

# Ragnar Kjartansson

## *The Visitors*

Sammlung Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst

January 28 – May 28, 2023

*The Visitors*, a video installation by Ragnar Kjartansson, sweeps viewers into the peculiar world of a historical villa on the Hudson River in Upstate New York. Against the picturesquely timeworn backdrop of the venerable Rokeby mansion, a group of friends have convened to play a song – the artist calls it a “feminine nihilistic gospel song”. Over 64 minutes of unbroken video recording, eight musicians and a choir perform a song based on text fragments collaged from works by artist Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir that have been set to music by Kjartansson and Davíð Þór Jónsson. The projections each feature one musician in one of the mansion’s rooms and the choir on the veranda, the scenes and soundtracks merging into one all-encompassing filmic tableau. Conceived as a cinematographic and musical experiment, the live-filmed performance can also be viewed as a many-layered portrayal of friendship. *The Visitors* is a unique visual and acoustic composition, which gives poignant expression to the experiences of love and loss, separation and reunion.

While it can be viewed as a tribute to friendship, *The Visitors* also references ABBA. The title echoes the Swedish pop band’s eponymous 1981 album, their last, which is strongly influenced by their subsequent breakup. Produced in 2012 for his solo show at the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, *The Visitors* brought Kjartansson international recognition and is considered an outstanding example of his artistic approach. In his long-lasting performances, he uses repetitions and continuous loops to explore the shifts in musical performances over an extended period of time, as the musicians’ fatigue grows and becomes discernible especially in their voices. In *The Visitors*, Kjartansson also lets us partake very directly in the work’s process of creation, inviting us to immerse ourselves in an intensely emotional artistic experience.

**Ragnar Kjartansson** (\*1976, lives and works in Reykjavík) most recently appeared on stage in Switzerland with the performance *Schmerz* at the Zürcher Theater Spektakel festival (2022). *The Visitors* was produced for his solo exhibition at the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst in 2012 and has since been shown in many international art venues – most recently at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco and at the TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Madrid (both in 2022); the V-A-C Foundation’s GES-2, Moscow (2021-2022); the High Museum of Art, Atlanta (2021); the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2020); and the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki (2019-2020). Kjartansson’s works have been shown in major institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Barbican in London and the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.

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## Public Guided Tour (German/English)

Saturday, 3-4 pm, Thursday, 6.30-7.30 pm  
Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst

Every first Saturday from 3 pm and every second and third Thursday from 6.30 pm each month, the museum offers public tours of the exhibitions *Acts of Friendship* and *Ragnar Kjartansson – The Visitors*, which provide an in-depth look at the themes and backgrounds of the two exhibitions.

The tours are free of charge and without registration.  
Dates on [migrosmuseum.ch/agenda](http://migrosmuseum.ch/agenda)

## Family Afternoon (German)

The Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst opens its doors especially for families on the following Sundays, 2-5 pm, in the Atelier in the basement:

- Sunday, January 29
- Sunday, March 5
- Sunday, May 5, for the international museum day
- Sunday, June 6

With: Cynthia Gavranic and Len Mettler (art educators)  
Children only accompanied by adults, ideal age: 3-12 years old

## Art Detectives (German)

Our clever exhibition riddles on the theme of friendship in the exhibitions are once again available for little sleuths to pick up at the reception!

- Available from Friday, February 10
- Free offer
- 12 Backpacks with the equipment can not be reserved
- Ideal age: 8-12 years  
(with the help of adults also suitable for younger children)

## Art Fridays (German/English)

Once a month on Fridays (3-6 pm), people with and without refugee experience meet alternately at the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst and in the Duttweiler meeting room for joint creation and an inspiring exchange. Do you also want to get creative and join in?

Forthcoming dates: 17/2, 24/3, 28/4, 26/5, 23/6/2023

More information: [www.migrosmuseum.ch](http://www.migrosmuseum.ch)

Instagram:  
[@migrosmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/migrosmuseum)  
[#migrosmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/migrosmuseum)

Info / Agenda



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