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Decolonial cartographies: Counter-mapping in the Arctic

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For centuries, cartographers – alongside writers and artists – have projected onto the Arctic an imaginary world located on the outskirts of the European ecumene, a world of emptiness, whiteness, and purity, an uninhabited and uninhabitable space balanced between utopia and dystopia. When Russia, Denmark, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the United States expanded their 'national' space northward, they brought not only their modes of thinking, systems of governance, and languages with them, but also spatial perceptions unfamiliar to Arctic local populations. The previously white and virgin spaces on the top of European world maps were soon filled with place names in English, French, Russian, and Danish, honouring 'discoverers' and 'founders' who spread the European, Asian, and American territories 'beyond' the frontiers of their historical colonisation. In this chapter, we foreground very different Arctic cartographies by studying strategies aimed at establishing a decolonial mapping of the circumpolar North, taking into account the variety of cultures and perspectives of those who live in the region.[1] Through examples taken from cultural, cartographic, and toponymic mediated actions, we wish to put forward a politico-cultural movement at the junction of geostrategy, the arts, cartography, and the takeover of power by communities.

Recent postrepresentational approaches to cartography have advocated for a perspective that understands '[m]apmaking and map use' as 'embodied and dynamic', emphasising that 'maps are constituted in and through diverse, discursive and material processes' (Kitchin, Perkins, and Dodge 2007, 17). Turning their attention to 'living cartographies' and foregrounding what maps *do* as well as what people do *with* maps (Rossetto 2014, 522–6), these critical trends have rethought mapping as performative and emergent, as ongoing actions-in-process, and created links between cartographic theory and fields such as phenomenology, cognitive science, and new materialism. These new directions in cartographic theory are particularly useful for discussions of decolonial mapping projects because they counter the association between cartography and abstraction that informs national and

colonial cartographies at the expense of lived experience (see Roth 2009). For Bjørn Sletto, such cartographic abstraction 'inevitably effect[s] violence to the fluid, shifting, and socially contingent nature of lived, indigenous spatial relationships' (2009, 147). Similarly, Renee Pualani Louis et al. write that 'there is still a tendency to view Western cartography as the standard by which all other cartographies are measured' (2012, 77). 'Western cartography' is here understood as a territorial form of mapping that fixes space and sets boundaries. Indeed, as Annita Hetoev'ehotohke'e Lucchesi maintains, 'many Indigenous nations have rich traditions of mapping', and she aims 'to dispel the myth that Indigenous peoples did not, and do not, draw maps' (2018, 2). As she argues, 'rhetoric and scholarship that ignores Indigenous cartographic practices denies thousands of years of advancements, traditions, and intellectual property created by Indigenous people' (2018, 14). For her, the decolonial potential of maps lies in their capacity to create connections to the land (2018, 15) and 'tell Indigenous stories in a meaningful way' (2018, 12). In Sápmi, for instance, joiks are living maps of the land; the soundscape of the joik recalls the land and is a performative act of the landscape, mountain, animal, or person made alive through the joik.

More broadly, we argue that combining a focus on mapping as a creative and embodied practice with Indigenous cartographic thought and spatial philosophies highlights the transformative and generative potential of cartography and opens up the very understanding of what constitutes maps and mapping, whether in the context of Indigenous or non-Indigenous artistic and cultural production from the circumpolar Arctic. We will begin by focusing on the theoretical and methodological context of cartography as an instrument of power in colonial and Indigenous contexts and go on to discuss examples from Nunavik, Sápmi, Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), and Norway. These political and artistic initiatives involve reversals of cartography and counter-mappings of the Artic. They credit aesthetics with the ability to redefine spatial perceptions and, consequently, to act upon existing power dynamics. In doing so, they transmit ancestral knowledge, imagine beyond colonial violence, and assert Indigenous self-determination.

Cartography as an instrument of power: colonialism and maps[2]

The North in its entirety can be considered a colonial and militarised territory, where, nowadays, decolonial initiatives have arisen. Among these, several are rooted in mapping. Cartography has been forced upon the land in such violent ways that the only way forward is to overthrow the practice itself. Settler colonialism is not only a political issue; it also consists in imposing a way of thinking (considered superior) which devalues and

replaces Indigenous cultural practices and ontologies. Maps determine the locations of the centre and the fringes, as well as the ways in which the land is occupied. As historically strategic tools, they make it possible to claim an entire territory without even setting foot on it. The Rupert's Land treaties and the monopolies held by the major colonial companies, such as the Hudson's Bay Company's hold over what is now the Canadian North, for instance, gave precedence to the authority of the word – *by the power vested in me, I hereby declare that this land belongs to such and such* – over physical occupation. As Bernard Nietschmann puts it, '[m]ore indigenous territory has been claimed by maps than by guns' (1994, 37). Indeed, Europeans took possession of territories before they set out to explore them. Maps are agents of this power and replace the experience of roaming the land with a cartographic abstraction that will later serve as proof of property, for instance during subsequent territorial negotiations.

Furthermore, maps thwart toponymy, replacing it sometimes with the settler's lexicon, and at other times, rather cynically, with something like 'great white expanse', signalling the unknown (rather than admitting ignorance) and emptiness (in lieu of acknowledgement). In the Americas, this imperialist cartographic violence denies any recognition of prior Indigenous presence, as acknowledging it would negate the very vocabulary that Europeans used to claim the land: 'the New World', 'New England', 'New France', 'the discovery of America', 'the founding of Canada'. To allow for the conqueror's gesture, Indigenous toponymy must be silenced.

This cartographic overwriting leads to the silencing not only of place names, but also of prior cultures and practices. Maps render the land – an essential and concrete element for Indigenous cultures – abstract, dematerialising it and devaluing its empirical understanding, favouring sedentary life over nomadism. Geographer and linguist Louis-Edmond Hamelin, who advocated for a 'geography of the feet', calling for trajectories, experiences, and field observations, writes that 'such condescending behaviour can only serve to distort the perception of facts on the ground' (Hamelin, Chartier, and Désy 2013, 41).[3] For peoples under colonial rule who still have to live with the performative efforts of colonial maps within their governance, such as the Inuit and the Sámi, overthrowing cartographic perspectives is a way to transform the political order.

