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WHERE ARE WE AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Protest movements in Iceland have been experimenting with different forms of street actions to make their dissidence known. Street performance is by no means a big part of Icelandic culture but a few distinct events have still made history there. Some are monumental ones that made a lot of difference, such as the Women's Holiday on November 24th 1975, when Icelandic women in Reykjavík took a day off and flocked to the streets and made a big impact on the fight for women's rights in Iceland. On November 8th, 2008, protests in the aftermath of the economic collapse in Iceland were happening every weekend. This particular Saturday was unusually eventful at Austurvöllur, the square in front of the house of congress, for many reasons. A few thousand people gathered there for a protest meet that was interspersed with a few unusually transgressive acts. In my paper I will go into a few key points of what happened that day, look at their historical significance and the performative part of the transgression. In this paper I will look at a few symbols and actions that have been key figures in these protest performances, in short, who does what, where and what might it mean? That is, what do we do/can we do with the relatively simple act of putting our bodies and other things in "different" places?

Biography

Sigríður Lára Sigurjónsdóttir is a PhD student (dormant) at the University of Iceland. Her thesis in the making is about various performances of activism in Iceland in the aftermath of the economic collapse in 2008. She is an MA in literature and publishing, a playwright and a translator in Iceland. She is now living at Egilsstaðir in the east of Iceland, working independently on translations and publications of a lot of things, among them new Icelandic translations of L.M. Montgomery's books on Anne of Green Gables.