

GUND GALLERY

Kenyon College

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Ragnar Kjartansson
Through October 27, 2013
Reception: August 30, 5-8 PM

The Gund Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of two recent video installations, "The Visitors" (2012) and "The Man" (2010), by Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson (b. 1976). Filmed on the location of Rokeby Farm in the Hudson River Valley, "The Visitors" assembles a close group of Kjartansson's friends—artists and renowned musicians from Reykjavik and beyond—whom each contribute individual performances to a collective musical project. The title is borrowed from the 1981 Swedish pop band ABBA album. It was supposed to be the band's last and was produced as internal strife and divorce broke up their collaboration. The lyrics to Kjartansson's "The Visitors" belong to a poem by artist Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir, Kjartansson's ex-wife, combined with the musical arrangement of another artist, Davíð Þór Jónsson. In a single take, the artist's friends perform the emotional 64-minute piece while in nine separate rooms throughout the Hudson Valley home. Rokeby House has been in the same family for over 200 years. Its current owners, who also participate in the performance, are dedicated to maintaining bohemian lifestyle. "The Visitors" premiered in North America at Luhring Augustine (NYC) after first being presented at the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Zürich.

"The Man" is a single-projection work featuring legendary blues pianist Pinetop Perkins. Perkins, who performed for over seven decades, was the oldest surviving blues performer from the Delta region until his passing in 2011. His performance extends Kjartansson's fascination with repetition and endurance, as well as portraiture. It was filmed in 2010 outside of Austin, Texas. "The Man" was most recently part of a solo exhibition organized by the Carnegie Museum of Art in 2011, which has since toured to the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston.

Kjartansson's work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions around the world, including the Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, Canada, The Sundance Film Festival New Frontier, Park City, Utah, and Hafnarborg, The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art, Hafnarfjörður, Iceland. The artist has also participated in the 2nd Turin Triennial, Turin, Italy, Manifesta 8, Rovereto, Italy, and Repeat Performances: Roni Horn and Ragnar Kjartansson, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, among others. His work is included in numerous museum collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Dallas Museum of Art, Texas, North Miami Museum of Contemporary Art, Florida, and The National Gallery of Canada, Ontario. Other recent solo exhibitions of his work have been held at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, Frankfurter Kunstverein, and the BAWAG Contemporary in Vienna. He was the youngest artist to represent Iceland at the 2009 Venice Biennale's International Art Exhibition.

Additionally, the exhibition launches the 2013-2014 curatorial and programmatic theme entitled "Vernacular Meaning." The theme, which moves across media, time, space and disciplinary boundaries, is intended to bring focus to the ways in which new perspectives and ideas are created through contemplation of the everyday, the domestic, the local and the commonplace.

Opened in the fall of 2011, the Gund is located on the beautiful 1,000-acre wooded campus of Kenyon College in the village of Gambier, Ohio just 45 miles from downtown Columbus. The Gund is dedicated to presenting art and visual culture of the 20th-21st centuries reflecting the interdisciplinary mission of liberal arts education. Exhibitions and all public programs are free and open to the public. For more information visit www.gundgallery.org or call 740-427-5972 or email info@gundgallery.org

Gund Gallery Summer Hours (through August 25th)

Tuesday-Friday 1:00-7:00 PM

Saturday and Sunday: 1:00-5:00 PM

Gund Gallery Hours (after August 25th)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 1:00-7:00 PM

Thursday: 1:00-10:00 PM

Saturday and Sunday: 1:00-5:00 PM

Gund Gallery exhibitions and programs are supported, in part, by the Ohio Arts Council.

CONTACT:

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RAGNAR KJARTANSSON

BORN

1976, Reykjavík, Iceland

Lives and works in Reykjavík, Iceland

Ragnar Kjartansson has been experimenting with elements of visual art, music, and theater and considers himself mainly a performance artist. His pieces are characterized by the play between contradictory feelings- sorrow and happiness, horror and beauty, drama and humor.

EDUCATION

2000 The Royal Academy, Stockholm, Sweden

1997-2001 The Icelandic Academy of the Arts, painting department, Reykjavík, Iceland

AWARDS

2011

Malcolm McLaren Award at Performa 11; New York

2008

Nominated for the Icelandic Art Awards; Sjónlist

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2013

"Scandinavian Pain: Ragnar Kjartansson, Edvard Munch," at Malmö Nordic 2013 Festival, Malmö, Sweden

"Ragnar Kjartansson: The Visitors," Luhring Augustine, New York, NY

"Ragnar Kjartansson: The Visitors," Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, Austria

"Ragnar Kjartansson: The Visitors," Fondazione HangarBicocca, Milan, Italy

"The Visitors" and "The Man," The Gund Gallery at Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio

2012

"Benefit," Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, Switzerland

"The End - Ragnar Kjartansson", Scrap Metal Gallery, Toronto, Canada

"Ragnar Kjartansson: Song," Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, Miami, FL; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA

"Ragnar Kjartansson: The End-Venezia," Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy

"The Visitors," Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, Switzerland

2011

"Ragnar Kjartansson: The Man," Arthouse at the Jones Center, Austin, Texas

"Ragnar Kjartansson: Endless Longing, Eternal Return," Frankfurter Kunstverein, Germany

"Ragnar Kjartansson: Song," Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; traveling to Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL; ICA, Boston, MA

"Take me here by the Dishwasher," BAWAG Contemporary, Vienna, Austria

"Ragnar Kjartansson," i8 Gallery, Reykjavik, Iceland

2010

"Ragnar Kjartansson: Me and My Mother," EX3 Center for Contemporary Art, Florence, Italy

"Ragnar Kjartansson," Luhring Augustine, New York
"Studio: The Night- Eroticism, Folköl, Melancholia," Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
"Ragnar Kjartansson: The End," Walter Phillips Gallery, The Banff Centre, Banff, Canada
"The End - Ragnar Kjartansson", Hafnarborg, The Hafnarfjordur Centre of Culture and Fine Art,
Hafnarfjörður, Iceland.

