



Merihaka, at home, October 1st 2022

Dear Taru,

Your postcard received yesterday, as much as the current situation, leaves me speechless, with not much way out for a response, except for the sharing of awe, anger, and tears.

Elina Pirinen sent me a few pictures from the studio today, on WhatsApp. They recorded yesterday with her band the pop song that I commissioned her to compose for the show. During our first working session last spring, Elina told me about a song she once composed in Iceland with a duck-footed creature with laser eyes on a black sand beach. I then showed her the picture (my postcard today) of the statue of Xixili that I had taken during the Christmas break in the harbour of Bermeo in the Basque country. Xixili belongs to the group of **itsas laminak**, the marine spirits in the Basque mythology; they resemble sirens, with golden hair, human torso, and fishtail, but the difference is that they have... duck feet. I asked Elina if it would be possible for her to revisit Sibelius's *The Oceanides (Aallottaret)*, embedding siren's chants and Céline Dion's *My Heart Will Go On*. That working day, I gave her a print of Camille Claudel's *The Wave*, where one sees three young persons dancing in a ring at the bottom of an onyx wave that will swallow them up in the next second. I asked Elina for a song that brings

tears.

Do we miss public, laic, pagan spaces and times where we can cry together? In the middle, as you say.

I have finally decided on the title of the exhibition, it will be *Kommos*. In ancient Greek tragedy, a kommos is a collective mourning song that involves the performers beating their chests. The kommos is sung by the chorus and actor(s) together. It is a heartbreaking lamentation that bursts, into a high-pitched mode, as the climax of the tragedy.

In the *Iku-Turso* film we made with Outi Condit, when Outi stabilizes above the CLion cable, one of these lines on the map, underwater - this one an 1173 km-long submarine cable with a capacity of 144 terabits of data per second - they recite the poem by Eino Leino, *Iku-Turso*. We did two takes in all. In one of the two, in addition to Leino's poem, Outi recalls the end of Alfred Lord Tennyson's *The Kraken* which goes, I am sure you know it by heart too, like this:

*(...) Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.*

Take care, Vincent