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## **2011 Nordic Fashion Biennale Readies for September 30 Opening at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle**

Six-week exhibition celebrates Nordic design, fashion and innovation

SEATTLE - September 13, 2011 - Nordic fashion, design and culture will be showcased in Seattle on September 30 when the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle, WA and the Nordic House in Reykjavik, in partnership with Iceland Naturally, officially open the 2011 Nordic Fashion Biennale. The Biennale, an international celebration of Nordic culture, fashion and design, is open to the public and will run through November 13 at the Nordic Heritage Museum. During the six-week long exhibition, detailed installations will highlight the best of Nordic fashion, design and photography. International designers will lead a two-day fashion and design summit, and 12 young US designers will be competing for a trip to Iceland's Fashion Week and the cachet of winning both a juried and a "People's Choice" award for their original Nordic-inspired fashion designs.

### **The Exhibition**

Anchoring the Nordic Fashion Biennale is the exhibition ***Looking Back to Find our Future*** which features cutting-edge, contemporary Nordic fashion and jewelry from designers throughout the Nordic regions, including Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

New York-based Icelandic visual artist and fashion designer Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir (aka [Shoplifter](#)) was selected to curate the exhibition. Well-known for her work with the Museum of Modern Art in New York and collaborations with the musician Björk, Shoplifter plays with the juxtaposition of old and new by integrating exhibition pieces into the existing historic collection at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle. The vision is one which blurs past and present while highlighting the cultural influences and deep roots that inspire many modern Nordic pieces.

"The Nordic Fashion Biennale is a platform where we offer a celebration and an insight into the Nordic spirit, the marriage of creativity with practicality in fashion, and the surprising and astonishingly beautiful results," said Shoplifter, curator for the Nordic Fashion Biennale 2011. "I have a deep respect for the history of fashion and human creativity when it comes to beautifying ourselves and our

surroundings. At the Nordic Fashion Biennale people can experience our global similarities and differences and create their own connections between the past and modern reality.”

In addition to the design installations, the six-week engagement will also include an exhibition of Nordic street fashion featuring photography from Reykjavik, Greenland, Faroe Islands, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo, and Stockholm.

### **The Summit**

The Nordic Fashion Biennale 2011 will kick off on September 30<sup>th</sup> with the **NFB 2011 Fashion Summit**, a series of interactive presentations and discussions led by industry trendsetters and leaders. Designers, artists, and fashion students are invited to join in a discussion of fashion, cultural heritage and sustainability, designed to open a dialogue and spark creativity between master professionals and young emerging designers. The symposium will feature presentations by 14 prominent speakers including Yvan Mispelaere, Creative Designer for Diane Von Furstenberg; New York based Áslaug Magnúsdóttir, founder of Moda Operandi; and Iceland designer Mundi Vondi, known for his recent work on the film *“Rabbit Hole.”*

“If the fashion industry is controlled by the establishment, the creativity slowly fades away,” said Mundi Vondi, Icelandic artist, designer and participant in the Fashion Summit. “Before we know it, all fashion shows start blurring together, looking more and more alike. We need fresh blood in the fashion industry. And what better way to get an infusion of fresh ideas and a rush of creativity, than by spending two days with designers and artists from all over the world?”

Themes woven throughout the Fashion Summit will include sustainability, cultural heritage and branding as it relates to fashion. According to New York-based stylist and designer Edda Guðmundsdóttir, a fashion insider who is co-curating the Summit,

“Our speakers come from the complete spectrum of the fashion industry—from a mom and pop operation to a multibillion dollar company. They represent enormous variety both in business models and in creativity, addressing all aspects of modern fashion business from the artisan to the global business leader. With the summit, we show multiple levels of operations and approaches to fashion, discussing for example, sustainability, slow fashion and how it relates to the global aspect of multi-cultural consumerism.”

A complete list of topics, speakers and presenters, as well as registration information, is available at: [www.nordicfashionbiennale.com](http://www.nordicfashionbiennale.com). Space is limited and people are encouraged to register early.

### **The Competition**

The final component of the 2011 Nordic Fashion Biennale is the North by Northwest (N x NW) fashion competition, designed to spark inspiration and creativity from unique designs and trends in Nordic fashion. Students and emerging designers from the West Coast were invited to submit entries and 12 designers from California, Oregon, Washington State and British Columbia have been chosen as finalists.

The finalists' entries will be displayed on the Nordic Fashion Biennale web site and a panel of judges as well as online voting will determine two grand prize winners, who will receive a trip to Iceland for the Reykjavik Fashion Week in 2012.

The 2011 Nordic Fashion Biennale is being produced in part due to the generous support from numerous partners including Iceland Naturally, Icelandair Cargo, Icelandic USA, Inc., Volvo, Marel, Trilogy International Partners, Scan|Design Foundation by Inger & Jens Bruun, Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, Artsfund, 4Culture, and the Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs.

For more information on the designers and artists participating in the 2011 Nordic Fashion Biennale, a full schedule of events and ticket information visit [www.nordicfashionbiennale.com](http://www.nordicfashionbiennale.com).

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### **About the Nordic Heritage Museum**

With over 55,000 visitors annually, the Nordic Heritage Museum is a cultural treasure in the Pacific Northwest. It is the only museum in the United States that represents the cultural heritage of all five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Museum's mission is to share Nordic culture with people of all ages and backgrounds by exhibiting art and objects, preserving collections, providing educational and cultural experiences and serving as a community gathering place. The Nordic Heritage Museum presents a wide range of vibrant programs including contemporary art exhibitions, outstanding concerts, lectures and films and a variety of special events throughout the year. For general information, visit [www.nordicmuseum.org](http://www.nordicmuseum.org) or phone (206) 789-5707.

*Museum hours: Tues-Sat 10 am to 4 pm; Sun 12 noon to 4 pm; Mon closed  
The museum is located at 3014 NW 67th Street, Seattle, WA 98117*

### **About Nordic House, Reykjavik**

The Nordic House in Reykjavik is a cultural institution opened in 1968 and operated by the Nordic Council of Ministers. Its goal is to foster and support cultural connections between Iceland and the other Nordic countries. To this end, the Nordic House organizes a diverse program of cultural events and exhibitions. The Nordic House is the only building in Iceland designed by an internationally acclaimed architect, Finnish modernist Alvar Aalto.