



THE WAYFARERS COLLECTIVE

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2024 Storyland Design Challenge**

THE WAYFARERS COLLECTIVE



The Wayfarers Collective is an international group of people dedicated to exploring the unknown, experiencing the unwitnessed and discovering the unwritten. These Wayfarers are dispatched to destinations all over the world to investigate and document their findings. Now, you have the chance to help the Wayfarers in their work.

This booklet presents to you The Wayfarers Collective, a location based entertainment (LBE) concept that brings a new and unique approach to immersive theatre. Where society moves to more and more individual digital experiences, The Wayfarers Collective aims to bring people together.


When guests visit one of the venues, they join members of The Wayfarers Collective in their efforts to document the peculiar place in which they have arrived. They get to experience an adventure through collaborative puzzles and interactions with actors and theatrical performances, in a heavily themed physical environment. Guests play an active role in the story and their surroundings change as the story progresses in real time.

As a concept, The Wayfarers Collective is designed as an overarching brand with a series of unique attractions in varying sizes and complexity, each one representing a new destination with new stories to uncover, offering participants the chance to experience


unique marvels and mysteries through immersive theatre experiences.

This booklet begins with a description of the themes and ideas behind The Wayfarers Collective. To showcase what an instalment of The Wayfarers collective could look like, we then invite you to join two Wayfarers in the picturesque town of Reykgras. After Reykgras, practical execution considerations for The Wayfarers collective are outlined.

Table of contents



The team	4
The Wayfarers Collective	5
Target audience	6
Experience structure	7
The Wayfarers Collective: Reykgras	9
Story	11
Design	13
General execution considerations	25
Accessibility and inclusivity	26
Staffing requirements	27
Food and beverage	27
Alternate revenue stream	27
Revisitability	27
Sustainability	27
Appendices	28
A1: TWC: Reykgras - story outline	29
A2: Reykgras character overview	36
B: Venue model	39
C: Finale special effect	40
D: References	43



The team



Elly Richards

Story | Concept | Art | Research

Elly is a storyteller who loves digging deep into the subject of her stories, to ensure every detail is right and the story world feels as believable as possible. She likes to get her inspiration from both her travels in the real world, as well as her passion for fiction. She has a professional background in marketing and has taken part in multiple themed entertainment projects.



Thomas Broch

Story | Concept | Technical design

Thomas is an all round creative with experience in video production, themed entertainment and digital creation. Being able to make an experience and a story come alive with the help of technology is where his passion lies. He has taken part in various themed entertainment design projects, and has worked on multiple projects for a large themepark in the Netherlands.

When he's not busy at work, he likes to spend time in his workshop, working on all sorts of creative side projects ranging from working on themed entertainment concepts, to building small lanterns.



The Wayfarers Collective

Core values

The concept for The Wayfarers Collective has been developed around four core values that serve as a foundation for both design and operations.

Be Together

Each instalment of The Wayfarers Collective encourages and facilitates interaction between people in its puzzles, sometimes even going as far as facilitating groups of strangers getting to know each other. In today's digital and individual age, The Wayfarers Collective strives for people to create memories together, playing to people's sense of belonging.

An important component to being together is that everybody can join. Therefore, the venues are designed with accessibility in mind.

Physical first

The venues take a physical first approach in their design. In order to provide rich experiences, physical sets and environments are utilised which tend to stand the test of time better than their digital counterparts. These physical sets offer a far smaller barrier to immersion as they provide a direct immersive environment, rather than an environment through a digital medium.

Technology does play a role in The Wayfarers Collective, but it's a supporting one, enriching the experience beyond what would be possible when employing just a physical environment.

Opt-in

The stories at The Wayfarers Collective are opt-in. We provide rich, and engaging stories and story worlds for those who want to go and discover them. For those who don't feel the desire to sink their teeth into the full story, we provide a simpler story and a pleasant environment to play some games and enjoy a nice meal or drink. Therefore, the venues should always be enjoyable to visit, even if guests choose not to engage deeply with the story.

Education through entertainment

The underlying themes in the storylines and challenges are themes that can be found in the real world as well. These themes are conveyed to guests by serving as the basis for the storylines, games and challenges. The guests get to interact with these themes in a natural and playful way. Entertainment, enjoyment and story always come first.



Target audience

The Wayfarers Collective is aimed at a target audience of people 12 years old and up, looking for a fun half-day activity to do with their friends and family. The experiences are not suitable for people under 12 for various practical and safety reasons. The presence of (very) young children can be disruptive to the immersive environment that people are in. Furthermore, special effects used in The Wayfarers Collective may be too intense or frightening to young children.

The opt-in nature, mixed with puzzles, games and food and beverages makes that this concept can appeal to a wide range of people, as there will be something for everyone to enjoy.

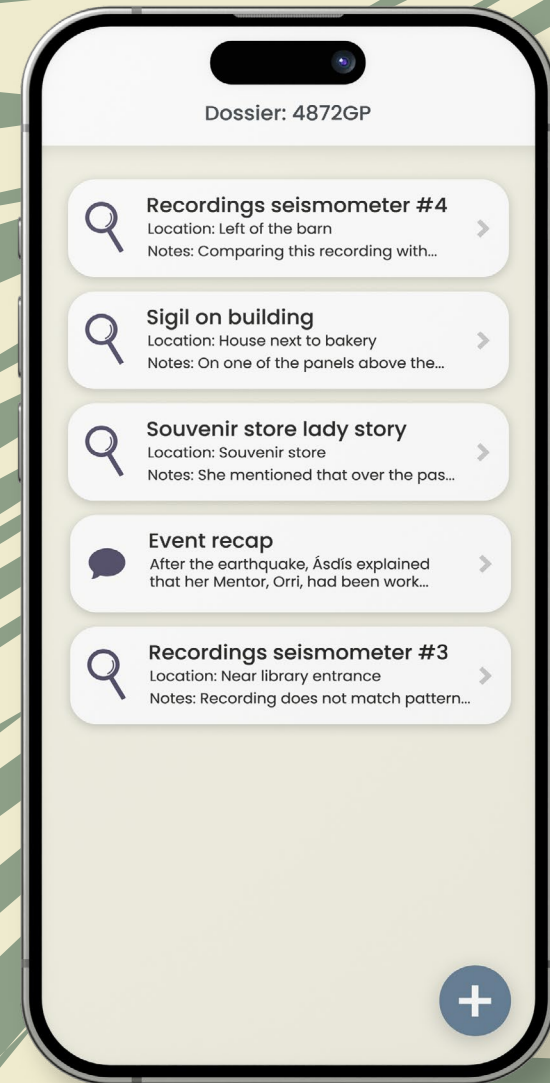


Experience structure

TWC dossier app

At the start of the experience, guests will get access to the TWC dossier app. A (web) app that allows them to keep track of their findings throughout the experience as well as keep them up to date on current story events. Canonically, the app is simply a tool provided by The Wayfarers Collective to help the guests on their adventure with the Wayfarers. The guests can enter their own findings, as well as receive update messages from the Wayfarers. The app is not part of any puzzle mechanisms. This is to ensure that guests only give attention to their phone when they want to input something, or when they receive a notification. They are not incentivized to keep looking at their phone, which allows the guests to leave their phones in their pockets as much as possible and enjoy their physical surroundings and each other's company.

From an operational perspective, the app can also be used as a load-balancing mechanism. If an area of the venue is less crowded, some visitors could receive a notification along the lines of "Hey, I noticed you found [clue], it reminds me of what I saw at [location]. You should go check it out.". This mechanism should be used sparingly though as to not bring the app to the foreground too much.



Experience structure

Storyline structure

Guests visiting a venue will get to experience a story as it unfolds in real time. These stories are divided into various phases. The change between phases is marked by a scene, with actors, that plays out somewhere in the venue. These scenes often provide new information and unlock new locations and puzzles for the coming phase.

The way guests are alerted to a scene taking place can differ between venues, but besides any custom notifiers, guests will always receive a notification through the TWC dossier app in the form of a message from one of the Wayfarers. If guests are unable to attend a scene, they can find a short recap in the dossier app as well, along with any clues or materials that have originated from that scene. This leaves them free to continue working on a puzzle and catch up with the story at their convenience.

After the scene, the new phase starts. Each phase has its own puzzles, events and characters associated with it. These puzzles provide the guests with bits of information relating to the story at that point in time. This allows for the puzzles to be an integrated part of the story world, as everything that can be found out in the puzzles is essentially canon. This also encourages guests to talk to other guests to see what they've been able to find, as everything is part of the larger story mystery.

Some puzzles may only be available during one phase of the story, whereas others might be available for multiple phases.

The stories in The Wayfarers Collective follow a linear storyline, and are deliberately kept relatively simple with few twists and turns. This is to ensure that the story still is understandable whilst guests are running around doing challenges and solving puzzles. The venues do offer more depth to the storyline and story world incorporated throughout the sets, puzzles and interactions with actors. But this information will not be required for guests to understand the main storyline.



REYKGRAS

THE WAYFARERS
COLLECTIVE

To illustrate what an instalment of The Wayfarers Collective can look like, a flagship instalment has been designed. The Wayfarers Collective: Reykgras. Guests are invited to the town of Reykgras to solve the mystery of sudden earthquakes and geological anomalies that are threatening the town's existence.

The Wayfarers Collective: Reykgras

When guests enter the venue, they do so via the The Wayfarers Collective (TWC) bar. Here the guests will have their tickets scanned, and are fitted with a coloured bracelet which will eventually allow them to move from the bar into the town of Reykgras. This bar forms the border between the real world and the world of Reykgras.

In the TWC bar, the guests are shown an instructional video outlining some of the ground rules of the experience and are provided with their dossier number for use in the TWC app. After the introduction, the guests are let into Reykgras.



Story

Reykgras, a small Icelandic-style settlement, has caught the attention of members of The Wayfarers Collective due to the inexplicable geological changes in the form of sudden earthquake swarms that have left volcanologists confused. Cracks have opened in the ground, worrying residents. Other anomalies are taking visible effect on the small geyser's eruptions located on the outskirts of the town. This has caught the attention of The Wayfarers Collective, who have dispatched two of their members, Chris and Amelia.

Over the course of about four hours, guests are taken through the story in various phases.

In the first phase of the story, guests get to explore the town, meet some of the townspeople, as well as familiarising themselves with specific geological concepts through puzzles.

The first phase ends with the guests experiencing a mild earthquake. After this earthquake, the second phase begins and the guests get introduced to Ásdís, a volcanologist who has been researching the geological anomalies that are threatening the town. Ásdís was working on this research together with her mentor, Orri, who has since gone missing.

As the guests embark on their quest to find out what is going on underground, aided by some of Orri's research notes, they find themselves caught in a bit of crossfire between the two Wayfarers. Amelia, wrapped up by stories told by the townspeople Kristján and Ingrún, believes there are supernatural forces at play whilst Chris insists that there must be a scientific explanation.

Throughout the following phases, guests can follow multiple storylines which will culminate in one grand finale. One such storyline has guests discovering that a cult seeks to break the barrier between Midgard (our world) and Muspelheim (the realm of the Fire Giants), as it's believed that the veil between realms is thin where Reykgras has been built. Can the guests stop the cult from achieving their goals?

Another storyline is more grounded in science, giving guests an insight into the world of volcanology. Through puzzles, guests will discover that an unexpected magmatic intrusion is taking place and it will be up to them to work out where and why it's taking place. Is the town safe?



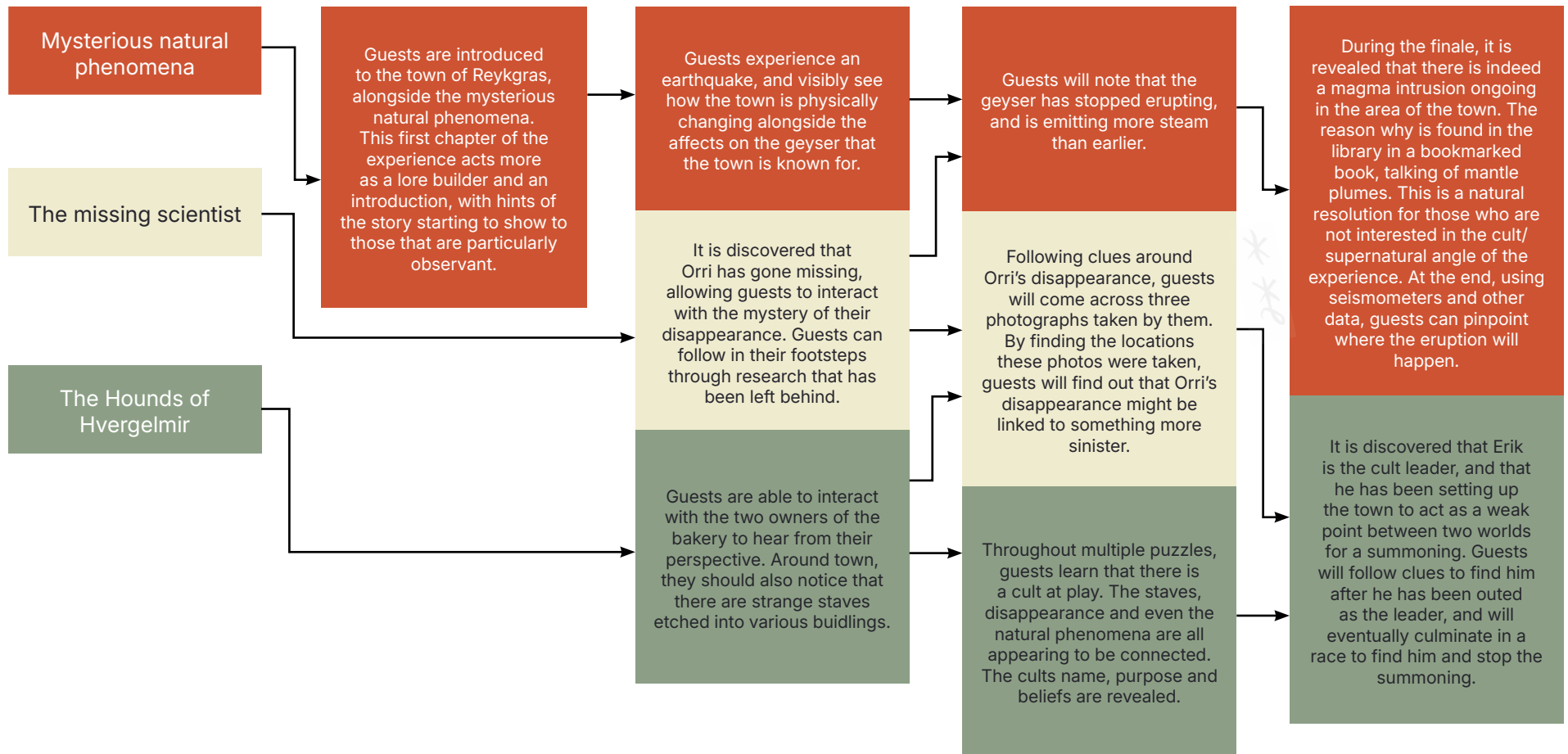
Underlying values

The story of Reykgras is fictional, but does contain information about real-life geological concepts and Icelandic folklore. The aim of the Reykgras instalment is to inspire curiosity in people and to encourage them to learn more about their surroundings and history, and how ancient folklore often parallels modern scientific discoveries.

