

The Reykjavík Grapevine



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Volume 21

Issue 07 2024

Best before June 14



Wild Creativity On The Loose

Culture

Music

Travel

In This Issue

6

In Iceland, a child calling you a walking piece of shit is totally normal

12-14

The Reykjavík Arts Festival is back and more accessible than ever

15

Don your best tweed and go for a ride

18

Taking a look at Skjaldborg's best short film

26-27

Into Anna Þorvaldsdóttir's *Metaxis* world premiere

34-35

Visiting the Natural History Museum of Kópavogur



On the Cover

Sea creatures come ashore and wander the rocky expanse of the island. Is there more to them than meets the eye? To accompany this issue's feature on the Reykjavík Art Festival, the creations of Pilkington Props were adorned by members of the Hringleikur Circus Company to preview some of the creativity and craziness they'll bring to the festival. Read more about the festival on Pages 12-14.

COVER ARTWORK:
Hörður Sveinsson

Editorial It's All Happening In June

WORDS Catharine Fulton,
Editor in Chief

Icelanders are headed to the polls on June 1 to elect their next president. But an election isn't the only thing happening – that auspicious date also marks the start of the biennial Reykjavík Arts Festival, which will see the city awash with creativity and sea monsters.

It's always a treat when the summer festivals return to Reykjavík and the creative scene that used to be ubiquitous steps, albeit briefly, into the fore to add more life, culture and colour to the city centre. Many long-time residents of 101 – myself included – often lament the loss of creative spaces and guerilla happenings that used to be so common in our neighbourhood before the harbingers of mass tourism swooped in with tongues wagging, dollar signs in their eyes and the financial backing to price out artists, independent shops and other creatives.

Walking around town and stumbling upon a performance used to be commonplace, but such occurrences have been corralled within the boundaries of one official Reykjavíkurborg event or another, sponsored by Landsbankinn or some other massive institution that likely doesn't give a shit about culture, creativity or the vibrancy of city life, but the branding sure looks good to their investors.

The tourists also get a kick out of it. These festivals give them the opportunity to believe the stories they're heard about Reykjavík being a thriving creative hub are true.

Cynicism aside, this year's festival does have an air of authenticity to it, with its core focus on inclusivity and accessibility, and a central hub where emergent artists are given freedom to explore and create and showcase their creativity. Read about it on Pages 12-14.

So go do your democratic duty and then show up to support the local arts scene. Maybe even consider the candidates' respective track records in supporting the arts when deciding who to vote for.

Oh, and free Palestine.

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FULTON

Catharine Fulton has been mulling around the Reykjavík Grapevine since 2009, while simultaneously working in international media development and press freedom, and writing and editing for publications in her native Canada. She's probably only editor of the Grapevine thanks to nepotism. Shrug.



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



ISH SVEINSSON HOULE

Ish Sveinsson Houle is a former radio station manager and DJ, mainly focusing on music writing with a side of other cultural happenings. Having moved to Reykjavík to get more in touch with their half-Icelandic genes, Ish is putting psychology and creative writing degrees to use through freelancing at Grapevine and working at a school.



JÓHANNES BJARKI
BJARKASON

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



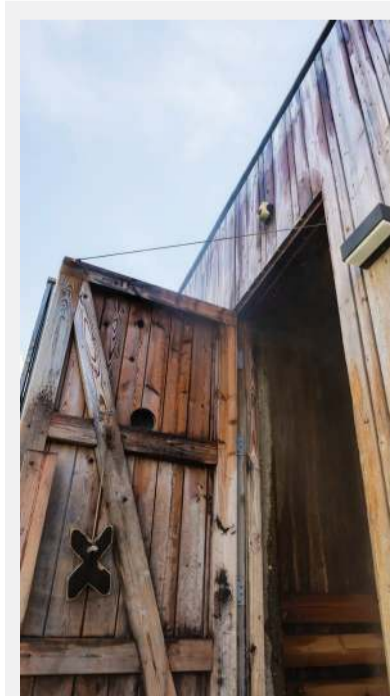
IRYNA ZUBENKO

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



REX BECKETT

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



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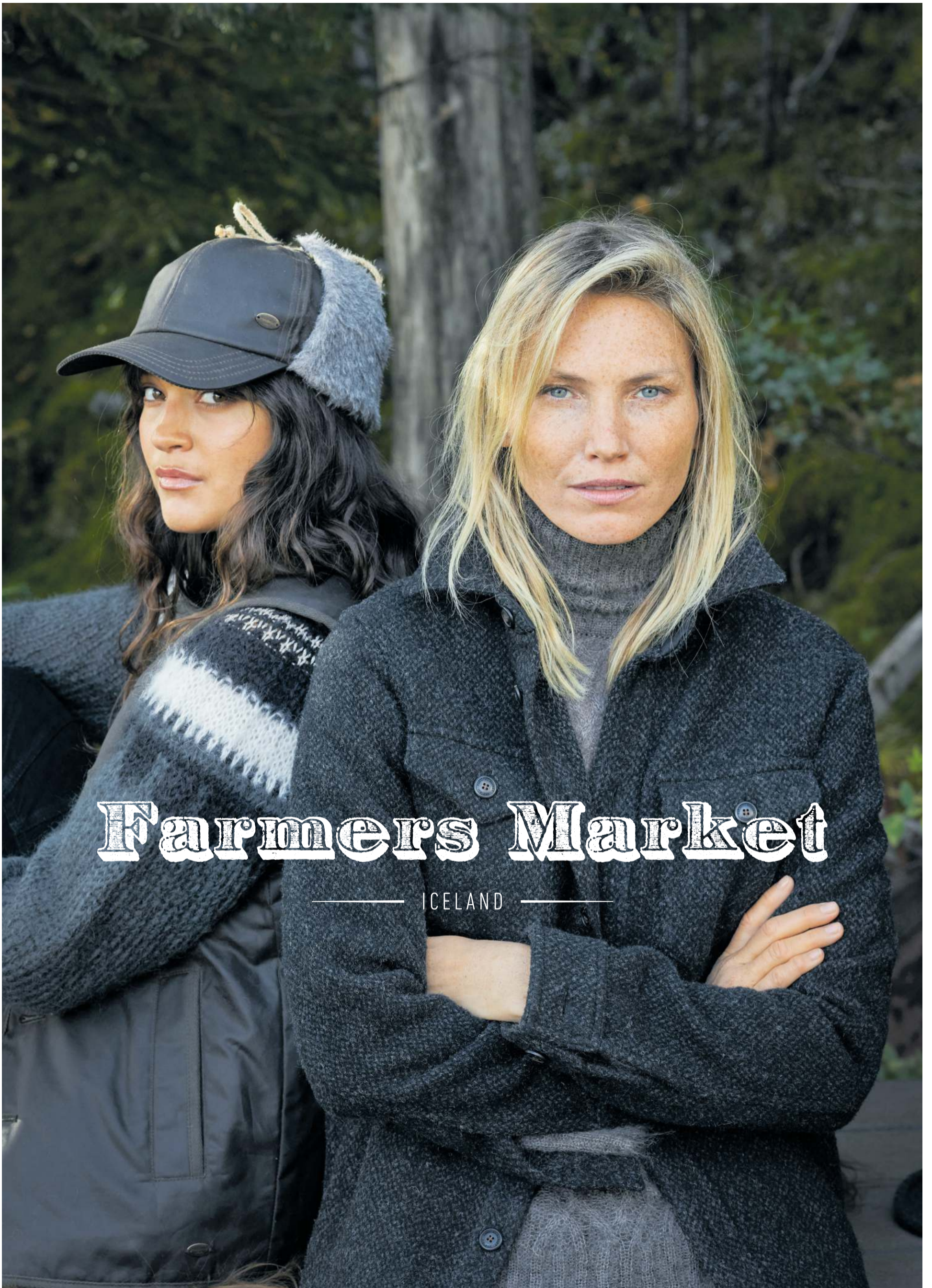
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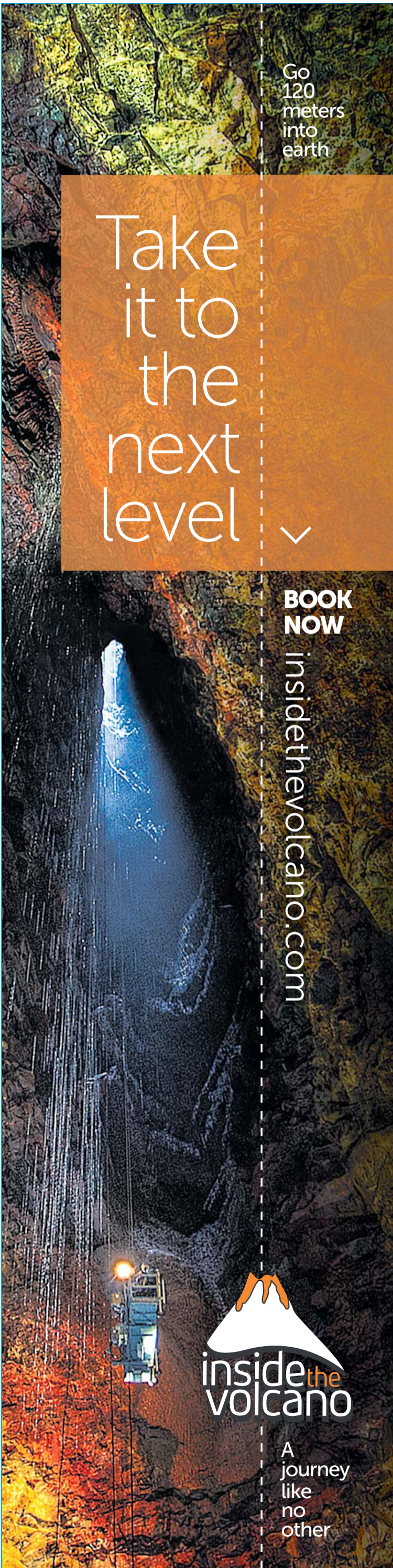


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What The News!?

Long Live The Volcano!

A look at some of the news making headlines in recent weeks

WORDS The Reykjavik Grapevine
IMAGE Emma Ledbetter

That darn volcano is at it again. And thank god, because we don't want to spare another word for the presidential elections.

An eruption began between Stóra Skógfell and Sýlingarfell at 12:45 on May 29, sending a curtain of lava spewing 50 metres into the air. The fissure eruption is roughly one kilometre long and was visible from Reykjanesbraut, the main road between the capital area and the international airport in Keflavík, in the hours after it began, making for some pretty stellar images.

The Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management has declared an Emergency/Distress Phase for the region. It should go without saying at this point that you should not travel to see the volcano at this time. Heed the warnings of local authorities and give them space and time to assess the safety of the situation.

Intense seismic activity signalling possible movement of magma underground had been detected prior to the eruption beginning, spurring the re-evacuation of

Grindavík. Though the town on the south coast of the Reykjanes peninsula was evacuated in November, 2023, roughly a dozen residents had returned to the town in recent months to tend to their property and farm animals.

The Svartsengi power plant and the Blue Lagoon were also evacuated prior to the eruption. RÚV reports that 700 to 800 guests and members of staff were located the Blue Lagoon.

This is the fifth eruption to begin in the area since December 2023. The last eruption began March 16 between Hagafell and Stóra Skógfell and was just declared over a few weeks ago on May 10. There truly is never a dull moment around here, folks.

DON'T TASE ME, BRO!

Also keeping things exciting around Reykjavík these days is the knowledge that local cops could soon be packing tasers. So that's fun.

As the national broadcaster reported in late May, 500 police officers had recently completed basic training on the use of tasers via virtual reality. The aim is to deploy tasers in Iceland by the end of summer.

"Of course, there is stress the first time you shoot something new and try something new. But it went beyond expectations and we had received good training," says one police trainee after using the weap-

on for the first time. They had previously practised shooting a training taser with a plastic projectile instead of a needle.

According to the National Commissioner of the Police, about a quarter of police officers feel rather or very unsafe at work. A vast majority – around 90% of officers – support the police carrying tasers while on duty.

A five-year contract was made to purchase the weapons, amounting to over 183 million ISK. In total, 160 tasers will be purchased – 120 initially, followed by 10 more per year for the next four years.

We feel safer already.

IN LIGHTER NEWS

The ducks that make their homes on and around Reykjavík's central pond, Tjörnin, are welcoming babies these days.

While it's undeniably adorable to watch the little ducklings swimming behind their mamas at this time of year, it's not cute to watch the baby ducks swarmed by seagulls. For that reason, Reykjavík asks that visitors to the pond refrain from feeding the ducks. In addition to posing a danger to the ducklings by attracting predatory birds, tossing bread or other bird feeds in or around the pond is entirely unnecessary, as the ducks and their ducklings have plenty to eat throughout the summer. ■



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Do Shit

Get Your Kid Into Leikskóli

The Útlendingur's ongoing guide to getting shit done

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGE Catharine Fulton

Is there anything as wildly wonderful and simultaneously stressful as being a new parent? You've welcomed a darling little baby into your home, doted on them around the clock, filling their squishy little belly with nutrients, changing their diapers, rocking them to sleep and showering them with more love than you knew was even possible before their arrival.

But around the 12-month mark, it sure would be nice to ship that screaming, snotty bundle of joy elsewhere during the day so they can expand their educational horizons and you can struggle to hold a conversation with another adult back at work. That's where Reykjavik's early childhood education system is meant to kick in, welcoming children as young as 12 months into one of the city's roughly 80 kindergartens (leikskóli, in Icelandic).

It's the "meant to kick in" part of that last sentence that makes leikskóli admissions a hot topic, as parents scrambling for childcare to bridge the gap between parental leave

and their child being offered a spot seems to be the anecdotal rule, rather than the exception.

"Reykjavik has been aiming to be able to offer children from 12 months old kindergarten spots. But for various reasons, the city hasn't really been able to do that so far," says Ólafur Bjarkarson, who oversees kindergartens within Reykjavik's School and Leisure Department. "So for the past few years, children have been around 18, 19, 20 months when they're getting into kindergartens. So people are worried about that."

Reykjavik has been building new schools to meet demand, but, as Ólafur explains, new construction is happening at the same time that many older school buildings are being shut for renovations, requiring children to be transferred to other schools. In short, it's a constantly shifting puzzle for Ólafur and his team.

BACK TO THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Getting your kid into leikskóli is a matter of heading over to umsokn.vala.is, logging in with your rafræn skilríki (the secure login system that sends a push notification to your phone) and following the registration process. It's possible to toggle between Icelandic and English on the page. The first page after logging in will list the children in your household who are of leikskóli age, so you can click the icon associated with them to begin registration.

Parents can register their child for a minimum of two and maximum of five schools. Once registered, the child is added to the waitlist, which is sorted by age, with older children being given priority for a leikskóli spot. There is a parallel waitlist that is given priority over the general admissions list; it's populated by children with special needs, the children of leikskóli staff and children coming from difficult home environments.

"It's always based on the age of the child," Ólafur emphasises when asked if there's anything parents can do to expedite their own little mufin's acceptance into a leikskóli. "So, if your child is, for example, three years old or older, they're probably going to be pretty high on the waiting list. There are always changes, with people moving away from Reykjavik or changing kindergartens within Reykjavik."

That's good news for parents who are just arriving to Iceland — you can't apply for a spot until your child has a kennitala, but when you apply is less important than when your child was born.

Those already living in Reykjavik may want to look into local *dagforeldrar*, who are individuals offering in-home childcare for children from six months old until they are accepted to leikskóli. Securing a space with a daycare you trust could help bridge any gap between the end of parental leave and the arrival of that coveted

leikskóli admission note.

The most likely opportunity for a child to be offered a leikskóli spot is during the annual *stóra innritun*, the mass intake of children based on the number of children graduating kindergarten to attend elementary schools. These admissions offers are sent to parents in April and May each year for their child to start school in August or September.

Ólafur advises parents to be proactive, saying, "it's very important that parents looking for kindergarten spots be in contact with the city phone centre (411-1111) or the kindergarten you're applying for, to ask about the situation, any possibilities for admissions or just to get information."

Though it's offline at the moment while the annual intake is in progress, Reykjavik also operates a *leikskólareiknirinn*, or preschool calculator, where parents can track their child's spot on the waitlist and see the situation across different schools in order to inform decisions about which schools to include on their child's application. When operational, that calculator can be found at reykjavik.is/en/preschool-admission-tracker.

"There have been a lot of new kindergartens and just in the last two years — we've opened more kindergartens than in the 15 years prior," Ólafur concludes. "So there has been a lot of improvement and development happening." ■



Word Of The Issue Don't Be Such A Butt-face

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGE Stock Photo

If you spend any time around a leikskóli, you're bound to pick up a few fun words and phrases. Between the near constant disembodied declarations of "ég er búin!" echoing through the building, you're likely to hear what is many a child's first curse word. *Kúkalabbi*.

This glorious word breaks down into two parts: *kukur*, meaning poop; and *labbi*, meaning walk. So you could surmise that a kid calling their classmate a *kúkalabbi* is calling them a "walking piece of shit," but it's not that sinister. A *kúkalabbi* is a generally unpleasant person. In kid-speak, it's equivalent to calling someone a buttface.

If you want your insult to sound slightly less juvenile, lob a *drullusokkur* in your target's direction and wait for the fireworks to fly. ■



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On The Fringes

I've Got No Strings To Hold Me Down!

Getting to know Pilkington Props' peculiar puppets

WORDS Catherine Magnúsdóttir
IMAGE Supplied by Pilkington Props

Ever wondered what the office of the god of creation might look like? After paying a visit to Pilkington Props, I am starting to think there might be a lot of foam, machinery and "body" parts involved. But how do these elements all get formed together into grand beings like trolls, aliens, sea serpents and flamingos? For this edition of my purpose-procuring pilgrimage, I spoke with Daniel Pilkington and Björg Einarsdóttir, two of the creative minds behind the puppets, props and prosthetics that prowl the Reykjavik prairie.

I sit down with Björg and Daniel under the watchful gaze of Tufti the Troll, one of Pilkington Props'

biggest celebrities, to learn about the work they do, how they got into it, and what goes into prop and puppet making, as well as performing as the characters they create. "We come from a very mixed background," Daniel explains. "I come from a visual effects background, specifically in the gaming field in Iceland."

Daniel also has experience as a performer, namely in a circus setting, as do his collaborators, Björg and Thomas Burke. As CTO at Pilkington Props, Thomas has both a performing and programming background, as well as experience with a circus rigger, so he keeps an eye on technical and safety aspects of the operation. Björg, meanwhile, has a background in psychology and linguistics, but now manages much of the extensive organisation, contacts and bookings, while also supervising performers.

Daniel says that he has always been interested in costuming and cosplay,

designing in games and in real life. "The first professional work we did was building a sculpture for Fly Over Iceland," he explains, referencing the massive troll figure that watches over the gift shop of the popular attraction. "It was kind of a one off job. I was working on that in the evenings, doing game development during the day. It was fun to do stuff physically, not just sitting in front of a computer screen. It was during that project that we started to realise that this could be a profession."

Combined with their ongoing cooperation with the circus culture in Iceland, specifically Hringleikur, the small team was able to create characters to perform for crowds at big annual events like 17. júní. In fact, it was Iceland's independence day that served as Tufti the Troll's public debut.

"Reykjavíkurborg came to the circus and asked if we could do something spectacular – and we accepted the challenge," Björg recalls. "We can be

tall because we can do stilts. In that way we can also extend the limits of normal puppetry." This helped cement what has become the signature of Pilkington Props: large scale puppets.

