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MYNDLISTARMÍÐSTÖÐ AUSTURLANDS
CENTER FOR VISUAL ART

IN

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

May 20-22, Herðubreið in Seyðisfjörður

TOOL-KIT FOR SURVIVALISM
AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

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Friday May 20

13.00 I. The natural world and distant past

Symposium launch and introduction to part I
- What are the particularities of ecosystems, environment, community, and daily life in Iceland?

Rán Þórarinsdóttir (IS), animal ecologist at East Iceland Nature Research Centre: *Imported reindeer in a sensitive ecosystem*

Martin Gasser (CH), geologist at Breiðdalsetur

14:30 Symposium break

15:00 **Hjalte Jóhannesson** (IS), geographer at University of Akureyri Research Centre: *Demographic conditions in East Iceland*

Open discussion

Saturday May 21

11:00 II. Art and attitude

Introduction to part II - How do artists engage with ecosystems, environment, community, and daily life, and what is their contribution to this discourse?

Ósk Vilhjálmisdóttir (IS), visual artist:
The Kárahnjúkar project

12.00 Lunch

13:00 **Ráðhildur Ingadóttir (IS)**, Frontiers in Retreat
artist: *Slowly but surely*

Kati Gausmann (DE), Frontiers in Retreat artist:
dancing dough and circumstances

Richard Skelton (UK), Frontiers in Retreat artist:
'Alterity' - exploring the 'otherness' of non-humans

Open discussion

Sunday May 22

11.00 III. Future scenarios

Introduction to part III - What opportunities and challenges are in store for local ecologies and how can we adjust to them?

Caitlin Wilson (IS), Landvernd Icelandic Environment Association

12.00 Lunch

13.00 **Jonatan Spejlberg and Lasse Hogenhof (DK)**, Lunga School: *The art school as space for conscious creation of Culture*

14:30 Symposium break

15:00 **Guðfinnur Jakobsson (IS)**, Skaftholt biodynamic farm in South Iceland

Erla Dóra Vogler (IS), Tourism and Culture Officer of Djúpavogshreppur: *Citta Slow*

Naresh Giangrande (UK): *Being local in a global world: the Transition to a low carbon, high well-being society*

Open discussion

Speakers

Caitlin Wilson works for the Icelandic Environment Association [Landvernd](#). She holds a B.A. in English from the College of William and Mary in Virginia (USA), and an M.Sc. in Environment and Natural Resources from the University of Iceland. She has been living in Iceland since 2006 and is currently working on her doctoral project on sustainability education at the School of Education, University of Iceland. Caitlin has worked as a director of study for many university groups visiting Iceland from abroad, and currently holds a position as adjunct teacher at the School of Education, University of Iceland, in the field of sustainability and environmental education. At Landvernd she focuses on developing the association's Green Flag/Eco-Schools program, which aims to introduce more complex themes into environmental education in schools, such as climate change and biodiversity.

Erla Dóra Vogler grew up in Egilsstaðir, East Iceland. She studied at the college in Egilsstaðir and graduated in 2003 from the natural science course. She graduated with a BSc in geology from the University of Iceland and the 8th level certificate in classical singing from the Music school in Reykjavík in the spring of 2007. In the autumn of 2007 she started her studies in the opera course at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Erla moved back to Iceland in 2010 and graduated with an MSc in geology in 2014. Erla has worked for the Municipality of [Djúpivogur](#) since February 2015 as the Tourism and culture officer and program manager of Cittaslow. She performs as a singer on a regular basis and has been the chairman of the Nature Conservation Organisation of East Iceland (Náttúruverndarsamtök Austurlands - NAUST) since the end of 2015.

Guðfinnur Jakobsson, b. 1943, grew up in Jökulfjörður in the Westfjords of Iceland. Guðfinnur was introduced to biodynamic farming at an early age when working in forestry with Martinus Simson. He graduated as a pilot in Reykjavík but never worked in the field due to the economic recession. After working in several jobs he turned his focus to his main interest, biodynamic farming. Alongside studying in the National Gardening School of Iceland he also worked as a gardener for eight years. After graduation he continued studying in Sweden and worked in a home for the disabled and became acquainted with curative education. In 1980, he co-founded the biodynamic farm [Skaftholt](#) in Gnúpverjahreppur. The initiative was a pioneer project in Iceland and the transformation process took years, since the main principles of biodynamic farming had to be adapted to the Icelandic environment. The aim of the initiative was to build a small sustainable community where everyone could be active and participate, disabled or not. This goal has been achieved but is constant in development.

Hjalti Jóhannesson is a researcher at RHA – [University of Akureyri Research Centre](#). His work focuses on regional development in the broader sense. Among his research projects has been an extensive study, commissioned by the Icelandic government, on the social and economic impacts of megaprojects in East Iceland during the period 2004-2009. During this very turbulent period in Icelandic history Jóhannesson and his fellow researchers at the RHA directed their main focus on East Iceland, looking at the regional effects of the construction of an aluminium factory and a large-scale hydroelectric project. Although this project has been completed many years ago, Hjalti is still very interested in observing how the region is developing. At the symposium he will present some findings on demographic conditions in East Iceland.

