

Let the lava flow! Iceland's volcano show is a hit

December 9 2022, by Jeremie RICHARD



Real molten lava coming from rocks ejected from Iceland's Katla Volcano in 1918 feature in the show.

In a dark auditorium in Reykjavik, bubbling orange lava flows down a slide to within inches of awe-struck visitors.

The [flow](#), contained on both sides by black sand, lights up the room like a sunrise.

This is the Lava Show, Iceland's latest tourist attraction, that uses reheated [lava](#) from a real [eruption](#) of the island's Katla volcano more than 100 years ago.

The heat emanating from the [molten rock](#) is tangible, so much so that some of the spectators shuffle in their seats to remove their coats.

"This is the show where you get to experience real molten lava flowing inside of a building, intentionally," the Lava Show's Scottish host Iain MacKinnon joked.

The molten liquid sizzled as it hit blocks of ice, crackling like the sound of breaking glass as it cooled.

"It was really beautiful," Jasmine Luong, a 28-year-old Australian tourist from Melbourne told AFP.

"I can see why a lot of people would be drawn to (an eruption), but obviously you wouldn't be able to go near it in a normal natural setting," she added.

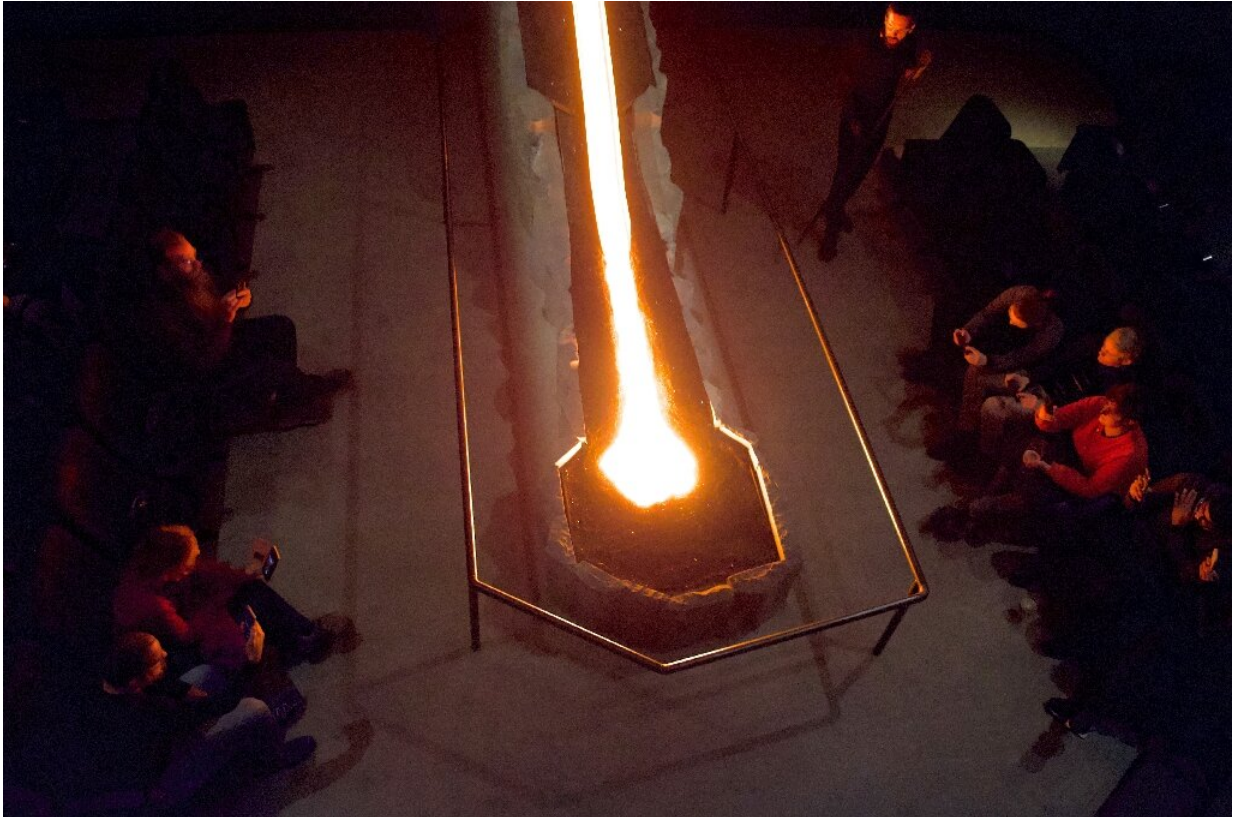
"This is a lot safer."