As for the creation process itself, it's a marriage of old school techniques and modern technology. "We do a full digital model of the expected build as I kind of assume it will work out," Daniel says. "Then I can break parts down individually and send them to our little 3D print farm. Some of the pieces I will sort of flatten out and make stencils for, so then we can cut them into upholstery foam or EVA foam or those kinds of materials."

I am told upholstery foam is pretty good for puppets that have to move a lot and the EVA foam works well from an understructure perspective, holding its shape better and adding bulk without adding too much weight. They also work with traditional clay, plaster and silicone

mold techniques, as was standard in crafting props for older films, though they're able to skip a few tedious steps with the help of advanced digital modeling and 3D printing.

The design and story for Tufti were created in cooperation with Daniel's father, Brian Pilkington – yes, the Brian Pilkington of writing and illustration fame – as a sort of continuation of his work. The core personality of the friendly and curious troll is additionally something that all of his performers carry into the act. "All our characters also move very organically thanks to Dan's background in model making," Björg adds, explaining that the digital models are often quite close to actual physics.

There is, of course, always some trial and error in the process but the end results speak for themselves. "I really enjoy being able to make people smile," she says. "Seeing that you are forming long term memories for people, not just kids. It's such a privilege to get to do this." ■



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Side Hustle

Princess For Hire

Jessica Chambers is living the princess life, one gig at a time

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGE Atli Freyr Steinsson

"Anna, Elsa, Ariel, Rapunzel, Belle, Mirabel, Moana..." Jessica Chambers crooks her fingers as she counts out loud, ticking off all the Disney princesses she has dressed as. Her day job might pay for most of her bills, but it's through her side gig, Prinsessur, which she runs together with her partner, Maxime Houssin, that Jessica's creativity truly comes to life.

Jessica Chambers, 29, a data analyst

I am a cosplayer and I make my own costumes. I used to make costumes just for fun, not for parties or anything. Then my friends had kids and their kids were having birthdays. Since I make a lot of Disney princess costumes, my friends asked, "Could you just come and pretend to be a princess for my kid?" This happened three times in the same month. I thought, if these parties go well, I'm going to start a business because clearly there's a demand for it. I started on my own, but really, it's me and my fiancé — we do it together. He plays the princes, and I play the princesses. Last year, we also hired a team of contractors who play other characters and speak other languages.

We always schedule things on the weekends, or if it's during the week, we make sure it's after work or on a day off. My real job never suffers from this. That's the whole point: it's very separated.

My colleagues at Marel are really excited about it. Usually, on Friday, when we're having morning coffee, they'll ask, "So, what are you dressing up as this weekend?"

THE HIGHS AND LOWS

It's a very expensive thing to get into. I still haven't paid off all the costumes. But I do it for the fun and for the kids. Because when you're playing someone like Elsa, and you see a kid thinking they're meeting their hero, it's just the most magical thing.

The worst thing is brushing the wigs. This is a very common business in other countries where the weather is better — they buy these very nicely styled wigs and touch them up maybe once a year. In Iceland, I have to touch up the wigs after every single use. I'm just constantly brushing hair.

One thing I wished I had known before starting this side hustle is the amount of sport involved. You don't think about it, but bending down to the kids you're just doing squats for two hours. It's more than I expected. Also, on a positive note, I would never do this job in France because I would definitely be groped. That's why my fiancé got involved in the first place: I had my very first real gig in Reykjanesbær, which is a long way. I thought, "Oh, God, if something happens, what do I do?" So Maxime was like, "Well, I'll come with you. I'll just dress up as Christoph." He really enjoyed it, so he kept doing it, but I don't actually need a bodyguard.

CHOOSE YOUR HERO

The heart of it is princesses, but recently, we've added a spider hero — Spider Man, who's actually our first Icelandic employee. He can do a backflip, so that trumps things. I have pirates as well to have some more gender-neutral characters.

My Icelandic is not perfect, so I tend to warn parents — I can talk about fairy tales and magic in Icelandic, but I can't talk about the economy.

Thank God for Disney Plus, I've been able to watch all the Disney movies in Icelandic multiple times, taking detailed notes of how they say and describe things, and learning the songs as well. One of my party tricks now is singing "Let it Go" in four languages.

WHEN KIDS GO OFF-SCRIPT

Kids just say the darndest things to you. That's probably the strangest thing. They'll just walk up to you, I mean, Elsa or Anna, and say, "Your parents are dead" and just walk off. They really have no filter.

I have a performer who plays Moana, and she had her very first event with us at a library in Hafnarfjörður. We're doing some crafts, and there's a book on the shelf called *Guns*. This one girl just asks, "Moana, what does that mean?" And my poor performer, she's just like, "Um, ask your mother."

FAIRYTALES WITH NO BORDERS

Almost all of our events are with cities to some degree, like in libraries or for big festivals. This weekend, we have Sjómannadagurinn and a story hour in the library. Those are the main sorts of things we do. It's what we call our meet and greet because we just go somewhere.

One of the big things about Prinsessur is that we do stuff in different languages and we're all international. We have a Ukrainian girl, a Venezuelan girl and Maxime and I are French. We really encourage all the children of foreign origin to come to our events. One of the best examples of that — and the most fun — is our Easter egg hunt in Hafnarfjörður. ■

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Elections

The Glacier That Ran For President

It may not have made the ballot, but this isn't the end for Snæfellsjökull

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGE Art Bicnick

Icelanders will head to their local polling stations on June 1 to elect the next president. The country has been gripped with election fever since the wildly popular outgoing president Guðni Th. Jóhannesson announced in his new year's address to the nation that he would not be seeking re-election. The furore that followed Guðni's announcement saw an incredible 82 individuals electronically throw their hat into the ring to be the next president of Iceland. In the end, 12 made the ballot.

Perhaps the most unique presidential hopeful to signal their interest in ascending to Iceland's top office was not even a person. Among the long list of names of human candidates was a glacier. Snæfellsjökull, to be exact, lest you erroneously assume Vatnajökull was in the running. (Could you imagine!?)

With Canadian-Icelandic interdisciplinary artist-researcher Dr. Angela Rawlings lending their kennitala to legitimise Snæfellsjökull's candidacy, the glacier centred its campaign around the core values of environmental consciousness and global unity, while aiming to challenge the status quo and "elect a candidate that symbolises endurance, resilience and global interconnectedness."

Angela also served as Snæfellsjökull's campaign manager, working toward the glacier's collection of

endorsements to make it to the official ballot along with a team of more than 40 volunteers from Iceland and abroad. Though Snæfellsjökull did not collect the requisite 1,500 endorsement signatures needed to continue their candidacy, that's not the end of the Snæfellsjökull campaign.

"Had Snæfellsjökull appeared on the presidential ballot, topics including climate action, rights of nature, transparency, ecocentrism, diversity and inclusivity would have been foregrounded through the presidential race in May," Angela told the Grapevine. Though not on the ballot, the Snæfellsjökull For President campaign held exhibitions and happenings in May to highlight the environmental messaging at the centre of their movement.

LOCKED OUT

Snæfellsjökull was running with an established platform presented in four languages — Icelandic, Polish, Spanish and English — and a dedicated team of volunteers, but still the campaign received minimal attention from Icelandic media, who instead zeroed in on the big name candidates.

"We made a collective decision to run this campaign on a purely volunteer basis and not fundraise. Still, we are the only candidate in this entire election who got international media coverage and interest from news outlets on every continent," explained campaign volunteer Gal-

adriel González Romero. "We made announcements via press releases, a website, and a social media build-up and video reveal — the same or more than the other candidates did — yet we got minimal media coverage in Iceland."

Galadriel explains that the team learned that, faced with such a large number of candidates, the national broadcaster RÚV had made an internal decision to cover candidates who held press conferences. So Snæfellsjökull held a press conference, inviting 50 journalists from every Icelandic news outlet. Not a single local journalist attended, though international journalists joined over Instagram live.

It was also in international media that the campaign garnered the most headlines. The Guardian called the campaign "The continent's most singular presidential bid." Australian national radio called Snæfellsjökull "One of the most extraordinary presidential candidates that Europe has ever seen." And German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung wrote, "Anyone who says that a glacier is not suitable for political office: That was also rumoured at Finnbogadóttir and Sigurðardóttir at the time," referencing to Iceland's first female president Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, and Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, Iceland's first female prime minister and the world's first openly LGBTQ+ head of government.

"After fulfilling every single requirement that was made of us, we got

information that only candidates who are paying a PR manager with inside contacts in news agencies get coverage," Galadriel lamented. "This means that Icelandic elections function as a sort of pay-to-play. A democracy relies on the public being able to make an informed decision. I don't think the public was given the opportunity to make an informed decision during this nomination period."

THE MESSAGE REMAINS

Though Snæfellsjökull's messaging didn't break through to Icelandic voters, its very participation in the race and its highlighting who gets to participate in democracy, who will speak for the environment and what is important to the world and its inhabitants.

"Humans like to think of themselves as unique and often see environmental issues as separate from the human ones," said campaign volunteer Martyna Daniel. "We have gotten used to seeing our environment as a resource we can profit from. Our campaign served as a reminder that we humans are a part of the environment, one species among many, and that we live on a shared planet where all elements and their wellbeing are interconnected."

At this watershed moment in history, world leaders should be paying more attention to environmental policy and protection. As Angela noted, "By the time Snæfellsjökull is significantly melted in 2050, more than 1.2

billion people from 32 countries will face climate displacement."

If wealthy nations like Iceland are grumbling now about increased immigration, the very harsh reality of the near future should spur real interest and action.

"Currently, Iceland's new, non-elected centre-right Independence Party prime minister Bjarni Benediktsson is calling for stricter immigration legislation and increased restriction on asylum seeking," Angela said, referring to Bjarni's insistence that stronger borders is a key issue for Iceland at this time. Notably, Bjarni ascended to the prime ministry when Left-Green prime minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir vacated the position in order to run for president.

"Bjarni Ben and his party's calls for stricter immigration run counter to what is urgently needed within national and global policies and legislations," Angela continued. "This is the time for precautionary measures to be implemented by our policymakers — not myopic, nationalist, egocentric legislation that runs counter to the immediate future interests, survivorship and sustainability of humans and non-humans."

"It's time we shift our mindset from egocentrism to ecocentrism," Angela concluded. "Embrace transformation; it's already arrived." ■

Follow along with Snæfellsjökull's ongoing actions at kjosumjokul.com and facebook.com/sfjfyfirforseta

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Get Cultured

There's No Such Thing As

Listahátið í Reykjavík returns with an eye on accessibility and inclusivity

WORDS Rex Beckett
IMAGES Hörður Sveinsson
Elvar Örn Egilsson
Gunnlöð Jóna
Rúnarsdóttir
Sandijs Ruluks
Ólöf Rut

cipline of art in Iceland. The always highly anticipated biennale takes place once again this year – running from June 1 to 16 – with an underlying theme of sea monsters and the turmoil that lies beneath our feet. It seems rather fitting then, that the island is erupting just as the festival prepares to erupt itself.

"This programme was born in a different way to the others, almost in reverse," says Vigdís Jakobsdóttir, artistic director and CEO of the festival since 2016. "Normally it is sort of this metaphor where you fill a

tival has been filled with gemstones of highly lauded and established performers as well as ambitious and exciting emerging voices spanning disciplines and communities. This curatorial approach meets Vigdís' primary mandate of accessibility and inclusivity.

"It's always been a real passion of mine to bring the arts to a wider group and for everybody to have access," says Vigdís emphatically. "I sincerely, firmly believe that we should all have access to and en-

programme of one-off events and full-day takeovers, curated by co-directors Aude Busson and Sigurður (Siggi) Starr Guðjónsson.

"We tried to use this open space as a place for encounters and a place of surprises," says Aude. "I just really like the atmosphere in the house. The idea is that there is a space that is open to different artists, different communities, people that maybe don't usually get spaces to perform."

"It's really using the advantages of our tiny little island when it comes to inviting different communities and that maybe haven't been a part of the discussion for a while, if ever," Siggi adds to this sentiment. "But it's important that it's also not just about getting them into the festival, but also into this spiralling chaos that is the local art scene."

Both coming from a background in performing arts in very specific communities – Aude in the world of youth performing arts and Siggi in professional drag and nightlife entertainment – both are particularly attuned to experimentation, collaboration and unrestricted creative expression. The two applied to the job separately but were offered to co-direct the Hub, an opportunity which they leapt at and embraced.

"Some events had already been booked through the open call and some we inherited from the main programme," says Aude. "Some

things were dialogues that Vigdís already had with some people who knocked on the door and said, 'Hey, where is there space for this?' But first we had a little focus group that gave us some ideas about things that we could get a little more into."

The focus group of which she speaks was a way for her and Siggi to access people and communities with links to or interest in arts and culture, but who have not found themselves represented, such as the elderly, Deaf people and cultural diasporas like Iceland's Filipino and pan-African communities.

FUTURE NOSTALGIA

Their method of holding such group discussions also echoed Vigdís' approach to how she has run the festival to date, both in terms of creative programming but also confronting its existential purpose.

"I went into this with a really open mind," says Vigdís. "When I took over in 2016, we were still navigating at that time the new cultural landscape that was formalising. We were still recovering from the financial crash in 2008, so there was really a need to revisit the mission of the festival and really dive deep into why we are here."

Vigdís created platforms and meetings that brought in not only the board of representatives, but a much wider group from across the

I sincerely, firmly believe that we should all have access to and engage with art; to take part in creating art and to see ourselves being represented in the arts as well.

jar with big rocks and then you can add smaller ones and then the sand comes to fill the rest. But in this case, apart from the sea monsters, many of the big events came later."

From the thematically titular opening event by Hringleikur circus troupe and Pilkington Props to the rich and diverse programming spanning not only the capital but the entire country, the jar of this year's fes-

gage with art; to take part in creating art and to see ourselves being represented in the arts as well."

A SPACE FOR EVERYONE

No other place in the festival is her passion for access as clear than in the programming of the Festival Hub. The "festival within the festival" that takes over Iðnó is the heart of the event with an entirely free

In the 54 years since its inception, Listahátið í Reykjavík (the Reykjavík Arts Festival) has gone from being the gateway to the world for Icelandic artists and culture to being among a set of highly acclaimed national events platforming every dis-



Too Much Art

cultural scene and also members of the public. This formed a space where important questions could be asked, getting to the core of whether the festival was even still necessary and if she would spend her tenure planning an exit strategy.

“All of these stories and people that came out really made me feel that this festival is so special, and we need to go back to those times,” she says. “I just thought this is impossible, you can’t recreate people’s nostalgia for the festival because

“For the people to really have a sense of ownership of the festival, people wanted to feel like the festival belonged to society and that society was equal,” says Vigdís. “Collaboration became the one word that sort of stuck out a lot, followed by representation.”

While it is not the only place in the festival where a wider audience and representation is found, the Hub is where that popular ownership truly feels the most prescient. The emphasis on access at all levels –

you need from it?”

This approach led to the Hub takeover days slated for every weekend of the festival’s run, where different groups get the entire venue to sub-curate a full-day programme. These include the Vökufélagið traditional arts community, the Happy Pinoy Filipino event and the Burlesque takeover.

RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

The importance of physical access within the team’s accessibility and inclusivity mandate cannot be understated and is apparent to have been at the forefront of the discussion, not an afterthought. “You need to think about access and inclusion every step of the way, from the way you speak, the way you interact, the way you present, to how you recruit,” says Vigdís. “And with all the work we’ve done on inclusion and accessibility, we cannot stay in a building that is not accessible to some of our artists and friends. It’s embarrassing not to be able to invite certain artists to come and you have to meet them somewhere else.”

Aude also echoes the sentiment that having able-bodied privilege caused the organisers some blushes.

“There are things that came up in our focus group immediately about parties or dancing events or concerts where usually you don’t have any chairs in the room and that

means for many people, that’s just off,” says Aude. “You don’t have to have a visible disability in order to be accommodated. So that’s one thing that we decided – to always have chairs in the room. That’s just really easy, but someone still had to point it out to us.”

On the subject of invisible disabilities, the Hub directors also factor in emotional and neurological health with a chill space for people to go unwind if they experience sensory overload amid all the hubbub.

“I’m not too scared about it, I’m just excited to be there,” says Aude. “I’m also feeling that it’s going to be the time for letting go now. I don’t know what’s going to happen, how it’s gonna go, what are people going to find out and I’m really excited about it.”

As the outgoing artistic director, Vigdís has no desire to hog the title for life and is ready to hand over the reins to a fresh new spirit. She does, however, hope that whoever comes next will carry on the legacy of ac-

You can’t recreate people’s nostalgia, so my secret mission became to create a nostalgia for the future.

the times have changed so much. So my secret mission became to create a nostalgia for the future. Rather than recreate something that people miss, my goal was to create something that people later would maybe miss or look back on as something special.”

This mission towards building a retroactive nostalgia went hand in hand with Vigdís’ mandate of accessibility and inclusivity, as only with changing alongside the evolving landscape of culture and population could this truly be achieved.

physical, cultural, economical and so on – is in full effect from start to finish there. As directors of the Hub, Aude and Siggí are often far less involved with the creative planning than they are with the logistics of access.

“For certain communities or certain representation, it’s important for us not to just create something but to rather reach out and try to find projects that are either ongoing or ideas that are already out there,” says Siggí. “We are trying to give them a space to grow or to just ask them, ‘If you would get a space, what would

With all the work we’ve done on inclusion and accessibility, we cannot stay in a building that is not accessible to some of our artists and friends. It’s embarrassing.

With their work now done (for the most part) and the festival ready to erupt, Vigdís, Aude and Siggí have all navigated their directorial duties with seemingly a great deal of pride.

“I’m very excited for the programme. Even if I was not a part of it, I would be excited for so many events,” says Siggí. “But I’m so afraid of getting ahead of myself because the festival hasn’t happened yet.”

cess and inclusion that she established during her time.

“This has become our mantra: the arts are a right, not a privilege,” she says, pointing to the back of the festival programme booklet. “It tends to be something that I get quoted on a lot, but it really lies at the core of what I stand for, so I’m fine with that.” ■

Meet The Artists

The acts and installations we are most excited about



THE SEA MONSTERS

Hringleikur (IS) & Pilkington Props (IS)

June 1, 15:00, Miðbakki (plus multiple tour dates around Iceland)

We follow the story of the mother monster having been accidentally caught and brought on land. In her distressed call we find other monsters from stories coming up on our shoreline seemingly in aid of their mother. The Sea Monsters is a street theatre performance where there is enough space for our monsters but of course wheelchairs and other modes of transport, too. Our show is extremely visual and it is enjoyed equally by Icelandic and non-Icelandic speakers, as it really doesn't need many words at all. As the character designers, we at Pilkington Props love creating creatures and puppets with believable and realistic movements. As a group, we also try to reuse and recycle as much material as possible for all our works. Audiences can expect a world of mythical creatures to come alive – it will be spectacular!



ÁSMUNDARSALUR ON THE GO: ROUND TRIP

Þórdís Erla Zoëga (IS) & Shu Yi (CN)
June 2-17, multiple locations

Round Trip emerged from our discussions about the shipping container, its symbolic and physical characteristics, and the surrounding environment. As a "neutral ground," the container connects the world through tidal cycles, like a durational symphony created by the gravitational interactions between the Earth, Moon, and Sun. Our goal is to craft an immersive environment with a blend of art installations and interior design, evoking a sense of presence. The exhibition space is uniquely portable, designed to journey across various locations in the capital area, making art accessible to a broader audience. The exhibition interior is designed as an invitation for visitors to step out of conventional space perception and into a moment of serene exploration and heightened awareness. We hope to create a space that fosters presence and mindfulness, where thoughts, wonders, and reflections can flow freely.



