



Helsinki, 30 September 2022

Dear Vincent,

Methane has been bubbling to the surface of the sea for a few days now from the gas pipes in the middle of the Baltic. The sabotage has not only exploded the energy infrastructure but also whatever little was left of my psychological detachment mechanisms. I keep on reading speculations on how much gas might be in the pipes (are they sure they have been closed off?), about heightened levels of methane in the atmosphere measured on the island of Utö in Turku archipelago, looking at images of the sea boiling and of maps crisscrossed with pipelines and borderlines. Meanwhile the border between Finland and Russia has been closed to the cheers of the rightwing populists.

The sea appears nearly as a void, a terra nullius, where lines are drawn and claims are made. A geopolitical stage, as it has always been. Now this stage has quite literally erupted into the media headlines and the consciousness of those living along these shores. Yet there has been hardly any mention of how this might affect the lives of those in the sea. During the planning phase of these notorious pipes there were concerns about the impact of their construction on the marine ecosystem, yet no serious consideration of geopolitical risks, some articles point out. Yet now the tables have turned, haven't they?

How to see the sea as both an ecological and a cultural

space? The gas gushing through the water and into the air is, after all, an embodiment of their entanglement. Just like this very act of hybrid warfare makes the distinction of ecological and political seem terribly outdated. Do you remember when hybridity used to mean something hopeful and exciting?

This has made me reconsider of our earlier exchange about ecoscene(s). Perhaps the spaces of art and the framings they allow, might allow the sea to be encountered otherwise than in these media images, where the surface appears penetrable only for the gas, the leak, the sabotage. Then again, the gas is surely an unexpected main protagonist here, uncontained by the narratives woven around it in this charged moment. It has redirected my thoughts to methane released out of the melting permafrost. I remember a scifi story about dramatic methane leaks underwater in the Arctic. Or is it fiction?

Rereading your last postcards, I am wondering, are we still on the brink of socio-ecological collapse? These don't seem like opening lines anymore. How to address or intervene in the scene in the middle?

The google earth image of the beach is incredible, by the way! It communicates something that I find the images of the gas eruption cannot quite convey of the uncertain, ever-shifting lines and porous boundaries between bodies of water, land and air.

Take care, Taru