

# Njála Concepts

**Three concept ideas**  
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**GAGARIN**  
[www.gagarin.is](http://www.gagarin.is)

## INTRODUCTION

### **About this document**

This design document describes three first draft concepts for an exhibit about Brennunjálssaga.

From these concepts, one will be selected by the library project group and designed further by the Gagarín team in collaboration with the library project group.

## INTRODUCTION

### Goal

*Projektet skal styrke litteraturens rolle på fremtidens bibliotek, som skaber af:*

***Fællesskab, identitet og en position for brugeren i en hovedrolle. Projektet skal udvikle en ny formidlingspraksis; der med **interaktion, fortælling** og **sanselighed** vækker **fantasi** og **følelse** og samtidigt **vitaliserer litteraturen.*****

## INTRODUCTION

### **Short summary**

The exhibit will evolve around Brennunjalssaga and trigger interest by library visitors in the common Nordic heritage of the Sagas.

The installation should “talk” to visitors as individuals but also to visitors as part of a community

The exhibit is to be mobile, easy to pack and set up again. In the first year it will be located in three different Libraries in Copenhagen and one library in Reykjavik.

The exhibit will be in two languages: Danish and Icelandic.

The placement of the exhibit should be chosen so that no one who visits the library misses it!



## INTRODUCTION

### Thematic goals

- Honour and shame
- Strong narrative tradition
- Law and Christianity

### Experiential goals

- Identifying/Mirroring
- Familiarity and strangeness
- Big emotions
- Interactive/interpassive

### Interaction goals

- Do/experience together
- Participatory
- Intuitive
- Senses, tactility, style

### Target groups

- Big culture consumers
- Students 16-20 +
- Parents with their kids
- Frequent “in and out” who come to pick up
- Teenagers who come for hang out
- People on another mission

## CONCEPT | TREASURE HUNT

### 1. Treasure Hunt

When a visitor has just entered the library and finds herself in the open space area close to the reception, she notices something is different, there is a framed zone on the floor and in the middle she sees interesting objects.

The zone represents the public area where decisions were made back in the times of the Sagas: the lögrétta at Alþing.

When getting closer to the objects the visitor is presented with elements from Brennunjálssaga as well as teasers from the Treasure Hunt game she is about to be invited to participate in.

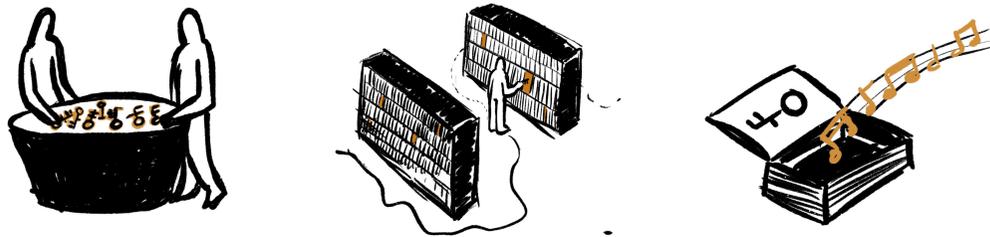
The visitor grabs one of the objects and gets introduced to one of the main characters of Brennunjálssaga, Hallgerður. The visitor follows the first clue which takes her to the children section where the visitor will get further introduced to Hallgerður as she is described in the very beginning of the story, setting the tone for the strong character.

The visitor then continues following the next clue and is taken through the main different happenings and descriptions of Hallgerðurs life and influence in the story. Through this exploration the visitor builds up an image of this influential yet questionable woman of Brennunjálssaga.

A story told through ca 7 clues, in 7 different locations in the library. Each clue/box holds a screen or headphones where short references to the story are retold through animations or sound.

Each location should have relevance to what is happening in the story. For example, when talking about Hallgerðurs murder cases, it could be in the crime section.