Storyline structure

This diagram outlines how the various storylines connect and converge throughout the experience.

An extensive outline of the story, its phases, the characters and some puzzle examples can be found in appendices A1 and A2.

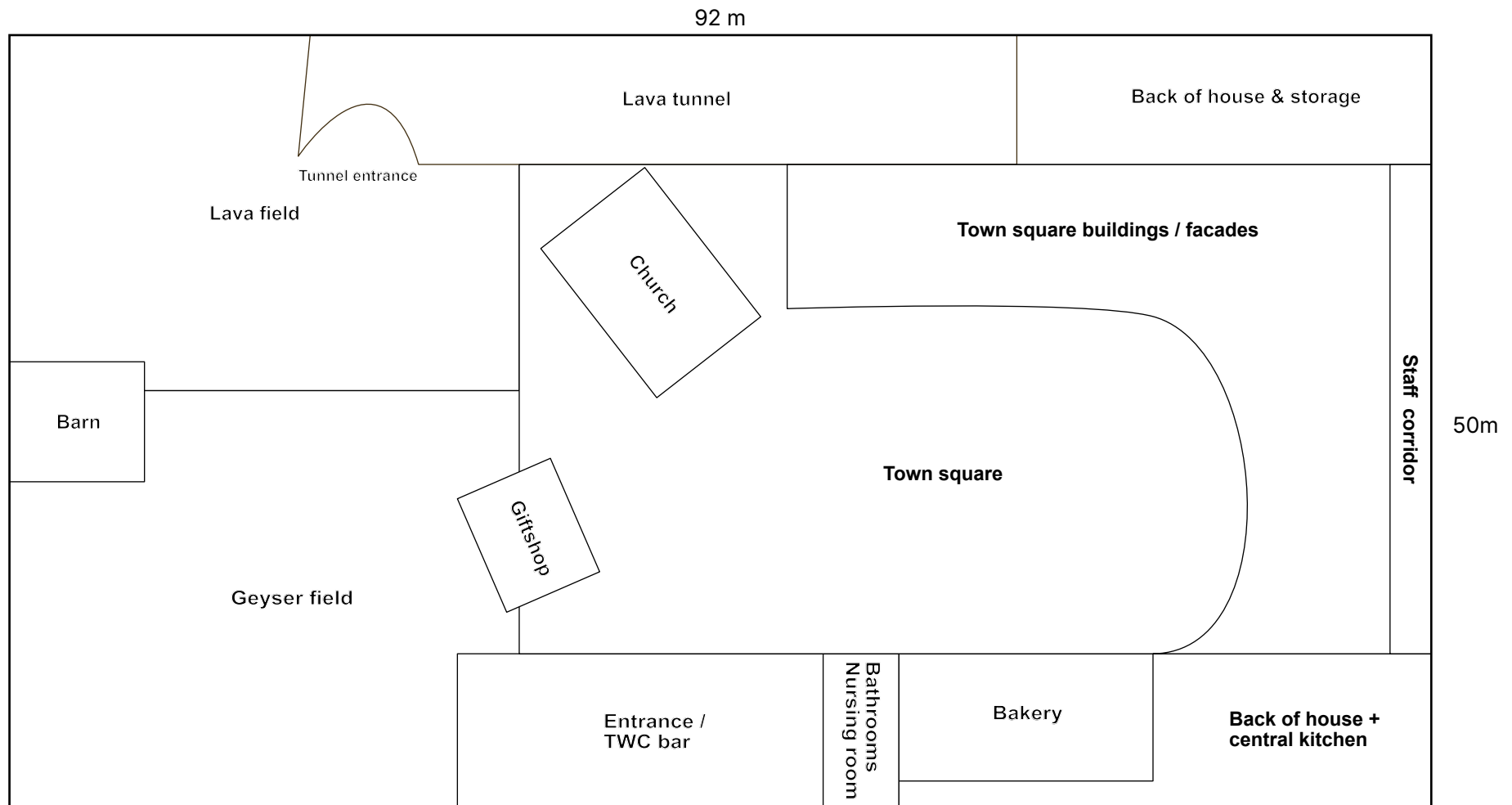


Design

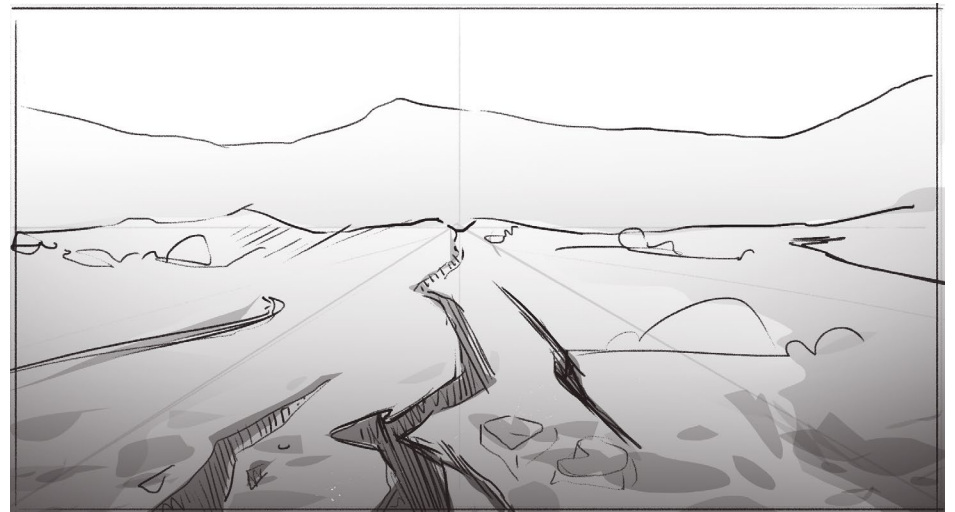
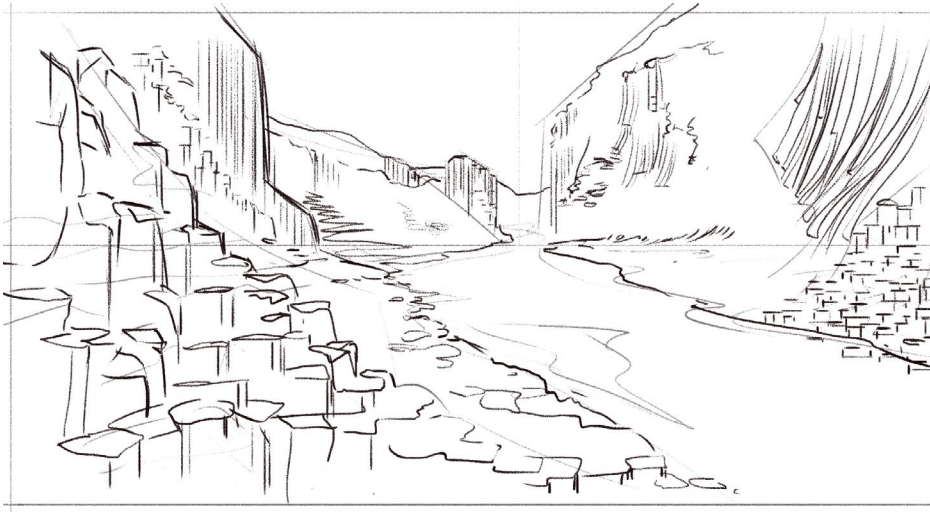
The Reykgras venue is divided into four distinct areas: the town square, the geyser field, the lava field and the lava tunnel.

The town square is modelled after architecture one might encounter in Iceland. The town square buildings form a, largely, continuous facade. This surrounds the guests with theming, as well as blocking sight lines to other areas and hiding the venue walls. The space behind the facade can be used for either guest areas with puzzles, or back of house areas. In the design, a continuous back of house space was implemented to allow easy movement of supplies and staff outside of the guest's sight. The bakery in the town serves both as a key story location, as well as the main food and beverage point in the venue. The back of house area next to the bakery also houses the central kitchen for the experience.

To serve as a scale reference, a rough 3D model was of the venue was made. Details of this model can be found in **appendix B**.



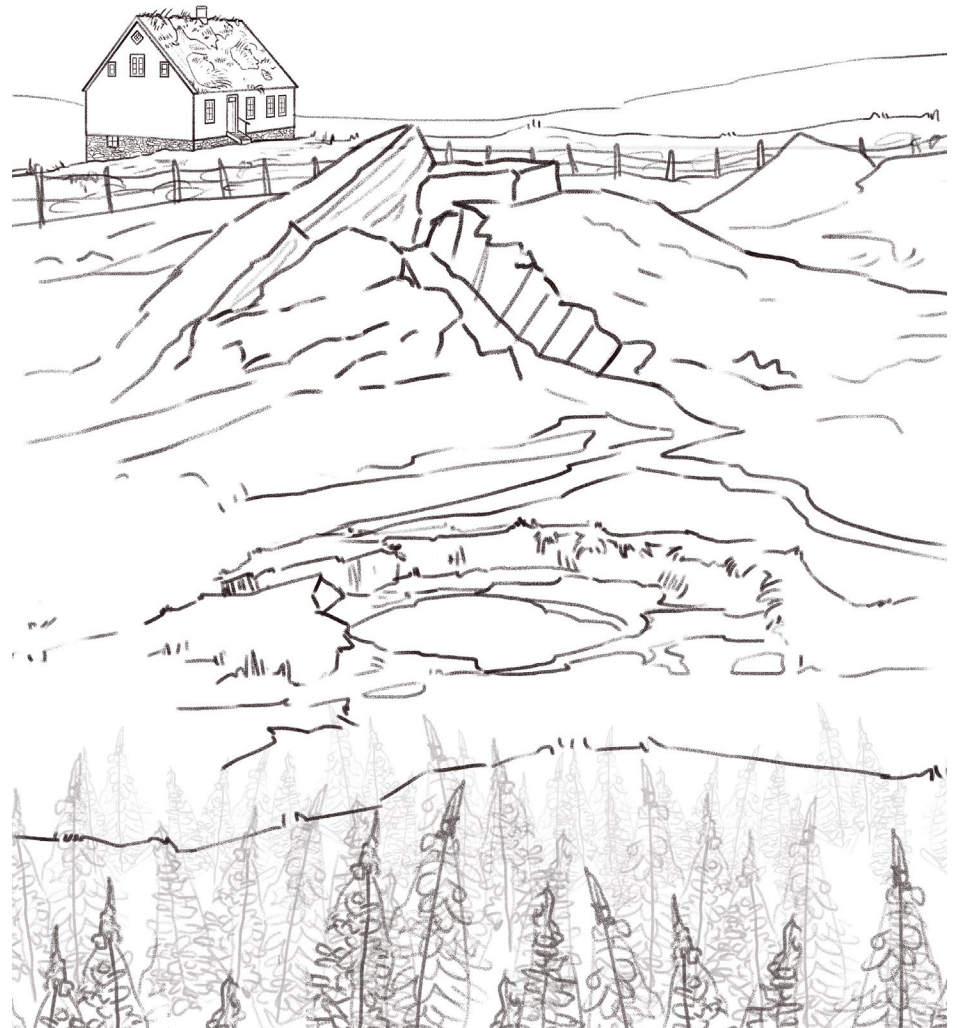
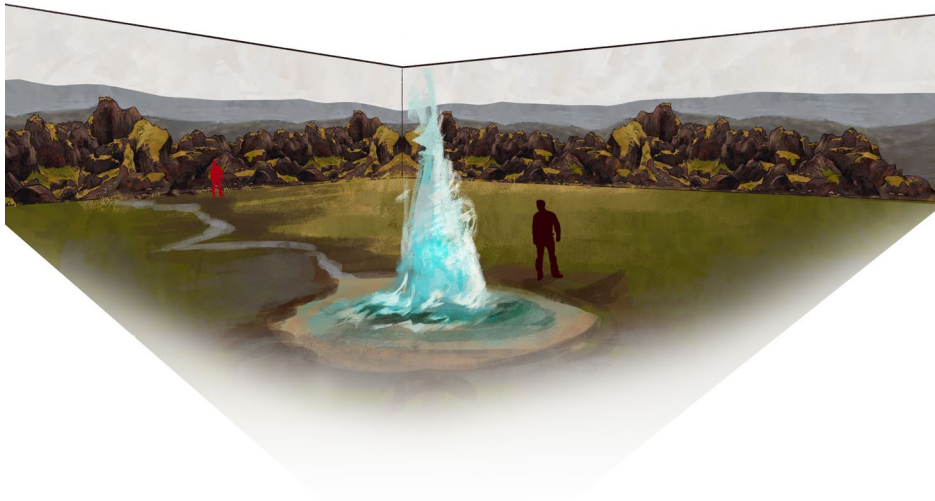
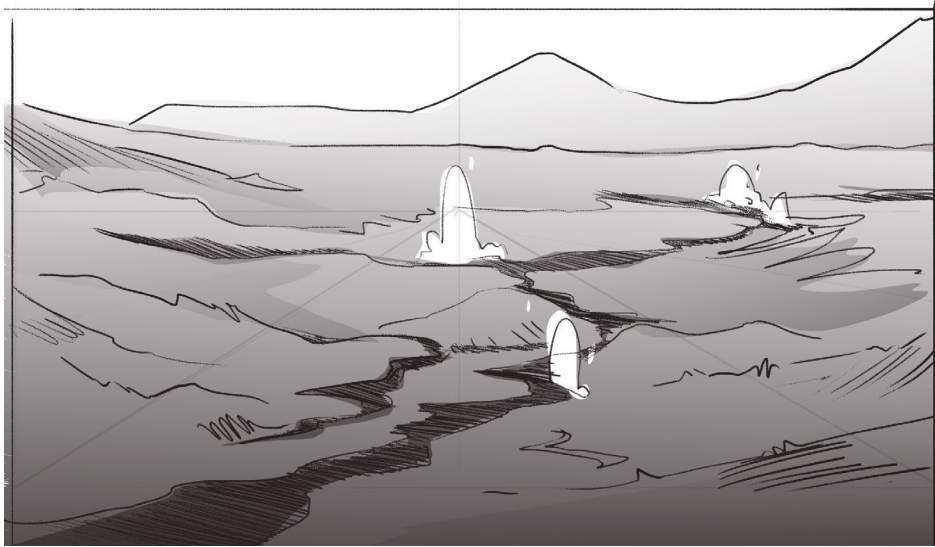
Exploratory sketches



Early development sketches, focussed on a general landscape. Themed basalt walls for the building's interior would have been difficult to maintain and costly to build.