2009

Iceland's representative at Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy

2008

2nd Turin Triennial, Turin, Italy
Manifesta 8, Rovereto, Italy

2007

"Repeat Performances: Roni Horn and Ragnar Kjartansson," CCS BARD, New York, USA
"Folksong," 508 West 25th Street, New York, USA
"God," The Living Art Museum, Iceland
"Guilt Trip," i8 Gallery, Reykjavík, Iceland
"Hot shame the Quest of Shelley's Heart," Galleria Crespi, Italy

2006

"Sorrow conquers happiness", Galerie Adler, Frankfurt, Germany

2005

"The Great Unrest," Dagsbrún, Reykjavík Art Festival, Eyjafjöll, Iceland

2004

"Confidential" (Collaboration show with Magnús Sigurðsson), Asmundarsalur, Reykjavík Art Festival,
Iceland
"Monument of Love", Gallery GUK, Iceland, Denmark, Germany
"Oh my god", Safn, Reykjavík, Iceland

2003

"Colonialization", Galleri Kling & Bang, Iceland

2001

"Hurt the one you love", i8, Reykjavík, Iceland

2000

Video installation with Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir, Gallerí Nema Hvat, Reykjavík, Iceland
"Konstar och jag vil knulla", Gallerí 1319 A, Stockholm, Sweden

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013

"Deep Feelings. From Antiquity to Now," Kunsthalle Krems, Krems an der Donau, Austria
"Venice Biennale: Il Palazzo Enciclopedico (The Encyclopedic Palace)," The Arsenale, Venice, Italy

2012

"It's Not the End of the World," Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino, Italy
"Le Nouveau Pleinairisme," Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec, Canada
"True Stories," Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, PA

"Discussing Metamodernism," Tanja Wagner, Berlin

2011

"A Strange Affinity to the Beautiful and the Dreadful," Hendershot Gallery, New York, NY
Prospect.2, New Orleans, LA (catalogue)

"The Garden of Forking Paths," Migros Museum, Zurich, Switzerland

2010

"Figura cuncta videntis (the all-seeing eye) / Homage to Christoph Schlingensief," Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, Austria.

"New Frontier at Sundance 2010," Park City, Utah.

"Scene Shifts," Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden.

"Twenty Five," Luhring Augustine, New York, NY.

2010-2009

"The Reach of Realism," Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL (catalogue)

2008

"Pleinairism," i8 Gallery, Reykjavík, Iceland

"It's Not Your Fault, Art from Iceland" Luhring Augustine Gallery, New York, U.S.A.

"Iceland on the edge" Reykjavík Art Festival, Reykjavík art museum, Iceland

"Iceland on the edge" artfestival at Bozar in Brussel, Belgium

2007

Moleskine Exhibition, ADC Gallery, USA

2006

Momentum, Moss, Norway

Pakkhús Postulanna, Listasafn Reykjavíkur, Iceland

2005

Tívolí, Listasafn Arnesinga, Hveragerði, Iceland

2004

"Where do we go from here?" Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York, U.S.

"Etoiles Polares Vooruit", Ghent, Belgium

"Winter Mass", The Nordic house, Reykjavík

"Aldrei, Niem Never", Gallery+, Akureyri, Iceland.

"Momentum 2004", Moss, Norway

"Berlin North" (Collaboration with the Icelandic Love Corporation), Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany.

2003

"Behind the eyes", Bergern Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway

"Iceland in Denmark", Gallery Stalke, Copenhagen, Denmark

2002

"The Times are Changing", Studio Alaska, Reykjavík

"The Tiger and the Polar Bear", Gallery 21, Malmö, Sweden.

"Grassroot" The Living Art Museum, Reykjavík, Iceland

2001

"Polifóni", The Living Art Museum, Reykjavík, Iceland

HAPPENINGS AND PERFORMANCES

2013

"Self-portraits from room 413," for "Sequences: real time art festival," Reykjavik, Iceland
"Sorrow," with The National, Performance Dome for Sunday Sessions, MoMA PS1, New York, NY
"BMW Tate Live: Ragnar Kjartansson," Tate Modern, Performance Room, London, UK
"Civilization: Monumental Materialism," MoMA PS1, New York, NY

2012

"Bliss," The National Theatre of Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland

2011

"Bliss," Performa 2011, New York, NY

2010

"The February Radio Drama: The Constant Reality Theater," The Watermill Center, Watermill, NY

2009

"Number Three: Here and Now. Düsseldorf," (in association with exhibition "100 Years (Version #1, Dusseldorf)"), Julia Stoschek Collection, Dusseldorf, Germany.
"SYMPHONY N.1 with Alterazioni Video," Performa 2009, New York, NY