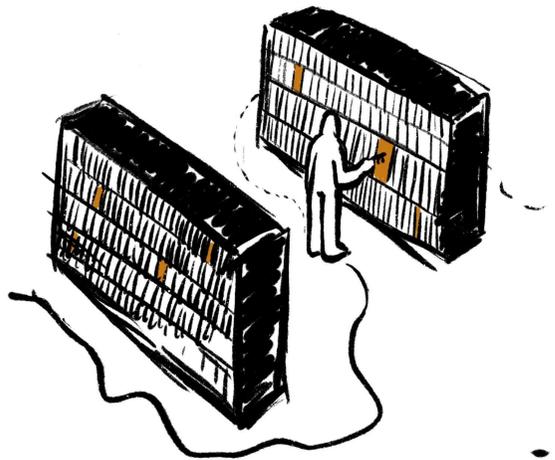
Different stories could be released at different times. So the library staff/curators can rearrange the clues.



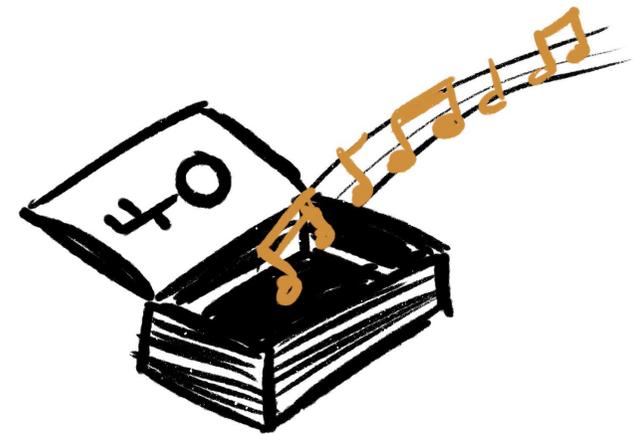
# CONCEPT | TREASURE HUNT



Starting point where visitor gets "key"



By following the clues a magic book is found



Once unlocked an experience takes over

## CONCEPT | HONOUR AND SHAME

### 2. Gateway to Honor and Shame

When a visitor enters the library she immediately sees a door divided into two entrances, *Shame* and *Honour*. This divided door/gate encourages her to walk through and make a choice which side, i.e. which theme to explore first.

She chooses to walk into Honour. Inside it feels like being inside a tunnel or in a cave, she will see her own shadow in an “honour costume”, objects related to honour, and feelings. Phrases from *Brennunjalssaga* that describe moments of honour, for example when Gunnar leaves Althingi with honour after concluding on complicated matters. There the visitor can relate to these moments herself and put herself in his shoes at these moments. When she exits she will see or hear quotes from

*Brennunjalssaga*, now related to the public opinion, voices that represent the public opinion or society at the time. After being immersed in the theme of Honour the visitor is curious to explore Shame too and goes through there.

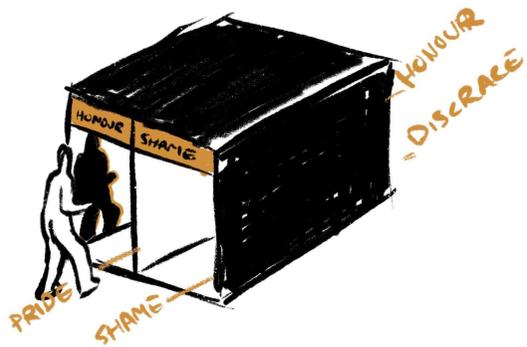
Through different stories from *Brennunjalssaga* the visitor is urged to identify with the characters for example Gunnar, Hallgerður, Skarphéðinn, Otkell and more as they experience honour, shame, disgrace and pride.

*“Reið Gunnar heim af þingi og situr nú um kyrrt; en þó öfunduðu mótstöðumenn hans mjög hans sæmd”*

*“Njáll mælti: “Eigi vil eg út ganga því eg er maður gamall og er eg lítt til búinn að hefna sona minna en eg vil eigi lifa við skömm.””*



## CONCEPT | HONOUR AND SHAME



Inside the tunnel the visitor experiences a private emotion as a shadow projected on the wall.



Once the visitor steps out the experience is transformed via the public opinion through whispers to just that, a public opinion.