HÉR Á ÉG HEIMA

Yuliana Palacios (MX/IS)
June 2-16, Gerðarsafn

The need to create a community has always been my way of life. The

theme of this project is belonging and resilience. Hér Á Ég Heima is a very personal gift for the audience. It's my way of saying we all can bloom in new environments. It is also my way of saying thanks to my new home and celebrating the journey of adaptation and growth. This project aims to create empathy and understanding for new Icelanders among natives. It is offering a space where all of those who feel they don't belong to society can enter and feel good in a comfortable and safe environment. We also want to encourage new Icelanders to create art and make themselves heard. We are very excited to see what the audiences have to say about our work, what emotions it evokes within them and hopefully we can inspire people in some way.



POPERA

Michael Richardt (DK) & Diana Burkot (RU)
June 7, 20:00, Iðnó

POPera takes place in a world where colourful werewolves save women throughout history from marriage and boredom, and help them grow wings, to become independent writers in their own right. Where angry infantile fashion werewolves cry for milk and nipple, and are fed ribs and dips by invisible spirits deep in the forest, before they put you to sleep and push you off to sea in a small boat, only to get picked up by pirates in flying spaceship dragons and have orgies with the goldfish women on the floating babyfather planet. Not to forget the faceless mineral

beings, who communicate with sonic clairvoyance, performing the duty of customs officers in space taxing you of your memories, storing them as fine art in their enormous Interstellar Freeport. In the world of POPera there is room for everyone, the good and the bad and there is even wheelchair access and the opera will be sign language interpreted.



DUETS

Ásrún Magnúsdóttir (IS)
June 9, 20:00, Borgarleikhúsið,
3.290–4.900 ISK

My work is always about amplifying the voices of those who are under-represented in art and in life through choreography and dance and music. For that reason I tend to work with non-professionals and I'm doing that once again with Duets. It's a series of portraits of different couples that each have different relationships to dance and to each other. They are lovers, siblings, friends, colleagues... In each duet, one person is disabled and the other is not. So it's about giving the stage to unlikely bodies and celebrating their own personal dance. We can all be on the big stage, no matter our abilities or age or background. I'm excited about seeing the dancers shine like diamonds. Guests can expect a party vibe with energetic music and great unconventional performers and hopefully be inspired in many different ways.



(H)ANDAFLUG

O.N. Productions (IS)
June 9, all day, Iðnó

The main goals of O.N. Productions are to bring Deaf and hearing cultures closer, by building bridges between different worlds of culture, language, and communities and to make space for representation of Deaf artists and contribute to more diverse role models in the performing arts, both on stage and behind it. The event is organised by Icelandic sign language-speaking individuals (both Deaf and hearing) and performed only by Deaf people. The space will be filled with Sign Language and Deaf culture. We are most excited about making space where this culture is dominant and where our guests get an opportunity to ask questions, play, learn and enjoy Deaf art and culture, regardless of their mother language. We can't wait to offer a unique experience of enjoying a feast for the senses, the heart and the nerves of laughter. ■

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The Grapevine's Top Picks



THE ICELANDIC TATTOO CONVENTION
May 31 – June 2
Gamla Bíó
1.500 – 3.500 ISK

With the Reykjavík Arts Festival running throughout this entire issue, we mustn't forget that our own human bodies are their very own magnificent works of art. So naturally one should adorn their canvas as they please! If you're getting ready to show off some skin this summer, head over to the annual Icelandic Tattoo Convention to lay your next work right into your epidermis. Gathering together big names from Iceland's local tattoo community as well as international guests, the yearly celebration of ink and needles is always a highlight on the calendar. Now shave that patch of skin and get marked. **RX**



LISE DAVIDSEN
Saturday June 1, 20:00
Harpa (Eldborg)
3.900 – 14.900 ISK

World-renowned soprano Lise Davidsen was on a very different musical track until she saw her first opera at the ripe old age of 20. Since then, the Norwegian vocal artist has taken the world of classical music by storm, receiving numerous awards and being hailed as the "voice of the century" by *The New York Times*. With her widely acclaimed performances at the Metropolitan Opera, the Bayreuth Festival and La Scala Milan, amongst others, the celebrated chanteuse now comes to deliver the opening concert of the Reykjavík Arts Festival. She is guaranteed to shatter the crowd with her incredible performance. **RX**



WHILE IN BATTLE I'M FREE, NEVER FREE TO REST
June 7 & 8
Borgarleikhúsið
6.900 ISK

Over at the city theatre, they are unfolding the cardboard onto the stage and getting ready to throw down. Street dance gets elevated to the contemporary stage in this new show by choreographer Hooman Sharifi that highlights the revolutionary act of dance for survival and community. Having found his place in the world hip hop and street dance in Norway after arriving there unaccompanied at the age of 14, Hooman's works solidify the form of street dance as a political force of art that has come to define a generation of dancers. **RX**



Fancy A Ride?

Get On Your Bikes And Ride

The Tweed Ride brings fancy dress and classy bikes to Reykjavík

WORDS Catharine Fulton
IMAGES Jón Óli Ólafsson

duo would go on to found *Reiðh-jólaverzlunin Berlin*, a Reykjavík bike store specialising in impossibly beautiful city bikes. Under the ownership of Jón Óli Ólafsson since 2018, Berlin has continued to invite

depends on the forecast, Jón Óli is quick to boast that it has not rained on the day of the Tweed Ride in all the years he's been overseeing the event.

somewhere to go?

In addition to sharing the joy of riding around town together, the Tweed Ride also furnishes prizes for best dressed cyclists and the most beautiful bicycle, as decided by the participants in a vote. There's no need to remember everyone's names, though – each registered rider is given a numbered bib for their bike and a corresponding armband by which to identify them.

The prize for best dressed participants remains shrouded in mystery, but the winner in the most beautiful bike category will win a prize from Berlin. But the prospect of a prize shouldn't be one's motivation for participating. The Tweed Ride is all about community and a shared love of riding bikes.

The basic aim of it is just to dress up and take out your old bicycles and join us riding around Reykjavík city – slow and nice.

fashionable cyclists out for annual rides around town.

Ahead of the 13th iteration of the Reykjavík Tweed Ride on June 8, I caught up with Jón Óli to get a better understanding of what the event is all about.

"The basic aim of it is just to dress up and take out your old bicycles and join us riding around Reykjavík city – slow and nice," Jón Óli says when asked about the event's *raison d'être*.

Anywhere from 40 to 60 people participate in the Tweed Ride each year, with Jón Óli explaining that it's a mix of people who have bought bicycles from Berlin and others who just have an old bike laying around that they want to take out for a ride. Though the turnout each year largely

As someone who sold his car in 2012 and has travelled almost exclusively by bike since, it's clear that Jón Óli loves biking and the opportunity to spend a day with other

It's fun, believe me.

cyclists. "It's freedom, being able to go wherever I want to," Jón Óli says of what he loves most about biking. "In some cases, when you're going a bit further or just out riding, it's like meditation."

Cycling, Sipping and Prizes
The Tweed Ride takes participating cyclists on two circuits around central Reykjavík, starting at Hallgrímskirkja and ending at a bar for "high tea." Those interested can also join other cyclists for dinner – hey, if you're all dressed up, why not have

"It's fun, believe me," Jón Óli says emphatically. "If you think about it, it's not often that you dress up, get on an old bike you have and ride around the city centre in slow motion. People will smile at you." ■

The Tweed Ride gets underway from Hallgrímskirkja on June 8 at 14:00. Register for the event at tweedride.is



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Dark Arts

There Will Be Flood

Jónsi brings a figurative “flood” to Hafnarhús as he explores creativity beyond

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGE Atli Freyr Steinsson

“I don’t know anything about how to be an artist,” says Jón Þór Birgisson, or Jónsi, as we meet at the Reykjavik Art Museum Hafnarhús. Less than a week before his first solo exhibition in Europe, FLÓÐ, opens its doors to visitors and simultaneously kicks off the biennial Reykjavik Arts Festival, Jónsi seems stressed.

As we stand surrounded by half-assembled works, he confesses, “I haven’t tried anything yet, haven’t turned the light on, haven’t heard the audio yet.” It’s been a full month since he arrived in Iceland from his sunny home base in Los Angeles, and he has spent every day since at the museum, methodically piecing together components for the immersive visual, auditory and olfactory installations. “It’s way more work than you think somehow,” he admits. “I want to see it work, but it’s going to happen slowly.”

CREATIVE ALCHEMY

Before Jónsi the artist came Jónsi the musician.

“I’ve been a musician forever – been in the band for 30 years now, Sigur Rós,” he says modestly as if his decades with the seminal band need an introduction. “I’ve just always been interested in visual arts. When you live in Iceland, you’re surrounded by artists. It’s something you can’t avoid.” Seven years ago, when Jónsi moved to LA, he suddenly had more time and space for experiment-

ing with other creative projects. It was through his collaboration with renowned artist Ólafur Eliasson that Jónsi got connected with gallerist Tanya Bonakdar.

As someone with a trained eye for visual art, Tanya saw potential in Jónsi’s creative explorations beyond music. “I started telling her about my ideas and installations I’ve been working on and she suggested we try and have an exhibition and see how it goes. That’s how it started.”

I just want to move people a little bit in some way. It’s nice to be moved.

Initially commissioned for the Nordic Museum in Seattle, this is the first time FLÓÐ is coming to Europe. Jónsi explains that his original conversation with the Reykjavik Art Museum revolved around another piece, his Obsidian installation from 2021 – a simulation of a volcano brought to life through a 16-channel composition played through 200 speakers. “When it comes to shipping, it’s an extremely impractical, non-logical piece – so heavy and awkward and big,” he says of the Obsidian piece. Since it wouldn’t fit at the museum, Jónsi proposed bringing FLÓÐ instead, along with other ideas. Installations SAD and REK will occupy other spaces within Hafnarhús, while Jónsi’s wind harp will adorn building exterior.

FLÓÐ started as a simple idea, with Jónsi contemplating the ocean and the similarities between Seattle and Reykjavik – sister cities, both coastal and surrounded by the vast waters. The concept, however, soon took a more existential and urgent environmental tone. “Then it went further into us being on social media, doomscrolling and seeing all these climate change things hap-

pening.” With a tingle of sadness, he adds, “We live in interesting times because it’s very obvious what’s happening, but nobody’s doing anything about it. [FLÓÐ is] about the big wave that, when the ocean rises, is going to sweep us away.”

With an art book fair happening next door and temporarily slowing down the installation process, I’m left to imagine how things will look here in just a few days. The now white room will turn into a complete blackout space with 50 speakers adorning

the walls to play a 25-minute sound piece with Jónsi’s transcendent chorals – pure and powerful. A lone, flickering strip of light will cut through engineered darkness. The air will be thick with swirling smoke, Icelandic black sand and a distinctive, haunting scent.

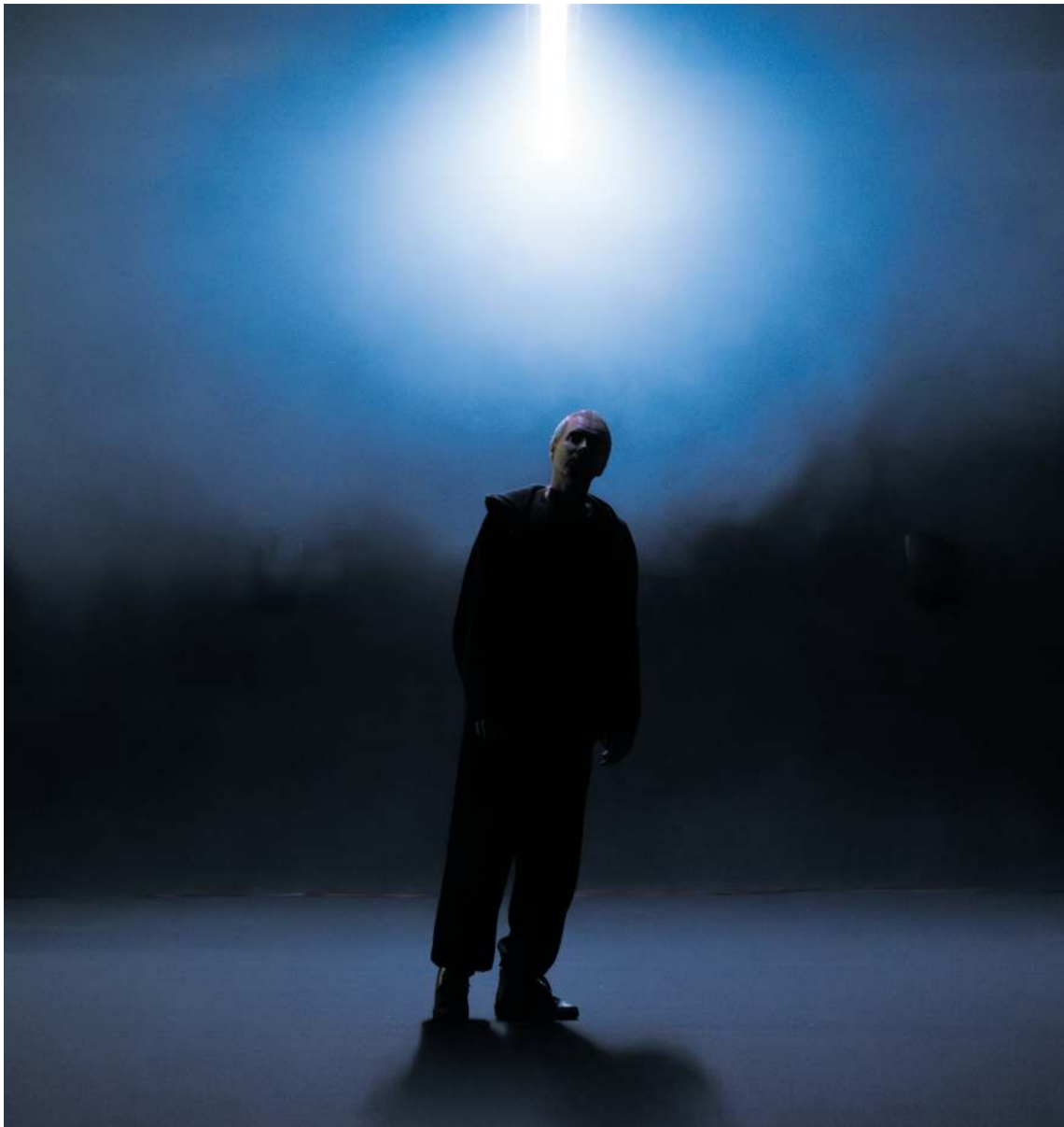
A SENSORY ADVENTURE

“When I started this art adventure thing, I wanted it to be multisensory a little bit – you walk into a room and you hear something, you see something and you smell something,” explains Jónsi, who’s been successfully dabbling into perfumery for the past 15 years.

The nose behind Fischersund, his family-run perfume house, Jónsi purposefully curated a scent for the exhibition. He ventured to a nearby beach to harvest seaweed, from which he created a tincture. This, combined with 30 other aroma molecules, resulted in “an apocalyptic, kind of briny, salty, seaweed thing.”

“The scent is a little bit brutal,” he smiles, adding, “Not really, though.”





and music

Together with his siblings, Jónsi is also working on a limited-edition fragrance that will be sold at the museum, turning FLÓÐ into a stimulating sensory journey.

"I just want to move people a little bit in some way. It's nice to be moved," he says. "When you go to a concert usually – or hopefully, if you like the band – you come out inspired, full of life and energy. Sometimes when I go to galleries, it is kind of boring," he admits, adding that modern art often hides in overly abstract concepts that fail to evoke any emotion. Rather than wrapping his art in layers of abstraction, Jónsi embraces a more grounded directness. "I don't know any of these buzzwords. I never went to an art school. Things are pretty basic, straightforward," he says.

"It's also funny," he adds, "because in the music world, nothing is very conceptualised. You just do things because they make sense. You don't have to talk about it too much, or explain your music." Things in the art world, on the other hand, are the exact opposite. "Everything has some meaning behind it – or not, but usually it does." Experimenting with linking ideas and concepts together has been a rather healthy process for him personally. "It's healthy to actually have to think about what it means, why you're doing it and what the meaning behind it is. Sometimes when you start thinking like that, you connect things together and they start to make sense."

I follow Jónsi to the second floor of the museum, where he's eager to show me one of his two additional artworks, also in a dismantled shape: six rusty metal plates, weathered outside in Iceland to imitate its rugged landscape. These will vibrate accompanied by a choral arrangement Jónsi again recorded with his voice. "Egomaniac," he laughs, imitating the sound of moving tectonic motions.

INTO THE ABYSS

As our conversation turns deeper, Jónsi opens up about challenges and day-to-day demands of being an artist. Having travelled the world with Sigur Rós for decades, he admits that being an artist feels like stepping outside of a safe bubble. While touring and performing as a musician is demanding, shipping an exhibition across continents, researching materials and adjusting them to fit the space of different museums is a whole new level

With a hint of self-deprecating humour, Jónsi adds, "Some musician is having a show at the Reykjavík Art Museum? They are going to be angry about it."

"MY MOTTO IS YOU JUST DO STUFF AND [THEN] YOU DIE"

Though new to the Icelandic arts scene, Jónsi's artworks have travelled from LA to Tasmania, lending him a bit more insight into the art

Some musician is having a show at the Reykjavík Art Museum? They are going to be angry about it.

of complexity. "It's actually more stressful being an artist than a musician for some reason. I don't know why," Jónsi says, pondering that maybe it's because most of his ideas are big and extremely technical, involving hundreds of speakers, computers and lights (for one of the installations on display along with FLÓÐ, he's using a whopping 60,000 LEDs). Unlike his established career as a musician, Jónsi finds himself navigating uncharted waters as an artist, without the same support system in place. "Here, nobody knows that I'm an artist and nobody cares," he shrugs. "Everything is on your shoulders. I don't have any big infrastructure around me."

He muses that the home audience might raise some eyebrows seeing him transition from musician to an interdisciplinary artist. "It's the classic version of a musician trying to be an artist, so there's probably going to be some interesting comments about that," he says, admitting, "I don't know the Icelandic art community very well. But I heard it's very intense."

world. "When you're in the art world, it's a little bit disappointing because it's all about business, money and selling." Jónsi agrees this is understandable up to a certain point – most artists simply need to make some money to sustain their creative process and themselves. "I'm fortunate," he says. "I'm using my money from Sigur Rós that I had been collecting for 30 years of being in a band to finance my art practice," he pauses, before adding. "I'm definitely not making any money off being an artist. It's just fun."

As the preparations for FLÓÐ are slowly coming together, Jónsi is excited, but admits he craves a breather. "After every single activity like this, I always think the next activity is going to be small landscape paintings you can just hang on the wall," he says with a smile. When asked if he's being serious, Jónsi responds, "Maybe one day, when I'm older. Something really comfortable." ■

Jónsi's FLÓÐ opens at the Reykjavík Art Museum on June 1 and will be on view until September 22.