2004

"The Theater of Artists", Klink and Bank, Reykjavík, Iceland

2003

"Four variations on sorrow", Performance with Egill S., Reykjavík Art Museum, Reykjavík, Iceland
"Operatione Pathetica", performance with Gabriella Fridriksdóttir. Circuit Barcelona, Spain

2002

"Modern Music", CD project with Gabriella Frieriksdóttir, Living Art Museum, Reykjavík, Iceland
"Santa Claus" performance with Asmundur Asmundsson. Living Art Museum, Reykjavík, Iceland
"The Artist on the corner" performance. Reykjavík Art Festival, Reykjavík, Iceland
"And Björk of course" a play by Thorvaldur Thorsteinsson. Theater and performances. Reykjavík City Theater, Iceland

1999-2002

Trubadour Rassi Prump, concerts a.o.: Reykjavík, Ísafjörður, Búeir
and Seydisfjörður, Iceland

CURATORIAL PROJECTS

2013

"PLAY! Recapturing the Radical Imagination," Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art, in collaboration with Andjeas Ejiksson, Göteborg, Sweden

MUSIC

2002

Trabant, music for a ballet "Eva 3", Ekka Dance Theater
Trabant, superman cd single, Thulemusik, TMT

2001

Trabant, Enter Space Bar, cd single, Thulemusik, TMT
The Funerals, Pathetic me, Thulemusik, TMT
Trabant, Moment of truth, Thulemusik, TMT
Concerts with music bands Funerals and Trabant

2000

Kanada, Kanada, Thulemusik, TMT

1996

Concerts with Kanada
Music in "Sirkús Skara Skrípo" Loftkastalinn, Reykjavík, Iceland

1995

Teenage band Kósy, Kósy Jól, Kísi-hljómplötur

1994-1996

Concerts with teenage band Kósy

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2013

- Baker, R.C. "Surround-Sound Solace," *Village Voice*, March 13-19, 2013, Vol LVIII, No. 11, p. 24.
- Cahill, Zachary. "Critics' Picks: Ragnar Kjartansson," *Artforum*, March 2013, <http://artforum.com/picks/section=nyc&mode=past#picks39512>.
- Davis, Ben. "Cutting Through the Noise Surrounding Ragnar Kjartansson's Neo-Romantic Jam Band," *Blouin Artinfo*, March 22, 2013, <http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/882454/ragnar>.
- Hamer, Katy Diamond. "New York Tales... Ragnar Kjartansson presents A Lot of Sorrow, Featuring The National MoMA PS1," www.flashartonline.com, May 9, 2013.
- Indrisek, Scott. "Reviews: Ragnar Kjartansson," *Modern Painters*, May 2013, p. 97.
- Indrisek, Scott. "The Next Most Collectible Artists," *Art+Auction*, June 2013, p. 126.
- Kastner, Jeffrey. "Ragnar Kjartansson: Luhring Augustine," *Artforum*, Vol. 51, No. 8, April 2013, p. 258.
- Mirlesse, Sabine. "Ragnar Kjartansson," *BOMBlog*, July 3, 2013, <http://bombsite.com/issues/1000/articles/7241>
- Mobilio, Albert. "Go with the Slow: Ragnar Kjartansson's 'The Visitors'," *Hyperallergic*, March 16, 2013, <http://hyperallergic.com/66988/go-with-the-slow-ragnar-kjartanssons-the-visitors/>.
- Scott, Andrew K. "Critic's Notebook- Parallel Lives," *The New Yorker*, February 25, 2013, p. 16.
- Sheets, Hilarie M. "Never Tiring Of Repeating Himself," *The New York Times*, January 6, 2013, p. AR 19.
- "Six hours, one song: the National perfect the art of repetition," www.guardian.co.uk, July 11, 2013.
- Rosenberg, Karen. "Art in Review," *The New York Times*, February 22, 2013, p. C26.
- Russeth, Andrew. "On View: Ragnar Kjartansson 'The Visitors'," *The New York Observer*, February 25, 2013, p. B8.
- Volk, Gregory. "Exhibition Reviews: Ragnar Kjartansson – Luhring Augustine," *Art in America*, May 2013, p. 162-163.
- Vogel, Carol. "Ripples of Ruminaton," *The New York Times*, June 3, 2013, p. C1.
- Walsh, Brienne. "Ragnar Kjartansson," *Art Review*, May 2013, p. 118.

2012

- Brevi, Manuela. "Le mille anime di un inguaribile romantico," Arte, pp. 118-122.
- Hollingsworth, Catherine A. "Radically Unbound," Art Papers, July/August 2012, pp. 10-15.
- Kjartansson, Ragnar. To Music/An die Musik, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst & JRP Ringier, 2012.
- Levin, Kim. "How PoMo Can You Go?" ARTnews, October 2012, pp. 84-85.
- McQuaid, Cate, "Ragnar Kjartansson exhibition marries song and video," The Boston Globe, December 23, 2012, pp. N1, N7.
- "Questionnaire: Ragnar Kjartansson," Frieze, Issue 145, March 2012, p. 172.
- Scott, Kitty. À Ciel Ouvert, Québec, Canada: Musée National Des Beaux-Arts Du Québec, 2012, pp. 26-33, 68-69, 74-75.

