

## Artangel's First International Commission

### **RONI HORN - Vatnasafn|Library of Water** **Stykkishólmur, Iceland**

Opens May 2007

[www.libraryofwater.is](http://www.libraryofwater.is)



For the past 25 years, the work of Roni Horn has been intimately involved with the distinctive geography, geology, climate and culture of Iceland.

In collaboration with Artangel, Horn has developed VATNASAFN|LIBRARY OF WATER as a multi-faceted long-term installation and community centre in the town of Stykkishólmur on the western coast of Iceland north of Reykjavik. VATNASAFN|LIBRARY OF WATER is situated in Stykkishólmur's former library building, overlooking the ocean on one side and the harbour and town on the other.

In the main viewing room, Horn has replaced stacks of books with a constellation of glass columns containing glacial water from around Iceland – gathered from the glacial tongues of Vatnajökull, the glaciers of Hofsjökull, Langökull, Snaefellsjökull, and glacial rivers such as Skaftá, Hvítá and Þjósa. A customised floor is inscribed with both Icelandic and English words describing the state of the weather - or the mood of the viewer... Through the watery columns natural light is refracted and reflected onto the floor creating what Horn describes as a “kind of lighthouse in which the viewer becomes the lighthouse in which the view becomes the light.” Absorbing the visitor into a world of weather, water and light, the room also doubles as a space for reflection and a place for community activity from writers' readings to women's chess clubs, yoga classes and meetings about environmental issues.

VATNASAFN|LIBRARY OF WATER also houses *Weather Reports You*, an ongoing collection of testimonies from people living in the locality, an alternative kind of weather reporting inspired by the site of the building as the place where the recording of meteorological conditions in Iceland was first initiated.

VATNASAFN|LIBRARY OF WATER also launches an annual writers' residency program with writers invited from the fields of fiction, non-fiction, poetry or screenwriting or from the natural sciences. The first writer in residence will be the Icelandic fiction writer Guðrún Eva Minervudóttir.

VATNASAFN|LIBRARY OF WATER is Artangel's first international project.

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## Editors' Notes

1. Since her first visit to Iceland after college, **Roni Horn's** artistic practice has been deeply nourished by her experience on the island – both solitary and communal. This relationship has engendered an extended series of books and exhibitions based on photographs made in Iceland. Amongst these books, which have the generic title *To Place*, are photographic series based on folds for sheep (*Folds*), swimming pools and hot pools (*Pooling Waters*), rivers and waterfalls (*Verne's Journey*), and the face of a young Icelandic woman. All of the books share a precise sense of Iceland's distinctiveness, its special sense of place.
2. **VATNASAFN/LIBRARY OF WATER** is funded and supported by The Town of Stykkishólmur, The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and The Ministry of Communications. The production of **VATNASAFN/LIBRARY OF WATER** and its associated programmes have been made possible by the generous support of: the Icelandic Parliament, FL Group, Olíufélagið and Straumur-Burdaras Investment Bank. With additional generous support from The **VATNASAFN/LIBRARY OF WATER CIRCLE**: Louise Bourgeois, Kathy and Richard S. Fuld Jr, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, LUMA Foundation, Anna Lísá Sigurjónsdóttir & Hreiðar Már Sigurðsson and those who wish to remain anonymous; **Artangel International Circle**: The Cranford Collection, Guy and Andrea Dellal, Joe and Marie Donnelly, Mala and Oliver Haarmann, David and Sarah Kowitz, Jennifer McSweeney, Catherine and Franck Petitgas, Pascale Revert and Peter Wheeler, Cora and Kaveh Sheibani, Iwan and Manuela Wirth, Anita and Poju Zabłudowicz and Michael Zilkha; and **VATNASAFN/LIBRARY OF WATER** Patrons: Cees & Inge de Bruijn, Fifth Floor Foundation, Steinunn Jónsdóttir, Dominique Levy & Robert Mnuchin, L&M Arts, Mary Moore, Howard & Cindy Rachofsky, The Pritzker Traubert Family Foundation, Emily Rauh Pulitzer, The Pulitzer Foundation, Alannah Weston and Sylvie Winckler. Thanks for support also from the Icelandic Tourist Board and Icelandair. The **Writer's Residency Programme** is supported by The Annenberg Foundation. **Weather Reports You** is published by Steidl in association with Artangel.
3. Over the past decade, **Artangel** has built an international reputation as a pioneering producer of highly ambitious projects by contemporary artists across a wide range of different disciplines. Artangel's mission is to work with some of today's exceptional artists to realise the full potential of their ideas in the best possible circumstances. From 2007, Artangel is extending its distinctive approach to commissioning with a sequence of long-term projects in different places around the world. Shaped by the visions and convictions of artists, and made possible by the new International Commissioning Fund, each project is based on an intimate connection to a place of enduring significance to the artist. The founding benefactors of this fund are more than 40 artists with whom Artangel has a close working relationship. Artangel is supported by Arts Council England, London, The Company of Angels, Artangel International Circle and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. [www.artangel.org.uk](http://www.artangel.org.uk)