

### **SÍM's board, associate and member meetings**

Serving on the SÍM board from April 15th 2015 were Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir chairwoman, Erla Þórarinsdóttir vice-chairwoman, Gunnhildur Þórðardóttir scribe, Steingrímur Eyfjörð and Sindri Leifsson board members, alternates Helga Óskarsdóttir and Sigurður Valur Sigurðsson. 12 board meetings were held, including three associate meetings. In addition four member meetings were held.

Director of SIM is Ingibjörg Gunnlaugsdóttir.

The SÍM board works for the interest of artists. During the operating year 2015-2016 the SÍM board has emphasized the campaign WE PAY VISUAL ARTISTS. Its goal is to bolster the visual art's field of work and improve salary and artist's standing. The hub of the campaign was introducing a draft of a Contribution Contract.

The SÍM board has also worked on the following projects in 2015:

### **WE PAY VISUAL ARTISTS**

The biggest issue this past operating year and in the future has to do with the visual artists' field of work and how to increase revenue within the field.

It was decided, at SÍM's initiative, to assemble a workgroup at the start of 2015 in collaboration with The National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavík Art Museum, Hafnarborg Center of Culture and Fine Art, The Living Art Museum, LA Art Museum and Akureyri Art Museum. Representing SÍM in the workgroup were visual artists Ilmur Stefánsdóttir and Úlfur Grönvold. On behalf of the museums were Þorgerður Ólafsdóttir, curator of The Living Art Museum, and Dr. Halldór Björn Runólfsson, curator of The National Gallery of Iceland. The workgroup's project manager was Ásdís Spanó.

The workgroup was tasked with shaping a proposal for a wage contract for artists who mount exhibitions in Icelandic museum funded by government or local authorities.

The workgroup submitted a draft of a contribution contract along with a report early in October and a member meeting was subsequently held on October 14<sup>th</sup> in order to introduce the contract to SÍM's members. The workgroup looked to the Swedish MU contract (Medverkande og utställningsersättning) a

contract signed by the Swedish government for remuneration to artists for the display of work in public galleries in 2009. Such remuneration is an addition to the payments for transport, installation and publication of material in connection to artists' exhibitions. The contract states that artists should be paid for all work they take on in connection to exhibitions, before, after and during the event. A written contract should be made about everything requiring a salary, according to the contracts' rates, as well as a gratuity for the works on display. The MU-contract has been an example for similar contracts in Norway and Denmark. Work is under way on contracts based on the MU-contract in Finland and Austria.

### *The People's Meeting.*

The People's Meeting was held at the Nordic House on 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2015 and was a three day festival focusing on community and society. The festival was an open forum for community discourse, an independent event and unconnected to any establishments in Iceland or elsewhere. Its goal is to inspire confidence in politics and strengthen a constructive political discourse.

SÍM participated in the festival and hosted a conversation between individuals working on visual art and the audience, regarding the work environment of visual artists. Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir, chairwoman of SÍM, supervised the conversation and invited the following participants as individuals working on visual art: Hafþór Yngvason, at the time the curator of The Nation Gallery of Iceland, Ragnhildur Jóhanns and Anna Fríða Jónsdóttir, visual artists and editors of the 4<sup>th</sup> issue of the magazine Endemi, Jón Óskar, visual artist and Ásdís Spanó, then the project manager of the workgroup creating the draft of a rate list for visual artists' exhibiting in public galleries in Iceland that are run or sponsored by the government or local authorities. SÍM invited Svanhildur Kondráðsdóttir, the chief executive of The Department of Culture and Tourism for the city of Reykjavík, and Illugi Gunnarsson, Minister of Education, Science and Culture, but unfortunately both were unavailable. Art historian, Eiríkur Þorláksson, served as Illugi's replacement.

### *We pay visual artists*

The campaign WE PAY VISUAL ARTISTS was formally launched on November 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 at The Nordic House. **The objective of the campaign is to promote visual art's field of work and enable artists to be paid for that work. At the center of the campaign is a contract about participation and contribution of artists in exhibitions.**

Author Guðmundur Andri Thorsson spoke at the meeting as well as Ósk Vilhjálmsdóttir, visual artist and member of the Visual Art Council and Ástríður Eggertsson, architect and member of the board of the Public Buildings Art Fund. Steinunn Eldflaug Harðardóttir performed a music number before and after the

meeting. During the meeting guests could get a copy of the Contribution Contract along with a red bag decorated by Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir.

