

The Icelandic National Committee of IAA

NATIONAL REPORT 2017-2018

SÍM's board since the last general meeting in April 29, 2017:

Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir, chairman, Eirún Sigurðardóttir, vice chairman, Starkaður Sigurðarson, secretary, Steingrímur Eyfjörð and Anna Eyjólfsdóttir, board members, Erla Þórarinsdóttir and Klængur Gunnarsson, substitute board members. 11 board meetings were held, including two union commission meetings. In addition, two association meetings were held, in Akureyri and in Reykjavík.

This general meeting will end the term for chairman Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir, Eirún Sigurðardóttir, Steingrímur Eyfjörð and Klængur Gunnarsson. SÍM would like to thank them for their good work in the interest of SÍM.

Six candidates expressed interest in board membership in the years 2018–2020. Candidates for the office of chairman are Anna Eyjólfsdóttir, Steingrímur Eyfjörð and Ásdís Spanó. Other candidates for board membership are Páll Haukur Björnsson and Lára Weissshappel, and Hildur Henrýsdóttir as a substitute. A new chairman will be chosen by election, but other board members and a substitute are chosen without an election as there were no other candidates. The board welcomes those new members.

SÍM now has 841 members, which is an increase of 85 members since the last general meeting.

The main role of SÍM's board is to represent visual artists, improve their working conditions thereby strengthening visual art as a profession, and attend to other interests of visual artists, including the operation of studios. This year SÍM's board focused on the campaign "WE PAY VISUAL ARTISTS" and on updating the database UMM.is.

In 2017-2018 the SÍM board has worked on following projects:

WE PAY VISUAL ARTISTS

The campaign "WE PAY VISUAL ARTISTS" was formally launched on the 22nd of November 2015 in the Nordic House. **Its purpose is to strengthen the work environment in the field of visual art and improve the conditions and position of visual artists. The campaign's main focus is a contract on the participation and contribution of visual artists in exhibitions.**

On May 1, 2017, a groundbreaking interview with SÍM's chairman was aired on the evening news at the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service, RÚV, which made the wheels turn after years of struggle. October 12, 2017, also marked a great milestone, when the Executive Board of the City Council approved new procedures for Reykjavík Art Museum and an extra budget of 8,5 million ISK. Payments to artists for exhibitions in the year 2018 will amount to 12,5 million ISK. This is an increase of 268% between years as the museum paid 3,4 million ISK in fees to artists in 2017. In this case, the City of Reykjavík took the initiative ahead of the state, not for the first time, and thereby set a leading example nationwide.

Now Akureyri Art Museum and Hafnarborg Centre of Culture and Fine Art have also set up similar procedures and received a great increase in budget to pay artists fees for their work. It would be safe to say that Reykjavík's initiative in the matter has marked a turning point in the work conditions of visual artists. Drafts of procedures have been made at LÁ Art Museum and Reykjanesbær Art Gallery. Gerðarsafn – Kópavogur Art Museum is working on procedures but

seems to have problems in securing funds for new methods for art exhibitions. If things remain unchanged, the town of Kópavogur will be the only municipality that does not pay visual artists for their work at exhibitions.

The National Gallery of Iceland pays according to a contract SÍM has not had access to. According to sources, the contract covers one payment to the artist which is defined as fee. The Art Museum of the Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASÍ Art Museum) is the only museum paying in accordance with the Contribution Contract. The editorial board of STARA interviewed Elísabet Gunnarsdóttir, the museum's director, and asked whether she had noticed something in SÍM's Contribution Contract that needed improvement. Elísabet mentioned the need for more details on different projects and remunerations for them, i.e. participation in panel discussions, other presentations, interviews etc. She also raises the question whether the length of an exhibition should matter when it comes to fee amounts and she is concerned about the extra payments when artists have to travel away for home for exhibitions and other events, as she considers them too high.

UMM.IS BECOMES ARKIV.IS

SÍM is responsible for the operation of umm.is - an information portal about Icelandic art and artists. The website is based on data from the Information Center of Visual Art which was operated for ten years with the support of the Icelandic state. After that, SÍM took over the management of the database and has operated it since. UMM had not been updated for years and the system (Dísill) was outdated. The board of SÍM tried to get state funding in 2015 as well as a grant from the Social Fund of Landsbankinn in 2016 but unfortunately both applications got a negative answer. SÍM's board decided to start the considerably large project of updating the database in the year 2017-2018, under a new name, "**ARKIV.IS**".

