

Saemundur Thor Helgason

25 May - 23 June 2018

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Fellowship of Citizens

Saemundur Thor Helgason

Fellowship of Citizens is London-based artist Saemundur Thor Helgason's first solo exhibition in London. The exhibition will formally launch the interest group *Félag Borgara* (or in English '*Fellowship of Citizens*') founded by Saemundur Thor Helgason in Reykjavik in October 2017, which aims to lobby for basic income in Iceland through apolitical means.¹

Part of *arebyte's* 2018 programme *Islands*, the interest group seeks to demonstrate the feasibility of a financing scheme which operates as an economic island, a microcosmic financial system, lobbying for basic income in Iceland. The work operates on a national scale due to legal restrictions, but financially supports *BIEN* (*Basic Income Earth Network*), an international organisation that advocates for basic income worldwide.

Fellowship of Citizens aims to fund *BIEN* with regular payments raised by a national lottery called '*Happdrætti Listamanna*' (or '*Artist Lottery*') open to all citizens of Iceland.² In Iceland, the '*Listamannalaun*' (or '*Artist salary*'), annually awards a given number of artists a monthly basic income for 3 months to up to 2 years. If we imagine (as Joseph Beuys did), that everyone is an artist, in some ways this could be seen as a trial for analogous minimum basic income. Bearing this in mind, the lottery campaign will address all citizens as if they were artists. Slogans include "*Who creates more masterpieces at dinner, you or Warhol?*", "*Embrace your inner artist*", "*Are you a good cook, by Duchamp's standards?*", "*Who's the better karaoke queen: You or Marina Abramović?*"

Happdrætti Listamanna does not pose as a micro pilot for basic income but serves as a tool for promoting the idea of basic income. Due to legal restrictions on small-scale lotteries in Iceland, the first prize cannot be money, or quasi-money, but must be a commodity or a service.

Thus, for the inaugural lottery draw, taking place later this year, the first and only prize is '*I'm feeling lucky*', a 100g, 18K gold artwork by the London based artist Anna Mikkola, commissioned by the interest group.

1. A basic income is a periodic cash payment unconditionally delivered to all on an individual basis, without means-test or work requirement.

2. Participation in the lottery is open beyond the borders of Iceland on the basis that the winner is able to collect the prize at their own expense.

Happdrætti Listamanna, prototype for a lottery ticket, (2018) feat. Anna Mikkola & Gnax Type.

Happdrætti Listamanna Artist Lottery

Miði númer
Ticket number

236

Verð
Price
2.900 ISK



Happdrættismiði þessi geymir prent listaverk í takmörkuðu upplagi. Leitist til fagaðila og fáid listaverkið prentað í stærð A1 á ál plötu (sjá skurðarlinur).

Félag Borgara heldur Happdrætti Listamanna til styrktar *BIEN* (*Basic Income Earth Network*), alþjóðlegra mannúðarsamtaka sem berjast fyrir grunnframfærslu allra jarðarbúa.

Aðal vinningur: 18K gull listaverk eftir listakonuna Önnu Mikkola
Miðafjöldi: 280
Miðaverð: 2.900 kr
Útdráttardagur: 00.00.2018
Miðasölutímabili lýkur: 00.00.2018