Analysing cartography implies above all examining the conventions that enable the transformation of the land into an abstract entity, as well as the values that underlie its cultural portrayal. In that sense, it goes without saying that acts of reversal serve as resistance to settler colonialism. This defiance can be Indigenous or not; the artwork *América Invertida* (1943) by Joaquín Torres García, an avant-garde artist from Uruguay, has become iconic in South American cultures and is a perfect example of this attitude,

with its caption reading 'Our North Is the South'. Robin McGrath notes that in several schools of the Canadian Arctic, the map of Canada is pinned up upside down (1991, 3). These reversals lie at the heart of the decolonial struggle. However, they cannot reverse the colonial process that favours abstract understanding over experience and devalues narrative, the foremost method of knowledge transmission used in many Indigenous cultures.

Far from being a neutral gesture, portraying the North as a blank space as per the Western tradition has social, political, and environmental consequences. Cartography has located the Arctic on the outskirts of the world's surface and thereby accentuated the foreignness of the region. Settler colonialism disregards the political and territorial systems already in place; borders, generally abstract ones, are traced in order to delineate the land. Two other strategies serve to overwrite Indigenous understanding of the land in favour of colonial powers: the omitting and replacing of toponyms. Both negate the history of the territory and promote the establishment of the colonising power. Instating new boundaries and overwriting existing toponymy goes hand in hand with devaluing Indigenous methods of orientation and their pre-existing cartography and usage of the land. Yet Indigenous peoples' cartographic practices were useful to the first European settlers, who leveraged Indigenous knowledge of the land to explore the American continent. However, as Georges Emery Sioui deplores, European colonialism dictates a hierarchy of knowledge that places its modes of thinking, technology, and spatial organisation above those of other continents (1989). As Irène Hirt writes,

> [h]istory has retained few traces of past Indigenous maps – either because they were destroyed or because they were transient, drawn on sand or on the ashes of a bonfire, or at best on bark or animal skins. Furthermore, a portion of these cartographies was immaterial, based on cognitive processes (images, mental depictions) or performances (rituals, poetic narratives, chants, dances). (2009, 173)

Colonial maps allowed states to shrink Indigenous property to tiny 'reservations' bound by restrictive and compulsory borders. The naming process itself, the act of delineating 'unknown' or 'uninhabited' zones, and exploration followed by appropriation are part of a broader Cartesian resolve to control the land through the rational mind. This gesture underpins the institutional power which is later carried out by the map: the state, the law, the border (cf. Said 1993, 225). Restoring a geographical and cultural identity, as well as reclaiming one's history, thus requires a reflection beyond Western political frameworks, focusing on the forms and hierarchy of knowledge, and appropriating the map as an instrument of power. This appropriation calls for an act of reversal that highlights the force carried out by the map, followed by a promotion of the toponymy that existed prior to colonisation, as we will now see in the case of Inuit cartographic practices in Northern Canada.

Inuit mappings of the North and the Nunatop Initiative in Nunavik

The points of the compass are the foundations of cartographic orientation, and traditionally, the North is placed at the top of the map, which makes the Arctic seem both 'extreme' (located on the very edge) and 'above' the rest of the world. For Inuit, who occupy a large portion of the Arctic, the notion of 'North' is far from self-evident, sparking a conflict of definitions that has implications on the practice of cartography. A closer study of this conflict brings forth the issue of Inuit relationship with land and helps to explain decolonial initiatives involving maps. From their standpoint, Inuit ('humans') live in *nuna* ('the land'). Drawing on the works of linguist Michael Fortescue (1988), Louis-Jacques Dorais believes that the orientation system used by Inuit was based on other elements of the land rather than on abstract directions. Inuit only began using 'North' and 'South' as reference points as a result of their relationship to settlers (2009, 15–16). Therefore, for Inuit, the North is a relative notion used to orient themselves on the land but an absolute one when it comes to colonial interactions. In this section, we therefore reflect on Northern cartography from the point of view of Inuit mapping initiatives, notably the Nunavik-based Nunatop project.

The creation of the 'North' is a recent phenomenon for Inuit: it stems from a new relationship with the colonial 'South', which began at various moments for different territories.[4] In his introduction to Taamusi Qumaq's remarkable memoir *Je veux que les Inuit soient libres de nouveau* ('I want the Inuit to be free again'), Dorais notes that as late as the mid-twentieth century, the Inuit realm of Nunavik had not yet been integrated into the Western world, nor was it subjected to its ways of thinking and modes of orientation: 'As a young man, the author was never concerned with his ethnic or national belonging ... He was a human being (an *Inuk*), who spoke Inuktitut and who travelled the land of humans (*Inuit*) in search of means of survival for his community' (2009, 11). For the Inuit, the idea of living 'north of the North' or even 'in the North' does not make much sense. Inuit were forced to let go of the idea that their world is central rather recently as a result of the colonial push towards Northern territories enacted by 'Southern' nations.[5] With the growing presence of *qallunaat*[6] and the ensuing pressure on Inuit to trade in their traditional lifestyle for the settler ways, the term *Inuit* ceased to designate 'humans' in general and became a

demonym. Western influence led to the 'invention' of the Nunavik territory (see Canobbio 2009) – another abstraction according to Qumaq[7] – and forced its inhabitants to adopt a new designation, first as 'Inuit' and later by the more precise term 'Nunavimmiut'. Meanwhile, the integration of Western concepts pushed Inuit territory away from the centre towards the North, and later north of the North. It can thus be surmised that from the perspective of North American Inuit, the twentieth-century colonisation of the Arctic by Southern nations invented the ideas of 'North', 'far North', 'north of the North', and '*grand nord*' for mapping purposes and forcefully introduced the usage of this lexicon to Arctic populations.

From a Western point of view, land stops where the sea starts. Maps create a clear visual differentiation between land and water. Bodies of water also have a specific status in the eyes of the law, and seashores are particularly significant, serving as precise borders surrounding states (and mitigated by *maritime* law, which applies differently). In that sense, the Western meaning of 'territory' implies 'land'. For Inuit, this notion does not make sense seeing as the territory does not stop at the shores, which are difficult to spot in cold weather as they are extended by the ice that forms along them. This is why hunting and habitat are not based on a clear distinction between terrestrial and maritime behaviours (Collignon 1996, 100). This connection of the land to the frozen sea creates a world order based on surfaces rather than on abstract directional concepts such as the North. Moreover, the intimate knowledge of the land is not an abstraction; it is the result of cumulative experience – hunting, gathering, movement, and displacement – shaping a network of lines connecting temporal notions with territorial ones, an 'axial perception' that 'is clearly expressed in the maps drawn by Inuit in response to explorers' requests' (1996, 98).