During the meeting the web page [www.vidborgumyndlistarmonnum.info](http://www.vidborgumyndlistarmonnum.info) was formally opened. Helga Óskarsdóttir made the page which includes articles, videos, art museums' annual reports, salary- and opinions polls put to the members of SÍM in 2014, the draft of the Contribution Contract and interesting links concerning visual artists' interests around the world.

The SÍM board welcomes the important milestone of the draft to the Contribution Contract, which museums and artists will be able to rely on. The museums that worked on the draft for contracts with SÍM did a cost analysis last year based on exhibitions of the past years. The estimated cost of adhering to the Contribution Contract is just short of 90 million ISK, split between the government and local authorities.

The introduction of the Contribution Contract draft is now at its peak and the chairwoman of SÍM, along with Ásdís Spanó, project manager, has been hosting the introductions at the National Gallery of Iceland, the Icelandic Museums Association (FISOS), The Department of Culture and Tourism for the city of Reykjavík, the Left-Green Movement, the town of Akureyri, The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Icelandic Association of Local Authorities. Among other things, the chairwoman of SÍM gave a speech about the campaign at the symposium "Education for the future" hosted by the Reykjavík Academy as well as the Association of Academics (BHM).

The SÍM board wishes to thank all the workgroups that have contributed to the contract for their excellent work and the museums for the cooperation and fruitful collaboration. Last but not least, SÍM wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the campaign "WE PAY VISUAL ARTISTS", especially Ásdís Spanó, Helga Óskarsdóttir, Berglind Helgadóttir, Björk Guðnadóttir, Habby Osk and Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir.

It will be crucial in the next months for artists to stick together, fight for their interests and guarantee that the Contribution Contract has the support of the government and local authorities. That is the only way that working conditions in Iceland can become comparable to the countries we wish to compare ourselves with.

### **SÍM member of the Association of Academics (BHM)**

In the fall of 2014 the SÍM board submitted an application for membership of the Association of Academics (BHM). The application was reviewed during BHM's annual meeting and approved. This application was a part of SÍM's lobbying for the aforementioned Contribution Contract. BHM is an umbrella organization for

member-unions and interest organizations which serve the professional and labor market interests of its members. BHM supports the work of its member-unions, strengthens the members' knowledge about wages and rights and serves its members' interests in relation to the government. The SÍM board welcomes that its member can finally have access to a rehabilitation fund, a public sector relief fund and a vacation fund and considers this a step toward bolstering the salaries and union struggle of artists. A member meeting was held on September 5<sup>th</sup> where Inigbjörg Gunnlaugsdóttir, managing director of SÍM, introduced the obligations and wages being part of BHM entailed for the members of SÍM.

### **STARA / E-ZINE – SÍM PUBLICATION**

STARA is a magazine published by SÍM which strives to encourage discourse and knowledge about visual art as well as provide information about the operations of SÍM. STARA is published both in Icelandic and English and appeals equally to professional visual artists and amateurs. STARA was published three times in 2015, the third issue came out on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2015, the fourth issue on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2015 and the sixth issue on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2015. For the first time 500 copies of the Icelandic part of the sixth issue were printed and freely distributed. STARA can be accessed on SÍM's web page and [timarit.is](http://timarit.is).

STARA's editorial board is made up of Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir, chairwoman of SÍM, Elísabet Brynhildardóttir, designer and visual artist, Jón B. K. Ransu, visual artist, Auður Aðalsteinsdóttir, doctor of literature and editor of Hugarás – e-zine for the School of Humanities, and Margrét Elísabet Ólafsdóttir, doctor of art and aesthetics and lecturer at the University of Akureyri. STARA is partly funded by advertising revenue and it is the hope of SÍM's board that in the future that revenue can fully fund the magazine.

