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In cooperation with the **University of Reykjavík** and **Klak**, a research- and consulting institute for entrepreneurial implementation (seed-stage companies), Fræ, the institute of University of Reykjavik for public good, **Björk Guðmundsdóttir** has together with the organizers of the website **nattura.info** summoned a workshop to gather for an open conversation with investors and métier designers, representatives from economic development associations, universities, and with those prolific individuals who work with ideas, establishments and other innovation in the field of self-sustainability and diversity. Ideas are being collected for further development and promotion, with companies of all kinds of researches, development and production, from woolens to state of the art inventions in the field of biotechnology.



Björk Guðmundsdóttir's new song, Náttúra, composed especially to encourage active support for a more environmental approach to Iceland's natural resources than those suggested by parties who are haughty and blind to the consequences of their actions, will be released on October 20th 2008.



Following the workshop held in the University of Reykjavík, **nattura.info** is hosting seminars inviting foreign thinkers and generating workshops across the country. The new website **nattura.info** is about to open as a site for conversation about the resources of Iceland, the diverse possibilities of using them, and self sustainability. On the website there is a think tank for alternative ways than heavy industry.

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Björk releases her brand new single "Nattura" through One Little Indian on October 20. The single will be initially available as an iTunes exclusive and then everywhere digitally on October 27. All proceeds from the track will go towards the Nattura Environmental Campaign (www.nattura.info), which aims at collating and providing sustainable and eco-friendly options suitable for Iceland.



Composed specifically to encourage active support for the Nattura campaign, the single continues Björk's close involvement with the organization in generating alternative ways to utilize natural resources. According to Björk, "It is now more important than ever before to emphasize a respect for nature...I believe that profits, technological advances and working together with nature can all go hand in hand. None need to be sacrificed at expense of the others."

IN SUPPORT
OF THE
NATTURA
ENVIRONMENTAL
CAMPAIGN

The new single is written and produced by Björk and features Radiohead's Thom Yorke on backing vocals, Brian Chippendale (Lighting Bolt) on drums, Matthew Herbert on synth/bass, and Mark Bell on additional electronic beats. Opening with a huge elemental swirl, "Nattura" then fires up an incendiary and fierce tribal rhythm. The song sees Björk firmly on the march in celebration of her homeland, in hopes that Icelanders harness its energy in a sustainable way.



For more information on the single and the Nattura Environmental Campaign please visit www.nattura.info or www.bjork.com.
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For some years, various attempts have been made all around the country to find ways to utilize natural and human resources other than those employed by large scale industry. These innovatory attempts have increased our capacity for a greater variety of options and helped to increase Icelanders' personal accountability for their own landscape. Yet, for various reasons little heed has been paid to these attempts and there has rarely been sufficient follow-up to many of the ideas that have been forwarded. There has been a sharp division between promising plans and their entrepreneurial implementation on the one hand and between investments and the networks that serve to generate them on the other. In these difficult times, when people are desperately trying to find alternatives to the excesses of large-scale industry, then we must a way erect bridges between unlike areas of interest.



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The MBA-studies of University of Reykjavík will work with business plans for those seed-stage companies that have gathered and lined up as profit-promising and will lead to further sustainability and diversity. Business plans for the ideas will be made under the guidance of Patrick Turner from the Insead-school. Winning plans are then presented in Iceland and compete internationally.



The goal of the workshop, and other related events, is to connect experience, knowledge and inventiveness from different fields of society, to nourish the soil of seed-stage companies and their self sustainable development; to open access to the motive power of financial- and executive power, and generate a creative dialog and researches. By building these bridges, the outcome will be an open interconnectivity and a clear work of development in the form of extensive business plans for the ideas of seed-stage companies of Iceland.

Following the workshop held in the University of Reykjavík, nattura.info is hosting seminars inviting foreign thinkers and generating workshops across the country. The new website nattura.info is about to open as a site for conversation about the resources of Iceland, the diverse possibilities of using them, and self sustainability. On the website is a think tank for other ways than heavy industry, and the money from Björk's song, Náttúra, goes to the development of prolific ideas.





