

# Rams

Cert 15 Iceland 2015 92 mins

## Crew

Director /	Grímur Hákonarson
Screenplay	
Cinematography	Sturla Brandth Grøvlen
Film Editing	Kristján Loðmfjörð
Original music	Atli Örvarsson

## Cast

Sigurður Sigurjónsson	Gummi
Theodór Júlíusson	Kiddi
Charlotte Bøving	Katrin
Jon Benonysson	Runólfur
Gunnar Jónsson	Grímur
Þorleifur Einarsson	Sindri
Sveinn Ólafur Gunnarsson	Bjarni

## Synopsis

*Iceland, the present. Brothers Gummi and Kiddi live in a secluded valley tending their sheep. Their ancestral stock is one of the country's best and they often win awards for their pedigree prize rams. But although they share the land and a way of life, Gummi and Kiddi have not spoken to each other for over forty years...*

*When a lethal disease suddenly infects Kiddi's sheep, the entire valley comes under threat. But Gummi and Kiddi don't give up easily. As the authorities close in, they find a way to work together to save their sheep, and themselves, from extinction.*



## Booking Information

**Distributor:** Soda Pictures

**DVD bookings:**

0207 377 1407

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www.sodapictures.com

Available: tbc



## Reviews

In one widescreen frame in *Rams*, we see two sheep farms stretching side by side across a gently sloping valley, the properties divided in the middle by a road heading straight towards the camera position. The poised symmetry of the composition is almost too good to be true, but this is rural Iceland, where sheep farming is a traditional component of the local economy, so there's every reason to believe it's a real location.

That tension between authenticity and contrivance is absolutely at the heart of Grímur Hákonarson's second narrative feature, which takes the evident dramatic construct of two brothers who are neighbours, rival sheep breeders and - most significantly - haven't spoken to each other in 40 years (for reasons the film takes its time revealing) and sets it against the plight of a very real farming community whose pride in its sheep stock proves no protection against today's tough market realities.

... To find another film whose straightforward, almost homespun simplicity masks a director in truly confident control of his material you'd probably have to go back to David Lynch's *The Straight Story*. While the subject matter is very different here, Hákonarson's achievement, like Lynch's before him, is ultimately to leave us with a sense that universal themes are thrumming through an extremely localised and specific scenario. In the case of *Rams*, you won't spot it coming, but fate, circumstances and brilliant filmmaking deliver a final image that not only sets individual conflict within the broader realm of human brotherhood but somehow also prompts a surge of emotion from an outcome on the very tipping-point of exquisite uncertainty. A minor classic, no less.

*Trevor Johnstone, Sight and Sound, February 2016*

...*Rams* fits in to a melancholy Nordic tradition - think of *Kitchen Stories*, *Of Horses and Men* or the hangdog comedies of Aki Kaurismäki - where whimsy is forever being elbowed aside by despair. Hákonarson allows his camera to gawp at the cruel landscape but for the most part he keeps us inside looking out, adopting the entrenched perspective of the beleaguered farmers. This visual directness, no barrier to poetry, would make it possible to watch *Rams* as a silent movie without losing much nuance. But you would then miss out on the evocative soundtrack. The wind whistles balefully behind a wheezing accordion and a piano is played so tentatively that the pianist's fingers might be frostbitten.

*Ryan Gilbey, New Statesman, February 2016*

## FILM FACTS...

- ☆ The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival 2015, where writer/director Grímur Hákonarson won the 'Un Certain Regard' Award.
- ☆ Sigurður Sigurjónsson (Gummi) is a well-known Icelandic actor and comedian, who appears regularly in the weekly satirical TV programme *Spaugstofan*.