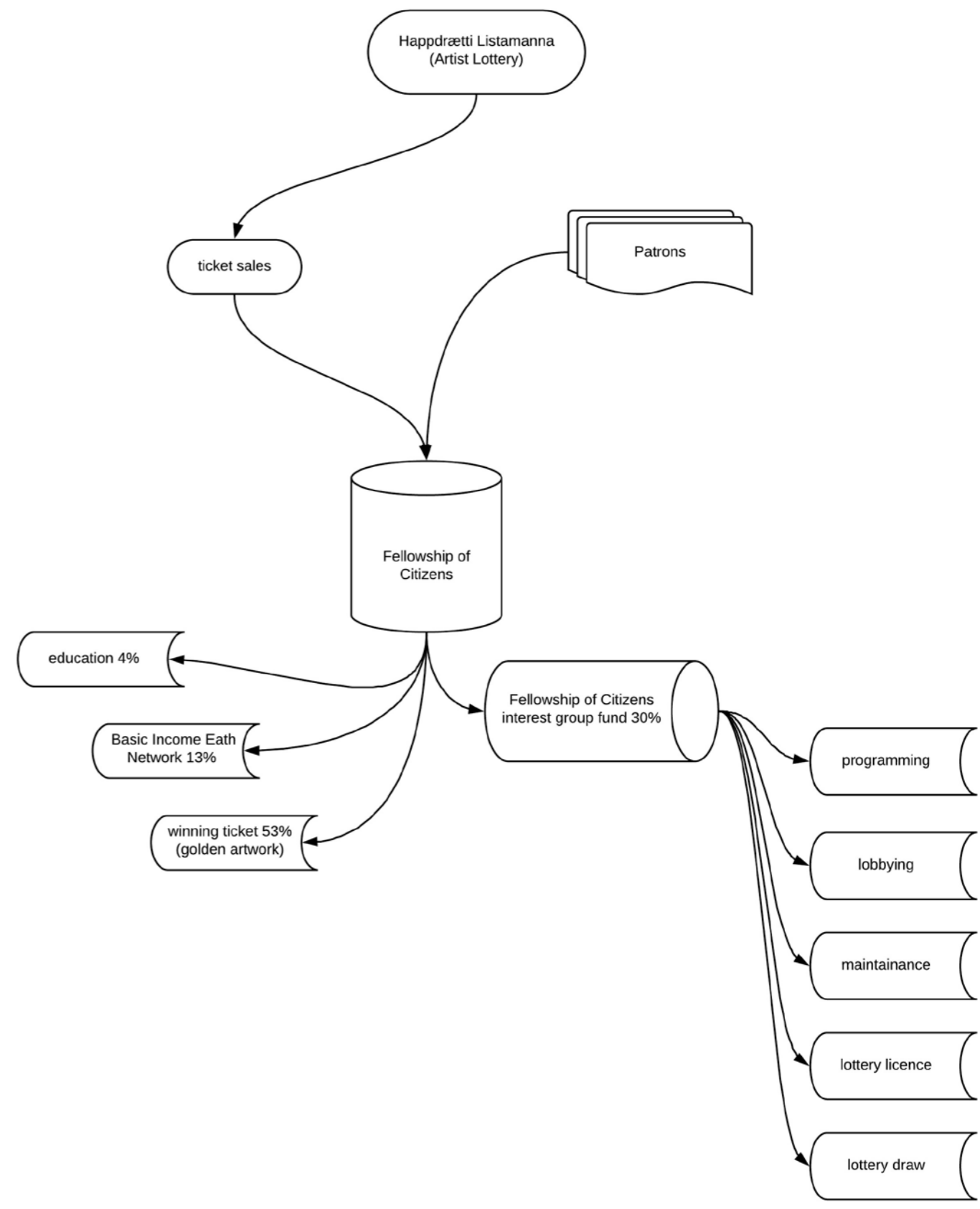
Upplýsingar um vinninga:
Sími: 7760000
Netfang: vinningar@happdraettillistamanna.is
Vefsíða: www.happdraettillistamanna.is

This lottery ticket contains an artwork in a limited edition. Seek an expert print service and have this artwork printed on an aluminium plate in size A1 (see crop marks).

Fellowship of Citizens organises *Artist Lottery* in support of *BIEN* (*Basic Income Earth Network*), an international non-profit organization that aims to provide an unconditional basic income for the global population.

First prize: 18K golden artwork by artist Anna Mikkola
Number of tickets: 280
Ticket price: 2.900 ISK
Date of lottery draw: 00.00.2018
Ticket sale ends: 00.00.2018

Enquiries about winning ticket:
Phone: 003547760000
Email: vinningar@happdraettillistamanna.is
Website: www.happdraettillistamanna.is



