

# PRESS

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After the Crash 11.08. © Gudmundur Ingolfsson

## **Iceland and Architecture?**

**1 October 2011 – 13 November 2011**

Deutsches Architekturmuseum DAM, Frankfurt am Main  
3rd floor

**OPENING:** Fri, 30 September 2011, 19:00

**PRESS CONFERENCE:** Fri, 30 September 2011, 17:00

## **ICELAND – LEARNING FROM THE CRISIS?**

What kind of architecture do we find in a country that has no traditional building materials such as timber and bricks at its fingertips but instead builds houses using grass and clay? To what heights did concrete buildings soar? And how did the people in Iceland cope with the unexpected wealth as their home suddenly became the richest country in Europe – and how did they manage the equally unexpected crash? The exhibition will explore these and similar questions, illustrated with photographs by Gudmundur Ingólfsson, and despite the crisis will illustrate a myriad of silver linings emerging behind the clouds. The festival documentary “Future of Hope” by the British director Henry Bateman employs other means but equally aims to present glimpses of hope for the country’s future in the wake of the crisis.

### **Abstract from the preface of the catalogue by Peter Cachola Schmal:**

*For the Icelanders, the financial crisis in October 2008 changed everything – their banks collapsed, the exchange rate of the Icelandic krona sagged, and home-owners found themselves hopelessly in debt. The people rose up, kicked out the government, and ostracized the few key players in the scandal who will forthwith have to lead a life of exile – along with their foreign currency reserves. Yet life of course goes on, and the Icelanders who for centuries led a poor life as full of deprivation as it was with invention are now having to unearth the character traits that originally made them strong. In one-on-ones with selected experts, this catalog paints a picture of the mood, combining a consideration of the past and one of the future in an attempt to find a basis for a post-crisis life.*

*The architects hold a key position here, as in the short boom years they were willing service providers for New Money and built the gigantically-scaled complexes relying on customary international methods but with new materials. The former architecture critic Hjalmar Sveinsson, today Reykjavik’s Municipal Planning Officer, exposes the urban planning sins of the boom days and outlines the burden of an urban-planning heritage that was driven by an ideology of the superiority of the market over the public*

sector. *The financial crisis destroyed not only the property market, with architects subsequently losing their jobs, but also severely pruned cultural funding. The country's only architecture collection (at the Reykjavik Art Museum at Hafnarhus) was recently closed and the only curator for architecture sacked. The collection's founder, architect and publicist Petur Armansson, has written not only a history of Icelandic architecture for this volume, from turf houses via concrete structure through to the new topographical trends, but also describes the structure of the collection and the foundation of Iceland's first college for architects, where he currently teaches.*

*Iceland's most famous buildings, such as the Hallgrims Church in Reykjavik, were designed by Gudjón Samúelsson, the country's first State Architect. One of Iceland's leading architects, Ögmundur Skarphédinsson of Hornsteinar Architekten describes how he concerned himself with the oeuvre of that illustrious role model and what influence Samúelsson had on him. Consultant structural engineer and planner Sigurdur Gunnarsson (who now lives in exile in Oslo) and light planner Rogier van der Heide (now a Philips Board member) teamed up with Hornsteinar to plan the future Saga Institute, and discuss the impact the Icelandic sagas and Icelandic light should have on an architecture of the future if it is to be authentic and original.*

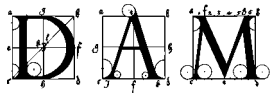
*The Icelandic architectural office best known outside the country is Studio Granda. Margrét Hardardóttir and Steve Christer cast a glance at their development over the last two decades and offer a blunt account of the future of their profession. Sigríður Sighorsdóttir (who currently teaches in Norway) has found a successful niche for herself. She explains how the construction of the famed Blue Lagoon incisively changed her life and led to other spa buildings be erected in Iceland and Norway. German architect Jörn Frenzel and his interdisciplinary team vatnavinir (friends of water) are widely considered the symbolic trailblazers of a new Icelandic Modesty. Their studies on small solutions in connection with thermal water point an optimistic path into the future.*

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue at Jovis publishing. The included and complete interviews are illustrated by impressing images from photographer Guðmundur Ingólfsson.

On the occasion of the Icelandic presentation as the Guest of Honor at Frankfurt Book Fair, the exhibition is part of the art and culture program and in cooperation with Fabulous Iceland.



Press photos for announcements and for the duration of the exhibition at [www.dam-online.de](http://www.dam-online.de)



## COMING SOON

19 November 2011 – 15 January 2012

**EMINENT ARCHITECTS. SEEN BY INGRID VON KRUSE**

2 December 2011 – 22 April 2012

**WOHA – BREATHING ARCHITECTURE**

10 December 2011 – 22 April 2012

**SCHNEIDER + SCHUMACHER**

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### **DEUTSCHES ARCHITEKTURMUSEUM**

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