

CENTRE FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN SOCIETY AND CULTURE

IMAGINING ICELAND: From Concordia to the North

Wednesday, September 20, 2017 • 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Visual Arts Building, 1395 René Lévesque W, VA 323, Montreal, QC



Jón Gunnar Árnason's *Sun Voyager / Sólfar* (1990), Reykjavik

PHOTO: Kathleen Vaughan

ABSTRACT

Imagining Iceland is an interdisciplinary roundtable on the influence and impact of Iceland – as place and as imaginary. Iceland is huge these days: from images of its jaw-dropping terrain in the mega-hit *Game of Thrones*, to the export of music stars such as Björk and Sigur Rós; from the country's recovery from the 2008 economic crash (and withdrawal from the EU) via a deliberately targeted tourist push, to its need to institute a 'responsible tourist pledge' as visitor numbers skyrocket to 1.6 million *so far* in 2017 – and this to a country of just 323,000 inhabitants. Historic, beautiful, clean, safe and English-speaking, Iceland seems destined to be an ideal visitor destination in our era of global strife and displacements. How can serious artists and scholars engage with Iceland and its people against this cultural backdrop? Four Concordia University scholars and artists suggest how they have approached these issues. Matthew Anderson (Theological Studies), Jessica Auer (Photography), G. Scott MacLeod (MA, Art Education) and Kathleen Vaughan (Art Education) will present their own work and then together take up questions of the complexities and joys of working in Iceland. Group discussion and reception to follow.

Open to the public. All are welcome.

This event is co-sponsored by the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture, and Studio Re-Imagine.



SPEAKER BIOS

Jessica Auer (Photography) creates photography and video work that is broadly concerned with the study of landscapes as cultural sites, focusing on themes that connect place, journey and cultural experience. She lives and works part of the year in East Iceland, where she co-founded Ströndin Studio.

Matthew Anderson (Theological Studies) is professor at Concordia University, a documentary filmmaker and cleric with a special interest in pilgrimage, particularly the 'dark pilgrimage' undertaken by descendants of settlers under the guidance of First Peoples. In 2016 he walked a pilgrimage in Iceland.

G. Scott MacLeod (MA, Art Education) is a multimedia artist and filmmaker with a special interest in peoples and histories — Montreal's, Canada's, the Scottish Highlands', and the Vikings'. His work has been exhibited, screened and collected by cultural institutions and individuals around the world. In June of 2017 Scott attended the SIM Residency in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Kathleen Vaughan (Art Education) has an artist's interest in 'place' in our globalized and mobile world. She has strong ties to the Icelandic Textile Centre in Blönduós, where she will lead a field school in June 2018, and is completing a textile walking map about June's 24-hour daylight near the Arctic Circle.

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