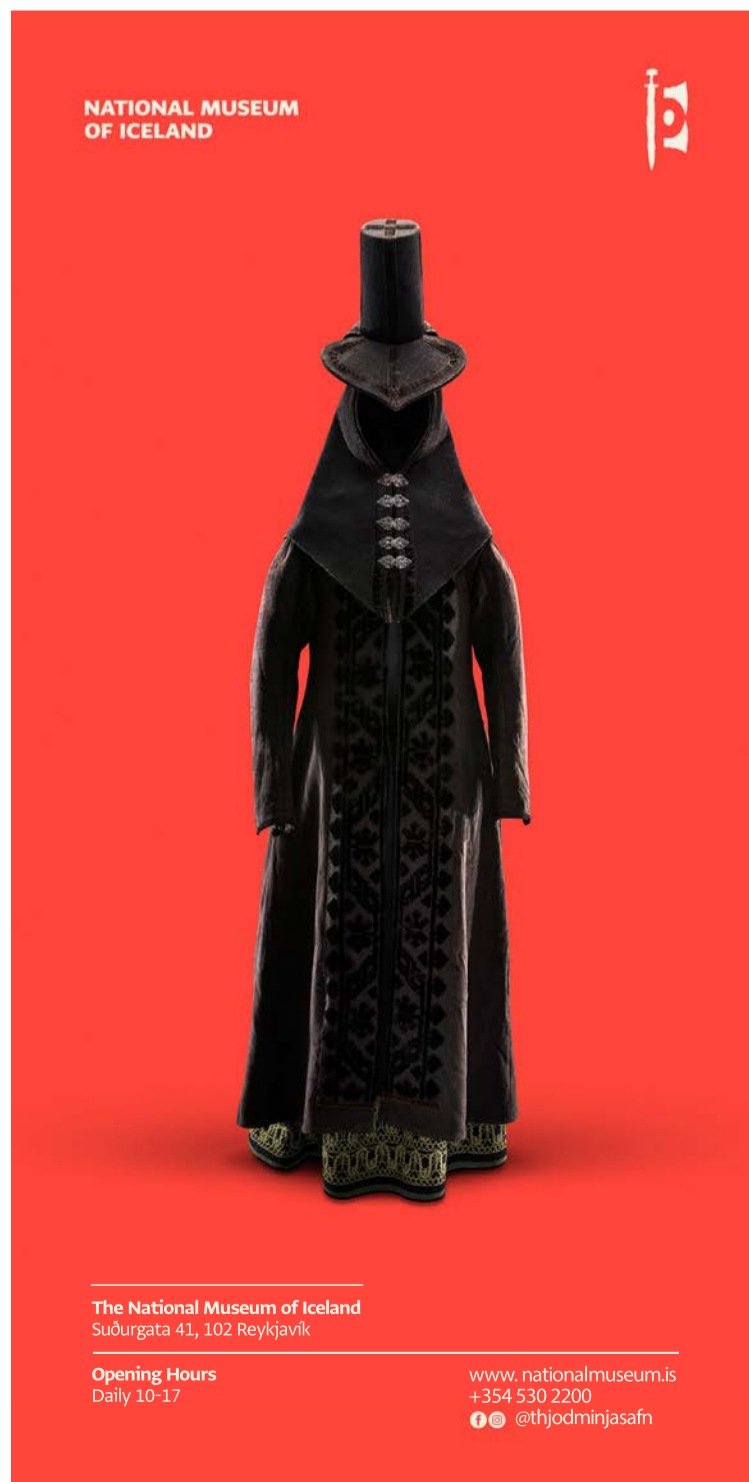
atone for your sins and receive them back anew with a bunch of complimentary dirt, grass and sludge.

Next year is going to mark Norðanpaunk's 10th anniversary and I'll let you in on one secret: UK band Heriot is confirmed. Don't tell anyone. See you in hell, next year. ■

Norðanpaunk 2023 took place from August 4 to 6, during Merchant's Day Weekend – just like every year.



Aðalstræti 2, 101 Reykjavík • +354 558 0000 • matarkjallarinn.is





About
Last Night

Dj. JoeboxeR

Good things come to those who wait

WORDS Jóhanna Rakel /
Dj. JoeboxeR
IMAGE Supplied by
Dj. JoeboxeR

Unlucky for me, this is my first DJ set alone in many years. So to be honest, I am nervous and I don't really remember what all the effects on the console do.

My best friend is also in labour! So I spend most of the day chilling with her, basking in her presence in awe of the strength and calmness she possesses.

I look at the clock and somehow I have an hour to go before my set at 12tónar! I gobble up yesterday's leftovers and put on my new green Crocs and run out!

In the first hour, I try to not overhype myself or the crowd (Playing chill stuff like Kevin Yost's "Two Wrongs Making It Right"), remembering that good things come to those who wait, so these people had better stay awhile.

The next two hours I pump it up a bit, firstly because I cannot wait to play some of my fave songs and also because these people have waited long enough and I love to see people dancing. Domiziana's "Ohne Benzin" and Lenny Funk & Zorra's "Meine kopf ist leer" are my fave songs in German of the night.

Final hour it was time to let madness and femme energy rain with Sophie's "VYZE," COBRAH's "U KNOW ME," and Eva808's "Empress" – to name a few. I end the set with Sinéad's "Nothing Compares 2 U."

I'm happy and tired, and the crowd moves on to the bars that close a little later with bass in their stomachs and cheeky grins. ■

It's August 4. The first night of the infamous Verslunarmannahelgi. The weekend is known to be the height of party culture in Iceland, so the pressure to deliver a good set is huge.



In Person

Deeper Than Definitions

Una Torfa talks national tour, queer culture and writing for Reykjavík Pride

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason
IMAGE Art Bicnick

had on Una was the company's logo being plastered on the tour van. It also allowed her to keep ticket prices low.

A BARBECUE GRILL IN THE BACK

"It went surprisingly well," Una says of her first national tour. She credits her booking agent for organising the tour down to the tiniest detail, making sure Una and her performing band always had a bed to sleep in each night. "My booker provided us with itineraries almost down to the minute," she says. "We managed

Pride's organisation team to write the official song for the festival. The song, "Þú ert stormur," was written by Una and Hafsteinn.

The artist says the song's message revolves around the pressure queer people face in defining themselves. "I had a hard time writing this song. I found it difficult to bridge writing openly about queerness, without using clichés or forced melodrama," Una admits.

"I'm bisexual and use the lyrics to question the idea that queer people need to define themselves, or need

What matters is being able to get through life and experience the whole range of emotions – to love and be loved.

to eliminate all uncertainty, which adds a lot of unnecessary stress on ventures like these."

Una's performing band is close-knit, counting the singer's partner, Hafsteinn Þráinsson (aka CeaseTone), and brother, Tumi Torfason, as members. Drummer Sólrún Mjöll Kjartansdóttir and sound engineer Þóroddur Ingvarsson rounded out the travelling quintet.

