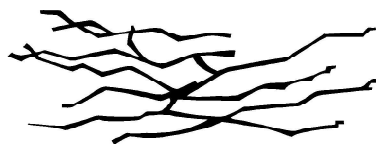


Helga Pálína Brynjólfsson

INTERLACED VAFNINGAR



Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum
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It all started in the north of Ólafsfjörður, when Helga Pálína's grandfather told her girls couldn't become carpenters. Determined to prove him wrong, she enrolled in carpentry and graduated from the Teachers' Training School in 1980. Two years later she went to Finland to study textile design.

Upon completion she returns to teach design and crafts, establishing the gallery Snegla with her friends, designing patterns, printing textiles and designing some book covers. During the summers, she guided foreign tourists around Iceland's interior, the landscape providing an inspiration for her creativity, as it does for so many Icelandic artists. The force of Icelandic nature, its bareness which makes everything comprehensible becomes a laboratory she repeatedly seeks out. Water, glaciers, fire, black sand, moss, lava – the infinite selection of colors that change with the seasons and play with our senses – all nourish her imagination and creativity.

It was in the fall, around the turn of the century, when Helga was walking in the rain near lake Kleifarvatn, that she started to notice the tuff.

This type of rock formed by volcanic ash and mixed minerals provides a view of differently colored layers, cold and warm at once, and is what the geologist Haraldur Sigurðsson called "the stone of Iceland." This became Helga's material. She approaches it as a new type of textile, braiding it together with the bright colored threads that bring together these fragments of Icelandic nature, formed from the churning insides of the earth,

and the delicate threads. That way, both materials achieve a new life and a new glow.

The wooden blocks she found in the firewood basket at a friend's cottage are treated the same way. She turns them into textile paintings by making grooves that bring together the different colors or different gradients of colors in repeated movements. The tangled threads create geometric or free forms. The entanglements bring out the beauty of the form, links between horizontal and vertical, a rhythm, the significance of the material and exaggerates the long reaching impact that recalls various popular patterns and forms from the Indigenous populations of Latin America.

These hybrid objects project action. They are charged with a new, nearly shamanic energy, they draw nearly as much on the earthy power of the wood, the solid material, as they do on the fluidity of the threads. An unexpected dialogue emerges within the framework Helga Pálína creates with the rules applied to the materials.

The diversity of the threads is nearly as limitless as their utility. Whether they are from wool, linen, cotton, silk, nylon, and are used to sew, embroider, baste, interlace, knot, braid, tangle, crisscross, weave, knit, or crochet...

The threads' roots run deep, and we have many myths about them. The shroud Penelope weaves and unravels again and again to stop time and escape her destiny; Ariadne's thread that she unwinds to guide Theseus through the maze; and the Norns, Urður, Verðandi, and Skuld, who weave the fates of men at the roots of Yggdrasill, the world tree, remind us of the fragility of life.

Just as a text frames the words, the word textile reminds us of texture and texts. Helga Pálína has long been interested in the connections between books and textiles, and maintains it by making BÓKVERK alongside her MYNDVERK

About her pattern "Ruin" (i. Tóftir), Helga Pálína says: "ruins of turf houses are found all around Iceland. Many have been measured and registered, drawn up. These forms appear in the landscapes, worn down by weather and winds, mostly destroyed - as a sign of the old times, or as a kind of alphabet"

In this pattern they appear as shadows of the past.

Laufey Helgadóttir

Pýðing: Silja Bára R Ómarsdóttir



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Photo: Luc Boegly