These perceptions of space are based on a system of signs wherein language plays a decisive role. Any contemporary Indigenous setting is a bilingual one where one (Indigenous) language competes with one or several dominant languages (Russian, English, French, Norwegian, or Danish, for instance). So, to create a map with Inuit knowledge of the territory, it does not suffice to replace a language with another; their worldview must be translated, often awkwardly, with words that necessarily displace meanings. Western temporal, legal, and philosophical systems, and the corresponding ways of orienting oneself on the land, relating to it, and organising it as a society, are either imposed on the Inuit system or considered in relation to it, both of which lead to the introduction of new concepts, translated or not, that destabilise Inuit ways of thinking. Therefore, the North becomes rooted as a concept while *nuna*, which previously referred for the Inuit to the world where people live, becomes an *Inuit* concept meaning *North* as it now refers to Inuit territories (*Nuna*vik, *Nuna*tsiavut, *Nuna*vut, etc.).

The knowledge of space depends on an understanding of Inuktitut as well as of its relationships to other languages, which in turn transform its meaning (cf. Collignon 1996, 197).

To orient oneself in the Arctic, one must have a sophisticated understanding of the environment. For the Sámi and the Inuit alike, this is a matter of life or death for herders, hunters, and fishermen, particularly when it comes to finding food and shelter from the cold and the wind. Inuit cartography thus unsurprisingly favours resources, itineraries, previous experiences, as well as potential obstacles to survival rather than abstract depictions. Inuit have been sharing this knowledge among themselves for millennia, as McGrath writes:

> Inuit have a long history of map-making. For thousands of years they shared their knowledge of the country with one another by creating representations of areas, either visited or known indirectly, by drawing and building outlines on sand or snow, using rocks, bones and sticks to give a three-dimensional quality to their images. (1988, 6)

McGrath notes that all Inuit place names are accompanied by an oral narrative, without which they are stripped of their meaning. Consequently, the map as envisioned by Inuit is difficult to use in another cultural context. Keeping only the place names would rob it of its primary function, which consists in providing fragments of previous experiences and advice for travelling throughout the land. That said, explorers and missionaries did leverage Inuit cartographic knowledge, at first to travel on the land, and later to seize it (1988, 6).

The rare maps and scarce narratives that bear witness to moments where cartographic portrayals were imparted confirm, on the one hand, that tools were used for orientation and, on the other hand, that experience-based knowledge had precedence over the geographical abstraction typical of Western cartography. These discrepancies stem from the disparity between European and Inuit relationships to land, as well as from their differing needs. However, this also means that Western maps cannot meet Inuit needs, unless they have to negotiate the use and management of their land when they are compelled to do so by foreign governments. In this context, decolonial initiatives to overthrow external cartographies arise, leading to a political use of maps for the sole benefit of Inuit.

The overwriting of Indigenous toponymy through colonial cartography did not squash all Inuit usage of place names. Upon signing treaties such as the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975, Nunavik Inuit wished to regain control of the mapping process and reclaim Inuit toponymy on their land. Their initiative had a cultural and linguistic as well as a strategic goal: the agreement forced Inuit to justify their use of the land

(see McGrath 1988, 6). By giving a carefully selected name to Nunavik, they demonstrated their sophisticated understanding and effective use of the environment. Thus was born Nunatop, a major mapping project under the aegis of the Avataq Cultural Institute – the only cultural organisation controlled by Nunavik Inuit. This organised, long-term strategic initiative aims to create an Inuit cartography of Nunavik, in Inuktitut and drawing on traditional Inuit knowledge.

Reclaiming toponymy is a major decolonial issue. According to Hélène Blais, '[i]t is imperative to be able to name places – most of which already have designations, but were renamed by settlers – and to depict the landscapes, which are not always accurately reflected by the semiotics developed by European topographical endeavours' (2017, 214). Béatrice Collignon, who supported Nunavut Inuit in this overturn, explains that these gestures of reappropriation 'arise in part from a desire to pass on information about the land, but also to ensure that the Inuit nature of the land is acknowledged from a political standpoint' (2004, 90). Yet she warns of a cultural threat inherent to these initiatives – the risk of cementing the way places are named, when Inuit culture requires a dynamic relationship with people, memories, places, and practices. As she notes, this 'breaks with the process of constantly adapting inherited traditions to current uses' (2004, 99).

In 1987, the Avataq Cultural Institute published its first *Gazetteer of Nunavik Place Names*, intended as a comprehensive inventory of the names given by Inuit to the places they frequent: islands, shores, rivers, creeks, rapids, lakes, mountains, frontlines, islets, coves, villages, etc. In addition to the painstaking labour of gathering the toponyms, a cartographic initiative was undertaken to locate them on the land, which is currently achieved with geo-tracking. The first series of maps using these place names was not released by Avataq until 2019, the culmination of a more than three-decade-long process.[8] From the outset, the elders attributed the utmost importance to this project, recognising it as useful for defending their rights as well as ensuring the survival of their language and culture. They stated that the oral traditions supporting the understanding of the land were

> resources [that] [now] need[ed] to be documented and put on an equal footing as the written culture of the dominant society, which includes visual depictions. Failing to do so would cause them to gradually lose ground. (Müller-Wille 1987, 2)

The goal was also a practical one: knowing Nunavik place names would allow its inhabitants to orient themselves on the land and find the necessary resources for survival:

> Inuit used to travel long distances by using place names and traditional narratives rather than geographical maps. This practice must be passed on to young people who, unfamiliar with ancient toponymy, tend to lose their snowmobiles, sleds, and other hunting equipment. If they knew place names, they would be able to retrace their steps to what they left behind. (Epoo 1987, ix)

Publishing maps, creating toponymic databases, and putting them to use are all ways of adapting cartography to the culture of Nunavik. The goal of these initiatives was thus rooted in a major decolonial bedrock as they show beyond the shadow of a doubt that this land, initially described by settlers as *terra incognita*, is actually a cultural space that is inhabited, understood, named, travelled upon, and experienced. The strategic value of these maps is not lost on Inuit: nowadays, anyone who wishes to acquire one of the 650 maps created by Nunatop must first explain how they wish to use it. This entails an understanding of cartography as not an abstract system but a process grounded in individuals' relationship with the land as well as with their community. Having examined the initiatives taken by Nunavik to put forward an Inuit way of understanding territory, toponymy, and maps, we will now turn our attention to the cultural and political force of cartographic art.

