

over_the_volcano>

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No one disputes the claim that through the ages, the land has been a major factor in shaping the character of the Icelandic people. This has for the most part been connected to the people's struggle against the forces of nature for survival, the destructive powers of ice and waterfalls, cold temperatures and damp conditions, and in particular the volcanic eruptions and lava flows that have destroyed fertile ground and laid waste to flourishing communities.

But the nation has survived, and the 20th century has seen dramatic changes in the lives of Icelanders because they now take advantage of the energy and the natural resources which this land has always possessed. Technology, allowing for the harnessing of waterfalls and geothermal power, has made it possible for Icelanders to lead a rich life in a country, which in earlier times, was considered to be at the edge of the inhabitable world.

Along with these changes our attitude to the land has altered, but we have as yet failed to explore these changes in depth.

-What does Iceland represent to Icelanders at the beginning of the 21st century?

-What do we want Iceland to be for us and our ever-increasing number of visitors in the future?

-A glorious display of decorative summer pictures?

-A mysterious subject for paintings?

-An unlimited venue for power stations?

-An almost untouched oasis for environmentalists?

The exhibition **over_the_volcano>** is a small contribution to this discussion. The art director, Einar Garibaldi Eiríksson, has begun a process that encourages us to think about nature's role in the arts of the people, their awareness, and even when conducting business; the land is the same but the attitudes of the inhabitants are changing.

And here, references to the great volcano Hekla, are very important: Hekla is capricious and terrifying at the same time - the paradox of being magnificent, tantalizing and an irreplaceable part of the Icelanders' view of nature. But will it remain so forever?

We fly over Hekla and attempt to form our own opinion based on the many chords the mountain has struck in the hearts of the nation's artists.

An exhibition such as this cannot come into being without the cooperation of many people. On behalf of Reykjavík Art Museum, I should like to thank the large number of individuals, institutions and companies that have taken part, lent works of art, photographs or exhibits to the exhibition, or in some other way supported the project and thus contributed to turning the idea which the exhibition is based on into the reality which can be seen in the exhibition halls of Kjarvalsstaðir - Reykjavík Art Museum.

Eiríkur Þorláksson, Director, Reykjavík Art Museum.

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[?] flying_ over_hekla>

« A modern painter does not see the mountains in profile from a distance, their distance is no longer Romantic, it has become too easy to get at them, around them and above them. A bluish mound in the upper half of a painting is no longer a valid expression of a mountain. When one reaches the summit of Hekla then Hekla no longer exists as a mountain; and if we fly over Hekla, then she has turned into a hole in the ground, a crater. »

Halldór Kiljan Laxness

The purpose of the exhibition **over_the_volcano>** is to pose questions about our visual approach to Iceland's natural world. The choice was Hekla because it has remained a constant attraction for scientists and artists, Icelandic and foreign alike, and is therefore an ideal venue for examining the variety of visual appreciation and perception of the land. Visual representation of Hekla, in maps, paintings, photographs and media, to name a few approaches, tells us a lot about our world of ideas. This world may be regarded as an open book waiting to be read.

The exhibition is intended as an informal survey, 'Flying around and above Hekla', to join together and activate different visual worlds in an attempt to improve understanding of the foundations of visual arts. The visual worlds are familiar but there is a need to identify them and put them in to context with other ideas, because it is not until their premises are also visible that we can perceive them in our minds and begin to discuss the importance of visual knowledge. The exhibition aims at making the visual arts break the silence and it is left up to the viewer to discuss the issues.

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In his essay on Kjarval, published by Helgafell in 1950, Nobel laureate Halldór Kiljan Laxness, had this to say about our altered view of nature: "A modern painter does not see the mountains in profile from a distance, their distance is no longer Romantic, it has become too easy to get at them, around them and above them. A bluish mound in the upper half of a painting is no longer a valid expression of a mountain. When one reaches the summit of Hekla then Hekla no longer exists as a mountain; and if we fly over Hekla, then she has turned into a hole in the ground, a crater." In the introductory remark of the same essay, Laxness poses the question: "What wonderful thing made a young boy from a remote corner of the country fifty years ago start to paint pictures?" The answer is perhaps to be found in the words of Kjarval, who once declared that his interest in painting originated from colourful illustrations on tinned goods.