'Wow effect'

There is the same "wow effect" that people get at an eruption site, MacKinnon said.

Hundreds of thousands of curious onlookers have flocked to watch the hypnotising jets of lava at Iceland's Mount Fagradalsfjall after two

eruptions over the last year just 40 kilometres (25 miles) from Reykjavik.



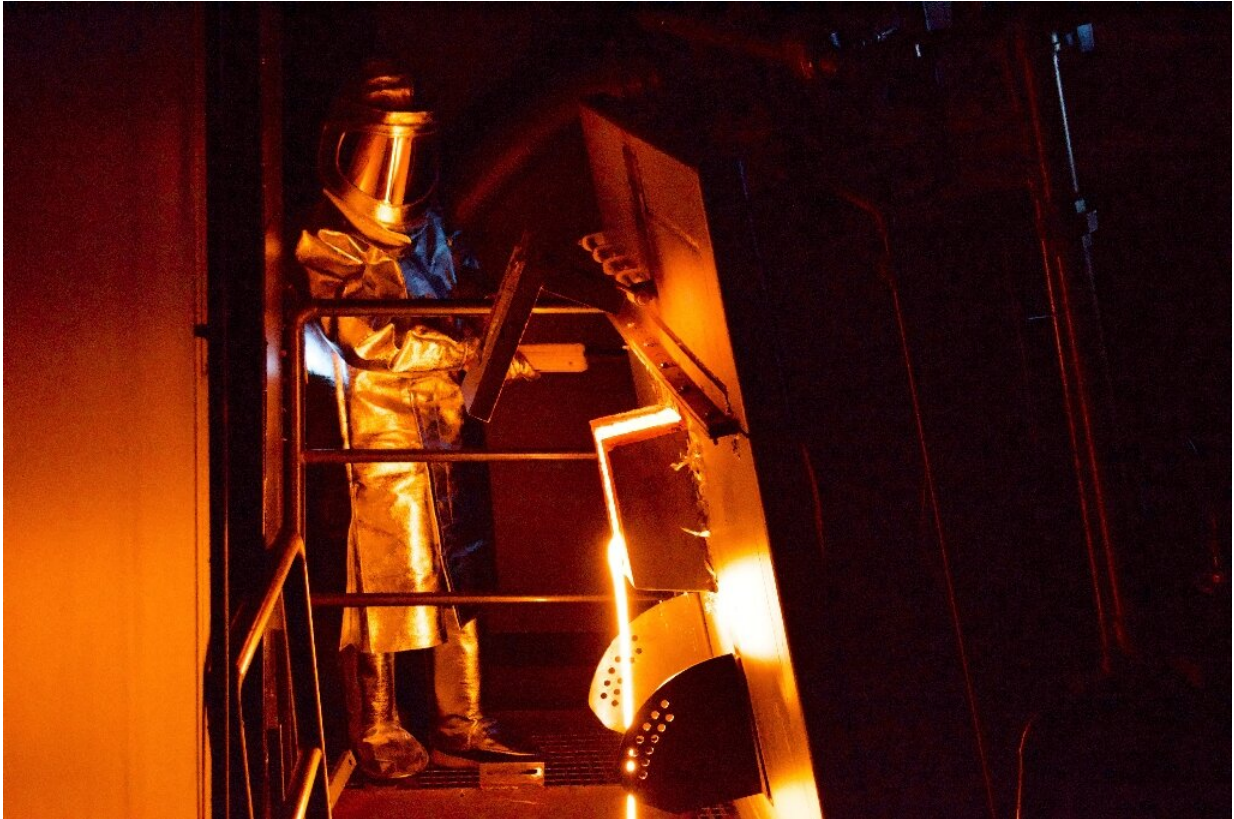
The lava used in the show only retains a hint of sulphur.

But not all Icelandic eruptions are safe.

While the lava used in the show retains a hint of sulphur, the dangerous toxic gases that normally emanate from an eruption have dissipated, since the rock has been reheated and melted down so many times.

More than 600 kilos (1,320 pounds) of tephra—the rocks ejected from

Katla, one of Iceland's most dangerous volcanoes, when it last erupted in 1918—are used in the Lava Show.