Elle-Hánsa's Sámi counter-mapping challenge

In the Sápmi context, decolonial cartography is closely associated with the artistic mapping practice of Elle-Hánsa (Keviselie/Hans Ragnar Mathisen[9]).[10] Scholars have narrated his practice as engaging in counter-mapping that challenges the official national stories of Scandinavian territory (see Uhre 2015; Stephansen 2017). As noticed by other scholars, counter-mapping artists use cartographic aesthetics to trouble this seemingly naturalised and timeless correspondence between nation, state, and self (Wood 2010). We do agree that Keviselie's artistic work can be regarded as counter-mapping but want to add that his maps can be considered as a folded place, a halfway place (Deleuze 1990) with multiple divisible stories which create friction. The maps disturbed the dominant story of national stewardship of the Northern territory by making visible Sámi sovereignty and understandings of place. Elle-Hánsa's maps offer more than Sámi place names and a visualisation of the Sámi present. They can be read differently, dependent on the viewers' knowledge about Sápmi, the Sámi languages, the political situation of the Indigenous people, and stories as well as their uses in the landscape (Jernsletten 2011). There are maps within the maps: lines of poetry from other Sámi writers, local Sámi patterns talking about the present of specific lines of memories/movements, and *siidas* are folded into them. These stories create different communities of reading, understanding, and even having fun, sharing multiple knowledges and creating friction in

different ways on different levels, from the nation state to local or translocal Sápmi communities.

In order to unpack more thoroughly some fragments of one of Keviselie's central maps, *Sábmi* (1975), we will draw on the concepts of 'folding', developed by Gilles Deleuze, as well as 'confluence and/or tension', inspired by Helen Verran (2019). Deleuze's 'fold' refers to a displaced field, a halfway place, which never quite but almost gathers presence and nonpresence into a unity that is not the same but divided: 'It is only by breaking open the circle, ... by unfolding and untwisting it, that the dimension of sense appears for itself' (1990, 20). This unfolding, for Deleuze, defines time as present that includes the past and the future (1990, 162–4). Confluence and/or tension is a concept that takes as its starting point the notion that art expresses philosophy: 'Art objects pick up and actively refract, even reframe, their aesthetic surroundings, much as a plant expresses multiple and varied aspects of its situation in its form, thus revealing a mode of collective being as particular yet singular' (Verran 2019, 56). Elle-Hánsa has always used tension and resistance as guiding tools in his artistic work. The social-political effects of one map have been the guiding tools in the making of the next. Counter-maps can thus be considered as *maps in tension* in addition to being halfway places.

Sábmi (1975) was the second map that Elle-Hánsa made during his years as a student at the Norwegian Art Academy in Oslo (Plate 13). The very first map he had made depicted the Romsa/Tromsø area, the biggest city of the Norwegian North. In his own words, 'that map made a scandal. It made Norwegians see the area differently, besides fuelling the anti-Sámi movement.[11] The first reaction made him think that he was on the right track and that he would draw a map of the whole of Sápmi. *Sábmi* creates 'a "cartography of connectedness" that registers the historical continuity of Sámi place names "from Kola to Lofoten, from the North Cape to Femunden"' (Mathisen 1991 in Uhre 2015, 82). The map created tension also inside the Sámi community: 'Sámi in some communities did not know of or were not thinking that there were Sámi in other areas – in the South, East and even within a nearby fjord.'[12] The second map was thus a reaction to the first.

The map expresses Sámi philosophy. *Sábmi* can (from a distance) be regarded as a social-political counter-mapping of Fennoscandia. Still, there are more specific claims in the map that you can learn to know if you stay with the details for some time. For instance, some places on the moon are given Sámi place names. Almost all the texts are written in Sámi, so one needs to know the language in order to fully enter the philosophy present in the map. Some of the text lines are by other Sámi and Indigenous artists; the map thus does not articulate a single artist's voice but those of the different Sámi artists and academics that formed Elle-Hánsa's community. These academics and artists were at the time living in a diasporic situation

in Sápmi. Sámi-speaking readers can recognise the bird in the very north end of the map singing Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's line *Eat davvelii šat beasa* ('We can't go any further north'), the words *Riggis jákká atte geafi eallá heaggainis* ('The rich assume that the poor live by breathing') from a joik or an old Sámi proverb, or Inga Juuso's *Mu rákkis æna læ divrasit go åbba máilmi ruđat* ('My dear land is more precious than all the money of the world'). They can also recognise objects such as the drum of the *noaidi* (shaman). The drum is most often described as a historical object, but Keviselie brought it into the present future of Sápmi; where past, present, and future come together.

In addition to all the verses of the Sámi *soga lávla* (anthem) by Isak Saba in North Sámi (in old orthography), the map shares multiple Indigenous place names meaning 'people' (Akansea/Arkansas, Illinidak/Illinois) and Sámi translations of place names from Turtle Island: Alibamu=dábbe mii árrut ('here we live'), Connecticut=gukkes ædno ('long river'). There is also a beautiful creation story: 'adde midjiide čázi, adde munnje čázi! Må læ čáziin dappahuvvon máilmis?' ('Give me water, give us water! What has happened with the water in the world?') The map also contains a partly hidden sacred landscape that only a few knowers would have the possibility of engaging with. If you are Sámi, you have an extended sensitivity to places within the land (as on the map) that call for your attention and should be respected (indeed, on another occasion Elle-Hánsa created a map of secret places drawn from historical records, but that map only circulated within a limited community). *Sábmi* also reframes cartographic modes of orientation. In a detail that is often highlighted in public talks and analyses, the map of Fennoscandia is turned upside down. This inversion is connected to the Sámi understanding of the rivers flowing down to the Arctic Sea (not 'up' as on Western maps).

