ARTS AND CULTURE IN ICELAND

The Visual Arts

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Contents

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Design: Erlingur Páll Ingvarsson.

Editorial board: Bera Nordal, Guðrún Ágústsdóttir, Tryggvi Þórhallsson.

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Cover illustration: Yearning for Flight, 1935-1954, by Jóhannes Kjarval (1885-1972), oil on canvas, size 145x155 cm. Owner: National Gallery of Iceland.

Foreword

by
Svavar Gestsson
Minister of
Culture and
Education,
Government of
Iceland

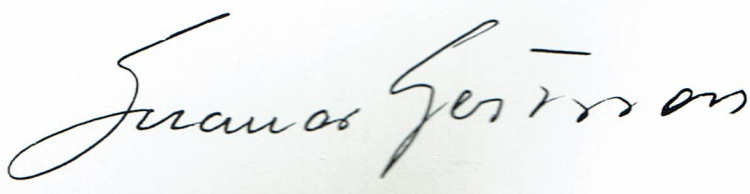
Foreigners reading this book might well notice two things in particular: First, the survey does not begin until around the turn of the century. And second, while the leading artistic movements were reflected in Iceland, there were omissions, for example surrealism was not evident in Icelandic art during the first half of this century.

Both of these points have their explanations, and it is important for foreign readers to be aware of them. The former was the result of a cultural community that, for a major part of the last century, was modest and limited in scope. Books were the cultural backbone of Iceland at a time when the country was a poor, agrarian society. Alongside the struggle for independence during the 19th and 20th centuries – which ended with the founding of the Republic in 1944 – occurred a cultural awakening which included a new era for visual art in Iceland. It was therefore quite by chance how the development of Icelandic visual art coincided with developments in foreign affairs.

Yet it is not exclusively a drawback having such a short history in visual arts; there are also advantages. For instance, its history is explicit and clearly defined. In fact, it is possible to trace the beginning of contemporary Icelandic visual arts back to one picture: Þingvallamynd by Þórarinn B. Þorláksson, painted around 1900. But there were few artists during the first decades of the century, until a virtual explosion of interest occurred which has continued to grow so that today the vast majority of Icelanders have a genuine interest in the visual arts. According to a recent study, attendance at art exhibitions in Iceland is greater than in any other Nordic country. Results in other areas of art were similar. And with the flourishing of visual arts during this century, Iceland has developed a broad-based cultural foundation that we can be proud of – that we are proud of.

Hopefully, this publication will help foreigners to understand Iceland and its culture and art better. This is the second volume in a series published by the Ministry of Culture and Education on Icelandic culture. The next volumes will discuss music and theatre, and then all of the volumes will be put together in one book.

On Bastille Day 1990



A CENTURY OF ICELANDIC ART

I.

In just over a century Iceland has not only succeeded in establishing a tradition of its own in the visual arts, but has also produced artists of an international calibre. The names of Svavar Guðnason (1909-1988), Nína Tryggvadóttir (1913-1968), Erró (b. 1932), Louisa Matthíasdóttir (b. 1917), the brothers Sigurður and Kristján Guðmundsson (b. 1942 & 1941), and Hreinn Friðfinnsson (b. 1943), to mention just a few artists, are now known to a discerning art public on both sides of the Atlantic, and others such as Einar Jónsson (1874-1954), Jóhannes S. Kjarval (1885-1972), Þorvaldur Skúlason (1906-1984) and Sigurjón Ólafsson (1908-1982) are surely deserving of a wider recognition.

II.

From the time of the settlements in the 9th century and roughly until the 17th century, Icelandic artists and craftsmen kept up a creative dialogue with the cultures of other European nations. Then a number of factors conspired to sever this vital connection. Iceland's absentee rulers at the court of Denmark exploited Iceland's natural resources in every possible way and the Reformation destroyed much of the country's heritage in the visual arts and dealt a blow to creative ambitions. As if that wasn't enough, freakish climatic conditions and a succession of epidemics, most notably the dreaded Black Death, reduced the population to its lowest level since the settlement. While the Icelandic language and culture managed to maintain its own internal continuity, the 17th and 18th centuries saw both of these threatened in a way which was not conducive to a national flowering of expression, ambition and artistic creativity.

III.

During the first half of the 19th century, young Icelandic poets and intellectuals studying at the University of Copenhagen, inspired by the changes that were taking place in Europe in the wake of the 1789 and July revolutions, launched a drive for a new national awareness in Iceland. They did so partly by eulogizing the natural resources of Iceland, the majestic glaciers, the powerful volcanoes and the wild highlands, linking the concepts of nature and nationhood in a way impossible to misunderstand. But it wasn't until the middle of the 19th century that Iceland produced an artist of a similar calibre. Sigurður Guðmundsson (1833-1874) distinguished himself at the Royal Academy of Art in Copenhagen, the breeding ground of many an Icelandic artist, and brought back to Iceland the conventions of European academic painting, tinged with a measure of Romanticism. But Guðmundsson, a fervent and uncompromising idealist, soon wore himself out in his many battles with a backward and conservative Icelandic society, dying at the age of 41. Besides his many visionary ideas he left only a handful of drawings and paintings and a backdrop to the play "Outlaws" by poet Matthías Jochumsson, perhaps the first landscape in the short history of Icelandic art.

IV.

Had Guðmundsson been born a generation later, he would no doubt have experienced a more sympathetic atmosphere. For during the second half of the 19th century, enlightened Icelanders began to concern themselves with the visual arts, an essential adornment of middle-class culture. In the last decade of the century, no fewer than three aspiring artists sailed abroad to study art, supported either by public funds or

private donations. These investments were to produce a rich dividend, for the three artists in question went on to lay the foundation for a modern Icelandic art. The oldest one of the trio was Þórarinn B. Þorlákssson (1867-1924), a bookbinder who in his late twenties decided to devote himself to art. He was admitted to the Danish Royal Academy, where he came under the influence of traditional landscape painting, which by then was fighting a losing battle with Impressionism. Unaffected by modern art movements, Þorlákssson proceeded to interpret the Icelandic landscape in the academic manner, though with his own gentle charm.

V.

It was Ásgrímur Jónsson (1876-1958), however, a farmer's son from the South of Iceland, who brought Icelandic art into the 20th century. Despite the fact that he'd probably never seen an oil painting, Jónsson was determined to become an artist from an early age. He was finally able to enter the Danish Royal Academy in 1900, and by 1903 he was producing his own versions of the prevailing academic style. But in 1907, at his third one-man exhibition, it was evident that he had turned his back on the tones and hues of academic painting and was seeking a direct visual equivalent to the Icelandic landscape, whether bathed in midsummer sunshine or battered by winter storms. Jónsson's efforts met with instant approval from the Icelandic public. At last Iceland seemed to have produced an artist whose vision of the landscape equalled that of the beloved Romantic poets. Jónsson was given a grant to pursue further studies in the South of Europe, where he encountered both Impressionism and embryonic Expressionism, both of which he sought to incorporate into his own painting. In time, Jónsson's painting became gradually more atmospheric, and in order to capture the brilliance of the Icelandic light he turned increasingly to watercolours which remain among his best work. Jónsson also interpreted the country's rich heritage of folktales in a series of paintings and drawings. In later years, Jónsson's painting became more tactile and expressionistic, while his subject matter remained the same. After his death in 1958 his Reykjavík home and studio was turned into a small museum dedicated to his art. The museum is now a part of the National Gallery of Iceland.

VI.

The third one of the pioneering trio was sculptor Einar Jónsson (1874-1954). While conditions in Iceland at the turn of the century didn't exactly favour the art of painting, they did even less for sculpture. Virtually everything a sculptor needed had to be imported at great cost, plaster of Paris, marble or bronze. Moreover, a sculptor needed a spacious studio and, not least, patrons. Young Einar Jónsson had little idea what he was letting himself in for when he decided to study sculpture in Denmark. He only knew that he liked drawing and that one of Europe's greatest 19th century sculptors, Bertel Thorvaldsen, had been half-Icelandic. In Copenhagen Einar Jónsson attached himself to the Norwegian sculptor, Stephan Sinding, an artist of a Romantic temperament. Sinding's forays into symbolism no doubt appealed to the mystic in the young Icelander, who after a brief flirtation with realism, evolved a symbolism of his own, a mixture of Norse, Greek and Oriental mythologies, tempered with theosophy. High-minded and serious, Einar Jónsson remained aloof from Icelandic art, as well as 20th century art movements, working away in his temple-like studio home in the centre of Reykjavík, now a museum devoted to his work.

VII.

If Þórarinn B. Þorlákssson and Ásgrímur Jónsson were preoccupied with coming to terms with the Icelandic landscape, and in a sense, with the „spirit of Iceland", Jóhannes S. Kjarval (1885-1972), probably Iceland's most popular painter this century, used landscape as a springboard into visual

adventures and fantasies. Kjarval was born on a farm but was attracted to the sea at an early age. He worked as a fisherman, and his first drawings were of fishing schooners. On moving to Reykjavik at the age of sixteen he took art lessons from Ásgrímur Jónsson. His unruly talent and eccentric temperament attracted the attention of a few Reykjavik art lovers, eager to nurture budding artists. They in turn offered to help him finance his studies abroad. When Kjarval made his move, it was to London, where he hoped to get into the Royal Academy of Art. The Academy wouldn't accept him, so Kjarval spent the winter of 1911-12 in London, working on his own. There he encountered the art of Turner, whose atmospheric studies of ships both fascinated and influenced him. From London Kjarval went to Copenhagen, where he was accepted at the Royal Academy in 1914. The Academy failed to curb Kjarval's highly individualistic temperament, which found its outlet in paintings and drawings of a startling variety, ranging from naturalistic landscape studies, through symbolism, to near abstract compositions. After his return to Iceland in 1919, Kjarval spent the next decade trying to find a way of expressing his feelings about the Icelandic landscape, not only as an objective natural phenomenon but also as a collection of forces which had shaped, and in the process had become an extension of, the Icelandic psyche. In the late 1920s Kjarval began a series of superb ink drawings of country folk that he met on his travels, delighting in their craggy, weather-worn features. Shortly afterwards he began to paint large-scale canvases at Þingvellir, the site of the ancient Icelandic Parliament. Eschewing the long view, Kjarval went in close to examine the face of the land, the textures and hues of moss, lava and earth. Subsequently Kjarval went on to merge landscapes and faces, or figures, producing paintings and drawings that are both impressionistic and visionary, teeming with natural life as well as the supernatural. By 1940 Kjarval had become „national artist", rather like painter Edvard Munch in Norway or composer Sibelius in Finland, much sought after and honoured. On his 70th birthday in 1955, 25.000 people, over an eighth of the population of Iceland, came to see a retrospective of his art in the National Gallery of Iceland. In 1972, the year he died, a museum named after him was opened in Reykjavik. It owns a substantial collection of Kjarval's paintings and drawings, and regularly mounts exhibitions of his work.

VIII.