## CONCEPT | WHAT IS IN THE HAIR?

### 3. What is in the hair?

As a visitor enters the library a noticeable structure covered with glowing fiber optic hair is right in front of the visitor. Around them a ghostly shadowplay is created by the light glowing in it. The hair moves slightly and attracts the visitor towards it. The visitor is urged to touch the hair, and when she does so she sees an interesting word appear, for example “corner lady”. She peeks into the structure to see better what is there, the structure might shake and a camera flash flashes the visitor in their face a is made aware of some imagery in between the hair. When pulling the hair to the sides a whole sentence where the word “corner lady” is put in context, as well as a simple sketched animation of a lady at the corner of a big dinner table.

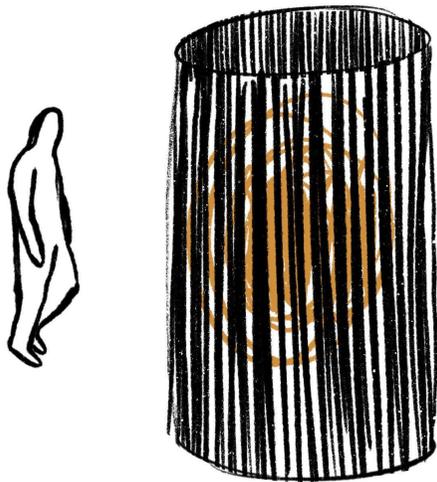
The hair structure is such that it is interesting to touch so the visitor continues and the curiosity is driven partly by the literary phrases on display and partly by the sensation of searching in the hair.

Other topics that easily lend themselves to being explored and presented in such a sensory way is the christianity or the blood rain.

“Da de red op mod Rangå, skete der det, at hugspyddet blev helt dækket af blod. Kulsæg spurgte, hvad det kunne betyde. Gunnar svarede, at det i andre lande blev kaldt blodregn, når den slags skete, “og Ølve Bonde fortalte, at det varslede store sammenstød.””



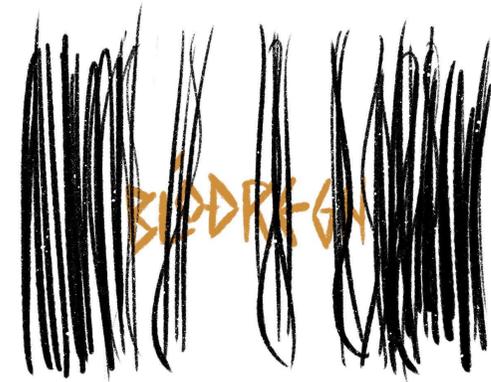
## CONCEPT | WHAT IS IN THE HAIR?



The visitors interest is piqued flowing lights and moving hair curtain.



The visitor peeks into the installation where a camera recognizes his presence.



An experience explaining, visualising or sonifying one concept from the saga is brought before him.

## CONCEPT OVERVIEW

### **Treasure Hunt**

In the first idea *Treasure Hunt*, **the visitor is an explorer**. She is driven by the build up of a story about the life of a character from *Njála*. The curiosity about this foreign and exotic character from the past that she at the same time is able to identify with.

### **Honour and Shame**

In the second idea *Honour and Shame*, **the visitor is put into an emotional situation**. She has to make a choice and is then forced into a situation where she is confronted with a strong emotion related to shame and honour from *Njála*. These emotions are the main drive of the story, because behind influential actions there is a person defending her honour or perhaps acting out of shame.

### **What is in the Hair**

In the third idea *Touch the Hair*, **the visitor is not in control**. Here the attention is directed to the elements in the story that are not in the hands of human, where one might put the fate of the story into non human actors. The hair is a metaphor for nature, destiny, beauty, premonitions. The visitor is driven by the beauty and appeal of this sensual installation which will then surprise her and remind her of the vulnerability of humans in the universe.

## BACKGROUND

### Description

The ideas here are based on brainstorm meetings between the Gagarín team and the library project group, taking place in february and march 2018 in Reykjavik and in Copenhagen.

All three ideas can be implemented in various ways and with different technology which needs to be designed further. Scope and detailed design will decide how many visitors can interact at the same time.

The next steps are that the library project group evaluates and chooses one idea to take further. The chosen idea will be designed further by the Gagarín team and in a workshop around the storytelling and content with the library project group.

From that point the Gagarín team should have the needed input to create detailed design and a cost estimate before going into production of the exhibit.