Initial geyser sketches

The geyser is set just out of the main town area, and is one of the first areas that guests explore. Faux Alaskan Lupine add colour to the area, and dynamism is added by steam rising from the area and the erupting geyser.



Building design sketches



Modular building sketches based on buildings seen in Reykjavik, Vik, and Arnarstapi.

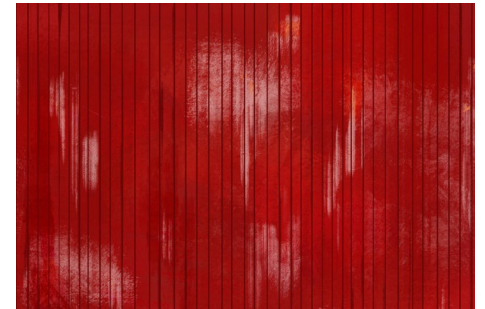
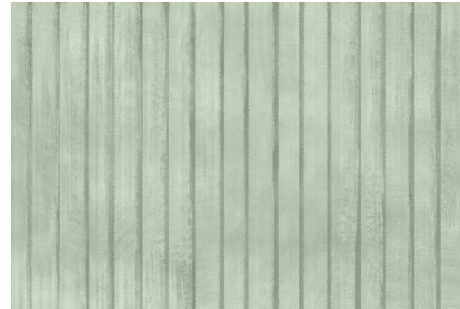
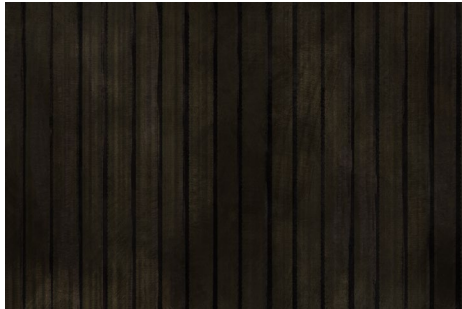
Town square design



Building textures and colours

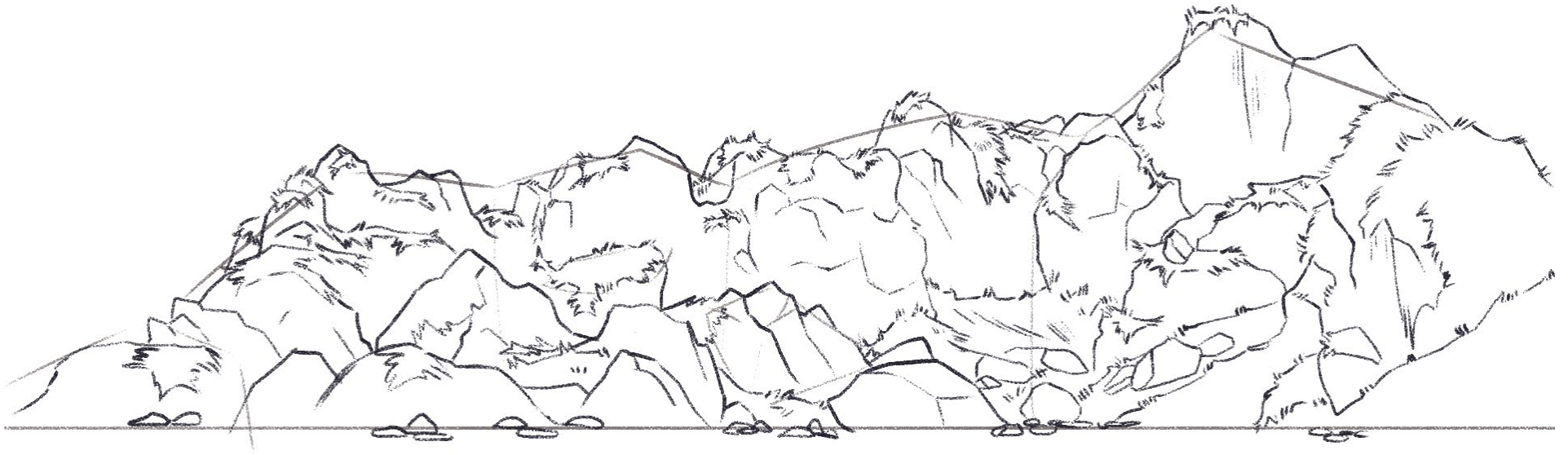
Sets of material textures to be used for buildings in the town.

Buildings should be made to emulate painted wood, with some areas having a decorative stone facade.



Wall facade

The majority of the walls will be painted to emulate a typical Icelandic landscape, but some small amount of rockwork will be present in the area where the lava tunnel is discovered.

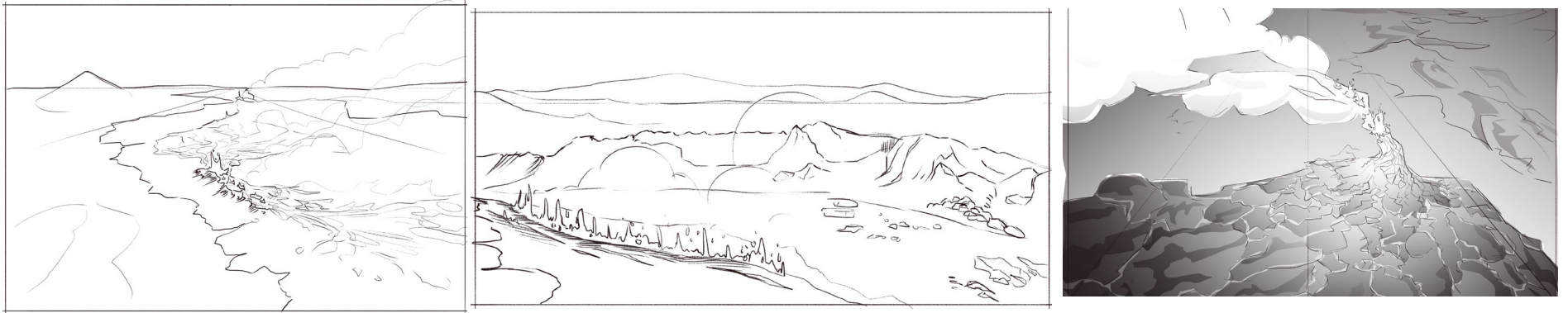




Initial sketches

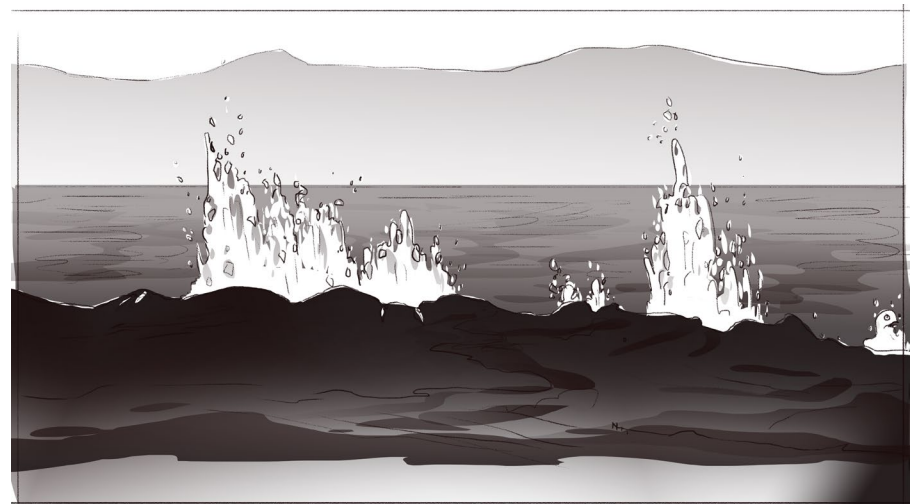
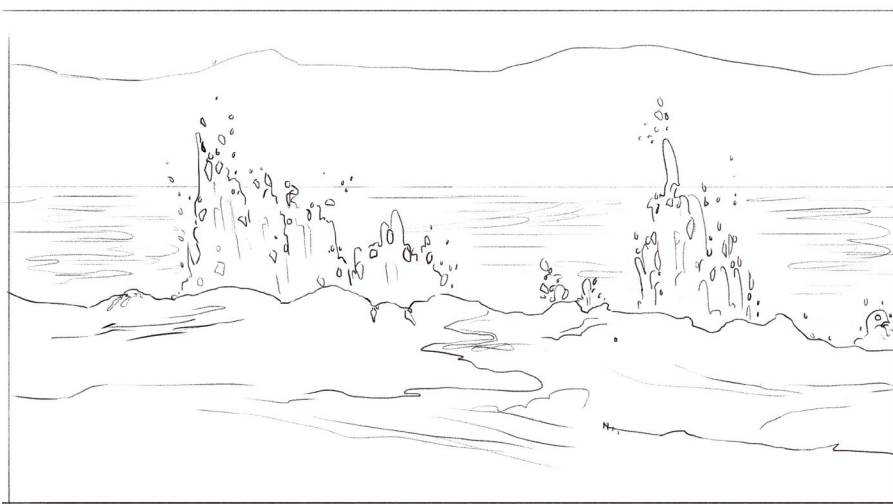
Initial sketches of a fissure eruption to grasp shape and texture.

A large scale fissure eruption would not work for an enclosed area, and effects needed would be very complicated, high maintenance and expensive.



Focus was turned to how a fissure eruption looks when it starts.

Fissure eruptions can last for a short period of time and are not explosive which fits well as a type of eruption to emulate.





grand finale scene aesthetic impression

Runes, staves, symbols and their meanings

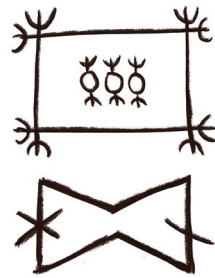
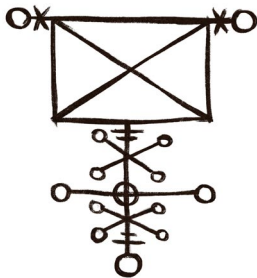
Throughout the story runes and staves (symbols from Icelandic mythology) play an important role. One of the most important symbols is that of the cult that is threatening Reykgras' existence, The Hounds of Hvergelmir.

The name Hounds of Hvergelmir comes from a passage from the Edda's (medieval Icelandic literature), where Hvergelmir is referred to as "...an exhaustless spring" and "...seething cauldron".

To represent the cult, a symbol has been designed. This design includes shapes to represent a wolf (green), flames (red), and the fabled Twilight Sword (yellow) wielded by Surtr in mythology.

The staves that can be found around town carry various meanings, which can be seen below.

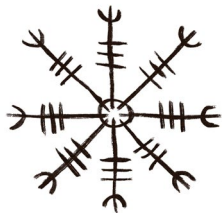
Stafur til að vekja upp draug
This is a stave to raise the dead



Lásabrájótur
This stave means "lock breaker", and "break free of bindings"

This is a stave that represents a powerful binding of a prisoner

Aegishjalmur
This stave stands for "protection and power"



Óttastafur
This stave invokes fear in enemies



This stave prevents anger and ends strife

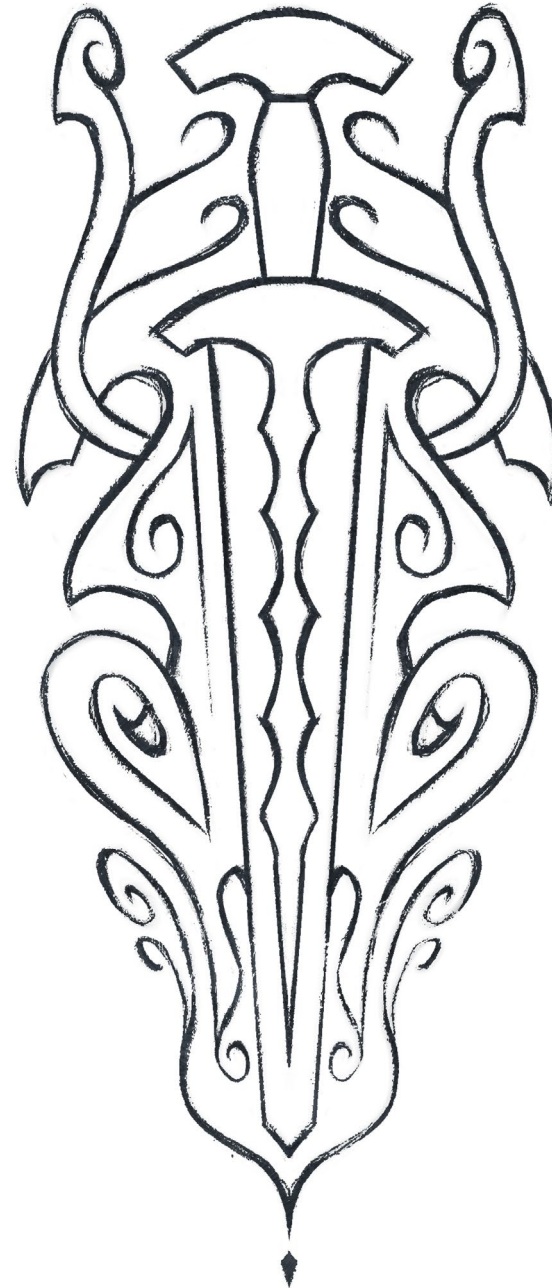
Gapaldur
This stave encourages success in combat



Hræthigaldur
This stave puts fear in enemies



Stave modifiers
direct or transform energy



Special effects

As the experience takes a physical first approach, the effects used are all practical in nature. The two main effects in the experience are the earthquake that takes place in the beginning, and the grand finale that involves one of the characters “disappearing” in an opening volcanic fissure. Besides the two main effects, there is also a third effect that allows us to create the illusion of space. This is the effect for the drone puzzle.