Jón Stefánsson (1881-1962) also made his mark on the development of Icelandic art, though in a very different way. While Kjarval was a Dionysian artist, impulsive, passionate and often erratic, Stefánsson was Appolonian in temperament. He had originally gone to Copenhagen to study engineering, but quickly switched to painting and ended up in Matisse's school in Paris, where he studied from 1908 to 1911. Matisse's classical modernism, tempered with Cézanne's visual logic, plus his own belief in painting as a rational activity, were the foundations of his art. Back in Iceland in the 1920s, Stefánsson, like Kjarval began to tackle the Icelandic landscape on a grand scale. But while Kjarval sought to immerse himself in the landscape, Stefánsson distanced himself from it, simplified and re-structured what he saw, to build up powerful monumental compositions. Stefánsson analytical approach to painting greatly impressed the younger generation of Icelandic artists, who looked to his example rather than to the expressionist tradition of German art.

IX.

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, other Icelandic artists began to make their presence felt, most notably Guðmundur Thorsteinsson, Muggur, (1891-1924), an engaging Jack-of-all-trades who, while failing to leave a coherent body of work produced a substantial amount of experimental pieces in different media : drawings, collages, cut-outs and small objects. Weak with the tuberculosis which eventually claimed his life, Thorsteinsson

produced his most enduring work, a large triptych showing Christ healing the sick, now an altarpiece in the church at Bessastaðir, the seat of the Icelandic president, but owned by the National Gallery of Iceland. The 1920's also saw the emergence of Iceland's first women artists in the modern period, Kristín Jónsdóttir (1888-1959), an accomplished painter of still-lives and melancholic landscapes and Júlíana Sveinsdóttir (1889-1966), a painter of lyrical landscapes verging on the abstract, and a highly esteemed textile artist.

X.

Abstraction was not an issue which occupied most Icelandic artists in those early years, perhaps because they were busy finding ways of dealing with their immediate reality. Baldvin Björnsson (1879-1945), a goldsmith working in Berlin, one of the centres of the European avant-garde in the second decade of the century, came close to producing near-abstract paintings as early as 1913-14, but never took the final step. Another Icelandic goldsmith studying in Germany, Finnur Jónsson (b. 1892) must be credited with being the first Icelander to produce abstract paintings. Jónsson studied in Dresden, where he encountered Kurt Schwitters, who in turn referred him to Herwarth Walden, the leader of the „Der Sturm" galleries in Berlin. In 1925, Walden and Vassili Kandinsky selected eight pictures by Jónsson for „Der Sturm's" spring exhibition. Two of them were later bought by Katherine Dreier for her „Société Anonyme" collection, now at Yale. Some of Jónsson's abstract pictures were shown in Reykjavík in 1925. They show a curious mixture of influences. A Cubist spatial construction holds in check a structure of biomorphic forms and metaphysical symbols. Jónsson's Icelandic audience was more nonplussed than hostile, but the artist was sufficiently discouraged. By the late twenties he had abandoned his progressive experiments and was producing expressionistic pictures of landscapes and fishermen. Much later, around 1960, Jónsson again took up abstraction.

XI.

In the 1920s and 1930s Icelandic artists could not count on the same public support as before, especially if they deviated from painting landscapes and figurative compositions. It was as if the guardians of Icelandic culture, seeing political independence in sight, suspected all artists who took „seriously the challenge of new possibilities" and wished to „introduce into their work perceptions, ideas and experiences which have come about only in our time" (Meyer Schapiro) of cultural treason. The grants and awards that were so generously handed to the „pioneers" now seemed to have dried up, and conservative politicians talked openly of „pernicious foreign influence" in the arts. A few artists such as Kjarval, Finnur Jónsson, painter and printmaker Guðmundur Einarsson frá Miðdal (1895-1963), sculptor Ríkharður Jónsson (1888-1977) and architect Guðjón Samúelsson (1887 -1950) responded, each in his own way, by attempting to create a „national style". They did so either by concentrating on subject matter that was particularly „Icelandic", or by creating a formal language out of indigenous geological phenomena such as Iceland's famous basalt columns, which seemed to provide the foundation for an „authentic" Cubist style. This „Basalt-Cubism" is a prominent feature of the cathedral of Hallgrímur Pétursson in Reykjavik, which was designed by Samúelsson. As the 1920s gave way to the 1930s, the conflict between the „traditionalists" and the „modernists" took on a more political slant. This was a direct result of the Great Depression, which affected Icelandic society profoundly during the 1930s.

XII

One by one, young Icelandic artists turned their backs on landscape and began to come to terms with a new reality, which centered on the small

fishing villages, the quiet dignity of the working man and the spectre of unemployment. As a result they would often be branded as „Socialists" by the more conservative faction of Icelandic society, which preferred landscape art or the polished society portraits of Paris-educated Gunnlaugur Blöndal (1893-1962). Prominent among those socially-aware expressionists were Jón Þorleifsson (1891-1961), a sensitive if timid painter of Icelandic villages, with their few and lowly dwellings clustered around empty harbours, Munch-enthusiast Jón Engilberts (1908-1972), who attempted to portray the mentality of working-class Icelanders through a symbolic use of colours, and Jóhann Briem (b. 1907), a symbolist of a mystical temperament, who sought to create a unified, and sometimes near-abstract, vision of man, animal and nature.

XIII.

Three other painters, Snorri Arinbjarnar (1901-1958), Gunnlaugur Scheving (1904-1972) and Þorvaldur Skúlason, also belong to this group, but for them everyday reality eventually became a springboard towards the „higher" reality of pure forms and colours. Arinbjarnar possessed a fine colouristic sensibility, which transformed his portraits of village life, landscape and common objects into studies in quiet harmony. While his colleagues were painting life on the seashore, Scheving followed the fishermen out to the sea and fastened on their battle with the elements. In the 1940s and 1950s, his paintings of fishermen became ever more monumental in scale, showing them as timeless heroes, lording over their fishing grounds. Yet such was Scheving's mastery of colour that these large paintings exude the warmth and intimacy of the watercolour sketch. In later years Scheving gave rein to a strong streak of fantasy in his monumental versions of Icelandic folktales and popular myths.

XIV.

In the late 1930s, Icelandic art began to open up to European Modernism, by which I mean the combined lessons of the School of Paris, Surrealism and late Picasso. Four artists were chiefly instrumental in introducing these movements to the Icelandic art scene, two painters, Þorvaldur Skúlason and Svavar Guðnason, and two sculptors, Ásmundur Sveinsson (1893-1982) and Sigurjón Ólafsson. As mentioned above, Skúlason started out as one of the 1930s painters of village scenes, exhibiting both a fine colouristic sensibility and an intellectual rigour honed by Marcel Gromaire, whose art school he had attended in Paris. By the end of the decade Skúlason had travelled extensively in Europe and absorbed many of the lessons of 1930s art. To judge from the paintings he did during this period, he seems to have been particularly drawn to Matisse, Klee and semi-Surrealist style of Picasso. By the early forties Skúlason was painting masterful figurative compositions, grand in conception and bold in colour. Always alert to new developments and ready to be stimulated by his younger colleagues, Skúlason gradually reduced his motifs to their bare essentials. The boats that he painted so frequently, gradually discarded their bulk and turned into a combination of two signs, the oval and the triangle. After a brief Cobra-esque interlude in the late 1940s, Skúlason became one of the leading figures of the „September group" which among other things introduced non-objective art to Iceland around 1950. Skúlason himself evolved a style of painting which for want of a better term might be described as „cosmic", featuring a rhythmical transformation of wedge-like forms in an indeterminate, open space.

V.

While Skúlason only broke the barrier between representation and abstraction at the end of the forties, Svavar Guðnason had already done so

at the beginning of the decade. With little or no art education, he sailed to Copenhagen in 1935, determined to become a painter. Unhappy with the old-fashioned art instruction he received there, he stayed for awhile in Paris where he studied with Léger and encountered the art of Miró, Klee, as well as primitive art, which seems to have made a deep impression on him. Back in Denmark he became a member of the group associated with the review „Helhesten", which later formed the nucleus of the Danish Cobra movement. Guðnason made an important contribution to Danish Cobra with his dynamic paintings, which combined swathes of blazing colours with a primitivistic sign language. He returned to Iceland in 1945 with an exhibition that excited his younger Icelandic colleagues and galvanized many of them into action. After a brief flirtation with geometric abstraction in the 1950s, Guðnason eventually went back to his abstract-expressionist roots, incorporating indirect references to the Icelandic landscape.

Every one of Guðnason's later canvases seems to depict a small universe in the making, showing the eternal clash of the elements: blue sea against black rocks, fire against ice and silvery lava against green moss, reminding us that he grew up among some of the most spectacular scenery in Iceland, close to the glacier Vatnajökull.

XVI.

Sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson was another boy from the country who heeded the call of art, though he had little idea what it involved. He studied under Carl Milles in Sweden from 1920 to 1926, absorbing his semi-archaic style, but after moving to Paris in 1926, he came into contact with the monumental Cubism of Bourdelle, Despiau and Lipchitz, which profoundly affected his view of sculpture. Sveinsson's first great work, „Sæmundur on the seal" (1928), which now stands in front of the University of Iceland, is an effective combination of the archaic style of Milles and Cubism, as well as a powerful interpretation of a popular myth.

After moving back to Iceland in 1929, Sveinsson concentrated on massive semi-figurative sculptures, mostly of working men and women, all of them characterized by a quiet dignity and a lack of sentimentality. In the 1940s Sveinsson started working directly with wood and metals, producing semi-abstract works in a biomorphic style which echoes both late Cubism and Surrealism. All of them have their point of departure in Icelandic myths, history or folktales, and can be seen in many places in Reykjavík, especially around his studio-home, now maintained by the city as a museum.

XVII.

Sigurjón Ólafsson was an extremely versatile sculptor, who during his long and productive life worked directly with plaster, wood, clay, granite, marble and metals. He was equally versatile in his subject matter, excelling in portraiture as well as abstract metal and wood constructions. Ólafsson lived in Denmark from 1928 to 1945, where he became a leading proponent of Modernist sculpture. Having mastered the „grand style" of his conservative teacher, Utzon-Frank, he quickly assimilated the massive figuration of modern classicism before going on to Surrealist-influenced biomorphism. By the end of the thirties Ólafsson was already experimenting with a „primitivism"of his own, using totemic forms and animal imagery, culled both from primitive cultures and old Icelandic mythology. Though Ólafsson never belonged to the Danish Cobra movement, these experiments parallel its search for a modern mythology, capable of expressing the passions and anxieties of a generation which had experienced the horrors of a world war. Back in Iceland, Ólafsson's refusal to compromise his artistic standards and his radical political beliefs delayed his acceptance by the Icelandic establishment, whose patronage a sculptor could hardly do without. He continued to work with primitivist or mythological imagery, mostly in stone or metals, until the early 1960s, when

an attack of TB forced him to concentrate on welding, as well as the carving and assembly of wood sculptures. After Ólafsson's death, a museum of his work was opened on the site of his studio home on the Reykjavík coast.

XVIII.

