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Sequences Biennial XII: Pása

October 10-20, 2025

Reykjavík, Iceland

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EVENTS

Sequences Biennial XII: Pása / Pause

By Eana Kim

ISSUES



At a moment when global biennials often resemble speed tours of spectacle, Sequences invites visitors to do the opposite—to stop, to breathe, to pay attention.

name, Sequence), it has grown into Iceland's defining contemporary art event while preserving its intimacy. This year's edition, curated by Daría Sól Andrews, unfolds across three core venues—Kling & Bang, the Living Art Museum, and the Nordic House—each exploring what it means to inhabit time differently. In Reykjavík, where the art community is

close-knit enough that everyone knows one another, the atmosphere feels less like an

international showcase and more like a shared experiment in attention. From former

Icelandic Pavilion artist at the Venice Biennale Ragnar Kjartansson (2009) to Ásta Fanney

Sigurðardóttir, who will represent Iceland at Venice 2026, the biennial gathers key figures

Founded in 2006 as an artist-run festival dedicated to time-based media (hence its

"Pása," Icelandic for *pause*, could not be more fitting for this year's Sequences Biennial.

across generations, reaffirming its role as the country's connective artistic pulse. At Kling & Bang, the exhibition *Decay and Field* opens with Sigurður Guðjónsson's immersive video installation, a symphony of light and glass that vibrates through the body. His analog process creates images that appear digitally generated—an inversion that reveals nature's material wonder. Nearby, Fischersund, the family collective behind Reykjavík's beloved perfumery of the same name, turns the gallery into a living sensorium. The scent of asphalt, tobacco seeds, and Icelandic herbs lingers in the air, while cassette players emit the soft hums and breaths of the artists themselves. In their store, visitors hear recited poems linked to each fragrance; here, those voices dissolve into the atmosphere, merging with the sounds of decay and renewal. "There's a great power in being together," Lilja, one of the members, told me. "Everybody here is raised by community—that's the beauty of Iceland." Their installation renders that idea tangible: decay becomes renewal, scent becomes the

Downstairs, Aftertime at the Living Art Museum examines the politics of remembering.

Lagos Studio Archives (Karl Ohiri and Riikka Kassinen) present rescued West African studio

portraits, their surfaces mottled by mold and chemical decay. What first appears as damage

staple fired into the photographic surface recalls both the violence of shooting and the labor

reveals itself as endurance. Sasha Huber's *Tailoring Freedom* extends this resilience: each

of stitching, punctures that reopen wounds even as they repair them. Santiago Mostyn

revisits the landscapes of his childhood in Grenada to layer memories of revolution and

solidarity, while Sheida Soleimani reconstructs her parents' exile from post-revolutionary

Iran through vividly staged tableaux that blur testimony and artifice. Together, these works

medium of belonging.

reanimate photography as a living archive—personal and political histories continually being remade. Ina Nian's *Black Noise* ties the room in a low, vibrating hum that moves through erased colonial frequencies between Iceland, Denmark, and beyond—turning sound into remembrance. If Aftertime dwells in historical wounds, Sediment and Signal at the Nordic House turns our attention outward, downward, and toward the nonhuman. The exhibition invites deep listening to materials that move on glacial and microbial timescales: minerals, fungi, and bees. Upon entering, Erna Skúladóttir's Yfirborð greets viewers with sweeping works on paper made from diluted unfired clay pigment, turning earth into watercolor. The clay becomes both image and medium, breathing through its porous skin as it absorbs and releases moisture from the air. Her surfaces seem less painted than grown, unfolding in slow dialogue with geology and time. The space is punctuated by Ragna Róbertsdóttir's radiant salt sculptures, crystalline formations held between panes of glass where light and mineral matter perform a slow choreography of evaporation and

crystallization. Nearby, artist duo Rhoda Ting and Mikkel Bojesen trace these geological rhythms at a microscopic scale. Their *Rhizome* captures fungal life unfolding across petri dishes, while *Deep Time* encases Arctic sediment in glass columns like vertical crosssections of millennia. Illuminated from within, the cores shimmer like frozen timelines, collapsing epochs into a single gesture that evokes the planet's deep memory. **ADVERTISEMENT**

At the other end of this material spectrum, WAUHAUS & Jonatan Sundström and Pétur

of birch forests—both exposing what endures after human extraction. Outside, Thomas

What's most striking throughout is the artists' shared care for the environment, an ethos

that extends far beyond the artworks themselves. These concerns surface in conversation as

naturally as in practice, found materials repurposed with quiet precision. Like the Helsinki

Biennial, Sequences reflects a broader Nordic awareness of ecological responsibility. Across

Reykjavík, concurrent events amplify that spirit. The State of the Art experimental music

festival, for instance, blurs boundaries between disciplines, echoing the city's restless,

vibrations of bees in an attempt to listen across species—to sense their umwelt, their

frequencies of being.

Thomsen turn to waste as landscape. WAUHAUS's Some Unexpected Remnants lingers over Finland's transformed landfills, while Thomsen's Teigskógur documents the brutal clearing Pausz's Double Capture transforms a greenhouse into a resonant instrument, amplifying the

Lagos Archives Studios,

Studio Archives.

Anonymous, Untitled, Lagos, ca.

1990s, from the series "Archive

of Becoming." Courtesy Lagos

collaborative energy.

Rósa Ómarsdóttir, Skör – A variation on cruelty and care, 2025. Photo: Vikram Pradhan/Sequences Real-Time Art Festival. Few embody this experimental spirit more vividly than Steina Vasulka, the Reykjavík-born classical violinist turned pioneering video artist, whose long-overdue retrospective is jointly presented by the National Gallery of Iceland and the Reykjavík Art Museum—expanded from earlier iterations at MIT List Visual Arts Center and the Buffalo AKG Art Museum.

What makes this moment even more poignant is the parallel presentation of her husband and long-time collaborator Woody Vasulka's *The Brotherhood* (1998) at Berg Contemporary, newly reassembled with the help of a former student. The piece—revived for the first time in decades—marks both an act of historical preservation and a living testament to the Vasulkas's enduring vision of technology as a generative, human instrument.

Remarkably, it is her first full retrospective in Iceland. The spacious dual venues give her

discourse on machine intelligence by decades, feels newly prescient. Amid the pulsating

computer-generated imagery where planetary and cosmic forms slowly rotate across

screens. Visitors don protective shoe covers before entering its darkened chamber—an

electronic imagery and signals room to breathe, allowing visitors to absorb her explorations

fields of electronic light stands the iconic Of the North (2001), a monumental installation of

almost ritual gesture that underscores the work's reverence for both nature and the cosmos.

of "machine vision" with clarity rather than overload. Her practice, which anticipated today's

ecological and temporal rhythms that sustain it. Here, pause is not absence—it's a pulse. Eana Kim is an art historian and curator based in New York. She holds a Ph.D. from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. A scholar of the

reminds us that attention itself can be a force of renewal, reconnecting art with the

Across the city, Reykjavík vibrates both with earthly and communal energy. Pása / Pause

intersection between contemporary art, technology, and science, Kim is at work on a book on life forms in contemporary art, which examines more-thanhuman agencies and hybrid morphology. Reggie Uluru

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