[1 . 1] Kristján Magnússon « Kjarval at Work » around 1950, b/w photographs, Reykjavik Art Museum. Kjarval has long been known for his unique approach to nature. An important feature of his paintings is that he worked in proximity

to nature, proximity which created mutual contact and developed his individual vision and understanding as an artist. However, it must not be forgotten that the presence of the landscape painting tradition, society and the tinned goods, further influenced his vision. The landscape painting cannot therefore be regarded as a simple representation of nature. [1.2] Þórarinn B. Þorláksson « Hekla, a

View from Laugardalur » 1917, oil on canvas, 44x92 cm. National Gallery of Iceland. When educated Icelanders became acquainted with the culture of foreign cities in earnest, along with Romantic thought in poetry and fine arts, we got our first landscapes. It is interesting to note that the first Icelandic landscapes were by Sigurður Guðmundsson and they were scenery for the play "The Outlaws" (*Útilegumennirnir*) by Matthías Jochumsson, which premiered in 1862. The landscape in Icelandic painting was therefore originally intended as a background for certain events rather than an independent project. The same development took place in Europe several centuries before, where the landscape slowly changed from being a neutral backdrop to a 'stealer of the scene'. [1.3] Ásgrímur Jónsson « On the Banks of

River Þjórsá » 1908, 84x105 cm. oil on canvas, The Ásgrímur Jónsson Museum. Landscapes always possess some encoded system of messages, both connected with the myths of the past and the expectations of the period when they are created. The ennoblement of the Icelandic features of nature, along with the idealization of the people who lived and worked in the country, was one part of the struggle for independence. The ideal of the pastoral scene was painted in the spirit of the poet Jonas Hallgrímsson, romanticizing human toil and the bounty of the land, exaggerated with the clear blue sky and bright colours. (Standing on Hekla's stony height / you stared at braided rivers gleaming / over the peaceful plains and streaming / out to an ocean broad and bright...)

[1.4] Jón Stefánsson « Women Looking Toward Hekla » 1960, oil on canvas, 73x92 cm. National Gallery of Iceland. During the struggle for independence, the pioneers looked toward important places, such as Hekla and Þingvellir, as symbols loaded with meaning. Natural beauty alone did not determine their choice of subjects. It was also the possibility of endowing beauty with meaning for a certain purpose. This strategy concentrates attention on the painting and the artist makes use of its power and effectiveness in a determined way.

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Landscape has a history which is based on myths, magic, science, religion and art, a history which has affected our view and understanding of nature. Formerly, our view was formed by a close contact with nature, but progress in science and technology has gradually distanced us from it. The telescope, the microscope, the speed of a car, height of an airplane's flight, the distance of the satellite and the live broadcast have fundamentally altered our perception and formed our attitudes toward nature. An illuminating description of this change in attitude is found in the memoirs of Brynjúlfur Jónsson from Minni-Núpur, « The Story of my Thinking » (Saga hugsunar minnar), when he recollects two events from 1850: (I was probably a little more than eleven years old when I happened to visit another farm where I saw a map of Northern Europe, the one that came with the Descriptive Geography of Gunnlaugur Oddsson. This delighted me enormously. I examined the map very carefully, read all the names of the countries and saw that my former ideas about the world were far from correct. Now they had to go away and were soon forgotten, and from then on I imagined the countries as I had seen on the map. While I was looking at this map I was told that another farmer, who lived further away, possessed maps of the whole world. I would not rest until I had received permission to visit him and view them. These were all the maps that came with Gunnlaugur Oddsson's Descriptive Geography. My knowledge was much improved by this.)