2011

- Arrhenius, Sara and Magnus Florin, ed. Scene Shifts, Albert Bonniers Förlang, Livonia Print, Latvia. p. 100-111.
- Clearwater, Bonnie. "Roving Eye: Religion in Contemporary Art," artinamericamagazine.com, December 2, 2011.
- Ebony, David. "Performa Playbill: Ragnar Kjartansson," artinamericamagazine.com, November 21, 2011.
- Kjartansson, Ragnar. "Ragnar Kjartansson's Favorite Performances," Modern Painters, March 2011, p. 17.
- Lee, Felicia R. "Ragnar Kjartansson Wins Performa Award for 'Bliss,'" nytimes.com, November 22, 2011.
- Miller, Michael H. "Performa Concludes: Ragnar Kjartansson," The New York Observer, November 28, 2011, pg B4.
- Saltz, Jerry. "Ragnar Kjartansson's Transcendent Twelve-Hour Operatic Performance," New York Magazine.com, November 23, 2011.
- Saltz, Jerry. "The Year in Art: The Top 10," New York Magazine.com, December 4, 2011.
- Smith, Roberta. "A Magical Musical Moment, Extended to 12 Hours," nytimes.com, November 19, 2011.
- Smith, Roberta. "The New Season: For Spectacle's Sake, Museum Get Specific," The New York Times, September 15, 2011, p. AR72.
- Smith, Roberta. "Substance And Spectacle," The New York Times, December 18, 2011, AR27.
- Stocchi, Francesco, "Ragnar Kjartansson, Bawag Foundation," Art Forum, October 2011. p. 332.
- The Garden of Forking Paths: An Anthology about contemporary follies, Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2011, p. 20, 21, 26, 27, 148, 149, 152.
- Thomas, Mary. "A 'Song' of Iceland: Ragnar Kjartansson stirs up the Carnegie," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, March 10, 2011, p. cover and W-13.
- Vermeulen, Timotheus. "Now & Beyond," Frieze, September 2011, pp. 180-181.
- Vogel, Carol. "Inside Art: Performa Commissions 5," The New York Times, Friday, April 15, 2011, C28.

2010

- Alexander, Rob. "The End explores Canadian culture," Rocky Mountain Outlook, February 11, 2010, Outlook Entertainment section.
- Asfour, Nana. "Ragnar Kjartansson," Time Out New York, July 8-14, 2010, p. 60.
- Bordignon, Elena. "The black humour of Ragnar," vogueitalia.it, July 21, 2010.
- Davis, Ben. "Summer Guide," The Village Voice, May 25, 2010.
- Hamilton, Sarah. "Ragnar Kjartansson, *The End*, Walter Phillips Gallery," prarieartsters.blogspot.com, March 30, 2010, pp. 1-3.
- Indrisek, Scott. "Ragnar Kjartansson, Microinterview," The Believer, Vol.8, No. 9, November/December 2010, p. 1, 6, 10, 38, 78, 88.
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McLean-Ferris, Laura. "Ragnar Kjartansson: At Home With Iceland's Blues Brother," Art Review, September 2010, Issue 43. pp 86-91.

Medoff, Eva. "Portrait of the Artist," Cityist.com, June 22, 2010.

Mellema, Tatiana. "Ragnar Kjartansson: Rocky Mountain Rag," Canadian Art, Spring 2010, pp. 54-56.

Russeth, Andrew. "In New York: The Avalanche of Gallery Opening This Thursday," artinfo.com, June 24, 2010.

Schoen, Christian. "Selected Interview: Ragnar Kjartansson," www.FARTiculate.com, 5 November 2010.

Smith, Roberta. "Ragnar Kjartansson: 'The End – Venice'," The New York Times, July 30, 2010, p. C28.

Ylitalo, Katherine. "In the Rockies," FFWDweekly, February 11-February 17 2010, p. 21.

York-Worth, Maggie. "Ragnar Kjartansson: An Icelandic artist mixes the Delta Blues, performance and video in a show at Luhring Augustine," CoolHunting.com, June 17, 2010.

Wei, Lilly. "Reykjavik Report: Under the Volcano," Art in America, No. 9, October 2010, p. 99

2009

Alexander, Lily. "The Icelandic Pavilion," whitewallmag.com, June 23, 2009.

"Another Day in Venice, Another Pose Struck, Another Portrait Painted," The New York Times, September 7, 2009.

"Art that never stops," global.nytimes.com, June 5, 2009.

Basciano, Oliver. "In Iceland, not everything about the past year has been forgettable – look at the arts, For example," ArtReview.com, July 23, 2009.

Byles, Jeff. "Ragnar Kjartansson: What do you do with a drunken painter?," Modern Painters, May 2009, cover, pp. 48-53.

Corbetta, Caroline. "Kjartansson Speciale per Domus," domus, June 2009, pp. 115-118.

Cullinan, Nicholas. "2nd Turin Triennial," ARTFORUM, March 2009, p. 178.

Ferrari, Pierpaolo. "Ragnar Kjartansson," L'UOMO VOGUE, May/June 2009.

"Iceland Selects Artist for Venice Biennale," Artinfo.com, March 19, 2009.

Kennedy, Randy. "Over and Over: Biennale Art That Never Stops," The New York Times, June 4, 2009: C1, C7.

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Knofel, Ulrike. "Dabei sein ist Luxus," Der Spiegel, May 18, 2009.

Magnússon, Haukur. "A Conversation with Ragnar Kjartansson," The Reykjavík Grapevine, May 22, 2009, Cover, pp. 1-10.

McLean-Ferris, Laura. "Ragnar Kjartansson, Icelandic Pavilion," Art Review, Summer 2009, p. 88.