Smiðjustígur 10 / Klapparstígur 16, 101 Reykjavík
Artists Björn Roth, Dodda Maggý, Finnbogi Pétursson, Haraldur Jónsson, Hulda Stefánsdóttir, John Zurier, Katrín Elvarsdóttir, Kees Visser, Monika Grzymala, Páll Haukur Björnsson, Rintaro Hara, Rósa Gísladóttir, Sigurður Guðjónsson, Steina, Woody Vasulka, Þórdís Erla Zoëga
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Film Feature

A Summer To Remember

RakeL Andrésdóttir's animated film wins the brand-new award for short films at Skjaldborg

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGES Atli Freyr Steinsson & supplied stills

The screening room at Skjaldborgarbíó in Patreksfjörður erupts with laughter as the credits roll for *Kirsuberjatómatar* (*Cherry Tomatoes*). Despite its naive, amateurish nature, the inexplicably funny film goes on to win the Skjaldborg Documentary Film Festival's debut award for documentary shorts later that night. A one-person creation from start to finish, director RakeL Andrésdóttir explains, "This is a love letter to little RakeL, who was miserable."

ONE ARTIST, MANY ROLES

From working on the scenography and props for the metal ballet Sa-

tanvatnið, to collaborating on music videos and now building a portfolio in animation, it's difficult to confine RakeL's artistic endeavours to a single label. "I think it's just very common for this little scene here," she says. "It's very easy to do different things."

"I studied visual arts at LHÍ [Iceland University of the Arts]," RakeL explains. "I was also doing music there and lots of other things, which is very common for that department." After graduation, she relocated to Prague for a year to study animation.

Kirsuberjatómatar is a three-minute animated film about the summer RakeL spent at Brún, her grandparents' cherry tomato farm in Flúðir. Though, just less than an hour away from Reykjavík, the then 14-year old felt like she was so far from her normal life and friends that she was miserable.

The film is entirely RakeL's work of art from start to finish, with her name credited as the director, editor, producer, cinematographer and sound designer. Having completed the project within a mere week and

a half, the director didn't take it too seriously. "I felt silly to put my name everywhere, but it was required to list someone for each role," she explains with a chuckle. "It was funny to see 'RakeL' as producer and sound designer among other things."

Though her animated film portfolio currently consists of just two other pieces — her graduation project and a love letter to an ex — animation remains a key focus area for RakeL. She is currently employed at an animation studio, working on an upcoming children's series due for release in a year or two, while also pursuing her own personal animation projects.

Even as she adjusts to winning the prestigious award, RakeL is already looking ahead. In September, she'll host a three-week open studio at Ásmundarsalur, showing visitors the process of animation for her new project.

UNEXPECTED SUCCESS

Having first heard about Skjaldborg on the radio, RakeL knew she wanted

to attend in 2024. This motivated her work on the film. "I wanted to push myself to do something on my own," she says. "Sometimes it's hard after doing something for somebody else nine to five. I really wanted to push myself to just do something simple and fun."

The artist jokingly admits that once she submitted the film, she instantly regretted it. But now, having secured the festival's first-ever short film award — the Skjaldan — those second thoughts have evaporated.

This is a love letter to little RakeL, who was miserable.

"I was a little bit tipsy. I thought there's no way I'm gonna win it," RakeL admits. "I was very surprised."

In addition to the Skjaldan statuette, RakeL received a high-speed hard drive from Sensor Films and 250,000 ISK in equipment rental from KUKL. Though mostly working with just a tablet on her projects, she hopes to use the prize money for

future ventures.

"It was my first time at Skjaldborg, but I think this is my favourite festival. It was so much fun," she says. "I thought so even before I won, so I'm not just saying it."

RakeL's festival highlights include the lively festival crowd, the opportunity to chat with established filmmakers and discuss potential collaborations. But she also underscores the impressive programme. "There were so many amazing films

there. I really had a hard time deciding which I like best," she says.

THROWBACK TO ONE MISERABLE SUMMER

Growing up, RakeL loved to scribble in the margins of her notebooks. Now, as an adult, she still carries a sketchbook and enjoys putting thoughts to paper in the form of doodles.





"I am a big fan of animated documentaries. It's a very niche genre but there are some really good ones," she says, adding that animation normally demands a significant time investment. With *Kirsuberjatómatar*, however, she wanted to create something quicker and more spontaneous.

friends." She recalls feeling alone at the farm, despite attempts to hang out with local kids who were at a slightly different teenage stage. "I was very shy and uncomfortable. They were more boy-crazy and excited about bras." Rakel adds that teenage years are simply "a horrible period" in general.

ed by her teenage mind. She explains that her mother has a robust work ethic and sending Rakel to labour on the farm was her way of attempting to instil that same virtue in her daughter. "Children from Reykjavík used to be sent to the countryside to learn work ethic. I joke that that was probably the last kid who had to do that."

My family has tomato eating competitions. Now that I say it out loud maybe this isn't normal.

"I appreciate having memories that we don't have pictures of and drawing them," she says. "Sometimes they are even more true."

Indeed, Rakel doesn't have photos from her summer spent working on the tomato farm, but she kept a diary documenting that period.

"I didn't hate the farm," she clarifies. "I was just a hormonal teenager. I really wanted to just be with my

"I actually love cherry tomatoes," she admits, saying that as a kid, she only wanted to eat tomatoes and they remain her favourite today. "My family has tomato eating competitions," she shares, quickly adding with a chuckle, "Now that I say it out loud, maybe this isn't normal."

In Rakel's mind, that summer on the farm was a dreadful three-month stretch, though she now suspects the timeframe was likely exaggerat-

On the one hand, it might have worked. After picking cherry tomatoes all summer, Rakel earned 25,000 ISK and, unlike most teenagers, she didn't spend it on candy or clothes. "I probably just put it in a savings account," she admits.

The farm experience left such a strong impression that Rakel vowed to never take on that type of job again. "I've never worked at the tomato farm again," she admits with a laugh. "I begged my mom to work in Reykjavík after that summer." ■

Keep your eyes peeled for screening opportunities – rumour has it *Kirsuberjatómatar* could be coming to the big screen in August or September.

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Centre Map

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

Dining

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Drinking

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

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

13 KAFFIBARINN
Bergstaðastræti 1
There are no correct words to explain just how iconic Kaffibarinn is in the local bar scene. It's the perennial hangout for the who's who of Reykjavik, welcoming everyone from members of Blur to curious passers by and everyone in between. Kaffibarinn is an establishment in and of itself. JB

14 VITABAR
Bergþórugata 21
If you're staying in Reykjavik more than a few days, you ought to find

your own dive bar – this is ours. It seems like the time froze at Vitabar, but we love it that way. People come for their famous blue cheese burger, but stay for a few pints and delicious fries. Sometimes I wish Vitabar discovered craft beer, but I go back nevertheless – for a late night bite and Thule on draft. IZ

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

Shopping & Activities

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

17 VESTURBÆJARLAUG
Hofsvallagata
Opening hours: 6:30-22:00 Mon.-Fri., 9:00-21:00 Sat.-Sun.
One of the many public swimming pools found in the capital area, Vesturbæjarlaug' reputation is one of affluence, as many of Icelandic society's jet-setters are based in and around the Vesturbær neighbourhood. Be prepared to literally rub shoulders with actors, politicians, and Björk. JB

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

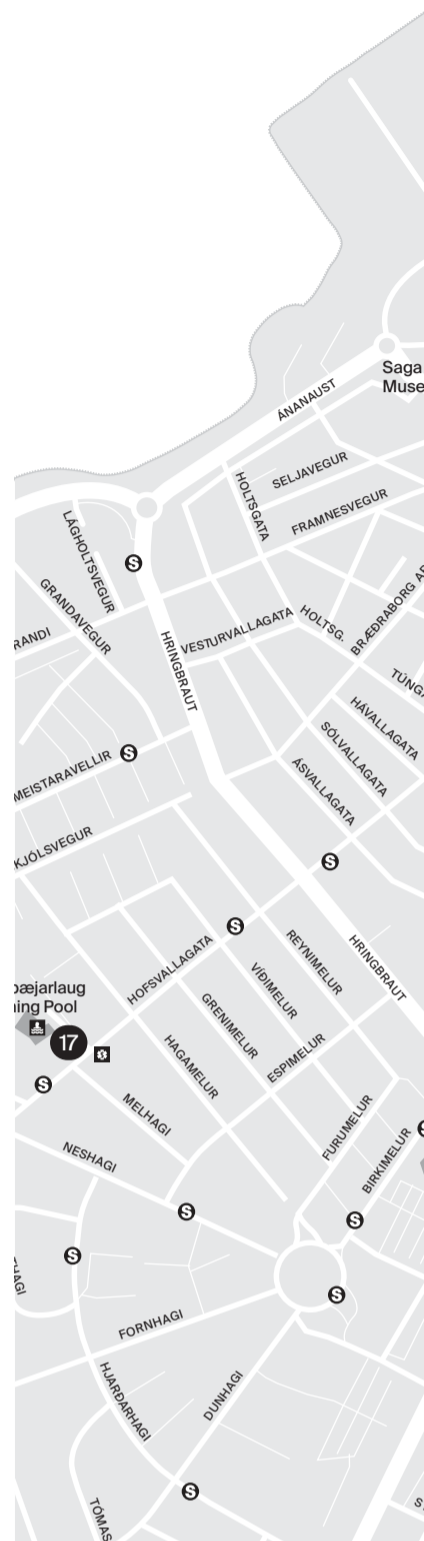
Be Warned

19 101 BISTRO
Austurstræti 3
The bistro on the corner of Ingólfs-torg and Austurstræti that has a plaque outside saying, "Come in and try the worst [insert popular food

item] that one guy on Tripadvisor said we had", or something like that. It's a trap, do not go there. That plaque has been in the same spot ever since Hrunið. RG

20 SBARRO
Austurstræti 17 & Vatnsmýrarvegur 10
"What is this shit?" is how Greil Marcus famously opened his review of Bob Dylan's 1970 album in Rolling Stone. It is appropriate here. It looks like pizza, it is sold as pizza, it's priced like foie gras, but it tastes like salted shit. Avoid. RG

21 REYKJAVÍK FISH RESTAURANT
Tryggvagata 8
Our beef with this place has to do with their "plokari" (Traditional Icelandic Fish Stew). Taste wise, there is nothing wrong with how Reykjavik Fish makes their "plokari", the problem is that the volume you get for the price is unacceptable; a tiny cast iron pan of fish stew for 2.690 ISK. An outrage. RG ■





J

M

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KLAPP

New In Town

Aroy Dee Thai Restaurant*

LAUGAVEGUR 2, 101 REYKJAVÍK

They say location is everything, and while some locations are doomed to fail, this location is deemed to prevail. The top floor of the house where Laugavegur and Skólavörðustígur meet has been a fortuitous home for many a great eatery – most recently Mama Reykjavík who just moved into bigger digs – and now it is home to Aroy Dee Thai Restaurant. Satiating the palates of the hungry downtown hoards since January, their tightly packed menu of Thai classics, home baked desserts and fresh bubble tea is just what this location called for. The fun décor and friendly atmosphere have us hoping this will be their home for a long time. ■

OPENING HOURS:
Monday – Thursday 11:00 – 22:00
Friday 11:00 – 22:30
Saturday – Sunday 14:00 – 22:00



B

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HAPPY HOUR
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PÓSTHÚSSTRÆTI HALA & BAR

Art Exhibitions 31.05–13.06.24

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

Opening

GERÐARSAFN
(KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM)

Here Is My Home
Within the cadre of the Reykjavik Arts Festival 2024, this video art installation explores the theme of rooting and belonging in a new environment and the quest to find a sense of belonging in a foreign land.
Opens June 2
Runs until June 16

HAFNARBORG
Guðný Guðmundsdóttir – Cassiopeia
New and recent mixed media works that invoke ideas of bruised ego, vanity and self-adulation, seeking inspiration from Greek mythology.
Opens May 31
Runs until August 18

HAFNARHÚS
(REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)
Jónsi – FLÓÐ (Flood)
First European solo exhibition by acclaimed musician and artist Jónsi, within the cadre of the Reykjavik Arts Festival 2024.
Opens June 1
Runs until September 22

Murmur
Group exhibition showcasing new and recent works that reflect a wide range of content, including autobiographical subjects, profound pain and confusion, alongside the poetic aspects of everyday life.
Opens June 6
Runs until September 22

ICELANDIC PRINTMAKERS ASSOCIATION
María Sjöfn & Sabine A. Fischer – forest and sea
The forest and the sea embody the

longing for merely being present with the senses. These artworks attempt to find coexistence in order to uphold a resolution to the human/nature dilemma.
Opens June 1
Runs until June 8

KLING & BANG
Guðrún Marta Jónsdóttir – Silfurgjá
Shedding new light on old history, an unexpected path through American and Icelandic politics and popular culture in the mid-20th century examines Icelanders' identity and inferiority complexes.
Opens June 13
Runs until July 21

Magnús Sigurðarson – HAPPY TALES of DEATH and MELANCHOLY (Post)
A continuation of the artist's long running process of wandering across the landscape of America which found him "becoming the land, skipping the soup, and melting into the pot itself."
Opens June 13
Runs until July 21

THE LIVING ART MUSEUM
Course
Primarily appealing to the ear, rather than the eye, this exhibition is presented as a possible answer to the paradox of "exhibiting sound" and simultaneously becomes a game or a puzzle.
Opens June 13
Runs until August 4

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ICELAND
Tumi Magnússon – Loop
Video work Loop brings together all the different working methods that

the artist has adopted over time, from paintings and photographs from the '90s to video works from the last 20 years. Part of the Reykjavik Arts Festival 2024.
Opens June 8
Runs until September 22

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND
Borgerður Ólafsdóttir – Future Fragments
Artistic investigation into the anthropocene and conceptions of cultural and natural inheritance using art works and objects interwoven with the history and influence of humans.
Opens June 8
Runs until January 2025

NORDIC HOUSE
(Post)
Multimedia art exhibition (Post) presents artwork created between 2005 and 2021 by mainly Nordic artists who question and reflect our time and our future. Part of the Reykjavik Arts Festival 2024.
Opens June 1
Runs until September 8

PØLSE&POESI
A poetry reading, panel discussion and sausage party where sausages, condiments and drinks from different Nordic countries, showcasing Nordic "sausage culture". Free and with gluten-free options.
Friday May 31, 17:00 (single event)

Ongoing

ANNABELLE'S HOME
Anna Hrund Måsdóttir & Jasa Baka – Bed of Poetic Lettuce
Installation, mixed media
Runs until June 14

ÁSMUNDARSAFN
(REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)
At Hand
Sculpture
Runs until September 1

BERG CONTEMPORARY
Haraldur Jónsson – Measures
Paintings, mixed media
Runs until July 6

THE EINAR JÓNSSON SCULPTURE MUSEUM
Brynja Baldursdóttir & Einar Jónsson – Be-coming
Sculpture, mixed media
Runs until August 25

GALLERY FOLD
Daði Guðbjörnsson – A Lightness of Spirit
Paintings
Runs until June 22

GALLERY SKILTI
Sirra Sigrún Sigurðardóttir – Misseri
Installation
Runs until June 15

GALLERY UNDERPASS
Sirra Sigrún Sigurðardóttir – WE ARE HERE
Graphic design
Runs until July 15

Á MILLI

Martyna Pietrowiak & Tomasz Bukowski – Phases of Uncertainty
Investigations into the feelings of anxiety, disposability, and isolation through a range of methods, such as collages, film, audio, 3D modeling, and photography.
Opens May 31
Runs until June 16

GALLERY GRÓTTA

Clizia Macchi – The Night Enlightened
Painting works that focus on the perception of self, bringing feelings and states of mind to light often with non conventional techniques inspired by nature and literature.
Opens May 31
Runs until June 21

Art Picks



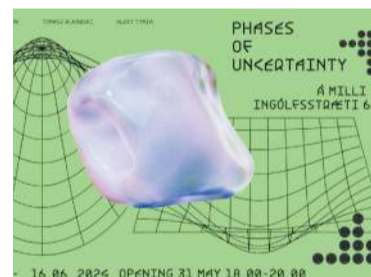
Guðrún Marta Jónsdóttir – Silfurgjá
June 13 – July 21
Kling & Bang



Guðný Guðmundsdóttir – Cassiopeia
May 31 – August 18
Hafnarborg



Opera Skjóta
June 7, 8, 14 & 15
Ásmundarsalur



Martyna Pietrowiak & Tomasz Bukowski – Phases of Uncertainty
May 31 – June 16
Á milli



Tumi Magnússon – Loop
June 8 – September 22
National Gallery of Iceland

The mid-20th century in Iceland was truly gripped by Americana fever. With those Allied soldiers busting in and setting up camp on our rock, the obsession with all things Uncle Sam took over the hearts and minds of young Icelanders leaving them with a pop culture inferiority complex so deep it lingers to this day. Artist Guðrún Marta Jónsdóttir drags the icons of old Hollywood out in her new solo exhibition to amplify how this relationship and complex lingers on to this day. It will be a roasting for the ages. RX

The iconic queen Cassiopeia was one of the cuttiest figures of Greek mythology, whose vanity and arrogance led to her downfall. A classic Drag Race arc. In her new exhibition, artist Guðný Guðmundsdóttir confronts her own inner saboteur that craves adulation and validation in works of clay on paper as well as video works. Connecting the works through multilingual references and titles, they become a constellation as elusive and stunning as the one named after that fierce queen. RX

An opera that explores football culture and climate change? Yes, we too are surprised, but you tend to stumble on these weird and unconventional projects in our tiny capital and, most of the time, they don't disappoint. Reykjavik is not Vienna, so instead of a real opera house, Opera Skjóta will take over Ásmundarsalur and promises a thought-provoking performance. Let's see who scores? IZ

Feeling anxious, unmotivated, stuck in a rut? Coming together with other people for physical activity and socialising is a proven way to feel better. Join an artsy catharsis of collage making and creative dialogue guided by artists Martyna Pietrowiak and Tomasz Bukowski (The lovechild of Charles Bukowski after a wild night in Warsaw?) at the cosy space Á milli. Cut, paste and collage your way out of that funk. IZ

Longtime established artist Tumi Magnússon's work has always dealt with the everyday, man-made moments and objects that make up human life. In his new video installation work Loop, the artist draws from his entire body of work going back through the 90s to take a different approach that tackles the natural world. Humans create their objects from nature and then Tumi turns his creations back towards nature. Like a loop. Ahh, we get it now. RX

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31.05–13.06.24



National Gallery of Iceland
Fríkirkjuvegur 7
The House of Collections
Hverfisgata 15

GERÐARSAFN
(KÓPAVOGUR ART MUSEUM)
Sóley Ragnarsdóttir – Queen of Hearts
Mixed media, installation
Runs until July 21

Pór Vigfússon – Numbers, places
Site-specific installation
Runs until July 28

GERÐUR
Works of sculptor Gerður Helgadóttir
Permanent exhibition

Glerhúsið
Sigrún Hrólfsdóttir – Spell
Installation, mixed media
Runs until June 9

HAFNARBORG CENTER
OF CULTURE & FINE ART
Time and Time Again
Group exhibition, installations
Runs until August 18

THE HOUSE OF
COLLECTIONS
Going For Gold
Group exhibition, goldsmithing
Runs until June 9

Resistance: Interplay of Art and
Science
Interdisciplinary group exhibition
Permanent exhibition