The post-war years brought Icelanders much prosperity, which in turn allowed them to catch up with the rest of Europe socially, intellectually and artistically. Modernism became an important factor in Icelandic cultural life, and for the first time painters and poets came together to form groups or „movements", which played a vital part in the country's culture for almost two decades. The ground had already been prepared by some of the artists discussed above. Mention must also be made of two important women artists, whose contribution to post-war Icelandic art cannot be overestimated. Nína Tryggvadóttir studied at the Royal Academy in Copenhagen, stayed in Paris and then went to New York, where she enjoyed the guidance of Fernand Léger and Hans Hoffmann. Eventually she made her home in New York, but returned to Iceland at regular intervals to paint and show her work. Like Guðnason's, Tryggvadóttir's mature style could be termed „nature-expressionism". It consists of large blocks of striated colours, as massive as Iceland's famous basalt columns, either floating on top of an iridescent picture plane or pulsating with raw energy. Tryggvadóttir also became a pioneer in modern stained glass and mosaic decorations. Examples of her work in both media may be seen in a number of public buildings in Iceland, for instance the National Museum of Iceland (stained glass), the Flugleiðir headquarters in Reykjavik (mosaic) and the cathedral at Skálholt (mosaic).

The career of Louisa Matthíasdóttir followed a similar route to Tryggvadóttir's, Copenhagen, Paris and New York, where she has been living for over four decades. But while her elder colleague turned to abstraction, Matthíasdóttir quietly nurtured a semi-figurative style. The 1960s saw the full flowering of her work, mostly pictures of the Icelandic landscape, animals and full-length figures, rendered with bold yet structured brushwork and an almost translucent palette. Since then Matthíasdóttir has gone from strength to strength in her depiction of objective reality, adding significantly to the tradition of twentieth-century figurative painting. In her art she seems to achieve an almost perfect balance between figuration and abstraction, movement and stillness.

XIX.

In the aftermath of the war Icelandic artists began to flock to Paris or the USA, thus breaking a century-old dependence on the art academies of Copenhagen or Oslo. In 1947 a new generation of artists, supported by some of the more progressive artists of the older generation, Skúlason, Ólafsson, Tryggvadóttir, Scheving and Arinbjarnar, came together for an exhibition which proved to be a watershed in Icelandic art. In it landscape art and figurative expressionism were discarded for the work of Picasso, Braque and Léger, as well as the more abstract art of the Cobra movement. The exhibition came with an eloquent manifesto by one of the younger participants, painter Kjartan Guðjónsson (b. 1921), which reiterated the modernist credo that art shouldn't „mean" but „be". Guðjónsson furthermore stated that the essence of art was the interaction of forms and colours, and that it need not refer to a reality beyond the boundaries of the canvas. In this he and his colleagues were rebelling against traditional Icelandic art which they saw mostly as an uninspired imitation of nature. But in spite of this radical statement, which along with the exhibition caused quite a stir in Reykjavík cultural life, a few years passed before Icelandic artists actually produced wholly non-associational paintings of the kind Guðjónsson advocated. Not until 1951 did Valtýr Pétursson (1919-1988) paint his all-Concrete picture, „Black Ground".

XX.

By the early fifties about a dozen young Icelandic artists, partly taking their cue from the latest developments in French art, were openly espousing a totally non-objective form of painting, variously termed Concrete Art or Geometric Abstraction. This was the first time in the history of Icelandic art that artists had come together with a common artistic goal, and also the first time that Icelandic art enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with international currents in art.

The strongest personalities among the young abstractionists were Valtýr Pétursson, Hörður Ágústsson (b. 1922), Karl Kvaran (b. 1924), Sverrir Haraldsson (1930-1985) and Eiríkur Smith (b. 1925), while Jóhannes Jóhannesson (b. 1921) and Guðmunda Andrésdóttir (b. 1922) contributed significantly to the cause. Of this group Kvaran was the only one to continue honouring the Concrete esthetic.

Ágústsson progressed from geometric abstraction, through lyrical abstraction to a kind of Minimalism, Smith went over to lyrical abstraction in the late fifties and now paints expressive figurative paintings with mystical overtones. Haraldsson, an early admirer of Ben Nicholson's lyrical geometry, later renounced abstraction and took up a kind of landscape surrealism. Geometric art was the subject of intense debate in Iceland all through the fifties, and the young artists were charged with everything from incompetence to „cultural Bolshevism". What probably sustained them in their effort was the support of older and respected artists such as Skúlason and Guðnason, who contributed significant works to the geometric canon, and the liberal artistic policy of the National Gallery of Iceland, which had moved into its own building in 1951.

XXI.

While most of his friends and colleagues pursued rigorous geometric abstraction, Kristján Davíðsson (b. 1917) persisted with a more open, expressionist art. He had been one of the first artists of his generation to study in the USA, first at the Barnes Foundation and subsequently at the University of Pennsylvania, where he saw the work of the masters of French Modernism. But during his stay in Paris in 1949 he came under the spell of Dubuffet's „Art Brut", which he adapted to his own ends during the first half of the fifties.

During the second half of the decade Davíðsson, along with Ágústsson, Smith and young Steinþór Sigurðsson (b. 1933) led the way towards a more lyrical abstraction, which dominated Icelandic art well into the sixties. Davíðsson's own art gradually became more landscape orientated. Taking landscape as his point of departure, Davíðsson would produce stunning free-form paintings which are neither figurative nor fully abstract, but rather emblems of immanence, with each image hovering between presence and absence, focus and dissolution.

XXII.

Ásmundur Sveinsson and Sigurjón Ólafsson dominated Icelandic sculpture during the forties and most of the fifties. But the fifties also witnessed the emergence of sculptor Gerður Helgadóttir (1928-1975), a student of Zadkine. She later became interested in the Constructive tradition as represented by artists such as Pevsner and Lippold and evolved a style of sculpture which combined „textured" surfaces and transparent structure. Later Helgadóttir branched out into stained glass and mosaics, examples of which can be seen in the cathedral at Skálholt and on the Reykjavík Customs Centre. Two of Ásmundur Sveinsson's pupils, the brothers Jón (b. 1916) and Guðmundur (b. 1920) Benediktsson, also played an important role in the development of geometric sculpture in Iceland during the fifties.

During the turbulent years of geometric and lyrical abstraction, artists of a more traditional bent, such as landscape painters Sigurður Sigurðsson (b.

1916), his brother Hrólfur Sigurðsson (b. 1922) and Jóhannes Geir (b. 1927) tended to be overlooked, in spite of their genuine extension of the landscape tradition of Kjarval, Ásgrímur Jónsson and Jón Stefánsson. The same goes for Hringur Jóhannesson (b. 1932), who sought to record the invasion and colonization of landscape by modern machinery.

XXIII.

But by the early sixties, the artistic climate on both sides of the Atlantic was changing in favour of realist or figurative tendencies. This led both to a re-evaluation of the values of traditional Icelandic art and a loss of prestige for the abstract artists, who felt they had broken the ice and were ready to enjoy the rewards of their struggle.

This was no doubt one of the reasons for the tensions that existed between the abstract artists and the generation of artists who came to maturity in the sixties, tensions which eventually led to the formation of the avant-gardist SÚM group in1965.

One of the first Icelandic artists to openly challenge the supremacy of abstract artists was Guðmundur Guðmundsson, Erró. As a brilliant student at Iceland's College of Arts and Crafts at the beginning of the fifties, he found himself gravitating towards figurative art. Rather than submitting to the prevailing abstractionist dogma in his native Iceland, Erró left for Europe where he studied the art of the Old Masters, came under the influence of Surrealist painter Matta and began to collect all sorts of popular visual material.

Out of all this Erró developed a phantasmagorical style, which provided a running commentary on the „spirit of the age", the foibles, absurdity and brutality of modern man. In his subsequent search for new subjects, Erró has cast his net far and wide, yet his working methods remain basically unchanged. The familiar is coupled with the exotic, and the horrific with the idyllic, forcing the viewer to take sides. In France, where he now lives, Erró has been much feted and admired, yet he regularly comes back to Iceland to travel and show his work.

XXIV.

In 1965 the whole tradition of Modernist art in Iceland was challenged by a group of artists who called themselves SÚM. They became vigorous propagandists for post-1960s trends in modern art, Pop Art, Arte Povera, then the spontaneous activity of the Fluxus movement with its adjoining Happenings and Performance Art.

At the beginning of the seventies, a number of these artists created their own brand of Conceptual Art, where ideas take precedence over material form. The SÚM group, which ran its own gallery from 1969 to 1976, also organized exhibitions of naive art, politically motivated art and invited important foreign artists to show in Iceland.

Some of the most talented members of the SÚM group have had considerable success abroad, such as sculptor Jón Gunnar Árnason (1931-1989), who went from kinetic art, through „junk" sculpture to a conceptual type of Constructivism, Hreinn Friðfinnsson, a maker of lyrical metaphors in three dimensions, now living in Holland, Magnús Pálsson (b. 1929), a maker of plaster sculptures with a metaphysical content, now an organizer of intermedia „events", and the brothers Sigurður and Kristján Guðmundsson, the one a visual poet who has worked with both photographs and three-dimensional structures, the other a minimalist philosopher and sculptor of a highly original cast of mind.

By the late seventies, many of the original SÚM artists were pursuing their careers outside Iceland, mainly in Holland and Germany, by which time a new generation was ready to take over.

XXV.

From 1978 to 1981 the centre of new art activities shifted to a new venue, the Gallery Suðurgata 7, where Conceptual Art, Performance Art, Book Art and related creative activity was much in evidence.

The art of the SÚM and post-SÚM artists was mostly ignored by Icelandic art institutions and collectors of art, which meant that a lot of art works, as well as documentary evidence relating to experimental art activities, were in danger of being lost forever.

In 1978 a large group of artists came together to found the Living Art Museum, an institution devoted to the collecting, cataloguing and exhibiting of 1960s and 1970s art, as well as providing exhibition space for new art. Despite a chronic lack of funds, the L.A.M. has by and large done a remarkable job. It now possesses almost 5000 art works, paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, artists books, multiples and other related material, and has housed over 200 art exhibitions and events.

XXVI.

Since the fifties, Icelandic artists have followed developments in foreign art with keen interest, and have moreover succeeded in turning these developments to their own ends. With the advent of „new painting"at the end of the seventies, a number of Icelandic artists switched from various conceptual art activities to painting.

One of the first to do so was Helgi Þorgils Friðjónsson (b. 1953). While studying in Holland from 1976 to 1979, Friðjónsson began to evolve a quirky style of drawing which owes something to Pieter Holstein, Swiss-German-Icelander Dieter Roth (b. 1930) and Jan Voss. These works were whimsical records of his own fantasies, erotic and otherwise, his private versions of fairytales, comic strips, common jokes and contemporary myths, and soon Friðjónsson began to turn out whole books of these drawings. At the beginning of the eighties, probably after exposure to new painting in Germany and Italy, Friðjónsson began to turn his drawings into paintings. Since 1982, Friðjónsson has exhibited widely in Europe, and been instrumental in bringing European artists to Iceland. Thematically his paintings haven't changed very much since then, but they have become grander in conception, simpler in design and more polished technically.

XXVII.

Most Icelandic artists of Friðjónsson's generation now express themselves through painting and sculpture. Some of them, such as Kjartan Ólason (b. 1955), Tumi Magnússon (b. 1957), Jón Óskar (b. 1954) and Steingrímur Eyfjörð Kristmundsson (b. 1954) can be termed painters of ideas, even storytellers, whereas artists Jón Axel Björnsson (b. 1956), Gunnar Örn (b. 1946), Jóhanna Kristín Yngvadóttir (b. 1953) and Björg Örvar (b. 1953), to name just a few, see painting as an emotional outlet, a voyage into the dark world of the psyche. Kristinn G. Harðarson (b.1955) is unique among the artists of his generation for his attempts to bypass „style" in favour of what he calls „emotional charge". A talented sculptor, Ívar Valgarðsson (b.1954), also stays out of the mainstream of Icelandic art with his emblematic structures, cast in concrete.

