



# The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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Editorial | Anna Andersen

# ÁFRAM ÍSLAND!

Anna's 24th Editorial



If there's one thing that really unites Icelanders, it's probably the annual Eurovision Song Contest. On May 18, the whole of Iceland will be glued to the TV, cheering Eypór Ingi Gunnlaugsson on as he performs the song "Ég á líf" before all of Europe. They will be partying all right, but the good time will be punctuated by some serious oohs and aaahs and oohs as it's revealed how many points our pals in Europe give us.

While the proliferation of parties in the recent elections confirms that there are many conflicting voices in Iceland, there will be one unanimous voice when it comes to Eurovision, and that's Eypór Ingi Gunnlaugsson. It took a while to get there—people bickered about everything down to the way he wore a Band-Aid—but as soon as he steps onto the stage in Malmö, they will all be standing behind him.

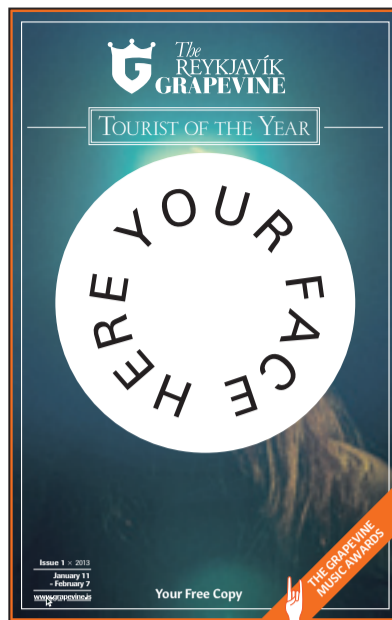
If Eurovision seems like a strange competition to take seriously—come on, it's a pretty kitschy affair—consider that it's one of few international competitions that Iceland can compete in on equal footing. And, as it turns out—again and again—Icelanders love to win, to bask in the spotlight, to be the best in the world.

In a pool of 321,857—give or take a few—there will naturally be fewer star athletes winning gold medals at, for instance, the Olympics, than there are in other countries. The exception is handball. Icelanders are relatively good at that for one reason—maybe it's because Americans think it's a game for elementary school kids—or the other.

When the Icelandic handball team competed in the 2008 Olympic finals, statistics from the local utility company suggest that people didn't even get up to use the toilet. When the team returned, they were greeted by much pomp and circumstance and the president awarded each player a Knight's Cross in the Order of the Falcon—arguably the most honourable of awards given out in Iceland.

With handball, Iceland only gets a chance to shine once every four years, but with Eurovision, it's once every year. And every year it's the same "we will definitely win this time" story—never mind last time and the time before that. Icelanders become possessed with an "in it to win it" mentality. It's really a bit scary, as Eypór Ingi told us. It's like Eurovision turns Icelanders into monsters.

There's more about that on page 16, and if you really have no idea what Eurovision is because you live in, say the United States, turn the page to a comprehensive guide with everything you need to take part in this wildly nationalistic party



## WILL YOU BE GRAPEVINE'S 'TOURIST OF THE YEAR 2013'?

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Note: To be eligible, the tourist (this can be you) must have visited Iceland in 2013.

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## FUN TRIVIA QUESTION

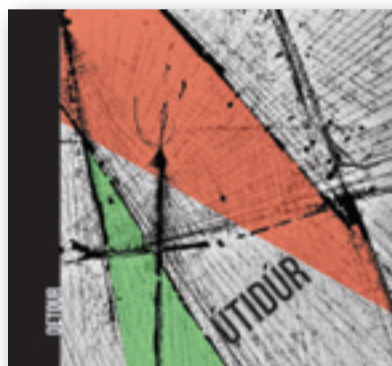
Taken from the educational trivia game *Instant Iceland*

**Q:** Iceland has never won the Eurovision Song Contest, but in 2009 an Icelandic singer came in second. She used the name Yohanna, but what was the name of her song?

- A Is it True?
- B Is it You?
- C Is it Me?

Turn to page 28 for the answer!

## TRACK OF THE ISSUE



Útidúr – Vultures

Download for FREE at [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)

You know that feeling when you have ten different things to do in a day, and rather than sulk and stress you just wake up and do them. Then halfway through the day you realise how nicely everything is coming together, and a wave of 'happy' hits you? Well, that's what listening to Útidúr's new track "Vultures" feels like.

The song off of their newest album, 'Detour,' is led by about a minute of a steady beat and piano tinkling before the lead singer, Gunnar Örn, comes in with his Beirut-like vocals. That is, if Beirut sang with a heavy Icelandic accent. Listen to the addictive tune while walking down Austurstræti and find joy in knowing that the only way anyone can understand the delight that is happening between your two head-phones is by the smile in your eyes. **PY**



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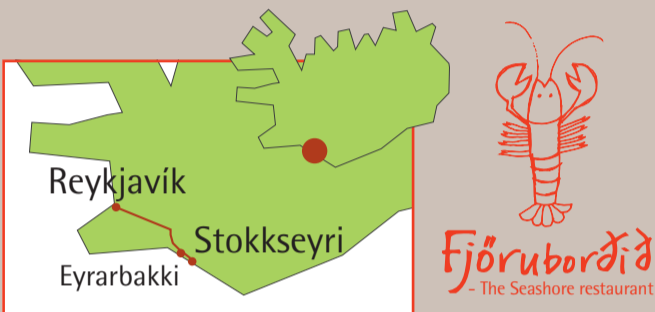


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## Sour grapes & stuff

### MOST AWESOME LETTER OF THE ISSUE

#### ICELANDS BEST KEPT SECRET

After having experiencing the most amazing holiday I've ever been on and after almost getting arrested at the airport for smuggling Iceland's Best Kept Secret I guess I'd better come clean and share it with you...although a full day bobbing around in the steaming silica waters of The Blue Lagoon was just as hair raising as the magical rainbow waterfalls, the geothermal power stations, the mental lava landscape and the bonkers glacier floating icebergs, non of these left my hair feeling as dry as a bone and as frizzy as a frizzy thing. (I looked like Bridget Jones after she had driven to the hotel for a 'mini break' with Hugh Grant)

So imagine my surprise to discover that pouring a bottle of the most delicious Icelandic Egils Malt Extrakt alcohol free beer type drink all over my hair left it instantly softer than a babies bum! It's true! It is absolutely amazing stuff which has special magical powers without a shadow of a doubt. Hence my pathetic (inadvertant?) attempt at smuggling it out of the country... But those eagle eyed customs fellas were having none of it...pah, jolly well keep it to yourself then!!!

Thanks for a great cultural bonkers country with fab people and the nice

hosts in the Hilton Exec Lounge who 'donated' one or two bottles to me in the name of science!

Yvonne Denton

**Wow! Thanks for the tip! How did you ever think of pouring Egils Malt Extrakt alcohol free beer type drink all over your head? Can we print this secret?**

Haha, after yet another mad dash to the free booze and fill yer boots 6-8 happy hour in the hilton executive lounge (my mate paid for the hotel, I'm skint!) I started wondering what free food would be as good for my crispy mad hair as that white silica blue lagoon stuff is for your skin when andy hit upon malt being allegedly good for your hair...further inspection of the ingredients also revealed via spurious translation that it contains marijuana or hemp (as well as liquorice) I'm not sure what liquorice does other than make you 'go' if you eat too much but if hemp is good enough to use as a conditioner for the likes of The Body Shop, then it's good enough for me! So now the secret is out. I'm an unemployed engineer and always wanted to invent something so reckon I can tick that off my bucket list. (just a shame I can't tick northern lights off-

it was too cloudy) Anyway, I'm a rubbish cook but reckon you should leave it to 'cook' for at least 10 minutes. Then 'hey presto' a glossy mane and a passport to be released into the wilds of iceland again! It's magic! X

PS – you can print it. (had to dash off from last email, because my georgous new boyfriend just landed in canada for a job interview after a 21 hour flight and had just texted me before he passes out. It's not every day I get woken up by a text from the other side of the world and an Icelandic editor! How cool! You work late by the way... am impressed! Take care. Anybody (who is normal ish) is welcome to stay at my house in england by the way. night bless xxx)

Yvonne

Dear Yvonne,

Thank you for all of your emails! For your Egils Malt Extrakt alcohol free beer hair miracle solution, for your entertaining story and for your invitation to England (though we're not sure if we would fit your standard of 'normal')!

It's true, we often work late hours, but it's readers like you that make it all worth it. If you ever make it to Iceland again, we'll treat you to some Malt!

Love,  
The Grapevine

This app is silly, <http://finance.yahoo.com/news/iceland-app-warn-hookup-relative-200939264.html>. You Vikings are all so closely related that you can do organ transplants between total strangers without anti-rejection drugs.

DEP

Hey there DEP,

People have certainly scoffed at the anti-incest app and how much international media attention it got because of

course nobody really accidentally sleeps with their relative here, at least not that we or anybody we know knows of (read more on page 6). But you're saying that it's silly because we're all a bunch of incestuous Vikings and no app in this world will help us? Jeez, thanks!

Maybe you're right though, who knows. The Icelandic writer and filmmaker Andri Snær Magnason recently said that being an Icelander is like having a mentally retarded Siamese twin. He was expressing dissatisfaction over

the recent parliamentary election results, which saw The Progressive Party and The Independence Party winning the greatest number of seats (read more on page 8). However, he immediately regretted using the term "mentally retarded" in a derogatory fashion. He really meant to say "foolish" or "silly."

Best,  
RGV

How are you??Just hoping this email reaches you well, I'm sorry for this emergency but I just have to let you know my present predicament. My family and I made an urgent trip to United Kingdom. Everything was fine until we were attacked on our way back to the hotel, nobody was hurt but we lost money, bank cards, mobile phones and my bag in the

course of this attack. I immediately contacted my bank in order to block my cards and also made a report at the nearest police station. I've been to the embassy and they are helping me with my documentation so i can fly out but I'm urgently in need of some money to pay for my hotel bills and my flight ticket home, will pay back as soon as i get back home.

Kindly let me know if you would be able to help me out so I can forward you the details required for a wire transfer.

Best regards,  
lolita

OH COME ON, LOLITA. DO YOU REALLY THINK THE GRAPEVINE IS GOING TO FALL FOR THAT ONE?

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Congratulations to this issue's MOST AWESOME LETTER. Drop us a line at [letters@grapevine.is](mailto:letters@grapevine.is) to find out how to collect those free socks! And if you're in the market for some socks come next issue, why not write us a wonderful reader letter to that same market. Like Axl Rose said: "It's so easy!"



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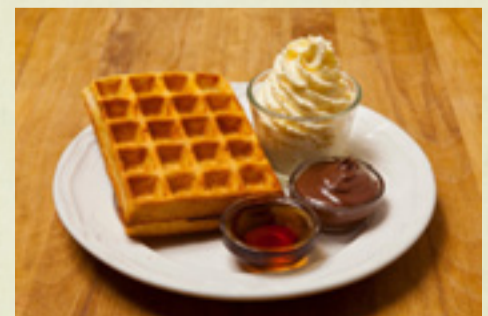
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# It's Not Just An Anti-Incest App

## The Book of Icelanders goes mobile

by Larissa Kyzer



Photo: Alísa Kalyanova

What do any two random Icelanders have in common, genetically? If this sounds like the beginning of a bad knock-knock joke (or Jimmy Kimmel sketch), that's probably because by now you've read at least some of the pun-heavy headlines popping up everywhere from Bloomberg Businessweek and NBC to the BBC and The Huffington Post. A quick sampling if you haven't: "App Aims to Keep Cousins from Kissing," or "Icelanders Avoid Inbreeding Through Online Database."

So then let's get this out of the way early: two random Icelanders have about as much in common as second cousins, once removed, according to Dr. Kári Stefánsson, CEO and co-founder of deCODE Genetics. That might sound like a lot, but accounting for the vast possibilities for genetic recombination in each generation, it really isn't. Breaking it down in very, very simple terms—call it 'genetics for literature students in five minutes'—Kári says, two Icelanders share a lot of DNA, but only in tiny bits and pieces.

If it seems strange that one of the world's more prominent neurologists would be taking the time to parse basic genetics for a freelance journalist with a high school level understanding of DNA, then well, you can see just how far the joke has really gone.

### NEW BÖMP TECHNOLOGY

In early 2013, deCODE Genetics and the University of Iceland's School of Engineering and Natural Sciences challenged the nation's university students to design a smart phone app for the 10th anniversary of the online genealogical database Íslendingabók.

The database takes its name from the Book of Icelanders, a 12th century historical text which details the Icelandic settlement. Currently, the database contains 810,000 genealogical records of the inhabitants of Iceland, dating more than 1,200 years back. It is viewable only by Icelandic citizens and permanent residents, about 200,000 of who have sought access to the site.

A collaborative venture between deCODE and software engineer Friðrik Skúlason, the Íslendingabók site developed as a corollary to deCODE's genealogical research. "The reason why we have been able to lead the world in genetic research," Kári Stefánsson says, "is because we understand the structure of Iceland's population so well." DeCODE has an advantage over "the big guys in human genetics" because the organisation has intimate understanding of Icelandic genealogy, he says. "Our history is mapped in our DNA."

DeCODE has attracted no small amount of international press over the years, but it is unlikely that its student app competition would have created such fervour now were it not for one of the novelty features of the winning ÍslendingaApp: the Sifjaspellipillir or "Incest Spoiler" alarm. It alerts the user if the person he or she

plans on going home with is a near relation. Using the app's "new bömp technology," users can tap their phones together and see how closely they are related. It will either erupt with a discouraging siren, or issue a gleeful "No relation: go for it!" message, while a Barry White-esque voice urges you on with a subtle "Oh, Yeeeahh."

### SAD ENGINEERS WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR

The winning "ÍslendingaApp" was submitted by Alexander Annas Helgason, Arnar Freyr Aðalsteinsson and Hákon Prastar Björnsson, three student software engineers at the University of Iceland who collaborate under the business moniker Sad Engineer Studios (SES). The Sad Engineers are, by their own account, "actually rather jolly" and they have good reason to be. In winning the ÍslendingaApp competition, they've not only made headlines around the world, but they've also received 1,000,000 ISK (just under 8,500 USD) for their app concept, as well as the possibility of further development opportunities with deCODE.

In addressing the "incest alarm," and resulting jokes about dating risks in Iceland, many people involved in administering the app competition expressed a surprising amount of incredulity that it has garnered so much attention from the international media. For their part, SES can laugh about it: "it is a running joke in Icelandic culture," Hákon Prastar says, though he and his collaborators had "no knowledge of anyone actually accidentally sleeping with a relative."

### CONNECTING WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS

While this is obviously all rather amusing, the "Incest Spoiler" feature, which SES says is "purely for fun," does perhaps belie the sincerity and creativity which they and other participants put into designing their apps, which primarily focused on finding inventive ways to connect Icelandic youth with their genealogical heritage.

"I considered the competition a wonderful opportunity to create a fun app with a positive societal purpose," said Hlín Leifsdóttir, a humanities student with an interest in entrepreneurship. She's part of the design team Skyldleikur whose app placed second in the competition.

"The fact that the app would be based on Íslendingabók really sparked my interest," she said. "I believe that awareness of one's own historical roots can contribute to one's general historical awareness."

The Skyldleikur app is an all-ages game which uses the information archived in Íslendingabók to generate personalized questions about the player's ancestors: When did they live; where were they born? From graphics down to the soft colour palette, Skyldleikur's central image—a tree whose branches blossom and fill with birds as you answer more questions correctly—was specifically designed to "spark interest in genealogy among the youngest generation," says one of her teammates, Björn Þór Jónsson, "while still appealing to the older generations." In the future, the Skyldleikur team can imagine all sorts of possible expansions for the app, such as users writing in their own advanced questions which could be integrated into family games.

### A NATIONAL INTEREST IN GENEALOGY

"It has often been said that there is a national interest in genealogy here," SES member Hákon Prastar remarked. All three SES engineers readily shared their own prior experiences using the Íslendingabók website. Arnar Freyr, for instance, thought that the website had always been a fun tool to use when you make a new friend, and you find out that you are fifth cousins. It was their interest in these unexpected personal connections which inspired the bömp tapping feature in the first place—they thought it would be great to be able to quickly find out if you and a friend had any shared ancestors.

Aside from the bömp feature, the ÍslendingaApp also allows users to search for any name in the database to see how they are related to that individual. While personal details about people listed in the registry are only viewable by close relatives—you can't sift through Jónsi or Vigdís Finnbogadóttir's family tree, for instance, if your only relation to them is 12 generations back—it is

“

...it will either erupt with a discouraging siren, or issue a gleeful 'go for it!' message, while a Barry White-esque voice urges you on with a subtle 'Oh, Yeeeahh.'

”

possible to look through and see how close your family connections really are. Additionally, the ÍslendingaApp includes compiled statistics, popular names, a calendar of relatives' birthdays, and reminders so that you "never forget grandma's birthday again."

In reaching out to student designers in this app competition, Ingi Rafn Ólafsson, the University of Iceland's marketing and community director, said the organisers were "tapping into the vast creativity and spirit of the generation that is currently in the Universities" and looking for new ideas for highlighting the wealth of information contained in the Íslendingabók database. They have certainly accomplished this, as evidenced by the vastly different approaches that the top placing teams took in their app designs, while still having similar goals in mind. "Older generations tend to be more interested in learning about their roots," says Skyldleikur's Hlín. "I think this has everything to do with how the information is presented, and that a more youth friendly approach would most certainly spark the interest of the younger generations."

Perhaps fascinating the foreign press with the "Incest Spoiler" will have its side benefits, too. Comments sections around the web may now be chock full of crass suggestions about the services that foreign tourists might render in Iceland's gene pool, but the Sad Engineers keep their sense of humour about this: "If it actually does expand tourism, that'd be fantastic."

## No Lifeguard At The Gene Pool?

by Anna Andersen

Iceland's gene pool sure has been under heavy scrutiny this last month. Thanks to a joke taken a little bit too literally by the international media, a whole bunch of people are probably now under the impression that Icelanders are so related that they need an app to prevent incest. Now, we are a pretty homogenous nation, as founder of deCODE Genetics Kári Stefánsson says, but we're not THAT homogeneous.

**DeCODE Genetics "has discovered key risk factors for dozens of common diseases" due in part to Iceland's small, homogeneous gene pool. So just how homogeneous are we?**

We are homogeneous in the sense that all of us are rooted in a relatively few individuals who lived many, many centuries back. This means that two random Icelanders will share more of the genome than two Americans, but they share just tiny little pieces of DNA because the genome has been broken up by recombination over many generations. There is the so-called Founder Effect in our population meaning that a few individuals who lived in the past are responsible for a large percentage of the population. This makes it much easier for us to find rare mutations that cause diseases.

**According to a chapter on impediments to marriage in Iceland's Law in Respect of Marriage No. 31, "Persons related by direct descent may not intermarry, and the same shall apply to siblings." This, however, means that Icelanders can marry their second cousins. You must have data on this; is this practice prevalent today? Was it in the past?**

We published a paper ["An Association Between the Kinship and Fertility of Human Couples," SCIENCE VOL 319] a few years back which showed that the more closely related parents were, the more children they had, which is sort of counterintuitive. Then when we looked at whether there was a relationship between how closely related the parents were and how many children their children had, it was still the case that the more closely related the parents were, the more children their children had, except when the parents were first cousins. This means, if the first cousins had children, those children were probably handicapped. So that's an indirect answer to your question.

**So it's okay for second cousins to procreate?**

Second cousins will have healthy children, at least that is what our data indicate. So biologically it is fine. Also, keep in mind that our definition of a species is a group of individuals who are closely enough related to each other to be able to have offspring. So implicit in our definition of a species is a relationship between individuals. I'm not at all promoting or recommending that second cousins procreate; I'm just saying that our data do not indicate that there will be biological disasters, though there may be social disasters. It is definitely frowned upon and probably should be.

**The law also states that, "Examination of impediments to marriage shall be performed by persons empowered to perform marriage ceremonies..." Do priests actually need to consult Íslendingabók to verify that they are not marrying off persons related by direct descent?**

I have no idea what the priests do in general. I do not know whether they consult Íslendingabók. I do not know if they like movies, I don't know what they like to listen to, I don't know what they like to eat. I know nothing about priests. I don't go barhopping with priests. I know nothing.

**How does the incest alarm work? How closely related do you have to be to set it off? How as this determined?**

You know, the incest alarm on this app was just a joke. On the tenth anniversary of our Íslendingabók database, we launched a competition to create a mobile version of the site, which was won by computer nerds who put together an app that was visually appealing and easy to use. When they got the award, they created this tongue-in-cheek part, but they were just joking. The international press was fooled.

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# So What's This Right-Wing Election Victory I Keep Hearing About?

by Kári Tulinius



Photo: DV / Sigtryggur Ari

To put it in simple terms, the two right-wing political parties in Iceland, The Independence Party and The Progressive Party, each won 19 out of 63 seats in the Icelandic parliament. This has caused much bafflement in the non-Icelandic press as this means that 60.3% of the members of the incoming parliament belong to parties who are largely blamed for the 2008 financial crash. These two parties ruled together from 1995–2007 and their policies arguably created the conditions that resulted in the collapse of the Icelandic banking sector.

## HOW CAN ICELANDERS BE SO FORGIVING?

Not so much forgiving as angry and looking for an outlet. Since the financial crash, anger has torn through Iceland like Godzilla through Tokyo. The outgoing left-wing government MPs were like earnest scientists trying various ways to get Godzilla to return to the ocean from whence it came. To add to the foreign media's puzzlement over the election result, the left-wing government was widely held to have been extremely successful in terms of their economic stewardship. Their opponents, however, had Godzilla on their side.

## SO THE RIGHT-WING TEAMED UP WITH GODZILLA TO BATTER THE LEFT-WING?

The story is a little bit more complicated than that. The more right-wing of the two parties, The Independence Party, did not do as well in the election as expected. In fact its 26.7% vote-share is the second lowest the party has ever received in a national election, the lowest being the 2009 election just after the financial crash. Nevertheless, it did get the largest share of votes. However The Progressive Party went from 14.8% to 24.4%, getting its best result since 1979. The two parties together received just a shade over 51% of the total vote.

## THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY THAT CLAIMED THE ANGRY VOTE?

Yes, they harnessed the anger of the Icelandic electorate and rode it to victory, like everyone who has triumphed in Icelandic elections since the financial crash. The left-wing parties were the obvious beneficiaries of anti-capitalist anger in the post-crash 2009 parliamentary election. In 2010, the Best Party, led by comedian Jón Gnarr and his hipster buddies, appealed to anti-politician anger in Reykjavík's municipal vote. In 2012, President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson won re-election by presenting himself as the Icelandic people's friend against foreign capitalists and treacherous politicians, mixed with a dose of "pretty ladies cannot be president" sexism against his female opponent.