Finally, Elle-Hánsa always wanted to bring in humourist elements – teasing others but also inviting people into a community of resistance through the act of laughing, creating an experience of us, a 'we'. For instance, there is a fly sitting on the map of Sweden. With this, Elle-Hánsa wanted to offer the audience a possibility to 'smack' Sweden for not having a decent Sámi policy. This can be seen as a performative gesture and an invitation to an act which not all readers/viewers of the map would acknowledge. When understood, it is an invitation to participate in a shared act, to perform a hit and become part of a community of laughter.

As we can see, Elle-Hánsa's maps are as much about becoming as they are a product of collecting names and cultural traditions. This makes his artistic practice performative. The act of collecting names has its own value, and since performativity in cartography is a cultural, social, and political activity, his artistic maps (particularly within Norwegian art institutions)

reveal a mode of collective being as well as the specificity of Sámi philosophy. Elle-Hánsa presents himself in the following way on his website:

> Being an artist is far from an ideal, it is, like the ancient noaiddit of my people, a heavy task, and a lonesome one, full of responsibilities but also spiritually very rewarding. I know there have been shamans in my line, and I use to compare being an artist with being a noaidi. (2021, par. 3)

Sábmi actively refracts both the aesthetic surroundings and the political situation of the Sámi people. Throughout his career, Elle-Hánsa has used the tension brought forward by his maps as a guiding tool in regard to the ontological claims that could be made in public. In addition, the framing of the maps as art has given him more acceptance within Norwegian institutions than Sámi maps made simply as maps could have done. *Sábmi* also offers homework to the viewer that involves puzzling over the particularities of Sámi practices, helping us imagine the possibilities of maps for decolonisation.

Cartographic transformations of Greenland

Like Sápmi, Greenland has recently seen a range of cartographic mediations and transformations that go hand in hand with decolonial struggles. In discussing these works and practices, we will also challenge the binary opposition between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cartographies, arguing that cartography itself can suggest complex entanglements of different modes of geographical knowledge, especially if it is understood as performance, practice, and process.

The first cartographic transformation of Greenland to be examined here is a painted map of Greenland by Ivalu Holm (Plate 14) that is included in a collection of short stories by young Greenlandic authors titled *2040*, part of the Allatta! series and published in 2015.[13] Holm's vision is deceptively simple – it shows an entirely green Greenland with pictograms of a beach, a car, a city, and two factories, surrounded by a blue ocean – but in doing so creates a layered space that invites reflection on Greenland's entanglement with various 'real' and 'imagined' geographies that extend far beyond the country itself. Greenland here looks like a tropical island, linking the far North to the warm South. On the one hand, this transposition playfully comments on the prospect of a Greenland radically transformed by climate change. On the other hand, it connects Greenland with a long tradition of utopian islands in the imaginary cartographies of fiction, typically set on tropical rather than Arctic islands. Though entirely visual, the map also has a verbal dimension in that it makes its Norse name literal, evoking Eric

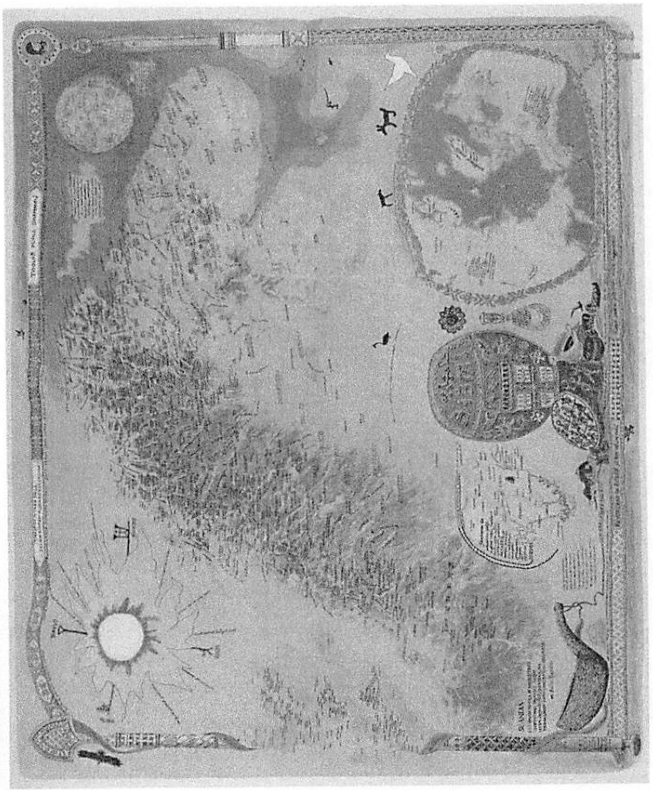


Plate 13 Elle-Hánsa/Keviselie/Hans Ragnar Mathisen, *Sábmi* (1975).