"We did all the loading of the gear every day. So it was like playing Tetris in the trunk," says Una. "It was like travelling with your best friends." A quintessential barbecue was brought along to really perfect the outing. "It was a ridiculous idea. We travelled with the grill the whole way, but didn't actually use it until the very last day," Una reminisces.

WRITING FOR REYKJAVÍK PRIDE

In addition to having finished a seven-day tour, Una was asked by

to know exactly who they are," she says. "It doesn't matter. What matters is being able to get through life and experience the whole range of emotions – to love and be loved."

While Una celebrates the ubiquitousness of pleather, glitter and disco in queer culture, she underscores that "being queer is also just a natural state of affairs. And I wanted to explore the feeling of being yourself – that you don't need to be a glitter bomb, full of happiness. I found that exciting."

Una is currently working on another record with Hafsteinn. "I am very lyrically focused, and concentrate not only on the words I sing but also the music's subtext, and how the words tie into the music itself." The forthcoming LP will feature new songs, as well as a few written before Una's latest EP, *Flækt og týnd og einnanna*. ■



Track By Track

Worst Wait of Our Life

Georg Óskar explores the murkiness of the everyday

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason & Georg Óskar
IMAGE Supplied by Georg Óskar

Scandinavian Rapture is the moniker of multi-disciplinary artist Georg Óskar. Focusing on painting and visual art, Georg's album *Worst Wait of Our Life* sees him return to his musical endeavours. As he does in his visual work, Georg's music explores the everyday while adding charismatic gloom through the use of goth and industrial-inspired soundscapes. He walked us through the offering track by track.

THE DAY I DIE

I composed the lyrics of this song when I was staying with friends in Paris in 2022 and I was strumming a ukulele that was there while singing these lyrics aloud. I began the song with "The day I die I will do something great, Like running around in Parisian rain," and of course, it was pouring outside when I was writing it. The title of the song seemed amusing to me and then the idea came to me that one must end something to start new. So, this song is about beginnings, despite

its title. It started as a calm guitar piece and then transformed into a more epic dance piece.

I AM DEAD

I have decided to keep myself on a positive note and continue to talk about death. The opposite of the first song on the album, this song directly addresses being dead and arriving at one's final resting place. I had Prodigy in mind when working on it and I wanted it to have an energetic feel – with a marching band, perhaps – taking on the challenging task of making death exciting.

MY NAME IS SUPERSTAR

"Hello, my name is superstar, I am going to get very far..."

This song is one of my favourites from the album. It portrays a character who perceives themselves as a superstar and exceptionally remarkable. He has a strong urge to go around and let people know how fabulous he is and how far he will go in life. Additionally, he is obsessed with a girl whom he claims to love deeply, but it's also something that only exists in his imagination.

I HAVE NO CHOICE BECAUSE IT'S MINE

Not many years ago, I barely sang for myself, mainly because I couldn't stand listening to my own voice; I simply found it terrible. As the title of

this song suggests, I have no choice because this is me, my life, my appearance, and so on. It's about embracing one's imperfections and not letting them hold you back, or at least not beating yourself. What one might consider a flaw in their life could be their strongest asset if they accept it and perhaps make it work. That's it, maybe I need to do this. I express this sentiment in the song and later on the character starts drowning their sorrows, ending up in a ditch and sailing down to the next bar to drink some more. Accepting oneself comes with risk.

LOVE IS PAIN

Just as the title suggests, this song explores how painful love can be. We all know the feeling.

STUCK IN THIS LIMBO

I started working on this song at the beginning of COVID when I lived in Berlin. During that time, lockdowns were in effect and almost the only place my wife and I could go for fresh air and some relaxation was the cemetery.

LATE NIGHT GOOD NIGHT

This song is about discovering a diamond in the rough that brings comfort, especially when you realise that the world is on the brink of ending, and you find your true self and embrace it for the first and last time ■



Filthy Interview

Let's Goo

See you in another 20 years, Graveslime

WORDS Francesca Stoppani
IMAGE Tala Ibabo

In our previous Filthy Interview, punk band Dauðýflin expressed their excitement for the glorious comeback of stoner rockers Graveslime, who have performed at two festivals this year: MBS in Akureyri and Norðanpaunk in Laugarbakki. In this issue, we put the slime back on the grave with Aðalsteinn Möller, or Alli, the bassist and vocalist of Graveslime.

The story of Graveslime began with the friendship of Alli and Kolbeinn Hugi Höskuldsson, or Kolli, when they were just 15-years old. They formed a punk band named Þrír Hressir, but quickly grew tired of the punk sound. So, sludgy heavy metal Guns N' Roses cover band Thundergun was born.

The stars truly aligned when, 20 years ago, Alli, Kolli and drummer Ólafur Steinsson found themselves at Mjólnishöll, a windowless bunker of a rehearsal space that echoed the trio's excitement about landing on the perfect band name: Graveslime. The band recorded an album, only to call it quits before its release. "Labels were contacting us, then shit happened and the world kind of collapsed," Alli recalls, referring to an incident that resulted in one member's temporary hearing loss.

JOINING THE GS DOLPHIN CLUB

Fast forward to today and Graveslime is making its grand comeback, thanks in part to renewed interest catalysed by the surfacing of old

concert footage online. "A lot of people contacted me throughout the years, saying they were fans," says Alli. "It ignited something in me. Maybe there was the need for Graveslime to finally get back in the scene."

The band's iconic album, *Roughness And Toughness*, had been released on CD in only 500 homemade copies but went viral after its recent addition to Spotify. The incredible support online led to a successful crowdfunding campaign, enabling Graveslime to re-release the album on vinyl in celebration of its 20th anniversary, along with t-shirts and a custom hot sauce called Dolphin Vomit (with extra crunchy bits). The response from fans was incredible, surpassing their expectations and their fundraising goal by 30%.

Graveslime music is known for its distorted, deep and sludgy sound. The unconventional drums on the album add an experimental touch, making it a challenge for new drummer Birkir Fjalar Viðarsson to replicate. "Óli was not a drummer, so he started to play guitar on the drums," Alli laughs. *Roughness And Toughness*, recorded in an analogue studio called Veðurstofan with music producer Tim Green, captures the essence of their chaotic but melodic sound. "We all met again for the first time in more than 15 years a few weeks ago. It was fantastic, it brought up a lot of memories. Some nostalgia, some grief," Alli says with a bitter smile.

Having thoroughly destroyed the stages of the Mannfólkið breytist í slím and Norðanpaunk festivals, Graveslime will unleash *Roughness And Toughness* on the world – 20 years overdue – on August 31 at KEX Hostel. ■

Follow Graveslime's renaissance on Instagram at @graveslime__

The Grapevine Presents:

66 Degrees of Sound

Welcome to 66 Degrees of Sound by The Reykjavík Grapevine, a weekly podcast for music lovers and Icelandophiles where Grapevine journalists Rex Beckett and Jóhannes Bjarkason discuss and play some of the latest and greatest in Icelandic music releases.

New episodes every **Friday** on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.





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The House at Eyrarbakki



Árnessýsla Heritage Museum is located in Húsið, the House, historical home of merchants built in 1765. Húsið is one of the oldest houses in Iceland and a beautiful monument of Eyrarbakki's time as the biggest trading place on the south coast. Today one can enjoy exhibitions about the story and culture of the region. Húsið prides itself with warm and homelike atmosphere.