## WITH GODZILLA ON YOUR SIDE, NOTHING CAN DEFEAT YOU.

The left-wing did not help themselves. There were a total of fifteen parties running for parliament, of which ten could be reasonably argued were mainly of the left or appealed to voters who would vote for left-wing parties, and seven of those parties received more than one percent of the vote. The outgoing government failed to articulate a political programme that could unite left-wing voters, and its signature proposal for a new constitution died after right-wing filibustering. The left-wing parties even failed to unite their own MPs.

## THE LEFT-WING DIDN'T SPLINTER SO MUCH AS NEVER BIND TOGETHER?

This fracturing of the left-wing started while the outgoing government was in power. They, the Social Democratic Alliance and the Left Green Movement, started with a majority

of 34, but had effectively become a minority government by the end of it, as one Social Democratic MP and three Left-Green MPs left. Furthermore, the left-wing Citizen's Movement party split in three. Due to this fracturing the left-wing parties received 39% of the seats in parliament, while winning 44% of the vote.

## SO THEY STILL SHOULD'VE LOST, BUT JUST NOT AS THOROUGHLY AS THEY DID.

Pretty much. Though the picture of left and right, which is reductive to begin with, is further complicated by the fact that The Progressive Party swept to victory on anti-capitalist rhetoric, saying it would lessen the debt-burden of Icelandic home-owners by taking money from what they term "vulture funds." Though it should be clear this was not traditional left-wing anti-capitalism so much as an appeal to anti-foreign sentiment. Furthermore, one other reason for their success is residual goodwill The Progressive Party has in rural Iceland from back when it was the political arm of the farmers' and village cooperatives movement.

## WHAT DID THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY OFFER GODZILLA TO SECURE ITS FAVOUR?

Debt relief, 11.5% of the electorate are unable to pay their creditors, and many more are just barely keeping up. The Progressive Party said it would cut housing debts by 20%, though who exactly would qualify for this debt relief has not been made entirely clear. But that sounded good to Godzilla, and it hugged The Progressive Party to its chest. But no one knows if Godzilla will stay appeased or return to menace Icelandic society.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

While Icelanders celebrated the **first day of summer** this month, April has proven to be one of the **coldest on record**.

Could it be that the weather gods are punishing us for complacency? After all, Iceland did return to status quo politics as The Independence Party received the biggest share of the popular vote in **Parliamentary elections** held on April 27.

Or could it be the influence of reported alien activity in the Icelandic skies, as a local extra-terrestrial enthusiast confirmed **160 UFO sightings?** And **CCP Games** just so happens to hold their annual **Eve Online** sci-fi fanfest this month and stir up controversy in the art world?

Meanwhile, **mysterious hieroglyphics** appear in **Grjótagjá lava cave** and **Hverfjall crater** in the north which further corroborate a more recent study showing Icelanders to be **Nordic leaders of literacy** (as the word 'CAVE' appeared in the cave and 'CRATER' in the said crater.) Coincidence? I don't think so.

Then again, our detractors might maintain that **shit weather** is this country's birth right, signed and sealed like the **"incest app,"** which made its debut this month.

In any case, the weather didn't scare off the **Chinese**, who signed a new **free trade agreement** with Iceland on April 15, or **Spotify**, which is now accessible here, or the three sheep found wandering the Þorgeirsfjörður area in the north after being lost in last autumn's snowstorms and spending an entire winter outside on the loose.

While it may have put the wind in the sails of **The Pirate Bay** boat, which anchored on an Icelandic server for two days before setting sail for the Caribbean, the **Pirate Party** still managed to uncover a little treasure among Icelandic voters, securing its first ever three seats in Alþingi.

And the weather certainly didn't drive away **the tourists**, who flocked here in record numbers, so much so that **police sent out warnings about speeding on the road** (apparently a problem among car-renting visitors), while the **Blue Lagoon** felt the need to enforce a new booking system and collect a fee from those looking to take a stroll around its industrial run-off waters.

No, it's not the weather that's frightening people around here. The real jolts are coming from **big industries**, like those looking to expand **power plants** and develop in the highlands, causing some **5000 environmentalists** to demonstrate in front of Alþingi on May 1.

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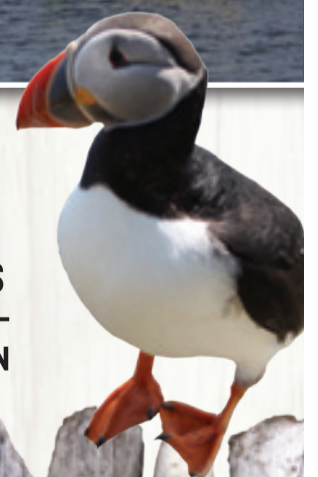


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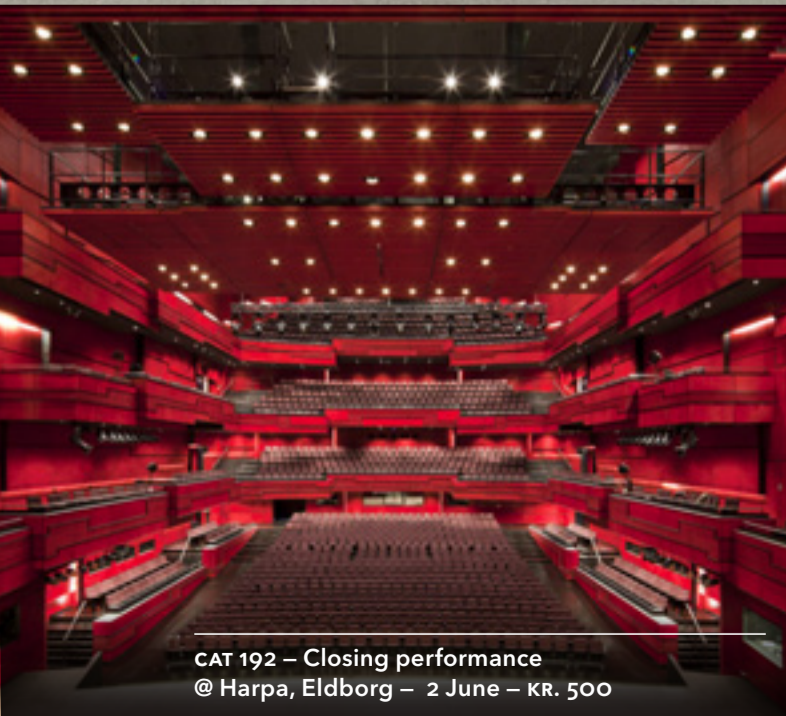
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# Partying With The Pirates



**Sam Knight** is a freelance journalist living in Washington D.C. He has been interested in Iceland since the Pots and Pans Revolution.

Two weekends ago, I couldn't have been happier to be in Reykjavík, thousands of miles from home— even more pleased than I normally would have been to participate in typically depraved Saturday night revelry in 101 Reykjavík.

Washington D.C., where I was born, raised, and currently live, was playing host to the White House Correspondents Dinner—a corrupt cesspool swimming with access journalists, actual celebrities, and the guys who control the nuclear arsenal. Someday, in a very thorough article about the decline in living standards for the vast majority of Americans, there will be an entire chapter dedicated to this circus—most infamous, perhaps, for being the gala where George W. Bush made a joke about not finding WMDs in Iraq under a White House sofa, while Iraqi women and children and American kids were being blown into unidentifiable smithereens.

But I was blissfully nowhere near the wank-a-thon and its related parties because I was doing what felt like the polar opposite—covering The Pirate Party's election night celebration at Kaffi Reykjavík, watching an improbable group of rag-tag internet freedom fighters nervously play a game of wait-and-see.

## THE JUNGLES OF CHIAPAS

It felt, in a way, like being in the jungles of Chiapas on New Year's Day in 1994—or at least a non-violent, way-less-bad ass version of the Zapatista uprising. Either way there was free beer. The Pirates were staying true to their inclusionary manifesto as far as I could tell, even if the free of charge stuff did run out rather quickly, and the line at the bar proved that microeconomic theories about price mechanisms aren't all bullshit.

Beer waiting time aside, there was a whiff of history in the air. In a few hours, we fully expected, based on polls, to see a handful of them become the first Pirate Party candidates in history to be elected to a national legislature. And there was a feeling that the results would have outsized influence typical of a country with the most non-British Premier League footballers,

WikiLeaks producers, Miss Worlds, and Sigur Róses per capita.

The Pirates' agenda—direct democracy, open government, and civil rights—had attracted people, such as myself, from all over the world. I noticed a French radio journalist snapping up interviews with random patrons. Laurie Penny—who, for all the right reasons, is a massive deal in the Anglophone left-o-sphere—was there. That Pirate candidates and strategists had been spied on and harassed by my government for helping WikiLeaks expose its murderous, corporate water-carrying ways made being there on that night all the sweeter, for me.

## FLIRTING HARD WITH DISASTER

Until, that is, the results started coming in. Although the Pirates had polled as high as 7.5 percent three days before the vote, all night voters threatened to ruin the election party. The tension was magnified by the fact that the Pirates' numbers were the last to be announced when local officials rattled off what results they could. Polite applause followed the less-than optimal numbers.

Musical performances distracted partygoers and supporters from the drama—as did an unruly, drum banging lush who was given the heave-ho by the cafe's staff. And I stopped jokingly asking Pirate candidates like Helgi Hrafn Gunnarsson and Smári McCarthy if they were Prime Minister yet. Not because my “Haha, I'm The Ignorant American” jokes became less comical with each repetition, in my opinion, but because the possibility of the Pirates finishing with less than five percent of the vote seemed increasingly realistic as the hours ticked away (as any casual observer of Icelandic Parliamentary politics knows, a party needs at least five percent to win any seats in Parliament).

While hopes remained high, the party was hovering at around 4.9 percent around midnight, flirting hard with disaster. The country was still waiting for



results to pour in from the capital area—the Pirates' bedrock of support, a fact that caused many to be relaxed in the face of a possible cataclysm. But MP Birgitta Jónsdóttir told me that she wouldn't take anything for granted, exuding a level-headedness required for long slogs she has fought with varying degrees of success in recent years. Either way, it seemed very possible that politicians seeking to marshal the power of horizontalist 21st century ideology would be, no pun intended, flattened.

## DANCING THEIR WORRIES AWAY

So I left the joint around 1:30 AM. Nervousness, helplessness, or cautious optimism—either way, the party wasn't exactly your typical 101 bender, and people I was chatting with wanted to check out The Progressive Party at Hotel Borg. I'd have been a shitty journalist if I didn't try to drink their beer. Given their history of looking out for moneyed interests, we thought they'd be taking care of the people celebrating Sigmundur Davíð's ascent at the swanky joint. But there was no such luck. Nine hundred ISK for a beer. A guy wearing a Mitt Romney shirt stumbling into the party was all I needed to know about the Douche Caucus without being plied with free alcohol. A motion was put forth to trudge up Laugavegur in search of higher quality debauchery. It passed with unanimous consent.

But I couldn't stop thinking about the Pirates—even a nice sloppy makeout sesh couldn't keep my mind off politics. What would become of the good ship Jolly Roger? My new friend and I formed a splinter cell in search of the remnants of the Pirate Party party. But Kaffi Reykjavík had shut. We found some Pirate candidates and supporters standing outside. A debate ensued about whether to join their comrades who were trying to salvage something of a Saturday night at the bar Harlem, or to set out in search of an apartment where we could watch the final results trickle in. For me, and some of the others, Harlem was the obvious choice. Pirate supporters—an identity I took on as the night wore on—sipped

and danced their worries away.

A sobering reality had sunk in, however, after the last call and long walk home—out to the apartment on Háaleitisbraut where I was staying. I flipped on the computer and checked the results on RÚV: Icelanders had not only given a majority of seats to the two parties responsible for handing the country over to larcenists over the last decades, but the Pirates were still polling just below five percent.

“Go home, Iceland. You're drunk,” I tweeted at around 5:30 AM—a throwaway remark that was retweeted by internet freedom activists from around the world.



## THE PIRATES PULL THROUGH

But when I awoke, rather groggily, I heard the good news from—appropriately—the internets, social media to be specific. Smári had updated his Facebook status to the delight of 43 or so of his friends—I didn't need Google translate to tell me the news was good. Three Pirates—Birgitta, Helgi and Jón Þór Ólafsson—would be representing Icelanders in the next session of Parliament.

And if they can manage to open up the government and pass direct democratic initiatives—the former is more likely than the latter—perhaps it will provide a model for those around the world who thrive on information. Something more dignified and less corrupted than kneeling at the altar of power and sipping from Rome's poisoned chalice to get information to the public.



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# My Way Or The Highway

## Road construction plans in Garðabær are causing a polite dustup

by Rebecca Louder



Photo: Alisa Kalyanova

I am mere steps into the Gálghraun lava field before I forget the bustling highway just to the east, connecting the towns of Garðabær and Hafnarfjörður. There is an almost instant sense of profound reverence to this unusual piece of wilderness, the last of its kind in the greater Reykjavík area. The lava field was created by the eruption of the volcano Búrfell over 7,000 years ago and later became the natural muse to one of Iceland's most iconic painters, Jóhannes S. Kjarval. Aside from some biological refuse like the discarded skeleton of a Christmas tree and a few piles of dog shit, it is perfect, unspoiled and completely peaceful.

Through the southern half of this ancient field, however, the town of Garðabær is planning to build Nýi ("New") Álfanesvegur, a six-lane freeway comprised of two bisecting roads. It would lie just a few kilometres north of the existing two-lane Álfanesvegur road. The plans were initially proposed and environmentally assessed by the municipality's division of Vegagerðin ("The Icelandic Road Administration") in 2002 and subsequently approved by parliament in 2009.

The new road was meant to bolster the town's expanding community, in particular the potential new residents of a luxury housing development on the southern-most edge of Gálghraun. "Many of the residents there bought their homes based on the idea that the new road would be built," Garðabær Mayor Gunnar Einarsson says. "It will be necessary to accommodate them."

### HANDS OFF MY LAVA

However, the planned construction has been met by opposition from the onset, in particular from a group called Hraunavinir ("Friends of Lava"). They have launched petitions, organised protest marches and held meetings with Garðabær city officials to try to get them to reevaluate the first assessment, which expired in May 2012, and offer an alternate plan to improve the existing road.

"The last assessment was only valid for ten years," says Gunnsteinn Ólafsson, a Hraunavinir board member. "Vegagerðin says that, because they have done repairs to the entrance of the road and also built a roundabout at Bessastaðir, the construction has already started. But those two projects were not included

in the plan for Nýi Álfanesvegur. They are trying to circumvent the law."

The opposition arose mainly from the fact that the area is in the Nature Conservation Register, a list of protected areas and areas where the circumstances exist to declare nature reserves or create national or country parks. "It's up to the municipalities to decide how they regard these areas," Gunnsteinn says. "So the City of Garðabær decided that the area north of the planned road would be a protected area, but not south of it, even though it is exactly the same nature."

As the number of protesters increased and discussions reached a stalemate, writer and environmental activist Andri Snær Magnason wrote an open letter to Gunnar Einarsson, published in the Fréttablaðið newspaper on April 20. "I just got tired of seeing people writing all these petitions and protesting and not being addressed," Andri says. "Of course I don't think I have the right to demand a meeting with a mayor and that he obey my requests, but I felt I had to say something." His letter called for Gunnar to reconsider the economical, environmental and cultural impact that this planned construction would have.

With opposition at a fever pitch, Minister of the Interior Ögmundur Jónasson issued a statement to the City of Garðabær requesting that it withhold signing a construction contract until a second assessment is completed. "I think it is necessary to listen to the voice of opposition," Ögmundur says. "This is not the first time I have intervened in this dispute. I have organised a few discussion meetings and the authorities in Garðabær have always been willing to attend them. Now I hope there will be proper consultations with the protesters."

### PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS

The Garðabær division of Vegagerðin is currently doing a second assessment of the road plan, which Gunnar says will be done by the end of May. "If the new assessment shows anything new that we have to take into account, we will," he says. "The implementation will take place on Vegagerðin's side." The new assessment will examine factors such as safety, traffic, cost, construction time and environmental impact.

“

I don't really have much sympathy for these homeowners who just don't like a bit of noise.

”

He adds that the city officials are more than happy to comply with Ögmundur's request for a second review as it doesn't hurt anyone to take a second look. "We aren't trying to come forward with this proposal aggressively," Gunnar says. "We just want to make sure we look at all the possibilities and do this respectfully."

While the road currently serves a community of 2,500 people and transports twice as many vehicles at most per day, the planned new road will accommodate 50,000 vehicles per day. Despite the disparity in these numbers, Gunnar maintains the new road's necessity. "The old one is very dangerous and we have to make room for future traffic in the area," he says. "We are planning to begin building homes in Garðaholt soon, the area south of the current Álfanesvegur, as it's one of the best areas to build on."

Gunnsteinn and Andri disagree with Gunnar about the new road's necessity. "The problem is that people are driving too fast on the old road," Andri says. "This is an example of archaic road construction that is no longer relevant to urban planning." This is in reference to the fact that the proposed freeway is based on an idea that has largely been phased out since the 1970s, due to an increase in traffic congestion at peak hours and the severity of accidents resulting from higher speeds. Many major cities, such as New York, Boston and Portland have implemented freeway removal policies and demolished these types of roads altogether.

Andri adds that the privilege of those who can afford prime real estate is an invalid argument to him. "I live next to a road that transports 12,000 vehicles every day," he says. "I don't really have much sympathy for these homeowners who just don't like a bit of noise."

### FEELINGS AND ARGUMENTS

The mayor is not only concerned with the residents' ears but also with their lives. "Our main point is the matter of traffic and security," Gunnar says, noting that the current road includes a blind-head that is particularly dangerous in bad weather, as well as dangerous merging lanes for cars in the residential areas.

Gunnsteinn too is concerned with safety, but he believes this could be addressed by repairing the old road. "We have suggested two possibilities: either they build roundabouts on the old road to make people drive slower," he says, "or they could also install motion-sensitive streetlights at intersections that would change from green to red when cars come to drive out of the residential areas."

He says he is glad that Ögmundur believes that the town officials will meet with him, although he notes that his last meeting with the mayor was unproductive. "His first response to me was, 'Well! The only other possibility is to build a tunnel, which would cost 3 billion ISK and that is so expensive that no one would dream of doing that,'" Gunnsteinn says. "He had already made up his mind before speaking to us. It was ridiculous."

"They have their feelings and arguments and we have our ours," Gunnar says, reiterating his stance that the old road is unsuitable for repair and the only other option would be to build an exorbitantly expensive tunnel. "I think the best solution would be to go ahead with our plan because we were very careful to take the environment into account. We don't think it will be as damaging to the area as the people opposed think it will be."

The opposition doesn't think it will just be a bit of damage, though. "It will totally destroy one of the last remaining ancient lava fields within the metropolitan area," Andri says.

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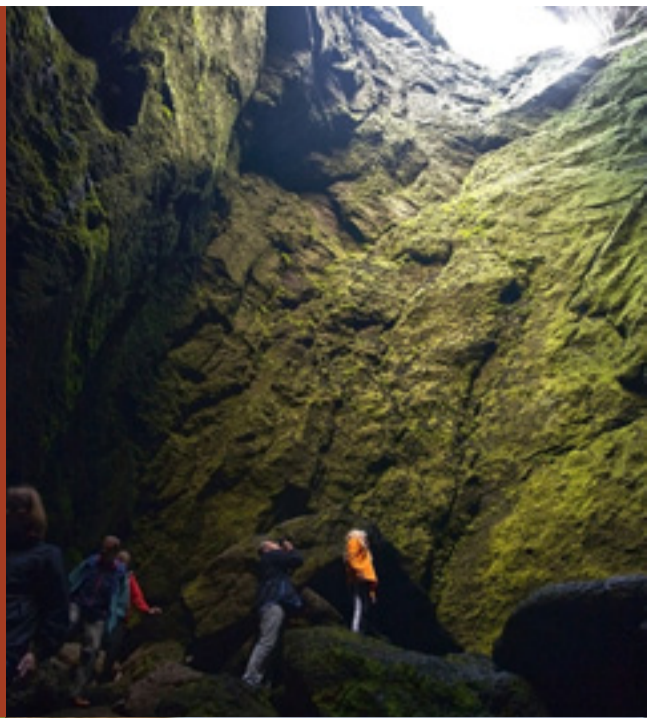
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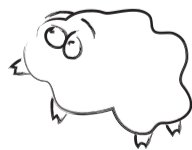
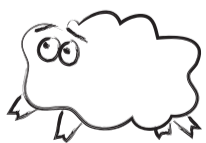
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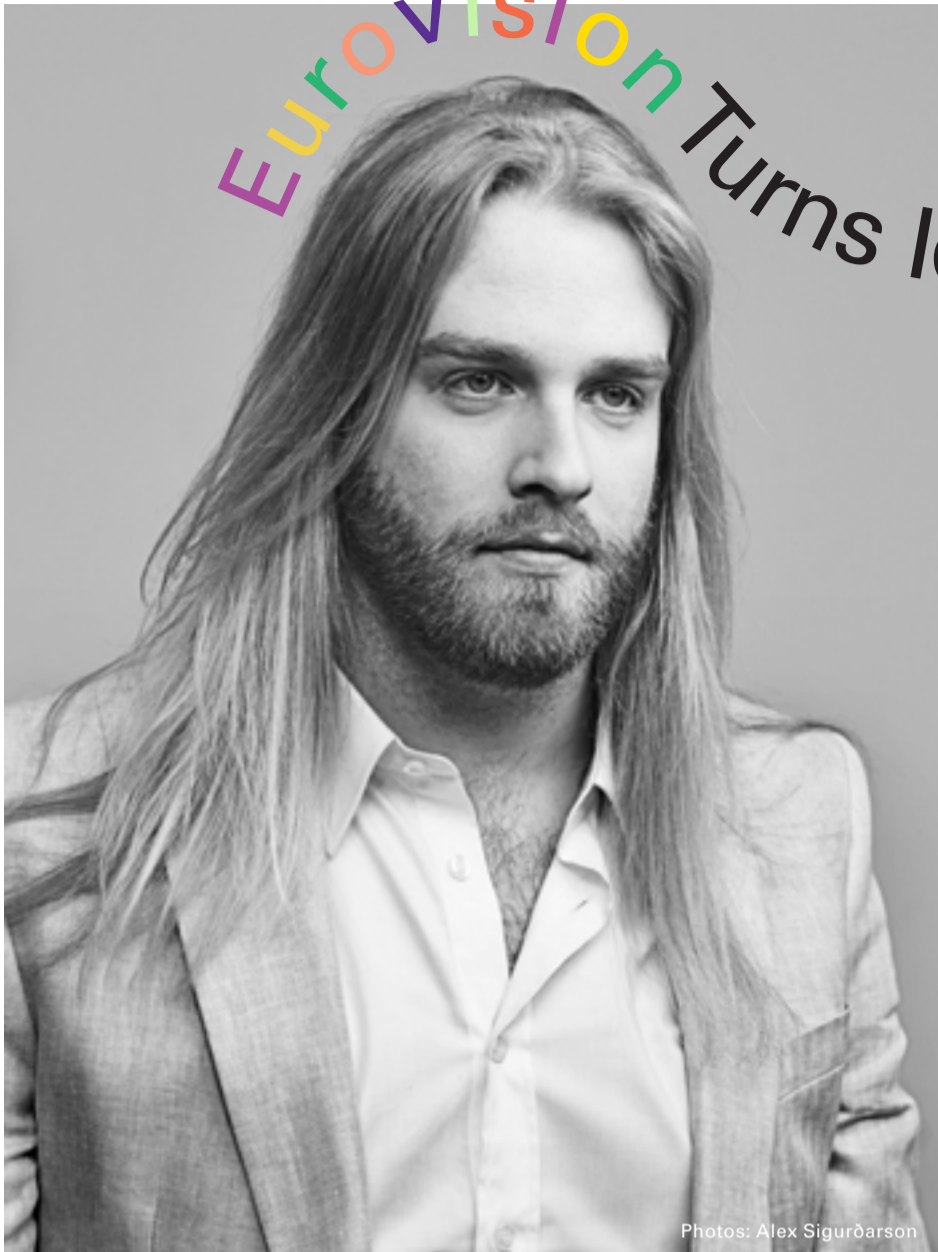
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Photos: Alex Sigurðarson

# Eurovision Turns Icelanders Into Monsters



## Eyþór Ingi opens up about what it's like to represent Iceland

by Anna Andersen

Eyþór Ingi Gunnlaugsson is off to Malmö to represent Iceland in the annual Eurovision Song Contest. He will be singing the song "Ég á líf" in Icelandic, marking the first time in 16 years that Iceland's song hasn't been translated to English. When the 23-year-old from Dalvík decided to take part in the preliminary song contest in Iceland, he had no idea how seriously Icelanders took it. "I thought it was crazy, but it's even crazier than I thought," he told us the night before he left for Sweden. "Evidently everyone in Iceland watches Eurovision, and if they don't watch it, they know something about it, and even if they don't know anything about it, they still have opinions about it." In many ways, he said it was a relief to be finally going abroad.