The earthquake

The earthquake that takes place at the beginning of phase two is largely insinuated, since it would pose significant safety and practical challenges to actually shake the entire venue.

To emulate an earthquake taking place, large subwoofer speakers will be hidden throughout the venue, to let guests hear and feel the rumble. Small props such as flower pots and paintings will be rigged to fall down during this earthquake and some interior furniture, such as cabinets, will be mounted on transducers to shake them. When this effect takes place, the majority of the interior spaces are not yet available.

To sell the effect that an earthquake has taken place, indoor spaces visited later on will also show some damage caused by the quake which can be seen once they open up. For example, the library will have a bookcase that has fallen over.

The fissure

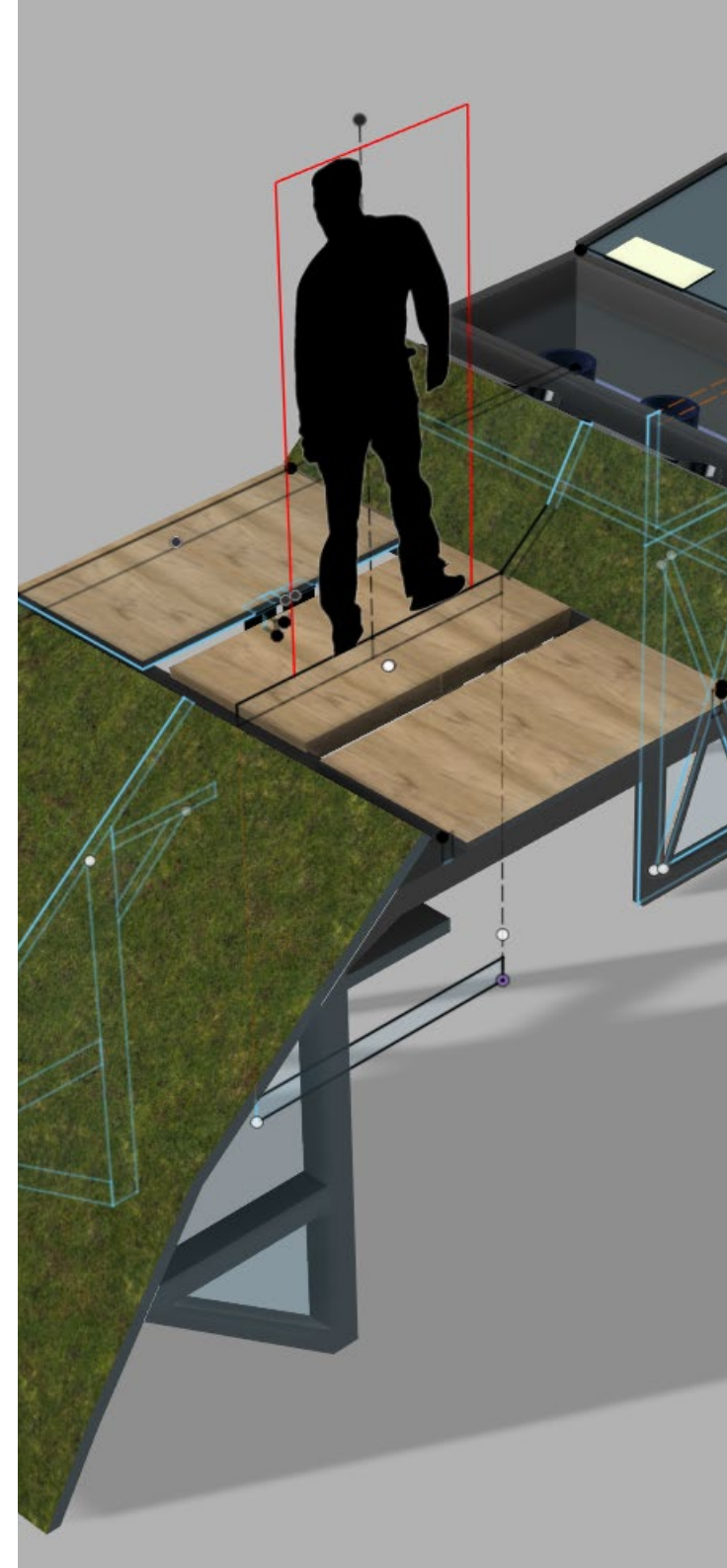
In the experience’s grand finale, the main antagonist attempts to trigger a volcanic eruption in his misguided beliefs. Behind him, large plumes of smoke can be seen emanating from the ground, as well as blobs of glowing magma being spewed up. Towards the end of the scene, the antagonist is to disappear into the fissure.

A more detailed design of this effect can be found in appendix C.

Drone puzzle

In the last phase of the experience guests get to fly a drone into the house of the antagonist, in order to find clues as one of the puzzles.

This puzzle starts with people taking control of a (prop) drone using a tablet handed to them by one of the cast members. Initially, this tablet will show a grainy live video feed coming from a camera in the prop drone, convincing the guests that they are actually controlling the drone. As soon as the drone moves into the house with the camera’s view being briefly obstructed by the passing window frame, the video feed transitions to a virtual environment, through which guests can navigate the drone. This conveys the effect that the antagonist’s house actually has an interior, rather than just being a facade.

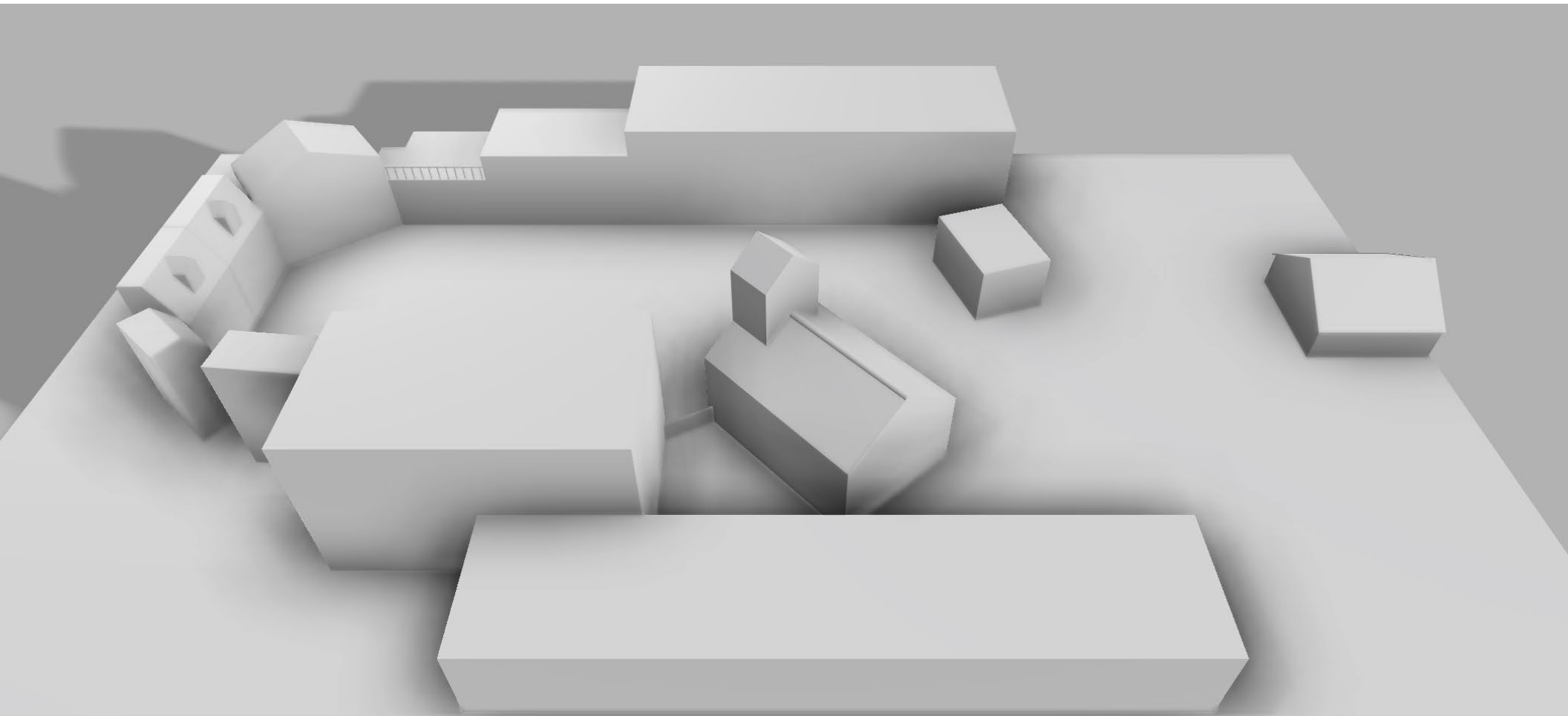


General excution considerations

Suitable locations

For each instalment of a Wayfarers Collective experience, a new destination and story will have to be developed, allowing the concept to be adapted to local cultures, available venues and current trends. This does limit the rate at which the concept can expand, but has been a deliberate design choice to choose quality over quantity. At the same time, this uniqueness does entice guests to visit multiple venues.

Based on venue size or location, the experience duration can also be tailor made. The current design of the concept works best in larger indoor spaces of 3500m² and up that allow for the creation of destinations with multiple zones or rooms. Theoretically, the concept of The Wayfarers Collective could be adapted to smaller locations where the destination is a special vehicle such as a submarine or an individual's workshop.



Accessibility and inclusivity

One of the core values of The Wayfarers Collective is “be together”. This can only be achieved if everybody can join. Whilst it is not possible to accommodate everyone, The Wayfarers Collective venues are designed with a broad range of accessibility features.

Accessibility

For guests with a physical disability, the venues are mostly wheelchair accessible. If part of the venue or activity cannot be made wheelchair accessible, an alternative will be provided through which guests with a physical disability can still take part.

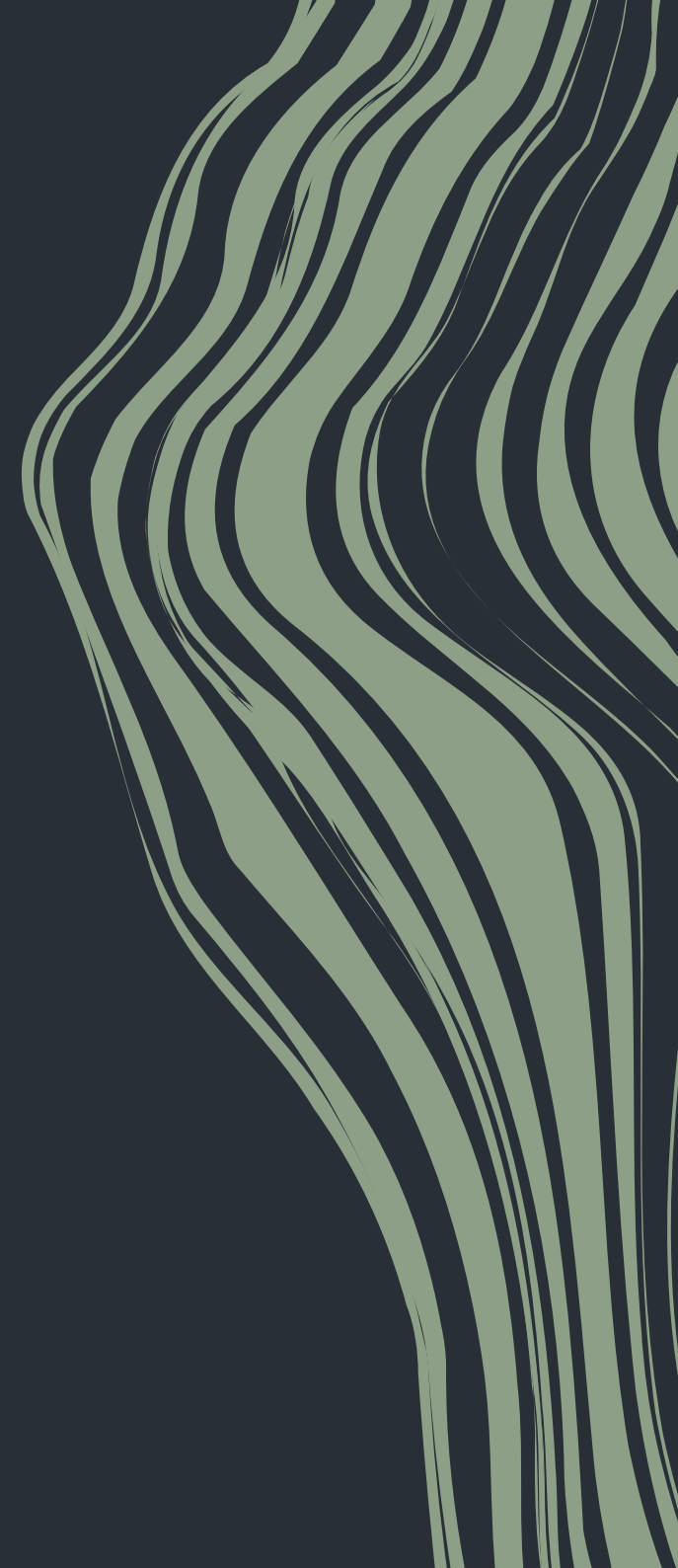
Another core value of The Wayfarers Collective is that the stories are opt-in. This means that there will be areas of the venue that contain less stimuli and where guests will not be actively encouraged to take part in the activities. This provides a way for people to enjoy the experience at their own pace and to take a break from a potentially over stimulating environment. For guests with a very low stimuli tolerance, yearly events will be held where guests just get to explore the environment and play some of the games and puzzles without the story playing out. For anyone interested, a booklet will be provided detailing what kinds of stimuli they can expect in each phase of the story.