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

18 GALLERY
Margrét H. Blöndal – Do not go roughly into that good night
Oil and paper works
Runs until July 6

18 GRANDI
Andreas Eriksson – Real Time
Paintings, progressive exhibition
Runs until December 2024

KJARVALSSTAÐIR
(REYKJAVÍK ART MUSEUM)
Kjarval and the 20th Century: When Modernity Anchored
Paintings, drawings
Runs until December 2024

KLING & BANG
Andri Björgvinsson – Monophthong
Sound installation
Runs until June 2

Tara & Silla – They Removed a Plank of Wood from their Pocket
Installation
Runs until June 2

LISTVAL
Hólmfríður Sunna Guðmundsdóttir – Pulse
Paintings
Runs until June 8

Helga Páley Friðbjófsdóttir – Velvet Curtains
Drawings, mixed media
Runs until June 8

THE LIVING ART
MUSEUM (NÝLÓ)
Tracing Roots – Thin Filaments and Porous Forms
Graduation exhibition of IUA's MFA students
Runs until June 2

Rereading
Bookwork group exhibition
Runs until August 4

MUSEUM OF DESIGN
AND APPLIED ARTS
FIREFLOWERS: When Dance Becomes Product Design
Mixed media, design
Runs until June 17

Katla Einarsdóttir & Una María Magnúsdóttir – Messages
Graphic design
Runs until November 24

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

NATIONAL GALLERY
OF ICELAND
Anna Rún Tryggvadóttir – Multipolar

Sculpture, installation
Runs until September 15

Steina – Borealis
Sound & video installation
Runs until September 15

Bóra Sigurðardóttir – Iron, Flax, Coal, and Chalk
Paintings, drawings
Runs until September 15

PHENOMENON GALLERY
Árni Valur Axfjörð & Anton Lyngdal – AI \ NI
Installation, sculpture
Runs until June 9

REYKJAVÍK MARITIME
MUSEUM
Heimir Freyr Hlööversson – We are Earth, We are Water
Video installation
Runs until December 2024

REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM
OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Hlynur Pálmason – Lament for a Horse
Photography
Runs until September 22

THE SCULPTURE
ASSOCIATION GARDEN
Agnes Ársælsdóttir – Potentially Garden
Installation, vegetation
Runs until June 9

SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON MU-
SEUM
The Gift of Children
Reliefs and Portraits
Runs until September 24

From Various Sources
Sculpture, mixed media
Runs until September 24

SÍM GALLERY
Gerður Guðmundsdóttir – From One to Another
Mixed media, installation
Runs until June 16

ÞULA
Davíð Örn Halldórsson – Typisch Gluggaveður
Paintings
Runs until June 30

Baráttan um gullið Going for gold

100 ára afmæli Félags íslenskrar gullsmiða
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Icelandic Goldsmiths

listasafn.is



Finnur Jónsson (1892-1993), *Armband með landvættum / Bracelet with Land Spirits*, 1985, LÍ-M10

Listasafn Íslands
National Gallery
of Iceland

24.4.–
9.6.2024

Event Picks



CYBER
Friday June 7, 21:00
Kex Hostel– Free

The progressive electro pop duo CYBER will rock the house come June 7. By then, we'll all have a new president – not that it will matter for CYBER's performance. Or will it? Sitting on a new album that's probably sexier, saucier and juicier than their previous work, a CYBER show is not one you should miss. JB



Drengurinn fengurinn, Apex Anima & FRZNTÉ
Wednesday June 5, 20:30
lönó – Free

Calling all the freaks to get their butts on the dancefloor. Over at the Reykjavik Arts Festival Hub, the hot weirdos come out in full force on this extra sweaty night of music and dance. Multidisciplinary artist and musical polyglot Drengurinn fengurinn will drop his signature lo-fi electro pop jams and electronica club artist Apex Anima will be joined by pole dance superstar FRZNTÉ pulling crazy shapes. Please stretch before and after the show. RX



Ingibjörg Turchi and Band & Djasskrakkar
Monday June 10, 20:30
lönó – Free

What's cooler than a group of kids playing jazz? I'll yell ya, a group of kids playing jazz while wearing sunglasses inside. As part of the Reykjavik Art Festival, composer and phenomenal bassist Ingibjörg Turchi performs music off her albums *Melíae* and *Stropha*, after a group of 9-13 year olds from Mosfellsbær has properly warmed up the crowd. JB

01.06.–22.09.2024

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Reykjavík Arts Festival
1.–10. júní 2024

Events

31.05-13.06.24

Concerts, comedy, movies and other happenings that defy categorisation

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

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

Friday May 31

Mechanical Percussion: Zeno van den Broek & ILL

17:00 12 Tónar

Dansdagur Closing Party

19:00 Dansverkstæðið

LegFest: Svartpoka, Sóðaskapur, Mørose & Kristrún

20:00 Gaukurinn

KUSK & Óviti, Frumburður & BLOSSI

20:00 Kex Hostel

Mayhem on the Moon

20:45 Kornhlaðan/White Lotus

Hjálmar

20:00 Ölver

Slacker Events: Illa J & Ash Walker, Kzoba & More

16:00 Petersen Svítan

Suburbass: Disturbed Nights #1

22:00 Radar

Saturday June 1

DJ Logi Leó

21:00 12 Tónar

Drápa Album Release Show

21:00 Gaukurinn

Metaxis: Anna Þorvalds & Iceland Symphony Orchestra

16:00 & 17:00 Harpa (public area)

Lise Davidsen (NO)

20:00 Harpa (Eldborg)

Ellen & Eyþór

20:00 Hannesarholt

Reykjavík Arts Festival Opening Party: Superserious

20:30 Iðnó

House of Heart: Charity Drag Brunch

13:30 Jörgensen Kitchen & Bar

Mayhem on the Moon

20:45 Kornhlaðan/White Lotus

BPM: Aylín Idah (BER), Día, Halldóra

21:00 Radar

Sunday June 2

DAGADANA

20:00 Harpa (Norðurljós)

Korda Samfónía: The Truth Lives In-Between

19:30 Harpa (Silfurberg)

Kvæðacore pt. II

19:00 Iðnó

Sunday Club

20:00 Radar

Wednesday June 5

Drengurinn fengurinn / Apex Anima & FRZNTE

20:30 Iðnó

Reykjavík Open / Orðið er frjálst

19:30 Mengi

Vortónar: Ásta Dóra Finnsdóttir

20:00 Salurinn

Thursday June 6

Iceland Symphony Orchestra: Mahler nr. 3

19:30 Harpa (Eldborg)

FAR Fest Happy Hour

17:00 Iðnó

Oyama & Mukka

20:00 Kex Hostel

Guðmundur Pétursson

20:00 Mengi

Af hverju ekki Presents: DJ_Dave, Smjörvi, Lil Data, Ólöf Rún & More

21:00 Radar

Friday June 7

CYBER

21:00 Kex Hostel

Reykjavík Social Distortion: DJ Mood Killa, Club Kid, ThizOne & More

21:00 Radar

Morris Koad

22:00 Röntgen

Saturday June 8

Jack Magnet Science: Future Forecast

20:00 Harpa (Silfurberg)

Mugison

20:00 Háskólabíó

Happy Pinoy Takeover

11:00 Iðnó

DJ Matti

20:00 Kex Hostel

Heart Attack! Drag Night

21:00 Kiki Queer Bar

HITAM, I-RO & More

21:00 Radar

Sunday June 9

Duets

20:00 Borgarleikhúsið

(H)andaflug Takeover

11:00 Iðnó

Monday June 10

Ingibjörg Turchi & Djasskrakkar

20:30 Iðnó

Tuesday June 11

DragUngar

20:00 Iðnó



Featured Happy Hour

Forsetinn Café

LAUGAVEGUR 51

With summer coming on and the central nightlife spots popping off, there's a lot to be said for a laid back local drinkery outside of the downtown mess. Forsetinn café ("The President Café") is a cosy gem that is downtown but away from all the muck, where patrons can lounge on plush velour sofas surrounded by retro Icelandic décor and tip back a brew. With chill live music every Saturday evening – mostly jazz and funk – and good local food and drink, you can throw back a few in classy comfort without being surrounded by too much debauchery.

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Some Of The Happiest Hours In Town

If your bar has a happy hour, email us on events@grapevine.is with the details.

101 HOTEL
Wednesday to Saturday from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.390 ISK, Wine 1.590 ISK

12 TÓNAR
Every day from 14:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.100 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

AMERICAN BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.100 ISK, Wine 1.300 ISK

APÉRO
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 1000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

BINGO DRINKERY
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

BÍÓ PARADÍS
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

THE BEER GARDEN
Monday to Friday from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK

BODEGA
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

BRAVÓ
Every day from 16:00 to 1:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

BREWDOG
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00 & 22:00 to 00:00
Beer 1.290 ISK, Wine 1.490 ISK

BRÚT BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.160 ISK

DEN DANSKE KRO
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer & Wine 1.550 ISK 2-for-1 offer

FJALLKONAN
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.190 ISK, Wine 1.390 ISK

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

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

FREYJA PUB
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

FRÖKEN REYKJAVÍK
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK

GAUKURINN
Every day from 17:00 to 21:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

HOTEL HOLT BAR
Wednesday to Saturday from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.350 ISK

THE IRISHMAN
Every day from 12:00 to 19:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 950 ISK

JÖRGENSEN KITCHEN & BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

JUNGLE COCKTAIL BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.100 ISK

KAFFI LÆKUR
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00 & 22:00-23:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

KAFFIBARINN
Every day from 15:00 to 19:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

KAFFIBRENNSLAN
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 950 ISK

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

LITLI BARINN
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 990 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

LOFT HOSTEL
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00
Beer 990 ISK, Wine 1.400 ISK

ÖLSTOFAN
Every day from 15:00 to 20:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

PETERSEN SVÍTAN
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

PRÍKIÐ
Every day from 16:00 to 20:00
Beer 800 ISK, Wine 1.500 ISK

RÖNTGEN
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 950 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

SÆTA SVÍNIÐ
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.090 ISK, Wine 1.390 ISK

SATT RESTAURANT
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

SKÚLI CRAFT BAR
Every day from 12:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.000 ISK

SLIPPBARINN
Every day from 15:00 to 18:00, late happy Monday to Thursdays from 21:30 to 23:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

SPILAKAFFI
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, no wine

STÚDENTAKJALLARINN
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00, until 21:00 on weekends
Beer 850 ISK, Wine 1.090 ISK

TIPSÝ
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
50% off select cocktails

UPPSALIR BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 19:00
Beer 850 ISK, Wine 850 ISK

VEÐUR
Every day from 14:00 to 19:35
Beer 900 ISK, Wine 900 ISK

VÍNSTÚKAN TÍU SOPAR
Every day from 17:00 to 19:00
Buy one wine bottle, get two courses (any price)

VOX BRASSERIE & BAR
Every day from 16:00 to 18:00
Beer 1.000 ISK, Wine 1.200 ISK

* We do our best to keep these prices current, but prices are constantly changing. Inflation, amirite!?

Cheap Eats

Here are some sweet meal deals that'll fill your tummy and without draining your bank account.

APÓTEK
Soup of the Day
1.990 ISK all day, every day

ARABIAN TASTE
Falafel Roll
1.790 all day, every day

BÆJARINS BEZTU
Hotdog and soda
990 ISK all day, every day

DEIG
Poor Man's Offer: filled bagel, doughnut & drink
1.850 ISK weekdays after 10:00

HAMBORGARABÚLLA TOMASAR
Tuesday Special: burger, fries & soda
1.990 ISK all day on Tuesday

HLÖLLABÁTAR
Lunch Offer: Choice of any sub and soda
2.195 ISK every day until 14:00

ISLENSKI BARINN
Soup of the Day
1.950 ISK all day, every day

LEMON
Combo of the Month: large sandwich & juice
2.390 ISK all day, every day

MAI THAI BISTRO
Lunch Offer: daily curry meal
2.290 ISK weekdays between 11:00 - 14:00

NAPOLI PIZZA
Lunch Offer: choice of menu pizza or sandwich
1.890 ISK every day from 11:30 - 15:00

PÍTUBARINN
Veggie pita sandwich
2.090 ISK all day, every day

REYKJAVÍK ROASTERS
Breakfast menu & sourdough toasts
580 ISK - 1.800 ISK, all day, every day

SHALIMAR
Curry in a Hurry Lunch Special
1.790 ISK weekdays from 12:00 - 15:00

ZORBIAN HOT
Chicken shawarma wraps & falafel wraps
1.690 ISK all day, every day

* We do our best to keep these prices current, but shit's outta control. Let us know if you spot a sweet deal: grapevine@grapevine.is

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Music News



Barbara Hannigan New Conductor Of The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra

On May 15, the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra (ISO) announced the appointment of Barbara Hannigan as its new Chief Conductor and Artistic Director. Hannigan will commence her initial period of three seasons in August 2026, succeeding Eva Ollikainen. She first conducted the ISO in spring of 2022, debuting at the Reykjavik Arts Festival performing Charles Ives' The Unanswered Question, Arnold Schönberg's Verklärte Nacht, Alban Berg's Suite

from Lulu, and George Gershwin's Girl Crazy Suite. Hannigan will maintain her relationship with the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra as Principal Guest Conductor, as well as holding diverse positions with a score of international orchestras. "It is a matter of creative chemistry and collective timing that drives us to embark on this new path together," Hannigan said in a press statement.

JB



Iceland Airwaves Announce Second Lineup Batch

Music festival Iceland Airwaves made their second wave of artist announcements on May 16. Joining the lineup are artists Alice Longyu Gao, Bear The Ant, Benefits, cumgirl8, Elín Hall, English Teacher, Gabriel Ólafs, GDRN, Hildur, Lambrini Girls, Lynks, Monobloc, MRCY, Overmono, Personal Trainer, Pétur Ben, Sofi Paez, Sóley, Teitur Magnússon, The Vaccines, Villano Antillano, and Wu-

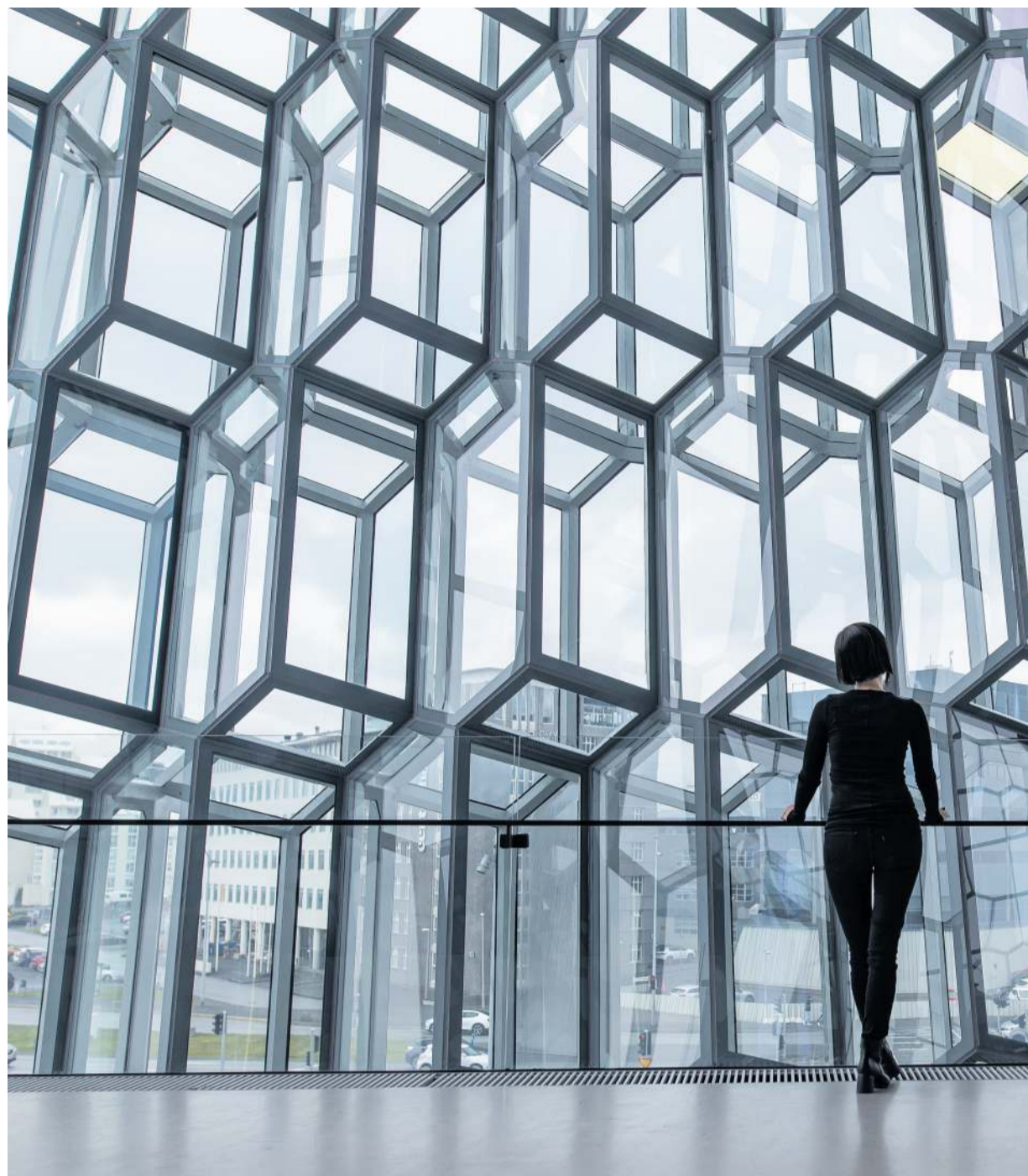
Lu. The festival takes place November 7-9 at various venues in downtown Reykjavik. Tickets are currently priced at 16.900 ISK for a full festival pass and 11.900 ISK for a day pass, available at icelandairwaves.is. Iceland Airwaves celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, coming a long way from its humble beginnings in a local aircraft hangar. JB



KEX Hostel Phases Out Live Events

One spot that won't be alive with the sound of music this Airwaves is long-standing hostel and former biscuit factory KEX Hostel. KEX is soon phasing out live events entirely, repurposing their current event spaces into more spots for tourists to rest their heads, according to the Grapevine's sources. In recent years, the venue has strengthened its position in the Reykjavik nightlife scene by hosting diverse and ambitious events. Currently, the hostel boasts two live event spaces: one on

the ground floor, colloquially known as Gamli Nýló, and the upstairs Gym & Tonik hall. According to sources, KEX's management will transform the ground floor into a reception area and restaurant, potentially adding a bowling alley in a few years. Upstairs, the Gym & Tonik hall will make way for more hostel rooms. KEX Hostel's event schedule culminates with what will probably be the final KEXPORT festival on July 13. Events will run through August 2024. JB



Sonorous

Between Two Worlds

Composer Anna Þorvaldsdóttir premieres her newest piece *Metaxis* to the

WORDS Jóhannes Bjarkason
IMAGE Red Illuminations

brimming with dynamic energy – explosive yet solemn.

different perspectives to the music along the way.

As part of the Reykjavik Art Festival's opening celebration, Anna's newest piece, *Metaxis*, will see its world premiere in Harpa on June 1. Her seventh orchestral score – and also one of her most unconventional compositions – will be performed by

NATURAL ELEMENTS

Given her home country's often unstable and extreme weather patterns and nature, Anna's work has unsurprisingly been compared to embodying elements of nature, in-

When I find elements in nature, that are musically inspiring, and serve kind of a musical purpose – that's when I get inspired by nature.

the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Eva Ollikainen.

voking the tremors of tectonic plates striking one another or the like. According to Anna, those stylistic choices are ambiguously produced.