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Climb Every Mountain

Reaching The Sky

A how-to guide to hikes around Reykjavík

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason,
Jón Trausti Sigurðarson
IMAGES Joana Fontinha,
Atli Arnarson

without telling you we once – almost – jogged up Esja. I mean, have you seen my Strava profile? I could definitely do it.

Luckily, going on a hike near the capital area doesn't require too much forward planning as most of the mountains in our backyard are relatively safe, with well-maintained trails. You'll be able to finish these in less than six hours – that's including travel time.

While these hikes are accessible, they rely on common sense and slight preparedness. Check the forecast ahead of time and listen to your gut. Are you sure you want to

ditions on the ground. The Icelandic weather is notorious for changing from a clear, blue sky to thundering rain. Most importantly, leave no trace and pick up after yourselves.

Having said that, let's take a look at some popular hikes around the capital area.

ESJA: THE QUEEN OF REYKJAVÍK

There's not a child in Reykjavík that doesn't know where Esja is. The mountain acts as a sort of watcher over the city, as it can be seen from almost anywhere in town. According to lore, this is the home of the mis-

A hike is nothing more than a walk on a mountain. Sure, you'll become out of breath and your legs will ache, but there is a certain charm standing on top of a mountain that wasn't made for wandering humans. And once back down, you can proudly point at that mountain and say "Look! I was there."

A WORD OF WARNING

Don't let anybody tell you that we city folks can't hike. We sure can and we won't let you escape a conversation

On a clear day, you can even see all the way to Keilir in Reykjanes.

hike when the Met Office has issued a weather warning? (Don't do it.) Dress in layers, bring water, food and snacks.

Factor in that the weather up on a mountain may be different than con-

chievous yule lads and their slightly more sinister parents and cat.

Because of its short distance from the capital and its impressive height, Esjan is one of the most popular hiking trails in the area. Elevation

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gain from the trailhead to the most common destination, the boulder aptly named "Steinn," lends you about 600 metres in elevation. The roundtrip is approximately seven kilometres. During clear weather, it is possible to hike slightly farther, to Þverfellshorn. That extra route won't add too much to your trip – you'll clearly see the peak from Steinn, but it requires some climbing and the assistance of bolted-on chains.

As Esjan is accessible from multiple directions, there are various trails to choose from. However, the most straightforward and popular route starts just when you drive past Mosfellsbær. About five kilometres past Mosfellsbær, you'll see an exit to the right to Esjan's trailhead. There you'll find a parking lot, usually half full.

Once you've managed to climb Queen Esja, marvel at the view it offers you. This is the best view you can get of Reykjavík. On a clear day, you can even see all the way to Keilir in Reykjanes.

MÓSKARÐSHNÚKAR: ESJA'S EVIL TWIN

Slightly east of Esja is a series of

peaks named Móskarðshnúkar. These peaks have long tricked the citizens of Reykjavík during wet seasons into thinking that sunshine is on its way. Due to their geological formation, the rhyolite peaks seem to be constantly bathed in the sun. It's an especially warming sight on cold days.

This is a fairly challenging, but accessible hike. It totals about six kilometres round-trip, with approximately 700 metres of elevation. The most popular trailhead starts from the south. From Mosfellsbær, instead of driving north towards Esja, turn right onto Þingvallavegur (Route 36). Head straight for about seven kilometres and turn left onto a gravel road with a sign saying Hrafnhólar. From there, you'll drive past the farms Skeggjastaðir and Hrafnhólar, until you'll follow the road to the right, where you'll end up at a parking lot by the trailhead.

Like all hikes, Móskarðshnúkar becomes more treacherous during the winter. It is prone to avalanches and many hikers have become injured. In 2020, an avalanche even led to the death of a young hiker.

ÚLFARSELL: STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

Standing tall on the border of Mosfellsbær and Reykjavík is Úlfarsfell – a 296-metre-high mountain that seems puny compared to its neighbours. There was once a farm there,

20th century, so the start of the hike leads you into a nice collection of evergreens. Once out of the copse, you'll hike up a pretty barren environment for the rest of the trip. The round-trip takes on average about 90 minutes and grants you a spectacular view of the cityscape.

ing you to Kaldársel. Drive until you reach the road Kaldárselsvegur which ultimately takes you out of civilisation. You'll reach the trail's parking lot.

Although the elevation isn't much to write home about – approximately 250 metres – the trail becomes steep. The more popular route leads you into a small crevice, where your hand and foot coordination is tested. No worries though, it's not a climb in any sense of the word.

Continue upwards to be rewarded with a beautiful panoramic view over Reykjanes and the capital area.

A WELL-DESERVED REST

Once you've finished these hikes – yes, *all* these hikes – give yourself a pat on the back. Your muscles will be sore tomorrow, which is a perfect time to hit up one of the local swimming pools. There will be an air of smugness around you and you'll want to tell everyone what hikes you got up to last weekend. Don't resist the urge. Tell them. Send them a friend request on Strava. After all, you are better than most. Congratulations. ■

These peaks have long tricked the citizens of Reykjavík during wet seasons into thinking that sunshine is on its way.

which was deserted around the year 1900. You can still find the ruins if you look closely.

Úlfarsfell is a fairly easy hike and a nice outing for the family. The hike is about three kilometres round-trip. The trailhead is very close to the main road connecting Reykjavík and Mosfellsbær. From Reykjavík, you'll enter a roundabout from where you'll take the first exit to the right. Voilá! You're at the trailhead. The Forestry Association of Mosfellsbær has grown trees there since the early

HELGAFELL: A LESS-KNOWN GEM

If you want to skip the trip to Mosfellsbær – I won't blame you – there are more hikes available near Hafnarfjörður. Helgafell is one of the more popular mountains to hike within the capital area. But it means you'll have to go to Hafnarfjörður. Pros and cons, people.

Driving into Hafnarfjörður, head in the direction of Keflavík until you reach a looped intersection tak-

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Street Eats Tacos Served With A S

Tacoson's simple menu brings big flavour

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason
IMAGES Art Bicnick

I seek the refuge of Tacoson – a food truck serving, you guessed it, tacos. The stand is emblazoned with a picture of a viking eating a taco, although I'm pretty sure vikings never ate those. Such is the power of fiction.

A TRUMPET-PLAYING TAQUERO

As I approach the truck, the stand's proprietor was practising the trumpet. "How long have you been playing?" I asked him. "About 25 years," he replied.

During the time of my visit, Tacoson boasts a simple menu, offering three types of tacos: BBQ pulled pork; chilli con carne; and fish. Patatas bravas are available as a side dish.

Waiting for the meal to be prepared, I gazed at the splendour of urban life around me. I had never noticed the vibrancy of the city to this degree. Despite the awful weather, I saw friends taking up a game of basketball and the two men dishing out high-fives earlier had started dancing.

When my tastebuds came into contact with the fish, something inside me changed, and I wished I'd gotten three fish tacos instead of one.