**Tell me about the song, "Ég á líf." What's it about?**

Well, it's really open for interpretation. The line "Ég á líf vegna þín," ("I owe my life to you") can mean different things to different people. I've been singing it at weddings and, interestingly enough, funerals too. So some people relate the lyrics to happy times in their life while others relate to them at difficult times. We're pretty happy with that.

**Iceland hasn't entered a song with Icelandic lyrics since Páll Óskar performed "Minn hinsti dans" ("My Final Dance") in 1997, the last year that is was obligatory for countries to sing in their mother tongue. What kinds of pros and cons weighed heaviest in the decision to stick to Icelandic?**

There was never really any question about it. Since Icelanders have been given the choice of singing in their mother tongue or English, we've always chosen English. I personally think it's nicer for countries sing in their language. Not only because you're most sincere when you speak your own language, but also because it's just fun to do something different, to take the risk. You know, why not?

**Have you gotten to hear it from people who are unhappy with the decision?**

Oh yeah, random people on the street stop me and ask, 'Why did you do that? Our chances of winning are so much slimmer now.' It's so funny, it's like they're asking some handball team, 'why didn't you play Óli [Stefánsson, Iceland's premier handball player, now retired] in the match?' It's like all of a sudden, I've been put into the role of a sports hero, which I don't think is the right way of looking at this. It's not about showing everyone what we've got or about winning the thing. It's about all of Europe meeting and having a good time. It's about the glitz and the glamour, about throwing a party.

**You don't think that the rest of Europe will be missing something important given that they don't understand Icelandic?**

Well, yeah, maybe. If you don't understand the language you might not connect with it in the same way as people do here at home, but I think it still works, and if anything it'll be more unique. "Ég á líf" is a bit interna-

tional too. I don't think it's difficult for a Dane or a Norwegian or a Swede to imagine what it means. You know, "líf," "life," So there's maybe that underlying impulse, and then people can interpret it as they want. And I think it's just a fun idea. This is a language spoken by a very small percentage of the world, and it will sound, well maybe it will sound horrible, but at least it'll be interesting.

### PREJUDICES ABOUT EUROVISION

**You've been performing, acting and singing for years now, but you've never taken part in Eurovision. Why not? Why now?**

This is a really difficult question to answer and I'm still asking myself the same question today. Personally I've never been a big Eurovision fan or had an urge to take part in it, but this year it was a bit more personal. When my good friend Pétur Jesú from the band Dúndurfréttur called me and said he had a song that had made it in a competition, my first reaction was, 'Yeah, yeah Pétur, I'm not going to enter this competition.' After I listened to it though, I immediately felt a connection, and I could tell that this was coming from Pétur's heart. So I thought, okay, it's totally different from everything else I've done, but why not? Why not do it and do it well, and then go back to making my album? I never expected it to go all the way. And then it won.

**Do you feel like entering the Eurovision contest will compromise your identity as an actor and singer? Will you be branded 'EUROVISION'?**

That's maybe what I always feared, but then I think, "Wow, does it matter? Why am I thinking it this way? It's not a big deal, it's just Eurovision. Come on. But now I don't know. I think the nation as a whole takes it too seriously and that scares me. It's a bit scary if the nation takes it so seriously that, by participating in this contest, one comes back branded. But hey, Daniel Ágúst went to Eurovision [and scored zero points], and then he went on to become the frontman of GusGus.

**Tell me about your experience since winning the local Icelandic song contest. What's it like to be in the Eurovision spotlight? Is there a lot of pressure?**

I started to feel the pressure even before the song contest finals. Already then I started to feel just how crazy people were about it all. I told Öggi [Örlygur Smári, composer], who's a big Eurovision fan, that I didn't know if I could deal with these people and with the media. And he looked at me and he said, 'Eyþór, I'm going to warn you,

I have to admit, because people around me are so relaxed around Eurovision, I thought everyone thought this was just for fun. But I think a lot of people take this too seriously and then I mean both those who have an uncanny interest in Eurovision and just want us to win it, and those who are prejudiced against it.

People stop me when I'm out on the town or when I'm walking to Bónus and criticise me for not showing what I'm made of, because maybe they've seen me perform Led Zeppelin or Freddie Mercury at a concert in the past. They're like, 'Why don't you show your whole vocal range? Why don't you show them what you can do?' Imagine if someone suggested that we perform it like Robert Plant. That would be ridiculous.

If you're on one extreme, we have to win it, then you're taking it too seriously. If you're on the other extreme, criticising harshly everything around this, well then you're also taking it too seriously. Then you're a bit silly.

**So how do you feel now, as you get ready to go off to Sweden?**

It's been an interesting rollercoaster and I haven't even gone abroad. At some point I told Pétur I don't think I can deal with all of this criticism in the media—the criticising of my clothes, the way that I wore a Band-Aid, how I cut a red fish, the music video—what will it be like when I go abroad, and he said, 'it's much easier abroad. It's Iceland that's difficult.'

**Why do you think Iceland is this way?**

It's hard to say. We are all steered by the media, so it's difficult to say that it's the whole nation. There are people out there who don't take everything so seriously. But I'm sure it comes from our old inferiority complex before we got our independence. Since then it seems like we feel like we need to prove ourselves to everyone else. A good example of this is how Björk and Sigur Rós didn't get the deserved attention here in Iceland before they got it abroad. That's so typical Iceland. But it's important to remember, we're not competing in an athletic match. We're just going to play cards.

*"I think the nation as a whole takes it too seriously and that scares me."*

Eurovision changes people into monsters.' And it's true.

For me it was just a rash decision. I thought if I somehow went all the way, that it would be just like going to meet a bunch of good friends for a fun board game and what matters is, when its done, that we would a good time, and when it's done, I can say, 'hey remember when we played that game.'

I think the Icelandic nation should think of it that way too, and I want to believe that that's the majority view. I want to believe that the nation's inferiority complex is a thing of the past. I want to believe that we have realised that it's just a TV show, that it's a night of glamour, that it can be fun because it's so ridiculous or because people think it's such fun music. I want to believe that.

### IN IT TO WIN IT

**But is your experience that the Icelandic nation wants to win it maybe even more than you do?**



# Golden Circle

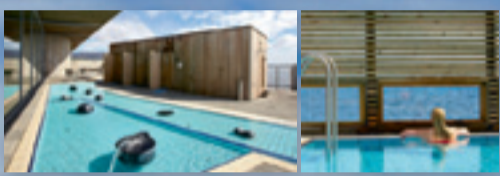
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# Iceland In The Eurovision Song Contest

## A Beginner's Guide

by Lee Williscroft-Ferris

Iceland has taken part in the Eurovision Song Contest since 1986. Editor-in-chief of So So Gay Magazine Lee Williscroft-Ferris takes us through the ups and downs of the country's Eurovision journey.

Yes, it's that time of year again, the time when hundreds of millions of TV viewers all over Europe and beyond tune in to watch the camp-fest that is the Eurovision Song Contest. This year's edition will take place in Malmö, Sweden, thanks to Loreen's victory in Azerbaijan last year with the pan-European hit, "Euphoria." We thought it would be good to take a look back at Iceland's history in the contest before Eyþór Ingi Gunnlaugsson takes to the stage with "Ég á Líf" in May.

### WHEN DID ICELAND FIRST TAKE PART IN THE CONTEST?

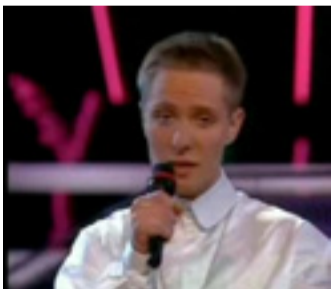
Iceland was a relative latecomer to the Eurovision party, entering the contest for the first time in 1986. The purported reason for the nation's tardiness was technical issues caused by the island's geographical distance from the rest of Europe.

### HAS ICELAND EVER WON THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST?

No, although it shares this dubious 'honour' with a whole raft of other countries, including Portugal, Malta, Cyprus and Hungary. Up until 2006, it was partnered with poor Finland as one of two Nordic countries never to reach the top. Then, the Finns went and won the thing with a group of masked 'monsters.' Rude.

### SURELY ICELAND, WITH ITS VERITABLE ROLL-CALL OF MUSICAL TALENT SUCH AS BJÖRK, RETRO STEFSON AND GUSGUS, HAVE NEVER EARNED THE INFAMOUS 'NUL POINTS'.

Oh dear, funny you should say that. Iceland has only scored zero on one occasion—in 1989. The song in question was "Það Sem Enginn Sér" ("What Nobody Sees"), performed by none other than Daniel Ágúst, now lead singer of... GusGus. How times change.



### WHO HAS DONE THEIR COUNTRY PROUD IN THE CONTEST?

Iceland had its first sweet taste of Euro success in 1990, when the band Stjórnin came fourth in Zagreb with the classic track "Eitt Lag Enn" ("One More Song"). Band member Sigríður Beinteinsdóttir, aka Sigga Beinteins, aka Sigga, aka Eurovision legend, went on to represent Iceland twice again, once as part of the group Heart 2 Heart who came seventh with "Nei Eða Já" in 1992. Then, Sigga finally took the solo spotlight in 1994 with "Nætur" ("Nights"), finishing in twelfth place in Dublin (Where else? It was the mid-1990s after all).

However, two other female singers have brought Iceland to within a cat's whisker of bringing the contest to Reykjavík. Selma came very close to winning in 1999 with "All Out Of Luck" (this was the first year that countries were allowed to sing in a language other than their own). Unfortunately, she was pipped at the post by a rather heavily made-up Swedish woman with a song that sounded suspi-

ciously like an ABBA b-side. Then, in 2009, Jóhanna came second in Moscow with "Is It True?", although it was left comprehensively trailing in the dust, along with everyone else, by Norway's Alexander Rybak and "Fairytale."

### HAS ICELAND AVOIDED CAUSING CONTROVERSY?

Not entirely, no. Jóhanna might have had the dress and demeanour of an innocent little Disney ice princess in 2009 and let's face it, you're about as likely to extract anything scandalous from Bo Halldórsson (1995) as you are to find Iceland developing nuclear missiles. Yet, Iceland hasn't always played it 'safe.' Páll Óskar caused a storm in 1997 when he appeared on stage in, quelle surprise, Dublin to perform "Minn Hinsti Dans" ("My Final Dance"), accompanied by what can only be described as four dominatrixes, clad in fishnet stockings and leather boots. Páll himself proceeded to stroke his thighs before thrusting his hands southwards at a 'strategic' point. The UK and Sweden loved it, the rest of Europe not so much.



Zip forward nine years to 2006 and an all-time low in Greco-Icelandic relations brought about by one Sívía Nótt. Essentially a comedy faux diva, the alter ego of singer and actress Ágústa Eva Erlendsdóttir, Sívía caused uproar in Athens by swearing at technical staff during rehearsals and behaving in a generally offensive manner during press conferences. So convincing was her act that by the time she took to the stage in the semi-final to perform "Congratulations," Sívía was booed and jeered in a vociferous manner not seen before at the contest. She didn't qualify. In the press conference that followed, Sívía 'explained' her failure thus: "Ungrateful bastards! You vote for ugly people from Finland who don't even have a real make-up artist, and you don't vote for me because I'm not a slut from Holland and I'm not an ugly, f\*\*\*\*\*g old bitch from Sweden!" Classy.

### SO, ICELAND IS A 'NEUTRAL' COUNTRY. THAT MUST MEAN IT DOESN'T INDULGE IN THE 'NEIGHBOURLY' VOTING THE CONTEST HAS BECOME FAMOUS FOR.

Wrong. Iceland's voting record is clearly skewed towards its Nordic brothers, Denmark and Norway in particular. Fear not, the favour is almost always returned! But when it's not, Icelanders are deeply offended.

### WHAT ARE ICELAND'S CHANCES THIS YEAR?

According to one bookmaker, 100–1, i.e. not great. Iceland has qualified from each semi-final since 2008 and has made the rather radical decision to keep the song in Icelandic this year, for the first time since 1997. This linguistic gamble does not appear to be at the heart of the matter for most. It's the fact that the song is, well, a little bit twee.

Nevertheless, good luck Iceland! Is Harpa big enough?

# UMMMM...

## Five recent Eurovision moments that made us chuckle

by Lee Williscroft-Ferris

### DANA INTERNATIONAL CAUSES MINOR SECURITY ALERT WITH TROPHY

Eurovision was held in Jerusalem in 1999 and security was high, for obvious reasons. As Dana International, who had won the contest the year before, went to lift the trophy to award it to Sweden's Charlotte Nilsson, she pretended to struggle under its 'weight' before actually toppling over, causing Mossad agents to spill onto the stage in case it was a terrorist attack.

### VERKA SERDUCHKA DANCES 'LASHA TUMBAI' (RUSSIA GOODBYE?)

Russo-Ukrainians were at an all-time low in 2007. When Verka Serduchka took to the stage in Helsinki sporting the number 69 on their back and casually fondling their left breasts at regular intervals, it caused something of a stir. However, what made most Russians sit up and take notice was the astonishing phonetic similarity of "Lasha Tumbai" to "Russia Goodbye." Subtle. Regardless, it was a genius performance—for all the wrong reasons.

### DUTCH SPOKESMAN CHATS UP GREEK PRESENTER LIVE ON AIR

Sakis Rouvas, who co-presented the 2006 contest in Athens (yes, the Sívía Nótt edition), got more than he bargained for when he called in the votes from the Netherlands and was propositioned by Paul de Leeuw, the Dutch spokesperson. De Leeuw delayed proceedings by giving Rouvas his mobile number before finally revealing his country's televote results. Terry Wogan, commenting for the UK described the episode as "pathetic." Wow.

### BULGARIA STUNS AUDIENCE WITH (LITERALLY) INCREDIBLE SEMI-FINAL PERFORMANCE

Bulgaria has only qualified for the semi-final once since its 2005 début. Krasimir Avramov is the personification of why. His song, "Illusion," wasn't too bad on CD, but dress yourself as a medieval knight-cum-superhero and add backing singers who look like refugees from "She-Ra," none of whom can hit a note, and it's quite a different affair. However, the real pièce de resistance is the man on stilts literally swinging a woman around the stage by her stilts before unceremoniously dropping her on the floor. Priceless. The respectable-looking Russian woman in the audience, hand clasped to mouth aghast at the end, spoke for us all.

### SÍVÍA NÓTT CALLS EUROVISION LEGEND AN 'UGLY F\*\*\*\*\*G OLD BITCH'

Sívía Nótt caused quite a stir (and genuine anger) with her act at the 2006 contest. Having already gravely insulted the host nation, Greece, and then failed to qualify for the final, she ranted at journalists that she had lost out because she was not a "slut from Holland" or an "ugly f\*\*\*\*\*g old bitch from Sweden." She was referring to Carola Häggkvist, who won the contest in 1991

## The Perfect Eurovision Party

by Rebecca Louder

Whether you are letting el vino flow for pure fun or pounding 'em back to get you through the roughness, spice up your Eurovision party by making a game out of it. And remember folks, to paraphrase our lovely contender Eyþór Ingi, it's not about winning; it's about glitz, glamour and having a good time!

Without further ado, we give you... THE GAME!

### TWELVE-POINT BLACKOUT

#### Required:

1. Bottle(s) of alcohol suitable for doing shots (preferably something local)
2. Drink suitable for chugging (beer, cocktail, white wine spritzers)

#### The Rules:

- ☺ When the contest begins, take a shot
- ☺ Whenever there is a dance sequence with more than 3 people, take a shot
- ☺ Whenever someone tears away their costume, take a shot
- ☺ Whenever a ballad-singer sings an over-sustained note, chug until it's over
- ☺ Whenever pyrotechnics, confetti or fountains go off, chug until they stop
- ☺ When Iceland gets either twelve points or zero points in the results, take a shot
- ☺ Whenever you see the Icelandic flag, finish your drink
- ☺ When (WHEN!) Iceland wins, pour all the remaining alcohol all over your head

# ALL THE WAY!

## ...with Reynir Þór Eggertsson

by Anna Andersen



Reynir Þór Eggertsson has a PhD in Icelandic and Danish literary history, he teaches Icelandic and Danish at the high school Menntaskólinn í Kópavogi—and he has a strong passion for Eurovision. “I’ve always been interested in languages, and when I was growing up, Eurovision was one of the few times a year one could hear all those beautiful languages, both spoken and sung,” he explains. “Also, I’m kind of a statistics nerd, so the voting system was an added bonus. Plus I do like music and glitter. And I’m gay.” Since 2008, he has been predicting Eurovision winners on an Icelandic TV show called “Alla Leið” (“All The Way”). We dropped him a line to see if he could break this craze down for us...

**How did you come to be one of the country’s foremost Eurovision enthusiasts, maybe second only to pop-star Páll Óskar?**

I guess it’s all Páll Óskar’s fault, really. We’ve been friends for 22 years and he’s always known about my obsession with the contest. In 1996 we were on the Icelandic jury together, and when he was preparing for Dublin in 1997, we worked a lot together to get the online Eurovision Song Contest community to notice him. He made some journalists aware of me and it basically took off from there. Then I participated in some TV gigs and people saw something in me they liked, so I’ve been invited back on TV again and again. I think it’s mainly because Icelanders, most of us really love this contest—I mean even hipsters participate in the televoting—and I guess people respect me for being so open about my love for it.

**How would you explain Eurovision and its mass appeal to people like Americans who generally have no idea what this competition is all about?**

It’s a competition where each country sends

one three-minute song, performed in whatever language people want. The viewers at home phone in their votes, and each country also has a jury. The public votes and the jury votes are combined and the top 10 from each country gets awarded points in the system 12-1, with the number one song getting the 12 points. No country can vote for its own song. By giving each country equal number of points to deal out, and not allowing them to vote for themselves, it’s not the population of any one country that can determine the outcome of the contest. This means that every single country represented at the Eurovision can in fact win it with the right song.

Eurovision has been going on since 1956. It was founded to increase brotherhood amongst Europeans after the horrors of WWII. During the Cold War, it was a beacon of hope for the downtrodden citizens of some Eastern European countries, which have embraced it after the Iron Curtain was torn down in the ‘90s. It’s a place to show your fellow Europeans that you’re one of them. It’s also a place where you see who your “real” friends are—who will vote for you, even when you send your worst entries.

**Can you give me any examples of that, a song that none of our ‘friends’ voted for, which left Icelanders feeling offended?**

This can really be seen every year, in various ways. When we end up mid-table, it’s basically the same few countries that give us votes: Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Estonia, Finland, Malta, Israel, Spain and Latvia. One example is “Angel” in 2001, when our only points were two from Denmark and one from Norway—probably the Icelandic diaspora in the two countries—putting us in last place with Norway. The worst case was in 1999 with our entry “All Out Of Luck,” when none of the ex-Yugoslav countries gave us any points and France gave us just a single point. It really cost us the victory.

**Are people who dismiss Eurovision as some kind of eurotrash competition full of lousy music missing the point? Do fans acknowledge that it’s a bit hokey? Is it supposed to be camp? Is that an aesthetic that you embrace?**

We all have different tastes in music and entertainment, but I do think that many people who dismiss the contest still think the contest is like it was in the 1980s and early 1990s. That was a really bad period when hardly any songs made the charts. The increased profile of the contest in the last 15–20 years has changed that, and we’ve seen all sorts of songs go on to do very well. Obviously, the three-minute format demands that performers stick it out, and that can often lead to disastrous results, aesthetically. So of course fans know that 80% of the contest is pure fluff, but entertaining fluff. And it’s the occasional gems that you find, such as the Dutch song this year, that really makes it all worth it!