Jonatan Spejlborg and Lasse Høgenhof are co-founders and headmasters of the [LungA school](#), est 2013 in Seyðisfjörður. It is a small experimental art school with students from all over the world, and similarly, artists from around the world coming to lecture and facilitate workshops. The

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school is an adventure into a collective learning experience – a commune of students dedicated to learn from and with each other while living together on in a small town on the east coast of Iceland. It is an experimental ground for creativity, art and aesthetics. An art school for the curious mind, for the untamed, for the explorers. In the talk we look at the school as a place for conscious cultural creation and the sociocultural impact of allowing the borders of a school to be membranes that recognize their interdependent relationship with the surrounding cultural and natural environment, and we will introduce what we consider to be some of the key aspects of how these schools can be created and flourish.

Kati Gausmann is a sculptor living and working in Berlin. Her work is concerned with movement, rhythm, and action as form-generating processes. In her artistic practice she combines the exploration of different materials and their qualities with acts of drawing, installation, and performance. Artistic expeditions and theoretical investigations are an important part of her working methodology. With the artist group msk7 and as a solo artist Kati has exhibited widely in Germany, as well as at Gallery Kling og Bang, Reykjavík. <http://www.kati-gausmann.de/en/> & <https://katigausmann.wordpress.com>

Martin Gasser grew up in the Swiss Alps. Martin has been committed to volcanoes since 1980, since he was just five years old and the eruption of Mt. St. Helens took place. Since 1995 Gasser has been active in cave surveying in many parts of the world. He holds a M.Sc. in glacial geology from the University of Bern, and has done extensive studies on the volcano Citlaltepētāl in Mexico. Martin has been living in Iceland since 2006. From 2012 he has worked as a curator at the Research and Heritage Center [Breiðdalsetur](#) in Breiðdalsvík, East Iceland.

Naresh Giangrande is a co-founder of Transition Town Totnes, the first Transition Town in the UK and worldwide. Naresh has been involved in designing, running and evolving many of the events, groups, and trainings that have been at the heart of the enormously successful Transition Towns project. He has delivered the Training for Transition, Transition Talk Training, Train the Trainers, and Transition training for Local Authorities and organisations to hundreds of participants in 9 countries. He has given dozens of lectures and interviews, and has spoken at many conferences and other public events.

Before the Transition Town Initiative took over his life he lived and worked in an eco community, was managing director of a landscape company, and a gaffer in the film industry. He has also taught meditation, has a degree in chemistry from the University of Pennsylvania, and is father to two lovely daughters. He lives in the UK. In his talk Naresh Giangrande will present his vision of the Transition to a sustainable world. Title: *Being local in a global world: the Transition to a low carbon high well being society*. Living closer to the land on which we stand, and depending on each other, we can start to make a world that will be one worth fighting for. It will be a more local world, and one where we are dependent on our local resources for the things we need to live well. But this is not a given. There are many ways in which we go, and in fact are going today, and which one becomes the dominant cultural story remains to be seen. Transition towns, from its inception in a small market town in South West England in 2006 to the global network of Transition towns we have today, all live the transition to a more local, high well being lifestyle.

- People in Transition typically ask three questions:
1. What is my ideal, my dream for the place i am living in?
 2. What would be needed to get us to that dream?
 3. What can we start to build now to get us there?

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[Transition Network](#) is the charity that inspires, explains, broadens, supports, trains, and deepens world wide awareness of and activity in the Transition model to a low carbon high well being world.

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[Ósk Vilhjálmsdóttir](#) studied at the Icelandic Academy of Art and Crafts and at Hochschule der Künste in Berlin. Her work stems from her sense of political commitment, often addressing tension between the public and the private and investigating the potential that art holds as a mechanism for dialogue and social change. Seeking to critically challenge consumerism, globalization, the exploitation of the environment, and the needs of individuals to navigate an increasingly complex daily existence, Ósk's exhibitions – which include photography, video and installations – are often made in cooperation with the public, such as her series of works made with children and teenagers.

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[Ráðhildur Ingadóttir](#) was born in Reykjavík, Iceland. She studied art in England from 1980 to 86, and has been active as an artist since then. Ingadóttir's approach includes text, drawings, wall paintings, sculptures and videos and often these elements are incorporated into expansive installations. She has through the years exhibited extensively in Europe. Ingadóttir was a visiting lecturer at the Iceland Academy of the Arts from 1992-2002. She has also been visiting lecturer at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. She was on the board of the Living Art Museum in Reykjavik for some years, and curated and co-curated exhibitions there as well as elsewhere. From 2012 to 2014 she acted as an honorary artistic director at Skaftfell Center for Visual Art in Seyðisfjörður, Iceland. Ingadóttir has received art awards and travelling grants both in Iceland and Denmark. She now lives and works in Reykjavík and Copenhagen.

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[Rán Þórarinsdóttir](#), Ms biologist from the University of Iceland. Working for [East Iceland Nature Research Centre](#) since 2004. Main projects: Monitoring the calving area of the Snæfell reindeer herd since 2005, assisting with annual reindeer counts and quota settings, giving lectures on reindeer and sometimes on other ecological subjects for schools or other interested groups. In her talk she will focus on imported reindeer in a sensitive ecosystem.

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[Richard Skelton](#) is an artist from northern England, UK. His work is informed by landscape, evolving from sustained immersion in specific environments and deep, wide-ranging research incorporating toponymy and language, ecology and geology, folklore and myth. Over the past 10 years he has worked with texts, artist's books, films and music, but more recently he has become interested in using curation as a means of exploring counter-historical narratives. Alongside running Corbel Stone Press with the Canadian poet Autumn Richardson, he is 'founding member' of the Notional Research Group for Cultural Artefacts and the Centre for Alterity Studies. www.corbelstonepress.com , www.nrgca.wordpress.com, www.alteritystudies.org

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