



HER CHOICE DEFINED THE WORLD

VIGDÍS

IN A MALE-DOMINATED SOCIETY A SINGLE MOTHER DECIDES TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT.

THE INSPIRING TRUE STORY OF VIGDÍS' JOURNEY TO BECOMING THE FIRST ELECTED FEMALE PRESIDENT IN THE WORLD.



“In reality no human is as strong as they appear.
He who does not experience weakness cannot be human.”

— Vigdís Finnbogadóttir

THE SERIES

The SERIES VIGDÍS is a four part drama-series based on the inspiring true story of the first woman in the world to be democratically elected as head of state. Vigdís was elected in 1980 in a historic election against three male candidates in Iceland and went to serve as President for sixteen years. The series tells Vigdís' story from when she was a teenager in the late 1940s until the monumental day she is elected in 1980.

We, the creators of this series, were children when Vigdís served as President and therefore it has been very intriguing to explore her life. Where she came from and what gave her the courage and audacity to become the first woman in the world to be elected President. She carries the aura of a winner, someone who has always succeeded without difficulty. However that is not the case in Vigdís' life. Her earlier years are characterized by disappointment and loss. Losing her brother at a young age. Her University years abroad were misadventures where loneliness and failure replaced the glory she anticipated. After that a failed marriage and difficult battles trying to become a mother. These dramatic events in her life shaped her character.

Which brings us to what drives her remarkable life story.

Despite endless obstacles, often because of her sex, she never gives up on dreaming about the future and what it might hold. She dreams about being a married woman and a mother as well as studying in Universities abroad. It is sad to realize that just over a half a century ago that is exactly what is was, a distant dream. As was being a single mother in a high-profile job, as she takes on later. It is because of these obstacles and others that she becomes the woman we remember growing up with. The strong woman who served as president for sixteen years and was equally respected among world leaders and her Nation.

That is why we choose to tell her story from when Vigdís is a teenager up until she is elected President. To understand where she came from and what shaped her into one of the world leaders of women's equality. VIGDÍS is a truly significant story of our time, dramatic, powerful and full of integrity and hope that will speak to audiences of all ages.

To guarantee authenticity, the script and production of the series are undertaken in full collaboration with former president Vigdís Finnbogadóttir.





THE IDEA

I thought I already knew the story behind Vigdís and how she went from being a single working mother, which was very unusual in the 80s, to becoming president. But it wasn't until I read her biography that I realized how truly unique her life story really is. I was given her biography as a Christmas gift in 2009, in the middle of a very dark time in Iceland, due to the financial crisis. The book filled me with hope – it was such an inspiring story that gave me a vision of how, even when things seem hopeless, there is always a way forward. It is a powerful reminder that all of us have to fight our own battles and desires, and often the solutions are just around the corner. You just have to follow your heart. Whether you want to change the law, the system, the world, or yourself. This story made me believe that the individual has a voice and has power. We just have to be reminded of it – and that is what the story of Vigdís truly does.

It was with a beating heart that I called Vigdís to make the request – would she trust me to gather a team and bring her story to the screen?. She said it would be best if we met before she gave her answer. Was that good or bad news? Knocking on her door, for the first time in my life, I felt hopeful. And here we are, some years later, ready to share her remarkable story with the world.



NÍNA DÖGG FILIPPUSDÓTTIR

LEAD ACTRESS

Nína Dögg who graduated with a BFA degree in acting from the Iceland Academy of Arts, is a renowned stage, film and television actress.

Nína Dögg starred as detective Kata in the Netflix original, *The Valhalla murders* in 2020 and gained international acclaim for her performance.

Nína Dögg is the creator, producer and played the lead role in the award winning TV series *Blackport*. The 8 episode drama series was hugely successful domestically when it premiered in 2022, followed by an increasing international success.

With a string of awards for her work (including a Shooting Star Award at the Berlinale festival), she has acted in countless TV and film production, including the first two seasons of the series *Trapped*, and has performed in theatre productions all over the world.

Nina is a founding member of Vesturport and is a resident artist at the National Theater

BJÖRN HLYNUR HARALDSSON

DIRECTOR

Björn Hlynur is a director, writer, actor, and producer. Co-founder of Vesturport, one of Europe's most innovative film, TV, and theatre groups.

Björn Hlynur's latest project is the TV series *Blackport*. This 8 part series already celebrates the success of the top win at *Series Mania* and 80% national audience approval.

His most recent directorial film project in development is an English language feature film starring Stanley Tucci and Julianne Moore.

Also, with a prolific acting career, Björn Hlynur has appeared in Netflix's *The Witcher* and Neil Jordan's *The Borgias* for Showtime. A recent acting role is in the feature film *LAMB*, which premiered at *Un Certain Regard* at Cannes in 2021.