- [2.1] Fernando Bertelli « De Islanda Insvla »** 1556, Venice, 26,7x18,8 cm. National Library of Iceland - University Library. From the beginning of map-making in Iceland, Hekla has been given special prominence, as it was infamous all over the world for being one of the entrances to Hell. Bertelli's map is probably a replica of Olaus Magnus' map of the Northern countries from 1539, but replicas were a matter of course and were commonplace for centuries.
- [2.2] Abraham Ortelius « Islandia »** 1590 and later, Antwerpen, 33x48 cm. National Library of Iceland - University Library. Ortelius' map was a turning point in the map-making of Iceland because it seems to have been based on fairly sound knowledge of the country, and many think this may be traced to Bishop Guðbrandur Þorláksson at Hólar. The map shows a good depiction of the coastline, but it is as if all the internal features have disappeared, the highlands are sparse and Vatnajökull glacier has disappeared.
- [2.3] Johannes Vrients « Islandia »** 1601 and later, 8,4x11,5 cm. National Library of Iceland - University Library.
- [2.4] Johannes Janssonius « Islandia »** 1628 and later, 3,5x19,3 cm. National Library of Iceland - University Library.
- [2.5] Johannes Cloppenburg « Islandia »** 1630, 18,3x25,2 cm. National Library of Iceland - University Library.
- [2.6] Joris Carolus and Willem Janszoon Blaeu « Tabula Islandiæ »** 1630 and later, Amsterdam, 38x49,5 cm. National Library of Iceland - University Library.
- [2.7] Vincenzo Coronelli « Isola d'Islanda »** 1692 to 1694, Venice, 22,6x30 cm. National Library of Iceland - University Library.
- [2.8] Pieter van der Aa and D. Blefkenius Scheeps « Togt gedaan na Ysland en Kunsten van Groenland »** 1706 and later, 15x23,2 cm. National Library of Iceland - University Library.
- [2.9] Pierre Duval « L'Islande »** 1731, Amsterdam, 10,7x13,2 cm. National Library of Iceland - University Library.
- [2.10] Henri du Sauzet « Islande »** 1734 and later, 18,2x25 cm. National Library of Iceland - University Library.
- [2.11] Emanuel Bowen « An Improved Map of Iceland »** About 1750, 9x14 cm. (the Icelandic part). National Library of Iceland - University Library.
- [2.12] Björn Gunnlaugsson and Olaf Nikolas Olsen « Uppdráttur Íslands »** 1849, Copenhagen, 56x68,7 cm. © The Icelandic Geodetic Survey. Björn Gunnlaugsson was a teacher at the grammar school at Bessastaðir. He had a university degree in mathematics and had worked as a map surveyor abroad for some time. He worked on the survey in cooperation with Olaf Nikolas, Director of the Danish General Staff Survey. His map was a major scientific achievement in its day, although it had its faults. Björn Gunnlaugsson travelled little in the

central highlands and other uninhabited areas, and thus he received less attention in the map-making process.

[2.13] Icelandic Geodetic Survey « Hekla » 1989 © The Icelandic Geodetic Survey. **[2.14] Icelandic Geodetic Survey « Hekla »** 1991, aerial photograph from 5.486 m. M 0527, 55x55 cm. scale 1:15.000 © The Icelandic Geodetic Survey. **[2.15] Icelandic Geodetic Survey « Iceland »** 1986 - 1992, composite satellite photograph of Iceland, based on 16 LANDSAT TM photographs, tapes 3.2.1. © The Icelandic Geodetic Survey. The history of map-making reflects a slow development from a mythological geology of older maps to the scientific approach present in the later ones. We see how Hekla changes from a fire-spouting entrance to Hell to an innocent-looking symbol on a piece of paper. **[2.16] N.N. « Hecla en Islande »** undated, engraving, 11,5x15,5 cm. National Museum of Iceland. **[2.17] N.N. « De Berg Heekla »** engraving, probably Dutch, 16x10 cm. National Museum of Iceland. There are numerous examples of stylised images of Hekla were it used to remind one of the closeness of Hell. The text in the picture refers to the Revelations of Isaiah. **[2.18] N.N. « Hecla »** engraving, probably Dutch, 11x20,5 cm. National Museum of Iceland. It is obvious that some of the artists who made pictures of Hekla had never travelled to Iceland; this is apparent from looking at their renderings of Hekla, the shape and location of the mountain. Yet, the pictures indicate how widely the fame and might of the mountain had travelled. **[2.19] Friedrich Thienemann « Reise im Norden Europas...1820 bis 1821 »** from a traveller's journal, Leipzig, 1827, National Museum of Iceland. **[2.20] N.N. « From a Traveller's Journal »** c.a. 1809, engraving, 26x18 cm. National Museum of Iceland. **[2.21] Carl Ludwig Petersen « Hekla »** 1847, watercolour, National Gallery of Iceland. **[2.22] Andreas I. Haalland « Hekla 8 November 1845, at 10 p.m. »** 1845, painting, 16x21 cm. National Museum of Iceland. Andreas I. Haalland was a Danish doctor who worked in the Westman Islands and saw the 1845 eruption of Hekla. This is believed to be the first eyewitness picture of a Hekla eruption. **[2.23] Emanuel Larsen « Hecla paa Island »** 1849, engraving, 10x13 cm. National Museum of Iceland. **[2.24] N.N. « Eruption in Hekla »** 1878, engraving from [The Graphic], Hjá Magna, Laugavegur 15. **[2.25] John T. Stanley « Hekla and a camp in Selsund »** 1789, watercolour, 11x18 cm. National Museum of Iceland. **[2.26] John T. Stanley « Mt. Heckla »** 1789, watercolour, 15x20 cm. National Museum of Iceland. The British nobleman John T. Stanley had gone on his "Grand Tour" to the most