Guests with a visual impairment can arrange for an early access session, where they are let into the venue before opening. They will be allowed to explore the venue by touch whilst a staff member informs them of the appearance of their environment. The guest then also has the option to briefly meet with the core cast of the experience, to get accustomed to their voices and to feel their costumes if they wish to.

The written recaps in the TWC dossier app allow deaf guests to still follow along with the story without hearing the dialogue.

Inclusivity

Since The Wayfarers Collective stories are our own, we have the opportunity to write stories with a broad range of characters from the start. This allows us to create stories with characters that resonate with a wide audience and that feel natural. Furthermore, the guests themselves play an active role in the stories, allowing them to be the protagonist to their day, rather than completely having to rely on watching an external protagonist.



Food and beverage

Depending on the size of the venue, it should have ample food and beverage sales points, offering a variety of food that can be eaten by all. To make a large venue profitable, a sizable crowd is needed for each experience. This comes with the drawback that it can be difficult to have enough guest capacity in the puzzles, which is why it is important to add extra capacity with food and beverages, enticing guests to sit down for a bit and enjoy some food and / or a drink. Venues will also sell souvenirs related to the experience where it is possible. For example, TWC branded stationary and imported items from the country an experience is based in.

Alternate revenue stream

The physical first nature of TWC venues allows for them to be operated as event spaces that can be rented by groups or companies. When in use as an event space, the physical sets and the food and beverage facilities can be utilised without the need for actors.

In larger attractions, a small gift shop will be available selling goods.

Revisitability

The fact that the storylines in The Wayfarers Collective are linear limits how likely people are to want to revisit the venues. To combat this, stories and puzzles are made rich enough so that guests feel like there is still more to uncover after their first visit. Furthermore, just like with regular theatres, the stories will need to be replaced or updated after a period of time.

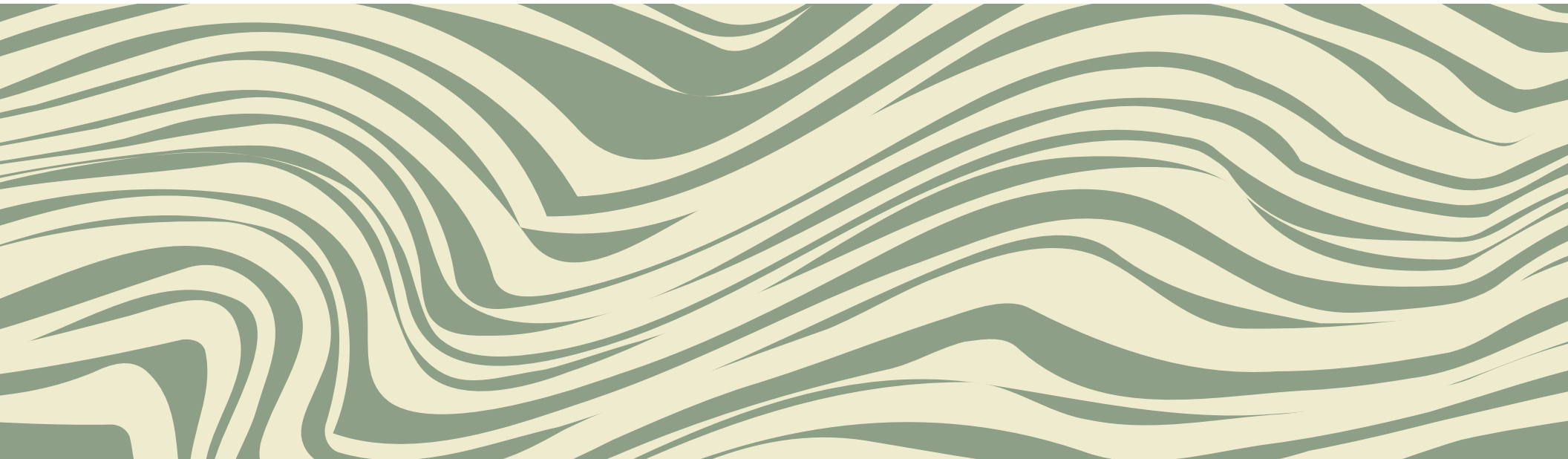
Staffing requirements

The Wayfarers Collective venues require a mix of operational staff as well as actors. There is no clear divide between these two types of roles towards the guests. If a character in a story is more prominent, the job will be more acting focussed. If a role is a minor character, then this can be performed by someone with a more staff focused role. The stories for The Wayfarers Collective are written with staffing in mind, avoiding characters that only appear very infrequently and having a clear focus on a small set of core characters and a larger interchangeable group around them.

Sustainability

The way resources are utilised will differ from location to location, as there is no set blueprint that is applied across all venues. The custom nature does allow venues to also account for any resource scarcity in the area where they operate. Furthermore, the venues don't contain energy consuming ride systems. Most of the resources used by the venues will revolve around climate control and some special effect equipment. For this, use can be made of renewable energy sources.

As the premise of this concept is all about exploring new destinations, it fits with the brand to not have large amounts of waste generated. After all, you would want to keep those destinations in a pristine state. Therefore, any food service offerings in the venues rely on reusable materials when it comes to tableware and such, only using disposables when absolutely necessary.





APPENDICES

A1: TWC: Reykgras - story outline

This is the outline for the different story phases in The Wayfarers Collective: Reykgras.

For each of the phases, except for the last, a description for the scene that starts the phase is given. Following that, the themes in the puzzles, available locations, key characters and the important story points for the phase are laid out. Whenever a location becomes available, it will remain available in following phases.

Phase 1: Welcome to Reykgras

Scene

As guests wander onto the Reykgras town square, they are welcomed by Chris and Amelia, the two Wayfarers that invited them. Chris and Amelia inform the guests of the geological anomalies that have raised The Wayfarers Collective's interest, and that they'll be helped by a volcanologist, Ásdís, who is currently in the library working on analysing some data. The guests are encouraged to explore the town and talk to the townsfolk just to get accustomed to their surroundings. Chris and Amelia could also use some help gathering the data from various seismological measuring devices scattered around town.

Puzzles

During this phase, guests get to meet Reykgras and some of its inhabitants. They are introduced to some game mechanics which will become important later on in the story. By talking to the townspeople, the guests learn that the inhabitants of Reykgras are somewhat fearful for the future of their town, as nature appears to be turning against them with no scientific explanation or historical record of previous geological events. Some parts of the town and its surroundings are already showing visible damage because of it.

If guests are particularly attentive, they can also start discovering that there are various staves (symbols from Icelandic mythology) and sigils hidden on some of the buildings in the town. Often appearing to have been hastily carved or painted.

Phase objectives:

- Introduce key characters and town lore.
- Introduce guests to the experience and its mechanics.
- Introduce that the town's survival might be on the line, introducing / highlighting what the main conflict in the story is.

Available locations

- Church (quiet/resting space)
- Town square
- Geyser field
- Lava field
- Souvenir shop near geyser field

Main characters

- Chris
- Amelia
- Margrét: Works at the souvenir stall, clear memory and a great talker about how the geyser and ground around has changed so quickly like never before seen.

Supporting cast

- Various townsfolk operating the puzzles

Story points

- Unusual and unexplainable geological activity has been causing damage to Reykgras.

Phase 2: The Missing Volcanologist

Scene

As guests are wandering around town, they suddenly hear a deep rumble. Elements in their surroundings start to shake, and objects such as plant pots in window sills fall to the ground. After the rumbling stops, a loud hissing can be heard from the geyser field nearby the town. Guests receive a notification on their phone that they should come to the geyser field in order to meet with Ásdís.

At the geyser field, the guests encounter Chris, Amelia and a distraught Ásdís. Ásdís explains that she was in the library researching some of her own notes, as well as those of her mentor, Orri, when the earthquake took place. Her frustration stems from the fact that she still has not been able to uncover why this activity is taking place. To make matters worse, her mentor Orri appears to have left town in a hurry and was last seen in the bakery by one of the owners, who claims that Orri was looking rather stressed and had bought a cinnamon roll, claiming that it was a “snack for the road”. Orri was seen heading towards the gravel car park just outside of the town in a hurry.

According to Ásdís, this is very unusual for Orri especially as she hasn't been able to get hold of them since their departure. To further fuel suspicions, her colleagues in the capital also have not heard from or seen any trace of Orri. Ásdís thinks that her mentor must have been onto something before they left. So perhaps if the guests trace Orri's steps, they might be able to find out more. Orri's notes are available to peruse in the library, which is now open.

In addition, the bakery has also opened up allowing guests to talk to the two brothers that own it, Erik and Kristján, as well as purchase some food and beverages.

Puzzles

In this phase, guests get to continue with the puzzles from phase one, but they now also have Orri's notes to look through in the library. In the library, guests can also find Ingrún, a local author who's highly knowledgeable on myths and legends. By researching Orri's notes, together with help from Ingrún, guests can discover that Orri had been researching two different topics which they thought could be an explanation.

Orri theorised that the cause of the disturbances could be the result of an orphaned tail of the mantle plume that fuels the country's hotspot, that has gone undiscovered due to its small size. Recent disturbances to the watershelf, possibly caused by small earthquakes, could be the source of the sudden activity. The combining of water and magma causes geothermal activities such as geyser eruptions and in large enough quantities, volcanic eruptions.

The second theory is rooted in myth and legend, from tales that Ingrún had shared. Legend has it that Reykgras is the location where the gods granted humans the gift of fire, creating the First Spark. As a powerful location where great magic was performed, the veil between realms is thin. Due to their nature being fire, the Fire Giants who reside in the realm of Muspelheim have wanted and used this place as a way to breach through to Midgard (our world). Legend says the last great breach was met with a great battle, where it was sealed.

Orri marks this as an interest to study due to how local myths sometimes have kernels of truth within them as some legends have proven to be an explanation to what wasn't understood at the time.

When guests engage with Erik and Kristján, the brothers who own and operate the local bakery, they find out that they are two very different people. Kristján is a conspiracy theorist who is certain that the anomalies in the town have been caused by aliens, and will talk about his theories to whoever is willing to listen. Erik, on the other hand, is very calm and collected. He maintains a friendly demeanour, but at times will show his frustration with his brother's antics.

If guests engage with both Ingrún's tales and Orri's notes on mythology along with Kristján's theories, they will find out that they have one thing in common. They both contain information about the staves that are subtly spread around town on houses and on rocks.

Phase objectives:

- Introduce Ásdís and her missing mentor.
- Introduce the bakery and the two brothers that run it.
- Introduce scientific theories for what could be causing the anomalies.
- Introduce that there may be something mysterious going on in the town, relating to the staves etched into buildings.

New available Locations

- Library
- Bakery

Main characters

- Chris
- Amelia
- Ásdís
- Erik
- Kristján
- Ingrún

Story points

- Ásdís' mentor Orri has gone missing under suspicious circumstances.
- The staves around town might have something to do with the anomalies that are threatening the town.

Phase 3: The Hounds of Hvergelmir

Scene

As guests are going about their puzzles, they receive a notification through the TWC app to meet Ásdís outside of the library. When the guests arrive at the library, they find Chris and Amelia in a heated argument in front of a man who's taking notes on a notepad. As it turns out, a journalist by the name of Yngvar had gotten wind of what was going on in Reykgras and was interviewing Amelia and Chris when their argument started. Amelia insists that it's worthwhile looking into the staves and what they mean, as she believes something sinister is going on. Chris on the other hand is not convinced and remains steadfast that those staves are nothing more than just superstition and that it's probably volcanic activity, as described in Orri's notes. At that moment, Ásdís comes walking up to the library. As soon as she spots Yngvar, she looks at him falsely. Yngvar greets Ásdís' look with a cheery "ah, there she is! Care to comment on what's going on here?". Ásdís snaps back at him "Oh zip it!". She proceeds to ignore Yngvar and explains that she has something to share. She has been rummaging through some of the stuff that Orri had left behind in their room. In there, Ásdís found three photographs that Orri took. The first photo shows a hooded figure at the geyser. A second shows footsteps leading towards a rocky wall, and a third shows a red glow near to the old abandoned farm building, owned by Gylfi (the local farmer). Ásdís had recognized the location on the second photo as being part of the field next to town. There's an opening in the rocks there that has been gated off, but perhaps with some help she might be able to get it open. She hands the three photos to Amelia and runs off to get Kristján to see if they can get the gate open. Amelia excitedly exclaims that she will add the photos to the TWC dossier and that they could be interesting to look into, much to the chagrin of Chris. Amelia darts off, leaving Chris and Yngvar as the last ones in front of the library. Yngvar turns to the guests and explains to them that he had heard that his former classmate Ásdís was working on something interesting, and that if the guests find anything newsworthy, they should report it to him as well. Behind Yngvar, Chris can be seen gently shaking his head.

Puzzles

The guests now have three different areas where they can engage with new puzzles, the geyser field with the giftshop, the lava tunnel hiding behind the gate in the rock wall and the exterior of Gylfi's barn.