The formal and thematic values of „new expressionism" have also spilled over into Icelandic sculpture and printmaking. In both cases artists stick to basic, everyday materials, concrete, rough wood, glass, even junk, which they use in order to construct striking images. Among young Icelandic sculptors, two women artists, Brynhildur Þorgeirsdóttir (b. 1955) and Hulda Hákon (b. 1956) have enjoyed some success in the USA and elsewhere. The first lady of Icelandic performance and environmental art, Rúrí (b. 1951), also exhibits regularly on the Scandinavian circuit.

XXVIII.

Though this survey has emphasized the role played by some of the innovators in Icelandic art, the inheritors of the Modernist mantle have also contributed significantly to recent art history in Iceland. At the beginning of the seventies, Colour-field abstraction and Hard-Edge painting was a point of departure for two Icelandic painters, Sigurður Örlygsson (b. 1946) and Magnús Kjartansson (b. 1949). They have since evolved quite distinctive painting styles. Örlygsson is now a painter of huge semi-surrealist landscapes, littered with ancient machines, often three-dimensional, and colonized by figures from 19th century picture books, while Kjartansson mixes pure colours, abstract and figurative drawings, collage and straight photography, in order to portray inner sensations, dreams, intellectual concepts, even elaborate visual jokes.

Traditional landscape painting has also been given a new twist by artists such as Georg Guðni (b. 1961), who concentrates on single mountains, hills, knolls and other natural elevations, until they yield their visual essence, their ideal shapes, for the viewer to contemplate as he would an icon. Through the efforts of artists such as Einar Hákonarson (b.1945), Ragnheiður Jónsdóttir (b. 1933), Björg Þorsteinsdóttir (b. 1940), Þórður Hall (b. 1949) and Jón Reykdal (b. 1945) Icelandic printmaking also enjoyed a rebirth in the seventies, and younger printmakers such as Friðjónsson, Daði Guðbjörnsson (b.1954), Kristinn G. Harðarson (b. 1953) and Kristbergur Pétursson (b. 1961) have produced some startling visual images for the eighties.

At the beginning of 1988, the National Gallery of Iceland, so long hampered by inadequate gallery space and limited funds, moved into a modern building in the centre of Reykjavik, thereby opening a new, and hopefully vigorous, chapter in the century-old history of Icelandic art.

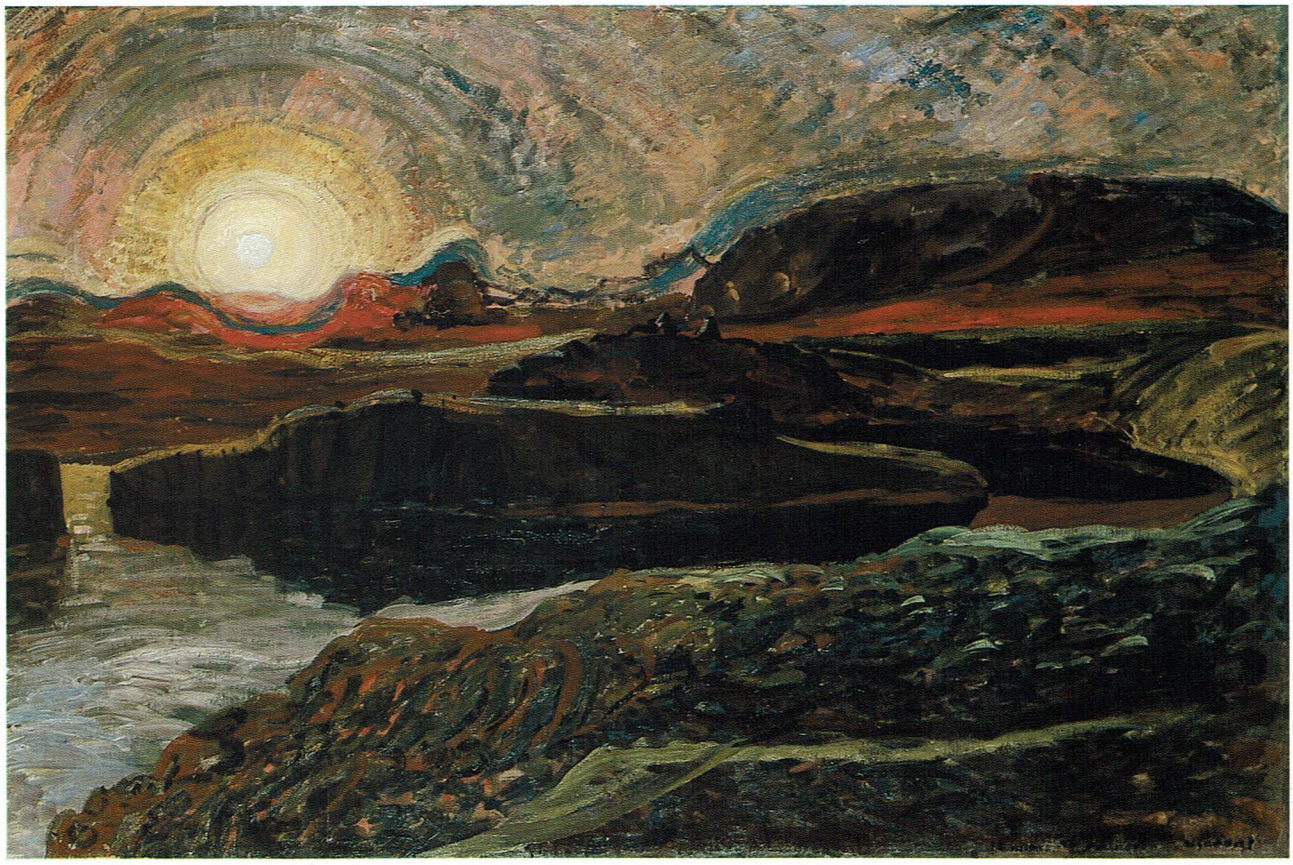
Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson

Þórarinn B. Þorlákssson 1867-1924
Þingvellir, 1900

Einar Jónsson 1874-1954
Outlaws, 1901

Ásgrímur Jónsson 1876-1958
Mt.Hekla, 1927

Jón Stefánsson 1881-1962
Summernight, 1929



Jóhannes S. Kjarval 1885-1972
Summernight at Þingvellir, 1931

Jóhannes S. Kjarval 1885-1972
Fantasy, 1940

Finnur Jónsson b. 1892
Dice of Destiny, 1925

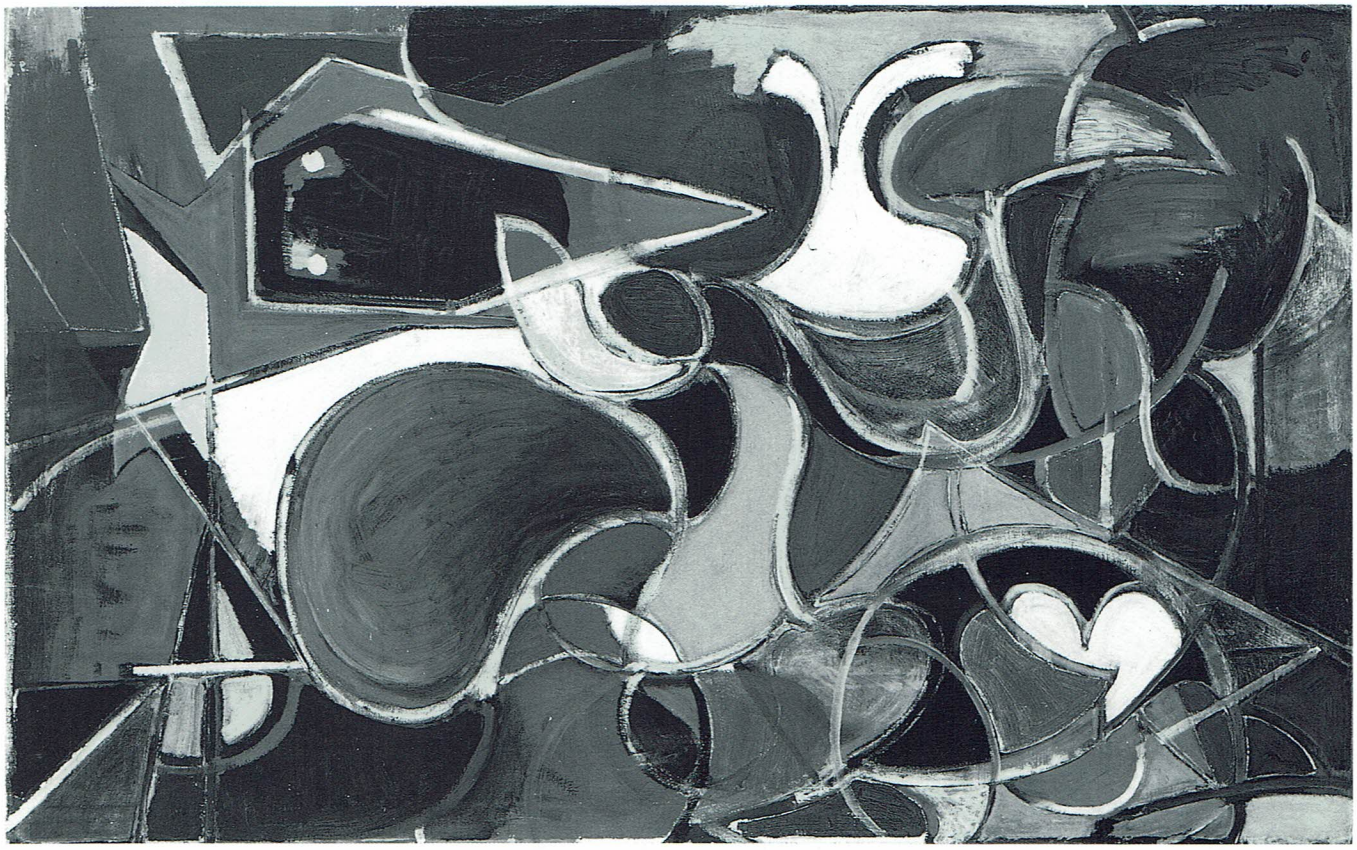
Ásmundur Sveinsson 1893-1982
The Hell Ride, 1944