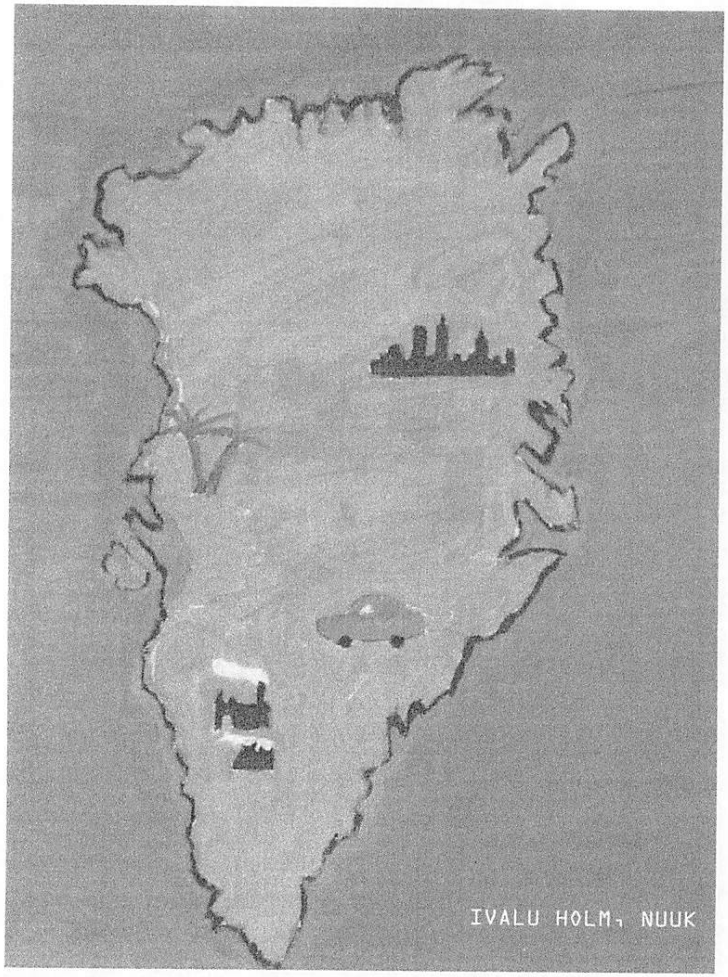


Plate 14 Artwork by Ivalu Holm in *Allatta! 2040* (milik publishing, 2015).

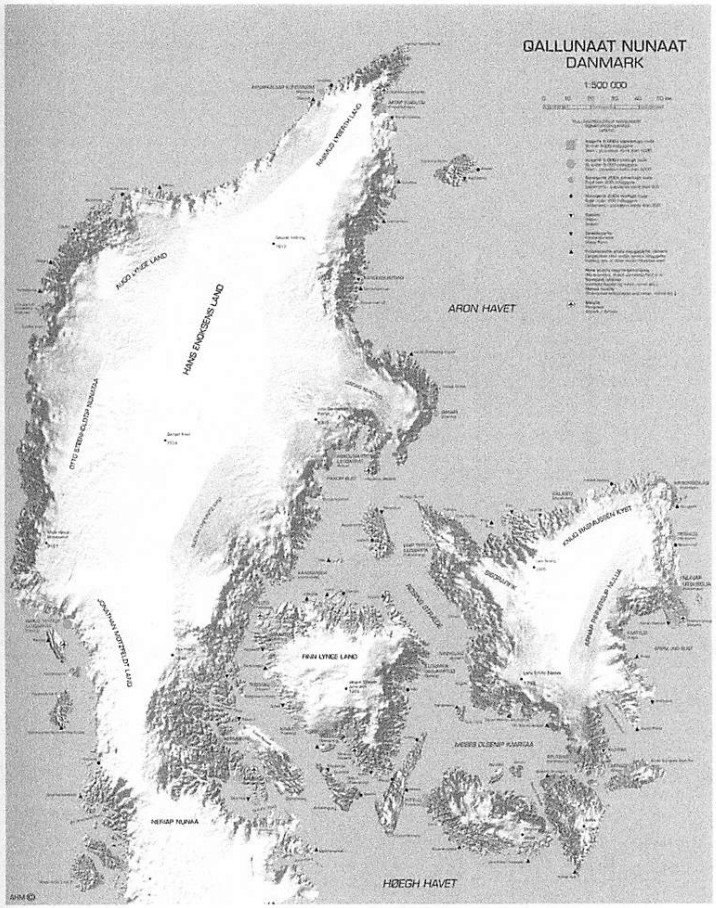


Plate 15 Asmund Havsteen-Mikkelsen and Inuk Silis Høegh, *Qallunaat Nunaat / Denmark* (2004).

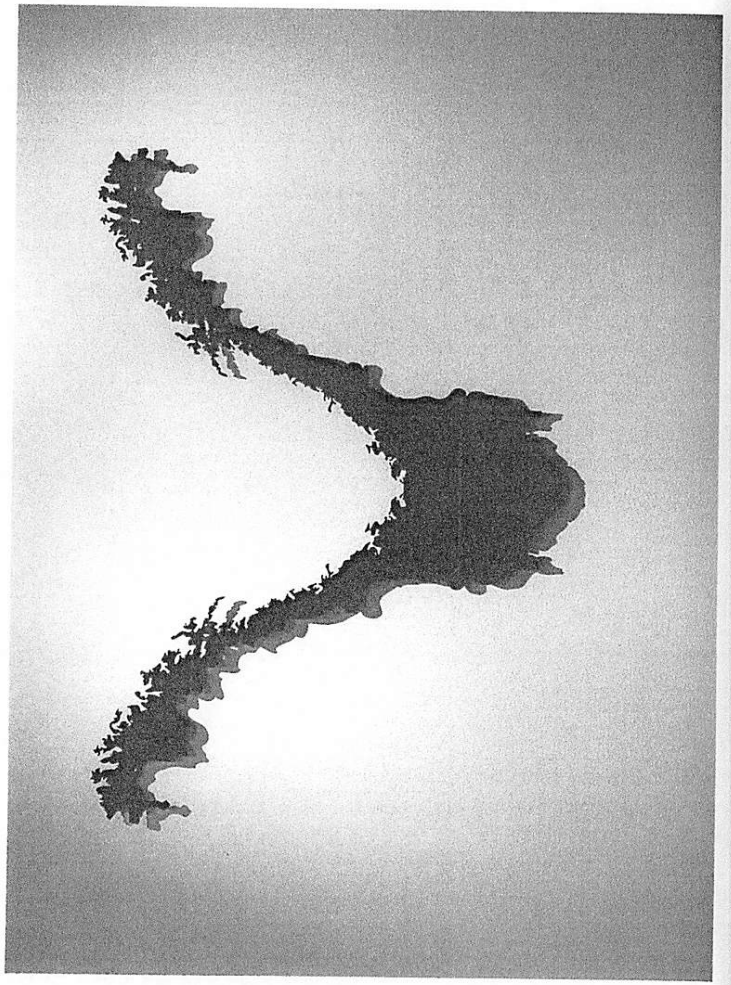


Plate 16 Tomas Ramberg, *Norschach* (2006).