Iceland's climate doesn't really allow for a vivid food truck scene, as the act of eating outside will usually land you in early stages of hypothermia, or the tragicomical scene of chasing down paper trays and full meals being swept away by the wind. Despite this chilling fact, the local food truck culture is more diverse than one would think, as exemplified by the annual street food festival.

Eating out is generally an expensive avocation in Iceland, and Tacoson is no exception. They offer two tacos and a pop for 2700 ISK. A duo of fish tacos with soda costs 3400 ISK. Add the patatas bravas, 950 ISK, and you could be eating a relatively nice meal somewhere inside, somewhere warm. On their own, the BBQ pulled pork and the chilli con carne variations were 1350 ISK each, and

Situated on the docks of Reykjavik harbour is Tacoson – a food truck overlooking a skatepark and a basketball court. Nearby is a massive cruise liner, which almost acts like a seven-storey building framing the area. Two men are dancing to the tunes of reggaeton music playing on the yellow communal loudspeaker and high-fiving passersby.

It is early August, yet the weather has started showing signs of fall, with grey skies and wind gusts, lowering my body temperature rapidly.

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It is early August, yet the weather has started showing signs of fall, with grey skies and wind gusts, lowering my body temperature rapidly.

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CATCH THAT FISH

Because an adult man physically cannot be satiated by two tacos alone, I opted for three tacos – one of each sort. It ended up costing a total of 4.400 ISK with a can of Coke, which blew away as soon as I had emptied it.

Diving into the first bite of the BBQ pulled pork, which I lathered with one of the four available hot sauces, a rich taste of barbecue sauce greeted me. Chewy and excellent, the taco was adorned with pickled red cabbage and other essential accoutrements.

Next up, the chilli. Although I love this one-pot wonder of easy protein, among the three tacos, it ended up in third place. Don't get me wrong,

it's good, but it was outshined by both the BBQ and fish variations.

fish batter managed to keep up its crunch despite swimming in a sour-

As I approach the truck, the stand's proprietor was practising the trumpet.

By far, the best course on Tacoson's menu is the fish taco. The fried

cream base, with brunoise cut fresh onion, tomato and cabbage. When

my tastebuds came into contact with the fish, something inside me changed, and I wished I'd gotten three fish tacos instead of one.

I was disappointed by Tacoson's lack of vegetable and vegan options, as it's something they have served in the past. Although my hands were cold, Tacoson's excellent tacos managed to warm my soul. ■

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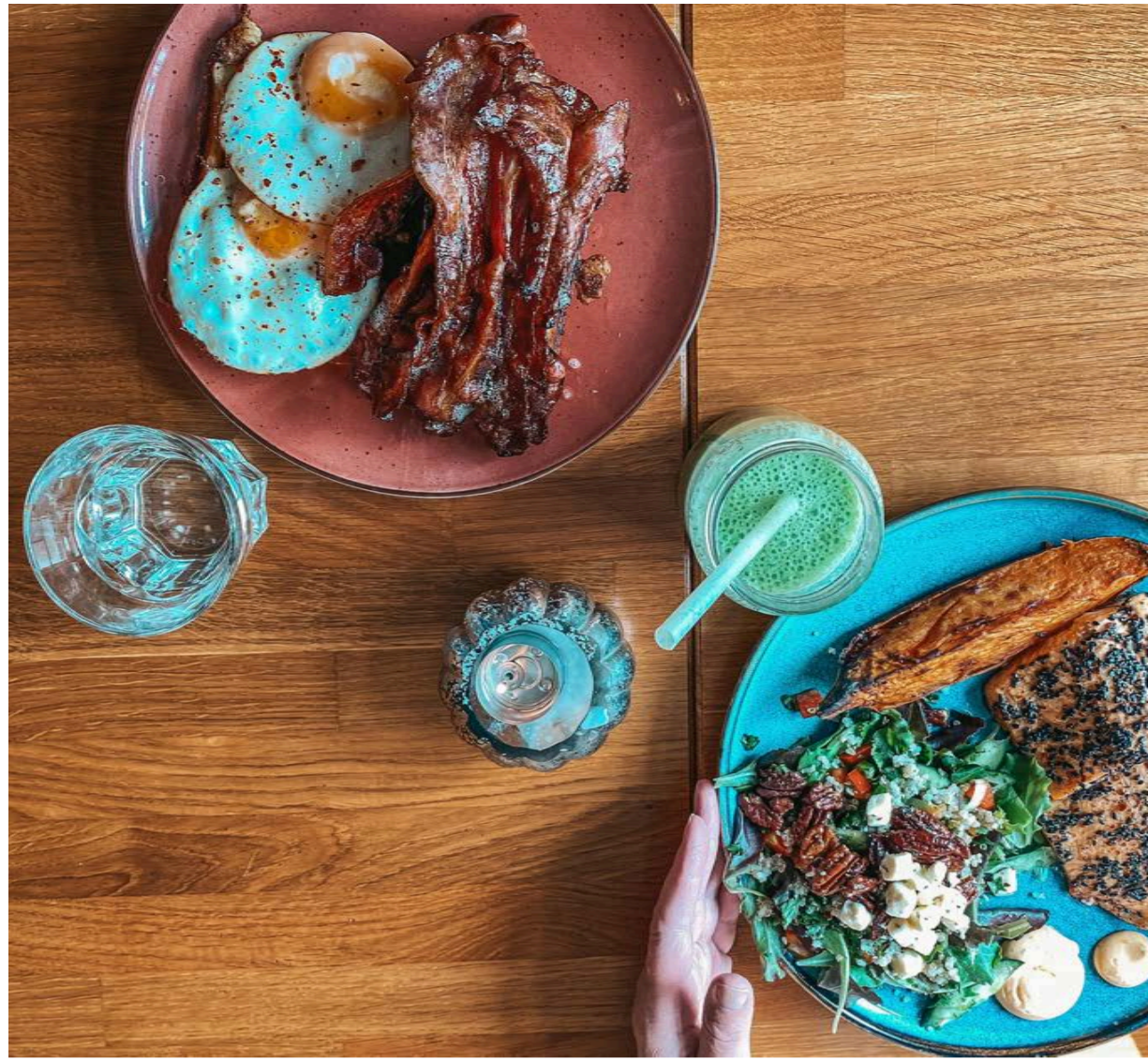
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Food & Travel

36 Hours In Akureyri

Whipping through the capital of the north

WORDS
IMAGES

- Shruthi Basappa
1. *Berlín* - Unnur Anna Árnadóttir
2. *LYST* - Anthony K. Do, Jarecka,
3. *Ketil Kaffi* - Maja Jarecka,
4. *Eyja Vínstofa* - Axel Darri Þórhallsson

cial trading post licence until 1862.

But you'd be hard pressed to find any remnants of such struggle today. A sought after destination for skiing, it isn't just the winter charms of Akureyri that stir up friendly competition between Reykjavik and the so-called "capital of the North." Sure they may often have more summer days than we do, and they seem to have new and old buildings in fairly balanced scales, but they also have longer, snow-deluged winters and controversial cat roaming laws.