*“I think the contest is bigger here than in most other countries, apart for perhaps Malta.”*

**Are Icelanders bigger fans than other nations? Why do Icelanders always think they’re going to win, even when chances are slim? Is this competition revealing of the Icelandic character?**

I think the contest is bigger here than in most other countries, apart from perhaps Malta. I think one of the reasons is that RÚV has managed to make the whole pre-selection so successful that people feel personally connected to the entry. And it’s one of

a few contests where our size or population does not really affect our chances of winning. We’ve obviously always chosen our best song, so why should others not love it as well? I do think it’s a healthy positivity. Why spend millions of krónur to enter a competition that you’re certain you won’t win? And, yes, I do believe that it says a lot about our national character, that we don’t do things with only half an effort. We will always give it our everything, and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn’t, but we can’t be accused of not trying!

**Some people say that this is as much a fun, maybe ironic, song contest as it is about politics and showing country allegiances. Can you explain this aspect of Eurovision?**

Well, we Icelanders are really supportive of our Scandinavian friends. I think it’s mostly connected to which country you, as a voting nation, are aware of, which country you will look (or listen) out for? We surely keep our ears open to Scandinavia, Germany, Ireland, UK, France, Portugal and Hungary. I think it’s no coincidence that Iceland managed second place in 2009, following the banking collapse. It increased our profile and made more people around Europe notice the song.

**You have been predicting Eurovision results on an Icelandic show on RÚV called “Alla Leið” (“All The Way”) for years now, is there something formulaic about making a winning Eurovision song? What does a good Eurovision song need to have?**

No real formula has been perfected, but it’s easy to say that it needs to be catchy. It needs to stick in your mind through loads of other songs and performances, until the telephone lines open. You need a gimmick—and here the problem is that you can easily overshoot the goal. The gimmick needs to enhance the song and atmosphere—not overpower it. I usually use two pieces of criteria when predicting a winner: 1) Do I want to listen to the song right away again? (like with Azerbaijan 2011) and 2) Do I remember the chorus long after having heard the song only once before?

**What are the chances that our entry this year “Ég á líf” makes it all the way?**

I have not been very optimistic about our chances this year, predicting it not to qualify for the final. I do believe that “Ég á líf” is very catchy, and I can certainly remember the chorus, but to me it’s too repetitive, it feels like it goes on for too long. It’s very well performed though, and I did hear it performed live (not on TV) for the first time yesterday, and it was better than I’ve thought before, so who knows? I don’t. We’ll see what happens in Malmö!

## Haffi Haff’s Favourite Eurovision Outfits!

Compiled by Rebecca Louder

Illustrations: Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

One can always count on pop star Haffi Haff for his relentless dedication to over-the-top fashion, irreverence and a flashy performance. He’s lived through the Eurovision preliminaries himself, having competed at the local level to represent Iceland in the 2009 event with “The Wiggle Wiggle Song” (he was nudged out at second-place by Jóhanna with “Is It True?”). He also has a closet filled with some of the flashiest and brashest fabric you’ll find outside of a John Waters movie! So naturally we had to go to him to help us pick out the best outfits from Iceland’s Eurovision legacy. Here are his top five.

**1986: ICY  
“GLEÐIBANKINN”**

Forgive me, but shoulder-padded, metallic detailed, pseudo tuxedos and ‘80s hair gives me an instant fashion hard-on. Plus it was our first entry. RESPECT!



**2000: AUGUST & TELMA  
“TELL ME”**

Einar Ágúst almost looked like a cult leader. How much fun is it that he got away with wearing a skirt over pants!? I want that outfit!



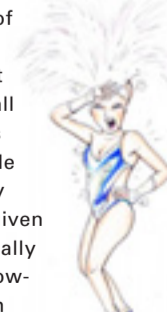
**2005: SELMA  
“IF I HAD YOUR LOVE”**

I didn’t understand the drama over Selma’s “If I Had Your Love.” She was stylish and looked presentable to Europe. Not overpowering or overtly sexy. I think that’s very respectable.



**2006: SILVÍA NÓTT  
“CONGRATULATIONS”**

The amount of time and effort that went into making all the costumes over the whole journey really needs to be given credit. She really pulled off showing that much leg, as well as an amazing Marie Antoinette hair-style. She certainly blew me away! I wanted to BE Silvía Nótt at the height of her fame!



**2013: EYÞÓR INGI  
“ÉG Á LÍF”**

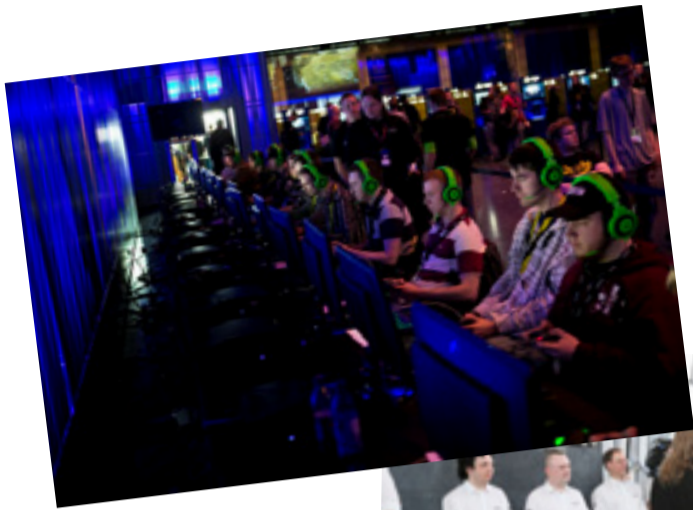
He is a great representation of the Icelandic man today, strong and sensitive, handsome and not afraid to be a little scruffy, approachable yet stylish. I also wish him the best of luck at this year’s competition. ÁFRAM EYÞÓR!



# A Wedding, Virtual Reality And A Mini-Series

CCP's ninth annual Fanfest was all about the fans of the EVE Online game

Walking through Harpa, it is absolutely packed with fans and EVE enthusiasts for CCP's annual Fanfest. They come in all shapes and sizes and fill presentation theatres, keynote events and round table discussions. But interestingly, it looks like the developers are doing more than just presenting ideas; they take a lot of notes and listen to the ideas of the players.



"That's what keeps EVE players hooked, the sense of ownership they have in the game."

Photos: Alisa Kalyanova, Arnaldur Halldórsson & Roman Gerasymenko

With their newest free to play online shooter DUST 514 being only moments from release, the team still asked for help and suggestions from players. The theme is player inclusivity, as was showcased with True Stories, a site where players can submit their real experiences from the EVE world. The stories then get voted on by EVE players and the best stories will be turned into a graphic novel by Dark Horse Comics and a mini-series directed by Iceland's Baltasar Kormákur.

'Thurenu' of the Lonely Soldiers Corporation tells me that's what keeps EVE players hooked, the sense of ownership they have in the game. Thurenu is in real life a paramedic from Michigan. He preferred to give me his EVE name as he said, "nobody would know my name in real life." He's played the game now for seven years and has only finished half of it.

The developers have learned the hard way what happens when they don't pay enough attention to their player base. In 2011 they were developing an expansion called Incarna that left many players feeling frustrated and excluded. As a result, many players cancelled their subscription and CEO Hilmar Veigar had to send out a public apology to bring them back. The players have returned, but a few I met told me it is still fresh in their minds.

## SO MUCH TO DO, SO LITTLE TIME

For a first-timer at Fanfest, there are almost too many things to do. The organisers have made sure to cater to a wide range of tastes. There are lectures on economics and game design, panels where players engage with developers, live concept art sessions and sneak peeks into the future of CCP. For those looking for simple fun, there are free arcade booths, poker, EVE and DUST tournaments, and an immersive virtual reality space flight demo reminiscent of dogfights from Battlestar Galactica or Star Wars. There are also EVE hair and makeup booths, a

place to dress up for a Viking photo shoot and a tattoo parlour.

There is even a wedding of two Norwegian players, 'Tarsisis' and 'Idunn Aasgard.' Speaking to them after the ceremony, they couldn't be happier. Not only did they get married, but they got to do so at a monumental event on the balcony of Harpa, surrounded by fellow fans. Admittedly, they tell me, they haven't played the game recently, but they: "Have a lot of friends from playing the game."

## MORE ONLINE PLAYERS THAN ICELANDERS

As of February of this year, there are half a million active subscribers on EVE Online, and they all play on the same server in a libertarian lawless environment. Players can use this freedom to mine asteroids and moons, craft valuable items, build alliances and engage in battles over star systems. The world is truly on an interstellar scale, and CCP keep expanding it by introducing space elevators, wormholes and a new first person shooter DUST 514.

The players are also proud of the world outside the game. Some meet up for barbecues and beers, a few host online TV shows devoted to the game, and yet others run gambling sites with in-game currency and in-game prizes. And the developers of the game make sure to alert the players to these great community efforts by writing articles on their website about them.

To finish the three-day festival, players get to party with developers to Skálmöld's Viking metal, Retro Stefson's cool tunes and world-class DJ Z-Trip's nerdy mashup beats. The players stumble back home in the early morning hours with raspy voices, lots of good memories and a nasty hangover looming on the horizon.

The future is bright for players of the science-fiction online multiplayer game, but CCP may have a tough act to follow next year.

✂ - Tómas Gabriel Benjamin

Friday's Pub Crawl almost bled the city dry of beer, but how much money did foreign visitors spend during the Fanfest inside the city limits?

1,907 foreign visitors bought tickets to the event

Each spent on average five days in the country

Average spending per day inside Reykjavík was 24,783 ISK

Total estimated spending 275 Million ISK inside Reykjavík, excluding flights

How many people watched the event?

1,907 foreign attendees, 83 members of press and 282,140 people online

That means there were almost as many people as Icelanders following the festival



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# Life Imitates Art:

## Meeting Ingimar Oddsson



Artist, musician, and author Ingimar Oddsson sits at a window table in a café in downtown Reykjavík, his hands folded calmly on his lap. There is a Sherlock Holmes-style deer-stalker on the table (a gift his sister bought for him in Scotland) and he's wearing a high collar, olive-drab coat buttoned at the neck with a white aviator scarf folded like a cravat. Small silver wire-rim spectacles and a carefully groomed handlebar moustache complete the effect. He sits, gently twisting one end of his moustache, at once a part of his surroundings and separate from them.

We're here to discuss his newest project, *The Bildalian Chronicles*, a multi-media, steam punk-inspired, adventure narrative/travel diary harkening back to Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. Based in part on Ingimar's experiences in the small Westfjords village of Bildudalur, *The Bildalian Chronicles* blends reality and fiction, print narrative, video instalments and illustration to bring to life "one man's journey to Bildalia in search of sea monsters and paranormal phenomena."

### THE ONLY STEAM PUNK IN ICELAND

Verisimilitude is key to Ingimar's project: Bildalia has its own currency (called hlunkar, meaning "fat," with one hlunkar being roughly equivalent to 10 ISK), its own newspaper (*The Bildalian Post*), crest, and even its own king (Peter) and royal heir (Lady Guðrun Louisa Ernst). Moreover, Ingimar himself is the story's central character, a role that he finds easy to integrate into his daily life.

"The character is not that exaggerated from myself, so I don't have to act a lot. I have been on stage several times and that is a harder thing—you have to put yourself into a different character," he says. But when Ingimar puts on his "costume," he's not just doing so for the sake of his fictional alter ego. He's just getting dressed for the day.

"When I discovered steam-punk, I thought: 'so this is what I'm called—so there is a name for me.'"

"When I discovered steam-punk, I thought: 'so this is what I'm called—so there is a name for me.' Twenty years ago, I had long hair and a long tail jacket and I walked about in a cloak. This is like coming home."

Steam punk is an aesthetic which is, much like Ingimar himself, a little old world mixing with new: "Today you put plastic over everything," he

says. "[Steam punk] is like the world without plastic. It's more eco-friendly in a sense—I have old clothes and I fix them up, I'm recycling all the time." He has collected a fair number of "props"—from old trunks to the "parphenometre," which he built for measuring levels of paranormal activity in Bildalia—but in each case, he's very discriminating about what he acquires or repurposes. "You can't just glue a gear on it and call it steam punk," he says.

Discovering this aesthetic identity and ideology has certainly been fruitful for Ingimar's creative life, but it hasn't necessarily introduced him to a larger community here in Iceland. While steam punk has dedicated followings in other countries around the world—Ingimar mentioned Japan, Germany, Britain, and the US—it hasn't so much caught on in Iceland.

"I'm the only, lonely one," he laughed. "I know there are maybe some cartoonists making some [steam punk] drawings, but I don't think anyone is dressing up like me, walking down Laugavegur with my top hat and goggles..." He shrugs.

### IN SEARCH OF SEA MONSTERS

For three months last summer, Ingimar moved to Bildudalur to work on his *Bildalian Chronicles*, guided by his own imagination and also integrating unplanned, everyday occurrences into his story as well. His computer started misbehaving when he first arrived, blinking out strange messages and patterns. He declared it "paranormal activity" and made a video diary instalment about it. He fell while rescuing a bird and got a black eye. This inspired a story twist in which he is kidnapped and abused by the nefarious "Grotters," who want to know just what exactly Ingimar is investigating in Bildalia, and who he works for.

Ingimar integrates all sorts of real-life inspirations in his fictional world: characters in Bildalia frequently take their basis from real people and Bildalian history incorporates facts from Bildudalur history. "Most readers, however, will just read the story as fiction," he explains, "and you don't have to know the truth to enjoy it."

As a child and young man, Ingimar was a dedicated reader of adventure

stories—Jules Verne was a favourite—and so while he didn't get to travel much or go abroad, he developed an appreciation for everyday magic and a sense of wonder which he tries to infuse into his art. He has vivid memories of summers spent in Bildudalur, of the merman that he recalls seeing on a beach when he was eight and of the town's famous sea monsters, which boast their very own museum.

"It's a mission for me," Ingimar says. "I want to help others to experience the adventure I experienced as child."

### MOVING TO BÍLDUDALUR

Ingimar's own adventures in the real Bildudalur are just beginning. He will be moving to the village permanently in early May (just after the publication of *The Bildalian Chronicles*) and will be working as a host (in character) at the Icelandic Sea Monster museum over the summer. Under his advisement, the museum has already made some aesthetic changes and will also be able to remain open until September, instead of closing in August as usual.

Bildudalur, Ingimar notes, has nurtured "a very lively artistic life for many, many decades. People in the nearby fjords sometimes say that people in Bildudalur are just artists sitting around and drinking red wine all the time. When my mother was growing up there, the theatre company went travelling all around the fjords to perform their shows. They have a lot of painters and actors and many, many good artists."

It sounds like an ideal place for Ingimar to continue his artistic endeavors. He can envision expanding the Bildalia project to include an online component in which people can take up residence in Bildalia and become characters in the story. He is also continuing to compose music, and is already at work on another book about the origins of the Hidden People and entering the elfish world.

For Ingimar, each project, however disparate the media or the story, is connected and really part of the same larger artistic project. "It is all sort of the same for me. When I write, I hear music. And when I make music, I see pictures, and when I see pictures, I make stories." **G - Larissa Kyzer**



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It's a cold world out there. No one knows that better than the documentary filmmaker, whose job it is to portray that world, in all of its gruesome glory, to the public. Lucky for them, Reykjavík provides a warm home to celebrate the fruits of their labour.

"If documentaries are not your cup of tea, I'll bet we have one that can convince you otherwise. Same goes for the short films."

For one week, from May 9–16, The Shorts&Docs Film Festival will screen 88 carefully selected documentaries and short films in downtown Reykjavík. We met with the Festival Director Heather Millard to discuss the importance of the festival, the international guest-list and the exciting films and festivities in store.

## SEEKING SHELTER

Iceland has no shortage of national film festivals. The annual Reykjavík International Film Festival (RIFF) leads the pack as the most widely known (for now!), with a smattering of smaller festivals popping up all over Iceland. What sets the Shorts&Docs festival apart from the rest is the, perhaps obvious, fact that it shows exclusively short films and documentaries.

But aside from satisfying the general public's demand for entertainment, the festival is a necessary part

of Iceland's emerging documentary film industry. Documentaries, Heather notes, are easily the most difficult films to market. Having worked for many years in the industry herself as a movie producer, she says this with a qualified voice. When people go out for a cinema experience, they want popcorn and entertainment, something to displace them from their daily lives for a couple of hours.

It's less common that people seek out the thought-provoking reality that documentaries offer. That being said, emerging from a quality documentary film can be one of the most satisfying and inspiring cinema experiences. Thus, the festival is for the sake of the filmmakers, the subjects of the films, and the audience's own good.

## THE FILMS

Due to limited funding and resources for the festival, Heather tells us that she tried to decrease the list of films from last year's record 75. But instead, it grew and Heather is enthusiastic about this year's 88 films, each one chosen carefully from over 350 total submissions.

With that many films, Heather is sure that there will be something for everyone. "If documentaries are not your cup of tea," Heather asserts, "I'll bet we have one that can convince you otherwise. Same goes for the short films." Her confidence stems from two main components of the selection process: variety and quality. "Some of the films are surprising, others intriguing, but they are all selected because they are quality films. With so many films to choose from, they have to be high quality films."

Along with the broader category break-ups, the festival will also feature blocks of 'spotlight sections.' This

year's include a German section, a Polish section, and an Icelandic Female Filmmakers section.

## AN INTIMATE EXPERIENCE

Once festival season hits, it's "all hands on deck," Heather says, referring to the all-star crew of volunteers and collaborators that make the festival possible each year. Her own personal involvement with films ties her to a global network of industry professionals, allowing her to compile an extensive multi-cultural guest list. Last year, Heather recalls inviting the entire line-up of filmmakers over to her own house for a home-cooked dinner.

Of course, the public is well provided for throughout the festival as well. Local venues all over town welcome festivalgoers each night with special offers, live music, and the occasional free drink. Along with the excitement of the films themselves, the Shorts&Docs Festival endows Reykjavík with a rich atmosphere of perks and parties.

The international guest list of talented and hard-working filmmakers combined with Iceland's famously tight-knit capital makes for a large-scale yet uniquely intimate experience. As the festival grows, she hopes that the international filmmaking crowd will recognise Reykjavík Shorts&Docs and take their own initiative to get an invitation to Reykjavík. In the meantime, Heather's mission: "to introduce Iceland's public to films they may otherwise miss, and to get these films the exposure they need to jump onto the global film circuit." — Parker Yamasaki

# What Most People Call Hell, We Call Home



Tom Cruise is slowly strangling himself in some post-apocalyptic desert landscape. Yes, we are watching 'Oblivion,' a dystopian future film shot in Iceland, and surely this is how he must have felt when he was here. It was not a happy time for the world's highest paid actor, living in a mansion on the hill overlooking Eyjafjörður, so far from Hollywood and so close to Akureyri. For one thing, after over a quarter century as one of cinema's top guns, he turned fifty. This would be a cause of concern for anyone, but for someone trading on his boy-ish good looks, the prospect of old age must seem daunting. To make matters worse, his wife Katie Holmes refused to join him on his birthday, electing for divorce instead. The suit was filed the day before Iceland re-elected its president, who has been in office since Cruise was still married to Nicole Kidman and making his first Mission: Impossible film.

It was not a happy time for anyone. A report that a local supermarket had been closed to the public so that the actor could do his shopping undisturbed turned out to be untrue, but roads were indeed closed off during his stay up north, much to the irritation of local sheep farmers who could no longer go their usual routes. Cruise is in fact one of the few actors with the pull to have the roads near his home in Hollywood permanently closed to the public, but in a country that has long prided itself on social equality and where stories abound of sheep farmers addressing the King of Denmark as an equal, this impressed no one.

While Ben Stiller charmed inhabitants of the East Fjords during the making of 'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty' and Russel Crowe became a Reykjavík local by pumping iron at the gym and singing with Patti Smith downtown on his days off from 'Noah,' the local verdict on Cruise remains mixed. So, was all the suffering worth it?

Well, kind of. 'Oblivion' is a superior, if not ground-breaking, science fiction film with a rather obvious plot twist and excellent visuals. A barren, future hell (Iceland, of course) is populated by clones of the world's most perfect man (Tom Cruise, of course). In between repairing predator drones made to kill sand people in Darth Vader masks, he has fashioned himself a tiny oasis safe for basketball, baseball caps and Led Zeppelin records (these scenes are shot somewhere else).

"A barren, future hell (Iceland, of course) is populated by clones of the world's most perfect man (Tom Cruise, of course)."

Northern Iceland here stands in for New York in 2077, and it is by no means the first time Iceland is used as a dystopia.

The first time was 'Enemy Mine,' made in 1985 in Vestmannaeyjar but sadly then reshot in a studio, and the latest one bar this is Ridley Scott's Alien prequel 'Prometheus.' Iceland will also soon make an appearance in 'Thor II,' where it will probably be the home of the Dark Elves, as in the aforementioned 'Noah,' but whether it will be portrayed in this as a new paradise or as a world ripe for drowning remains to be seen.

Iceland, then, is most often used to represent Hollywood screenwriters' idea of a dark and forbidding place. This, in itself, is kind of funny to locals. "Hey, I can almost see my house from here," one sometimes feels like shouting at the screen. In more optimistic times, many thought New York was what the world would look like in the future. These days, with global warming, it is more likely that the wastes of Iceland are what New York will wind up looking like. Or, to (mis)quote a phrase from Rambo, what most people call hell, we call home. — Valur Gunnarsson

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Adalstræti 7

# D.I.Y Or Die!

A new music label has been birthed in the cultural swamp of 101

INTERVIEW



Photo: Alisa Kalyanova

It's been a rather busy 12 months for DJ/musician Frimann Ísleifur Frimannsson and designer Nicolas Kunysz. Frimann launched Skeleton Horse, a magazine of art, music and other assorted paraphernalia that harks to the classic era of the DIY punk/hardcore zine movement. Meanwhile Nicolas set up The Makery, a consultancy design studio that has produced items for Icelandic designers such as Mundi. Now the two have teamed up together to create Lady Boy Records, a DIY music label that seeks to create a symbiosis between experimental music and format/graphic design, recently releasing their first record, a compilation of local musicians on limited cassette.

**So what motivated you to start up Skeleton Horse in the first place, Frimann?**

**Frimann:** I felt that it was something that was needed in the area, that there wasn't a certain platform where people could express themselves. There is the Grapevine and then there's the Internet. But I really liked the idea of self-publishing a small circulation zine. You don't need anyone's permission to do it.

**How did it all actually come about?**

**F:** I simply sent a mass e-mail to everyone I knew. I told them that I was setting up a paper and that they were free to do what they wanted to do and I'd print it. At the time I was asking people for reviews, articles about their favourite bands, designers doing sketches, food recipes. Nicolas even put some computer code in there.