"Ragnar Kjartansson: Venice Is a Lighthouse at the End of the World," Artinfo.com, June 9, 2009.

"Reykjavik: Sequences 09," frieze.com/blog, December 1, 2009.

Rechsteiner, Karin. "Island Hopping," KOPF AN!, 2/4, 2009, pp. 26-27.

The Reach of Realism. Miami: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009, pp. 36-37.

Saltz, Jerry. "Entropy in Venice," saatchi-gallery.co.uk, June 29, 2009.

Saltz, Jerry. "All New York's a Stage," New York Magazine, November 23, 2009, page 98.

Schoen, Christian. "Iceland Stuck between a Rock and Hard Place," theartnewspaper.com, May 13, 2009.

Smith, Roberta. "Performa 09: Gooaaaaaalllll," ArtsBeat, The New York Times, November 3, 2009.

Tifentåle, Alise. "The Joyful *Danse Macabre* of Ragnar Kjartansson," Studia, April/May 2009, pp. 54-59.

Wei, Lilly. "Ragnar Kjartansson: The Beginning of 'The End'," Art in America, June/July 2009, pp. 122-124.

2008

Corbetta, Caroline. "Everyone is decadent these days," Mousse, Issue 15, October/November 2008, pp. 32-35.

Lentini, Lara Kristin. "It's Not Your Fault: Art from Iceland," Art Papers, November/December 2008, pp. 68-69.

McLean-Ferris, Laura. "Turin Triennial," artreview.com, November 12, 2008.

Wei, Lilly. "Report from Reykjavik: Experiment Iceland," Art in America, October 2008, No. 9, p. 72.

2007

Markús Thór Andrésson, The Paradox of Ragnar Kjartansson, Reykjavik: i8 Gallery, March 2007.

2006

"Art Review. Reykjavik," Art Review, June 2006, p. 54.

Ævarsdóttir, Oddný Eir and Unnar Örn Audarson Jónasson, "Ragnar Kjartansson," Póst-postilla Hafnarhúslestrarbók, Reykjavik: Reykjavik Art Museum, 2006, pp. 78-85.

Jung, Katharina Klara. "Somewhat Unreal," in New York Arts Magazine, September 2006.

Coulson, Amanda. Frieze, October 2006.

Danicke, Sandra. "Der traurige Isländer," in Frankfurter Rundschau, Feuilleton, July 14, 2006, p. 16.

Schoen, Christian. "Ragnar Kjartansson," in A Prior Magazine, #12, Revolver Verlag, Frankfurt 2006, pp. 161-163.

2005

"Bright young things," Art Review, December 2005, pp. 28, 100.

Hoffman, Jens, "Ragnar Kjartansson," Material Time, Work Time, Life Time, ed. Jessica Morgan et al (Frankfurt am Main : Revolver, 2005), p. 32.

Sladen, Mark. "Iceland Hopping," Artforum, May 2005.

Jón B.K. Ransu. "Leikhúsdraugurinn," Morgunblaðið, 2005, and in Tímarit Mals og Menningar, March 2005.

2004

"Visions of Beyond," Art Fairs International, 2004.

Psibilskis, Liutauras. "Momentum 2004," Artforum, December 2004.

"From Darkness to Light: Icelandic Art," Dazed and Confused Magazine, October 2004.

"Where Do We Go From Here: Emerging Icelandic Artists," Time Out New York, August 5-12, 2004, p. 51.

2003

Demby, Eric. "Iceland Cometh," Artforum, February 2003.

PRIVATE and PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA

Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH

Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX.

Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA.

Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, NY.

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.

National Gallery of Art, Ontario, Canada.

North Miami Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL.

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, Austria.

Ragnar Kjartansson (b. 1976)



***The Man*, 2010**

(Still)

Video

Duration: 49 minutes



***The Visitors*, 2012**

(Still)

Nine channel HD video projection

Duration: 64 minutes

Photos: Elísabet Davidsdóttir

Sound: Christopher McDonald

Video: Tómas Örn Tómasson



***The Visitors*, 2012**

(Still)

Nine channel HD video projection

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Sound: Christopher McDonald

Video: Tómas Örn Tómasson

Ragnar Kjartansson (b. 1976)



***The Visitors*, 2012**

(Still)

Nine channel HD video projection

Duration: 64 minutes

Photos: Elísabet Davidsdóttir

Sound: Christopher McDonald

Video: Tómas Örn Tómasson

Ragnar Kjartansson
 July 26, 2013 - October 27, 2013
 Download Images at: <http://www.thegundgallery.org/press-packet/>

| Artist: | Title of Work: | Year Completed: | Medium: | Duration: | Photos: | Sound: | Video: | Credit Line: |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------|---|
| Ragnar Kjartansson | The Man (still) | 2010 | Video | 49 minutes | NA | NA | NA | Courtesy of the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York, and i8 Gallery, Reykjavik. |
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| Ragnar Kjartansson | The Visitors (still) | 2012 | Nine channel HD video projection | 64 minutes | Elísabet Davidsdóttir | Chris McDonald | Tómas Örn Tómasson | Courtesy of the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York, and i8 Gallery, Reykjavik. |
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Scott, Andrea K.
“Critic’s Notebook - Parallel Lives”
The New Yorker.
February 25, 2013, page 16.

