

THE END  
RAGNAR KJARTANSSON  
THE PAVILION OF ICELAND  
07.06. – 22.11. 2009



## Final days of Ragnar Kjartansson's endurance performance at the Venice Biennale

*The End* is near! **Ragnar Kjartansson**, the representative of Iceland in the 53<sup>rd</sup> International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, is preparing for the last few weeks of his exhibition ***The End***. Visits to the Pavilion have been numerous and, by the end of October, they had already exceeded forty thousand people. The media coverage surpassed all expectations with reviews in international magazines, newspapers, TV and web media, and a documentary on Kjartansson's participation in the Biennale, directed by Ragnheidur Gestsdóttir, is in production to be premiered early next year. Lastly, international museums and art institutions have expressed great enthusiasm in exhibiting Kjartansson's work after visiting the exhibition in Venice.

The part of the exhibition that has been of the most interest in public discourse is undoubtedly the live performance onsite in the Pavilion. Kjartansson has resided in Venice together with artist Pall Haukur Björnsson since the onset of the Biennale, and every day they have lived and worked in the Pavilion, which has been transformed from the ground floor of a 14<sup>th</sup>-century palazzo into a painter's studio. There, Kjartansson has painted roughly one image a day of Björnsson, who models in different positions throughout the Pavilion, clothed only in a Speedo bathing suit, while the finished paintings were piling up all around them. Visitors have reacted in different ways to this work, standing aside and observing or entering the situation and sitting down to read, doze off, or put an album on the record player that is part of the exhibition's idiosyncratic *mise en scène*. Some have even taken up a paintbrush and worked with the artist on his paintings.

Kjartansson's two-fold exhibition in Venice also includes a video and music installation, which he created in collaboration with musician David Thor Jonsson and recorded in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. The room-sized installation consists of five video projections, showing Kjartansson and Jonsson playing different musical instruments, each staged outdoors in the sublime beauty of the winter landscape. Together the videos and recorded sounds create a harmony of indeterminate country music. The interest in this work has been phenomenal: it has recently been selected for a special event related to the Sundance Film Festival in the U.S. in early 2010, and we expect to see it on display around the world in the next years.

On the **22nd of November**, the last stroke of the performance will be painted in this extended series that now consists of nearly two hundred paintings. On this day, visitors are invited to celebrate the finissage together with the artist and his model in the pavilion at **7 pm**, directly following the final painting gesture of this six-months long performance.

Kjartansson is represented by Lühring Augustine in the United States and i8 Gallery in Europe.

The exhibition is organized by the Center for Icelandic Art (CIA.IS) in Reykjavík, Iceland under the commissionerhip of Christian Schoen, and is curated by Markús T. Andrússon and Dorothee Kirch. Official website: [www.cia.is/venice](http://www.cia.is/venice)

### Contact:

For further information, images, orders or to arrange an interview, please contact:

CIA.IS – Center for Icelandic Art  
T:+354-562 72 62  
info@cia.is

THE END  
RAGNAR KJARTANSSON  
THE PAVILION OF ICELAND  
07.06. – 22.11. 2009



Catalogue:

**Ragnar Kjartansson – The End, ed. by C. Schoen**

120p with essays by M. T. Andrésón, C. Alemani,  
C. Corbetta, F. Malbran and C. Schoen

Ostfildern (Hatje Cantz) 2009

English

ISBN 978-3-7757-2333-6

€ 35.00, CHF 59.00, \$55.00, £32.50



Art edition:

**Performance sketches, 2009**

Portfolio of 13 black and white photographs,  
and a unique drawing on paper

Image size 11 x 14 inches or 14 x 11 inches  
(35.5 x 27.9 cm or 27.9 x 35.5 cm)

Edition 30 plus 5 artist's proofs

\$ 2,500.00

Contact:

[anna@luhringaugustine.com](mailto:anna@luhringaugustine.com)

[annajulia@i8.is](mailto:annajulia@i8.is)

**Contact:**

For further information, images, orders or to arrange an interview, please contact:

CIA.IS – Center for Icelandic Art

T:+354-562 72 62

[info@cia.is](mailto:info@cia.is)