**You're about to publish your tenth issue. What's it been like?**

**F:** Hmm... I would say that the first couple of issues were quite hard, but once I got the ball rolling, and everyone was in some sort of a rhythm, then it was rather easy. I still have to chase people up every day to tell them to hand their stuff in. I would say that's the hardest part of it all.

**And now you and Nicolas have set up a music label, Ladyboy Records. How did you two meet up initially?**

**N:** Well I was working for the designer Sruli Recht at the time, and one day Frimann came to the studio to buy a bow tie. And I was the only one there!

**F:** Yup, it was love at first sight!

**N:** After that, we'd bump into each other at places like Kaffibarinn and the old Bakkus. We started making music when Frimann was in London and I was asked to provide the music for an art show. I said yes to this, but I remembered speaking with Frimann in the past about making some music together. I sent him an e-mail and he said, 'yes let's do it.' So when he got back, we got together and created the group Pyrodulia.

**At what point did it go from making music to creating a record label?**

**F:** Well we were looking at the labels around in Iceland and the majority of it was really crap. It's all this pre-packaged indie bullshit that's ready for export. I found we didn't have anything musical in common with these labels. But we didn't want to go abroad to get stuff released. I wanted to keep it in Iceland so I approached Nicolas with the concept of making the label ourselves.

**N:** He dropped this name, 'Ladyboy Records,' and I really liked it. I slept on the idea overnight, and I came back to

him saying that I wanted to do something slightly different. As a designer I have several projects that have to do with sound. And I wanted to see if there was some way we could combine music closely with design. That way it would give me something more to do with the label.

**How does the dynamic work? Who does what?**

**N:** For the art direction we're 50/50. We decide and confirm everything together. I'm more involved with visual artwork, but if Frimann doesn't like it, then we don't do it. I'm more into the designs, the graphic visuals and the stencilling and Frimann is this energetic, hyper guy who runs around and gets things organised. He's the one who's listening to everything and coming to me saying, 'Hey there's this guy who wants to do something with us. We should check him out.' He's the one who deals with people.

**Your first release was a compilation on a tape where the info was laser etched onto the casing. How important is the idea of formats and music to you and the label in general?**

**F:** It's so important. I believe formats such as cassettes are a far more intimate way of listening to music than just pressing play on your MacBook and going to wash the dishes. You press play sit down and stay with a cassette. Then after a while you have to get up and physically change the side. You're much more involved.

**N:** There's also the collectable value of some formats. And while I don't collect that much myself, I do like to make items that are collectable. I like this aspect. With this cassette release we had songs released that I wouldn't have released on other formats, but on cassette it works because of the sound quality it provides.

**With both a label and a zine in action, what can we expect from you in 2013?**

**N:** I think we can sneak a couple more releases in this year. I think there will be one release on vinyl. That will be a recording from playing sessions from Lady Boy Record nights and a retreat with some musicians. We'll record everything over a couple of days, sort everything out and see what comes from that.

**F:** As for Skeleton Horse, after the first 12 issues I'm looking to set the magazine up as an independent publishing entity that will look to publish poetry, short stories and comics. In fact, one of the first releases will be a book of poetry from Skeleton Horse contributor and Spacemen 3/ Spiritualized bass player Will Carruthers.

☞ - Bób Clúenés

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Úlfur

White Mountain

2013

http://ulfurhansson.com

A promising debut with room to grow

Beneath the Norwegian black metal font and gray glacial formations on its cover, listeners will unexpectedly find some of the warmest and most redemptive music produced in recent memory. Úlfur Hansson's solo debut 'White Mountain' has been available in Japan for a year, but 2013 heralds its official release to a wider audience via Western Vinyl.

Úlfur has forged this record from gentle synths and a collection of personal field recordings. The project has a strong gravitational pull toward the music coming from the "cassette label Renaissance" happening in the United States right now. Its brief, meditative pieces, rich analog timbres, and ambient/environmental samples blend to convey a little biological warmth amidst soundscapes made mostly from machines. A short album, only slightly too long for a C-30 cassette, 'White Mountain' would sit comfortably within the discographies of labels like Field Hymns or Tranquility tapes.

As it aspires toward such deeply personal spaces, 'White Mountain' sometimes feels a touch too intimate, its secrets kept just out of reach from more universal appeal. But it continues to open up with repeated listening. As a debut, it initiates a thoughtful conversation that hopefully perseveres into future recordings. ♪ - **Scott Scholz**



Tanya And Marlon

Quillock

2012

www.mollerrecords.com

Mellowish indeed

'Quillock,' the debut EP from Tanya And Marlon (of PLX and Anonymous), sees these stalwarts of Iceland's electronica scene expand their old-school influenced bass groove to something wider and less aggressive—not so much in yer face, but drifting into inner space.

Some sections of this EP certainly strike a chord. The opener "Melodies," with dreamy throbbing pads and the sound of children's play and rainfall, gives you a warm hint of past memories, the same feeling you'd likely get from a Boards Of Canada song. There's also the AtomMax remix of "Mellowish," (the best track on the EP), doing a seamless job of weaving samples with a heavy ambient dub undercurrent that takes the original somewhere else completely different.

Alas, some of the tracks don't quite hit the mark for me. "New Day" falls back on the off-kilter glitch-y rhythms that don't add anything to the overall sound, while the second "Mellowish" remix from Bypass opts for a rinsed minimal house beat that only shakes up some kind of energy in the last two minutes. But there's certainly more than enough on "Quillock" for fans of Icelandic electronica to dip their brains into. ♪ - **Bob Cluness**



Sin Fang

Flowers

2013

http://www.heysinfang.com/

Another album, another beard cover; a lush garden of nostalgia

Picture the last fleeting moments of your life, the minutes, or in most cases seconds you have to live. What do you suppose would occupy your last thoughts? Likely an overwhelming barrage of things, but amidst your inevitable cognition of the end I believe one would reflect back on their life and hearken through endless memories... An overflowing, beautifully forlorn sense of nostalgia. This is Sin Fang's 'Flowers'...

Listening to 'Flowers' is like releasing the floodgates of dopamine and memories to the brain, a torrent of pleasure centres brought on by lush and dynamic dreamy folk-pop beautifully ensconced with elegant synths, bass, horns, strings, drums, and Sindri's soothing vocals. The album droops and swells between profound and whimsical, evoking a cornucopia of emotions within the listener... It seeps into your psyche and lingers, this is why it is so powerful.

Its decadent evocative qualities are not the only strong-suit here. 'Flowers' is undeniably fun and infectious. I really don't think I am capable of listening to 'Flowers' without singing along (badly), whistling in unison to the tooting horns or tapping incessantly away to the rhythmic drums. The sound is rich and expansive, heavily emblazoned with the trademark sound of producer Alex Somers (of Jónsi & Alex). The entire album emits this warmth. It's like being hugged by the sun, or more suitably, like taking a dip in a natural Icelandic hotpot—relaxing, cosy, mollifying and perfect with a couple of beers and some good company. ♪ - **Chris D'Alessandro**



Kontinuum

Earth Blood Magic

2012

facebook.com/kontinuumice

An album divided cannot stand.

The majority of Kontinuum's Candlelight Records debut, 'Earth Blood Magic,' feels painstakingly familiar. The first three tracks pass without any bearing on memory. On paper the marriage between choral, avant-garde folk metal with traditional doom sounds exciting, yet on record it falls short of anything spectacular.

On "Stranger Air," there's a sense of confidence and maturity in the track's patient roll. There's air on the track and it creates for beautiful atmosphere, both delicate and earnest. However, after this brief detour into expressive songwriting, the album returns to its humdrum ways.

The album is entertaining in parts—the progressive black-metal of "Lightbearer," the guitar work on "Lýs Milda Ljós"—but it rarely takes the next step to engage completely. Not only that, you get the feeling Kontinuum felt comfortable not taking that step, maintaining control but never straying from the path it set for itself. "Risk" and "emotion" are not words I would associate with Kontinuum's effort here, rendering it dull. ♪ - **Dru Morrison**

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# Ice And Sand

Sigur Rós & Of Monsters And Men Storm Coachella 2013



"Unless, that is, you really, really wanted to see the Red Hot Chili Peppers."



Photos: Dan Busta

It's not often that most Icelanders find themselves in the middle of the desert. Of Monsters and Men's Nanna Bryndís Hilmarsdóttir isn't quite sure how to handle it. "It's horrible," she says. "We're all trying to find shade."

Not that anyone is really in a bad mood. It's the first day of Coachella, the three-day festival that takes over Indio, California every spring, drawing tens of thousands of concertgoers from around the world. This year is the second time the event has been held over two weekends, with the festival basically repeating itself a week later. Chances are everyone will be a lot more tired by the time it's all over, but right now it's just getting started, and spirits are high. Plus, we're hunkered down in an air-conditioned trailer for the moment, so there's little to complain about.

"It's sunny outside and hot, so people must be in a good mood," drummer Arnar Rósenkranz Hilmarsson says. "I expect the crowd to be very happy—very open, warm, and welcoming."

## OMAM ARE HOT, HOT, HOT

It's a good prediction. By the time Of Monsters and Men hit the stage a few hours later, spirits are quite

high, indeed. A rapturous crowd welcomes the band to the festival's Outdoor Stage—the second largest of the six stages simultaneously hosting artists around the site—and proceeds to reinforce the group's rapidly growing popularity in North America. Many fans sing along word for word to tracks like "Little Talks," "King and Lionheart," and "From Finner," with the lyrical refrain from the latter song ringing especially true in this most un-Icelandic of places: "We are far from home / But we're so happy."

It's actually all a bit surreal for a group that never really had any visions of success outside its home country. "We were just making a record in Iceland. We didn't think anything was going to happen," frontman Ragnar Þórhallsson said earlier in the day. Now, not only are they playing for international fans across the globe, but they're also getting to share the bill with some of their own favourite artists. In fact, their now standard live take on the Yeah Yeah Yeahs "Skeleton" has a special significance today, as Karen

O and company will be hitting the main stage themselves in just a few more hours for another one of the weekend's must-see sets.

Yeah Yeah Yeahs are just one of the acts the band rattles off on a list of artists they're excited to see, which also includes Blur, Earl Sweatshirt, and Grizzly Bear. And because of the fact that the festival will repeat a week later, anyone they miss this time around can still be caught next time. Although, with more than 100 acts on the bill, it's still impossible to see everyone, even if you're there twice.

## SIGUR RÓS MESMERISE THE CROWD

Mixing marquee-name headliners with up-and-coming acts, while spanning genres, eras, and nationalities, Coachella is one of the most diverse festivals around. This year's line-up includes everyone from Wu-Tang Clan and a reunited Stone Roses to indie darlings like Grimes, Alt-J, and Tame Impala.

And Of Monsters and Men weren't the only Icelandic act on the bill; the following night, Sigur Rós took to the very same stage to close out the second day with an epic set that resounded mesmerizingly through the darkened desert.

The temperature drops considerably when the sun goes down in the valley, meaning that by the time the band brought its flickering lights and windswept sounds to the stage, the environment was ideal for a soundtrack of epic stature. Which is exactly what Jónsi and his bandmates (and their numerous additional musicians) unleashed into the night air. Mixing older favourites with the astoundingly intense and uncharacteristically aggressive first salvos from upcoming album 'Kveikur,' Sigur Rós not only established their place as a major highlight during a day that also included standout performances from Bat For Lashes, Janelle Monáe, and Portugal. The Man, but also boldly declared their musical rebirth to an enchanted fan base clearly ravenous for more.

## DRIVEN AWAY BY A SANDSTORM

If there was a downside to the first weekend at all, it was the abrupt windstorm that struck late in the evening on the third and final day, kicking up dirt and sand to a degree that saw many concertgoers wrapping scarves around their faces for protection, and others simply giving up and heading for the exits (only to brave even more intense sand assaults in the unpaved parking areas). Of course, by that point, everyone was three-days in, and an early departure didn't seem like the worst idea. Unless, that is, you really, really wanted to see the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

All in all, it was another success for the team behind the increasingly globally renowned event, and if anyone was breathing a sigh of relief when it was all over, it was only for a moment. In less than a week, it would be time to do it all over again.

✂ - Doug Levy

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## Docking In Art's Harbour

Lilja Birgisdóttir conducts an entire fleet as the Reykjavík Art Festival sets sail



Photo: Rebecca Louder

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Visit [www.listahatid.is](http://www.listahatid.is) to see the full programme of events.

The annual Reykjavík Art Festival begins on May 17 and will feature world-class artists and performances from both local and international ground-breakers. Artist Lilja Birgisdóttir has the honour of launching the festival with a performance entitled The Vessel Orchestra, in which she will verbally conduct a band of ship-captains using their vessels' horns as instruments.

### How did you decide to compose a piece for ships?

I've been kind of obsessed with the ocean and the culture around it for a while. I did an exhibition at the Galtarviti lighthouse in the Westfjords, and the ocean was everywhere around me, and it really felt like therapy. I realised that the ocean helps me clear my mind and focus. Sometimes when I'm in cities where I can't see water I get claustrophobic. It's really important to me.

### What is your composition method and how will you act as a conductor?

Well, every ship has a horn and every one of them has its own note. None of them produce the same sound. So what I do is I go record each ship-horn, then I put them in my computer and I compose a ship-horn piece. Then I will conduct it using a walkie-talkie to call on the captains to sound their horns.

The time it takes for me to give them direction to the time it takes to press the button to when the horn sounds is about three seconds, so I have to take all these things into account. As I compose the piece, I am writing notes, so the captains will all have note sheets with them.

### How many vessels are in your orchestra and who is setting it up?

I set up most of them just by walking onto the ships and asking them directly, but I'm not yet sure how many ships will actually be involved. So I can't finish the composition yet! [Laughs loudly] There will be ships from all over the harbour though, and there will also be one or two boats coming from Ísafjörður to perform in it.

### That sounds complicated. Are you stressed about how it will all work out?

No, because I've actually done this piece before. After I graduated from the Iceland Academy of the Arts in

2010, I did this piece for a performance-focused art festival called Villa Reykjavík. This will of course be a new song with new "band-members," but I'm feeling confident. I'm also really happy because Úlfur Hansson is going to help me with the composition and with all the technical stuff.

### How do you hope the final composition will sound?

The ship horns are grand and melancholic. It was really powerful the last time I did it. I got many emails and calls from people who were really touched. I think it's because a lot of people feel connected with the harbour life. The sound of the ship horn has so much history in itself. I want to create a grandiose piece that the audience will remember. That would be my dream.

"I'm like this small, little girl leading these gigantic ships and their captains!"

### What have you most enjoyed about doing this piece?

I like the three-dimensional feel of it because some of the ships are very close and others are really far away. That's really important for me, that the whole harbour is taking part in it. I think it's the best project I've done and it's so much fun. It's amazing to work with all the captains and sailors and I'm so honoured that they want to work with me. It feels so powerful. I'm like this small, little girl leading these gigantic ships and their captains! ♡ - Rebecca Louder

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# Not For Your Average Latté-Drinker

## Three days in Ilulissat, West Greenland

By Anna Andersen

“What are all these people doing here?” a guy asked his mate in the fourth row. “Beats me,” he replied, looking up at us as we walked past to find our seats on Air Iceland’s 37-seat Dash 8 bound for Ilulissat.

Home to 5,000 people and 7,000 dogs, Ilulissat in West Greenland is not exactly your typical holiday destination. After all, its only international connection is Reykjavík, which is already in the middle of the North Atlantic—at least five hours from the United States and three from mainland Europe.



Photo: Anna Andersen

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From Reykjavik though, it's just four hours to the west coast of Greenland, an island that looks bigger than Australia on a map even though it is actually three times smaller. It was almost enough time to master some Greenlandic phrases like 'Timmisartornermi' ("En route") and 'Timmisartup iluani pullanneqas-sangilaq' (meaning, yes, you guessed it, "Inflate upon exiting")—before the plane began its descent on the snow-covered landscape below. "It's a nice, clear day," the pilot said, "and the temperature is -28° C."

It certainly didn't look warm as we homed in on the area's claim to fame—massive icebergs jutting out of a frozen-over fjord. A designated UNESCO World Heritage site since 2004, the Ilulissat icefjord is presumably what brings the town's 36,000 annual visitors to spend time 450 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle.

FROZEN SNOT AND TEARS

Not until I stepped out onto the tarmac did I begin to understand what -28° C really meant, as my lungs tried to cough out the cold Arctic air.

I would later learn that Ilulissat is blessed with a high-pressure system, which means it is dry. "You leave Ilulissat where -28° C is okay, and you arrive in Copenhagen where it is -9° C and you're freezing cold," explained Ole Gamst-Pedersen, a Dane who runs the local art gallery.

"You leave Ilulissat where -28° C is okay, and you arrive in Copenhagen where it is -9° C and you're freezing cold"

But it was still cold enough to freeze the snot deep inside my nostrils and to coat my eyelashes in a frosty white as soon as we ventured outside to explore the town and its colourfully painted wooden houses. The nation-wide aesthetic that is so iconic of Greenland was instituted by the Danes in the early 1950s, long before Greenland would become an autonomous country within the Danish Kingdom.



Photo: Alisa Kalyanova

As our cameras faded on and off, constantly threatening to give up, we took refuge from the cold as often as we could, popping into all of the stores and tourist shops in the downtown area. For such a small town there were a large number of stores with a selection of all kinds of modern conveniences, from soda water machines and fish aquariums to Roombas.

Passing Café Tutu and Café Hong Kong, we went to Icy Bar, a seemingly upscale café serving pizzas, which Ole later told us are the best in Greenland. We sat there for a while watching America's Funniest Home Videos dubbed over in Danish. After toying with the idea of seeing Django Unchained, the only film being shown at the town theatre, we decided to retire to our hotel, Hotel Icefjord. There, from our rooms, we watched the sun set over the frozen fjord, the stillness disturbed only by the occasional pair of ravens or gulls flying past.

TRADITION UNDER DANISH INFLUENCE

We awoke to an equally impressive sunrise, which we enjoyed with breakfast before rushing into town to observe 10 AM mass at a large brown wooden church overlooking the fjord. We took our seats in the back with the families juggling little kids, almost all of them chewing gum—evidently a special treat—which I caught some of them flaunting to kids in other pews.

We went through the motions, flipping a Lutheran bible from one Greenlandic verse to the next. My eyes wandered to the window where I spotted some of our fellow passengers from the flight over, a Chinese painter and his entourage, wandering over to the fjord edge, perhaps scouting for a landscape to put on canvas.

Just when I was getting restless, everyone turned to the back of the church where a husband and wife dressed in traditional Greenlandic garb—the man wearing a white anorak

and the woman wearing seal skin bottoms and a colourful beaded top—came walking down the aisle with their newborn, whose baptism we got to witness before going out into our second day in Ilulissat.

At a tourism office in town we were told that there were no dog sledding or boat tours available to us due to the extreme frost, as most of the town's fishermen were off fishing for halibut by dogsled, a far more lucrative business than chauffeuring around tourists.

We walked down to the harbour, hoping to convince somebody to take us along, but unfortunately everything was gridlocked and we had trouble communicating—English seemingly as foreign to the fishermen as West Greenlandic was to us. One of them wrote "Atersuit Qaleralinnut, tumimaaiia" in my notebook, which made no sense to me. Unfortunately, Google translate is not yet available for Greenlandic, a language spoken by a nation of 57,000 people.

ROOMBAS BUT NO BANANAS

Instead of going out to sea we met Ole at the Ilulissat Art Gallery, "a castle compared to the rest of the houses," as Ole described it, "as it was built to house the Danish colony manager." Today it houses a permanent exhibition by the 20th century Danish landscape painter Emanuel A. Petersen. "It would have been far too cold to be outside painting in Greenland, so he made numbered sketches and then went back to



Photo: Anna Andersen

LINE.

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Photo: Alisa Kalyanova

Denmark to colour them in," Ole explained.

Ole has been living in Greenland for 25 years now with his wife who runs a reflexology clinic from their house. The last three to four years, he told us they've had cargo ships coming in on a weekly basis, but given this sudden frost in March, they hadn't seen a cargo ship for two weeks. "We were surprised to see one come in last night," he said. "It was

quick to talk about its natural beauty. "This is a place for people who like to be outside in the nature, people who like to hunt. You'd think you were in Texas," he said, noting that every household in town has a gun or two. "If you're interested in sipping on café au lait, you should be in Reykjavík or Copenhagen," he said. "This isn't that kind of place."

### PUREBRED GREENLANDIC DOGS

When Ole's shift ended, we walked over to his house to go meet his dogs, which barked ferociously and lunged at us from their chains. Owners are legally required to keep their dogs chained down, with the exception of puppies, which are free to roam and playfully followed us around town during our stay.

They are working dogs, kept for the purposes of pulling sleds, and they can do that for about ten years before they stop pulling and must be shot, said Ole's friend David Droob, who happened to sled past us with a Danish couple—a local policeman and a nurse—clad in sealskin from head to toe. Much like there are strict regulations to keep the Icelandic horse purebred, there are regulations to keep

the Greenlandic dog pure. "No normal, city dogs, north of the polar circle," he explained.

For Ole and David, dogsledding is more a hobby than anything else, and neither of them raced in the national qualifying race, which took place just before we got into town. In this region especially, they told us dogsled races are taken quite seriously—it's like handball to Icelanders, Ole explained.

There were no shortage of dogs in the running, however, as we would see on our last day in Ilulissat. Fortunately it was as sunny and clear as the previous days as we set off to go see the icefjord, a little ways out of town past a suburb of dogs, howling, crying like babies.

### THIS IS WHAT WE ARE DOING HERE

Past the dogs, we followed a single wooden sidewalk in the snow, hoping we were going the right way until the view of a massive iceberg in the distance provided confirmation. We made our way up to a lookout spot where we found two lone benches. We sat and stared and took photos. Every now and then a few boats cut across the ice, dwarfed by the titanic

icebergs. Pairs of ravens flew by. It was silent.

It was almost too silent to believe that the Sermeq Kujalleq glacier empties into this fjord at a rate of 30-40 metres/day, making it one of the fastest moving glaciers on Earth, where many glaciers flow the same amount over an entire year.

From there David recommended that we hike back to town along the fjord-edge. Fortunately we could follow the marks of a single hiker's footsteps, deep holes in the snow, up a mountain until yellow painted cairns eventually appeared. The entire time we spent out there, five hours or so, we met one old Greenlandic man and another Greenlandic couple hiking past us on the same trail.