Visitors to Akureyri often talk about the charming little town with great affection. The town is built alongside a steep slope towards the fjord making for idyllic strolls whether you are in town, by the harbour, or taking one of the meandering scenic routes to its botanical heart. In recent years, there has been a delicious awakening not just limited to their over-the-top dogs. Schedule some food hopping with your cultured rambling and you have the perfect itinerary for a glorious 36 hours in Akureyri.

DAY 01: MORNING

SUNDLAUG AKUREYRI

Skólástígur 4, 600 Akureyri
Monday to Friday: 6:45 - 21:00, Saturday: 8:00 - 21:00, Sunday: 8:00 - 19:30

By now it is no secret that the best thing about Iceland, no matter which corner of the county you are in, are the pools. And the pool in Akureyri has been another bragging point they have held over Reykjavik for a long time. Recently renovated, the local pool has never been better - just check out the kiddie slide section fashioned after water-parks, but miniaturised to Icelandic scale. There are plenty of hot pots to lounge around if laps aren't your thing. Regardless of your pool preference, it sure is a great way to start the day and work up an appetite.

BERLÍN AKUREYRI

Skipagata 4, 600 Akureyri
8:00 - 17:00 (last orders at 16:00)
"Have you seen the bacon?" quipped a friend of mine incredulously when I asked him about the breakfast at Berlín he'd been raving about. "This is not your amma's

Did you know that it was not until 1776 that the first residential house was built in Akureyri and in 1784 the population numbered a grand total of 12? Historical accounts say that efforts by the Danish king to improve the lives of Icelanders were mostly unsuccessful and the town didn't regain its commer-



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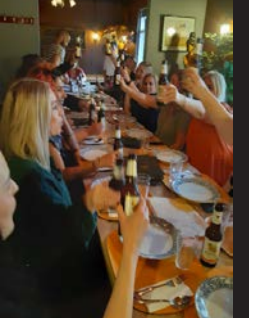
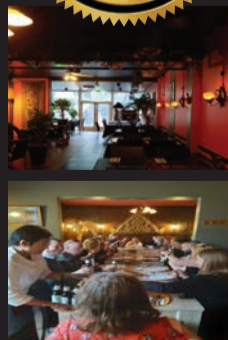
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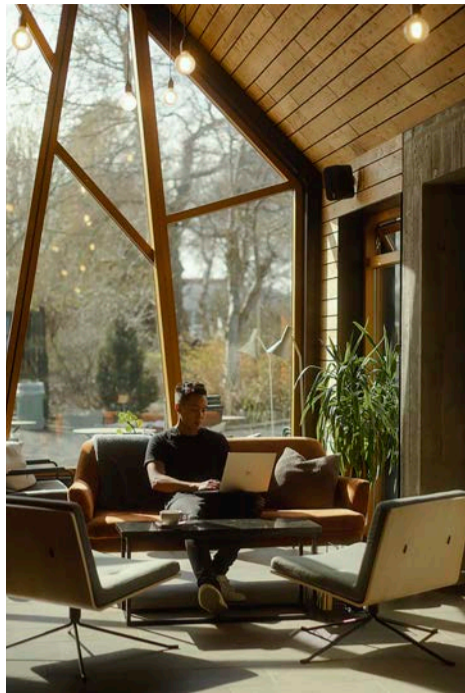
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breakfast!" Turns out, he was spot on. Berlín has been dishing all day breakfasts since 2015 and is sought after by locals and visitors alike. Kids under 15 can get a hearty balanced brunch platter with eggs, bacon, waffles, fruits, toast and juice for just

production.

LUNCH

BACCALÁ BAR
Hafnargata 6, Hauganes
Summer: 12:00 - 20:30

can be safe and grab a cheeseburger, but while here, it's either the DJ burger with a sunny side-up egg, or the many over the top sounding, yet somehow balanced "specials" named after popular DJs and musicians, that we recommend.

DINNER

NORTH

Hafnarstraeti 67, 600 Akureyri
Wednesday to Saturday: 18:00 - 22:00
An impressive tasting menu with ingredients sourced or foraged from just around Akureyri, in a dinner-at-your-friend's-house chic setting, and at a hard to believe price point (11,900 ISK)? Yes, North is all that and then some. Ambitious young chef Rafn Svansson is determined to put Akureyri on the map as a dining destination and serves up thoughtful plates that hark back to Dill while still being his own. The wine pairing (10,900 ISK) is delightful and I recommend bar-side seating for a first hand view of all the action.

DRINKS

EYJA WINE BAR AND BISTRO

Hafnarstraeti 90, 600 Akureyri
Wednesday to Sunday: 14:00 - 23:00, Thursday: 14:00 - 00:00, Friday & Saturday: 14:00 - 01:00
This stunning timber house has been painstakingly restored to a moody contemporary crib that is

The fish is satisfyingly flaky, encased in a light, flavourful batter. The tartare sauce is speckled with dill, a neat Nordic touch.

1990 ISK, making it especially popular with families. But the surprise hit is the huevos rancheros (2530 ISK), which while not 100% autentico is a properly seasoned and cooked sunny side-up egg, decent salsa, crisp tortilla and (gasp!) ripe avocado, which makes one feel like someone knows their way around the old cocina. Very nice, spicy surprise at the top of the map.

NOON

LISTASAFN AKUREYRI (AKUREYRI ART MUSEUM)

Kaupavangsstraeti 8, 600 Akureyri
Everyday 12:00 - 17:00

Pick up the pace after a laid back breakfast and walk by the church - renovations are underway on the iconic steps and access is currently restricted, but the steep terrain makes for some good post-meal cardio to the church doors. This is a great vantage point not just for the views but to also appreciate the multi-level architecture of the Art Museum. Kurt og Pi from Reykjavik is behind the thoughtful restoration, breathing new life into what was once a milk factory. Staid and calm, this is an oasis of Icelandic creativity. Celebrated artist and Iceland's pride, Ragnar Kjartnasson's stirring project, 'The Visitor's' is on display for the first time in Iceland since it was last shown in Reykjavik in 2012. Set aside at least an hour, if not more, to take in this masterful

The drive from Akureyri to Hauganes is a scenic under-an-hour route that will reward you with endlessly expansive Simpson-esque blue skies, rolling hills and pastoral greens. OK that is if the sun god smiles on you. Ekta Fiskur is a family establishment that has devoted itself to making the best salted cod. The shack-like restaurant has windows overlooking the beautiful harbour, only interrupted by the impressive taxidermy birds and roosters. Service is unshakeably friendly, and the fish is satisfyingly flaky, encased in a light, flavourful batter. The tartare sauce is speckled with dill, a neat Nordic touch.

DJ GRILL

Strandgata 11, 600 Akureyri
Monday to Friday: 11:30 - 21:00, weekends: 12:00 - 21:00

This is an A-list bath that'll have you reconsider your citizenship status.