One of the purposes of ARKIV.IS is the permanent safekeeping of comprehensive information on the works and history of Icelandic artists. This role of guarding the cultural heritage i.a. entails that invaluable documentation on Icelandic art will be preserved for later generations. The website is and will be the property of the nation. Cultural history is an important part of a nation's identity. Easy access to it ensures the cultural literacy of individuals, and that must be the purpose and duty of governmental bodies and associations such as The Association of Icelandic Visual Artists. Open access gives people, all around Iceland and the world, an easy way to discover Icelandic art and enjoy it.

Another aim of ARKIV.IS is to serve as a comprehensive database about and for practicing artists. The participation of practicing artists in the project enables the website to live up to its role as a permanent storage of art history but each artist is responsible for the information in his or her pages and for updating it. All members of The Association of Icelandic Visual Artists automatically have the option of joining the database.

All data at ARKIV.IS is stored in a secure server and SÍM intends to fulfil the standards of The EU General Data Protection Regulation. The operation of an image gallery will of course follow the rules of the Copyright Act. One of the long-time goals of SÍM is connecting with international databases, which would increase the chances of Icelandic artists getting noticed abroad.

SÍM's board hired Þrándur Arnþórsson, system analyst, to update the data base and Elísabet Brynhildardóttir, visual artist, to design the website and the brochure. Through a project of the Directorate of Labour, SÍM also got an employee for six months to work on the data base. Júlía Hermannsdóttir, SÍM's office manager, has gone through all the data, but that entails coordinating information, fixing outdated links etc. Sorting through the data has been far more time consuming than was estimated and therefore the new website has not yet been launched, but the plan is to introduce **Arkiv.is** in October 2018, on the Day of Visual Art. SÍM's board considers it important that SÍM hires a part-time assistant to promote ARKIV.IS, assist artists updating their pages and answer queries.

THE PEOPLE'S MEETING

In cooperation with Akureyri Art Museum, SÍM participated in the People's Meeting in Akureyri for one weekend, September 8-10, 2017. The chairman of SÍM partook in panel discussion along with Hlynur Hallsson, director of Akureyri Art Museum, the artist Rúrí Fannberg and Þórgnýr Dýrfjörð, managing director for Visit Akureyri. They discussed the question whether creative work is valued as it should and how to strengthen culture, democracy and critical thought in society. The purpose of the People's Meeting is to activate democratic participation of the public and be a venue for all those willing to discuss social matters. This is the third time SÍM participates in the People's Meeting and the board of SÍM considers it important to continue the conversation and take part in the event.

STARA / EZINE & SÍM'S PUBLISHING

STARA is the ezine of the Association of Icelandic Visual Artists and aims to encourage discussion and strengthen knowledge of visual art as well as providing information on SÍM's operation. STARA is published both in Icelandic and English on SÍM's home page and is aimed at professionals as well as visual art enthusiasts. STARA was published twice in the last year, issue 9 was published on October 28, 2017, at an open house at SÍM exhibition space celebrating Days of Visual Art, and issue 10 will be published on May 26, 2018, at SÍM's general meeting. The Icelandic part was printed in 500 copies and distributed for free. STARA can be accessed at SÍM's home page and at the website timarit.is.

On the editorial board of STARA, appointed until June 1, 2018, are Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir, chair of SÍM, Elísabet Brynhildardóttir, designer and visual artist, Jón B. K. Ransu, visual artist, Auður Aðalsteinsdóttir and Margrét Elísabet Ólafsdóttir, doctor of art and aesthetics and lector at the University of Akureyri. STARA is partly financed by advertisements and SÍM hopes that in the future the income from advertisements will grow and cover the cost of publishing STARA.

SÍM's board has hired Starkaður Sigurðarson as the next editor of STARA from June 1, 2018, to June 1, 2020. Starkaður will appoint a new editorial board in collaboration with SÍM's board.

DAYS OF VISUAL ART 2017

The Day of Visual Art was celebrated throughout October 2017, as the year before. Various events were organized to draw attention to the artist's profession. On this occasion, artists opened their studios, presentations were held in schools around the country, articles were written regarding the field of visual art and artists recounted their everyday experiences on the social media Snapchat. Some libraries promoted books on visual arts, drawing attention to the diversity of their book collections. Katrín Helena Jónsdóttir, project manager of the Day of Visual Art, opened a discussion of collaboration with students from Iceland University of the Arts, which got a positive reaction. The students organized a performance program at the month's harvest festival and further collaboration is planned next year.