Part concert, part installation, *Metaxis* is performed by a "deconstructed symphony orchestra," performing the piece while arranged throughout Harpa's enormous foyer. Harnessing the spatial qualities to introduce new dimensions to an otherwise conservative format, guests are invited to walk among and between the performers, experiencing

"It's not so much that I focus or obsess about nature. It's more that when I find elements in nature, that are musically inspiring, and serve kind of a musical purpose, that's when I get inspired by nature," the Icelander explains from her adopted home in England.

Listeners familiar with the work of composer Anna Þorvaldsdóttir are aware of the artist's expansive control of the orchestra, playing it as she would a single instrument. Already critically acclaimed, Anna's work has gained increasing traction over the last few years, cementing her as a superstar of the classical world.

Anna's canon includes dozens of compositions spanning orchestral, ensemble, chamber, and choir works. Her meticulous pieces evoke the power of unstoppable forces,

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world

"Inspiration comes from everywhere around us. But there are elements and forces in nature that are particularly inspiring and you can find some resonances with them when you're working with large groups of instruments," she continues. "So it's actually quite ambiguous. It's never about describing nature. It's much more raw and something that ambiguously finds its way into the music."

SKETCHING IT OUT

Equally awe-inspiring is the artist's approach to the creative process itself. In the early stages of a piece, Anna sketches huge drawings denoting every single minuscule detail she can think of. Although purely for Anna's personal use, these illustrations serve as the blueprint for her pieces, which she ultimately transcribes into more universally legible musical notation.

"It's a mnemonic device that really helps to remember the music that I'm working on each time," Anna explains. "In the earliest stages, I allow myself this headspace and time to find the music. It's impossible throughout months and months to remember everything in the music. So I created this technique to sketch out sounds that I can relate to on the page."

"It never looks exactly the same. But I always know what every single line or text on that page means. It's something I've done for a very long time, I think it came about very naturally, because I was always trying to remember in my head, 'Oh, yeah, I can't forget this.'"

From the get-go, Anna's outlook towards her upcoming pieces is reflected in this holistic method, slowly but surely structuring the piece.

"From the very, very beginning, it's more about the overall image. So one of the first things that I find or imagine is a structure so that I can have a sort of sense of where the piece lives. And then all the details, one by one, start to emerge," Anna remarks.

THE IN-BETWEENNESS OF METAXIS

Since premiering *ARCHORA* at the BBC Proms concert series in 2022, Anna has been working on *Metaxis*. By introducing a participatory element within the piece, Anna erodes the usual hierarchical notions surrounding orchestral and classical music. Given the genre's historical reputation of classism and inaccessibility, efforts to bring such an ambitious work of art into direct connection with the people are laudable — it's an effort doubled down upon by the Reykjavik Art Festival's commitment to accessibility.

Although musical development has surpassed American composer and theorist Milton Babbitt's 1958 criticism posited in the article "Who Cares If You Listen?" — an argument that composers wrote "advanced" music that is disinteresting to the common person — curiosity called to enquire about Anna's thoughts on composing in consideration of the general audience.

"It's impossible not to think about the audience when you're making music. But it's a balance. I'm not obsessing over whether people will

like it or not," she replies. It's about being human. "I'm making music I'm trusting that this will carry and that people will find in it something for themselves," she says.

"With *Metaxis*, it was really important to me to invite people *into* the music. You are invited to explore the music in space and the musical textures travelling in the physical space," Anna says, describing the feeling of entering the installation where the orchestra is situated around the listener.

"You will hear how the layers are travelling from instrumental groups and between individual performers," Anna continues. "As an audience member in this space, you will get a chance to direct your own listening in a way that you can choose where you position yourself in the audio environment."

Ancient Greek philosopher Plato coined the term *metaxy* to describe the in-betweenness characteristic of human nature — it's a concept Anna's *Metaxis* adopts and builds upon. "It's about these two worlds coming together in this installation where you are going through the installation, but also being inside a piece of music."

With a new cello concerto on its way, to be premiered next year, Anna's creativity shows no signs of slowing down. ■

The world premiere of Anna Þorvaldsdóttir's *Metaxis* takes place June 1 at Harpa, performed by the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Eva Ollikainen. Entrance is free, but tickets need to be booked beforehand at harpa.is.

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666

Do You Truly Love Sátan?

Iceland's newest metal festival features a legendary comeback

WORDS Francesca Stoppani
 IMAGE Red Illuminations

From June 6-8, the town of Stykkishólmur on the Snæfellsnes Peninsula hosts the first edition of Sátan, a brand new heavy metal music festival. I grabbed a coffee with Sátan organizer Gísli Sigmundsson and Birkir Fjalar Viðarsson — the frontman of the legendary band I Adapt — where they spilled the tea.

Gísli Sigmundsson has dedicated nearly 50 years of his life to music and metal. "I've been into metal since the age of six and started playing in 1990 with Icelandic death metal band Sororicide. Over the years, I've been in and out of bands, organising gigs, and helping run the Eistnaflug festival in East Iceland, where I managed foreign band bookings," he says.

Nowadays, Gísli is hard at work putting on Sátan, which aims to take up the mantle of the now defunct Eistnaflug, which incited its final mosh pit in 2022. He's not going it alone, though— Sátan has a 10-person team bringing the event together, with Gísli overseeing bookings, major decisions and media representation.

Birkir was in the countryside picking rocks to furnish his aquarium when he received a call from Gísli. Much like a fish, he was speechless. "I wasn't expecting to get back into

the scene after 20 years, but when Gísli called about I Adapt playing Sátan, it felt right," he says. "The clean air and my wife wanting to see me play for the first time were big factors in my decision to join."

I Adapt hasn't performed since their reunion concert at Eistnaflug in 2012. The next reunion taking place at Sátan feels fitting.

DAMNED ACCIDENTS

"It all started by accident," Gísli explains. "My daughter, Lilja, wanted to go to a festival abroad, but it was sold out. So, she suggested we have our own festival in Stykkishólmur. We approached the municipality expecting a no, but they surprisingly agreed."

Gísli, along with his daughter, his wife Nancy and former Sororicide member Guðjón Óttarsson, represent the core team of Sátan. The support from the local community has been unexpectedly good, with the festival amassing a slew of sponsors.

The festival's remoteness lends the event a special atmosphere, where attendees can immerse themselves fully in the music, forgetting the struggles of daily life. Stykkishólmur offers a similarly remote vibe to Eistnaflug's former homebase in Neskaupstaður, while being considerably closer to Reykjavík. "Many people miss Eistnaflug, so when I first heard about Sátan, I thought it was timely," Birkir adds. "Being away from the city really brings out the best in people!"

EMBRACING THE LEARNING CURVE

Figuring out logistics has been a learning curve for the Sátan team. They're not aiming for perfection this first time around, but everyone is committed to learning and improving for the benefit of future editions.

"We've had to deal with the municipality, licences, police and fire department. It's important for the authorities to understand we're not

complete nut cases," Gísli laughs. "The plan is to hold the festival every year as long as we have support, or until we die," he adds, dead serious.

It's fitting that the first band to be booked for Sátan were longstanding Icelandic band HAM — "a cornerstone of Icelandic rock and metal," according to Gísli. The old guard will be joined by newer Icelandic bands, with international acts like Arcturus, Wolfbrigade and Vltimas rounding things out.

In addition to metal, Sátan will feature hardcore elements, but it won't expand beyond that. No more than one-third of the lineup will be international and no band will play two years in a row. The calibre of the Icelandic metal scene has grown so much that Gísli considers this to be an achievable goal.

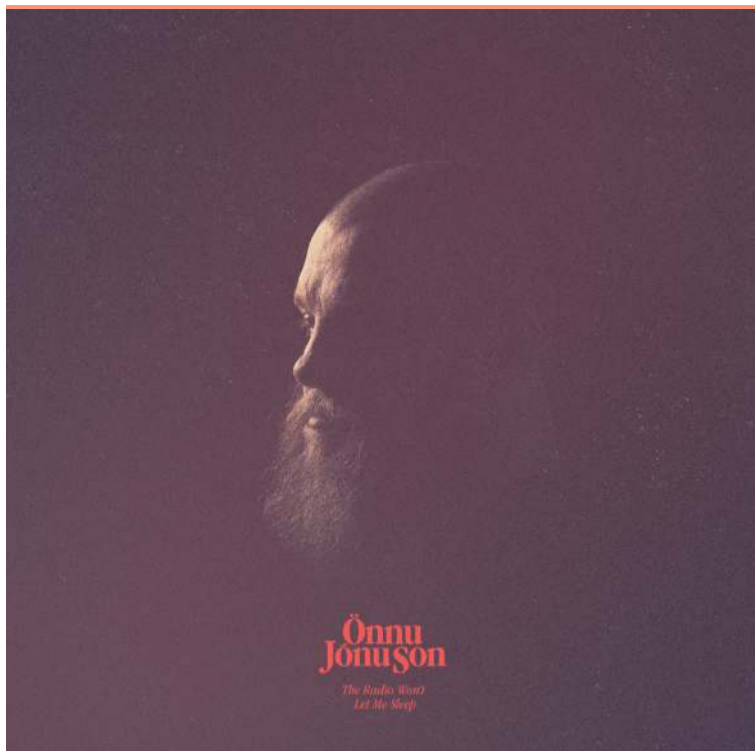
OBVIOUSLY OBNOXIOUS

"I was initially sceptical about I Adapt reuniting, but the support and enthusiasm have been overwhelming," Birkir says. I Adapt has often been in the frontlines of saying whatever the fuck they want, to put it nicely. "We were so obnoxious back then," Birkir admits. "We had something to say, and if people didn't like it, we would say it 10 times louder."

"Now, we respect the music more and think more about the sound, tonality and riffs," he adds. This growth is reflected in their new lyric video for the song "Afraid To Leave," about equality and human rights. "We stand with Palestine, just like we did 20 years ago. The crimes against humanity are so apparent now that no one is trying to hide them anymore. We stand against all genocide and ethnic cleansing, wherever in the world it's happening."

At the moment, I Adapt does not have any other plans to perform live, making Sátan a not-to-be-missed event for fans of the band and those curious to see what all the fuss is about. ■

Worship Sátan this summer. Check out the full festival lineup and ticket availability at satan-festival.com



Track By Track Dreaming, Yearning, Loving

Önnu Jónu Son hits top marks with his debut *The Radio Won't Let Me Sleep*

WORDS Haraldur Þorleifsson
IMAGE Supplied by artist

Haraldur Þorleifsson is a man of many talents. A philanthropist, businessman and musician, Haraldur released his debut album *The Radio Won't Let Me Sleep* under the moniker Önnu Jónu Son, in memory of his mother. The haunting release sees the artist explore feelings of happiness, grief, freedom and loss. Featuring perhaps one of the most touching renditions of Daniel Johnston's "True Love Will Find You In The End" – save for the original, of course – Önnu Jónu Son's debut will make you reaching for the tissues before you can say, "Hey Siri, play Önnu Jónu Son."

ALL I WANT IS YOU

I wrote this song after I had taken sleeping pills one night. The next day I woke up and it was all there. I'm not sure what it's about, but it was written shortly after a breakup. At the time I wasn't sure if I thought the breakup was the best or worst thing that could happen. I figured out later it was the best thing.

TAKE ME THERE

This is nostalgia for something that never happened. A dream I want to experience. A place that I want to go with my wife and our kids. Maybe we'll find it someday.

ALMOST OVER YOU

I wrote this one in about five minutes. I just sat down and played it, the words too. I used to think it was about a breakup but I recently realised that I wrote it a few weeks after I started using anxiety medication. I was feeling great, free for the first time since I was a kid.

LAY DOWN LOVE

A little lullaby. I sing it for my younger son when I put him to sleep at night. Sometimes he sings along.

THANK YOU

A song about love and loss. When I wrote it I wasn't grateful for the experience I had gone through. I was alone and angry. Now, years later, I am grateful for the hurt I experienced. It taught me a lot about myself and helped me grow.

MARGRÉT

For my wife and our life together. A long night in Paris I dream we will have.

BIG BOY BOOTS

I lost my mom when I was young. Now I have children of my own. I wrote this song as a bond between the generations. A conversation between parent and child when one of them leaves this existence.

OLD AND GRAY

A love song about growing old together with my wife. It came together very quickly in the studio.

TAKE THESE BONES

This song is about living in a body that keeps finding new ways to fail me. I have a disease that's taken away most of the strength in my muscles. Sometimes I feel there is nothing left, I just need to return my bones.

TRUE LOVE WILL FIND YOU IN THE END

Written by Daniel Johnston about obsessive love. I've played it for a long time. Recently I've started thinking about it as being about self-love. Hopefully, we'll find it in the end.

LEGS ENTWINED

A song about love and the things we do that hurt the ones we love. The lyrics are explicit because I've always felt ashamed of my body, and the vulnerability I feel during sex. ■



Bleep Bloop

Why Not?

Afhverju Ekki brings the live coding scene to Reykjavík

WORDS Ish Sveinsson Houle
IMAGE Supplied

Naming your event "2024's Biggest Thursday" is gutsy. But in this case, it's not without reason. On Thursday, June 6, Afhverju Ekki ("Why Not") is hosting a night of live coding at RADAR.

Mesmerising and innovative, live coding refers to a genre of performance – specifically a type of DJ set in this case – in which an artist writes, edits and executes code on-stage. Usually, the code is projected onto them or a backdrop while it warps the performance's sound or visuals.

I asked c_rob0_, one artist on the bill, about their gravitation towards this undeniably unique method of performance. "I was enamoured with the idea of an all-in-one performance system, with integrated visuals and the like, that I could control from my laptop," they tell me. Another artist, DJ_Dave, noted being "drawn to the transparency between performer and audience."

This is the first event hosted by Afhverju Ekki – The Absolutely Everything Studio, and its first move towards the surface with an "anticipated birth later this year," according to founder, designer and technologist musician Jack Armitage. He describes Afhverju Ekki as an "unbounded laboratory ecosystem and a garden for optimistic ambitions."

U.K. born and Iceland-based Jack, known under musical moniker Lil

Data, is a firmly established musician in his own right thanks to previous releases with the legendary label PC Music and his ongoing work at the University of Iceland's Intelligent Instruments Lab.

SHARING THE STAGE

Four elite live coders are on their way from the U.S. to perform at this event. DJ_Dave, who helped plan the event with Lil Data, joins c_rob0_, Dadabots and Cabibbo. Icelanders on the bill include Dagur Kristinn of post-dreifing and projects DBG, DJ Ræna Banka, Ávaxtakarfa Þjóppun, singer/producer Ólöf Rún, and genre-bending musician Smjörvi – whose album *svo heilagt!!* was nominated in the "You Should Have Heard This" category at the Reykjavík Grapevine's 2024 Music Award.

China. While the ICLC regularly hosts a series of international satellite events, this is the first of its kind in Iceland.

Outside the main event, there will be two free, beginner-friendly workshops on live coding at the Reykjavík City Library Music Makerspace, hosted by Lil Data and Ólöf Rún – one is open to all and one is exclusively for women and non-binary people. With the goal being to teach the skills needed to fully launch a live coding scene here in Reykjavík, workshop participants will have the chance to test their new skills in the RADAR basement while the main event is happening.

"If you ever thought computer music was too boring, too straight, not danceable and an overall tame, elitist pursuit – we agree and are

I can say that you will either witness this show or never stop hearing about it from your friends who did.

So, if you *haven't* heard it, now's your chance. "Seeing what Smjörvi has been cooking up, I can say that you will either witness this show or never stop hearing about it from your friends who did," says Jack.

YOU GIVE IT A GO!

2024's Biggest Thursday is hosted in tandem with the International Conference on Live Coding (ICLC), happening this year in Shanghai,

fixing it," Jack concludes. "Come on through for a taste of what computers can actually do in the hands of the right people. Why not?" ■

2024's Biggest Thursday is happening June 6 at RADAR. Check ticket availability and secure your passes at midix.is. Register for the June 5 and June 6 live coding workshops at borgarbokasafn.is/en.



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Hikes

The Miniature Mountain

Hiking up Úlfarsfell at the Reykjavik city limits

WORDS John Rogers
IMAGES John Rogers

TO THE TRAILHEAD

The number 15 bus roars away and I'm suddenly alone.

To the north, Mount Esja rears up over the choppy ocean waves, still streaked with snow just a month from midsummer. Closer, it's a less romantic view: a car park, a strip mall, trickling traffic, and some rough grassland where young lupins are beginning their annual verge domination. And then, peeking above the treeline to the northeast, I spot my destination for the day: Úlfarsfell.

Úlfarsfell is a mountain, technically. Standing at 291 metres tall, it's visible from downtown Reykjavik, and is reachable by bus in just half an hour. It looms large over the Mosfellsbær suburbs – a picturesque, slightly forested, cliff-lined bulge of land that marks the start of countless journeys on the northbound Ring Road.

Starting the hike to its summit begins with a 2km preamble to the trailhead, tracing the Route One roadside. Before long, the trail plunges into a dense forest and the sound of cars is dampened by tall pines. A small clearing marks the start of the hike, with a map that shows a couple routes that thread through the woods to the mountain.

"Preamble over," I mutter, to myself, the map and no one in particular. "Time for the... amble."

The forest path is well kept and I crunch up the steepening gravel trail, offering a cheery "daginn!" to a couple of locals who are walking their dogs before the rain that's forecast later. The path splits into two, with a sign indicating steep ("brött", in Icelandic) and easy ("létt") routes up the mountain. I'm in no rush and choose the gentler route, following the cheerful green hiking posts that trail off into the woods.



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FAR FROM SOUND

A stream burbles happily at the trailside and the forest deepens. Before long, there's nobody to be seen. The tree canopy muffles the city's sound, casting pools of deep shade where thick, knotty roots grasp at the earth. I pause for a moment in the daytime darkness, senses bristling, and breathe in the forest deeply.

After zigzagging over a wooden walkway, the trail emerges onto the naked mountainside. Úlfarsfell looms to the left, more imposing than before. The crunchy gravel gives way to a well worn dirt trail and my boots thump satisfyingly onto the dusty ground as I start my ascent.

The trail gets gradually steeper, winding between rocky outcrops with views back to the city. Hallgrímskirkja looks tiny in the distance and the city's smallness comes into focus, with views stretching all the way from Harpa, to the edges of Arbær and the distant Straumsvík smelter on the Reykjanes road. Out

of the trees, the city sound is still a constant quiet roar – trucks, planes and the constant clangs and clanks of construction. But it feels at arm's-length up here. It's satisfying to have one foot in the wilderness.

intertwining at intervals with the marked route, and I wonder how long ago the very first trail was laid.

After 20 minutes, the steep part is over. The path levels out and the

Rolling foothills give way to the sheer, snow-streaked mountainside, violently scored by glaciers in millennia long past.

THE OLD WAYS

A stiff breeze is picking up. High clouds skim rapidly across the sky and a brooding grey weatherfront is slowly encroaching. That forecasted rain is getting closer, so I pick up the pace.

There seem to have been various paths up the mountain at different points, and I switch between them from time to time. The old trails are still visible from decades of footfall,

ground becomes rough, with banks of hard dirt slowly rending open under their own weight. Panting from exertion, I arrive on the broad, flat mountaintop, which is covered in a clattering sheet of shattered rock and scree. It's a short walk to the top, where there's a humble bench, an information plaque, and a tall pile of rocks left by other hikers.