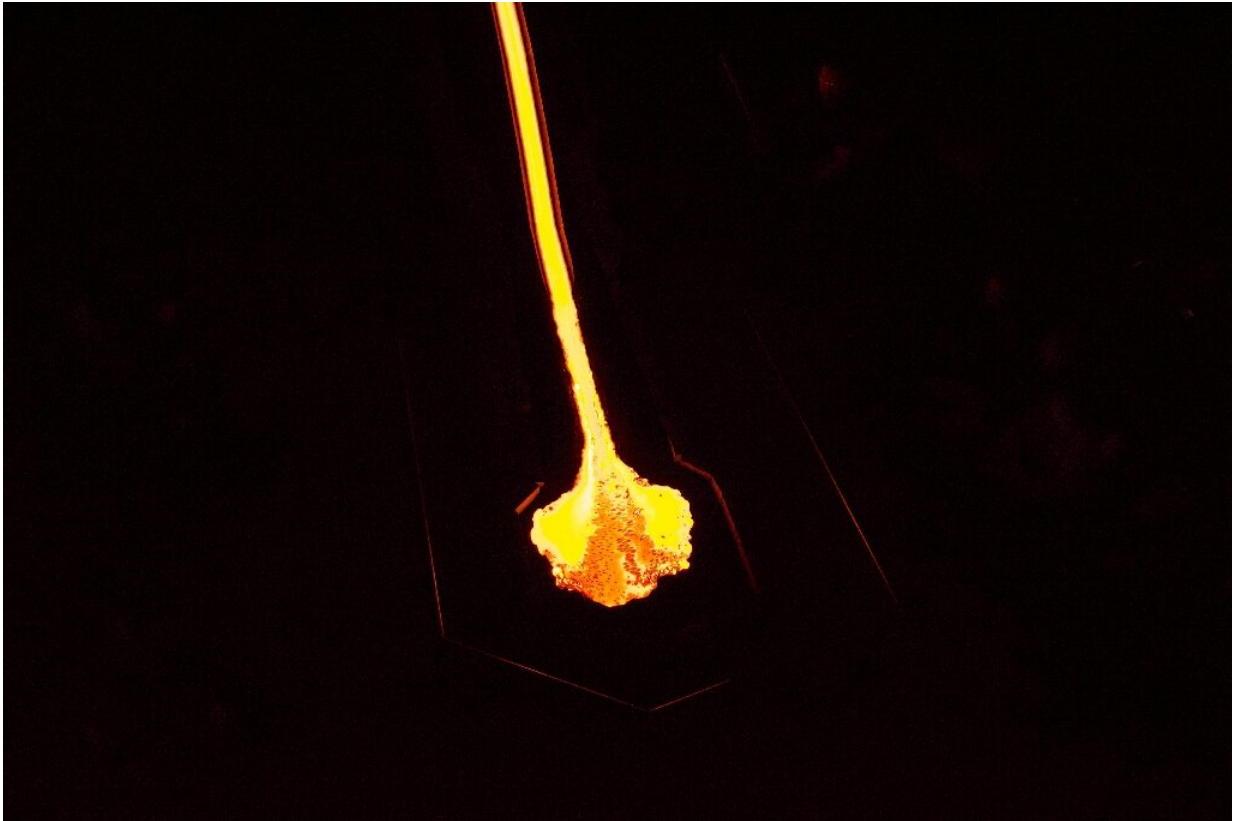


It is touted as the first show of its kind in the world.

"We heat that up to its [melting point](#), which is around 1,100 degrees Celsius (2,000 Fahrenheit) and then we pour it into the room," said the show's founder Julius Jonsson.

In an adjoining room, a large furnace has been modified to suit the show's needs.

Jonsson's company has run a version of the production in the seafront village of Vik in south Iceland since 2018, but the Reykjavik show only opened last month.



Iceland has 33 volcanic systems.

He came up with the idea of a lava [show](#) when he was standing atop a glacier watching lava flow from Fimmvorduhals, a small eruption that preceded the massive Eyjafjallajokull one in 2010, whose ash cloud disrupted air traffic and stranded more than 10 million travellers.

Known as the land of fire and ice, Iceland has 33 volcanic systems

currently considered active, the highest number in Europe. It has an eruption every five years on average.

"We thought it would be wonderful for Iceland if lava would always be flowing," Jonsson said.

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