We took a cab to Arctic Hotel for our last dinner, a fancy Greenlandic buffet—with local musk ox, halibut, reindeer, whale, lamb, and more. There we found 50 tall Danes who Ole had told us were in town for a dental conference. We spoke to a couple that said most of them had gone dogsledding and sailing, which explained how the few available tours could be fully booked and also left us feeling pretty content with our alternative adventure.

"You'd think you were in Texas"

marked Ístak—an Icelandic company." He said his wife noticed that stores had by then run out of bananas, but grocery stores were otherwise pretty well stocked.

When I wondered what he has been doing here in this town for so many years, he was

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# Come To The Dark Side

We have free comics



Photo: Gunnella Thorgeirsdóttir

Whilst most of the city is still asleep on a cold Saturday morning, a handful of loyal fans have already set up camp outside of Nexus. Undeterred by the elements, they wait patiently and count down the hours until the twelfth annual Free Comic Book Day starts. Gísli Einarsson, the owner of Nexus, tells us the store has participated in the international day from the beginning and the number of attendees increases year by year.

Traditionally a niche market, Gísli says comics are becoming more and more mainstream. "The comic business," he says, "has gone through a lot of growing up in the last decades." In addition to classics such as 'Batman' and 'Spiderman' becoming more mature, new material like 'Watchmen' and 'Scott Pilgrim' has expanded on the traditional comic format with themes like dark political drama and wacky teen romance.

For the third year in a row, a free Icelandic comic called 'Ókeipiss' is distributed. It features a collection of short stories and ads from 21 artists and writers, including Hugleikur Dagsson who is known for his dark humour. Whilst 'Ókeipiss' is bursting at the seams with quality amateur submissions, the domestic comic book scene has had difficulty publishing, and there are few who can make a living from making comic books.

## IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT QUEUING UP FOR FREE STUFF

Half an hour before the doors open, the line has grown from a dozen to well over a hundred, and is the only time you will see Icelanders queue in an orderly fashion. Most of them seem to be in their late teens and early twenties, with equal numbers of boys and girls. Many have come year after year, and they drag their friends along to introduce them to the hobby.

Once the clock strikes one, the fans burst in, eager to get comics from their favourite lines. This year the store offers seven thousand free comics from fifty different lines featuring themes and stories that appeal to all kinds of readers. Gísli tells me the free comics are appreciated by enthusiasts, but also bring new readers into the hobby. They are often excerpts from larger books, and make for an easy transition to established series. "The appeal of the day isn't lining up for free comics as they are relatively cheap to buy," Gísli says. "It brings together people with shared interests and offers a validating experience."

## BRINGING DIVERGENT HOBBIES TOGETHER

Nexus goes above and beyond what many European stores do for the day, making it into a fan celebration, Gísli says. In addition to offering a range of TV series, films, books and, of course, comics, Nexus is a hub for fringe interests. "It brings people together to develop hobbies like roleplaying, collectible card, board and war games, which don't translate to other mediums like computer games," he says. On occasion, they also have special film premieres like for the latest Star Trek and nerd films.

Three hours after the event has started, at least a thousand fans have gotten what they came for, and most of the free comics have finished. The few fans that trickle in just before the store closes blame exams, hangovers, or unfortunate working hours for their tardiness, but they are all happy to get their comics.

Free Comic Book Day is held on the first Saturday of every May, so keep your eyes open for it next year.

✉ - Tómas Gabriel Benjamin

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The latest addition to Reykjavík's restaurant scene is Borg Restaurant. Located on the ground floor of the monumental Hotel Borg – in the heart of the City, Borg Restaurant is the place for people across all hours. Open for breakfast, lunch, afternoon drinks, dinners and weekend brunch, Borg Restaurant is a bustling and breathtaking space in one of Iceland's landmark buildings.

A stunning mix of vintage and modern brought together by an ever-changing menu filled with dazzling surprises. The bar is in a league of its own. Hand crafted original cocktails with homemade syrups and bitters and a wide selection of premium spirit's; local, as well as international.

The kitchen is run by award-winning chef and co-owner Chef Volundur Volundarson who has worked in top restaurants all over the world. His innovative vision and talent have earned him many national & international awards in recognition for culinary excellence. His first book, *Delicious Iceland*, was chosen one of the best 100 cookbooks published in the world by Gourmand World Cookbook Awards and his TV shows have aired in over 50 countries and on channels such as the BBC Lifestyle.

The Restaurant is quickly becoming a neighborhood fixture, serving up flavorful and fresh cuisine at affordable prices to local denizens.

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# The Message: No Messages

Reykjavík district court building refuses to display YOUR TEXT HERE



Marcos Zotes is an architect who recently brought one of his latest projects, “YOUR TEXT HERE,” to Reykjavík. He was caught off guard, however, when the Reykjavík district court building refused to grant him permission to use their façade as a display point.

The project is simple. People anonymously submit text messages to a website that Marcos has set up, the messages are then added to a queue and automatically projected for roughly ten seconds each in a spot he has designated. With these short interventions, which typically last only one night, one of Marcos' primary aims is to activate public spaces.

“The intention is to have people physically interact with their environment,” Marcos said. “Cities are designed in a way so that everything is homogeneous; you are meant to perform in a particular way, to follow a certain pattern... my work challenges this condition.”

More importantly though, the project's goal is to enable self-expression. These projections serve as a way for people to articulate themselves and make their voices heard. Instead of having their city decorated with banners and product advertisements, residents actually have a say in what is displayed. “The main point is to have people actually express themselves,” Marcos explained. This issue of self-expression, however, is where Marcos encountered a problem.

## THE COURT'S REACTION

After getting clearance without issue from both City Hall and the Eymundsson bookstore on Austurstræti, the court building on Lækjartorg turned down his request to carry out his project on their building. When the project was explained, the unnerved operator at the court plainly repudiated his request. Owing their negative response to the fact that theirs is a “politically charged building,” they said they could not allow people to use it for their own self-expression. Their message was clear: unless we can be in control of what mes-

sages are projected, you are not running your project here.

Having carried out his project successfully in the past without many issues of censorship like these, this reaction from the court building came as a surprise to Marcos.

When he first ran this project as a research student at Columbia University in New York, he was sent on something of a wild goose chase to get permission. “I had a lot of trouble because the institution was somehow afraid of what people would say. But they couldn't say ‘no, we don't want you to do it,’ because that's also very delicate; it's basically censoring freedom of speech,” Marcos explained. In the end, Marcos was granted provisional permission, able to run his projector until some sort of nasty message appeared, at which point a security guard would shut it down. Ultimately, he decided to black out any messages that might fall into this category, so as to publicly highlight this condition of censorship.

When Marcos ran his project a second time, in Detroit, he had complete freedom. More than a thousand messages were submitted and then displayed on the façade of an old industrial building, and for a two-day period, Marcos just left his projector running. “The great thing was that all of the messages were positive,” Marcos said. “People came together as a community to share messages about love, wisdom, criticism, or just jokes. It was really kind of a family event.”

While it wasn't on the centrally located court building that he would've preferred, Marcos did get to run his project in Reykjavík. The projections lasted for three nights, one on the City Hall and the other two on the Eymundsson bookstore. Of the roughly 100 messages that were submitted, as had been the case in the past, they were all pleasant and familial.

The kinds of messages Marcos has received in his project only exacerbate his confusion over the court's ultimatum to censor and filter out what would get displayed. In each of New York, Detroit, and now Reykjavík, the messages received have almost all been positive and created a family-like atmosphere around the building. An argument could certainly be made that messages like, “Never give up,” and, “Make each day your masterpiece,” don't seem to warrant concern. Seen in this light, the court's lack of cooperation is even more bizarre. “I don't know what they'd be afraid of,” Marcos said.

“I don't know what they'd be afraid of.”

Marcos uses his own design studio, UNSTABLE, to experiment with new media and to be critical of the way public space is used. He focuses primarily on the issue of control over public space and how to go beyond its limits. The layers of control over public space, Marcos expressed, limit its potential. These conditions are what Marcos had hoped to challenge with “YOUR TEXT HERE,” with his use of the court building's façade. The court, however, obviously didn't empathise with Marcos' objectives.

“I wasn't surprised to hear Columbia's

answer because it's a private institution and they want to preserve this image. But we're in the City of Reykjavík, this is a public place,” Marcos said. “This brings up the issue of censorship again in a city, and even with the court building, which is supposed to be a public institution. I wanted to project the messages there and display the voices of local residents, but it turns out that no, you don't have your say.”

## JUST CASTING LIGHT

Marcos has no future plans to rerun “YOUR TEXT HERE” in Reykjavík, but does intend to bring the project to other cities. The messages submitted in each of the cities seem to capture something of the personality of the local crowd, which is why Marcos plans to continue to expand the project's reach. “This is becoming a travelling project, and in different places, the messages are very different. In every case they reflect the spirit of the local community,” he said.

In the end, Marcos thinks the fuss made by the court building seems funny. All this project consists of is casting light onto a building. “It's not as if it's graffiti or something permanent, I'm just shining a light for a few seconds,” Marcos explained. He hopes, however, that something as seemingly trivial as casting light may inspire something more. “My interventions are so ephemeral that they obviously can't instantly change anything in a city,” Marcos emphasized, “but they can certainly generate ideas or raise concerns; that's the whole point.”

✎ - John Wilkins

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Issue 5

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Page 6



"In addressing the "incest alarm," and resulting jokes about dating risks in Iceland, many people involved in administering the app competition expressed a surprising amount of incredulity that it has garnered so much attention from the international media."

**The new Íslendingabók app has gotten a lot of attention over a little cousin-lovin'**



"While steam punk has dedicated followings in other countries around the world—Ingimar mentioned Japan, Germany, Britain, and the US—it hasn't so much caught on in Iceland."

**Iceland's only steam punk Ingimar Oddson is publishing his first book**

Page 24



"While Ben Stiller charmed inhabitants of the East Fjords while making 'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty' and Russel Crowe became a Reykjavík local by pumping iron at the gym and singing with Patti Smith downtown on his days off from 'Noah,' the local verdict on Cruise remains mixed. So, was all the suffering worth it?"

**Iceland had cameos in many major motion pictures last year**

Page 28



"It's sunny outside and hot, so people must be in a good mood," drummer Arnar Rösenkranz Hilmarsson says. "I expect the crowd to be very happy—very open, warm, and welcoming."

**Of Monsters and Men were lucky enough to play Coachella, and we had a lucky reporter on the ground!**

# Glacier Walking & Ice Climbing Day Tour from Reykjavík!

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**G** Music, Art, Films and Events Listings  
+ Eating, Drinking and Shopping + Map

Issue 5 - 2013

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ADVERTISING



## Eighty-Eight Worlds In A Week

*The Reykjavík Shorts&Docs Film Festival*

*May 9-16*

It's The Reykjavík Shorts&Docs 11th year running, and they're getting pretty good at it. Planted right in downtown, the festival mixes the glamour of an international film festival with the intimacy of, well, downtown Reykjavík. Bump elbows with the filmmakers and then offer them a drink. Watch your favourite bands star in a hot music doc and then hear them play live at the bar down the road. If you know what you like, check out some of the bigger flicks at Bíó Paradís. If you're feeling more experimental try one of the two off-venues, Kex Hostel or Slipp Bíó, which will be screening the flicks for free all week. Mix it up, hit them all. "Music, sex, animations, or wild nature" says the festival's director Heather Millard, "there really is something for everyone." For full schedule and prices check out the website: [www.shortsdocsfest.com](http://www.shortsdocsfest.com). PY

# MUSIC

## CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

May 10 - 23

### Friday May 10

- Glaubar**  
 • 22:00 Basic House Effect  
**Dillon**  
 • 22:00 Texas Muffin  
**Faktory**  
 • 22:00 DJ Plan B  
**Dolly**  
 • 22:00 Weirdcore presents Atom Max / Tanya & Marlon / Skimik-sofornia  
**Hressó**  
 • 22:00 Brilliantin/DJ Solid  
**Café Rosenberg**  
 • 17:00 Pokkabót  
**Harlem**  
 • 22:00 KGB at Harlem  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 22:00 Kanilsnældur  
**Volta**  
 • 0:00 Kalli & Ewok  
**Gamli Gaukurinn**  
 • 23:00 Guns and Roses Tribute Band  
**Bar 11**  
 • 22:00 Sykur  
**Prikió**  
 • 22:00 Emmsjé Gauti  
 • 23:59 Moonshine

### Saturday May 11

- Glaubar**  
 • 22:00 DJ Cyprie  
**Faktory**  
 • 23:59 RVK Soundsystem's Reggae Night  
**Dillon**  
 • 22:00 Langi Seli Og Skuggarnir  
**Faktory**  
 • 23:00 DJ Pabbi / FM Belfast / RVK Soundsystem  
**Hressó**  
 • 22:00 DJ Ívar Amore  
**Café Rosenberg**  
 • 21:00 Andrea Gylfa and Bíobandið  
**Gamli Gaukurinn**  
 • 16:00 Skálmöld - all ages  
 • 22:00 Skálmöld - 20+  
**Harlem**  
 • 22:00 Solaris Sun Glaze  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 22:00 DJ Óli Dóri and DJ Kári  
**Volta**  
 • 23:59 DJ Margeir & Steindór Jónsson  
**Græni Hatturinn**  
 • 23:00 Guns and Roses Tribute Band  
**Harpa**  
 • 13:15 Children's Hour at Harpa  
 • 14:00 'Elves and Knights' Musical Adventure  
 • 17:00 European Union Youth Orchestra  
**Prikió**  
 • 22:00 Árni Kocoon

### Sunday May 12

- Faktory**  
 • 17:30 Free Live Jazz Show  
**Harlem**  
 • 20:00 NBA Night  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 22:00 Hrynjandi with Kristinn Pálsson  
**Langholtskirkja**  
 • 20:30 Vox Feminæ Women's Choir  
**Prikió**  
 • 22:00 Hangover Cinema: Police Academy

### Monday May 13

- Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**  
 • 20:00 FUNI - launch concert for new album 'FLÚR'  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 20:00 DJ Katla  
**Prikió**  
 • 22:00 DJ Hús & Rólegheit

### Tuesday May 14

- Glaubar**  
 • 20:00 Eurovision Semi-Finals 1  
**Harlem**  
 • 22:00 Wonderism  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 20:00 DJ Pabbi  
**Prikió**  
 • 22:00 Súr Berndsen

### Wednesday May 15

- Café Rosenberg**  
 • 21:00 Kvartettinn Kvika  
**Harlem**  
 • 22:00 DJ Pilsner  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 20:00 Einar Indra/Exos/Drone Clones  
**Prikió**  
 • 22:00 Sunna Ben

### Thursday May 16

- Glaubar**  
 • 20:00 Eurovision Semi-Finals 2  
**Dillon**  
 • 22:00 Pub Quiz and Daniel Acoustic Introspection  
**Faktory**  
 • 22:00 DJ Elvar

17-2  
May-June



### Hybrid Theory Of Arts Reykjavík Art Festival

Various locations and prices

This year's Reykjavík Art Festival is absolutely packed with events where different art forms come together and merge into a beautiful harmony of the sense. Whether you are into visual, musical, new, old, domestic or foreign art, there will be something for you to enjoy. The festival is by nature experimental, and hopefully expands a few attendees' horizons.

A perfect example of this hybrid theory is Bang on a Can All-Stars, a world renowned group that will start the festival. They fuse jazz, world music and contemporary classic works. They will focus on their set Field Recordings, one with a diverse background of indie-pop, electric, visual art and classical music. The New York Times has given the group high praise, and if such a funky mash up sounds like it appeals to you, you should check them out, or at least swing by to see the rest of the festival. We just don't envy whoever has to follow their act. For full schedule and price information go their website, [www.listahatid.is](http://www.listahatid.is). **TGB**

### Friday May 17

- Hressó**  
 • 22:00 Flass Party  
**Café Rosenberg**  
 • 21:00 VOR  
**Harlem**  
 • 22:00 Óli Dóri  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 22:00 Alfons X  
**Volta**  
 • 22:00 Murrk  
**Harpa**  
 • 19:30 Mendelssohn and Tchaikovsky  
**Prikió**  
 • 22:00 Young Ones Night
- Glaubar**  
 • 22:00 Basic House Effect  
**Harpa**  
 • 20:30 Bang on a Can All-Stars  
**Dillon**  
 • 22:00 Bee Bee And The Bluebirds  
**Faktory**  
 • 20:00 Daniel Higgs/Babies/BORG009  
**Hressó**  
 • 22:00 Grúvbandið/DJ Solid  
**Gamli Gaukurinn**  
 • 22:00 Fræbblarnir/Saktmóðigur/Norn/Pungsig



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- Harlem**  
 • 22:00 Benni B-Ruff  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 22:00 Bensol & DJ Pilsner  
**Volta**  
 • 23:59 RVK DNB  
**Prikið**  
 • 22:00 Moonshine & the House-band

**Saturday May 18**

- Glaumbar**  
 • 20:00 Eurovision Party with Seth Sharp  
**Dillon**  
 • 22:00 Azoic  
**Faktörý**  
 • 23:00 DJ KGB  
**Hressó**  
 • 22:00 DJ Fúzi  
**Café Rosenberg**  
 • 22:00 Kristjana Stefáns  
**Gamli Gaukurinn**  
 • 22:00 Ultra Mega Technobandið Stefán and guests  
**Harlem**  
 • 22:00 DJ Plan B  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 22:00 B.G. Baareegaard  
**Volta**  
 • 21:00 RetRoBot & Big Band  
**Theory**  
 • 23:59 Housekell & Lagaffe Tales  
**Prikið**  
 • 23:59 Benni B-Ruff

**Sunday May 19**

- Glaumbar**  
 • 22:00 White Sunday Party  
**Hressó**  
 • 22:00 Dalton/DJ Solid  
**Harlem**  
 • 22:00 Atli Kanill  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 22:00 DJ KGB  
**Harpa**  
 • 20:00 Routeopia Piano Bus  
**Prikið**  
 • 22:00 Hangover Cinema: Once Were Warriors

**Monday May 20**

- Kaffibarinn**  
 • 20:00 Hrynjandi with Kristinn Pálsson

**Tuesday May 21**

- Café Rosenberg**  
 • 22:00 KYRR  
**Harlem**  
 • 22:00 Quiet Romance Night  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 20:00 DJ Óli Dóri  
**Prikið**  
 • 22:00 Funk Night

**Wednesday May 22**

- Café Rosenberg**  
 • 21:00 Ingibjörg Fríða and Band  
**Harlem**  
 • 22:00 Koko & Berry  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 22:00 Alfons X  
**Harpa**  
 • 20:00 Jack Quartet: Playing in the Dark  
**Prikið**  
 • 22:00 Gay Latino Night

**Thursday May 23**

- Glaumbar**  
 • 21:00 Nyxo  
**Dillon**  
 • 22:00 Morning After Youth  
**Faktörý**  
 • 22:00 DJ Óli Dóri  
**Hressó**  
 • 22:00 Fox Train Safari  
**Café Rosenberg**  
 • 22:00 Lost Dog (Hundur í Óskilum)  
**Gamli Gaukurinn**  
 • 22:00 Málmsmiðafélagið plays the Rock Classics  
**Harlem**  
 • 20:00 Karaoke!  
**Kaffibarinn**  
 • 22:00 Óli Ofur  
**Prikið**  
 • 22:00 Ready to POP Night



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We know, keeping up with the young music scene in Reykjavík is no easy task. Walk any given downtown block on a Friday or Saturday night and you're hit with booms and baps from all sides. But for one shiny weekend at the end of May, life is simplified. The Reykjavík Music Mess consolidates the must-hears of the independent music scene into two venues and one ticket. The Mess features homegrown acts like Oyama, Bloodgroup and Muck, among others, as well as international imports from the UK and Australia, like Withered Hand and DZ Deathrays. **PY**



**Worship The Old Gods And Bring The Roof Down  
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Gamli Gaukurinn | 16:00 and 22:00 | 1,500 & 3,000 ISK

Legendary Viking metal band play material from their celebrated albums 'Baldur' and 'Börn Loka'. With lyrics inspired by the Old Icelandic Sagas and a vibe that is dark, fast yet lyrical, Skálmöld are a treat for fans of folklore buffs and metal heads alike. So find your shiny silver rings, leather up and bring your best drinking horn, it will be a night like none other to honour Óðin and celebrate the coming of summer. There are two gigs, one for all ages at 16:00, 1,500 ISK entry, and a second at 22:00 for 20 year olds and over, 3,000 ISK entry. **TGB**



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# ART

## OPENINGS AND ONGOING

May 10 - 23

**How to use the listings:** Venues are listed alphabetically by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is). Send us your listings: [listings@grapevine.is](mailto:listings@grapevine.is)

### Opening

#### Bíó Paradís

May 9

##### Shorts and Docs Film Festival

The 11th annual Reykjavik Shorts and Docs Film Festival is returning! The finest in Icelandic and international short films and documentaries will be available either in English or with English subtitles.

Runs until May 16

#### Gerðarsafn

May 11

##### The Kópavogur Art Museum's 25th Anniversary

This collective exhibition celebrates the 25 year history of the museum, displaying some of the finest works in its collection.

Runs until June 2

#### Hafnarborg

May 18

##### Art=Text=Art

An exhibition of more than 80 drawings, prints, and artist's books by close to 50 artists. The exhibition provides broad insight into the many ways artists incorporate text into their work as a formal element or conceptual device. Here artists utilize text as an instrument of color, shape, or composition—or they explore the structure of the written word and its ability to communicate ideas and information.

Runs until June 23

#### Kling and Bang Gallery

May 18

##### Clive Murphy Exhibit

Kling & Bang Gallery hosts Clive Murphey, a New-York based artist who upcycles materials to produce works that examine societal ideologies and cultural systems. On May 18th the artist, in collaboration with curator Jessamyn Fiore, will create an improvised installation in the gallery space to kick off the month-long exhibit.

Runs until June 23

#### National Theatre of Iceland

May 14-15

##### The Iceland Academy of the Arts Dance Department Graduation show

See two new contemporary dance works from recent dance graduates. Shows at 20:00 on May 14, 17:00 and 21:00 on May 15. Tickets are free but must be reserved at [leiklist@lhi.is](mailto:leiklist@lhi.is).

### Ongoing

#### ASÍ Art Museum

##### Kristín Jónsdóttir - Words, Time, and the Color of Water

Works from 1984-2013 touching various themes on Kristín's



### Art=Text=Art Simple Mathematics

May 18- 23 | Hafnarborg, Hafnarfjörður

Almost 50 artists of varying backgrounds have contributed more than 80 drawings, prints, and artists' books to this travelling exhibition. Exploring the ways in which artists use text in their work as formal elements and conceptual devices, this exhibit examines the way that words are able to communicate ideas and emotion. Each artist has made a unique contribution by engaging with different surfaces and substances of paper in a distinct way. People don't normally think of visual art as text, but these artists make a pretty strong counterargument. **JW**

palette consisting of handwritten texts, paintings on plexiglass and watercolors on paper.