If guests visit the geyser, the location of the first photo, they will note that the geyser has stopped bubbling and that there is a massive increase in the amount of steam coming from it and the cracked ground. Asking Margrét, the shopkeeper of the giftshop, if she's ever seen anyone around the area wearing a cloak and acting suspicious will put her on edge, and if pushed far enough will kick people out of the souvenir shop but not before discretely handing them a scrap of paper with "Hounds of Hvergelmir" hastily written on it as guests are kicked out.

Investigating the second photo's location, the footsteps heading towards some rocks, will lead guests to the opposite edge of the venue to where the geyser is. Here, there are nooks and crannies within the rocky walls with one opening into a large lava tunnel. More staves will be found in some of these nooks, with more in the cave tunnel. In the tunnel's opening, guests can see that the gate is now open. A broken lock hangs off the wall next to the gate. It appears Kristján was successful forcing the gate. Inside at the very end of the lava tunnel is a raised flat stone, that looks like an altar. On top of the altar, a large book is left open on an image of a fiery giant. The book is filled with staves and written in runes. In the tunnel, guests can do various puzzles relating to the staves and the book. They can call in the help of Kristján, who is excitedly darting around the tunnel, photographing as many staves as possible, whilst talking to himself about how this validates his theory that aliens are behind what's going on in the town.

Investigating the third location, the abandoned farm building, will lead guests into meeting Gylfi, the owner and farmer. First, they will get to the run down barn and find that it's long been locked, but footsteps are seen leading in and out of the locked door. One window has been shattered where guests can try and peek through, where they'll be able to make out shadowy shapes. Gylfi will approach the people at the barn, annoyed and demanding to know what they're doing as he's sick of vandals and people breaking into his property. During his rant, he will mention graffiti (staves on and in the building). He will also mention Kristján, saying that if it's all another game to him and his conspiracy fantasies he will be having words with him.

About halfway through the phase, the guests will receive a message from Amelia through the TWC app. She had encountered Ásdís in an erratic state. Whilst Ásdís was out for lunch, someone had slipped a threatening note in her notebook, demanding her to leave the town and never think of coming back.

Throughout the puzzles, the guests can slowly start uncovering that there appears to be a cult at action here. They are named The Hounds of Hvergelmir, and are dedicated to bringing the Fire Giants into this realm, as they believe that the Fire Giants will bring a new era to the world and that the veil between the two realms is thin and easily broken in a specific nearby location.

If people talk to Yngvar, they can find out why Ásdís snapped at him earlier. They were classmates in university. She went into science, whilst he decided to become a journalist focussing on nature. To this day, Ásdís dislikes Yngvar because she feels he takes all the credit for the work that the actual researchers do.

Phase 3: The Hounds of Hvergelmir

Phase objective

- Introduce the cult and its potential motives

New available locations

- Lava tunnel
- Barn exterior

Main characters

- Kristján
- Erik
- Yngvar
- Gylfi
- Margrét
- Ásdís
- Chris
- Amelia

Story points

- Hounds of Hvergelmir - the cult is slowly being exposed and a threat to the town, with it becoming obvious that the Hounds have something to do with Orri's disappearance
- Increased steam at the geyser, localised to rising from the large crack in the ground.
- Volcanic activity is now a viable option for those pursuing the scientific plot, as the presence of a lava tunnel can only be caused by there having been magma in the area previously.

Phase 4: The Fissure

Story

The guests receive a notification in the TWC dossier app that Kristján is screaming at his brother's house in the town square. Once guests arrive, Amelia informs the crowds that whilst Kristján was taking pictures of the staves in the cave, he encountered one sigil that he vaguely recognized. On his way back to the bakery, he passed by his brother's house and noticed the sigil carved into a wooden panel on the house. When Kristján asked his brother about the stave, he got defensive and tried to brush it off. When Kristján kept pressing his brother about it, he lost his temper and ushered him out of the house, slamming the front door behind him.

Guests can see Erik looking through a window at the crowd that is forming outside his house. After a minute or so, an enraged Erik opens a window on the top floor of his house and starts addressing the people on the ground. At first, he tries to retain his composure whilst trying to convince the crowd that his brother's theories are just a madman's imagination. When Ásdís confronts Erik about him being the last person that supposedly saw Orri leave, Erik loses his temper. He starts yelling at the crowd about how they're all stupid and that the town of Reykgras was to be swallowed by flames sooner or later regardless. In his tirade, Erik lets it slip that the Wayfarers, his brother and Ásdís, are meddling with things that they don't understand and should've stayed out of. Realising there is no use in keeping up his deceit, Erik runs back inside his house, leaving the window open.

Kristján is completely dumbfounded by what just happened. He stares at Ásdís in disbelief. Did his brother really betray all of them for so long? The silence is broken when Amelia lets out a surprised scream. She points towards the roof of the bakery, adjacent to Erik's house. On the roof, a hooded figure is seen quickly walking away from Erik's house and disappears behind the bakery. Kristján runs off, trying to get to the back of the bakery, but a moment later he returns, proclaiming that Erik was nowhere to be found.

Chris, appearing to be very uncomfortable by the whole situation, nervously starts barking orders in an attempt to make it look like everything is under control and there's still nothing really going on. He instructs Kristján to open up his and his brother's offices in the bakery for the guests to do research. Amelia and himself will head towards the cave to see if they can find more matching staves.

Puzzles

As guests leave the town square, they can now head to two new locations: the offices in the bakery, as well as the barn which has now been opened.

At the bakery, Erik's office is rather plain looking with only his planner laying on his desk. By examining the agenda and cross referencing it with the seismological data gathered in earlier puzzles, it can be uncovered that every time an earthquake took place, Erik has blocked off a section of time in his agenda and labelled it as "getting supplies".

Kristján's office on the other hand appears to be the lair of a conspiracy theorist, with one of the walls completely plastered with newspaper articles, notes and pictures. By going over Kristján's "evidence", guests can discover that he actually had a lot of things right, but was just completely off about the root cause.

When guests approach the abandoned barn, they can now see that the doors have been opened and someone appears to have left in a hurry. Inside the barn, there is a large apparatus with big pressure gauges and pipes running into the ground. Here, guests can discover that this device was made to pump water into the ground at high pressure, with the aim of disturbing the underground magma dike and triggering an eruption. In the barn, guests can take part in puzzles that help Chris disable the machine. If guests decide to look at their seismological data from earlier puzzles, combined with the location of the machine in the barn, they will be able to pinpoint a potential fissure location just outside of town.

Another location the guests can explore is Erik's house. With the help of Yngvar, they can fly a drone into the house and virtually explore the interior to discover clues as to what Erik is up to and, more importantly, which staves he plans on using to break the veil to Muspelheim.

By helping Kristján and Amelia in the cave by matching the staves from Erik's house to their inverse counterparts, the guests can help Kristján create a stave board which can hopefully counter Erik's plans.

Phase 4: The Fissure

Phase objective

- Attempt to counter the antagonistic forces

New available locations

- Barn interior
- Inside Erik's house (through Yngvar's drone)
- Erik's bakery office
- Kristján's bakery office

Main characters

- Amelia
- Chris
- Ásdís
- Erik
- Kristján
- Gylfi
- Yngvar

Story points

- The race against time is now on! Guests must find Erik and prevent him from causing an eruption near the town in an attempt to open a gate to Muspelheim.
- For those following the scientific side, the race is on to find the location of where the eruption is thought to take place, and warn Erik and others to stay away.

The finale

The start to the finale is announced by deep rumblings being heard around town, followed by Chris, Amelia and Ásdís running out of the town whilst screaming “he went this way!”.

Erik can be seen in a fenced off area of the field outside of town, standing on an elevated piece of ground right next to a large glowing crack in the ground. As the crowd gathers, Erik starts to address them: “You’re too late, the veil is weak, Muspelheim and its demons will walk amongst us and the reign of Surtr’s flame shall begin! It can’t be stopped!”. At that moment, Kristján comes running towards Erik. Wielding a big wooden board as some sort of shield. He confronts his brother, trying to get him to stop, to which Erik sneers at him. “Well well well, if it isn’t mister alien theorist himself. I must admit, despite how dim you are, you managed to find out a surprising amount of what I was up to. Fortunately your sci-fi brain rot kept you thinking it was aliens, keeping you out of my way. Step back little brother, you wouldn’t want to get burned now do you?!”

Erik takes a book from within his robes, which is the book that was originally seen in the lava cave. He opens it and starts reciting various chants. At this point, Kristján charges forwards and stops within a few metres of his brother. He points the front of his wooden board towards Erik. Flames appear on the front of the board, and in a flash of smoke and sparks a series of staves appear on it. Erik stutters but hesitantly finishes his chanting. Much to Erik’s surprise, nothing happens. A scared and confused look appears on Erik’s face as he looks at his brother and the counter-staves. His plans appear to have been thwarted.

Suddenly, a deep rumble sounds again and small puffs of smoke start appearing from the ground. Behind Erik, glowing blobs of lava start shooting up out of the ground. An excited expression appears on Erik’s face. He starts to yell “It’s starting, and you thought you outsmarted me! The hounds shall...” His sentence gets cut short when a large jet of steam shoots up from the ground, engulfing him completely. As the steam clears up, Erik is nowhere to be found. Gradually, the rumbling stops, the cracks in the ground stop glowing and the lava fountain subsides.

Kristján drops to his knees, letting go of the wooden board. It is unclear what happened to Erik, but the threat to the town appears to have been lifted. Kristján gets up and turns to Ásdís to comfort him in the realisation that his brother, who turned out to be a cult-leader, may have gotten wiped off the face of the earth.

Then, breaking the silence, Chris blurts out “See, I told you that there was nothing supernatural about this! He should’ve never messed with nature, look how it backfired!”. Amelia cannot believe what she’s hearing. She starts loudly arguing with Chris that he’s being insensitive to Kristján, who she sees as brave for stopping his brother with the right counter-staves that caused the gate to Muspelheim to open only slightly and swallow Erik.

As the bickering goes on, Margrét the gift shop owner walks up to the scene. She tells the guests that, by the looks of it, their work here is done and that she’s grateful that there’s finally more clarity on what was going on and that hopefully the geological activities will have come to an end. She’ll instruct her husband, Gylfi, to dismantle Erik’s machinery in their barn. She thanks the guests for coming to Reykgras and tells them she hopes to see them back someday.

As the experience wraps, some storylines are deliberately left open, facilitating future story development. What happened to Orri? Will they ever be found? Who else could be part of the Hounds? Is Erik really gone?

A2: Reykgras character overview

The Wayfarers

The group is guided by two lead characters, both of whom are full time members of "The Wayfarers Collective". They represent contrasting sides to the organisation- one follows the founding decrees of "to share peculiar knowledge and rare events with the world", and another who is part of an inner group that believes such knowledge should be guarded and kept to those who see it.



Amelia is chatty, enthusiastic and inquisitive to the degree of nosy. Amelia believes that knowledge should be shared to all, and at times can be oblivious to social cues and is not afraid to put herself in harm's way for the sake of experiencing something interesting.



Chris contrasts Amelia. He believes that some things should not be shared and meddled with. That it is a privilege to see the hidden secrets of the world (both natural, modern and historic) which must be earned to witness.

The volcanologist



Ásdís

Ásdís is a volcanologist, who has been studying the strange natural phenomena that's been occurring at Reykgras for a year. Ásdís is enthusiastic and pragmatic, taking a grounded and logical approach to her beliefs and finding. She believes that there is an unknown volcanic system causing the phenomena, but currently none of her and her research partner's findings back this up.

It is through Orri's and Ásdís' published research that the Wayfarer's Collective have become aware of the small and unassuming Reykgras as a sudden spike in seismic activity has been occurring, giving hopes of witnessing the birth of a volcano.

Ásdís should appear to be in her early 30s, late 20s. She is a major character alongside Chris and Amelia.

A2: Reykgras character overview

Townspeople



Erik

Erik runs and owns the town's local bakery alongside his younger brother Kristján. He is calm, reserved, and has a good reputation amongst the townspeople, living up to the 'gentle giant' descriptor. He has a keen interest in geographical and mythological history and is very close to his brother. Erik is in his mid 30s, and has a large semi-slender build.

He is tall and should appear as a 'gentle giant' archetype.

He is a major character, and later revealed to be the leader of the cult, the Hounds of Hvergelmir.



Kristján

Kristján is Erik's brother, and helps him run the bakery. Kristján is friendly, outgoing and excitable to those who will listen to him. He is known as the town's oddball as he has a near obsessive fascination with conspiracies which leads him to believe that the cause of the unexplainable seismic activity in Reykgras is due to aliens trying to conquer the world. Kristján is four years younger than Erik and shares his brother's love for mythology.

Kristján is in his early 30s. He is a major character, should look friendly and has a collection of comedic aprons that he'll be seen wearing.

A2: Reykgras character overview

Supporting characters

Yngvar

Yngvar is a journalist and old rival of Ásdís' from their time at university. He has a passion for photography and believes in documenting and exploring all possible avenues of reason. He comes across as passionate, inquisitive and bold. Yngvar has a connection to Reykgras, as his grandparents used to live in the town and he fondly remembers visiting them in his childhood before they passed, meaning he is hopeful that Ásdís' theory on a magma intrusion is wrong.

Yngvar is of similar age to Ásdís, late 20s/ early 30s. Yngvar is a minor character who appears in the latter half of the experience. He should have a camera on him and a notebook at all times.

Orri

Orri is Ásdís' research partner, and an experienced volcanologist. Alongside Ásdís, Orri has been researching the natural phenomena occurring at Reykgras, and may have stumbled upon information they shouldn't have as they have mysteriously disappeared...

Orri is never seen, and guests learn about them through their and Ásdís' research. They are in their late 40s.

Margrét

Margrét is Gylfi's wife, who works at the souvenir shop near the geyser. Margrét is a keen knitter, and sells handknitted lopapeysa alongside other hand made items by other townspeople in the shop. She is superstitious and a gossip, always knowing what's going on with who in Reykgras.

Margrét should appear to be in her mid 50s, and look outwardly friendly. She is a minor character, and met in the first half of the experience.