Bjork's statement from the first workshop on October 12th 2008

Now it is more important than ever before to emphasize a respect for nature. The economic collapse of the past few weeks has been blamed on our extravagance and wastefulness, on our failure to show money due respect. I thought it interesting, for example, that the Icelandic financial crisis is said to be a result of greed, of taking too much for granted that all this cash belonged to us and that it was best to spend as quickly as we could because there was plenty of it and supplies would never run out. But then it did run out, a little like this country's water resources and other forms of energy that have recently been estimated as being far from endless. I think it is important in these times of hardship to remind people not to abuse the riches of nature in the same way as they have abused economic wealth because there will be a far greater price to pay for the damage. And it won't just be us who has to pay that price, but our children and children's children. ■

I believe that profits, technological advances and working together with nature can all go hand in hand. None of them has to be sacrificed at expense of the others. I believe that self-sustainability means thinking holistically—not just drilling deep into the ground for geothermal power as they have done on Hellisheiði Moor, a place where they have to cool steam down before they can make use of it. Why do they allow all that energy go to waste? Why, for example, can't they set up greenhouses there and utilize the energy sensibly? Or find a way of harnessing sulphur before it kills all the surrounding moss. They know now that the water in the bore holes will run out in 30-40 years, like exhausted mines. Then this "green Icelandic power station" will also be waterless and perforated everywhere with bore holes fringed with burned moss. We need to revise our ideas about what we think is self-sustainable and green.



Björk Guðmundsdóttir calls for workshops gathering individuals who have worked on proceeding self-sustainable companies and aim for innovation. Among these are start-up companies and post-seed companies, representatives for economic and social development, academics, inventors and investors.

The workshop's conversation deals on possible progress, on obstacles, and various ways to connect inventiveness, innovation, start-up companies, and to activate the interconnection to other clusters of similar relations and to the motive power of international expertise and market forces.



Icelanders stand at crossroads: Are we going to choose a single-track industry or administer to diversity and openness to other ways? Permanent and fertile diversity exclude quick-fix-solutions that economically, socially and environmentally deplete the resources that are fundamental for a self-sustainable development.

Self-sustain development in the field of economy and forming society, calls for us to reconsider our relation with the environment and nature, it calls for researches of the possibilities to activate human and natural resources; and requires a certain humbleness towards these wellsprings. Self-sustainability and innovation needs awareness and researches on reciprocal connections of economical profits and social and environmental responsibility.



All over Iceland ideas and start-up companies have been developing, setting the goal for self-sustainability and innovation. Active interconnections have been created together with a comprehensive overview. But the soil of these experiments and relations have not been fertile enough for them to form a viable, creative whole.

Björk contracted with the University of Reykjavik and their MBA students, which under guidance of the worldknown Patrick Turner, are going to make business plans for clusters of different start-up companies and challenging innovations in the field of self-sustainability. It is quite a challenge, because not only calls it upon awareness of trade practices but also an understanding of complicated social systems in Iceland.



It is in the hope that this discussion and the making of business plans for clusters in the field of self-sustainability possibly becomes an instrument, or a way to multiply positive effects of every endeavour per se, that this step is being taken, as a starting point to make a more diverse society and culture, and more exciting economy life, in Iceland as a whole, internationally connected.

In sequence of all this, the conversation will continue to be open on the website nattura.info and more workshops are coming up across the country, and with foreign experts in self-sustainability and innovation, to discuss which ways are possible other than single-track heavy industry.



By Björk Guðmundsdóttir

A Senator says I am childish because I want to protect nature. This is strange, because I think it is in reality half-childish of Icelanders, when the whole world is holding its breath because global warming might be fatal to mankind within 50-100 years, to increase our CO2 emission by 19 tonnes per capita, which places us at third rank worldwide, just after Australia and the U.S. 10 of those 19 tonnes are caused by the three already existing aluminium plants. Do we aim at even more, if we build more aluminium plants, at Húsavík and Helgúvík? Will we be at the top? Will we be the world's top polluters? Childish or responsible? It is a question. The already existing plants will stay, that cannot be changed. Nonetheless I find it strange that we sell this energy at a third of what Alcoa pays in Europe and America. We could afford to have three times less power plants if we got the right share of the profit. At the same time, we export everything raw and unprocessed instead of designing and producing useful things we could brand as "Made in Iceland". Why don't we produce these things before we go on smelting?