important points of interest in Italy before he came to Iceland. The journey was undertaken for scientific purposes, but no doubt the lust for adventure played its part, combined with the expectation of an exotic environment and a modicum of danger. Stanley himself painted a few watercolours and sketches in his journals. Upon returning home, professional painters made complete copies of the works and these paintings are the only "findings" that appeared as a result of the expedition. **[2.27] Nicolas Pocock « Mt. Heckla »** 1789, watercolour, 56,5x73 cm. National Museum of Iceland. **[2.28] Philip Reinagle « Mt. Heckla »** 1790, watercolour, 49x60,8 cm. National Museum of Iceland. **[2.29] Edward Dayes « Mt. Heckla »** » 1789, watercolour, 54x68,5 cm. National Museum of Iceland. **[2.30] Sigfús Eymundsson « Hekla »** c.a. 1880, photograph, 16x20 cm. National Museum of Iceland. This is probably the oldest photograph of Hekla in existence. It was taken on Sigfús Eymundsson's first of two trips to Hekla, just before 1880. Travelling to the area was a major undertaking because of the bulk and weight of all the photographic equipment that had to be taken along in that period. **[2.31] W. G. Collingwood « Hekla from Fellsmúli »** 1897, watercolour, 20,5x34,5 cm. National Museum of Iceland. Collingwood came to Iceland in the late 1890s. He had been interested in the country for a long time but his purpose for the journey was partly to make descriptions of historic sites for the English readers of the Icelandic sagas. **[2.32] RAX / Ragnar Axelsson « Climbing Hekla » « Flying over Hekla »** 2000, colour photographs © Morgunblaðið. Like the maps, these photographs clearly show the difference between man's perception when he is viewing the world from soaring heights or with his feet on the ground. Flying gives a general overview and a sense of context, but walking offers detail and variety. **[2.33] Þórarinn B. Þorláksson « A Morning in Laugardalur »** 1923, oil on canvas, 58x72 cm. National Gallery of Iceland. **[2.34] Jón Stefánsson « Hekla »** 1935, oil on wood, 80x116 cm. Reykjavík Art Museum. **[2.35] Nína Tryggvadóttir « Eruption »** 1964, oil on canvas, 131x105 cm. National Gallery of Iceland. **[2.36] Haraldur Jónsson « Hekla »** 2001, sound waves and time, artist's collection. The centuries-old history of looking toward Hekla has brought to everyone his own picture of Hekla which has very little to do with the mountain itself. Haraldur Jónsson's Hekla is such a picture, echoing both the distant voice of Þórarinn B. Þorláksson from the first summer

house communities of Laugardalur, and voices of modern hikers climbing the mountain. [2.37] **Einar Falur Ingólfsson « On Kjalvegur »** 2000, C-print, 75x75 cm each, artist's collection. [2.38] **Húbert Nói Jóhannesson « 64°12'47"N. / 21°42'84"W. 183° T.N. {True North} » « 64°12'47"N. / 21°42'83"W. 52° T.N. {True North} » « 64°13'64"N. / 21°48'94"W. 186° T.N. {True North} » « 64°09'46"N. / 21°56'27"W. 65° T.N. {True North} »** 2001, oil on canvas, 25x40 cm each, artist's collection. The placement pictures of Húbert Nói and Einar Falur are a reference to the precise scientific topographical knowledge of today. The reference may also be seen as a reference to religious and secular methods of orientation of various ancient civilizations. [2.39] **Hrafnkell Sigurðsson « Untitled » « Untitled »** 2000, Lambda photographs, 74,5x110 cm each, Reykjavik Art Museum. The tents of various scientists who have made their way to Hekla through the ages are an indication of the desire to improve man's understanding of nature. Hrafnkell Sigurðsson's tents are connected with this same desire, but with a different purpose and another approach; the tents are not pitched in interesting or noteworthy locations, but completely utopian ones and thus seem to refer to explorations of possibilities rather than something given. [2.40] **Various writings { a } J.C. Schytte « Hekla og dens sidste udbrud »** Copenhagen, 1847, National Museum of Iceland. **{ b } George S. Mackenzie « Travels in the Island of Iceland »** London, 1811, National Library of Iceland - University Library. **{ c } Paul Gaimard « Voyage en Islande et Groenland »** Paris, 1842, National Library of Iceland - University Library. **{ d } Oddur Erlendsson « A Catalogue of the Hekla Eruption 1845-6 and its Effects »** [Dagskrá um Heklugosið 1845-6 og afleiðingar þess] photograph of a manuscript, Helgi Bragason, National Library of Iceland - University Library. **{ e } Halldór Ásgeirsson « Lava »** 1994, molten lava and paper, Reykjavik Art Museum. **{ f } Georg Guðni Hauksson « Working Sketches »** artist's collection. **{ g } Húbert Nói Jóhannesson « Sketchbook »** 1996, artist's collection. **{ h } Icelandic Geodetic Survey « Flying over Hekla »** 2001, stills from a flight simulator program: [A view to the north / A view to the south / A view straight down] © Icelandic Geodetic Survey. **{ i } Árni Hjartarson « At Hekla »** [Á Hekluslóðum] 1995, Yearbook of the Touring Club of Iceland.