Gunnlaugur Scheving 1904-1972
Fishing Boat, 1958

Þorvaldur Skúlason 1906-1984
Composition, 1965-65

Jóhann Briem b. 1907
Coloured Cows, 1966

Svavar Guðnason 1909-1988
Iceland`s Melody, 1944



Svavar Guðnason 1909-1988
Composition, 1939-40

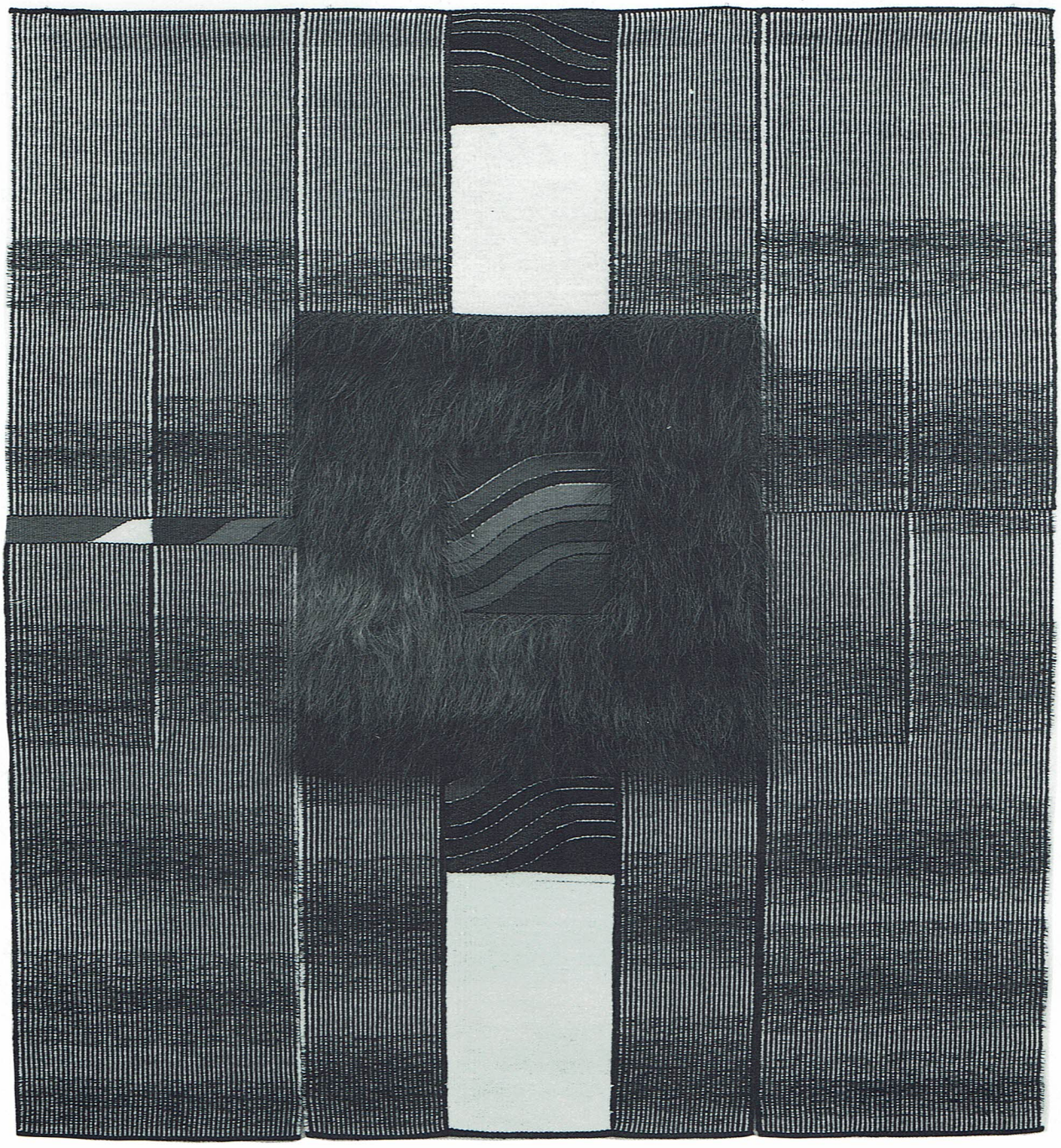
Sigurjón Ólafsson 1908-1982
Woman with a Cat, 1946

Jón Engilberts 1908-1972
Evening in a Fishing Village, 1937

Nína Tryggvadóttir 1913-1968
Composition, 1960

Kristján Davíðsson b. 1917
Early Morning, 1977

Louisa Matthíasdóttir b. 1917
Figures in Landscape, 1978



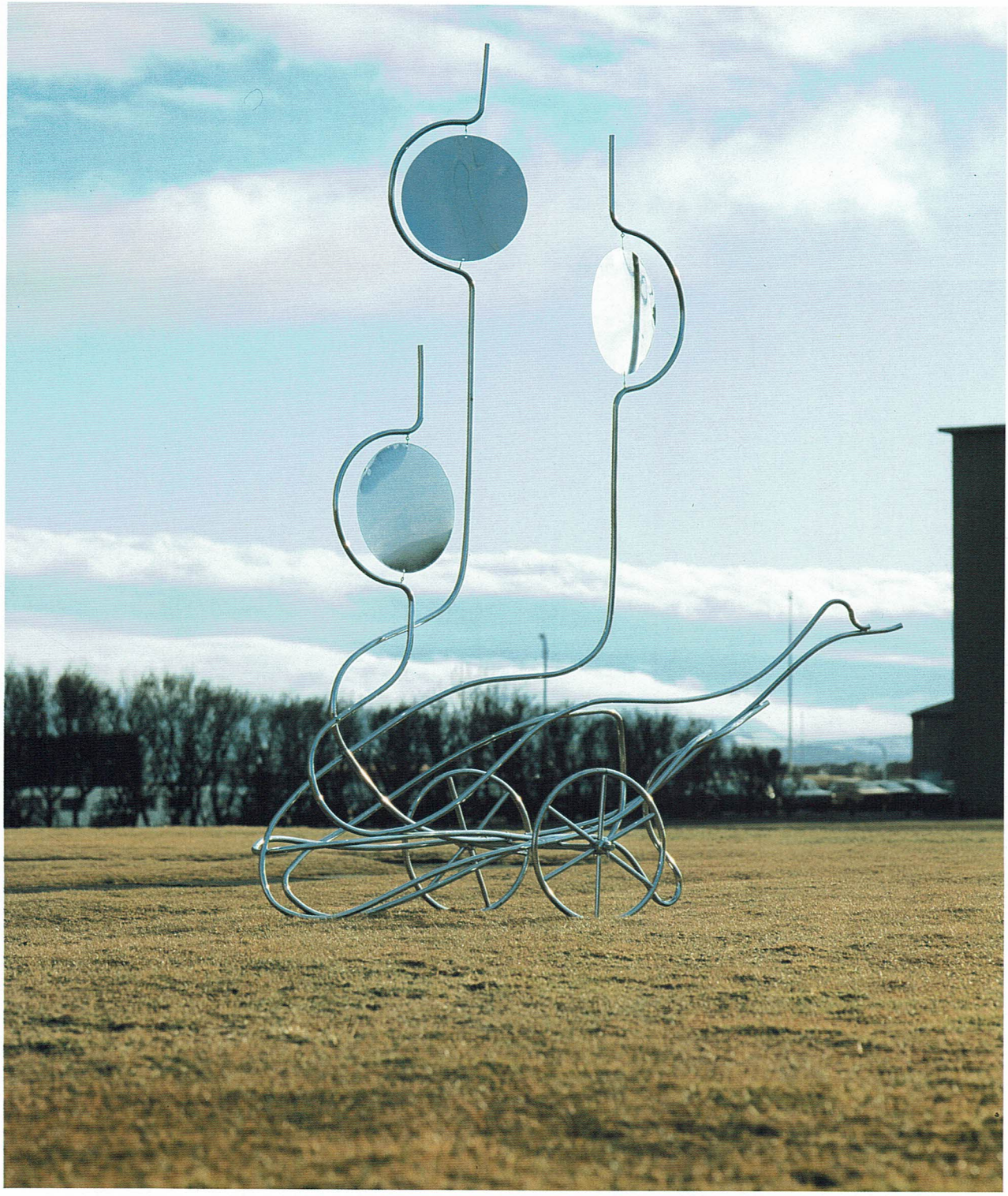
Ásgerður Búadóttir b. 1920
Vulcan, 1986

Karl Kvaran 1924-1989
Energy, 1978-79

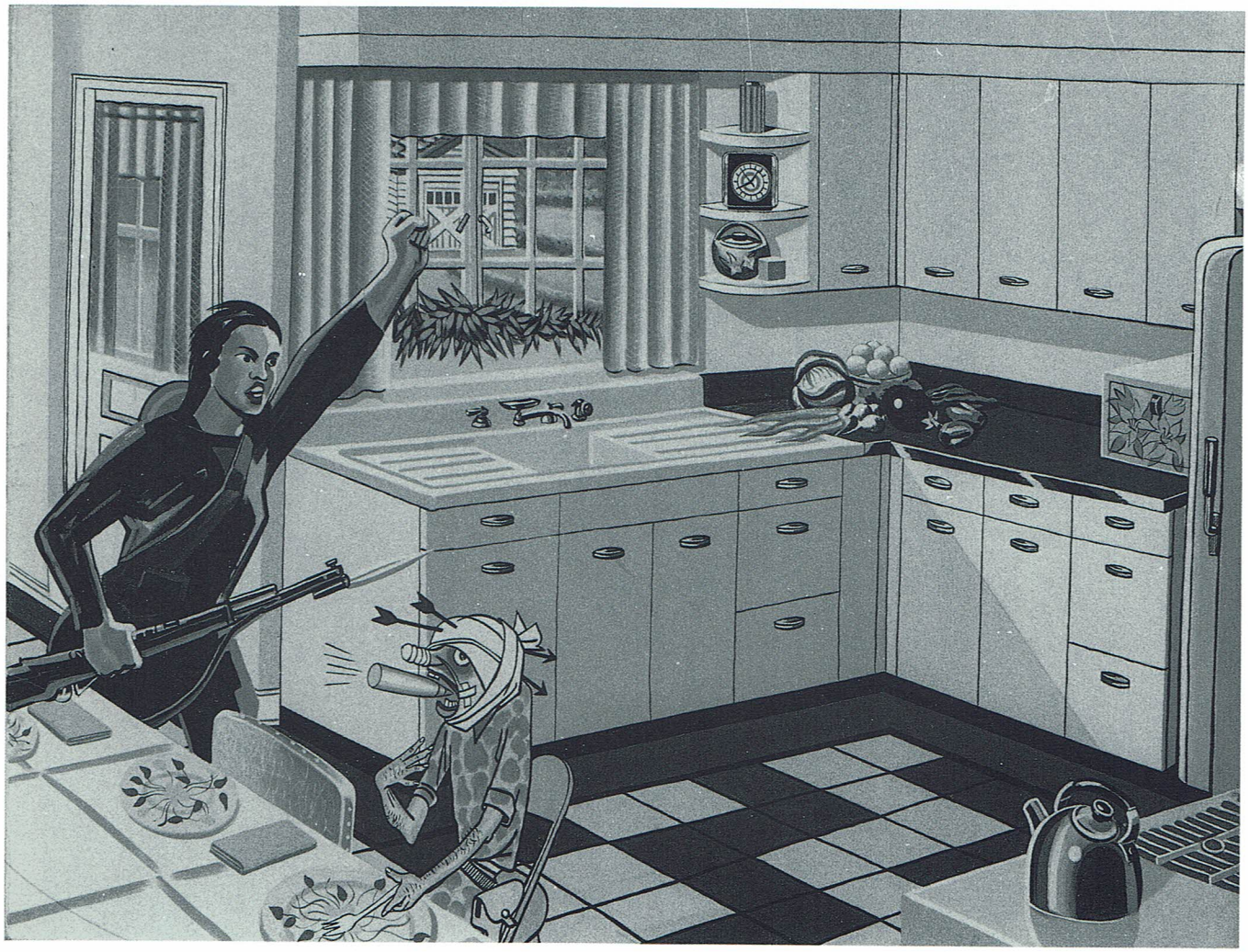
Gerður Helgadóttir 1928-1975
Composition, c. 1952