### **PROTECT THE VISUAL ART FUND AND THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS ART FUND**

The SÍM board launched a petition in October 2015 to strenuously protest the attacks on the Visual Art Fund and the Public Buildings Art Fund in the past years. We challenged parliament to display ambition and vision by allotting 52 million ISK to the Visual Art Fund and 10 million ISK to the Public Buildings Art Fund. Over 700 people signed the petition and challenged the members of parliament to reverse this trend and protect the funds. The plan was to hand over the signed petition to Vigdís Hauksdóttir, chairwoman of the appropriations committee, at the launch of the We Pay Visual Artists campaign held at the Nordic House on November 20<sup>th</sup> 2015, but she declined and said that the matter was not the responsibility of the appropriations committee. In light of the fact that in Iceland a constitutional cabinet operates, i.e. the parliament sets the laws and the executive branch executes it, and in light of the fact that when the petition was handed over the appropriations were being put before parliament, which means that legislator is telling the executive branch which funds were earmarked in 2016, it was important that the

appropriations committee receive the petition which is why the chairwoman of SÍM submitted it to the appropriations committee on Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2015.

It was disappointing to receive the announcement that only 35 million ISK were allotted to the Visual Art Fund and 1.5 million ISK for the Public Buildings Art Fund in the final draft of the budget bill for 2016. The SÍM board feels, though, that all that work served to plant seeds which will be of use in the continuing battle for the 2017 budget year.

### **THE SALARY OF PART-TIME TEACHERS**

The chairmen of the member societies of artists in Iceland have held a meeting over the salary of part-time teachers at universities. A survey was sent out to all members, at the end of April 2015, in order to get a better picture of the position part-time teachers are in. A decision was made to assemble a workgroup which would evaluate the part-time teachers' position and how to improve their salary. The SÍM board nominated Eirún Sigurðardóttir for the workgroup which includes Páll Baldvin Baldvinsson, Hörður Lárusson, Páll Ragnar Pálsson and Sigrún Grendal. The workgroup has met five times and the plan is to form an interest organization at the Iceland Academy of Arts. The workgroup has written a draft of the organization's directive, currently being reviewed by a lawyer from Association of Academics. The plan is to invite every teacher working at the Iceland Academy of Arts to a meeting where an interest organization of teachers will be formed and a board appointed. The interest organization will have the authority to press for higher salary and negotiate on behalf of teachers at the Iceland Academy of Arts.

### **DAY OF VISUAL ART**

The Day of Visual Art was celebrated on Saturday October 31<sup>st</sup> 2015. The project manager, Berglind Helgadóttir, emphasized reinforcing the public's awareness of the visual artist's profession and increasing access to information about visual art in order to enrich knowledge of the field. The Day of Visual Art serves to increase awareness of visual art and contribute to its distribution and access so that the public can both understand and utilize it to augment their lives in various ways. Creative and critical thinking is the corner stone of art and first and foremost a positive force in the society of man.

A new web page was launched in the middle of October. The material was more accessible and the front page better defined. Texts about the project were added and sign-up sheets made accessible. Information about the Day of Visual Art of past years were also made more accessible and explicit. The page was designed by Elísabet Brynhildardóttir.

One of the most important sides of the projects are the introductions of visual artists in elementary and secondary school in Iceland, a rare opportunity to reach out to important people. Visual artists had introductions in 24 school and these were the artists:

*Rúrí, Sara Riel, Hulda Hákon, Sirra Sigrún Sigurðardóttir, Eirún Sigurðardóttir, Jóní Jónsdóttir, Habby Ósk, Valgerður Hauksdóttir, Katrín Inga Jónsdóttir Hjördísardóttir, Auður Ómarsdóttir, María Kjartans, Kristín Rúnarsdóttir, Kristbergur Óðinn Pétursson, Monika Frycova, Arnar Ómarsson, Arna Valsdóttir, Ólöf Dómhildur Jónsdóttir, Gunnar Jónsson, Jón Sigurpálsson and Ágúst Bjarnason.* They each received 18.000 ISK for their introductions.

On the Day of Visual Art, artists opened their studios and in the preceding week articles appeared in Fréttablaðið and visir.is, written by Fríða Björk Ingvarsdóttir, principal of the Iceland Academy of Arts, Libia Castros and Ólafur Ólafsson, artist, and Berglind Helgadóttir, project manager of the Day of Visual Art.