REGARDING ESJA

The peak of Úlfarsfell is a bleakly beautiful spot at this time of the

year. The rolling landscape to the south is still a rusty, autumnal brown, the vegetation not yet recovered from the thick winter snow. The twin lakes of Hafrvatn and Langavatn shine brightly, while gleaming silver rivers meander across the plains towards the snowy mountains in the distance.

There's a sole structure nearby – a lonely, weatherworn TV mast crowning a bare, reddish mound. A couple of other hikers are wandering around over there – two slow-moving dots, their bright outerwear standing out against the umber earth.

To the north lies Esja, which looks majestic from this vantage point. The 914 metre mountain is an everyday sight in Reykjavík, so much so that it can fade into the background. But from here, all of Esja's details are visible. The rolling, lumpy foothills give way to a blackish treeline, then the sheer, snow-streaked mountainside, scored violently by the movement of huge glaciers in millennia long past. Its scale is sud-

denly overwhelming, snapping me keenly into the moment.

AND BACK AGAIN

Before long, the promised rain starts to spatter the ground and the cold droplets bring me out of a trance that I didn't realise had befallen me. Feeling fully refreshed by my time on the summit, the descent is easy. There's a new spring in my step as I hop down slopes that had been laborious moments earlier. It isn't far to the forest, the road and the return bus home.

There are countless amazing places in Iceland, with remarkable natural sites tracing the country's coastline, and nestled deep in the fjords, the plains and the Highlands. But Reykvikingur and time-poor city-breakers alike can get a tantalising taste of Iceland's bleak beauty at the miniature mountain of Úlfarsfell. ■

Úlfarsfell is on the number 15 bus route. Go to straeto.is or download the Klappið app to plan your trip.

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Road Trip

Charged For Adventure

“Hey, Tesla, take me to the Westfjords.”

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGES Atli Freyr Steinsson

Kilometres driven: 898 km
Charges: 5
Car provided by: Tesla

There are two types of people – those who love camping and those who don’t. Thinking about these polar opposites, I always recall a *New Girl* episode where Schmidt exclaims, “Camping?” to which Winston adds, “Like we’re animals?!” Somehow, I ended up in the first group. I absolutely love camping.

There’s something weirdly calming about waking up on a half-deflated mat with drops of fresh dew falling on my forehead. Or eating food that I’d normally consider an effortless

“meh” lunch, like pasta pesto always tastes better when cooked on a Primus in a slightly scorched pot. Or even forgetting about my skincare routine to the point where a splash of water on the face will do just fine. I love waking up to complete silence, not the din of construction that often serves as the soundtrack to my mornings in 101.

For someone who spends most of their time in the city, mostly stuck in a cramped space staring at a laptop, camping is one of my few chances to reconnect with nature. Call it meditation, if you will.

So, when Tesla offered up a car for my visit to the Skjaldborg Documentary Film Festival, I decided to take it to the extreme and test the Tesla’s much-talked-about camping mode. “Do you *want* to sleep in the car?” my publisher asks, clearly puzzled.

With my travel partner on board and our car fully charged, we leave Reykjavik after work on Friday.

We start with over 450 km of range displayed on the touchscreen and a 386 km drive to Patreksfjörður ahead, but things are not as smooth as they sound. The EV range depends greatly on the terrain, driving speed and other factors, so we know we’ll need to charge along

the way. But first things first: food. If you’re hungry and plant-based in Borgarnes, here’s a pro tip – head to the Settlement Centre restaurant and try their chilli sin carne, a hearty meal for a fraction of the price of a dinner out in Reykjavik.

60 KW, STAÐARSKÁLI

Travelling with an EV means having to think ahead. Do I really want to see another seal beach? Or can I wait for a toilet break until the gas station with an available charger?

Calculating in the head that we would need approximately 20% charge to use the camping mode, we make our way to the only Tesla Supercharger in the northwest region, located in Staðarskáli. Somehow, I had always assumed that a Supercharger meant the car would receive a mega boost of charge – plug it in and you’re ready to go. Spoiler alert: it doesn’t work quite like that. The Supercharger, however, reduces charging time from four or five hours to just over 80 minutes.

While we wait for the car to fill its “tank,” we browse through the features the brand new Model Y. With a gas station soft serve in one hand, we find an option to turn the touchscreen into a fireplace, and no, it’s not as lame as those Windows



screensavers. The feature activates hot air circulating around the in-car “fireplace” with flames flickering on screen and the sound of a crackling blaze on the soundsystem. There’s also Netflix, so you can binge on your favourite TV series while you wait for a full charge, plus a bunch of video games you can play using the car’s steering wheel.

Once charged, we continue our way westbound. With the thrill of navigating countless potholes along Route 60, I think, “Does this country really need a ferris wheel?”

15,9 KW, PATREKSFJÖRÐUR

Wild camping is strictly forbidden in Iceland and while in theory, getting away with sleeping in the car in such a distant location sounds like a feasible feat, we opt for a legit option – the Patreksfjörður campsite, offering modest facilities limited to a kitchen and toilets. But first, we make a brief charging pit stop, ensuring we have sufficient battery power to comfortably spend the night inside the car.

When we arrive at the campsite around 1:00 a.m., exhausted from the trip, it’s one of those moments where you just want to sink into bed and fall asleep. But I won’t be seeing my bed for the next three nights and also, let’s not forget it’s May and

we’re in Iceland – the midnight sun is shining. Confused whether it’s still sunset or already sunrise, I go to the Tesla’s settings and turn on the “camping” mode, a feature that keeps the car’s interior temperature at whatever level you set it, while regulating airflow and allowing you to use lights, charge devices and play music.

Once the setting is selected, a little tent appears on the screen. It takes us some time to figure out how to install the sun shades, but once we do – the car is converted into a cosy lodging for the night. With a giant inflated mattress, pillows and duvets from home, it’s nothing short of a glamping experience.

41,75 KW, PATREKSFJÖRÐUR

In the breaks between navigating the logistics of charging the vehicle and downloading not one, but four different apps throughout the trip, I remind myself that I’m here for the festival fun.

Skjaldborg is a breath of fresh air, metaphorically and literally – with the seasalt breeze caressing my face as I enjoy a pink sunset during one of many festival parties (all together with using this time to charge the car). It’s a gathering one could

hardly expect in a place as remote as Patreksfjörður. A mismatched crowd of seasoned filmmakers – including close collaborators with no one other than Werner Herzog (sparking rumours of his potential visit) – plus amateurs just dipping their toes in the industry, close friends and complete strangers, young and old but all thirsty for a good documentary.

Whether laughing their asses off as they watch a film about one of Iceland’s few country singers or crying as the credits of a documentary about a deadly avalanche in Suðavík roll by, the audience is very involved. The films are discussed at length at afterparties, between screenings, and once the lights dim you can hear whispers alike, “Are you seeing the next one?”

We enjoy all the benefits of being festival pass holders – including free entry to the local swimming pool. With no showers available at the campsite, our Tesla rolls by the Patreksfjörður pool every day. One day, we even manage to use the parking charger, while soaking in the 40-degree hot pool and overlooking the stunning fjord. It feels like the festival is everywhere – even the few pool visitors on a Sunday morning are fitting in a dip before the next screening.

Skjaldborg’s side events are another story. Serious, name at least one other film festival in the world that offers a home-cooked meal, a limbo competition and a parade that the whole town participates in.

39 KW, PATREKSFJÖRÐUR

Opting out of one of Skjaldborg’s two fish parties, we take off on a more scenic adventure to a beach. Our destination, Rauðasandur, which literally means “red sand,” was recently recognised as one of the best beaches in the world by Lonely Planet. While the views take your breath away, getting to the beach is not for the faint-hearted. I catch my breath as our Tesla navigates the steep, winding road leading to the beach. Mother sheep and their newborn lambs occasionally jump onto the side of the road, making me marvel at how they manage to keep their balance.

Stretching for over 20 kilometres, the coastal path lies between Rauðasandur and the birdwatching paradise of Látrabjarg. Despite its name, the beach doesn’t actually have any sand; its red hue comes from scallop shells.

“Waffles,” reads a sign on Franska kaffihúsið as we drive by. “Yes!” exclaims the moviegoer who sac-

rificed her lunch break for another film. But the café is closed, probably not opening until later in the season.

Despite the wind rocking the car slightly, Rauðasandur is peaceful. No other humans are to be seen, probably for a few kilometres, it’s just birds – forever hungry noisy seagulls and tiny oystercatchers that seem like they hatched just earlier this week.

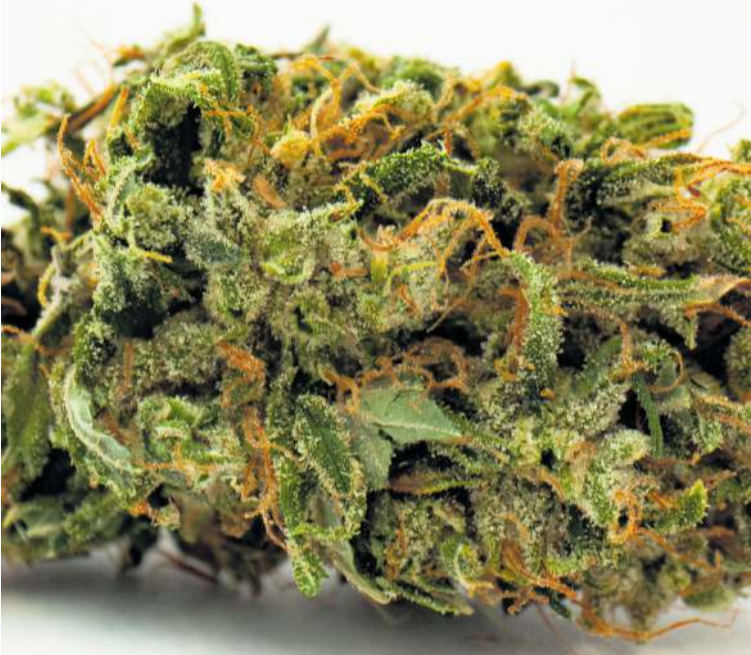
I put on extra layers, arm myself with a film camera and a pair of binoculars, and step into nature. A beach walk in Rauðasandur is quite different from other beaches highlighted in the Lonely Planet guide. After just a few minutes, the wind makes being outside unbearable and despite summer officially arriving in Iceland a month ago, I regret forgetting my mittens in the car.

I look at what looks like an endless horizon, the birds gracefully defying the elements and dream of returning to this place when the air doesn’t feel like a freezer. ■

A massive thanks to Tesla for furnishing some sweet wheels.

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Urban Travel

A Place To Play And L

Chronicles of Earth at Kópavogur's Natural History Museum is hands-on and

WORDS Ish Sveinsson Houle
IMAGES Atli Freyr Steinsson

um has boasted a diverse collection, with intentional space for school children to interact with and learn from real artefacts. Re-opening just a few weeks ago after a five-month closure for renovations, this intention has only been improved upon.

sites, yet they are both realities of Iceland, and therefore connected. Upon entering, you're faced with a case of artefacts divided into seasons, highlighting Icelandic nature through everything from flora and fauna to biological life.

CHRONICLES OF EARTH

Titled "Chronicles of Earth," the new exhibition space was reopened to much fanfare on May 11. As per a re-opening announcement from the museum, the new exhibition offers "insight into the history of our planet, the evolution of life and the relationship between animals and plants with their environment and each other. Like nature, the exhibition will evolve and change over time – even with unexpected mutations."

Enjoyably, there's not too much of your standard long, convoluted explanatory paragraphs typical of stuffy museums. Here, in Icelandic and English, they give you simple and engaging descriptions of what you're seeing and why it matters, often with a fun title to grab attention.

Over the past few years, articles in the Grapevine and elsewhere have drawn attention to how criminally-overlooked Hamraborg is. This area of Kópavogur, which boasts the Gerðarsafn art museum, Salurinn concert hall, the library, music school and regional archives, is holistically called "Mekó" (Menning í Kópavogi, or "Culture in Kópavogur," in English). Strætó routes 1, 2, and 4 will transport you from your downtown doldrums to Hamraborg's happening hub in just about 15 minutes!

A major facet of the exhibition is recognising the interconnectedness of our world and explaining it in terms a child can understand. I enjoyed seeing these curated connections during my recent visits.

On one wall is a mural by artist Elín Edda Þorsteinsdóttir titled "What happened before Earth was formed?" It is a colourful and accessible written history of the world, ranging from 4.5-4 billion years ago all the way up to "The future: then what?" The mural and text featured some of my favourite texts in the museum, such as "Perhaps ant soup will one day be more popular?" and "Giant insects! 300 million years ago, life was a bit scary." It is definitely way more fun than some of the jargon-y essays I've read on the walls of other museums.

I recently bussed out to experience another of Mekó's cultural cornerstones: The Natural History Museum of Kópavogur. Since 1983, the muse-

There's a triptych about Iceland at one point: "Volcanic Island," "Red Hot Island" and "Frozen Island." Volcanic and frozen are polar oppo-



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SAUR EGGSHELL, OH MY!

A backbone of the museum is its collection of animals. The collection's tenants are a trifecta of acquisitions: Jón Bogason's inverte-

AFTER-SCHOOL SPECIAL

When I visited – on a weekday at 5 p.m. and at 3 p.m. one weekend – the museum was packed. Perhaps a key contributor to the museum's popularity is its location in the basement of the Kópavogur Library,

Sveinsdóttir told me the main goal of the renovation was “to create a space that evokes curiosity and an open and inquisitive approach to our surroundings.”

The connection to the library also leads to a key point – admission to the museum is free. As the tourism industry grows and grows, so do the ticket prices for museums and attractions – especially those focusing on Icelandic nature. A free museum is already a rarity in the country, but a free natural history museum is practically unheard of.

Yes, the museum is much smaller than some of its expensive natural science counterparts, but the biodiversity they have managed to fit into the space is remarkable. “The exhibition is a work in progress,” Brynja tells me. “It will develop and change, like nature!”

Go see – and play – for yourself. ■

Kópavogur's Natural History Museum is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This is definitely not a quiet museum experience, but I found the bustle and joy to be endearing and infectious.

brates, Hans Jörgensen's birds, and Halldór Pétursson's rocks and minerals. Approximated to be around 6,000 pieces in total, there is an abundance of fossils, rocks, taxidermy and more. I wandered around reading labels for things I had never heard of, looking at sea creatures, reptiles and worms preserved in jars, marvelling at bubblegum coral and even dinosaur eggshell. A centerpiece of the exhibition is an orca whale skeleton, which is actually pieced together from four specimens.

adjacent to the children's library. This is definitely not a quiet museum experience, but I found the bustle and joy to be endearing and infectious. At one point, I sat down next to some kids to try out the magnifying glasses and microscopes on the table. I examined the intricacies of rocks and shells that were scattered for us to inspect, tapping into a childhood-science-museum level of joy.

The museum is delightfully hands-on. Confirming this, curator Brynja



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Islanders

A Chair Is All You Need

Carpenter artist Dorka Csora is obsessed with wood

WORDS Iryna Zubenko
IMAGE Atli Freyr Steinsson

"I mopped the floor for you," smiles Dorka Csora as she welcomes me into her woodworking studio at the hafnar.haus creative space. "Usually, it's a few centimetres of sawdust," she remarks, proud of the tidiness of the space. Surrounded by an assortment of carpentry tools — hammers, jigsaws and more — she often spends hours on end in the studio. In this space, an eclectic mix of chairs, including those adorned with flames, a set referred to as "mother and father" and pieces undergoing refurbishment for friends, all coexist, breathing life into Dorka's obsession for her craft.

I was born in Hungary, in a small town nestled in a valley between two mountains, which I really loved. But obviously, I grew out of it. Since my childhood I spent a lot of time in Stockholm where my mom's sister and her family lived. At the age of 23 or 24, I moved to Berlin by myself, because I needed this adventure on my own.

You can put it in your living room as a sculpture or functioning object.

I went to Berlin and I was riding my friend's bicycle and thinking, "This is it." I had this feeling of freedom. I was born on November 11, 1989, just when the Berlin Wall fell. Naturally, it had some effect on me. I was curious about Berlin. It's a fun city. But I always felt like I belonged in the Nordics. I had been to Iceland once before I moved here and I really enjoyed it. I've been based in Reykjavik since 2021 and I'm planning to stay. But why Iceland? When I was a teenager, I saw a movie called *Nói albinói*. I like its melancholy vibes

and how it's fun-crazy. I love this movie!

ARCHITECTURAL MIND, ARTISAN'S HANDS

I studied landscape architecture and architecture. But I knew I wasn't an office person, even though I always had a structured mind. I wanted to play around and work with my hands. Obviously, in Berlin, everybody does this and this and this. I used to do

photography, which is fun, but the competition is huge and it's just very nerve-racking. I felt that what I'm going to end up with should be a job I really enjoy daily.

I started just like this [Dorka snaps her fingers]. The story came to me after I started.

My mother has a really good eye for furniture. I grew up with original Thonet chairs, even though we were definitely not a wealthy family. But in Eastern Europe, you could make

amazing deals if you were smart enough. We always had a nice antique collection of chairs. Every time I moved, it was essential for me to have a table and chairs. I decided that I was going to just make my own here. I was between points of deciding what I should do with my life and how I could get myself busy without a big purpose. I didn't know that I would be the full-time woodworker I am now. I just wanted to do something and let things happen.

My first studio was in Grandi, at a place called Verkvinnslan. I was very lucky because it was mostly guys there, but there was Ragna Ragnarsdóttir, a great designer with whom I shared a woodworking studio. She was a big inspiration for me. She was just tough. We didn't have heating or anything. I was sanding in my ski outfit, but we pushed through. Then I got into hafnar.haus and I feel very good here. Plus, I have heating.

TRASH TO TREASURE

The curator of one of my shows once introduced me as a carpenter artist and I just loved it. I restore and build furniture, but most of my work is for shows. It's more like sculpture. But I want all my pieces to be able to be sat on — I want them to remain

functioning and wood-based. Even if a chair looks like, "Oh my god, can I sit down on it?," it's always sturdy. You can put it in your living room as a sculpture or functioning object.

I'm collecting chairs on the street, rebranding them and giving them a new life. My main project is using everything from recycled wood. That's why I often go to the metal junkyard or Sorpa. I live in Vesturbær and there's always some construction there, especially in spring and autumn — everybody's just refurbishing their whole house. I go up to them or get their phone number and take the leftover wood. Sometimes, if I'm making shelves that have to be perfect, I go to BYKO and buy plywood. But the price and the quality are just not good. I love living here, but I live in the country without wood. The prices are pretty extreme at the moment, but I'm not complaining. I have my resources and I'm very lucky because I have the time and I'm obsessed with this. Otherwise, it would obviously be easier if I lived in Spain or something.

My projects vary. I made a huge sewing table for DesignMarch for the Scottish designer duo Endurtakk. Now I'm going to build a bed for a



client. If it could be chairs forever, I would also be happy, but I really like when I get a message like “Do you also build beds?” and I’m like “I can. It’s the same structure, basically. Let’s try it.” If it’s a client I don’t really know, I usually have an interview with them, we hang out a bit. I really like when I can go and see their place. A lot of times people can’t really explain what they actually need, but it has to function for them. If you spend time with them in their home, even just for a coffee, then you can understand, see what they need.