Magnús Pálsson b. 1929
Dogs, 1971
Part of a series of16 dogs

Bragi Ásgeirsson b. 1931
Madame sans Géne, 1974



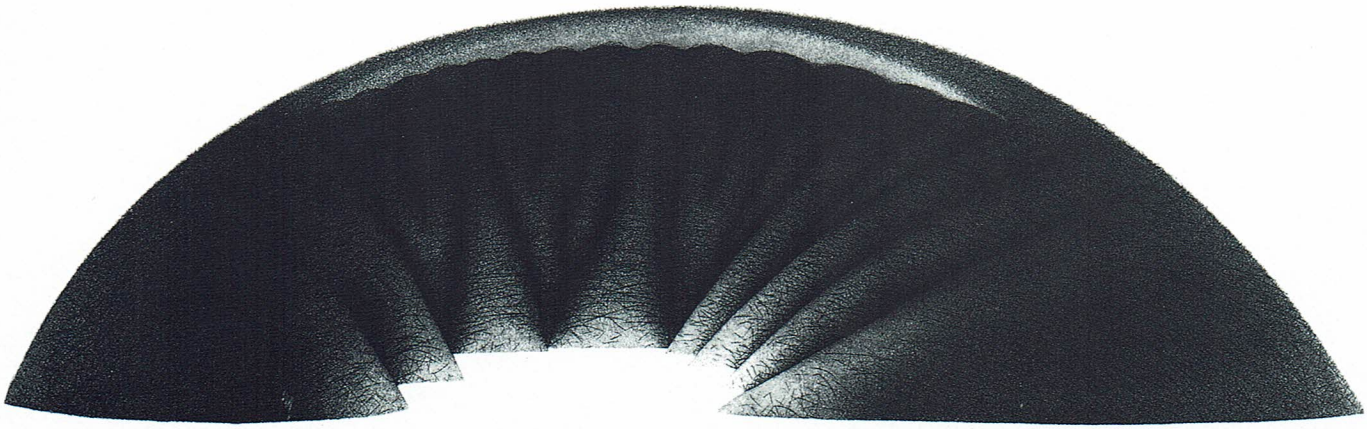
Jón Gunnar Árnason 1931-1989
The Sun Wagon, 1978



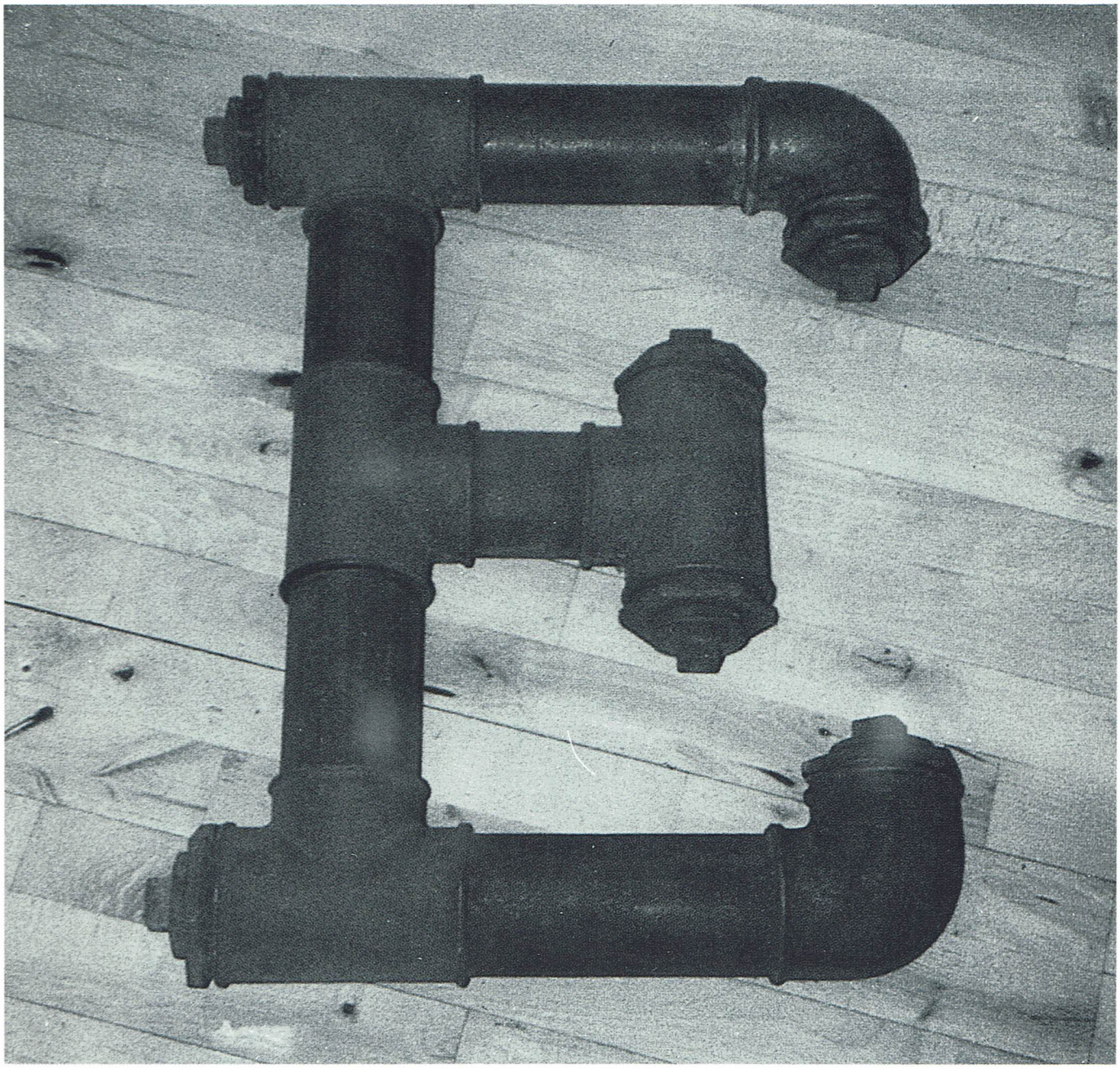
Erró b. 1932
American Interieur no 5, 1968

Erró b. 1932
Apollo 13, 1981

Ragnheiður Jónsdóttir b. 1933
"2008b", 1976



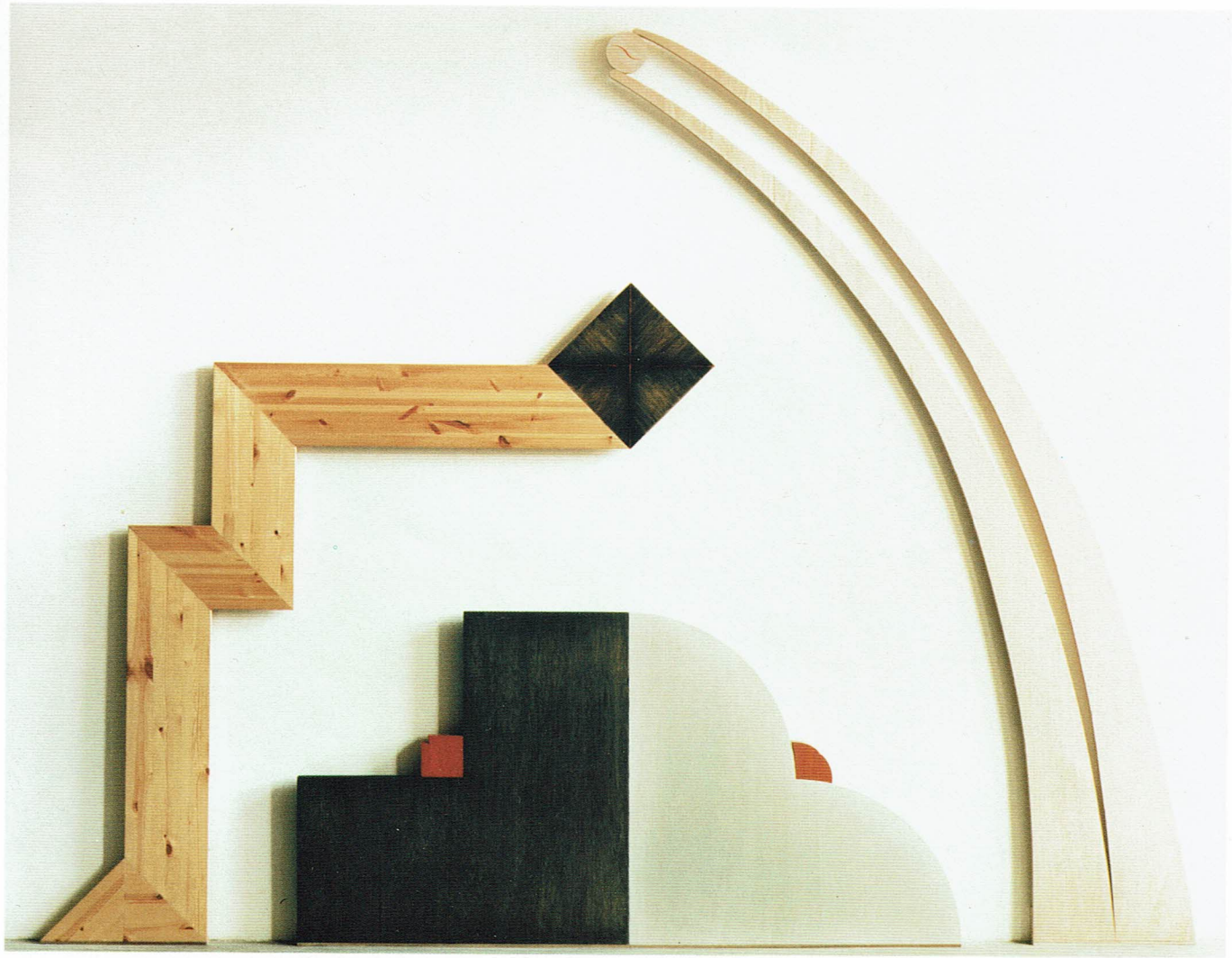
Sigrid Valtingojer b. 1935
Landscape V, 1986 22/50