Four videos were made to emphasize the diversity of mediums. The objective was to educate the public, especially young people in the higher grades of secondary school as well as junior college. The interviewees were *Rakel McMahon, Halla Birgisdóttir, Bjarki Bragason and Guðjón Ketilsson.*

It was decided to increase the awareness of the Day of Visual Art by collaborating with libraries in Iceland. Numerous libraries in the greater Reykjavík area and elsewhere in the country participated and there was a lot of diversity in presentations; from exhibitions, guests' participation in viewing paintings and workshops to the display of visual art books.

Berglind, project manager, applied for a grant from Landsbankinn's community fund for the introduction of artists in high schools in the country. The project received 250,000 ISK for this operation in 2016 making it possible to send artists from the greater Reykjavík area all around the country to host introductions in high schools.

The SÍM board wishes to thank everyone who participated in the Day of Visual Art and Berglind Helgadóttir, project manager, for her excellent work.

## **UMM**

SÍM oversees and runs umm.is – an information portal about visual art and visual artists in Iceland. The web page is based on data from the Information Center of Visual Art which operated for 10 years with support from the Icelandic government. The databank is vast and complex and has proven invaluable for various cultural agencies, visual artists, scholars, teachers and foreign curators.

Unfortunately the database cannot be upgraded as it is since the operating system (Dísill) it is based on is outdated.

SÍM received an estimate for 8 million ISK from the company Skapalón about updating the database. SÍM had Skapalón design a front page and the first look of the page in order to use it as an introduction for future plans to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

On April 16<sup>th</sup> 2015 Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir, chairwoman of SÍM, and Inigbjörg Gunnlaugsdóttir, managing director of SÍM, had a productive introduction meeting with Karítas Gunnarsdóttir, office manager, and Ragnheiður Þórarinsdóttir, department manager of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. They promised SÍM a grant of half of the cost to update UMM or 4 million ISK. They advised SÍM to submit an application right after the introduction meeting, requesting a foundation grant for a new information portal about Icelandic visual art and visual artists.

On May 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 the ministry requested a consultation from the Visual Art Council regarding SÍM's application about a foundation grant. The Visual Art Council gave the application a negative review on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 and on July 23<sup>rd</sup> the application was denied by the ministry. The SÍM board was disappointed with this result and requested a copy of the Visual Art Council review.

It was a big letdown for SÍM's board that the Visual Art Council, or SÍM's member on the Visual Art Council, did not choose to consult SÍM and ask for a presentation of the application before it wrote its review for the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The change in distribution of information online regarding visual art cannot replace UMM where UMM serves as a database for Icelandic visual artists, with information that, among other things, comes directly from the artists themselves. The database is made up of both intranet and extranet where a large collection of information from visual artists of the last 20 years has been gathered. The organization that the Visual Art Council mentions in its review will not be able to provide the same information as UMM.

The SÍM board considers it important that everyone who has a stake in visual artists' lobbying cooperates with each other and plans to call a meeting in order to discuss the future of UMM. The board hopes that the project can be financed in the next operating year.

## **IAA / AIAP ANNUAL MEETING**

Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir, chairwoman, and Inigbjörg Gunnlaugsdóttir, managing director of SÍM, attended the annual meeting of IAA / AIAP (The International Association of Art) held in Pilsen, Czech Republic October 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 2015. The chairwoman of SÍM requested a declaration of support from IAA / AIAP because of the closing of the Icelandic pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Unfortunately the representatives of

nations wanted more time to look into the matter and it was decided to put the declaration of support up for a vote online. IAA / AIAP has been short of follow-up, however, and such a poll has yet to materialize.

A symposium was held about visual artists' position in the world. Katarina Jönsson, chairwoman of KRO, the Swedish Artists' National Organization, gave a very interesting and useful lecture on the installation of the MU contract and the follow-up. Joseph Young, visual artists, talked about the campaign Paying Artists, which is in full swing in Great Britain and the chairwoman of SÍM gave a speech about the upcoming SÍM campaign "We pay visual artists" which received some very positive attention.

## **OFFICE OF SÍM**

Currently six people work at the SÍM office in four full-time equivalent units. Ingibjörg Gunnlaugsdóttir managing director of SÍM, Guðrún Helgadóttir, bookkeeper, Hildur Ýr Jónsdóttir, guest studio supervisor, Friðrik Weissappel, property supervisor, and Sigríður Björnsdóttir, office manager.