I love birch. Very hard wood is also very pretty. I don’t like pine. Nobody likes pine. But it’s also very rude for me to pick a favourite child, because I love them all, they are listening to us now. Pine is just soft, birch and oak would be in my top two.

My dream project at the moment would be furnishing a restaurant or a cinema hall like *Bío Paradís* or refurbishing the chairs at *Skúli*.

MUSIC AND NATURE AS MUSE

I’m always listening to music while working. I type in ambient or new age on NTS radio and it just goes on and on. It really inspires me. I’m not

going to work without music. I can tell what I was listening to with some chairs. I was listening to a lot of jazz while making this one. I’m not gendering them, it’s not a him or her or something, but it’s more like a genre of music, for example, that one is definitely a punk chair. I have some experimental chairs at home. There is one chair in my bedroom that’s a whole Sade album.

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Icelandic nature is another inspiration – I started dyeing wood a bit darker. I’m using stones in all of my exhibitions. Joinery with metal clips has a really big meaning for me – that’s what Icelandic nature is for me. The metallic elements represent mostly the sky or the water.

It just feels good. It’s natural. Since I found this as not my hobby but my profession, it gave me a purpose. I’m very invested in it. When you realise that, for example, if you love writing or if you’re interested in people, it’s such an easy job. Some-

times, I’m angry at a chair. My friend broke that guy [a chair in the studio], and I removed the glue, which was there from the 60s, and I regretted it that very moment because we don’t have such good glue anymore. Now, I’m trying to figure out a different way of getting the best glue to fix it. It’s a project I would never say, “Oh, I hate this,” or “I’m gonna give up.” It became my obsession.

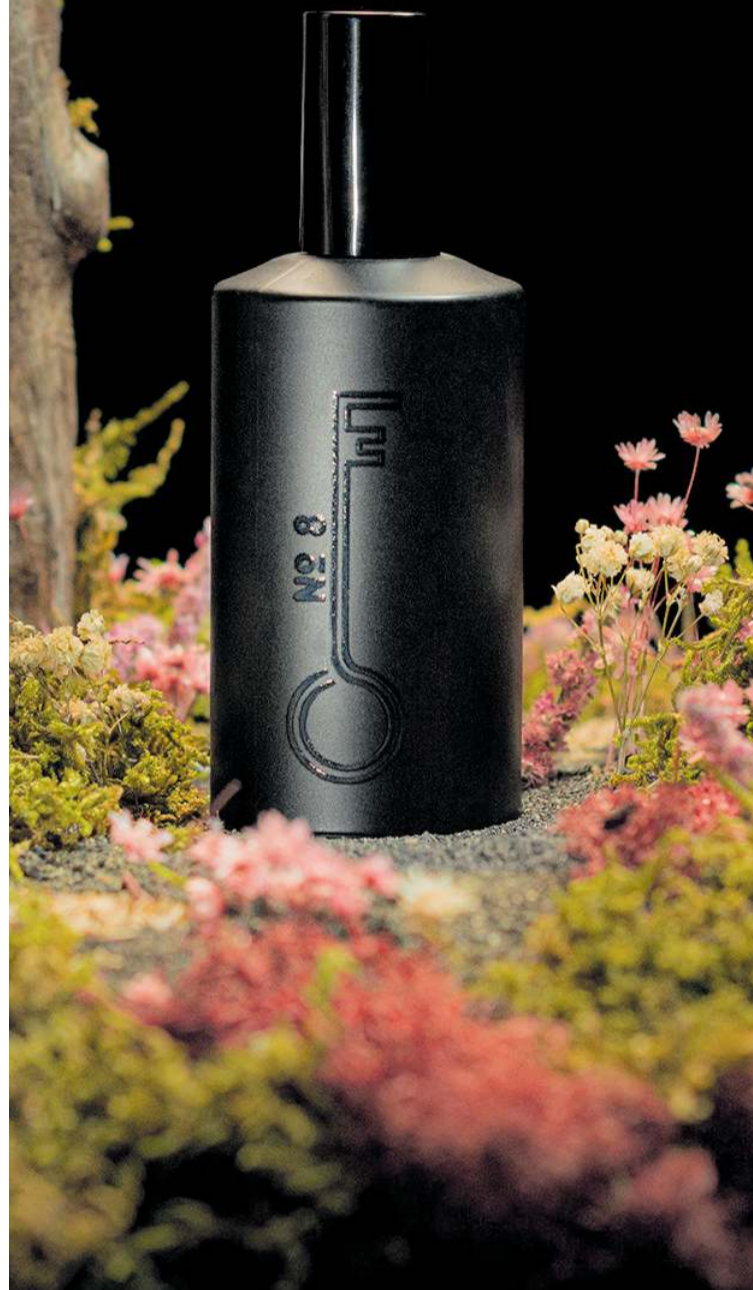
A friend of mine asked me what I was up to these days, and I said, “I’m making chairs.” He replied, “I love sitting.” Exactly. When you sit, you should relax and be present. Everything else just happens. Everybody loves sitting. Everybody needs a chair. But I did my research, and there are more than 40 billion chairs on planet Earth. Every time I make a new chair, I’m just like, “Ugh.” I’m trying to recycle. ■

Explore Dorka’s wood creations on Instagram: @dorkacsora.

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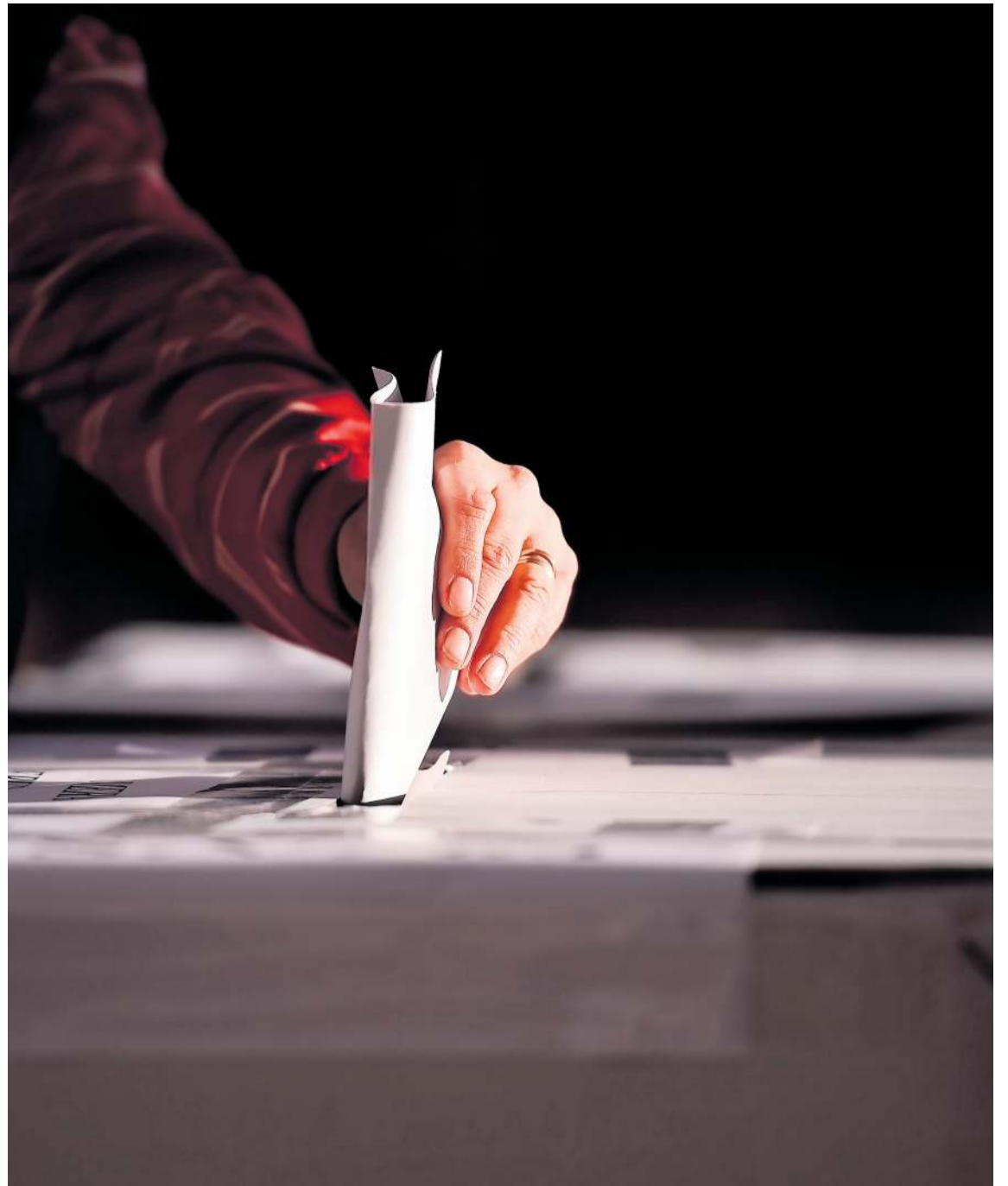
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Musings There's An Election?!?!

Charlie helps you decide who to vote for

WORDS Charlie Winters
IMAGE Adobe Stock

They're choosing a president which is the person who gets to sit on the Law Rock at the All Thing...I think... not a 100%... I'm sure the rock does something, or at least it's a pretty rock. But the Icelanders are voting on whether or not the candidate is going to sit on the rock or get crushed under it. They also have a prime minister, which probably has their own different unrelated rock. So who is running for rock sitter? I don't know all of them, but here's the ones I've heard of:

a comedian. I don't speak Icelandic but his jokes look pretty funny. Katrín Jakobsdóttir is the former prime minister who abdicated her throne and left it to Bjarni Ben. Fun Fact: Bjarni has been the winner of the "Human Shrek from Shrek 2 lookalike" contest seven years in a row. There's also a few more that I offhandedly heard about but I don't really have anything remotely funny to say about them.

Theres Arnar Þór Jónsson, he went independent from the Independence Party and now is independently running for president. We got Ásdís Rán Gunnarsdóttir, who is a model and influencer. Don't forget to like and subscribe. Ástþór Magnússon is running and I have no idea what this man's platform is but I love every single insane fucking Facebook advertisement I get from him. Like eats a bunch of missiles, AI singing, and mad eyes. No idea what any of

There's also a huge list of people who didn't make it to the final election but it would be a crime not to mention them. The glacier Snæfellsjökull was genuinely running but dropped out, probably due to climate change. Andri Snær Magnason who I personally despise cause they made me read his books for class, dropped out. And last but not least, ME. Yes its true, me and 11 other people accidentally signed up to run for president, apparently its not that hard (this is not a joke).

You've kept to yourself for a while, haven't really gone out much, not following the news either. You see flyers everywhere but you pay them no mind. People seem to be heated and taking sides in arguments you aren't familiar with. Suddenly, it hits you, your aunt just asked you who you're voting for. Oh my God, there's an election AND IT'S TOMORROW!

Hey everyone, Charlie here, you may not have noticed but the Icelandic election is tomorrow. I was expecting USA election style parades, floats, meetings, or at least demonstrations, but no. It's been real quiet. Who's even running? Well as a foreigner who knows nothing about Icelandic politics and can't vote (on account of the crimes), I believe I am the perfect person to tell you all about the election. Get ready for a foreigner's hot take. But first, what even is it an election for?

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it is but I'm here for the ride. Baldur Þórhallsson is bald but his husband is balder. That's genuinely all I know about him. There are the two Halla's. One is Halla Prime and the other is an escaped clone but we cant tell which is which so we're letting them both run for president. Jón Gnarr is

Now that you've heard all this, you know everything you need to know about the state of modern Icelandic politics, go vote. It is your civic duty. And if you take anything I've said to heart, you will end up under the Law Rock next. ■



Horotropes

Wild West Woes

Slap some bacon on a biscuit and let's go! We're burnin' daylight!

WORDS Charlie Winters & Catherine Magnúsdóttir
IMAGE The Reykjavík Grapevine

WOOOooOOooOOOO.
Waaaa waaa waaaaaa. Welcome to Reykjavik, the most rootin' tootin' town this side'o the Westfjords. So saddle up, we're seein' what lies on the tracks. Spoiler alert, its Pisces.



PISCES
(February 19 – March 20)

Pisces I know that – stop screaming, it's me – you have a tendency to play the victim, but just because you're tied to the rails and the train is rumblin' towards ya, doesn't mean you have to be so dramatic.



GEMINI
(May 21 – June 20)

Gemini, things have been tough since the mine collapse o' '49, but trust me. You keep pannin' and this month, by God, you'll hit gold just as yella as your teeth.



VIRGO
(August 23 – September 22)

Virgo, you ol' saw bones, the whole town's get dysentery this month cuz lil' Charlie pissed in the water supply and you're the only doctor for 18 miles. Good luck. It's messy work, but someones gotta do it.



SCORPIO
(October 23 – November 21)

You ain't the only scorpion out here in the desert. This month, you're gonna find yerself caught in the middle of a Mexican standoff. Best shoot quick and aim to kill. Good luck, Scorpio.



CAPRICORN
(December 22 – January 19)

Even the best planned heists tend to go wrong. This month, Capricorn, when the fuse won't light the TnT set on the bridge, you'll have to rob the train the ol' fashioned way.



ARIES
(March 21 – April 19)

Wind in your hair, the horizon stretchin' out before ya, it sure gets lonely in the wild. Maybe it's time for you to saddle down, Aries. Find yourself your own Brokeback Mountain.



CANCER
(June 21 – July 22)

Cancer, this month you're going to be in your very own mine cart chase. Remember to keep your arms and legs inside the ride at all times. Is...is that a dead end sign?



LIBRA
(September 23 – October 22)

Libra, this month, you'll be forced to put your hands up and your money in the bag, this is a train robbery. Shouldn't have bought that first class ticket, city slicker, now keep your mouth shut and no one gets hurt.



SAGITTARIUS
(November 22 – December 21)

Sagittarius, I'm gonna be real with you: when you agreed to that duel at High Noon, you fucked up big time. What're your measurements again? I'll get yer coffin ready.



AQUARIUS
(January 20 – Feb 18)

Aquarius, whatever you do, don't drink the cactus water. Cactus water, it won't quench you. Don't do it. Don't...don't do it! You're gonna do it.



TAURUS
(April 20 – May 20)

Have you grown weary of the prairie, Taurus? The wide expanse and the tumbleweeds not enough for you? You've got bigger sights in mind. Gallop after them. In this scenario you are a horse.



LEO
(July 23 – August 22)

Bein' mayor in this lil' town o' yers is a real cushy job. But when you're sittin' on yer pile o' money, smokin' your fat cigars, just remember who got you there. These tracks are littered with workers' bodies.

Well, we hope your dance cards are full now and your hearts have found their perfect match. If not, we are hardly to blame, it will be you who choose to wear that appalling garb. Find a new tailor and your reputation might yet still be salvageable. ■



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Potent Quotables

Humans like to think of themselves as unique and often see environmental issues as separate from the human ones.

Get a glimpse into the environmental-forward glacier running for president on page 10

You can't recreate people's nostalgia, so my secret mission became to create a nostalgia for the future.

The biennial Reykjavik Art Festival takes the city by storm on pages 12-14

[FLÓÐ is] about the big wave that when the ocean rises, is going to sweep us away.

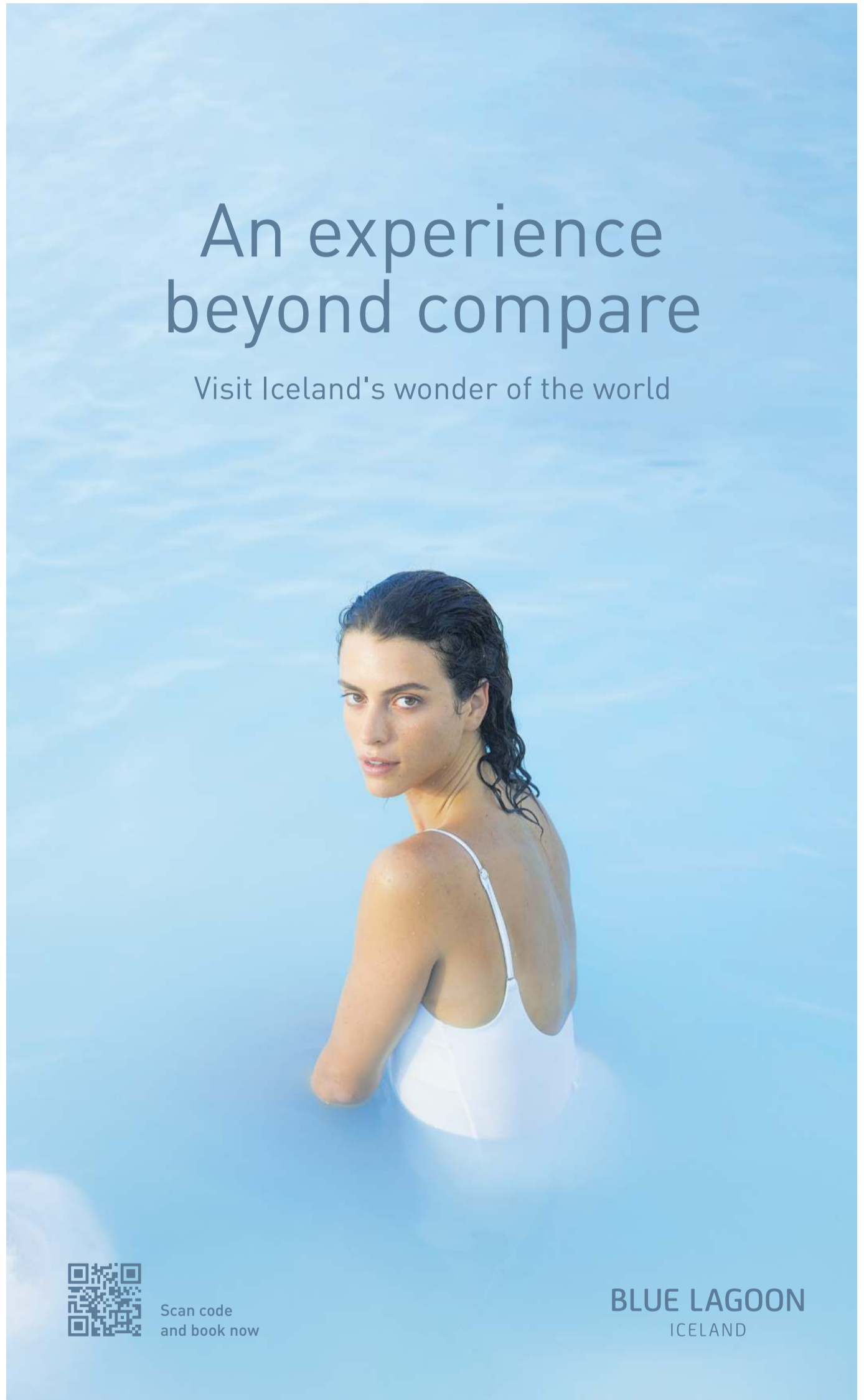
Sigur Rós' Jónsi talks his latest art installation on page 16

We were so obnoxious back then. We had something to say, and if people didn't like it, we would say it 10 times louder.

Iconic hardcore band I Adapt reunites at the metal festival Sátan this summer on pages 28

Rolling foothills give way to the sheer, snow-streaked mountainside.

John Rogers hikes Úlfarsfell so you don't have to on pages 30-31



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