The harvest festival was held on October 28 at an open house in SÍM's exhibition space. The festival was a great success, the performance duo Berglind and Rúnar provided catering and DJ was Þorsteinn Eyfjörð.

Tilberan, an award for initiative in visual art in the year 2017, was delivered with due ceremony. Sirra Sigrún Sigurðardóttir and Bryndís Hrönn Ragnarsdóttir, organizers of the award, gave this year's Tilberan to the campaign "We Pay Visual Artists". The harvest festival was considered a great success; an appropriate end to this lively month and a reward to all participants celebrating a fruitful collaboration.

Experience proves that dedicating a whole month to the Day of Visual Art, instead of just one day, is more efficient for bringing attention to the work of visual artists and visual art as a profession. The project broadens by prolonging it and that gives traditional parts of the program more breathing space.

Katrín Helena Jónsdóttir, project manager of the Day of Visual Art 2017-2018, enrolled into an MA study program in Culture and Communication at the University of Iceland in autumn 2017. There she was permitted to use the Day of Visual Art as a subject for her MA-thesis in autumn 2018. The thesis focuses on management and organization around the Day of Visual Art. Katrín Helena also wants to use the project to provide a clear frame for future project managers. The result of this thesis will thereby become a sort of a manual for the project manager of the Day of Visual Art, answering questions like: *What is to be expected from a project manager, what is the real purpose of the Day of Visual Art, what should be done and when and where is room to enhance or decrease elements of the project?*

Katrín hopes that this will allow the Day of Visual Art to grow steadily as an important venue for deepening the public's knowledge of the artist's profession in Iceland, even though a new manager regularly takes over the project. The manual will ensure that new managers will not have to start all over again and there will be a steady frame for the project.

Katrín Helena's supervisors are Sumarliði R. Ísleifsson, historian and lecturer in applied studies in Culture and Communication at the University of Iceland, and Hannes Ottósson, PhD in Business and Socioeconomic sciences and a project manager at Innovation Center Iceland.

The board of SÍM would like to thank everyone who participated in the Days of Visual Art and especially project manager Katrín Helena Jónsdóttir for a work well done.

ARTÓTEK

Artótek is a collaborative project of SÍM and Reykjavík City Library which started in 2004. SÍM overtook the operations and accounting of Artótek a year ago but Reykjavík City Library is, as before, responsible for housing, promotion and exhibitions.

Artótek has visual art by SÍM's members for hire and sale. Artótek's aim is to promote contemporary Icelandic art to the customers of Reykjavík City Library and others and give them the opportunity to easily hire or buy an artwork.

Reykjavík City Library and SÍM are now co-operatively working on strengthening the operation of Artótek, increasing the number of customers and buyers with systematic marketing and ensuring a good selection and regular renewal of works. A new website for Artótek, www.artotek.is, was launched in 2017 and members are encouraged to be active on Artótek's facebook page and use the hashtags #artotekid and #borgarbokasafnid.

The Icelandic Competition Authority

On March 14, 2018, the board of SÍM received a letter from the Icelandic Competition Authority, pointing out that publishing a guideline for a basic rate of pay at SÍM's website might be a violation of articles 12 and 10 of the Competition Law no. 44/2005. SÍM's board has sent a reply to the competition authority, pointing out that one sentence, stating that artists are free to set higher rates of pay than the ones at the website, has been removed, in compliance with the competition authority's comments. If this is not considered an adequate response, SÍM has requested further guidance, referencing the duty of guidance in article 7 of the Administrative Procedures Act no. 37/1993. SÍM also points out that publishing this information is a part of an effort to establish a wage agreement, which is a time-consuming procedure, as can be seen from the fact that SÍM has only been a labour union for one year although the association has for three years fought for payments for artists' exhibitions. Furthermore, SÍM points out that publishing information such as those appearing on SÍM's website is customary both in Denmark and Sweden, seemingly without violations of the competition law in those countries, laws that are based on rules and regulations

that should be comparable within the EEA. SÍM therefore thinks there is a reason to further investigate why the execution of the law is different in other Nordic countries and why the publication of this information might be illegal in Iceland although it is a common practice in other Nordic countries. If this is a matter of the publication of some information being legal but not others, SÍM is ready for a closer review of the matter in cooperation with their sister associations in the other Nordic countries. Finally, SÍM points out that many associations of Icelandic artists publish comparable information on their websites and have done so for years. If the competition authority finds the changes in SÍM's publishing of information an insufficient response, SÍM has requested information on the difference between SÍM's publishing of information and the information other artist associations have published, so that SÍM can provide this information to its members in a way that complies with the Icelandic Competition Law.

The board of SÍM is seriously concerned with the matter, bearing in mind that the Icelandic Musicians was fined 100.000 ISK for publishing a guideline for payments to organists on their website.

IAA GENERAL MEETING

Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir, the chair of SÍM, and Ingibjörg Gunnlaugsdóttir, the managing director of SÍM, went to the general meeting of IAA, the International Association of Art, in Dublin in September 14-16, 2017. Most of IAA's member associations fight the same battle as SÍM, campaigning for visual artists to get paid for the work they put in their own exhibitions, and SÍM's campaign got deserved attention at the meeting.

SÍM'S OFFICE

Presently, there are five employees at SÍM's office in three positions. Ingibjörg Gunnlaugsdóttir, managing director, Júlía Hermannsdóttir, office manager, Elma Óladóttir, accountant, Katrín Helena Jónsdóttir, project manager and Friðrik Weissappel, property caretaker.

SÍM'S STUDIOS

SÍM rents seven studio houses and subleases to its members. These houses have the total of 171 studios og 2 workshops, one operated by The Icelandic Textile Guild and the other by The Icelandic Association of Ceramic Artists. SÍM's studio houses are located at Seljavegur 32, Nýlendugata 14, Hólmaslóð 4 and at Korpúlfsstaðir in Reykjavík, at Lyngás 7 in Garðabær and Auðbrekka 1 and Auðbrekka 14 in Kópavogur. Auðbrekka 1 and Hólmaslóð 4 also house storages for members.

There is a great shortage of studios for members and a long waiting list for available studios. Some members have waited for years. To solve this problem, SÍM's board decided to sharpen the rules on SÍM's studios and has agreed to limit the number of times a lease agreement can be extended. *SÍM's board must keep the interest of all its members in mind in its decision-making and ensure that all members have equal opportunities.*

Precedence was sought from Copenhagen and Berlin, where comparable artists' associations rent studios to their members, and all of them had a time-limit on lease agreements, usually 8 to 9 years.

SÍM only has a long-term lease agreement with the property agency of Reykjavík City for Korpúlfsstaðir and the Government Property Agency for Seljavegur. Other studio houses have temporary lease agreements, usually for 5 years, and members with studios in those houses have to live with that insecurity.

SÍM's studios have from the beginning been rented out for 3 years at a time. When applications for studios are open (once every three years), all members can apply for a studio and those that already have one can apply for an extension of the lease agreement for the next 2 years, if certain conditions are fulfilled.

One of the conditions for extending a lease agreement has been that the applicant can prove he has used the housing as a studio and not as a storage. It is completely forbidden to use SÍM's studios as storages.

There has been no limit to the number of times a lease agreement can be extended, until now that SÍM's board has agreed on new rules for all of SÍM's studios.

Those who cannot apply for an extension of a lease agreement according to the new rules will be given an adjustment time of 3 years, until May 1, 2021.

SELJAVEGUR – safety- and fire inspection

SÍM's residency for foreign artists is situated at the 4th floor in SÍM's studio house at Seljavegur 32 in Reykjavík. The fire safety agency made some reprovals regarding the residency in 2010 and SÍM engaged in considerable renovation for the house. In 2017, fire safety inspectors again made reprovals because of the residency, this time demanding more thorough improvements that are possible on the 4th floor. In order to get the approval of fire safety inspectors, SÍM's board decided to move the residency down to the 2nd floor. Because of delays in the system, we are still waiting on the inspection's final approval.

With these changes, the number of studios at Seljavegur increases, for there will be more studios on the 4th floor than will be used for the residency on the 2nd floor.

THE SÍM EXHIBITION SPACE

The SÍM exhibition space, located at SÍM's headquarters in Hafnarstræti 16, is available to members for exhibitions and other events. A call for applications from members to exhibit there is sent out once a year. The exhibition time is around three weeks, but at the end of each month, SÍM's guest artists have a group exhibition.

The exhibitions have been well attended and the program is available on SÍM's home page and SÍM's Facebook page.

In the year 2017 the following members exhibited in the SÍM exhibition space:

Jelena Antic, Sari Maarit Cedergren, Klængur Gunnarsson, Helga Páley Friðbjófsdóttir, Helga Arnalds, Bjarni Bernharður Bjarnason, Kristbergur Ó. Pétursson, Berglind Erna Tryggvadóttir, Selma Hreggviðsdóttir, Katrín Inga Jónsdóttir Hjördísardóttir and Jakob Veigar Sigurðsson.