A new web page for SÍM was launched on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2015. The material was more accessible and the front page better defined but also simpler. A lot of work was put into creating the text and finding good photographs for the web page. The page was designed by Elísabetar Brynhildardóttur and Auður Aðalsteinsdóttir proofread it. The board of SÍM thanks them both for great collaboration and work.

In addition to the new web page it was decided to get Elísabet Brynhildardóttir to design an introduction leaflet containing all the pertinent information about the work and role of SÍM in both Icelandic and English.

## **STUDIOS**

At the beginning of January 2016 the rental contract SÍM had with Landsbankinn for a property on Súðavegur ran out. It was a great loss for the members of SÍM. The office of SÍM has been looking for a studio property all year and the market does not look good. But after a great search SÍM was offered a property at Auðbrekka in Kópavogur for rent. It includes 15 studios and most of them are big. SÍM has rented out studios to artists for several years. Currently about 200 members rent studios from SÍM, located at Seljavegur, Nýlendugata, Korpúlfsstaðir, Lyngás and Auðbrekka.

## **THE SÍM HALL**

The SÍM hall is located at our headquarters in Hafnarstræti 16, and is available to member for exhibitions. Applications are accepted once a year and each exhibition period is usually one month.

The exhibitions have been popular and the schedule is available for viewing on both SÍM's web page and Facebook page.

In 2014 various exhibitions were mounted, among them the group exhibition of Steinunn Önnudóttir, Soffía Sæmundsdóttir, Didda H. Leaman, Georg Óskar, Gunnhildur Þórðardóttir, Ólöf Björk Bragadóttir, Matthías Rúnar Sigurðsson, Rán Jónsdóttir, Ólafur Þórðarson and Pálína Guðmundsdóttir.

An advent exhibition with members' work was held in December and was well received.

### **SÍM'S GUEST STUDIOS IN REYKJAVÍK**

123 foreign artists stayed at SÍM's guest studios in 2015. Two rooms were added at Seljavegur as well as a communal studio. Each month the group hosts an artist's talk in the SÍM hall and at the end of each month a group exhibition, also at the SÍM hall.

SÍM received a grant from KK nord for six guest residences in 2015. SÍM called for applications for a two month stay using the KK nord grand and Sebastian Mugge received it.

The SÍM board contacted the Living Art Museum and invited them to select an artist sponsored by SÍM. They selected Emil Magnússon Borhammer from Sweden and he held a private exhibition at the Living Art Museum.

As an experiment, the SÍM board decided to invite curators to Iceland, and sought out Birta Guðjónsdóttir for the selection process. SÍM invited Malene Dam, curator from Denmark, and Virginija Januskeviciute and Valentinas Klimasauskas, curators from Lithuania. The curators went on roughly 24 studio visits and the SÍM board hopes that the members had a good conversation and hopefully an opportunity for some exciting projects.

SÍM did a studio exchange with Paris, France and Vaanta, Finland. Ólöf Dómhildur Jóhannsdóttir stayed in Vaanta and Anna Hrund Másdóttir in Paris.

### **SÍM'S GUEST STUDIOS IN BERLIN**

Since 2010 SÍM has rented out guest studios in Berlin for its members. There are two guest rooms, Askja and Hekla. The guest studio is located at Friedrichshain which is a lively neighborhood with many artists and designers. The neighborhood is teeming with bars, cafes, restaurants and fun shops. SÍM's members have an opportunity to rent a studio for a month at a time or a shorter period over the summer.

The SÍM board decided to launch an experimental project for two years and invite two young member to stay for free at the SÍM guest studio in Berlin each year. The SÍM board congratulates Freyja Eilíf and Úlfur Karlsson for their month long subsistence expenses grant at the SÍM guest studio in Berlin. Freyja and Úlfur will give a recount of their stay in STARA as well as give readers insight into their creative process.

The members of BÍL (Federation of Icelandic Artists) can also apply to stay at the guest studio when the space allows. Application for the studios are received all year round.

2015 has been very eventful and the SÍM board wishes to thank all committee members who have done a great job for SÍM, as well as everyone who has had a hand in all the important projects SÍM has worked on.

On behalf of the board,

Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir