

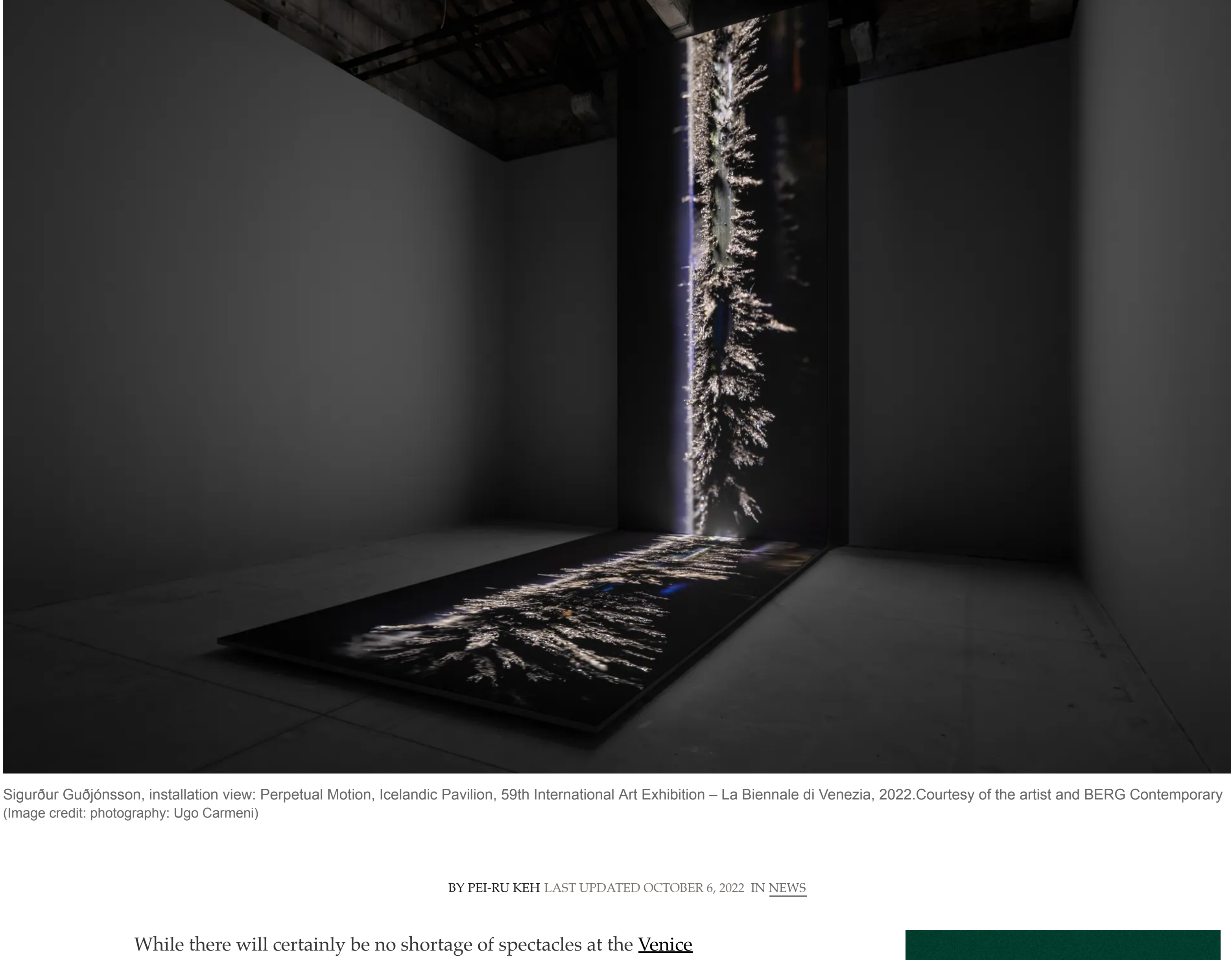
ART

Sigurður Guðjónsson bends time and space at Icelandic Pavilion in Venice

Sigurður Guðjónsson's Perpetual Motion for the Icelandic Pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale is a multi-sensory experience that transports visitors to another dimension

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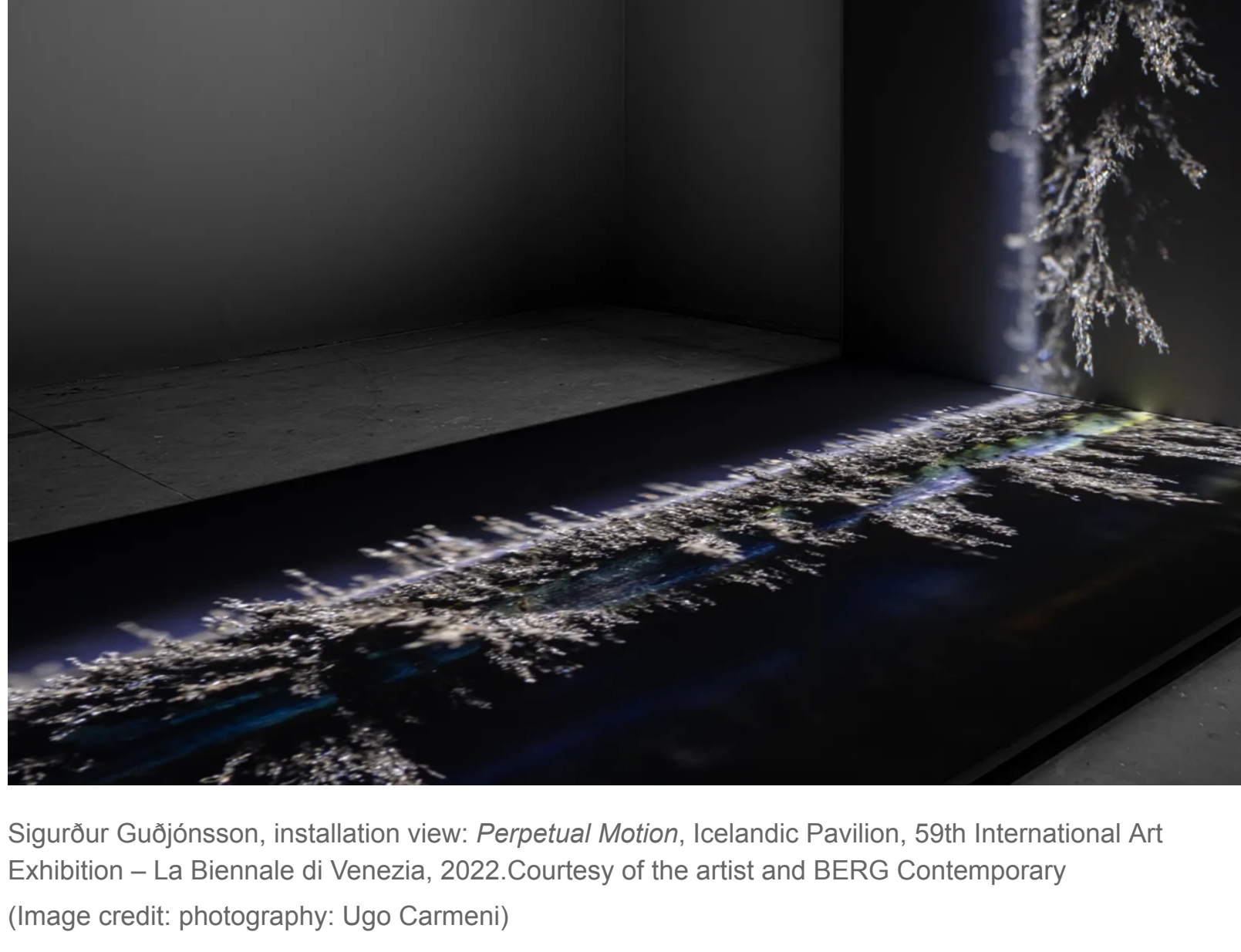


Sigurður Guðjónsson, installation view: Perpetual Motion, Icelandic Pavilion, 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and BERG Contemporary (Image credit: photography: Ugo Carmeni)

BY PEI-RU KEH LAST UPDATED: OCTOBER 6, 2022 IN [NEWS](#)

While there will certainly be no shortage of spectacles at the [Venice Biennale 2022](#), the Icelandic Pavilion has set the stage for an immersive experience like few others. Located at the Arsenale di Venezia for the first time, the pavilion will house a multi-sensory sculpture created by the Reykjavik-based artist Sigurður Guðjónsson that will transport visitors to another dimension. Entitled *Perpetual Motion*, Guðjónsson's piece bends the notion of time and space in *more ways than one*.

Known for his time-based media works that pit manmade machinery against technical relics, Guðjónsson invites viewers to reconsider the abstract with a perception-bending video piece, which zooms in on the formations metal dust makes when attracted to a magnetic rod. This microscopic view into materiality not only results in submersive imagery, but creates a trance-like and meditative atmosphere with its use of moving images and a droning soundtrack.

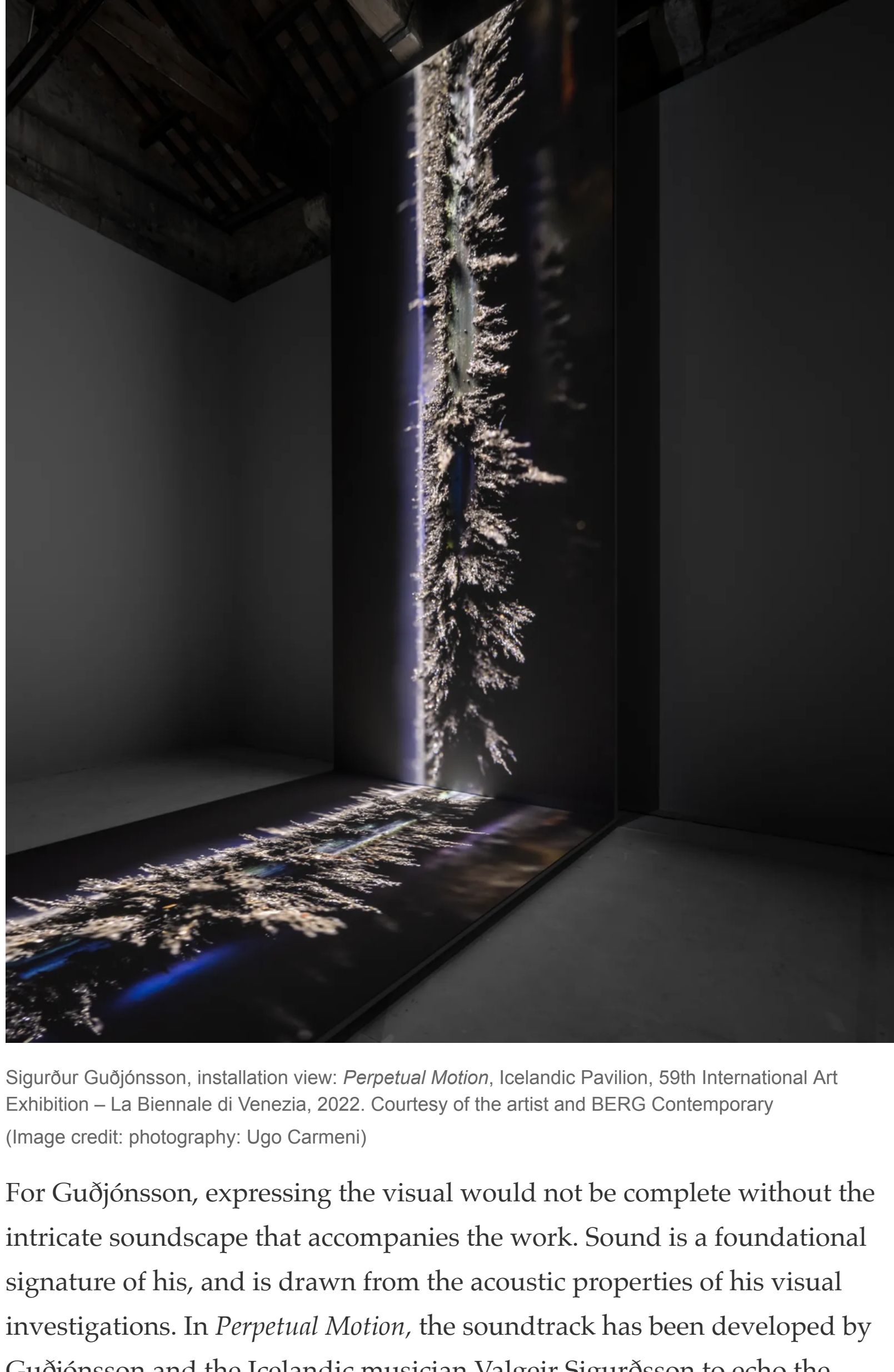


Sigurður Guðjónsson, installation view: Perpetual Motion, Icelandic Pavilion, 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and BERG Contemporary (Image credit: photography: Ugo Carmeni)

Curated by Mónica Bello, curator and head of arts at Cern (European Laboratory for Particle Physics), the work is staged as a split-screen installation, featuring a 6m-tall vertical projection that connects to a large-scale floor projection that occupies most of the pavilion's space. Through experimentations with camera lenses, perspective, light and motion, both screens depict the flow of metal dust, which itself has been amplified and magnified to create a distortive, interplanetary atmosphere.

'The transformation and playing with scale is important and something I have been working a lot with; going into these tiny objects and seeing what's happening with them when you go up in scale,' Guðjónsson says. 'Another important element is how your focus and sensing of different elements at [different] times [changes]. The duration of this piece is [significant]. It's 45 minutes long, very slow. You need time for it.'

Contemplating the notions of time and space has been a recurring theme in Icelandic art, not least because Icelanders have a deep-rooted relationship with nature and awareness of their surrounding landscape. Subject to the widely oscillating cadence of the seasons – from neverending day in the summer to endless night in the winter, many Icelanders demonstrate a unique level of introspection that has been inadvertently fostered by the country's climate.



Sigurður Guðjónsson, installation view: Perpetual Motion, Icelandic Pavilion, 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and BERG Contemporary (Image credit: photography: Ugo Carmeni)

For Guðjónsson, expressing the visual would not be complete without the intricate soundscape that accompanies the work. Sound is a foundational signature of his, and is drawn from the acoustic properties of his visual investigations. In *Perpetual Motion*, the soundtrack has been developed by Guðjónsson and the Icelandic musician Valgeir Sigurðsson to echo the granular textures in the moving images, while stacked electromagnetic sounds have also been manipulated to further enhance the frequencies of the metal dust.

'The soundscape is mostly based on electronic sounds that we take into different programs, specifically one called Granular Synthesis. It's somehow zooming into the sound and splitting it up. It creates some kind of particles and speaks to the texture in the video, but in a poetic way,' Guðjónsson says. 'It's inspired by the video, but not totally synchronised with it.'

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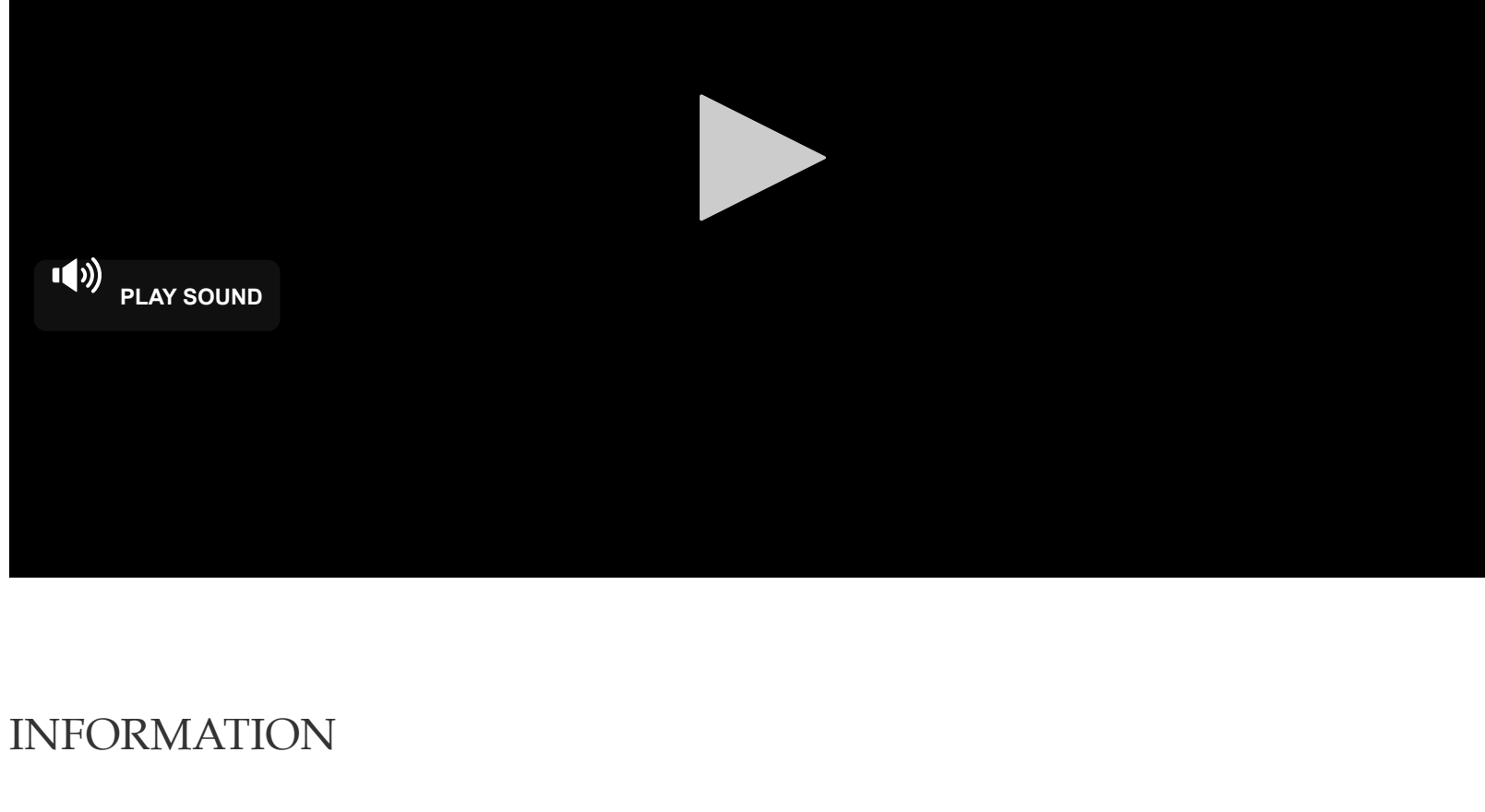
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Despite the duration of the piece, Guðjónsson says he's happy if visitors stop in for just five minutes. He concludes, 'You're always going to experience the piece in a different way, both in terms of constant change in the original material and also in some scale. I'm sure someone is going to take [a moment to meditate], but I'm not trying to control it. There are no benches in the space, so the physical experience of the piece is important as well. You walk around it like a sculpture and you see it from that perspective, instead of if you were just sitting down and watching a film. The artwork is intended as a play on boundaries between reality and fiction, depicting something that is real but usually beyond our field of perception.