Why on earth, just like when we were fishing cod, were we only interested in the first step, i.e. providing the raw material, instead of processing it all the way? Why are we still playing the part of the colony, taking all the dirty jobs? Whether it is for the Danes, the U.S. Army or Alcoa, we don't get much in exchange. Isn't it childish to sell oneself that cheap? Senator mentions the brutal withdrawal of the army why should Alcoa not become as brutal some time in the future? Most of the Icelanders who were employed by the army have now found a new job, and we should be glad they did. Jónas frá Hríflu once said that Halldór Laxness was childish, because of his views on nature conservation. Laxness fought for the protection of Gullfoss, the Golden Waterfall. Was Prime Minister Ólafur Thors also childish, because he granted the U.S. Army permission for only one military base, when they were asking for four? Sure, they would have rewarded us and paved Road Nr 1 all around Iceland, and we would have then "gained" quite a lot that way. But then Iceland would have followed the Cold War in its fall, and been hurt by brutal unemployment. We would have been unable of attempting anything without asking first the U.S. for permission. Not unlike the dependency of Greenlanders on Denmark today.

Why should we depend on others? I think it is childish. Maybe Senator thinks the Icelanders' struggle for independence was childish. Was Jón Sigurðsson, our national hero, just a romantic dreamer when he said that Icelanders should take everything in their own hands, which is of course the much harder way: to care for the common people, to start from scratch and build up a whole country takes a long time, why should we bother when it is so easy to let the Danes/USA/Alcoa take care of the book-keeping? I wish to point out to Senator that I know a few things about common people, contrary to his statement. Mine is a nearly 30 year experience. From the very start, when we were offered contracts by Skífan and Steinar, we decided to do everything ourselves and to this day I never sold myself. The Sugarcubes could have accepted big offers from big companies, but we never wanted to belong to others or owe them anything.

I have always refused to get involved in advertising. I have met many foreign musicians who once had a similar status to mine in terms of fame and record sales, and at one point got tempted and signed the "big contract": in doing so they sold their independence, and when their success began to wane they could not get anything published or they had to write the kind of music the record companies dictated to them. We have heard many stories of that kind. It is plain bad to put oneself into such a weak position, to have to obey others.

Senator, you are right when you say that I don't know what it is to be unemployed in a small village out in the country, but I do know what it is to start a small company, to take care of it and believe in it when nobody else does, and resist to the temptation of selling oneself to larger companies when things just start taking off, one has to go on watering and persevere through the difficult times in order to deserve the fruit when they finally come. One has to protect one's plant during all those years, until it reaches full growth. Your plant will not be healthy and unique if you haven't had the patience to take care of it meticulously all the time. It is then necessary to refuse corruption and temptations, such as "short cuts" into "big time", and I can assure you that building one of the biggest aluminium plants in the world with Alcoa is one of those "short cuts". One knows the smell from quite a distance.

I wish to point out to the Senator that I come back to Iceland more than once a year. Since 1993, I have spent half of my time abroad; the members of Sigur Rós still live here, and it should be mentioned again that they built a recording studio in Mosfell, and have created and recorded most of their music there.

When I said that Iceland's image was important for Icelanders who are working abroad, I was not thinking about myself or Sigur Rós. I don't worry a bit about us. I have in mind all the other export goods such as skyr, water, fish, bio lamb meat, tourism, geothermal experience;

even our President, the Honourable Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, has started giving lectures abroad about Iceland's green energy. Not to mention what could happen if we do stay green.

