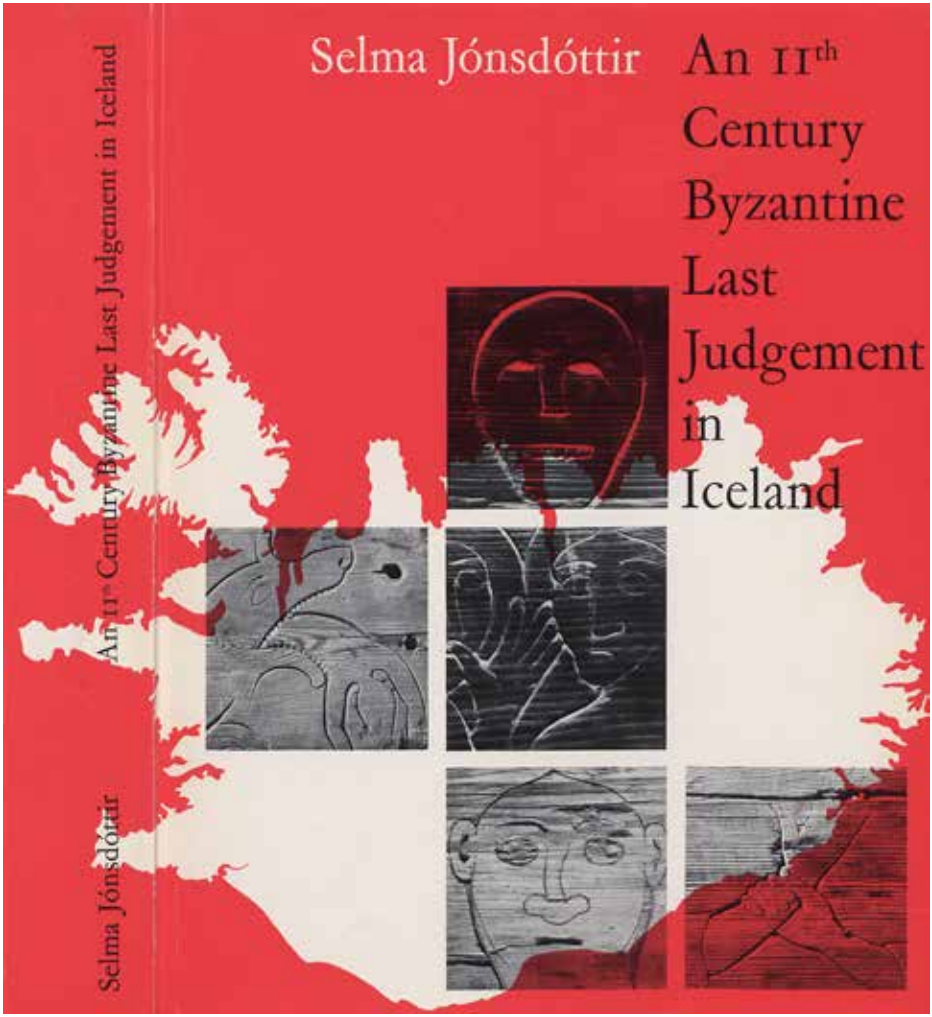
Selma Jónsdóttir

100 years commemoration



Exhibition in
the National and University Library of Iceland
Opened 22 August 2017



Selma Jónsdóttir (22 August 1917 – 5 July 1987) was the first Icelander to hold a degree in Art History and the first woman to receive a doctorate degree from the University of Iceland.

Selma was born in Borgarnes on 22 August 1917 to parents Helga María Björnsdóttir and Jón Björnsson; she was the youngest of four siblings. Selma went to Reykjavík to study at grammar school Verzlunarskóli Íslands. After finishing her studies in 1935, she went on to travel to Germany and studied German language and literature in Hamburg and Heidelberg. She returned to Iceland in 1937 and worked for a little while at her parents store in Borgarnes.

Selma left for the United States in 1941 to study at university. She finished an undergraduate degree in Art History from Columbia University in New York in 1944. She then continued her studies at Columbia as well as at the Warburg Institute in London, receiving a Master's degree in Art History in 1949. Her thesis got wide recognition and was published in *The Art Bulletin* in September 1950.

Selma's specialty was medieval arts and she was a real pioneer in that area. She defended her doctoral dissertation on medieval art in Iceland and its connection to Byzantine art in January 1960. AB press in Reykjavík published her thesis both in English and in Icelandic.