Sigurður Guðjónsson on Perpetual Motion



INFORMATION

[sigurdurgudjonsson.net](#)

The Icelandic Pavilion is located in the Artiglierie building of the Arsenale di Venezia (nearest vaporetto stop: Arsenale). For more information visit [labiennale.org](#).

Address: Sestiere Castello, Campo della Tana 2169/F, 30122 [Venice, Italy](#)

Opening Hours: Biennale Arte 2022 will be open to the public from 23 April 23 to 27 November 2022.

23 April to 25 September: 11am – 7pm. Fridays and Saturdays open until 8pm. Closed on Mondays.

27 September to 27 November: 10am – 6pm. Closed on Mondays

(except Monday 25 April, 30 May, 27 June, 25 July, 15 August, 5 September, 19 September, 31 October, 21 November)

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Pei-Ru Keh

Pei-Ru Keh is a former US Editor at Wallpaper*. Born and raised in Singapore, she has been a New Yorker since 2013. Pei-Ru held various titles at Wallpaper* between 2007 and 2023. She reports on design, tech, art, architecture, fashion, beauty and lifestyle happenings in the United States, both in print and digitally. Pei-Ru took a key role in championing diversity and representation within Wallpaper's content pillars, actively seeking out stories that reflect a wide range of perspectives. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two children, and is currently learning how to drive.

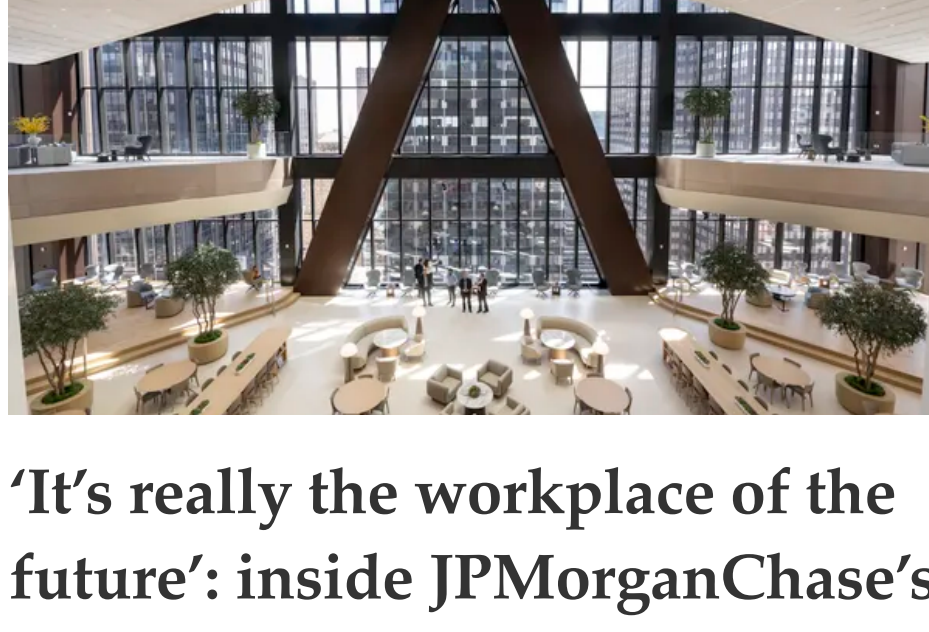
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