**THE SMALLEST GIANT OF EUROPEAN CINEMA TO JOIN US FOR THE 20th ANNIVERSARY OF MOTOVUN FILM FESTIVAL**

**Motovun Film Hill will be shaking once again – for the twentieth time! Celebrating the big anniversary, our big screens will be red hot between 25-29 July, filling the summer nights with the latest achievements of the Croatian and world cinema. But a fresh cinematic breeze from the north will cool down the Mediterranean heat – Iceland is joining us as this year’s partner country.**

Iceland, the least populated European country, is exceptional in many ways. Only 300,000 people live on this island of chilly wastelands, two thirds of the them in the capital, Reykjavik. The Icelanders boast the highest book-reading rate in the world. Most of them still believe in dwarfs and they are the only nation in the world who sent their bankers straight to jail after the financial crisis of 2008. Iceland also produces highly acclaimed films – good enough a reason to be the partner country of the **20th Motovun Film Festival**.

In the past years, Icelandic films regularly screened at major world festivals, their authors often winning awards. Knowing that their film industry’s annual production is rather modest – a dozen films per year – Iceland’s cinema is a miracle of a sort. Its films are permeated with this typical atmosphere of the remote North, full of secluded characters fighting their own demons, their community and the nature around them – and all this against the backdrop of dramatic and fascinating landscapes. The films from the far north are often very funny, using absurd and black humor in the tradition of typical Nordic dry humor somewhere along the lines of the iconic Finnish filmmaker Aki Kaurismaki.

Having joined efforts with the **Icelandic Film Center, Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Visit Iceland,** we’re bringing to Motovun this summer a number of great figures of Icelandic film, from the father of Icelandic film industry, **Friðrik Þór Friðriksson** (whose fruitful and heterogeneous career includes several genres and spans the early 1980s and the present day and whose 1991 film ***Children of Nature*** won him an Oscar nomination) to **Rúnar Rúnarsson**, whose ***Sparrows*** won awards in San Sebastian and Warsaw. Part of the credits for the film goes to Croatia’s film industry because *Sparrows* – also to be shown in Motovun – were a Croatian minority coproduction. The film’s protagonist and the best known Icelandic actor, **Ingvar Eggert Sigurðsson**, will also join them on our hill. This four-time winner of Edda Award has also won the European Film Academy Award. The film in which he plays the leading role, ***Of Horses And Men***, is yet another off-center, black-humor comedy, and yet another title in our side program **Iceland: Small Country for Great Films**.

The side program’s selector **Mike Downey** has announced some older experimental films, short films that conquered the world of cinema and a number of eclectic documentaries. The program will thus provide an overview of the Icelandic cinema – not just its contemporary films, but also some of the classics which are now very hard to find elsewhere.

See you at Motovun Film Festival XX, between 25-29 July!