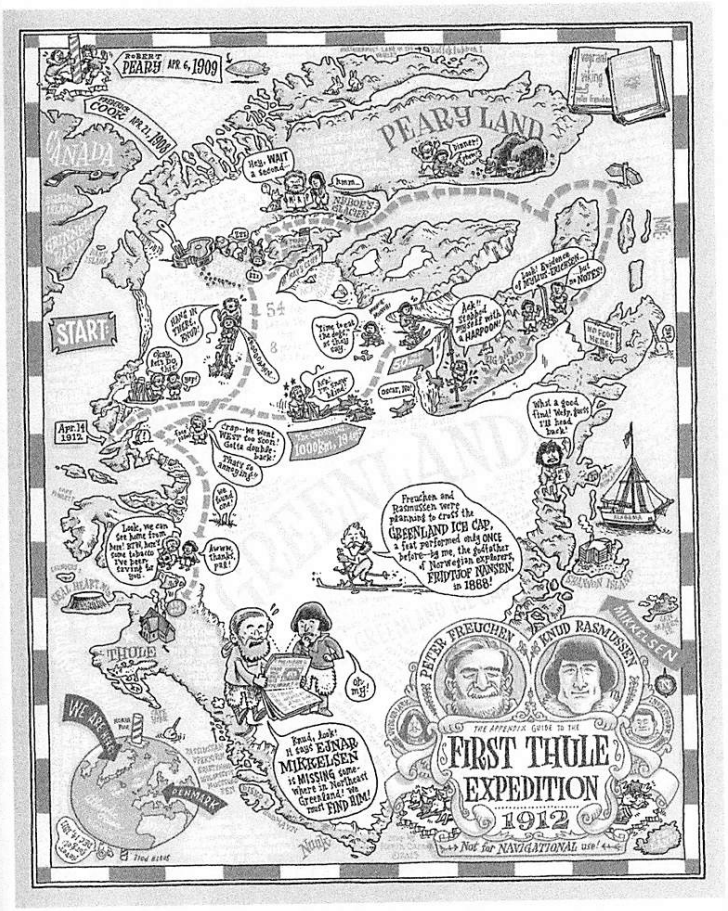


Plate 17 Kevin Cannon, The Appendix *Guide to the First Thule Expedition 1912*, in *The Appendix* 2 (2): 159 (2013).

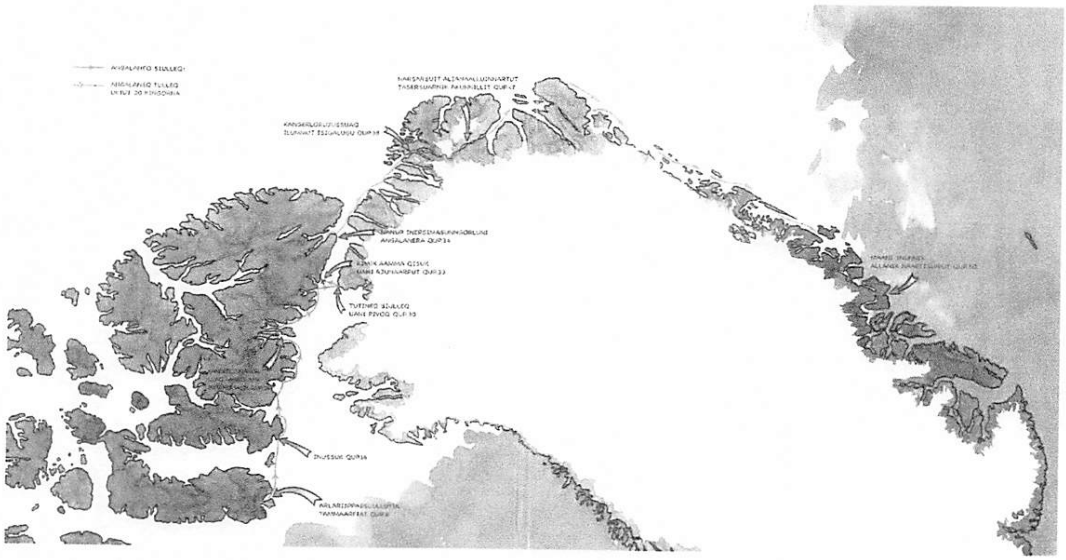


Plate 18 Remapping Greenland. Nuka K. Godtfredsen, map inside the cover of *Tutineq siulleq* (Ilinniusiorfik, 2009).

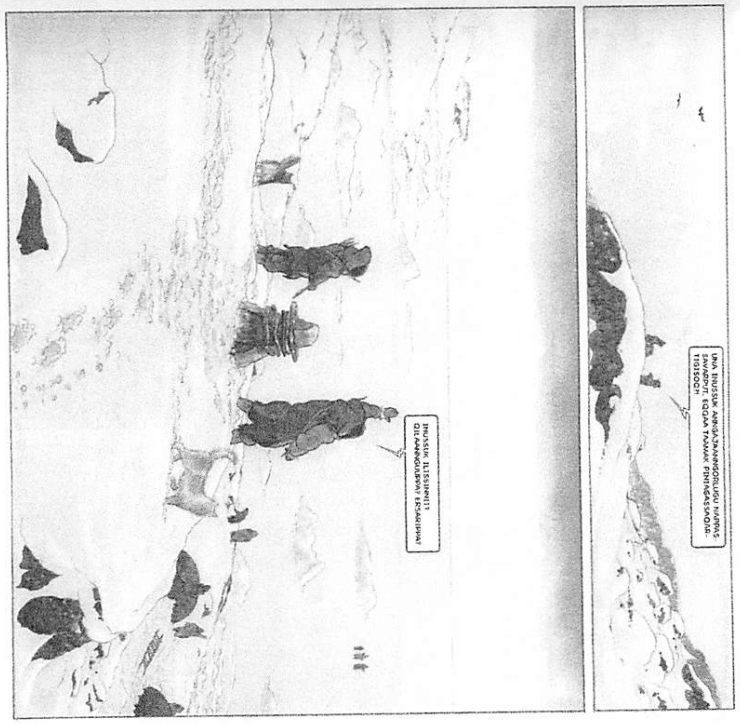


Plate 19 Marking and inscribing the land. Nuka K. Godtfredsen, two panels from *Tutineq siulleq* (Ilinniusiorfik, 2009), p. 16.

Plate 20 Multiple planes of existence. Tony Romito and Jeremy D. Mohler, three panels from 'Siku', in *Moonshot: The Indigenous Comics Collection*, Volume 1 (Inhabit Education Books, 2015), p. 103.

Plate 21 Mapping layered realities. Rachel and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley, panel from 'Rosie', in *This Place: 150 Years Retold* (Highwater Press, 2019), p. 122.