This family run restaurant does one thing and one thing only: burgers. If you didn't already know it is not the hot dog, or the lamb's head that is Iceland's national dish. It is the burger. Fashioned after an American diner, this joint has been dishing up old school burgers with none of that smashed burger nonsense that has firmly gripped the capital. Sure you

somehow also a cool bar. High ceilings, beautiful wall paper and lush booths make this a perfect spot for a nightcap. Choose from Scandi favourite natural wines, or more traditional tipples from their extensive wine list.

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DAY 02

KETIL KAFFI

Kaupvangsstræti 8, 600 Akureyri
Everyday: 7:30 - 18:00

here spans eggs multiple ways, alongside filling smoothies and an iconoclastic lemon cake that warrants a visit just for its pared down beauty. Tall and bare, it is crowned

LYSTIGARÐUR - AKUREYRI BOTANICAL GARDEN

Eyjarlandsstofa, 600 Akureyri
Everyday: 8:00 - 22:00

This is indeed the hidden jewel in Akureyri's heart. Established and nourished almost entirely by women in the early 1900's, the botanical garden is proof of the founder's determination that a garden such as this, lush and bountiful, could not only survive but thrive this far north. It is a beautifully laid out pleasure garden with fragrant flowering trees lining the many paths, guiding one to various sections. It's easy to lose track of time while here, especially if you find a park bench all to yourself.

LYST

Lystigarður, Eyjarlandsstofa, 600 Akureyri

Monday to Thursday: 08:00 - 21:00, Friday 08:00 - 23:00, Saturday 10:00-23:00, Sunday 10:00 - 19:00
Could there be a better spot for a café? Well recognised for its architecture, it is only since young chef Reynir Gretarsson took over LYST that it has garnered an almost cult following for its "Fish and Vegetables." Book ahead of time, and specifically ask for the fish as they tend to run out, sometimes even by 13:00! Pair that fish with a glass of wine or their equally renowned hot chocolate to round off a near perfect day.

FOREST LAGOON

Vaðlaskógur 605, 605 Akureyri
Everyday 10:00-23:30

There's no better way to bid adieu to Akureyri than to drive out of town and soak in a world class bathing facility, nestled within the forest. Forest Lagoon, designed by Basalt, is a breathtaking facility that knocks your socks off from the get go. An expansive pool that overlooks Eyri and Akureyri, lots of stone pedestals that function as bar tables for your drinks, a pool bar and a drinking water fountain while you hop from warm pool to sauna to cold pool - this lagoon has it all. Hours go by mysteriously here. This is an A-list bath that'll have you reconsider your citizenship status. ■

To sit by the window and quietly watch the world go by, slice by your side, is meditative indeed.

With brown-red brick floors and its concrete walls, walking into Ketil Kaffi instantly transports you somewhere far away. There is almost a sacred air around, the kind one finds in libraries. The simple menu

by a creamcheese stabilised crown of fluffy frosting. To sit by the window and quietly watch the world go by, slice by your side, is meditative indeed.

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Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK

APÉRO
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 1100 ISK

BÍÓ PARADÍS
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00
Beer 850 ISK, Wine 850 ISK

BJÓRGARÐURINN
Every day from 15:00 to 19:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 900 ISK

BODEGA
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 900 ISK

BRAVÓ
Every day from 12:00 to 20:00
Beer 750 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK

BREWDOG
Wed-Sun from 14:00 to 17:00
Select beers 1290 ISK, Wine 1290 ISK

BRÚT BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 750 ISK, 2F1 on wine and beer on tap

DEN DANSKE KRO
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 750 ISK, Wine 750 ISK

FJALLKONAN
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 990 ISK, Wine 1190 ISK

FORRÉTTABARINN
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 900 ISK

FORSETINN
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 990 ISK, Wine 990 ISK

FRÖKEN REYKJAVÍK
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 990 ISK, Wine 1100 ISK

GAUKURINN
Every day from 16:00 to 21:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1100 ISK

HOTEL HOLT BAR
Wednesday to Saturday from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1000 ISK, Wine 1350 ISK

THE IRISHMAN
Every day from 12:00 to 19:00
Beer 850 ISK, Wine 850 ISK

JÖRGENSEN KITCHEN & BAR
Every day except Thurs. 16:00 to 18:00, Thursday 16:00 to 20:00
Beer 890 ISK, Wine 1100 ISK

JUNGLE COCKTAIL BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1000 ISK, Wine 1100 ISK

KAFFI LÆKUR
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1000 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK

KAFFIBARINN
Every day from 15:00 to 19:00
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 900 ISK

KAFFIBRENNSLAN
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00
Beer 850 ISK, Wine 900 ISK

KALDI BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 950 ISK

LOFT HOSTEL
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00
Beer 860 ISK, Wine 950 ISK

LÓLA FLÓRENS
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 1200 ISK, Wine 1200 ISK

ÖLSTOFAN
Every day from 15:00 to 20:00
Beer 1000 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK

PETERSEN SVÍTAN
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1200 ISK

PRIKIÐ
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00
Beer 700 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK

PUNK
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 850 ISK, Wine 950 ISK

RÖNTGEN
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK

SÆTA SVINIÐ
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 990 ISK, Wine 1190 ISK

SATT RESTAURANT
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK

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

SLIPPBARINN
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 1000 ISK, Wine 1000 ISK

SPILAKAFFI
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00
Beer 1000 ISK, no wine or cocktails

STÚDENTAKJALLARINN
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00

Beer 710 ISK, Wine 850 ISK

TIPSÝ
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
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UPPSALIR BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 750 ISK, Wine 950 ISK

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

VÍNSTÚKAN TÍU SÓPAR
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00
Beer 1300 ISK, Wine 1600 ISK

VOX BRASSERIE & BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1200 ISK



Featured Veður
Klapparstígur 33

Since it's Pride season, we obviously want to stay on queer theme, but sadly Reykjavik's only "official" gay bar Kiki isn't open for happy hour. Luckily there's an excellent one right next door at Veður. The bar has become a popular mainstay over the past several years, with a casual-classy vibe and friendly energy. Perfect in good or bad weather, it's got a great beer and wine selection, plus a fabulous cocktail menu. Get early-boozey at Veður and then go dance at Kiki!