CRITIC’S NOTEBOOK
PARALLEL LIVES

Add to the list of great hallmarks of Icelandic culture—the sagas, the midnight suns, Björk—the duration-based performance art of Ragnar Kjartansson, thirty-seven, whose wrenchingly romantic yet endearingly silly video



installation “The Visitors” is now at the Luhring Augustine gallery. Last summer, the artist and seven musician friends (including a former member of the band Sigur Rós) took up residence in a ramshackle mansion in the Hudson Valley. Back home, in Reykjavík, Kjartansson’s marriage was crumbling, and his then wife, Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir, wrote a poem that the group set to music and performed, individually, in separate rooms of the house, captured on camera in synchronous, nearly hour-long takes. Kjartansson sings his broken heart out, strumming a guitar while nude in a bathtub—a slacker Pagliacci. The imagery conveys a vulnerable beauty and a Gothic romance worthy of Caspar David Friedrich, as if compressing the epic sweep and isolation of the Northern landscape into the run-down grandeur of the interiors. “There are stars exploding around you, and there’s nothing, nothing you can do,” the performers chant, all alone together.

—Andrea K. Scott

Russeth, Andrew.
"On View - Ragnar Kjartansson"
The New York Observer.
February 25, 2013, page B8



on VIEW

AN APPRAISAL OF CURRENT ART OFFERINGS

RAGNAR KJARTANSSON

'The Visitors'
LUHRING AUGUSTINE

The wily Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson spends most of his time on screen in his new film, *The Visitors* (2012), naked in a bathtub, holding an acoustic guitar. Sometimes he strums and sings. "Stars explode all around you / but there's nothing you can do," he croons, over and over. On eight more screens arrayed around the gallery, musicians—a drummer, a pianist, a guitarist and more—located in other rooms of a sprawling old house in upstate New York, join him. A large chorus is perched on a porch outside.

The folk song slowly builds—Mr. Kjartansson ably mans his bath faucets to help along the crescendo—and then falls to its denouement over the film's 64 minutes. As in *Bliss* (2011), his 12-hour performance of the final aria in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Performa biennial two years ago, the character of the music changes as it repeats, becoming by turns solemn, mournful and almost celebratory, but the lyrics, from a poem by the artist's ex-wife, Asdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir, dwell on loss. (Mr. Kjartansson and musician Davíð Þór Jónsson, a frequent collaborator of his, arranged the music.)

It is mesmerizing and moving to wander around the installation, observing these lonely performers in their respective rooms as they listen to each other's parts through headphones, coming together into a greater whole.

When video art becomes so polished, accessible and large-scale (an increasingly prevalent mode for the medium), it risks becoming a gimmick, a kitschy leap for sublimity, but like fellow gallery artist Guido van der Werve, Mr. Kjartansson, is a smart, understated showman, and he finds unpredictable ways of keeping his work grounded: musicians break and share a drink as others continue, and an amateur cannoneer outside threatens disaster.

Eventually they walk away from their instruments one by one, pop a bottle of wine and wander outside into the sunlight and the hills, still singing. Visitors to the gallery, however, are likely to want to remain inside for a few more rounds. (Through March 16, 2013) —Andrew Russeth



Still from
The Visitors
(2012) by
Ragnar
Kjartansson.

Rosenberg, Karen.
"Art in Review: Ragnar Kjartansson"
The New York Times.
February 22, 2013, page C26.

Ragnar Kjartansson

'The Visitors'

Luhning Augustine
531 West 24th Street
Chelsea
Through March 16

Bonhomie and nihilism go hand in hand in "The Visitors," a recent video installation by the talented performance artist Ragnar Kjartansson. Divided among nine channels, it shows Mr. Kjartansson and eight friends making music at the endearingly scruffy mansion Rokeby Farm, in the Hudson Valley.

Like his 2011 piece "Bliss" it involves the repetition of a single piece of music: this time, not a Mozart aria but an original composition by Mr. Kjartansson and David Por Jonsson (with lyrics by Mr. Kjartansson's ex-wife, Asdis Sif Gunnarsdottir). The performers, in separate rooms and in various states of undress — Mr. Kjartansson, for instance, is in the bathtub — play it over and over for the better part of an hour, exploring its versatile, vaguely melancholic refrain ("once again I fall into my feminine ways") from every angle.

Sometimes they entertain themselves as they entertain us, pausing to smoke a cigar or, in Mr. Kjartansson's case, towel off. Eventually they assemble for a rousing, roving a cappella finale, still singing as they wander off away from the camera.

Mr. Kjartansson often uses the emotive power of music as a counterpoint to the drudgery of durational art performance. That may be true of past projects like "Bliss," in which opera singers performed the same aria for 12 straight hours. But "The Visitors" is not the sort of piece to test your patience or your mood. It's a mellow jam session that's almost indistinguishable from its charmingly run-down setting — and, ultimately, an irresistible invitation to la vie bohème.

KAREN ROSENBERG

Sheets, Hilarie M.
"Never Tiring of Repeating Himself"
The New York Times.
Sunday, January 6, 2013, pg AR 19.

Never Tiring Of Repeating Himself

By HILARIE M. SHEETS

IN "The Visitors," a nine-screen video installation by Ragnar Kjartansson that will have its first American showing next month, the artist lies in a pedestal bathtub almost in a trance, strumming a guitar as he repeatedly sings a refrain, "Once again, I fall into my feminine ways." Over the course of an hour his voice falls and rises, on its own and in unison with performers on the other eight screens — each seen as if in a painting, playing an instrument in a different room of a beautiful, run-down mansion and singing the same enigmatic refrain at a dirgelike pace.