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In recent years, the difference between nature and landscape has disappeared. As a result the desire for uniting with nature has led to an excessive adoration of the landscape picture, whose supply has increased with demand. In former times, only churches and heads of state had the means to commission the making of pictures. Today these have been replaced by major companies and entrepreneurs. Their treatment of the landscape becomes almost as unreal and absurd as pornography. The mindless use of landscape can have a formative effect and is even immoral. Maybe there should be a ban on landscapes similar to pornography!

[3.1] Icelandair « Menu » unsigned menu, Icelandair. The advertising world of today bases its language on simple and easily digested messages. The geography of gaze has gradually changed Hekla from the repulsive to the attractive and thus opened possibilities to use its image in connection with airplane food, which immediately becomes desirable.

[3.2] Hringur Jóhannesson « Watching Nature { Paolo Rossi } » The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service. One of the main themes in Hringur Jóhannesson's work is the examination of the connection between man and nature.

In his works, the landscape appears through doors and windows of buildings and vehicles, which refers to the beginnings of the landscape tradition. The distance of the copy is emphasized in a speculation about who is closer to us: a sports hero in a direct broadcast or the "Queen of the Mountains" in the distance beyond the windowpane.

[3.3] Hekla « Desk Calendar » design, Birtingur. When the struggle for independence was at its height it was not unusual to use pictures of Hekla or Þingvellir as symbols for our history and culture. In today's advertisements, nature is used to denote something more general, a leisure or holiday playground where lost contacts with nature are renewed. This dreamlike vision often appears in the mass media flood of images, for example in a jeep safari where the dream of eternal life in a natural paradise comes true with the help of highly polished vehicles splashing in muddy puddles.

[3.4] Eimskip « Calender » 2000, photograph © Ragnar Th. Sigurðsson. **[3.5] Iceland Telecom « Telephone**

Directory » 2000, front page picture by Ásgrímur Jónsson, design Nonni og Manni plc. Iceland Telecom. **[3.6] Golli / Kjartan Þorbjörnsson**

« Hekla » 2000, press photograph © Morgunblaðið. **[3.7] National Power Company « Cards »** unsigned, promotional material, National Power Company. Dressing up nature in press photos, advertisements and all kinds of promotional materials is characterized by the one-sided evaluation of material wealth. The landscape has become a commodity. **[3.8]**

Íslands Banki « Bank notes » 10 IKR 1920 - 1939, 7x12,3 cm / 50 IKR 1904 - 1939, 9,5x15 cm © Laxakort Ltd. Hjá Magna, Laugavegur 15. **[3.9]**

Ásgeir Lárússon « Hekla, 3 October 2071 » - 1997, plaster, 24x23 cm, artist's collection. When the marketing of nature has been completed, nothing remains but making 'souvenirs', pictorial representations of events which may take place sometime in the future. **[3.10] Georg Guðni Hauksson**

« Hágöngur » 1995, oil on canvas, 75x200 cm. Guðmundur Ingólfsson's collection. The massive flow of information and images which pelts us constantly has gradually made us insensitive to their meaning. We tend to accept them at face value and forget the fact that painting the gap between the Hágöngur mountains is not due to sentimentality alone; we are watching a visual statement which demands to be taken seriously. **[3.11] National Power Company**

« Advertisement for the Hágöngur Reservoir » 1999, newspaper advertisement, design Nonni og Manni. **[3.12] The**

Highlands Group « Advertisement for the Hágöngur Reservoir » » 1999, photograph RAX and Guðmundur Páll Ólafsson, design Hvíta húsið. When the discussion about the construction of the Hágöngur Reservoir was most intense, two interesting advertisements were published; one was a poster from the environmentalists where the emphasis was on the necessity to preserve the area from man-made reservoirs, and the other was from the National Power Company which promoted the project. Although the causes were different, both parties used the same language to make their views known, i.e. they published pictures taken "before and after" the reservoir's construction. The main difference between the representations was that one of the parties was clearly with their feet on the ground whereas the other soared high over the area. **[3.13] Svavar Guðnason « Hágöngur »**