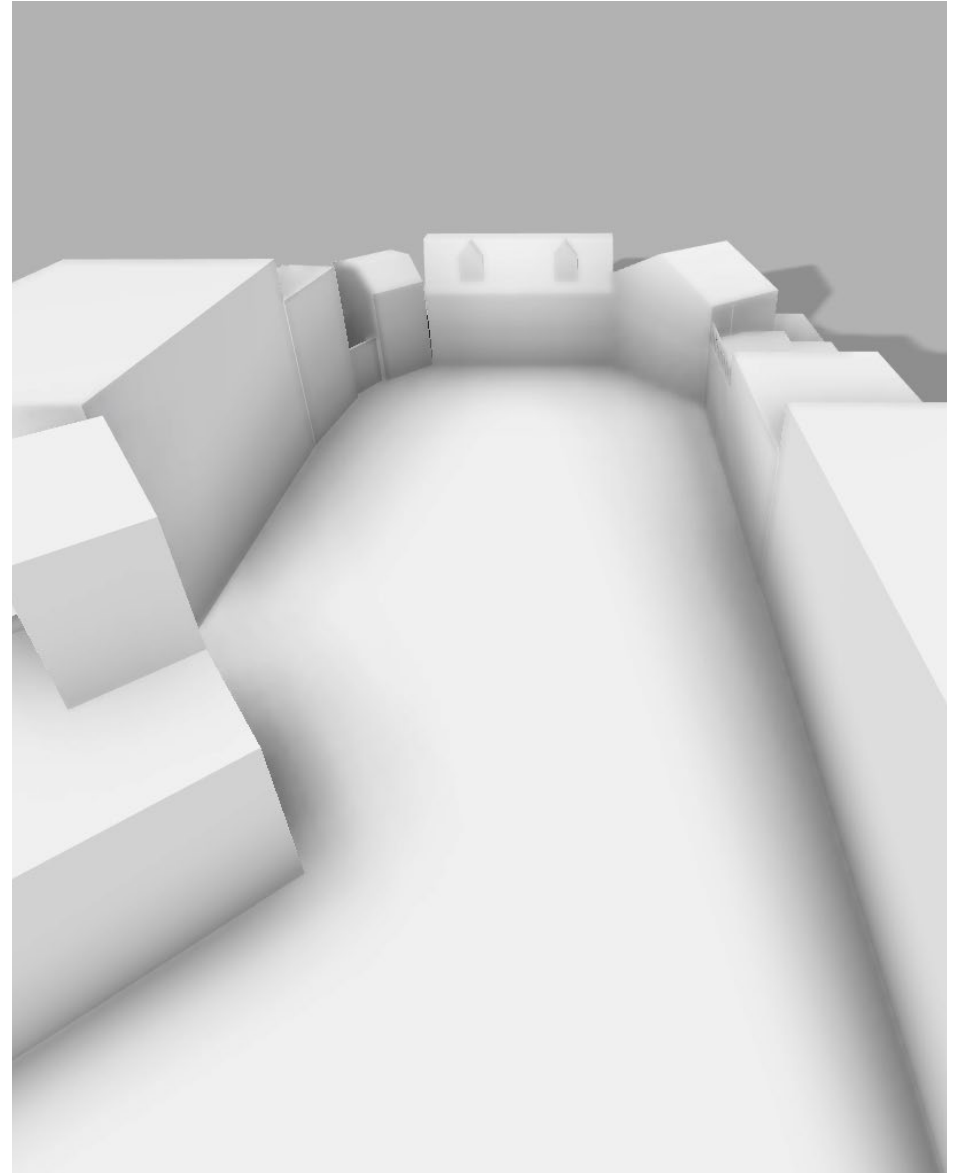
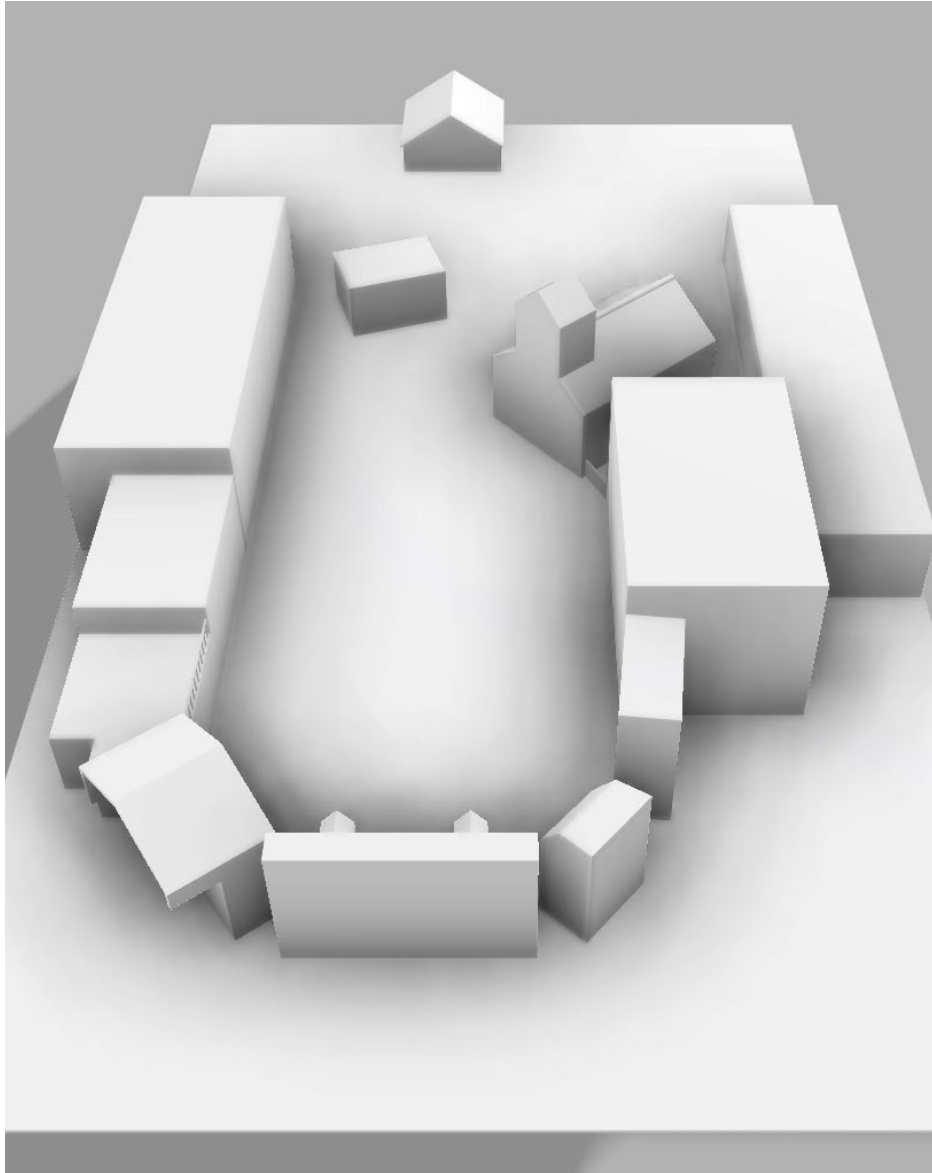
Gylfi

Gylfi is Margrét's husband. He is a sheep farmer and local handyman, with a realistic outlook on life. He's gruff and has no tolerance for nonsense or for people he views as timewasters.

Gylfi is in his late 50s, and should look like a hardworking and active man. He is a minor character, and appears in the latter half of the experience.

B: Venue model

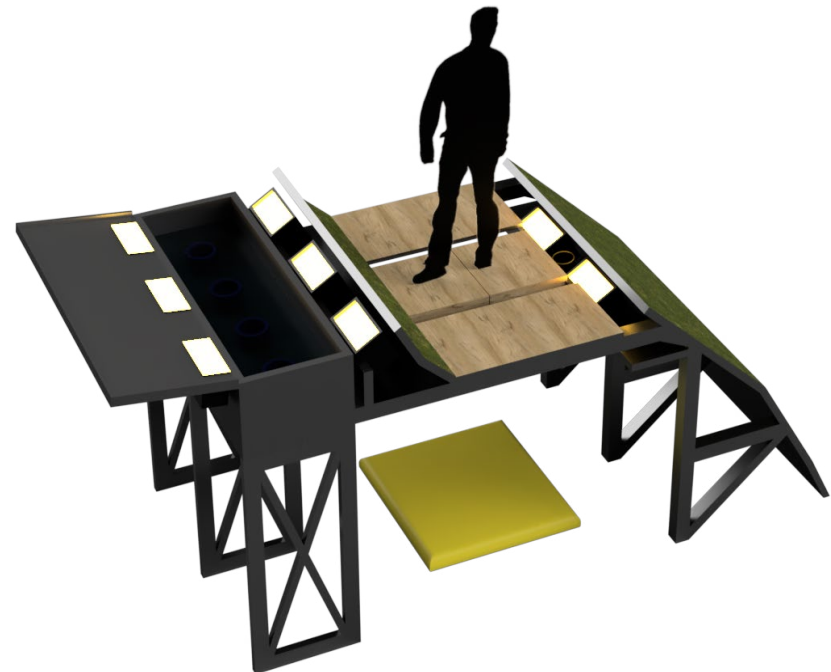
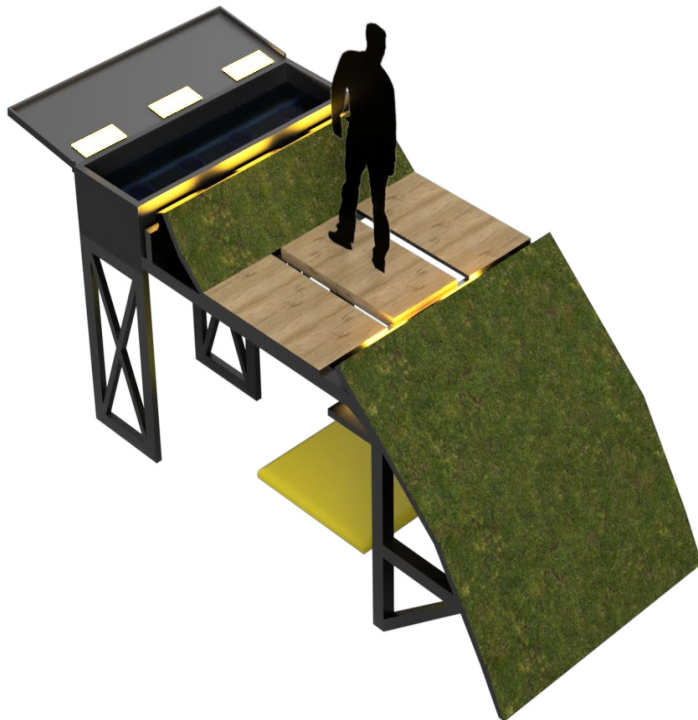
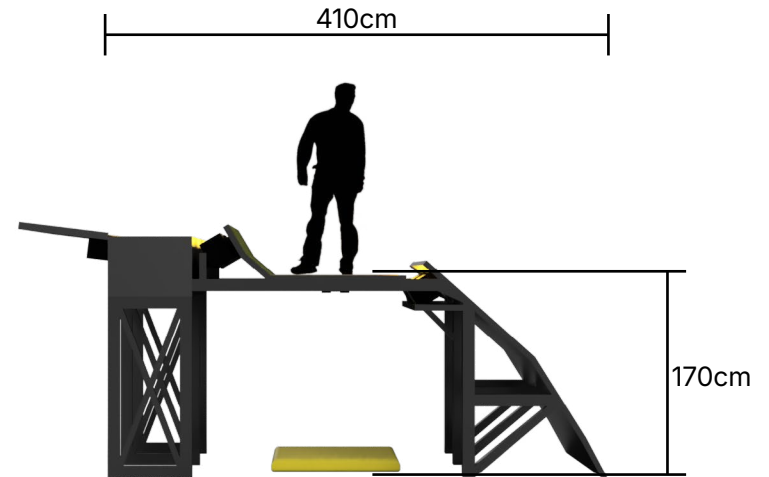
To serve as a scale reference, a rough 3D version of the venue was created.



C: Finale special effect

The finale effect consists of a raised structure with a trapdoor. Behind the actor, out of sight of the audience, is a large basin containing water with a foaming agent. Right before the start of the effect, air bubbles will be pumped through the water, causing it to foam. This foam is then shot up using compressed air. The foam will catch the light of the lights positioned in front of and behind the basin, making it look as if the liquid itself is glowing. The foam launchers are aimed a few degrees back, so the foam lands on the catching plate and doesn't come near the actor. Between the basin and the actor, a row of fog outlets is placed to simulate a smoke plume

In front of the actor, a row of lights and CO2 jets is placed. The jets will go off when the actor falls through the trapdoor.