Runs until May 12

#### The Culture House

##### Medieval Manuscripts, Eddas, and Sagas

It includes principal medieval manuscripts, such as Codices Regii of the Poetic Edda, Prose Edda, law codes and Christian works, not forgetting the Icelandic Sagas.

On permanent view

##### Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurðsson

Exploring the life of Icelandic national hero Jón Sigurðsson, made especially accessible to children, families and school groups.

On permanent view

##### Millennium - Phase One

A selection of pieces from the collection of the National Gallery displaying a variety of works by Icelandic artists in the last two centuries.

On permanent view

#### The Library Room

The old reading room of the National Library displays books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th century to the present day. Works include the oldest published versions of the Sagas, Edda Poems and more.

On permanent view

#### The Einar Jónsson Museum

The museum contains close to 300 art works including a beautiful tree-clad garden adorned with 26 bronze casts of the artist's works is located behind the museum.

On permanent view

#### Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

##### Birds - The Art of Flight

Birds in all possible manifestations are the subject of this Springtime exhibit.

Runs until June 21

#### Hafnarborg

##### Hellisgerði, Flower and Recreation Park

The exhibition looks at the public's use of the park, vegetation and overall mood of the park in different time periods. The exhibition opens on the first day of summer in Hafnarborg's Sværrissalur.

Runs until June 17

##### An Attempt to Harness the Light

The exhibition looks at selected imagery made by Icelanders practicing new age theory and healing, alongside the works of professional, contemporary artists who are as well influenced by spiritualism.

Runs until May 12

#### i8 Gallery

##### Hamish Fulton Art Exhibition

British artist Hamish Fulton displays his work.

Runs until June 1

#### Kling and Bang

##### Knitting Iceland

Come and knit at Laugavegur 25, 3rd floor, every Thursday, 14:00 - 18:00.

On permanent view

#### Latin Dance Studio, Faxafen 12

##### Guided Practica

Argentine tango. Sundays from 17:30-19:30. Register by phone 821 6929 or email [tangoadventure@](mailto:tangoadventure@)



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WHATS INSIDE | Reykjavík Map | Happy Hour Guide | Places we like | Best of Reykjavík | Practical Info

Reykjavík Area

May 10-23

Keep it in your pocket

## Two Weeks

The Grapevine picks the events, places and what to experience the next four weeks

11  
MAY

**Party in the Streets**  
Intercultural Celebration Extravaganza

**10 May ELECTRONIC** Weircore Presents: Atom Max, Tanya & Marlon, and Skimiksofornia at Dolly. Tune in, get weird, space out.

**12 May CHOIR SONGS** Vox Feminae Women's Choir sings Iceland's history from settlement to present day. The closest attention you'll ever pay to a history lesson, unless your history teacher was really fine.

**19 May PIANO BUS** Routeopia takes listeners on a musical journey around Reykjavík. Quite literally. Ticket holders are loaded onto a bus and driven to mystery destinations around Reykjavík to the tunes of an on-board grand piano.

**12 May SPORTS** Pound a cold one and bump fists with your bros at Harlem's **NBA Night**. It's playoff season, baby!

13-26  
MAY

**TV Marathon**  
They're Laughing, Michael!

### Reykjavík Intercultural Day

Tjarnarbió ☉ 13:30-17:00, Hafnarhús ☉ 20:00-22:00 and all over Reykjavík

Mayor Jón Gnarr is kicking off the fifth annual Reykjavík Intercultural Day with a parade from Hallgrímskirkja to City Hall. A market offering samples of foods from around the globe will be set up at City Hall, as well as arts and crafts workshops. Magicians, music, dancing, singing, poetry and short films will comprise the free live entertainment offered at Tjarnarbió, and Hafnarhús is featuring The Bangoura Band, a group from Africa. For the City of Reykjavík, this means good news, highlight the best aspects of interculturalism with good food, live entertainment and a full day of enjoyable events. **JW**

11  
MAY

**For Your Ears**  
This One's For You, Europe



### European Day

Free! Eldborg, Harpa ☉ 20 :00

European Day is upon us on May 11. Whether you are for or against the EU, you will probably appreciate this gig as it is a double feature. The EU Info Centre brings us the European Union Youth Orchestra and the European Opera Centre, conducted by Laurent Pilot. There is free entry, but you need to reserve your tickets through Harpa's ticket office. These are world-class performers, so lend them your ear. Why? I don't know. I'm not here to tell you your politics! **TGB**

### Arrested Development Marathon Mondays

Free! Harlem ☉ 22 :00

It's Monday night. You've managed to pull yourself up out of bed, get dressed, possibly even comb your hair, and endure a long and gruelling workday. We're proud of you, really. Why don't you loosen that necktie up and treat yourself to a long and healthy laugh via Harlem's Monday night Arrested Development marathon, keeping its head down and powering through until the premiere of the long awaited fourth season. Because nothing says "Steve Holt!" like watching the Bluth family's comical demise while sipping a cold one with your co-workers. Go on now, you deserve it like a \$15 thing of candy beans. **PY**



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[www.theviking.is](http://www.theviking.is)



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Tel. 590 1500 • www.visitreykjavik.is



A

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www.kraum.is



B

## Café Loki in front of Hallgrímskirkja



Enjoy some solid homemade Icelandic food  
Open 9-21 Mon-Sat and 11-21 Sundays

C

# MAP

## Places We Like

### Food

#### 1 Ban Thai

Laugavegur 130

Although some claim service at Ban Thai can at times be lacking, most have no complaints about the food. One of the few Thai restaurants in Iceland, Ban Thai gives the diner a unique experience in both atmosphere and cuisine.

#### 2 Gallery Restaurant

Hotel Holt, Bergstaðastræti 37

Truly one of Iceland's finest dining establishments, Hótel Holt's Gallery Restaurant has been a local staple since opening in 1965. Their consistently outstanding take on French cuisine and impeccable service ensures the place highest marks (as well as repeat visits) from gourmets and critics alike. Widely considered a classic, and rightfully so.

#### 3 Café Babalú

Skólavörðustígur 22a

It's tough to miss the brightly colored Café Babalú walking up Skólavörðustígur. A cosy place for coffee and cake, the well-worn, homey ambience makes it difficult to leave. Check out their rooftop patio on sunny days as well.

#### 4 Munnharpan

Austurbakki 2

Danish cuisine with the inherent French influence and a little more French sprinkled on top. Munnharpan is owned by the same people that run Jómfrúin, a long-standing favourite in the local scene. The meals are mostly suitable with plenty of light courses offering a selection of smørrebrød (Danish open faced sandwiches) mixed with classic French courses.

#### 5 Dill

Sturlugata 5

Pioneering New Nordic Kitchen style cuisine in Iceland, Dill Restaurant has very quickly gained status as a Reykjavík favourite. Using fresh and classic Nordic ingredients exclusively, Dill offers a unique dining experience whether you go for their short and simple lunchtime menu or the extensive evening one.

### Drinking

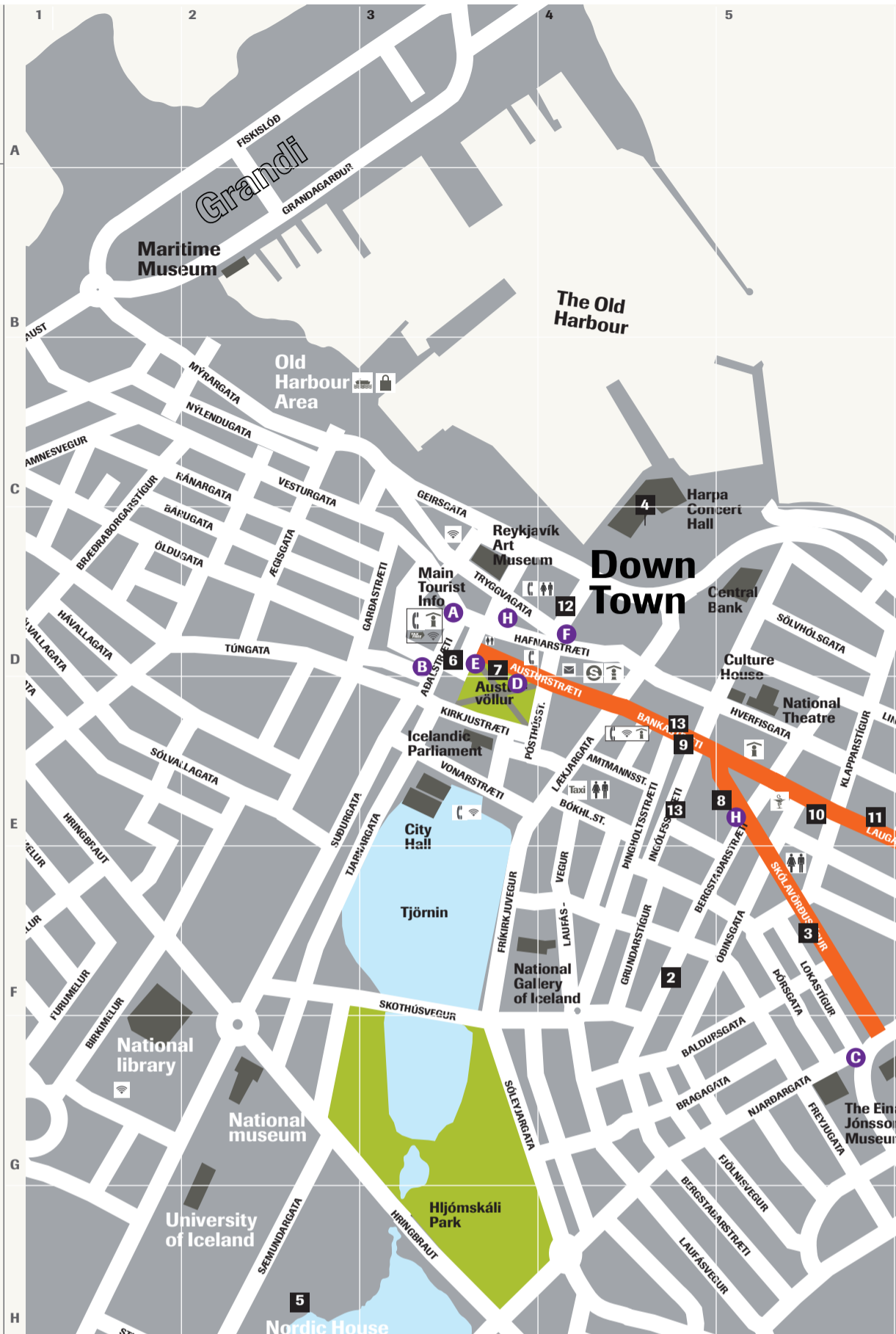
#### 6 Micro Bar

Austurstræti 6

One of Reykjavík's newest bars also boasts one of the city's largest selection of draught beers. It carries eight different kinds of beer on tap, as well as bottled beer from microbreweries in Iceland, Denmark, Belgium and Scotland. No doubt the biggest beer selection in town.

### Useful numbers

- Emergency number: **112**
- Medical help: **1770**
- Dental emergency: **575 0505**
- Information: **118**
- Taxi: Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir: **588 5522**  
BSR: **561 0000**
- Tax Free Refund**
- Iceland Refund**, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400
- Tourist information**
- Arctic Adventures**, Laugavegur 11, tel: 562 7000
- City Centre**, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550
- Iceland Excursions – Grayline Iceland**,



#### 7 ÁTVR (Liquor store)

Austurstræti 10a

In Iceland, alcohol isn't sold in the grocery shops (that stuff in the shops that looks like beer—it isn't beer. Trust us). You can only buy alcohol in the state-owned liquor stores named ÁTVR, usually referred to as Ríkið ("The State"). Twelve stores are operated in the capital area and one is located in the city centre. Opening hours for the downtown one are: Mon.–Thu. 11:00–18:00, Fri. 11:00–19:00, Sat. 11:00–18:00.

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1313

**The Icelandic Travel Market**, Bankastræti 2, tel: 522 4979

**Trip**, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

### Pharmacies

**Lyf og heilsa**, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020

**Lyfja**, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and Lágmúla 5, tel: 533-2300

### Coach terminal

**BSÍ**, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10, tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

### Domestic airlines

**Air Iceland**, Reykjavíkflugvöllur, tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

**Eagle Air**, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562-4200

#### 8 Kaffifélagið

Skólavörðustígur 10

There is coffee, and then there is coffee. The kind that makes your mouth foam with delight at the mere thought of it. The kind that can wake you up from a horrible day's slumber, instantaneously drying your snow-wet feet. Kaffifélagið may be small, but it more than makes up for it in quality and atmosphere. Take your coffee to go or drink your espresso at the bar.

### Public transport

The only public transport available in Reykjavík is the bus. Most buses run every 20–30 minutes (the wait may be longer on weekends) and the price per fare is 350 ISK for adults and children. Multiple day passes are available for purchase at select locations. Complete route map available at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Buses run from 07:00–24:00 on weekdays and 10:00–24:00 on weekends. Main terminals are: Hlemmur and Lækjartorg

### Opening Hours

**Bars and clubs:** According to regulations, bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 04:30 on weekends.

**Shops:** Mon.–Fri. 10:00–18:00, Sat.

#### 9 Prikið

Bankastræti 12

"Serving old men their morning coffee since way back, and somehow combining that with serving beer and hip hop to young folks since the late '90s. And burgers. And milkshakes. A one of a kind place with spirit and soul."

10:00–16:00, Sun. closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

**Swimming pools:** Weekdays 06:30–22:00 and weekends 09:00–17:00, although each pool varies plus or minus a few hours.

**Banks** in the centre are open Mon.–Fri. 09:00–16:00.

### Post Offices

Post offices are located around the city. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3–5, open Mon.–Fri. 09:00–18:00. Stamps are also sold at bookstores, gas stations, tourist shops and some grocery stores.

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D

## New In Town



### 13 Reykjavik Loft Hostel

Bankastræti 7

With a brilliant location right in the centre of the action, the views from the upstairs bar and rooftop patio at the Loft Hostel can't be more entertaining. In addition to clean, comfortable rooms for all types of travellers, this new hostel is quickly becoming a hotspot for live music and comfortable accommodation alike.

## Venue Finder Music & Entertainment

- Amsterdam**  
Hafnarstræti 5 | **D3**
- Austur**  
Austurstræti 7 | **E3**
- B5**  
Bankastræti 5 | **E4**
- Babalú**  
Skólavörðustígur 22 | **F5**
- Bar 11**  
Hverfisgötu 18 | **E5**
- Bjarni Fel**  
Austurstræti 20 | **E4**
- Boston**  
Laugavegur 28b | **F6**
- Café Paris**  
Austurstræti 14 | **E4**
- Celtic Cross**  
Hverfisgata 26 | **E5**
- Den Danske Kro**  
Ingólfsstræti 3 | **E4**
- Dillon**  
Laugavegur 30 | **F6**
- Dolly**  
Hafnarstræti 4 | **D3**
- Dubliner**  
Hafnarstræti 1-3 | **D3**
- Esja**  
Austurstræti 16 | **E4**
- English Pub**  
Austurstræti 12 | **E3**
- Faktory**  
Smiðjustígur 6 | **E5**
- Gamli Gaukurinn**  
Tryggvagata 22 | **D3**
- Gay 46**  
Hverfisgata 46 | **E5**
- Hressó**  
Austurstræti 20 | **E4**
- Mánabar**  
Hverfisgata 20 | **E5**
- Kaffi Zimsen**  
Hafnarstræti 18 | **D4**
- Kaffibarinn**  
Bergstraðastræti 1 | **E5**
- Mánabar**  
Hverfisgata 20 | **E5**
- Nýlenduvöruverzlun Hemma & Valda**  
Laugavegur 21 | **E5**
- Næsti Bar**  
Ingólfsstræti 1A | **E5**
- Ólsmiðjan**  
Lækjargata 10 | **E4**
- Ólstofan**  
Vegamótastígur | **E5**
- Prikið**  
Bankastræti | **E4**
- Rósenberg**  
Klappastígur 25 | **E5**
- Sólon**  
Bankastræti 7A | **E4**
- Thorvaldsen**  
Austurstræti 8 | **D3**
- Vegamót**  
Vegamótastígur 4 | **E6**



## Museums & Galleries

- ART67**  
Laugavegur 67 | **F7**  
Mon - Fri 12 - 18 / Sat 12 - 16  
[www.listasafn.is](http://www.listasafn.is)
- ASÍ Art Museum**  
Freygata 41 | **H6**  
Tue-Sun 13-17  
[www.listasafnasi.is](http://www.listasafnasi.is)
- Árbæjarsafn**  
Kistuhylur 4
- The Culture House**  
Hverfisgata 15 | **E5**  
Open daily 11-17  
[www.thjodmenning.is](http://www.thjodmenning.is)
- The Einar Jónsson Museum**  
Eiríksgröta | **G6**  
Tue-Sun 14-17  
[www.skulptur.is](http://www.skulptur.is)
- Galleri Ágúst**  
Baldursgröta 12 | **G5**  
Wed-Sat 12-17  
[www.galleriagust.is](http://www.galleriagust.is)
- Galleri Fold**  
Rauðarástígur 14-16 | **G8**  
Mon-Fri 10-18 / Sat 11-16 / Sun 14-16  
[www.myndlist.is](http://www.myndlist.is)
- Kaolin**  
Skólavörðustígur 22 | **E5**  
[www.kaolingallery.com](http://www.kaolingallery.com)
- Galleri Kling & Bang**  
Hverfisgata 42 | **E6**  
Thurs-Sun from 14-18  
[this.is/klingogbang/](http://this.is/klingogbang/)
- Ásgrímur Jónsson Museum**  
Bergstaðastræti 74  
Mon-Fri through Sept. 1
- Gerðuberg Cultural Centre**  
Gerðuberg 3-5  
Mon-Thu 11-17 / Wed 11-21 / Thu-Fri 11-17 / Sat-Sun 13-16  
[www.gerduberg.is](http://www.gerduberg.is)
- Hitt Húsið**  
Galleri Tukt  
Pósthússtræti 3-5 | **E4**  
[www.hitthusid.is](http://www.hitthusid.is)
- i8 Gallery**  
Tryggvagata 16 | **D3**  
Tue-Fri 11-17 / Sat 13-17 and by appointment. [www.i8.is](http://www.i8.is)
- Living Art Museum**  
Skúlagata 28 | **E7**  
Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17 / Thu 13-22. [www.nylo.is](http://www.nylo.is)
- Hafnarborg**  
Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður  
[www.hafnarborg.is](http://www.hafnarborg.is)
- Mokka Kaffi**  
Skólavörðustígur 3A | **E5**  
[www.mokka.is](http://www.mokka.is)
- The National Gallery of Iceland**
- Frikirkjuvegur 7** | **F4**  
Tue-Sun 11-17  
[www.listasafn.is](http://www.listasafn.is)
- The National Museum**  
Suðurgata 41 | **G2**  
Open daily 10-17  
[natmus.is](http://natmus.is)
- The Nordic House**  
Sturlugata 5  
Tue-Sun 12-17  
[www.nordice.is](http://www.nordice.is)
- Restaurant Reykjavik**  
Vesturgata 2 | **D3**  
[www.restaurantreykjavik.is](http://www.restaurantreykjavik.is)
- Reykjavik 871+/-2**  
Aðalstræti 17 | **E3**  
Open daily 10-17
- Reykjavik Art Gallery**  
Skúlagata 30 | **E7**  
Tuesday through Sunday 14-18
- Reykjavik Art Museum composed of Hafnarhús**  
Tryggvagata 17 | **D3**  
Open 10-17  
Thursday 10 - 20
- Kjarvalsstaðir**  
Flókagata 24  
Open 10 - 17
- Ásmundarsafn**  
Sigtún  
Open 10 - 17  
More info on [www.listasafnreykjavikur.is](http://www.listasafnreykjavikur.is)
- Reykjavik City Library**  
Tryggvagata 15 | **D3**  
Mon 10-21, Tue-Thu 10-19, Fri 11-19, Sat and Sun 13-17  
[www.sim.is/Index/Islen-ska/Artotek](http://www.sim.is/Index/Islen-ska/Artotek)
- Reykjavik Maritime Museum**  
Grandagarður 8 | **B2**  
[www.maritimemuseum.is](http://www.maritimemuseum.is)
- Reykjavik Museum of Photography**  
Tryggvagata 16 | **D3**  
Weekdays 12-19 / Sat-Sun 13-17 - [www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is](http://www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is)
- Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**  
Laugarnestangi 70  
[www.lso.is](http://www.lso.is)
- SÍM**  
Hafnarstræti 16 | **D4**  
Mon-Fri 10-16
- Skörin**  
Aðalstræti 10
- Spark Design Space**  
Klappastígur 33 | **E5**  
[www.sparkdesignspace.com](http://www.sparkdesignspace.com)

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HAFNARSTRÆTI 5 & SKÓLAVÖRÐUSTÍGUR 10

H



PICCOLO ITALIA

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G

## Shopping

### 10 Red Cross Shop

Laugavegur 12B

Our favourite place to find bargains. They've got a nice selection of Icelandic sweaters, and sell all types of clothes for both men and women. Pretty nice if you're low on cash, especially considering the outrageous prices you can pay elsewhere in this darn city.

### 11 Brynja

Laugavegur 29

In business for more than 90 years now (and with good reason), this Laugavegur hardware store offers everything you need to fix up your house, and compliments it with some helpful and knowledgeable clerks that can even guide you through simple repairs. So good, you'll forget Bauhaus even exists!

### 12 Kolaportið

Tryggvagata 19

Reykjavik's massive indoor flea market is a wonderful place to get lost for a few hours, rummaging through stall upon stall of potential treasures. There are heaps of used clothing, knitwear and other yard-sale type goods from decades of yore, and a large food section with fish, meats and baked goods. Check out the vintage post cards and prints at the table near the army surplus.

#### Public phones

There aren't many public payphones in the city centre. The tourist information centre at Aðalstræti 2, City Hall, Kolaportið, entrance at Landsbankinn and in Lækjargata. Prepaid international phone cards are recommended for int'l callers.