1947, oil on canvas, 130x97 cm. (photograph of painting), Art Gallery of the Federation of Labour. Following the discussion in recent years about the preservation of nature and the exploitation of natural resources a committee has been appointed whose task is to put forward ideas of the "visual evaluation" of nature. Recently, the committee proposed a system of classification which is intended to be the basis for this evaluation. Surprisingly, the classification does not take into account the enormous visual evaluation which has been promulgated by the visual arts and literature. Instead it is based on historically connected ideas of taste, which are likely to turn quickly into small change in dealing with public authorities. **[3.14] Eyjólfur Einarsson « Rotor »**

» 2000, oil on canvas, 170x240 cm. artist's collection. If our culture only sees the landscape as economically productive at any given time, we will soon be faced with the landscape we deserve. **[3.15] Hallgrímur Helgason « Holiday '00 »** » 2000, digital print on canvas, 170x327 cm. Reykjavík Art Museum. The summer cottage is designed around the horizon. It is intended to bring nature into the living-room, where we can enjoy it effortlessly without sacrificing any of our civilized comforts.



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[4] images>

A landscape is not just the image that the artist makes of the landscape but also the general image which the works of man create in the land. This includes fields, pastures, roads and dams, as well as pictures, poems and folk tales. The general image is a landscape filled with meaning long before the artist pays attention to it. From this viewpoint, a landscape is just a picture of a picture. By turning his attention to the nature of the language of images, and visual representation, the artist attempts to define his position within the general view and rediscover the visibility of art through the representation itself.

[4.1] Sigfús Eymundsson « Hekla I. and II. » c.a. 1885, photograph, 18,5x24 cm. National Gallery of Iceland. In his second of two trips to Hekla, Sigfús Eymundsson encountered bad weather, but he was undaunted and painted Hekla into his photograph when he got home. It seemed to be a secondary consideration whether the painting resembled the mountain or not because he painted Hekla as he remembered it from an old engraving. **[4.2] Sigurður Tómasson « Búrfell and Hekla »** c.a. 1930, stereoscopic photographs, National Museum of Iceland. In spite of new and varied techniques in visual representation, it seems that each new picture is just an echo of those which

already exist. They become an independent continuation of a film series with the same hero in the leading role. Whether Hekla appears to us in a photograph or a painting it never lets its many admirers down. Hekla has acquired an independent existence in picture-making, and outside of it the reality of the mountain does not exist. **[4.3] Magnús Ólafsson « Hekla »** c.a. 1910 - 1930, b/w photograph, Reykjavik Photographic Archive. **[4.4] Ólafur Magnússon « Þjórsá and Hekla »** c.a. 1930 - 1940, b/w photograph, Reykjavik Photographic Archive. **[4.5] Snorri Arinbjarnar « Búrfell and Hekla »** 1932, oil on canvas, 65x75 cm, National Gallery of Iceland. **[4.6] Jóhannes Geir « Hekla, a View from Laugardalur »** 1990, oil on canvas, 120x180 cm. Hekla collection. In the same way as the photograph by Sigfús Eymundsson is unthinkable without the engraving, the picture by Jóhannes Geir is unthinkable without the Hekla paintings of Ásgrímur Jónsson. These paintings in turn would be unthinkable without the poetry of Jónas Hallgrímsson and his vision of nature would be unthinkable without... **[4.7] Birgir Andrésón « Eruption in Hekla 1947, 12 pennies » « Eruption in Hekla 1947, 35 pennies »** 2001, lacquer on MDF 88x68 cm. each, artist's collection. In the world of recycling it is quite normal for old stamps to be revived in a remake which gives them a new meaning in a different context. In exactly this way, like a shadow or reflection, the visible seems to appear in its invisible way. **[4.8] Kristján Steingrímur Jónsson « Hekla 1935 »** 1999 **« Hekla 1998 »** 2001, digitally enhanced photographs 65x51 cm. artist's collection. The artist's attempt to make art a meaningful form of expression includes the revision of the symbols which direct our perception of the land down a certain course. The Hekla picture is one of these symbols and it can be found in these bits from the "Hekla pictures" of Jón Stefánsson and Ragna Róbertsdóttir. **[4.9] Húbert Nói Jóhannesson « Painting »** 1994, oil on canvas 81,5x57,5 cm. artist's collection. When the picture becomes conscious of itself it becomes a model and subject, no matter whether it is real or imagined: (In my spiritual habitat hangs this picture of Þingvellir by Þórarinn B. Þorláksson. I have always wanted to move it from there and view it with my eyes. The work is dedicated to Þórarinn B. Þorláksson.) H.N. '96. **[4.10] Kristinn E. Hrafnsson « End of Journey { Homage } »** 1999 - 2001, photograph, 103x106 cm. artist's collection. Dealing with the meaning of history does not necessarily