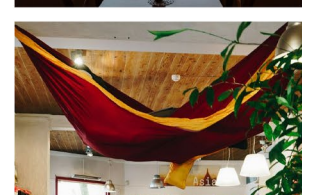
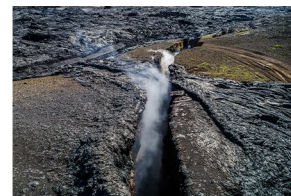


D: References

Icelandic building references

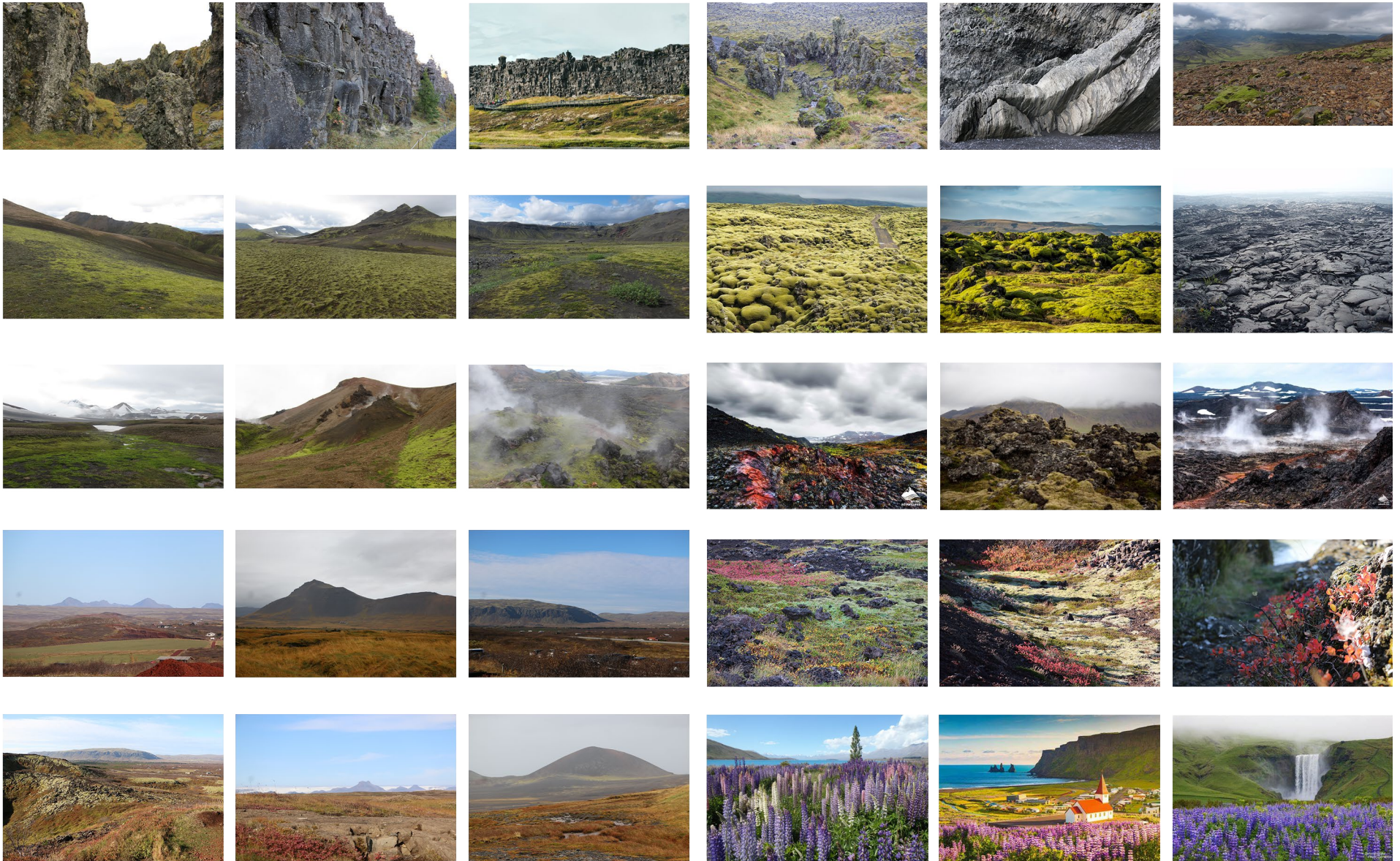


Bakery interior references and cracked ground references



D: References

Landscape references

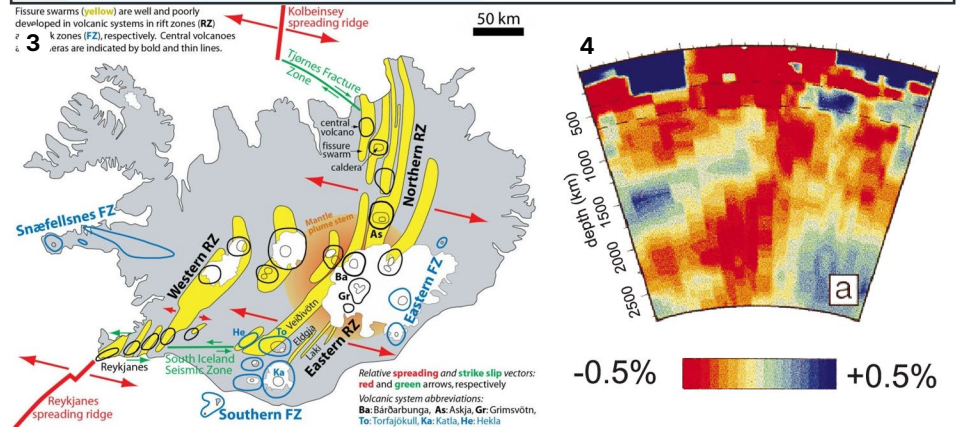
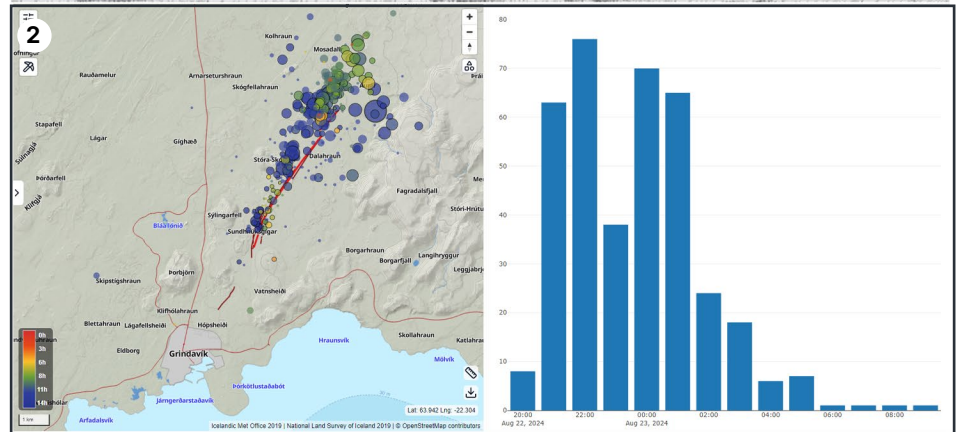
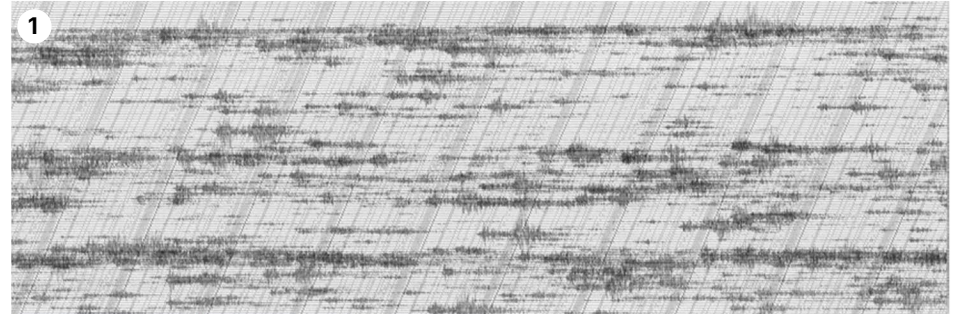


D: References

Lava tunnel references



Examples of data used in puzzles: 1: Seismometer readings, 2: Earthquake time frequency, 3: Map of Icelandic volcanic systems, 4: Seismic Tomography of Iceland

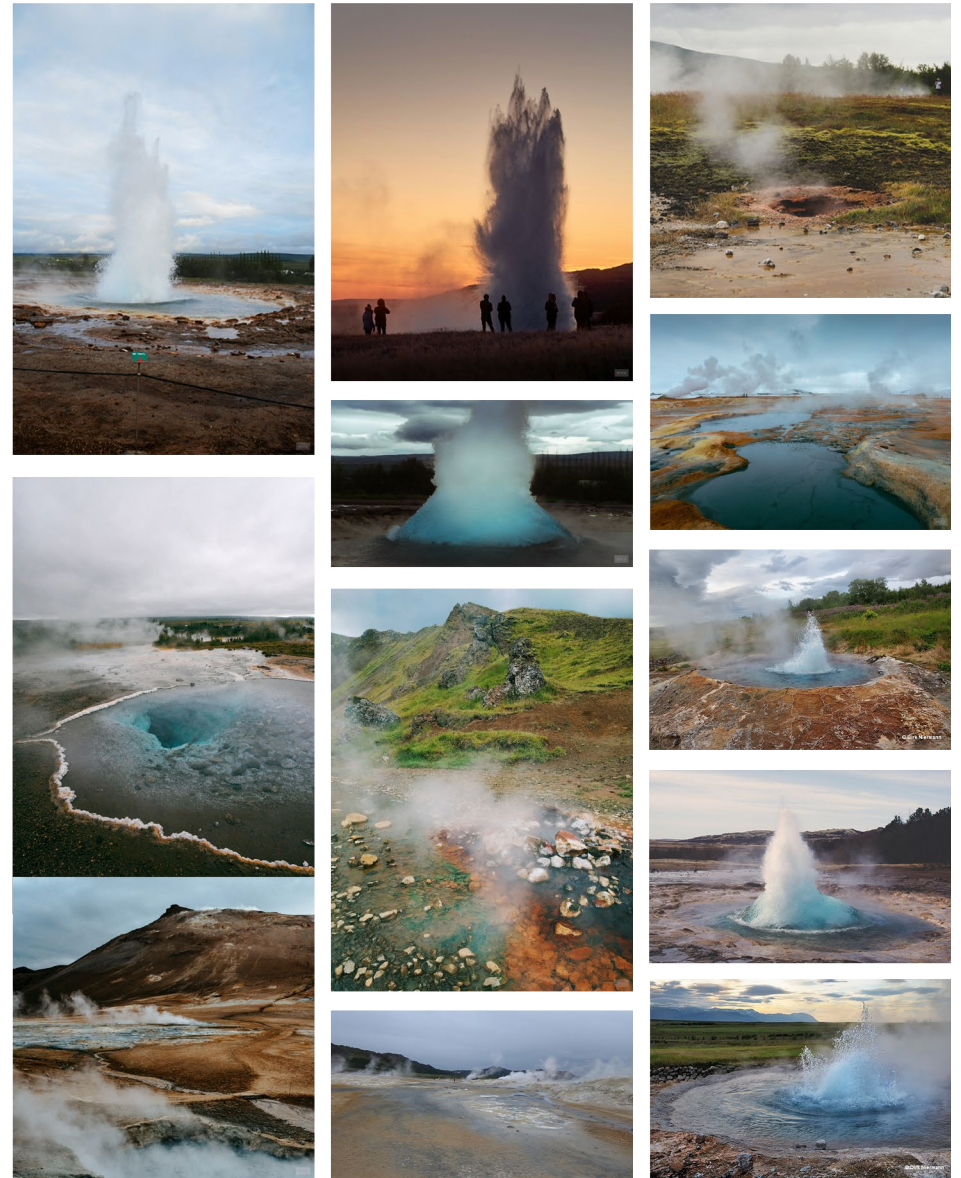


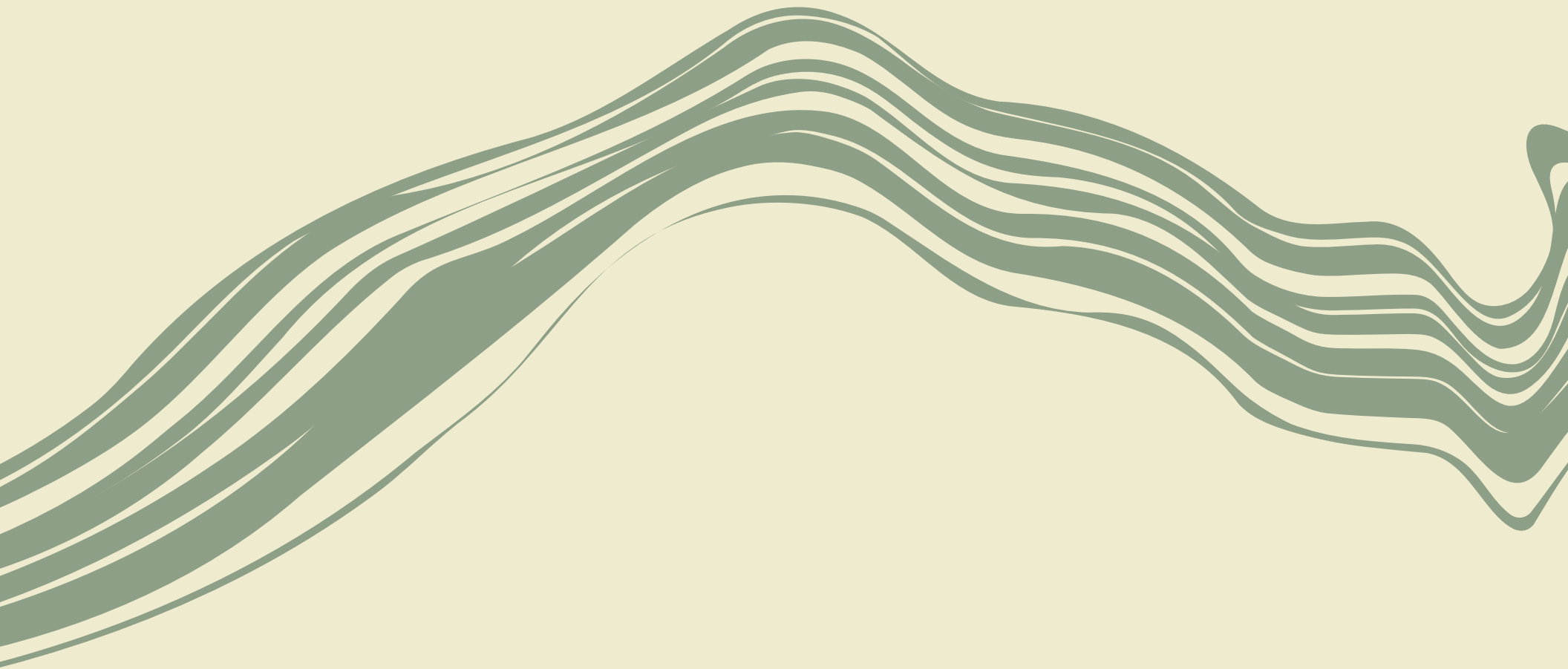
D: References

Eruption references



Geyser references





We thank you for your interest in The Wayfarers Collective. It has been a pleasure to develop the concept. If you would like to know more, feel free to get in touch with [Elly](#) or [Thomas](#).