In my opinion, we could make a much, much better use of the image of our country abroad. We could for instance sell bio vegetables, health products, cosmetics, dairy products and so on and so on. Many people abroad are quite ready to pay much more bio products from a green country.

What I essentially believe in is the imaginative power of the Icelander. In that field also, Senator, I do have some experience. Icelandic music which was just an imitation of foreign music was never successful abroad. Art and business have that in common: original thinking helps.

Prime Minister Geir Haarde was recently rewarded by Newsweek as the greenest Prime minister in the world. If we give the green light to more aluminium plants we will not be greenest any more. We will become one of the biggest smelting pots in the world and, per capita, the most polluting nation on earth. Many business opportunities will be ruled out. Many companies have already announced that they will in the future deal exclusively with green businesses and countries. Our chances to cooperate with Google, for instance, will fade away if we don't reinforce Iceland's image today.

We cannot be green and non-green at the same time. Sorry. Látrabjarg, the largest bird colony in Europe, could become a successful natural park. The inhabitants of that region have shown a keen interest. But they intend to allow an oil refinery as well. Those simply do not work together. If we harness all the rivers, all the reproduction areas of the cod would be disturbed, perhaps irremediably. The choice for us is: cod or dams?

There is another thing, Senator, I have always considered as very childish: to have such a uniform economic system in such a small country. How often did we burn our fingers, for instance when everybody was fishing herring, an when the herring disappeared the economy collapsed; do you remember when everybody wanted to open video rental shops and half of them went bankrupt (remember the tanning booth businesses, too?) We can possibly cope with the three already existing aluminium plants, anyway we have to; but why not go for diversity and create the lacking jobs from so many other fields? Without selling one's soul to a company which ignores human rights, produces weapons and is on black lists in many parts of the world.

There was no miracle solution when Icelanders began their struggle for independence. Nor is there any now. Nice, creative societies are not the product of uniform solutions.

You might be right, Senator, when you as a proud countryman do not to listen to the advice of the 101 Reykjavík arty kernel (anyway they are never in Iceland, they rather drink champagne abroad) but why do you have to kneel down to Alcoa, if you are so independent and self-sufficient? Moreover, I think it's no longer right to connect this pro-con aluminium quarrel to some alleged countryside-city antagonism. The situation is not black and white, because in recent years all kinds of companies have started outside Reykjavík. Small grassroots beginnings, but who can foresee the results after 5 years? 10 years? Think about the Húsavík Whale centre, musicians all over the country, the scholars at Hólar, Villimey in the West Fjords, Geoplank in Grindavík, Vogafjós in the Mývatn district, the Bird Collection at Mývatn, Hvíldarklettur sea angling in the West, The Settlement Centre at Borgarnes, the Sorcery and Witchcraft Museum Strandagaldur in Strandasýsla, the rapidly expanding Akureyri University, The Pirate Museum at Patreksfjörður, the Aldrei fór ég suður Festival at Ísafjörður, Skálanes and Lunga at Seyðisfjörður. I would love to hear what all these people have to say.

Most scientists abroad think solar energy is the future. Why not do some research in that field and join the pioneers?

Many things have already been accomplished: for instance the Blue Lagoon (obtaining the license for running the business took 10 years, it was considered so utopian), Icelandair, Össur, Marell, Marorka, Whale Watching and Museum at Húsavík and 3x Steel at Ísafjörður. CCP employs today 350 people thanks to a video game idea one individual got 10 years ago. Let us not forget the carbon fibre plant at Sauðárkrúkur, which will create 60 new jobs. Minimal pollution and a vision of future! (Planes will be made of carbon fibre instead of aluminium). These, and others are in the grassroots, and will grow and thrive for a whole century; and we haven't of course listed everything yet, because as Jón Sigurðsson knew, as Ólafur Thors knew also, and Halldór Laxness and all of us Icelanders know, just by placing our hand where the heart beats, whether we are for aluminium plants or for the protection of nature, what is most beneficial for the Icelandic nation is what we build ourselves from scratch, although it is much more difficult and takes much more time than if we submit it to foreigners.

There lies our gain.