Kristján Guðmundsson b. 1941
"Eyjólfur hét maður..", 1971
Owner artist

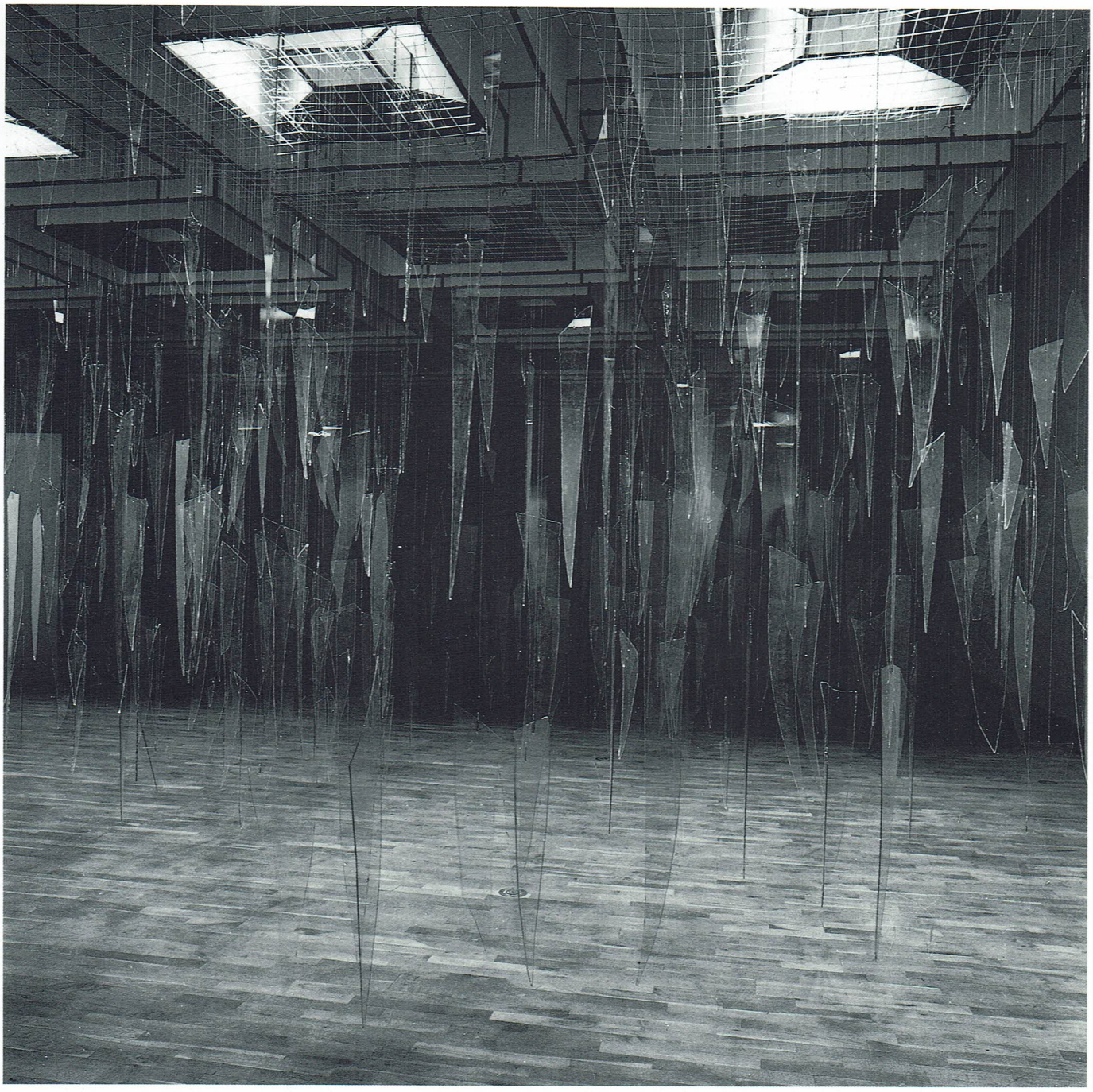
Sigurður Guðmundsson b. 1942
Diabas, 1986

Magnús Tómasson b. 1943
Object, 1971



Hreinn Friðfinnsson b. 1943
Without Title, 1985-86

Gunnar Örn Gunnarsson b. 1946
Folktale, 1986-88

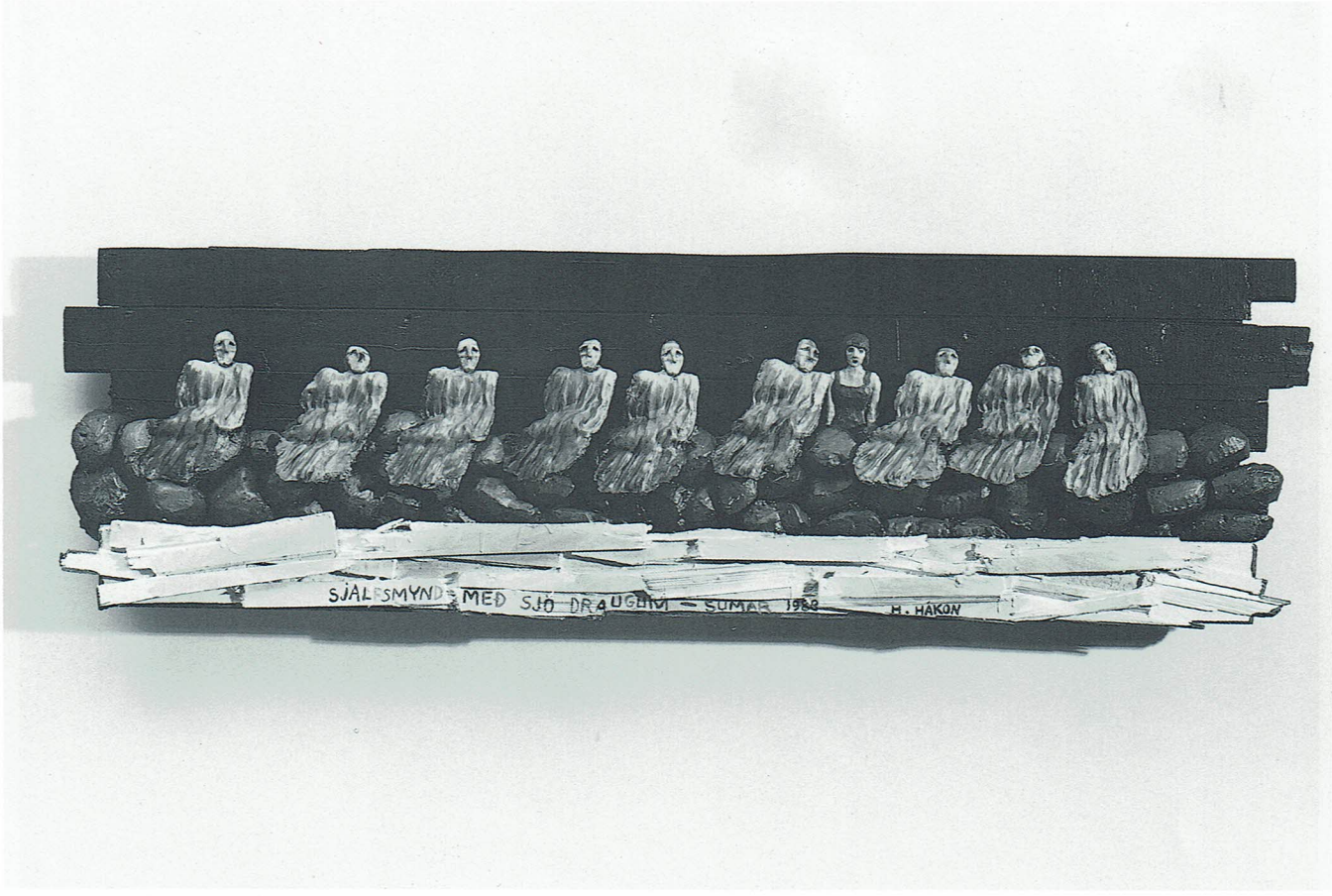


Rúrí b. 1951
Glass Rain, 1984

Helgi Þorgils Friðjónsson b. 1953
Without Aim, 1987

Jón Óskar b. 1954
Without Title, 1988

Brynhildur Þorgeirsdóttir b. 1955
Sculpture, 1982-83



Hulda Hákon b. 1956
Selfportrait with Seven Ghosts,
1988

Georg Guðni b. 1961
Kögunarhóll, 1985

All works owned by the National Gallery of Iceland except otherwise stated

Photo credits:
Kristján Pétur Guðnason
Leifur Þorsteinsson
Viktor Smári Sæmundsson

Listasafn Íslands
National Gallery of Iceland

Fríkirkjuvegur 7
P.O.Box 668
121 Reykjavík
tel.91-621000

Listasafn Íslands, the National Gallery of Iceland, celebrated its 104th anniversary when it moved into its new premises at Fríkirkjuvegur 7 in Reykjavík in January 1988.

The museum was founded in Copenhagen in 1884 by the Icelander Björn Bjarnarson with some 50 works, mostly by Danish artists.

Today the collection amounts to 5000 works plus the Ásgrimur Jónsson collection of nearly 3000 works. About two-thirds of its exhibits are donations, and the majority of these works are Icelandic.

Listasafn Íslands is situated by the lake "Tjörnin" in the very heart of Reykjavík. The new building consists of an old ice-house and a new construction lying directly behind it and connected to the old building by a glass arcade. The old house was designed by the former state architect Guðjón Samúelsson and erected in 1916-17. The new building was designed by the present state architect Garðar Halldórsson.

The museum is in all 2600 m^2 and consists of four exhibition rooms, about 1200 m^2. The exhibition rooms are of various sizes and each has its own character. Other facilities are a library, lecture room, coffee shop and space for magazines, offices, etc.

The aim of the museum is to collect and provide a profound survey of Icelandic art. The museum has the biggest and most extensive collection of Icelandic art of this century in the country. The museum's specialized art library has the biggest collection of newspaper clippings available on Icelandic art as well as books, catalogues and other documents. All this is invaluable for all those engaged in researching Icelandic art, and thus the museum has become the center of art research in Iceland.

Listasafn Íslands stages about 4-5 special exhibitions each year which are primarily exhibitions on Icelandic art. But it also shows exhibitions from its permanent collection.

The museum provides extensive educational programs. School classes are daily given guided tours around the museum by the museum tutor. Guided tours are given to the public each week through the present exhibition or the permanent collection. A talk on the picture of the month is given once a week.

Listasafn Íslands has gone into extensive publications of catalogues from its exhibitions, books on its collection and a large selection of art cards and posters.

The coffee shop offers both hot and cold light refreshments in pleasant surroundings.

Listasafn Íslands is open daily except Mondays from 12 - 18.

Listasafn Reykjavíkur
The Reykjavík Municipal Art Museum

Kjarvalsstaðir
Flókagata
105 Reykjavík
tel.91-26131

KJARVALSSTAÐIR was formally opened on March 24th 1973. The works of Icelandic as well as foreign artists are exhibited there on behalf of the Reykjavík Municipal Art Museum. Its premises are also hired out to individual artists and art groups. Works of art owned by the Reykjavík Municipal Art Museum are kept at Kjarvalsstaðir and in various institutions of the city of Reykjavík.

Kjarvalsstaðir is open daily from 11-18.

THE KJARVAL COLLECTION is preserved at Kjarvalsstaðir. It is a large collection of works of art by Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarval (1885-1972), his personal belongings and a collection of letters given to the city of Reykjavík by the artist. Kjarvalsstaðir exhibits every summer the work of the master, both from its own collection and private collections. According to plan, a special Gallery of Kjarval will be built on Miklatún, south of Kjarvalsstaðir.