refer to the validity of the meaning in itself, it rather emphasizes the history of meaning, how meaning has come into being in endless interpretations, hypotheses as well as misunderstandings. [4.11] **Sigríður Björg Sigurðardóttir** « I. The Comet Arrives, II. The Comet Departs, III. The Sea Returns » 1999, oil on canvas, 27x35 cm each, artist's collection. When the copy has freed itself of the "aura" of the prototype it is capable of everything; all subjects become equally magnificent, the Moominvalley is no different from « Hraunteigar at Hekla », there is no difference between a real volcano and a TV cartoon. [4.12] **Kristín Reynisdóttir** « Hekla » 2001, mixed media, 110x150x150 cm. artist's collection. [4.13] **Hreinn Friðfinnsson** « From Mont Sainte-Victoire » 1998, frottage, 50x65 cm each, Kristinn E. Hrafnsson's collection. Some works are based on references and dedications which arouse feelings that eradicate whole centuries. The past comes alive and Cézanne is ever present. [4.14] **Halldóra Ísleifsdóttir / Hlín Gylfadóttir / Jóni Jónsdóttir / Sigrún Hrólfsdóttir / Særún Stefánsdóttir** « The Youngest Generation » 1997, digitally enhanced photographs, 140x87 cm each, The Living Art Museum. In 1997, the art directors of « Undir pari » and « Gúlp! » were invited to exhibit in the Living Art Museum. Instead of inviting the artists who had exhibited in the galleries until then, they showed pictures of themselves with the title, "It matters which party you go to". This simple and bold decision was neither hedonistic nor arrogant. They look toward us and offer a dialogue; whether it is nature in art or art in nature, ours is the choice. The blue tinge behind them is no accident; they have decided to turn their backs to it, which is both a conscious remake and a quotation.

[5.6]



[5.1]

[5] nature's_ palette>

We have experienced how the visual arts teach us to look at things. A good example is Kjarval and the influence his work has had on our perception of nature. But it is not enough to look to the old masters; the visual appreciation of nature is in constant revision. The important thing is that neither the visual evaluation of works such as « Nature's Palette » nor other contemporary works, is kept in silence. We must uncover the mystique that often surrounds works of art in order to access the knowledge that they convey to us.

[5.1] Jóhannes S. Kjarval « Nature's Palette » 1962-1963, oil on canvas, 30x40 cm. Reykjavik Art Museum. There is a tendency to regard visual evaluation as lightweight or second class knowledge. For example, the vision that appears in the works and various comments of Kjarval has been studied very little and much more is made of his eccentric actions and behaviour, seemingly in order to devalue his political and philosophical importance.

[5.2] Helgi Sigurðsson « Illustrations » c.a. 1850, From Helgi Sigurðsson's manuscript "Instructions for the arts of drawing and painting" (*Ávisun um uppdráttar og málalartistina*), photograph Helgi Bragason, National Library of Iceland - University Library. Helgi Sigurðsson's essay on "The art of drawing and painting" is the oldest document about art teaching in Icelandic. It includes several school-book examples about

the presentation and creation of visual arts, based on the academic theories of the 19th century. It contains these examples of the laws of perspective, this invention of the Renaissance which marked an important step in the representation of reality in visual art. **[5.3] Hafþís Helgadóttir « Perception »** 1995, videos and drawings, three TV

screens and maps VIII 120x150 cm each, artist's collection. [A camera moving slowly and randomly in a continuous take is a manifestation of the visibility of the camera to the subject. Vertical, horizontal and diagonal movements in the video's side by side, constantly change the composition and orientation between the screens. The illustrations may be seen as an extension of the observation or viewing, an abstraction of a real object in real time. The action of drawing (creating) derives from watching and observing, visual experience is produced and transformed into some medium. It is endowed with a dimension which, possibly, changes the view of the original subject.] H.H. 1995. **[5.4] Jóhannes S. Kjarval « Drying the Hay after an Eruption in Hekla »** 1947 -