Last August the nine performers gathered in a room of the mansion, two hours north of New York City in the Hudson Valley, to rehearse. "The Visitors" would be shot later that week in a single take, with nine cameras distributed around the house, but that day they simulated being in separate rooms by avoiding eye contact.

To one onlooker what was most striking was the extraordinary emotional range and intensity of their performances. Limited to just a few simple lyrics, which they repeated dozens of times, the singers created an entirely absorbing ensemble piece that was alternately tragic and joyful, meditative and clamorous, and that swelled in feeling from melancholic fugue to redemptive gospel choir.

It was not the first such work for Mr. Kjartansson (his name is pronounced RAG-ner kuh-YART-un-sun), an Icelandic artist who, at 36, has spent more than a decade exploring the potential of repetitive performance to yield unexpected meanings, and who has lately become one of the most celebrated performance artists anywhere. In 2009 he was the youngest artist ever to represent Iceland at the Venice

Far right, one of the paintings of the same friend Mr. Kjartansson painted every day for the six months at the Venice Biennale in 2009. Scenes from his videos "The End," below, and "The Man," bottom, on view in "Song," in Boston.



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The New York Times.
Sunday, January 6, 2013, pg AR 19.

Biennale, and two years later his piece "Bliss" won the Malcolm Award for the most innovative work at Performa, the three-week performance art biennial in New York. His traveling museum survey, "Song," is at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston through April 7, and his second solo show at the Luhring Augustine gallery in Chelsea, featuring "The Visitors," will open Feb. 1.

His wide appeal, many admirers say, lies in an ability not just to invoke the deep existential concerns of much endurance-based performance art — anxiety, ennui, other discomfort — but also to push beyond them, toward joy.

"He's someone who understands theater, who understands drama, who understands pleasure and wants the viewer to have a great pleasure," RoseLee Goldberg, the director of Performa, said in a telephone interview. "Most of us think of performance based on the 1970s — difficult, politically engaged." But a work like "Bliss" — in which Mr. Kjartansson and a group of Icelandic opera singers repeated the final aria in Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" for 12 hours with full costumes, set and orchestra — represents "endurance at

a level of sheer ecstasy," she said.

Mr. Kjartansson's understanding of theater runs deep: his mother, Guorun Asmundsdottir, is a well-known actress in Iceland and used to perform with his father, Kjartan Ragnarsson, now a director and playwright. He spent his childhood in the wings of theaters, watching actors rehearse the same scene over and over, and remains fascinated by the way the same words can be constantly made new.

"It's so interesting when a man enters the room and says, 'I don't love you anymore,'" Mr. Kjartansson said, then giving voice to a second actor — "'Why?'" — and then to a director: "Let's do that one more time: 'I don't love you anymore.' 'Why?'"

Watching this process, he said: "You start imagining the story, but there's no story. I was always disappointed when there was really a play."

Which helps explain why he was drawn to performance art. "My works are all kind of anti-storytelling," he said. "They're always about a feeling, but there's no story."

Mr. Kjartansson made his first video performance piece, "Me and My Mother," in 2000, while studying painting at the Iceland Academy of the Arts in Reykjavik. In it he and his mother stand side by side as she spits into his face, ferociously and with complete commitment, over several minutes. He accepts the abuse, occasionally starting to giggle. Mr. Kjartansson restaged the piece five years later, and then repeated it again in 2010 after deciding to continue the cycle every five years.

The series, in which he shifts from boy to man, undermines the idea of the doting mother while also showing Ms. Asmundsdottir's love in acquiescing to her son's unconventional vision. And it is a gift from a son to an aging mother who no longer gets offered parts regularly.

"You get this idea of the progression of them in their relationship and also of Ragnar as an artist," said Anna Stothart, the curator who organized "Song" for the Institute of Contemporary Art and installed the three versions on flat screens there as part of "Song." "There are these silly moments but also these really serious mo-



Sheets, Hilarie M.
 "Never Tiring of Repeating Himself"
 The New York Times.
 Sunday, January 6, 2013, pg AR 19.

ments we have in our relationships with our families."

Mr. Kjartansson's first encounter with the Hudson Valley mansion of "The Visitors" came in 2007, when he was introduced to its owners by a friend. The setting of the 43-room, nearly 200-year-old house, Rokeby Farm, inspired a two-day piece, "Blossoming Trees Performance," in which he assumed the role of plein-air painter in the mode of the Impressionists or Hudson River School artists. With a grand flair obvious in photographs documenting the work, he painted landscapes in a field overlooking the Hudson. The photographs were shown alongside his finished landscapes at the nearby CCS Bard Galleries that year.

Many artists, he said, "are really performing the artist." Despite his painting degree, he added: "I consider myself a hobby painter. It's such a bold, egomaniac act to be, like, 'I'm doing this and it matters!'"

In defense of his arch approach, he said, "I look at irony as something real, as the most human way to express yourself — not making a mockery, but using playfulness."

Mr. Kjartansson played the artist again in Venice in 2009, just after Iceland had fallen into financial ruin. In a 14th-century palazzo he locked himself into a continuous pas de deux between artist and model, making one painting of the same friend in a Speedo every day for the six months of the biennale, as cigarette butts and beer bottles piled up. In the face of his country's crisis, the performance, called "The End," spoke at once to his belief in the beauty of the artistic gesture and to the futility of it.