ÁSMUNDARSAFN (The Ásmundur Sveinsson Museum) at Sigtún keeps 370 sculptures and about 2000 drawings by the sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson (1893-1982) that he left to the Reykjavík Municipal after his death. Researches on the art of Ásmundur Sveinsson are carried out at the museum and new exhibitions held every year. The museum is open during the summer daily between 10-16, during the winter from 13-16 tel. 32155.

THE ERRÓ COLLECTION consists of 2000 works of visual art by Guðmundur Guðmundsson, Erró, that he personally gave to the Reykjavík Municipal on September 16th 1989. The collection is now preserved at Kjarvalsstaðir, but will in the near future be moved to Korpúlfsstaðir.

The Reykjavík Municipal Art Museum publishes art cards, reproductions of paintings and sculptures, posters, slides, video-tapes and books on Icelandic works of art, with special emphasis on the art of Ásmundur Sveinsson and Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarval.

Works of art owned by the Reykjavík Municipal Art Museum now number about ten thousand.

The Nordic House

Hringbraut
101 Reykjavík
tel.91-17030

Ever since the Nordic House opened in 1968 exhibitions of visual art have been an important part of its activities. The aim is to promote nordic visual art. Exibitions are organised in cooperation with art galleries and individual artists are given the opportunity to exhibit their works of art. Besides that, the exhibition rooms are hired out to artists.

Every year around 20 exhibitions of nordic visual art are held in the Nordic House, paintings, sculptures, graphics, photographs, applied arts. The Nordic House initiated the Nordic Graphic Triennial in 1988.

In the past few years The Nordic House has exhibited the works of

Edward Munch 1986, Svavar Guðnason 1986, Frans Wiederberg 1987, Asger Jorn 1987, Lena Cronquist 1988, Henry Heerup 1988 and Akseli Gallen-Kallela 1988.

Nýlistasafnið

The Living Art Museum
c/o Ásta Ólafsdóttir
Birkimel 6
107 Reykjavík

Nýlistasafnið is a foundation run by a group of artists, the Society of Nýlistasafnið, with financial support from the Althing and the Municipality of Reykjavík. The collections of the museum consist of gifts from its founders and new members as well as donations from foreign guests who have had their exhibitions in the galleries of the museum. Since its foundation on January 5th 1978, Nýlistasafnið has been in the lead among museums and galleries in introducing and initiating performances, artist books, audio and video art, installations, sculptures and two-dimensional pictures. Nýlistasafnið is a regular contributor to the Art Festival of Reykjavík. A publication on the principles of artistic creation and visual thought is in preparation.

SÍM

The Association of Icelandic Visual Artists.

SÍM office
Freyjugata 41
P.O.Box 1115
121 Reykjavík
tel. 11346.

SÍM, the Association of Icelandic Visual Artists, is an organized interest union of artists. The association was established in 1981 and its purpose is to represent the rights of visual artists, to act as their advocate and negotiator. Total number of members is 270.

The Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts

Skipholti
tel. 91-19821

The Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts was founded in 1939 by Lúðvík

Guðmundsson under the the name of The Crafts School. In 1942 it was made into a self-supporting foundation and the name changed to The School of Arts and Crafts. By the first Icelandic Visual Arts Training Act from 1965 the school was taken over by the state and turned into a college, The Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts. Currently a committee designated by the Minister of Culture and Education is preparing proposals for the founding of an Icelandic Academy of Art for the fields of music, drama and visual arts.

Today the structure of the college is based on a four-year program. Admission to the college is granted in reference to strict criteria.

The school now offers training courses in eight special areas: painting, sculpture, graphic art, multi-media, graphic design, ceramics, textiles and art education, (courses in art education are not offered in the 1989-90 term).

The school is divided into five departments:

1. The Introductory Program is a broad basic instruction course intended as a preamble for the special areas. The course takes one year and is offered by two other schools apart from the college, the Breiðholt High School and the Akureyri School of Visual Arts.

2. The Department of Fine Art provides instruction and training in the main branches of fine art, i.e. painting, sculpture, graphic art and multi-media.

3. The Department of Applied Art and Industrial Design comprises the areas of textiles, ceramics and graphic design.

4. The Department of Art Studies arranges courses in academic fields of art for all students at the college.

5. The Department of Extra-Mural Training and Information arranges instruction and information services regarding the visual arts for both the general public and professional artists. It organizes open courses, continuing education and remote teaching in cooperation with the other departments and in consultation with other institutions whose activities overlap with those of the college.

For the past few years the average number of students attending the school each year has been around 220. In addition 300-400 people attend the open courses, both children, youngsters and grownups.

The Reykjavík School of Visual Arts

Tryggvagötu 15
101 Reykjavík
tel.91-11990

The Reykjavík School of Visual Arts has been continually operated since 1947 when The Icelandic Association of Amateur Painters, initiated by Axel Helgason, began to give courses for its members. From 1950 the School has been a self-supporting foundation, now partially funded by the state and the City of Reykjavík. The school offers both day and evening courses intended for people of all ages, covering drawing, painting and a two year special program in plastic art. Weekly lectures are held on art history.

420 students attend the school in this current term, children and youngsters constituting a little less than one third.

The Akureyri School of Visual Arts

Kaupvangarstræti 16
600 Akureyri
tel.96 24958

The Akureyri School of Visual Arts is an independent educational institution run jointly by Akureyri town and the state. The school was founded in 1974 following a two year period in which the Akureyri Association for the Arts had operated a workshop. Previously, in 1950-52, an arts school had been maintained by amateur artists.

The school now provides two full time programs for those students having sufficiently completed a strict entrance examination:

1. A one year introductory program (first introduced in 1980) is intended to give a broad insight into the field of visual arts and to prepare students for further training either in the school or at the College of Arts and Crafts.

2. A four year long special training program in painting (first introduced in 1982).

Apart from these programs the school offers various day and evening courses for people of all ages.

The school also handles all teaching of art for students at the Akureyri High School. During this term 24 students attend the full time programs, and the courses are regularly attended by 200 people.

The Reykjavík Arts Festival

Gimli
101 Reykjavík
tel.91-612444
telefax.91-624475

The Reykjavík Arts Festival is a biennial occasion and a special undertaking to present the Icelandic and the Nordic art scene as well as international art to the Icelandic public. Participants in the festival are the Ministry of Culture and Education, the City of Reykjavík and 22 associations and unions.

The festival is managed by a council to which every participant nominates a representative.

The Minister of Culture and Education and the Mayor of Reykjavík are chairman and vice-chairman, changing places every two years.

The council designates three members to sit on the festival's executive committee along with a representatives from both the Ministry and the City of Reykjavík. Those representatives also take turns at heading the executive committee in the same manner as with the council. The head of the executive committee has the task of shaping the artistic profile of each festival in collaboration with the executive committee and in accordance with the general emphasis expressed by the council.

Amongst those who founded the festival almost 20 years ago was Vladimir Ashkenazy and ever since he has been the Honorary President of the Festival. The patron of the festival is the President of Iceland, Mrs. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir. Many artists of international fame and stature have performed at the festival on previous occasions. First must be mentioned Vladimir Ashkenazy who has performed regularly at the festival, and other foreign musicians and vocalists include: André Previn, Daniel Barenboim,

Itzhak Perlman, Yehudi Menuhin, Renata Tebaldi, Mstislav Rostropovitch, John Cage, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Luciano Pavarotti, Boris Christoff, Christa Ludwig, Claudio Arrau and Krzysztof Penderecki. The visual arts have been a prominent feature on each occasion. Numerous art exhibitions have been held in conjunction with the festival for example of works by Munch, Picasso and Chagall. The festival has also been visited by world famous rock groups and jazz musicians. Led Zeppelin can be mentioned and Cleo Laine, Oscar Peterson, Herbie Hancock, Dave Brubeck and Leonard Cohen to name a few.

Although the art forms mentioned above may have constituted the main attractions on past occasions, the festival has nevertheless always sought to present the latest innovations on the international art scene to the Icelandic public. Many dance and ballet groups have visited us as have various theater companies.

Literature has also been presented.

The Reykjavík Arts Festival will be held for the 11th time this spring, from June 2nd to June 16th. Preparations have proceeded in the traditional manner and visiting artists are expected from all over the world.

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With i.a. the essay: Concrete Art in Iceland by Halldór B. Runólfsson, pp. 160-163, and interviews with the artists Valtýr Pétursson and Hörður Ágústsson , pp. 173-182.

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A magazine of contemporary art and literature, with interviews with Icelandic artists.

This list contains only major publications.

Museums and Galleries

Ásmundarsalur (Ásmundur Sveinsson House)
Freyjugata 41
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-14055, 91-11465.

FÍM salurinn (Gallery FÍM)
Garðastræti 6
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-25060.

Galleri ll
Skólavörðustígur 4a
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-11138.

Gallerí Art-Hún
Stangarhyl 7
110 Reykjavík
tel. 91-673577.

Gallerí Borg
Pósthússtræti 9
Austurstræti 10
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-24211.

Gallerí List
Skipholti 50b
105 Reykjavík
tel. 91-84020.

Gerðuberg Menningarmiðstöð
Gerðuberg 3-5
111 Reykjavík
tel. 91-79166.

Listasafn ASÍ (Labor Union Art Gallery)
Grensásvegur 16
108 Reykjavík
tel. 91-681770

Listasafn Einars Jónssonar
(Einar Jónsson Museum)
Njarðargata
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-13797.

Listasafn Háskóla Íslands (University Gallery)
Oddi v/Suðurgötu
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-694300.

Listasafn Íslands (National Gallery of Iceland)
Fríkirkjuvegur 7
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-621000

Listasafn Íslands -
Safn Ásgríms Jónssonar
Bergstaðastræti 74
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-13644.

Listasafn Reykjavíkur (Municipal Art Gallery) - Kjarvalsstaðir
v/Flókagötu
105 Reykjavík

Listasafn Reykjavíkur -
Ásmundarsafn
tel. 91-26131
v/Sigtún
105 Reykjavík
tel. 91-32155.

Listasafn Sigurjóns Ólafssonar
(The Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum)
Laugarnestangi 70
105 Reykjavík
tel. 91-32906.

Norræna húsið (Nordic House)
v/Hringbraut
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-17030.

Nýhöfn listasalur (Art Gallery)
Hafnarstræti 4
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-12230.

Nýlistasafnið (The Living Art Museum)
Vatnsstíg 3b
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-14350.

Þjóðminjasafn Íslands (National Museum of Iceland)
Suðurgata 41
101 Reykjavík
tel. 91-28888.

Gamli lundur
Eiðsvallagata 14
600 Akureyri
tel. 96-27522.

Hafnarborg Menningar- og listastofnun Hafnarfjarðar (Municipal Culture Center and Cafeteria)
Strandgata 34
220 Hafnarfjörður
tel. 91-50080, 91-50544.

Safnahús Borgarfjarðar
Bjarnarbraut 4-6
310 Borgarnes
tel. 93-71279.

Safnahús Skagfirðinga
550 Sauðárkrókur
tel. 95-35424.

Safnahúsið Selfossi
Tryggvagata 23
800 Selfoss
tel. 98-22703

Safnastofnun Austurlands
Skógarlönd 4
700 Egilsstaðir
tel. 97-11451.

Slunkaríki
Aðalstræti 22
400 Ísafjörður
tel. 94-3453.

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