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DRAGON DIM SUM
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GLÓ
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HAMBORGARABÚLLA TÓMASAR
Tuesday Special: burger, fries & soda
1.890 ISK all day on Tuesday

HLÖLLABÁTAR
Lunch Offer: Choice of any sub and soda
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ISLENSKI BARIINN
Soup of the Day
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LEMON
Combo of the Month: large sandwich & juice
2.195 ISK all day, every day

MAI THAI BISTRO
Lunch Offer: daily curry meal
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1.690 ISK every day from 11:30 - 15:00

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4.390 ISK for two all day, every day

SUBWAY
Sub of the Day
1.399 ISK for 6" / 1.999 for 12", all day, every day

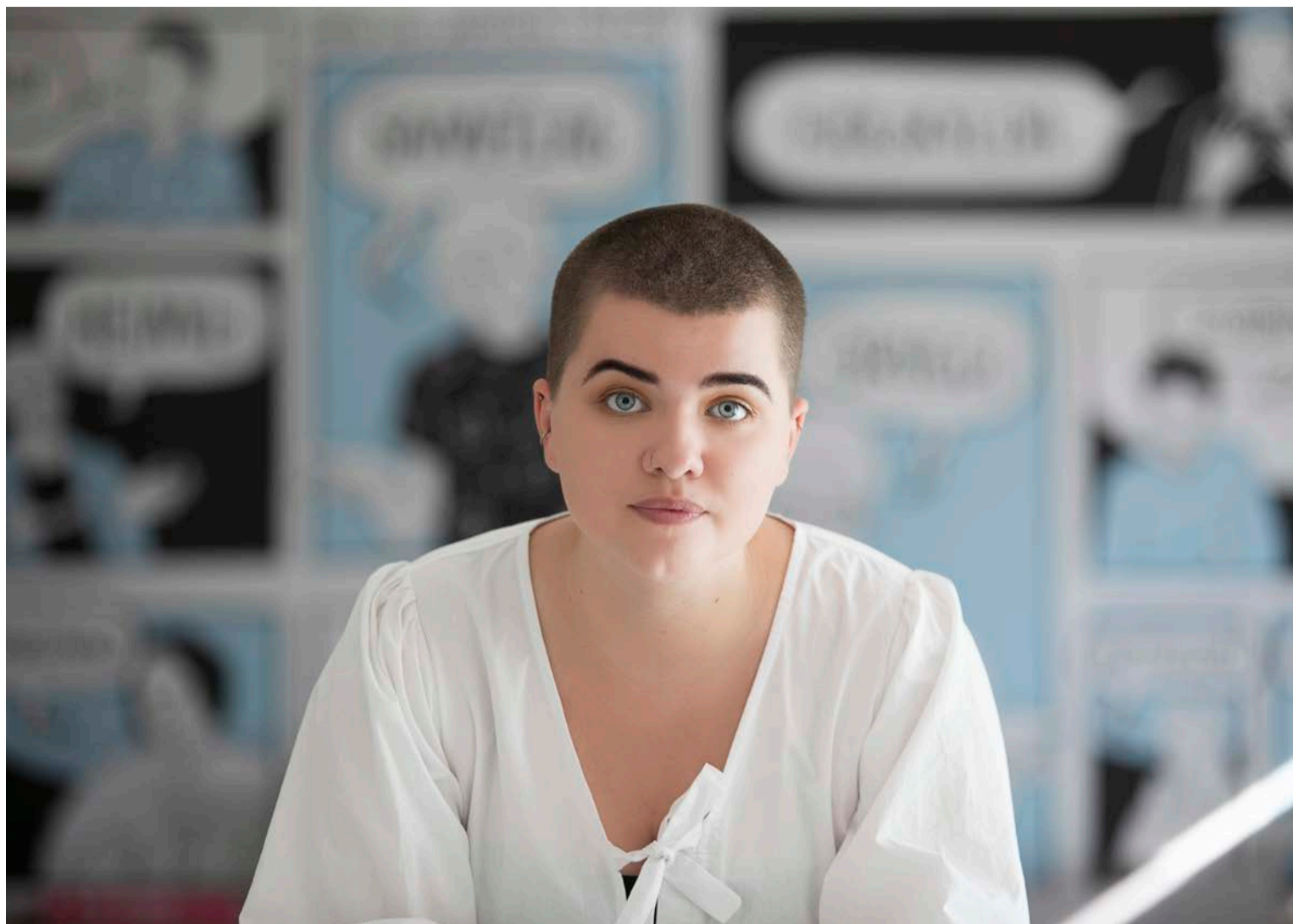
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The Neighbourhood Watch

Connecting Queer People

The growing popularity of Samtökin '78's youth clubs

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason
IMAGE Art Bicnick

vide them with a place to meet," she explains.

The organisation hosts all manner of events, such as open nights and cafe evenings for queer people. "We've hosted events for queer folks of foreign background, seminars, and events like book clubs and knitting meet-ups," Þórhildur says.

people received education on queer matters in 2022. "And then there's constant activism, which has been put to the test recently, as happens when there's a backlash against the queer community," adds Þórhildur, referencing the organisation's finding of growing opposition towards queer communities in Iceland.

SERVING THE CAPITAL'S QUEER YOUTH

Among Samtökin's most popular services are its queer youth clubs. Like municipal youth clubs operated elsewhere in Iceland, Samtökin '78 operates clubs open to teenagers and adolescents.

are expressing their identities at a younger age.

Samtökin's youth clubs aren't the only place for LGBTQ+ teenagers to meet, as multiple youth centres around the capital region operate similar clubs for queer teens. There's even one in Akureyri, which opened in 2019.

Headquartered in the office and cultural centre at Suðurgata 3, Samtökin '78 operates an active network of social clubs and services aimed towards LGBTQ+ people. As the national queer organisation of Iceland, its operations span multiple sectors, from advocacy and education to consultation and social services.

SAMTÖKIN'S SOCIAL FACET

"The social services of Samtökin '78 include many things," says board member Þórhildur Elínardóttir Magnúsdóttir. "The overarching goal is to connect queer people and pro-

And then there's constant activism, which has been put to the test recently, as happens when there's a backlash against the queer community.

As Samtökin's operations rest on four main pillars, there is constant work to be done. "We are always busy," Þórhildur admits. "Our consultation team meets a huge number of people every year, and our education team travels all over the country providing information about queer topics," says Þórhildur. According to the organisation, roughly 13,000

With rising levels of stigma around LGBTQ+ people, how does that translate into Samtökin's social services? "We mostly perceive it in the conversations between people. Our people feel the societal discourse on social media or in the news. Perhaps they've experienced some provocation themselves, but we stand together," Þórhildur confesses.

"Our youth program is always a bomb. The club for 13 to 17 year-olds, which we manage in collaboration with Tjörnin youth centre, is our most popular activity," Þórhildur says. Due to its immense popularity, the club was split in two: one for 13 to 15 year-olds; the other one for 16- and 17-year-olds. There's also Hinung, a club for 18 to 25 year-olds.

The club nights are filled with teenagers, who come out in droves. Although only receiving municipal support from Reykjavík, teenagers from all over the southwest corner of Iceland flock to meet their peers. "It's just getting bigger. Every year, we think that it can't get more popular and then the kids prove us wrong." Previously, it wasn't uncommon that people came out in their twenties, but Þórhildur estimates that people

"It's essential for young people to find their community and meet others in a similar situation as themselves. In these spaces, they can vent and relate to similar experiences. They're allowed to be exactly who they are, with the support of adults," says Þórhildur and explains that the organisation emphasises that the volunteers and employees of the clubs be queer themselves. "Most kids find something they can't find in their local youth club," she concludes. ■

You can support Samtökin '78 by becoming a Rainbow Friend – a monthly donation scheme. Their office on Suðurgata 3 is open for drop-in enquiries Mondays through Thursdays, from 13:00 to 16:00.