Mr. Kjartansson is dedicated to what he

calls the "divine boredom" of such marathon performances. "I hope it will offer some kind of a religious moment in a humanistic way," he said.

Key to achieving that moment has been his attention to beauty. A live, three-week performance in 2011, at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh when "Song" opened there, featured the artist's three fair, young nieces continuously singing a fragment of Allen Ginsberg's poem "Song" as misremembered by Mr. Kjartansson. A six-hour video of one day's performance runs in a loop at the show in Boston.

"It's sort of a siren call," Ms. Stothart said of that work. "It's shot really beautifully, and you get caught in the lyrics."

In staging the last aria from "The Marriage of Figaro" for Performa he gave the audience much to take in visually — from the sumptuous costumes to a feast of suckling pig to sustain the performers in the 11th hour. While some singers showed strain over the 12 hours, Mr. Kjartansson never flagged as he sang of repentance and forgiveness at a delirious pitch.

"The word 'endurance' is a little bit too athletic for me," he said. "It's so much harder to be a waiter than to sing opera for 12 hours. Chris Burden and Marina Abramovic gave performance this Houdini status. I don't feel that. It's easier than real life."



Ragnar Kjartansson, right, and other musicians, below right, play in different rooms of an old mansion in his video installation "The Visitors," coming to Chelsea next month.



Surround-Sound Solace

Sink into Ragnar Kjartansson's soggy serenade **BY R.C. BAKER**



Courtesy of the artist and Lühring Augustine, New York / Photo: Elisabet Davidsson

'The Visitors'

Lühring Augustine
 531 West 24th Street
 212-206 9100, luhringaugustine.com
 Through March 16

Although the band broke up three decades ago, Abba continues to reverberate across cultural frontiers. Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson has cribbed the title of the Swedish pop giants' final album, *The Visitors*, recorded when the foursome was dissolving amid divorce and discord, for his nine-screen, 64-minute ensemble piece that mulls the pain of separation as it segues from silly to sublime.

Start with the bearded, pale mastermind himself, reclining in a bathtub in a run-down upstate New York mansion, his guitar dipping into the soapy water. Kjartansson's image is projected onto one of the screens, each of which focuses on a single musician somewhere in the huge house. A banjo player tunes up, an accordionist adjusts her microphone, a guitarist settles onto the edge of a bed while a buxom woman lolls behind him. Finishing his work in one room, a technician hustles out the door only to appear moments later on another screen. Soon the players are all wearing headphones and

that acute gaze of musicians everywhere awaiting their cue.

Unlike David's Marat, the 37-year old Kjartansson has not been murdered in his bath, though he seems bereft as he begins strumming his damp instrument and singing a refrain that all the musicians take up: "Once again/ I fall into/ my feminine ways." The words come from a poem written by Kjartansson's ex-wife, the artist's own divorce adding a pang reinforced by the performers' isolation: Each musician works alone, headphones joining them in communal sound. But these aren't feuding band members arriving in Bentleys on different days to lay down separate tracks for an engineer to knit together. Instead, the music unfurls in a single take, entwining the musicians in the ebb and flow of the simple tune while the multiple screens act like the torqued expanse of an Escher drawing. One camera focuses on an older man drowsing in a lawn chair and a disheveled chorus lounging on a white-colonnaded veranda, this exterior shot supplying quick context for gallery-goers entering at any point during the continuous loop.

After one harmonic convergence, two participants join for a toast, their glasses clinking. Kjartansson and his collaborators

**Alone, but
 not solo.**

Baker, R.C.

"Surround-Sound Solace"

The Village Voice.

March 13-19, 2013, Vol. LVIII, No. 11, pg. 24.

haven't filmed a documentary of an event; instead, they've created an enveloping emotional space. Speakers arrayed throughout the gallery create a sonic environment that sets audience members wandering amid the screens, trying to match individual sounds to performances as if visitors to the mansion itself. Its shabby, spacious rooms, atmospheric as Sargent paintings, combine with the melody to rise above the sum of these bedraggled parts. Another repeated lyric straddles the cosmic and the intimate: "There are stars / exploding around you / and there's nothing / nothing / you can do"—a sentiment echoed when the elderly gent occasionally sets off a cannon.

While it's helpful to know of Kjartansson's personal woes and the title's derivation, a viewer arriving cold will still be pulled in by the unfeigned intensity of the players, perhaps tempted to invent fictions about the lissome accordionist in her revealing smock or the piano player's fetish for hefty cigars.

Eventually the drummer leans forward, hands pressed together, as if grateful that this protracted take has arrived somewhere within the realm of what they had collectively envisioned. He stands up, subtracting his instrument

from the quieting dirge. Soon the players gather around a piano with a bottle of champagne. Now, sans headphones, they all sing along to the guitar strumming of Kjartansson, risen in a red bath towel, which he momentarily doffs to sop up spilled bubbly—a jocular coda to his theme of emotional exposure. With homely bonhomie, the troupe strolls outside into the Hudson River Valley's verdant lushness, the rolling hills, like the undulating melody, dissipating into late-summer mist.

Finally, the technician walks through empty rooms, whistling and killing cameras for the few minutes it takes the screens to go dark, conveying a sense of the manse's sprawl. Kjartansson has exchanged the thundering sensations of the multiplex for an intimate experience, conjuring a portrayal of heartbreak leavened with the hope that you can always move on, literally and figuratively.