TINNA HRAFNSDÓTTIR

DIRECTOR

Tinna Hrafnisdóttir is an Icelandic director, actress, writer and producer.

She is an alumna of Iceland University of the Arts, Reykjavik University (MBA), TIFF Filmmakers Lab and runs her own film production company, Freyja Filmworks.

Tinna has made two award winning short films, a feature film selected to A-festivals, (TIFF, Black Nights Film Festival) and her first series as a writer, director and co-producer is currently in post-production.

MOOD



SYNOPSIS

Episode 1

We meet Vigdís in high school in post-war Iceland. While trying to be well behaved, as society demands from all girls of the period, she pushes the boundaries and longs for the same opportunities as her younger brother. While her girlfriends are getting married in Iceland, she heads to France for University. Her experience is not what she expects and she fails her exams repeatedly. While home on summer holiday her beloved brother dies in a tragic accident. Being the only child left in her family she feels immense pressure to make her parents proud.

Episode 2

Back in Paris, Vigdís finds out that she is pregnant. Her stern upbringing leaves her only one choice – to quit her studies and marry. She follows her husband to Scandinavia where he is studying medicine. She has a miscarriage but falls pregnant again multiple times, without success. When Vigdís finds out her husband is expecting a baby with his mistress she hits rock bottom. Moving in to her childhood bedroom with no baby, no degree and divorced is humiliating. She is determined to adopt a child and takes on the system when she realizes that single people aren't allowed to adopt.

Episode 3

Vigdís is appointed artistic director of the Reykjavik City Theater. A month after she starts her new job the adoption agency calls - a baby girl is waiting for her. Her daughter is a blessing but juggling motherhood and a high-profile career in a male-dominated society is a constant battle. Vigdís has a male friend she secretly hopes will turn into something more, but when Vigdís is diagnosed with breast cancer he breaks his promises of remaining by her side and returns to his wife and family.

Episode 4

Vigdís' name comes up as a candidate for the next presidential election. She is up against three esteemed family men and many find the idea of a female president absurd, including her mother. Lack of a husband, being a single mother and her battle with breast cancer are issues weighed against her. As her courage builds, she dives into the battle of becoming president and famously when asked: "If people should vote for her because she is a woman?", she sincerely answers that people should vote for her because she is a HU-MAN.

In June 1980, over 90% of Icelanders vote for their next president and change history when Vigdís becomes the first female president in the world.



PRODUCTION COMPANY

Vesturport

Vesturport was founded in 2001 by a group of artists who wanted to create a collaborative platform for producing their ideas.

Vesturport quickly established itself as one of Europe's most inventive award-winning theater and film companies. It quickly gained a strong international reputation and has had repeated continuous successes.

“...amongst the world's most dazzling troupes.”

— Michael Billington, The Guardian (UK)

Vesturport's theatre productions include: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Woyzeck*, *Dubble Dusch*, *Love the Musical*, *Metamorphosis*, *Brim*, *Faust*, *Bastards*, *The Heart of Robin Hood*, *The Tempest*, and *Othello*. All the productions have been performed all over the World; from the West End in London to Tas-

mania in Australia. From the Kennedy Centre in Washington to the LG Centre in S-Korea, winning numerous awards and nominations all across the Globe.

In 2011, the company received the prestigious European Theatre Prize. An honor, with past honorees being amongst other Peter Brook, Pina Bausch, Robert Lepage, and Harold Pinter. Vesturport is repeatedly finding itself producing or co-producing feature films and TV series both domestically and internationally. Vesturport has created and co-produced many feature films and TV series, including the feature films: *Children* (best picture at the Icelandic film awards and Golden Swan for best picture in Copenhagen), *Parents*, *Brim* (best picture at Icelandic film awards), *Country Wedding* and *The Homecoming*. Vesturport's production of *Fangar*, a six-episode TV Drama, is on Netflix. Their latest series, *Blackport* is produced in partnership with ARTE France and Turbine Studios and has gained enormous success.

For more information on Vesturport, visit vesturport.com.



GENERAL INFO

ORIGINAL TITLE: Vigdís

ENGLISH TITLE: Vigdís

GENRE: Drama

GENERAL: Drama series

FORMAT: 4x60 min

LANGUAGE: Icelandic

DIRECTOR: Björn Hlynur Haraldsson & Tinna Hrafnadóttir

SCRIPT: Björg Magnúsdóttir & Ágústa M. Ólafsdóttir

PRODUCERS: Rake! Garðarsdóttir, Ágústa M. Ólafsdóttir,
Gísli Örn Garðarsson, Ásta Einarsdóttir

PRODUCED BY: Vesturport

LEAD ROLE: Nína Dögg Filippusdóttir

LOCATION: Iceland

PRODUCTION YEAR: 2023/2024

CONTACT: rake!@vesturport.com

CO PRODUCER: RÚV

SALES AGENT: ReInvent