#### Internet Access

Most cafés offer free wireless internet access. Computers with internet connections are available to use at:  
Ráðhúskaffi City Hall, Tjarnargata 11  
Ground Zero, Frakkastígur 8, near Laugavegur 45  
The Reykjavik City Library, Tryggvagata 15

The National and University Library, Arngrímsgata 3

Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstræti 2  
Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2  
Reykjavik Backpackers, Laugavegur 28

#### Swimming Pools

There are several swimming pools in Reykjavik. The one in 101 Reykjavik, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur, is an indoor one, located at Barónsstígur. That pool features a nice sunbathing area and some outdoor hot tubs. Opening hours: Monday to Thursday from 06:30-22:00, Friday from 06:30-20:00, Saturday from 08:00-16:00, and Sunday from 10:00-18:00.

#### Public Toilets

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

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# Best Of Reykjavík

Every year around the beginning of July, we make a BEST OF REYKJAVÍK ISSUE celebrating some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, posting some good entries into a hopefully never-ending discussion. The primary purpose of BEST OF REYKJAVÍK is celebration! It's about big-upping stuff, giving mad props to it and patting it on the shoulder. The following are some nice tips we pulled from BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2012, which you can find in full at [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)



### BEST PLACE TO READ A BOOK: STOFAN



There are a bunch of nice places to read a book, but many of them are weather-dependent and relying on the weather is risky at best. If it's sunny we agree that the botanical garden is a pretty nice, quiet place to read. You can find a spot there sheltered from the wind, but if it's cold and rainy, you probably don't want to be outside. That's why we decided to go with Stofan, a cosy café with comfortable couches. It feels super homey, like grandma's house homey, and it's typically pretty quiet.

Located at Aðalstræti 7



### BEST RECORD STORE: LUCKY RECORDS



Lucky Records offers scores of hard-to-find vinyl and first editions of rare Icelandic and international LPs. "This is where I send my visiting music geek friends," remarked one reader while another noted that the store is "world class! I found a battered 7" of 'Kind Midas Touch' by The Hollies for 1 EUR and a pile of old electro boogie stuff."

Located at Rauðarástígur 6



### BEST PLACE TO START THE NIGHT: KEX HOSTEL



A lot of people like KEX Hostel's bar for starting their nights these days. One correspondent remarked that "KEX have very decent beer on tap, their back porch is nice for soaking up the sun on bright days and the bar food is affordable and tasty. I also always meet someone fun when I'm there, whether it's an old friend or a tourist passing through town." Others commend KEX for their regularly scheduled events and pleasant, low-key atmosphere. In any case, it's a winner.

Located at Skúlagata 28



Available at most respectable souvenir stores.

**VARMA**  
The Warmth of Iceland  
WWW.GLOFI.IS

## A GUIDE THAT FUCKS YOU UP

### A list of every Happy Hour in 101 Reykjavík

**101 Hótel**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer for 450 ISK, wine for 645 ISK.

**Austur**  
Every day from 20:00 to 00:00. Beer for 495 ISK and wine 550 ISK.

**B5**  
Every day from 16:00 to 22:00. Beer 550 ISK, cider 750 ISK, wine 550 ISK.

**Bjarni Fel**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. 2 for 1 beer for 890 ISK.

**Boston**  
Every day from 16:00 to 22:00. Beer 500 ISK. Wine glass 500 ISK, wine carafe 1000 ISK.

**Celtic Cross**  
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00. Gull and Tuborg for 500 ISK.

**Den Danske Kro**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2 for 1 beer and wine for 900 ISK each.

**Dillon**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. 2 for 1 beer for 850 ISK.

**Dolly**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. Beer 500 ISK and wine 500 ISK.

**Dubliner**  
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. 2 for 1 beer (Pilsner Urquell) for 1000 ISK.

**Faktory**  
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00. Gull beer for 500 ISK.

**Fálkinn bistro**  
Every day except Sundays from 17:00 to 22:00. Beer for 500 ISK and wine for 500 ISK.

**Harlem**  
Every day from 17:00 to 22:00. Beer 550 ISK, wine 700 ISK.

**Hemmi og Valdi**  
Every day from 12:00 to 20:00 (to 22:00 for Viking Lager). Draft beer for 550 ISK, Viking Classic and Viking lager. Wine for 700 ISK.



## Download the FREE Grapevine Appy Hour app!

Every happy hour in town in your pocket. Available in the App store and on the Android Market.

**Hilton Hotel Bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer for 500 ISK and wine for 650 ISK.

**Hótel 1919**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2 for 1 beer for 1000 ISK, white wine for 1190 ISK, Red wine for 1290 ISK, Cocktail of the Day for 1919 ISK.

**Hótel Holt Gallery Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. Stella for 475 ISK, Kaldi for 550 ISK, Wine for 695 ISK, sparkling wine for 750 ISK, Cocktail of the Week for 950 ISK.

**Hótel Plaza Bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer for 500 ISK.

**Kaffi Zimsen**  
Sunday - Thurs from 17:00 to 22:00. 2 for 1 beer for 800 ISK.

**Kaldibar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00. 2 beers or 2 glasses of wine for 900 ISK, 2 for 1 on all drinks.

**Kolabrautin**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer for 500 ISK. Wine for 700 ISK. All cocktails 1000 ISK. Champagne glass 1500 ISK.

**Lebowski Bar**  
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2 for 1 beer for 900 ISK and wine for 1000 ISK.

**Micro Bar**  
Every day except Saturday from 16:00 to 19:00. Selected draft microbrew for 500 ISK, 2 for 1 on beer on Saturdays.

**Miðgarður Bistro bar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. 50% off all drinks. Beer for 500 ISK, wine for 600 ISK.

**Obladi Oblada**  
Every day from 12:00 to 20:00. Beer for 600 ISK.

**Prikið**  
Weekdays from 16:00 to 20:00. 2 for 1 beer for 690 ISK.

**Roadhouse**  
Friday and Saturday 22:00 - 23:00. 2 for 1 Beer for 790 ISK, wine for 790 ISK.

**Slippbarinn**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. 50% off beer 475 ISK and wine 500 ISK.

**Stofan**  
Every day from 17:00 to 20:00. Beer for 500 ISK and wine for 600 ISK.

**Tapashúsið**  
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. 2 for 1 beer for 950 ISK and wine 1150 ISK.

**Uno**  
Every day from 17:00 - 19:00. 50% off all drinks. Beer for 450 ISK, wine 575 ISK.

**Uppsálar - Bar & Café**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. 2 for 1 Beers for 900 ISK, except Tuborg Classic for 950 ISK, wine for 1100 ISK.

**Pingholtsbar**  
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Viking beer for 500 ISK.

# ART ONGOING

– continued –

gmail.com, 500 ISK for students, 800 ISK for others. Six-week courses are also available.

On permanent view

## Museum of Design

### A Glimpse of Glit

An exhibition on chosen items from the Glit Pottery from between the years 1958 and 1973.

Runs until May 26

## The National Museum

### Across Greenland, 1912 - 1913

This exhibit features photos taken by four explorers who traversed across Greenland for a year.

Runs until May 26

### The Making of a Nation -

#### Heritage and History in Iceland

This exhibition is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

On permanent view

### The People Þórsgrata

Alda Lóa Leifsdóttir documents the residents of Þórsgrata through photographs over an eight year span. She aims to capture the beauty and individuality of the residents.

Runs until May 26

### Behind the scenes - making of a museum

Concerning the 150th anniversary, the national museum invited a group of students to create an exhibition.

Runs until May 12

### Photography in Iceland 1970 - 1990

Runs until May 26

### Icelandic silverwork

A collection of the Icelandic silver work is displayed. The exhibition shows pieces from different time periods.

Runs until May 26

## Nordic House

### Drawn

A group of twelve Swedish artists will show drawings at The Nordic House in connection with the exhibition Tecknat they will arrange a workshop which will involve a creative dialogue about drawing with local art students.

Runs until May 26

## The Icelandic Phalological Museum

The museum contains a collection of more than two hundred and fifteen penises and penile parts belonging to almost all the land and sea mammals that can be found in Iceland.

On permanent view.

## The Reykjavík City Library

The collection centers around new Nordic literature, both fiction and nonfiction. The library lends out novels, academic publications, audio books and more.

On permanent view

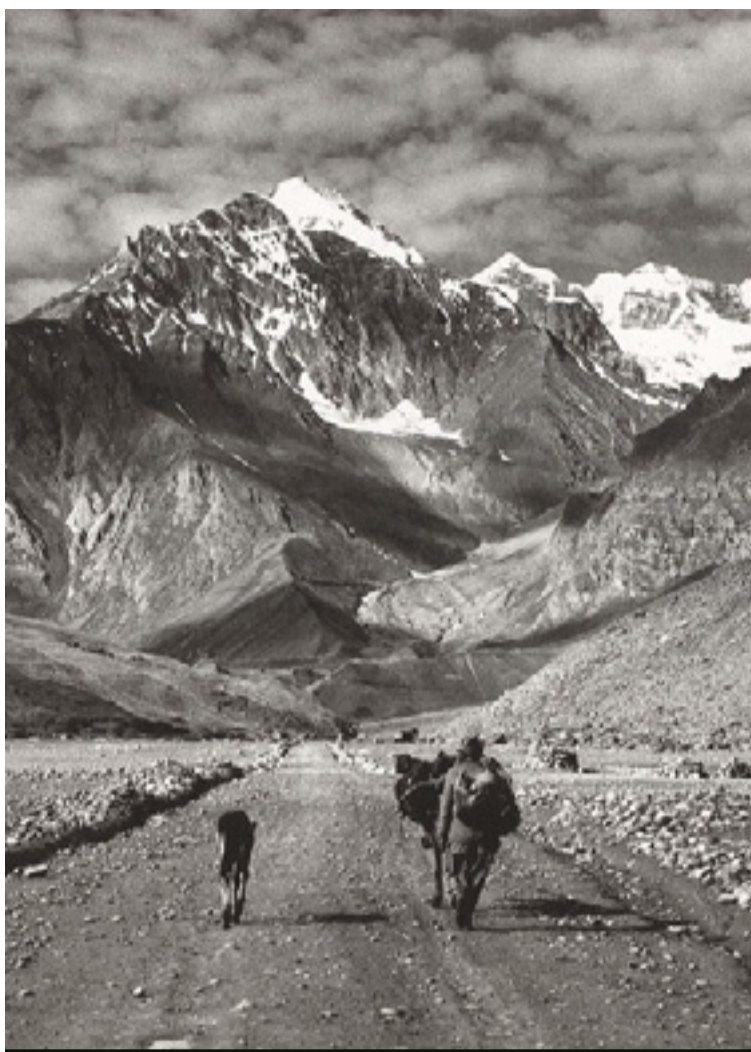
## Reykjavík Art Museum -

### Hafnarhús

#### Erró - Graphic Art, 1949-2009

For the first time the general public are able to view Erró's graphic art spanning half a century.

Runs until August 25



## Take a Hike Hamish Fulton Art Exhibition

April 25 - June 1 | i8 Gallery, Tryggvagata 16

For almost four decades, Hamish Fulton has covered 50-80 kilometers per day on foot in complete solitude with the goal of uniting walking and art. Fulton takes nothing back with him more than the occasional souvenir photograph, a testament to one small moment of his extensive journey. Sometimes these photographs contain words; sometimes Fulton's work consists of words without photographs. All of it, however, stimulates the brain and highlights outright the mysteries of nature.

JW



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online  
[listings.grapevine.is](http://listings.grapevine.is)

## Reykjavík Art Museum - Kjarvalsstaðir

### Kjarval - Key Works

Reykjavík Art Museum draws on its extensive collection of works by Jóhannes S. Kjarval for ongoing exhibitions at Kjarvalsstaðir.

On permanent view

## Reykjavík City Museum

### Reykjavík 871 +/- 2: The Settlement Exhibition

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 10:00-17:00, 1.100 ISK per adult, 650 ISK per person in groups (10+) and free for children 18 and under.

On permanent view

## Reykjavík Maritime Museum

### From Poverty to Abundance

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century.

On permanent view

### The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history and the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour.

On permanent view

### The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

This vessel sailed through all three Cod Wars and also served as a rescue ship to over 200 ships.

On permanent view

# Experience Icelandic Art and Design

ROUTE  
40



## Kópavogur Art Museum- Gerðarsafn

Hamraborg 4, Kópavogur  
Tel. +354 570 0440

Open 11-17

Closed on Mondays

[www.gerdarsafn.is](http://www.gerdarsafn.is)

25 Year Birthday Exhibition  
of The Art School of Kópavogur



## Hönnunarsafn Íslands Museum of Design and Applied Art

Garðatorg 1, Garðabær  
Tel. +354 512 1525

Open 12-17

Closed on Mondays

[www.honnunarsafn.is](http://www.honnunarsafn.is)

A Glimpse of Glit  
- Icelandic Ceramics

Nordic Design Today

## Hafnarborg The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður  
Tel. +354 585 5790

Open 12-17

Thursdays 12-21

Closed on Tuesdays

[www.hafnarborg.is](http://www.hafnarborg.is)

Hellisgerði  
Pleasure Garden

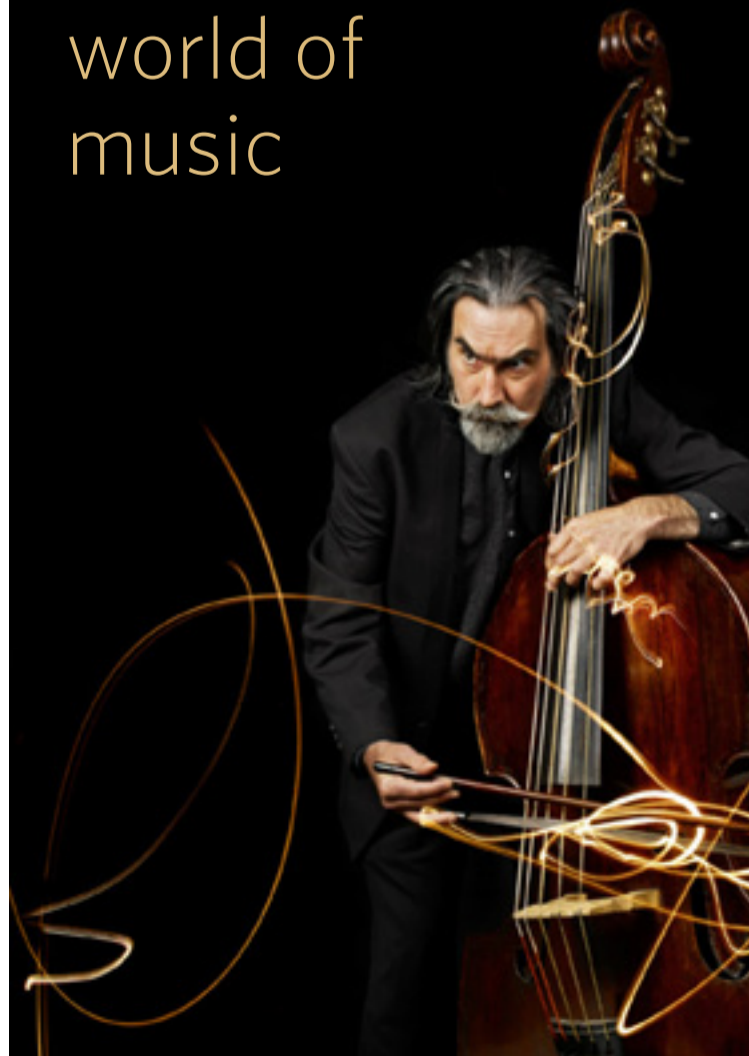
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FOR YOUR MIND, BODY AND SOUL

by Patricia Pormar



# The Best Fix In The City

## Yummi Yummi

Hverfisgata 123,  
105 Reykjavík  
Mon-Fri 11:30-21 z  
Sat-Sun 17-21

### What we think

A quick and tasty remedy for acute hunger

### Flavour:

Asian fast food

### Ambience:

A greasy joint, charmin only in the broadest sense of the word.

### Service:

Speedy and satisfactory

### Price:

**All dishes:** 1.000 ISK

**For 2 (with drinks):**

2.500 - 3.000 ISK



If you're looking for unforgettable ethnic food, head up the street from the Hlemmur bus station to Ban Thai restaurant and all your dreams will come true. I recommend bringing five credit cards and going all in, Icelandic-style. I promise

it will be worth the overdraft. If you're budget-minded, time-pressed, or hung-over, head across the street to Ban Thai's take-away outpost, Yummi Yummi, and you won't be disappointed.

This place is a credit to the 105 neighbourhood and a saviour of the masses that can't bother to boil pasta. I've come here for many a quick fix of pad thai in my hour of need. This sticky-sweet concoction offers blessed relief from exam preparation, errand running or stress in general. There's hardly any need to take a seat on the rickety patio furniture since it takes only a couple of minutes to cook your order from scratch.

The odd signs inside provide light entertainment while you wait: "We don't serve water—only soda," "No refund for any reason—if you aren't used to spicy food, try something milder." Wise advice, in my opinion. I can see Yoda now: "Too strong for you, these noodles are. Something milder, you must try." For multiple orders, I like to linger upon this one: "If you are in a hurry then order the same dish, it takes less time and therefore you don't have to wait as long." These signs speak the truth, except the one offering Thai iced coffee for 450 ISK—apparently they don't serve that, either.

Despite months of patronage, I haven't dared wander further down the menu until now. I took my sister along, who ordered Yummi Spicy Noodles while I settled on the No. 4. Noodle Soup: Tom Yum with shrimp. Within minutes, I received a huge bowl of coral-coloured soup with four fat prawns bobbing at the surface. Its delicate, spicy flavour was not quite as intense or as full-bodied as its counterparts' across the street at Ban Thai, but for less than half the price, it's a terrific mouthful for your money. My sister's noodles were equally delectable, despite the fact that they were served in a Styrofoam box. Less sweet but with more bite than their classic pad thai, this dish could easily become a regular favourite of mine.

All in all, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better deal for tastier food. The portions are ample, the service is quick and the flavours are pronounced and satisfying. If yummi is what you are looking for, yummi is what you will get. For 1000 ISK, what more could you ask for?

PATRICIA PORMAR  
 ALÍSA KALYANOVA

**Ban Thai**

www.ban thai.is  
www.yummy.is



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# Dayhawks At The Diner

## Prikið

Bankastræti 12, 101 Reykjavík  
Mon-Thurs 11-22, Fri 08-04:30, Sat  
12-04:30, Sun 12-01:00

### What we think

As for comfort food classics, Prikið will satisfy your needs. Hangover destination par excellence

### Flavour:

Comfort food, dinner, Americana

### Ambiance:

Easy going, cosy by day. Crowded and loud by night

### Service:

Friendly, accommodating

### Price for 2 (no drinks):

4.000-5.000 ISK



'The quintessential diner is not easy to come by in Iceland, at least not if you have anything resembling Edward Hopper's masterpiece *Nighthawks*' in mind. That said, the place that comes closest would have to be Prikið, situated on the corner of Bankastræti and Ingólfsstræti—as central as central can be.

Prikið is one of the oldest dining establishments in Reykjavík that is still in operation. Much like so many other downtown establishments of its kind, it suffers—or benefits, perhaps—from a Dr Jekyll and Mr

Hyde syndrome, being a quiet, cosy café by day, and a loud, sweaty place of drinking yourself into oblivion by night. Therefore, if Prikið is to be enjoyed as a dining destination, I recommend that you visit during lunch—or whenever you manage to wake up on a given weekend. Brunch offers are on hand at any given time but otherwise the menu consists of diner classics: steaks, sandwiches and burgers, with milk shakes (even spiked, if the mood should strike.)

Prikið can be busy during lunch hour, but it is always welcoming. The first order of business is to warm up with a cup of Joe. If you need to get some work done, or read a book, Prikið also offers a good ambiance, and the often sleeve-tattooed staff of hipsters aren't shy about topping you off when needed. Opting to stay in the kitchen's comfort zone, I order a burger. Prikið offers a 'burger of the day' special for just 1000 ISK, but I decide on something heavier, the sweaty burger (1590 ISK), served with onions, tomatoes, lettuce, cheese and bacon, topped with a fried egg. Fries are served with every order of burger or sandwich.

For my companion, a pescatarian, the choices are limited to a veggie burrito, a veggie burger, fish and chips or the infamous fish burger. He chose the latter (at 1690 ISK), served with crispy onion rings, tomatoes and lettuce.

I was quite pleased with the sweaty burger. The burger was

perfectly cooked: medium rare, as it should be. The egg yolk was perfectly cooked and still intact, simply begging to be cut in half, to ooze over the rest of the ingredients. Be sure to get a bottle of Tabasco to drizzle some heat over your egg—as chili and egg form one of the best couples in the history of civilization. Also, you may want to ask for mayonnaise with your fries, if you're into that sort of thing.

The Fish Burger also passed the test, although the onion rings were not too 'crispy'—perhaps due to the fact that they were sandwiched between steaming hot buns.

As for the dessert menu: You have the basics, an ice cream sundae, carrot cake or devil's food cake. As my companion and I were pretty much about to burst, we decided to share a piece of carrot cake, just for the sake of the review. It was moist and plump with a rich frosting, and comes highly recommended from me to you—although perhaps not after a meal such as ours.

All in all, this was a lunch that gave us everything we hoped for, and everything we expected. This is not haute cuisine; this is diner comfort food at its finest by any standard.

✍ BJÖRN TEITSSON  
📷 ALÍSA KALYANOVA



# SNAPS

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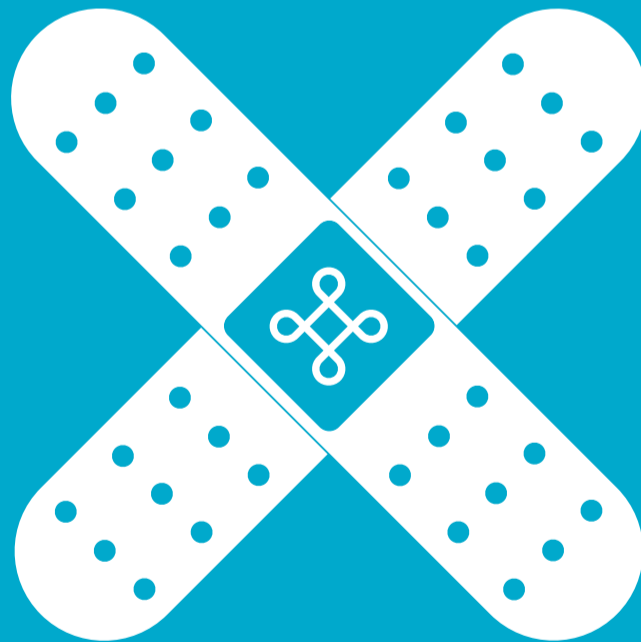


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