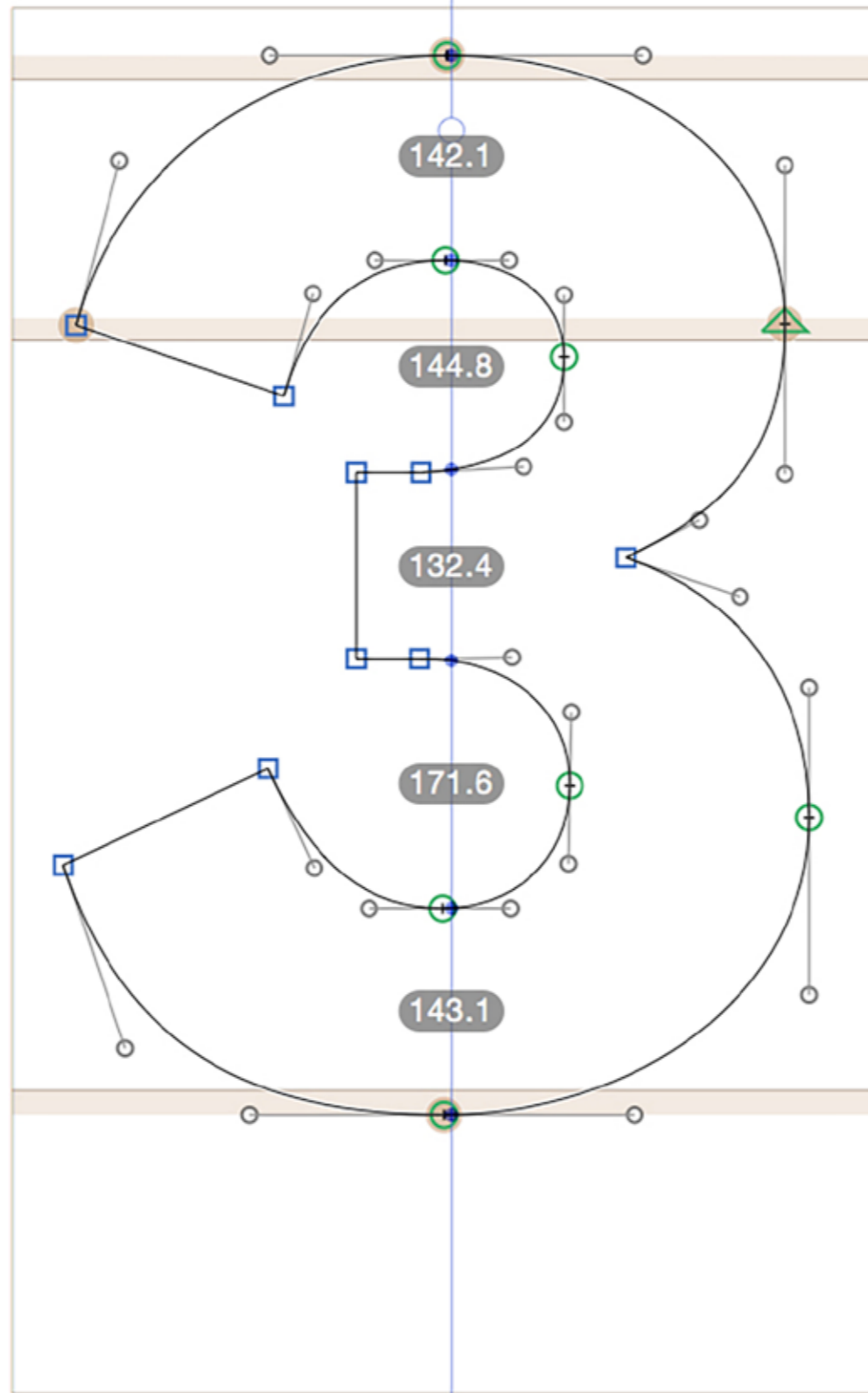
Happodraet

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Abolishing the Distributaries of Value

by Nick Srnicek (2018)

Under our current mode of production, we find ourselves socially recognised through monetary sums. The efforts that we make, the energy that we expend, the projects we build, and the contributions we add to society are aggregated and represented as a single figure in a vast social ledger. These figures mark our position in society, tracking the production, consumption, and distribution of value as it travels around the world and as it determines our mode of existence in a world dominated by capital.

The question we face today is what happens when the mechanisms for creating and distributing that value become scarce? What happens when the production of value is simply funnelled and concentrated upwards, while its distributary networks dry up and perish as dead labour takes over from living labour? At best, we see people fighting and pushing to reach the few remaining outlets, increasingly debasing themselves in a desperate effort to siphon off some value from the process of accumulation. At worst, entire groups of people are excluded and left as an unnecessary excess to the functioning of the economy. How can this situation be rectified? How can the distribution of value be reengineered in ways that abolish its concentration while simultaneously enabling the expansion of capacities to act, think, and feel?

It is here that ideas of a universal basic income can offer us potential. Instead of tying the distribution of value to a narrow set of socially validated performances, a universal income recognises that the production of value is collective and the wealth we generate is a commons. While capitalism has individualised the attribution, distribution, and recognition of value, we must instead demand a basic collective right to our common wealth. Whether we work in a factory, work in the home, or work to create, we demand a right to be recognised and a right to existence without the compulsion of wage-labour. This is the future that a universal basic income offers: in a world where the requirements of living labour have been reduced to a minimum, we stand poised on the edge of an immense expansion in our collective and individual freedoms. The challenge now is to rebuild anew the channels of value.

Fellowship of Citizens aims to finance its activities through the lottery and generate artworks, essays, articles, films etc in collaboration with various agents in the creative economy. Rather than being a symbolic gesture addressing the lack of economic value of marginalised types of labour, the organisation aims to provide systemic change.

As part of the exhibition at arebyte, excerpts from for a new short film written and directed by **Hawk Bjorgvinsson**, *Wilma (2018)*, will be showcased. The film is produced by Fellowship of Citizens together with **Chanel Björk Sturludóttir** and **Katrín Arndísardóttir**. The director has been given carte blanche to make a film of their own choice, on the basis that excerpts from the film may be taken out of context to serve as non-illustrative visual material for the interest group and the lottery.