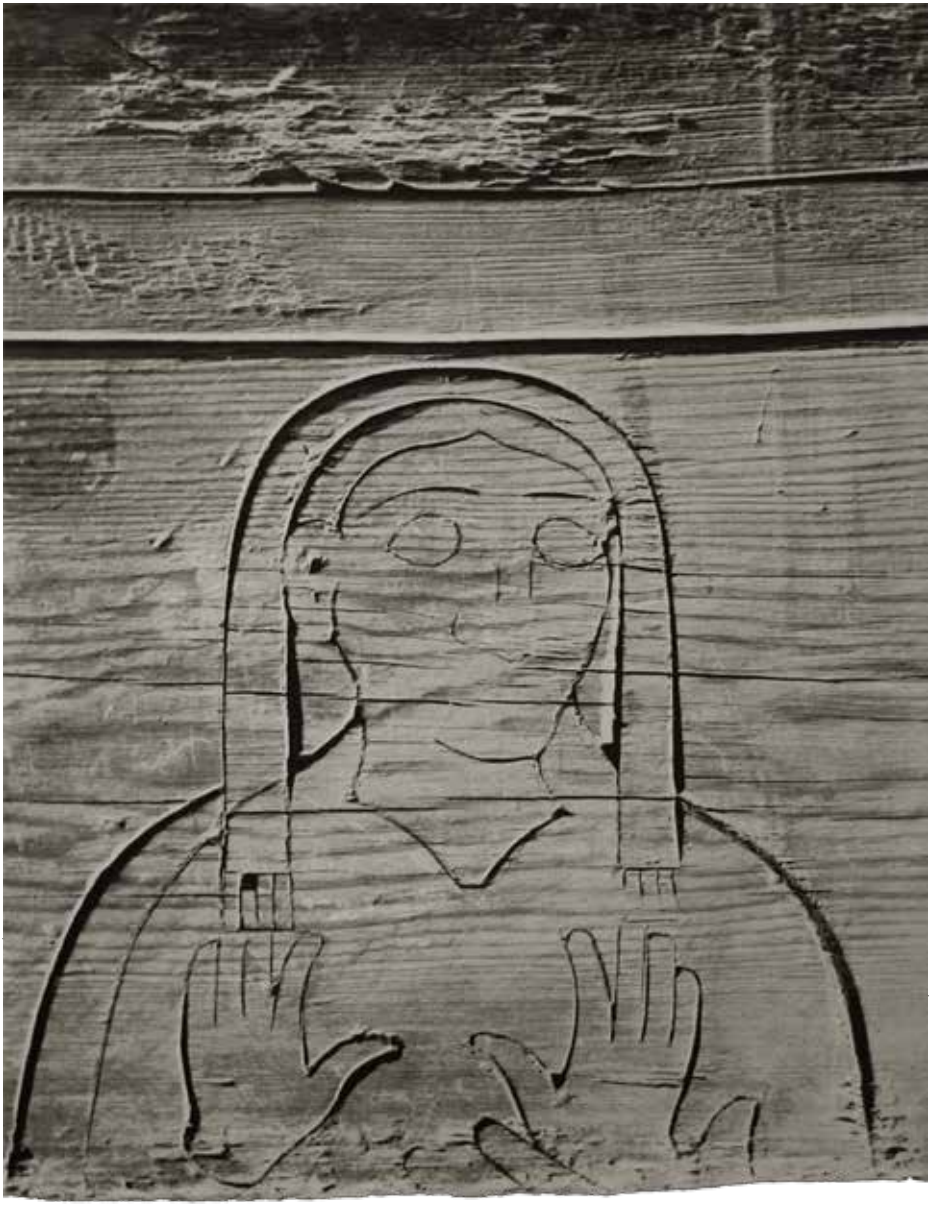


Selma Jónsdóttir. Photo: Jón Kaldal.

When Selma arrived in Iceland in 1950, fresh from her studies abroad, she became the director of the Art Museum of Iceland, a position she held until her death in 1987.

This Selma commemoration is in collaboration with the Women's History Archives in Iceland, the National and University Library of Iceland, the National Gallery of Iceland, the Association for Art Historians in Iceland, the Borgarnes Museum and the National Museum of Iceland.

Information on all events can be found on the Women's History Archives' website: www.kvennasogusafn.is.



WOMEN'S HISTORY ARCHIVES

NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OF ICELAND

Text: Rakel Adolphsdóttir
August 2017.