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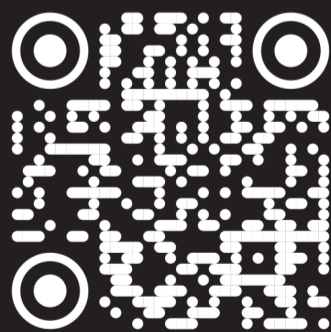
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Musings Still Single, Hoping to Mingle

Bad advice for finding queer love

WORDS Charlie Winters
IMAGE Art Bicnick

First, I must apologize, ladies and nonbinary friends, my attempts have been strictly MLM (male loving male – my Multi Level Marketing ventures are unrelated). As such, you’ll have to look at my advice through the lens of a cis-homo male.

First, we need to figure out if it is possible to have a homoerotic encounter in Iceland. Looking at its history, Iceland is pretty queer. The country has had a queer organization (Samtökin '78) for over 45 years, had the world’s first openly gay prime minister (Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir) and has the most LGBTQ+ members of society per capita (trust me). This means the likelihood of homo-to-homo communication is high.

Great! So how do I meet them? A good manhunt starts at a gay bar. If you’ve ever Googled the words “queer” and “Iceland” you know of Kiki. You can’t miss it, it’s the downtown building painted with a giant rainbow where Reykjavik’s most fashionably dressed gay tourists and straight women dance to the ABBA remix playing every night. I was able to strike up a wonderful conversation with a cute guy when they caught me hiding in the bathrooms hyperventilating, sadly it didn’t go anywhere.

The alternative bar is Gaukurinn. It’s also downtown and it’s known to host many queer events. If Kiki is full to the brim with the party queens, Gaukurinn is filled with the leather

jacket, spiked collared alt queers. They’re all friendly and wonderful, but a hot guy said “Hey” to me once and Gay Panic evolved into Gay Panic Attack real fast. I’ve never been able to go back.

If the bars are a no-go, then the alternative is apps. There are three in Iceland: Tinder, Grindr and Smitten.

Tinder is Tinder except you run out of potential people to swipe on damn fast. But hey, if you’re looking for hunky gay sailors, flight attendants or tourists, it’s the place to be. Unfortunately, I’m simultaneously scared of the sea, in-flight meals and camping gear, so Tinder didn’t work for me.

There’s also Grindr. Those on Grindr know how thirsty people can be and on an island with such a small population, you might as well be slapped with a “Fresh Meat” label and taken to the market. Hungry queers grabbed at me from all sides. Too intense.

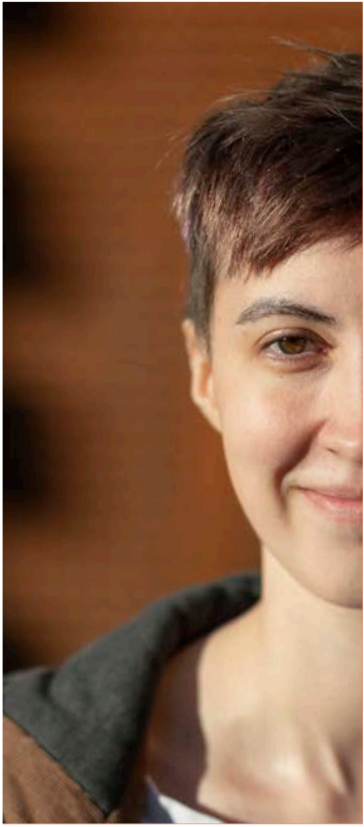
I was left with one final option. If anyone else is on Smitten, let me know, cause it seems to be me and some guy named Bjarki just chillin’ here.

And those are all the tips I can provide. Hopefully, you won’t follow my advice and will actually be able to find yourself someone to spend Pride with.

Good luck, Godspeed, use protection, and happy hunting. ■

When you arrive the first thing that you notice is that the sun never sets on this queer little island. Walking down the streets there’s rainbows everywhere but you aren’t focused on that because... Dear Lord! Everyone is so fucking hot! Gay panic hits you like the rapidly shifting weather and the one question that echoes in your brain: “How do I get me some of that?”

Hi, I’m Charlie and I’ll be your gay guide to Reykjavik. As a single anxious virginal gay immigrant who went to Christian missionary school (God bless), I am the forefront expert on not getting laid. So, to help you out, I’m going to tell you everything I’ve tried on this little gay volcanic landmass to try and get a date, so you don’t replicate my mistakes.



Well, You Asked

Bumpy Roads, Take Me Home

You really should not have asked

WORDS Catherine Magnúsdóttir
IMAGE Art Bicnick

WHERE ARE THE PUBLIC LAUNDROMATS IN REYKJAVIK AND AKUREYRI LOCATED?

When you do find a publicly accessible laundromat it's usually incorporated into something else – because laundromats are fucking boring – like a café an entire hostel. That's how you might have missed them. If

you're out and about camping, the campsites should have some opportunities to clean your clothes or you just keep doing the good ol' four sides switcheroo until you reach the nearest unoccupied waterfall.

IF I GO TO AIRWAVES IN NOVEMBER AND SLEEP IN A VAN, WILL I DIE?

Depends. What do you think will kill you first? The cold? Most rentable campervans are equipped to handle that – human popsicles don't give good reviews. Sleep deprivation? Most people can go a while without rest in a big bed, especially when they're entertained, though you might get cranky. Other festival

goers? Now that's another story. There's a chance you'll have to bulldoze your way onto the campsite, Mad Max style, to get a spot. Otherwise you and your van will be at the mercy of Reykjavik night life and the might of music maniacs pumped up on new riffs and beats just waiting to find their own little stage – say, the roof of a van – to continue the party. Also, parking is, like, super tricky here even without major events, so beware.

IS THERE A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN RENT A MOBILITY SCOOTER FOR TOURISTS? PREFERABLY ABLE TO USE ON HARD TERRAIN.

Okay, hang on, let me not be a bit of a dick about this one. So, this is one bumpy island and outside of towns the terrain gets rough pretty quickly. Even the capital city is super uneven. There have been some efforts to make a few buildings more accessible for wheelchairs and mobility aids, though the old ones in particular tend to be very narrow. Apparently you can contact tour providers (like Iceland Unlimited) and locations ahead of time and they can prepare to help out. Some of the major sites have these wooden deck paths that should help. But in terms of renting (not buying) things like mobility scooters, I can't say I've found much here. Hopefully, to be continued... ■



Last Look IMAGE Art Bicnick

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Potent Quotables

I'm working on my podcast with two other people that both live in different countries.

Journalist Iryna Zubenko spoke with Taylor Garcia van Biljon about her side hustle as a podcast producer on page 9.

The first step in the restoration process is pouring water over the pages or washing the pages.

Eyþór Guðmundsson collects and restores old manuscripts. Find out more on page 10.

When I went the first time to Torture Garden, it was my first big event and people were getting shit faced. I was like, "whoa, is this allowed?"

This issue's feature dives into the world of kink and its place within the LGBTQ+ community. Read more on pages 12-14.

It is not possible to create something like this without struggle.

Read Francesca Stoppani's account of this year's Norðanpaunk, Iceland's biggest DIY festival in the world, on page 24.

I am the foremost expert on not getting laid.

Charlie Winters' quest for love isn't going very well. Read about his tribulations on page 37.

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