1964, oil on canvas, 162x275 cm. National Gallery of Iceland. Even when oversized, there is nothing heroic in the canvases of Kjarval. They describe a delicate knowledge that has been acquired through a long process of experiments, mistakes and repetitions. The Hekla we see is a witness to how Kjarval becomes an artist through his vision of nature and the action of painting. **[5.5] Georg Guðni Hauksson « Hekla »** 1985, oil on canvas, 200x285 cm. University of Iceland Art Collection. Our perception of nature changes, not only because of our movements, weather conditions, light or temperature, but also because of the images that language and culture have implanted in our minds. [I paint the mountain with myself / I paint myself into the mountain / I paint the mountain from my mind.] G.G.H. 1987. **[5.6] Ásgrímur Jónsson « Hekla »** 1927, oil on canvas, 110x140 cm. National Gallery of Iceland. Our

visual perception is formed through the vision of past generations and the reality of nature no longer exists except as a picture. We discover it through the eyes of art and Hekla does its best to imitate the pictures that have been made of it. **[5.7] Jón Stefánsson « Hraunteigar at Hekla »** 1930, oil on canvas, 110x141 cm. Reykjavík Art Museum. Both Ásgrímur Jónsson and Jón Stefánsson painted Hekla numerous times. Their regular trips to the mountain seem to be connected with a personal obsession reaching far beyond the desire to

capture the mountain on canvas. An obsession which results in visual knowledge. **[5.8] Helgi Þorgils Friðjónsson « Hekla »** 1995 -1997, oil on canvas, 45x55 cm. artist's collection. **[5.9] Karólína Lárusdóttir « Hekla »** 1995, oil on canvas, 93x105 cm. Hekla collection. **[5.10] Snorri Arinbjarnar « Hekla »** undated, oil on canvas, 60x70 cm. National Gallery of Iceland. **[5.11] Júlíana Sveinsdóttir « Hekla »** 1936, oil on canvas, 66x76 cm. collection of Knútur Björnsson. **[5.12] Halldór Ásgeirsson « The Conception of Vesuvius and Hekla Under a Full Moon »** 2001, the small hours of 6 June, welded lava, artist's collection. Melting together lava from two of the most famous volcanoes in the world creates a chemical transformation which becomes both a personal eruption and a symbolic action that has references to different civilizations.

[5.7]



[6.2]

journalists this was a turning point because this was the first time an eruption on Hekla had been predicted with such accuracy. During the next minutes and hours, the eruption was carefully monitored and its progress described in detail. Thus, the eruption took on the guise of a total media event, suggesting that man's control over nature had reached unknown heights. **[6.4] Jónas Erlendsson « Hekla's eruption plume »** 2000, press photograph © Morgunblaðið. Soon after Hekla's eruption began, news and photographs of the event were published on the Internet, including this photograph which is held to be the first press photograph of the 2000 eruption. Technology ensured easy access to an experience which otherwise would be foreign to us. **[6.5] Jón Leifs « Hekla »** Op. 52, for chorus and orchestra (to a text by Jónas Hallgrímsson) 1961, 11'22 © Icelandic Symphony Orchestra, conductor En Shao with The Schola Cantorum, choirmaster Hörður Áskelsson. It is believed that the Hekla eruption in 1947 was the inspiration for this powerful work. Along with traditional percussion, rocks, sirens, chains and even gunshots can be heard. **[6.6] Brynhildur Þorgeirsdóttir « Mountain I. »** 1998, mixed media, 217x45x45 cm. Reykjavík Art Museum. **[6.7] Sigurgeir Jónasson « Hekla eruption »** 2000, press photograph © Morgunblaðið. In aesthetics, the terms 'beautiful' and 'sublime' are frequently used. The difference in degree is that the beautiful belongs to what is controlled and made with artistic sensibility, whereas the sublime is rather connected with chaos and excess. The explosive forces of nature can evoke feelings for the sublime and thus the ugly can become magnificent and even beautiful in art. This transfer is also evident in the media where stylistic touches and technology are used to beautify and elevate the terrifying forces of a natural catastrophe. **[6.8] Icelandic National Broadcasting Service « News »** 2000 © The television newsroom of the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service. When the Hekla eruption began, the reporter Ómar Ragnarsson was travelling in a passenger airplane over the mountain. He used the opportunity to take some shots of the eruption and comment on the event. **[6.9] Tern Systems Inc. « Hekla's Eruption Plume »** 2000, 3-D picture © Tern Systems Inc. The picture shows part of the eruption plume of Hekla at 22.00 on the first day of the eruption in 2000, but then the plume reached 45.000 feet. The model is designed to improve flight safety over Iceland. The dangers of the mountain are carefully

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