Accompanying the short film, a new sculptural body of work has been produced in collaboration with photographer **Berglaug Petra Garðarsdóttir** and type foundry **Gnax Type**. Photographs, depicting behind-the-scenes of the making of *Wilma*, are eclectically displayed on monolithic lottery sculptures slightly elevated from the floor and which turn slowly synchronously in the gallery.

behind the scenes of *Wilma* (2018), Photographs by Berglaug Petra Garðarsdóttir





behind the scenes of *Wilma* (2018), Photographs by Berglaug Petra Garðarsdóttir



behind the scenes of *Wilma* (2018), Photograph by Berglaug Petra Garðarsdóttir



Behind the scenes of *Wilma* (2018). Photograph by Berglaug Petra Garðarsdóttir

WILMA (2018)

Director: Hawk Bjorgvinsson

Writer: Hawk Bjorgvinsson

Producers: Fellowship of Citizens / Hawk Björgvinsson

Co-Producers: Chanel Björk Sturludóttir / Katrín Arndísardóttir

PA: Ísak Már Jóhannesson
Katra Pálsdóttir
Samúel Bjarnabogu

DOP: Ásgrímur Guðbjartsson

AC: Eiríkur K. Júlíusson

Gaffer: Dagur Benedikt Reynisson

Best Boy: Viktor Orri Andersen

Swinger: Ástþór Knudsen

Sound: Benedikt Örn Árnason

Makeup Artist: Jónína Ingvarsdóttir

Photographer: Berglaug Petra Garðarsdóttir

Costumes: Katrín Arndísardóttir

Scenography: Saemundur Thor Helgason / Samuel Bjarnabogu

Cast:

Wilma: Snævar Valdimarsson Steffensen

Mother: María Birta

Father: Bragi Árnason

Benni: Snorri Ásmundsson

Gussi: Sigurður Ámundason

Jói: Dagur Leó Berndsen

Waitress: Anna Hafþórsdóttir

Alejandro: Úlfur Emilio Machado Tinnuson

Tanja: Eva Þóra Hartmannsdóttir

behind the scenes of Wilma (2018), Photograph by Berglaug Petra Garðarsdóttir



Saemundur Thor Helgason is an Icelandic artist based in London. He is a co-founder of *HARD-CORE*, an Amsterdam and London based art organization, developing algorithmic curatorial methods since 2011 and Cosmos Carl, an online platform that only hosts hyperlinks provided by artists and curators. Recent exhibitions and events that Helgason has taken part in include; '*A guiding dog for blind dog*', Centre for Contemporary Art FUTURA, Prague, Czech Republic (2018), '*Silicon Dreams*' with *HARD-CORE* at Harbinger, Reykjavik, Iceland (2018), '*SuperFetish S/S*' at Goethe Institut, Beijing, China (2016), '*Not in the Berlin Biennale*' at 9th Berlin Biennale (2016), '*ÁVÖXTUN %*' Rate of Return at Reykjavik Art Museum, Iceland (2016), '*CO-WORKERS – Network as Artist*' at Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France (2015), '*Vanity Fair | Demo Mode*' with Leslie Kulesh at Project Native Informant, London (2015). Since 2015, *HARD-CORE* teaches its own module 'Documentation and Online Presence' at the fine art department at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam.

Anna Mikkola is based in London and currently finishing her MFA at Goldsmiths. Her work explores the ways that technology alters human subjectivity and probes the boundaries of the human. Her research considers how interfaces and infrastructures format lived reality. Her work often materialises as videos and installations depicting narratives where different entities and points in time are woven together. Anna's work has been shown in various spaces locally in London, for example ICA and Jupiter Woods, and elsewhere in Europe such as Sonic Acts in Amsterdam, INDEX 19 in Stockholm, House of Egorn in Berlin and T-Space in Milan. She has given talks, to name a few, at Goldsmiths University (London), ECAL (Lausanne) and the New Museum in NYC.

Berglaug Petra Garðarsdóttir is a freelance photographer and a video maker from Iceland. She graduated from *Ljósmyndaskólinn (The school of Photography)* in January 2018. Her work is a variation of projects that focus on pop culture, feminism, young artist and the Icelandic music scenes.

Gnax Type type foundry was founded in 2017 by Reykjavik based graphic- and type designer Gabríel Markan. Gabríel graduated from the graphic design department at *Iceland Academy of the Arts* in 2017 and has since worked as a freelance graphic- and type designer for various clients in Iceland, Europe and India.

Hawk Bjorgvinsson is a director, producer and a screenwriter based in Reykjavik. He has directed numerous commercials for *Sagafilm* in Iceland. With interest in humour and drama, Bjorgvinsson aims to craft memorable characters and stories that appeal to a wide array of audiences. He directed the video for the *Fæði Klæði* campaign which is nominated for the Icelandic commercial awards.

Nick Srnicek is a lecturer in Digital Economy at King's College London and the author of *Platform Capitalism* (Polity, 2016).

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