SÍM's board decided to offer 3rd year students at the Iceland University of the Arts the last exhibition of the year, in December, and the outcome was very positive. The purpose was to give the students a chance to get an insight into the work of SÍM and how they fit into that environment. The board of SÍM hopes to continue this cooperation with Iceland University of the Arts.

THE SÍM RESIDENCY IN REYKJAVÍK

A total of 168 foreign artists dwelt in the SÍM Residency in the year 2017. At Seljavegur there are 11 rooms for artists, as well as several studios and there was an addition of two rooms and a collective studio in July 2016. At Korpúfsstaðir there are 3 rooms as well as good studios. Artists can dwell from one up to three months and more and more artists dwell more than one month in Reykjavík. At the start of each month the group has an artistic talk in SÍM's exhibition space where everyone is welcome. At the end of each month the guest artists are invited to take part in a group

exhibition at the SÍM's exhibition space for two days. An increasing number of guests attend these exhibitions, which are varied and often innovative.

In 2016, The Icelandic Art Center, KÍM, sought after SÍM's co-operation in inviting foreign curators to dwell in a residency in Iceland for up to two weeks. SÍM's board was delighted to take part and intends to invite two curators to Iceland this year. KÍM is responsible for bringing the guests to Iceland and SÍM supplies housing. The curators will make studio visits to artists and give a presentation in SÍM's exhibition space where they introduce themselves and their work. The German-American curator Annabelle von Girsewald was the first guest in this co-operative project of KÍM and SÍM. She stayed for two weeks in Iceland in January 2017 and in that period of time she visited the studios of twenty artists and prepared a project with a group of Icelandic artists, as well as foreign artists, in the next semesters. Sylvie Fortin, curator and editor, dwelt with us in October 2017 and also visited the studios of many artists. SÍM hopes that members had a conductive conversation with Annabelle and Sylvie Fortin and that this opens new opportunities for exciting projects.

SÍM had a residency exchange program in collaboration with Vaanta in Finland and Anton Logi Ólafsson went on behalf of SÍM to Finland in September 2017.

SÍM also had a residency exchange program in collaboration with Kunstnerhuset in Svolveær, owned by NNKS og NNBK, associations of Norwegian artists. In 2017, Andrea Ágústa Aðalsteinsdóttir went to Svolveær on behalf of SÍM and in 2018, Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir and Bjargey Ólafsdóttir will go to Svolveær. Norwegian artists will stay at SÍM's residency in Korpúlfstaðir in August 2018. Kunstnerhuset's project manager is Ina Otzko. She came to Iceland along with NNBK's board members and visited our residencies. Consequently, Kunstnerhuset invited Katrín Helena Jónsdóttir, the project manager of SÍM's residencies, to Svolveær for one weekend to get acquainted with their work there. This cooperation is an experimental project for possible collaboration between nations. It has given good results so far and every year marks progress in introducing the residencies among artists in both countries.

THE SÍM RESIDENCY IN BERLÍN

SÍM has operated a residency in Berlin for its members since 2010. There are two guest rooms, Askja and Hekla, with a joint kitchen and bath. Members can apply to stay in the apartment for one month at a time. The apartment is at Friedrichshain, formerly a part of East-Berlin. The neighbourhood has a number of artists and designers and is full of life, interesting designers' shops, cafés and restaurants.

SÍM's board decided to launch an experimental project for two years and invite two young members to stay for free in the SÍM residency in Berlin every year. Heiðís Hólm and Logi Leó Gunnarsson were granted a month's stay in the residency in 2017. After this successful experiment, SÍM's board decided to continue to offer one month of free residency in Berlin, but without an age limit so that all members can apply. SÍM's board congratulates Anton Logi Ólafsson and Dagrún Aðalsteinsdóttir on their grant of one month's stay at the SÍM residency in Berlin in 2018. Anton Logi and Dagrún will write about their stay in Berlin in STARA, giving readers some insight into their art creation.

BÍL's members can apply for a stay in the residency when the apartment is available. The residencies are always open for applications.---

The year 2017–2018 was both eventful and demanding. SÍM's board would like to thank all committee members that have served SÍM this year and everyone who has collaborated in the important projects of SÍM.

On behalf of SÍM's board,

Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir, chairman