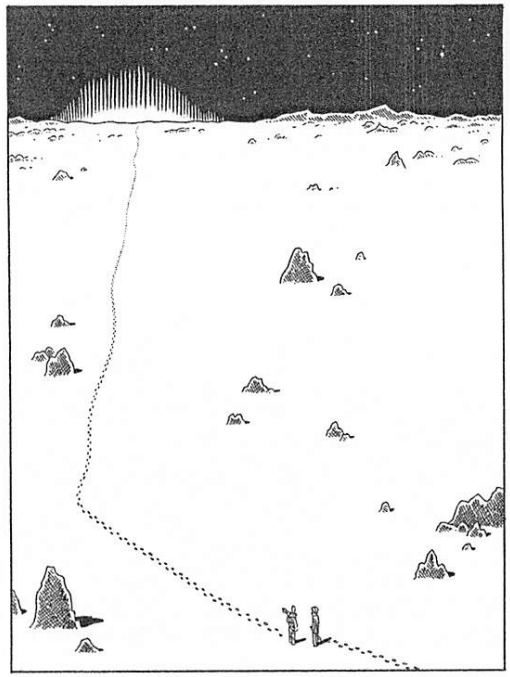
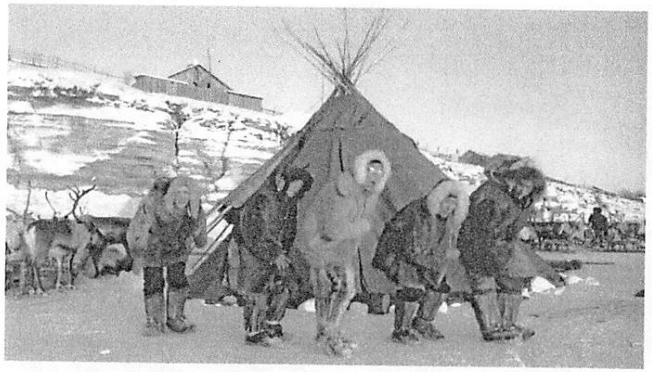
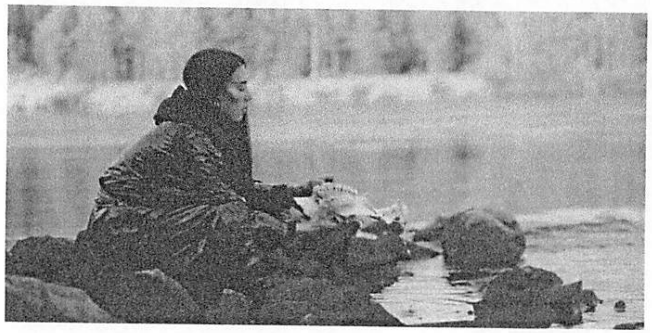


Plate 22 Black-and-white Arctic. Kevin Cannon, full-page panel from *Crater XV*





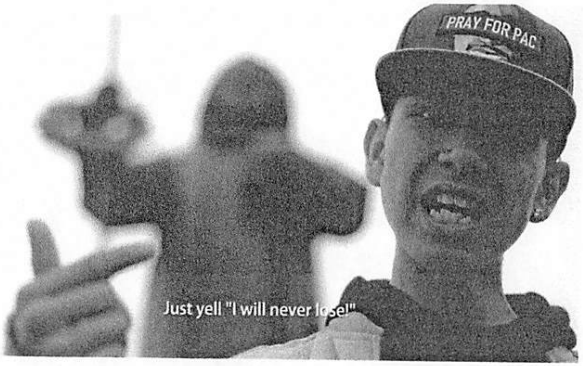


Plate 23 Top to bottom: stills from 'Khotu uollatara (Northern Brothers)' (Ajaal Adamov and Suus Bies Suus, 2015), 'Akta dig' (Maxida Märak and Martin

Plate 24 Navigating the land with inuksuit and cars. Top to bottom: stills from Hyper-T, 'Asiujunga (I'm Lost)' (2019) and 'Ikpigijatti (Your Feelings)' (2018).

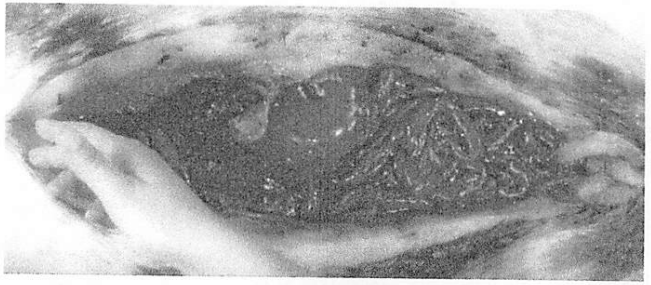


Plate 25. Stills from

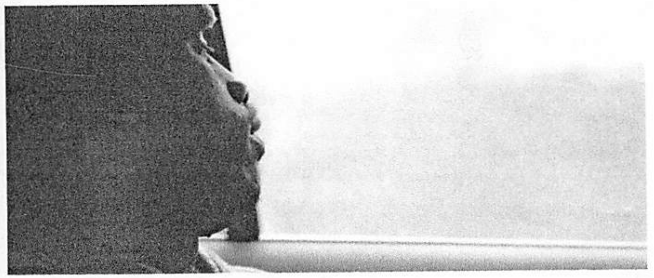
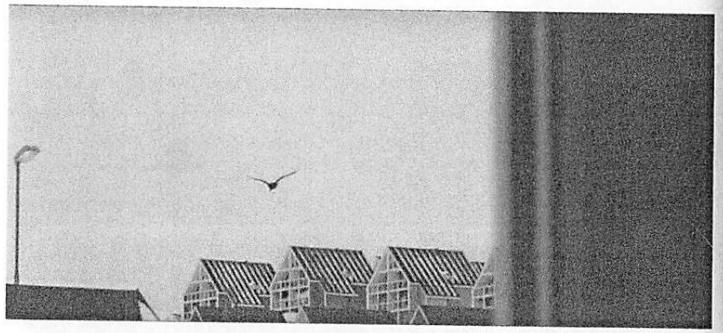


Plate 26. Mediated landscapes and migrant experiences. Stills from *alaskaI and*



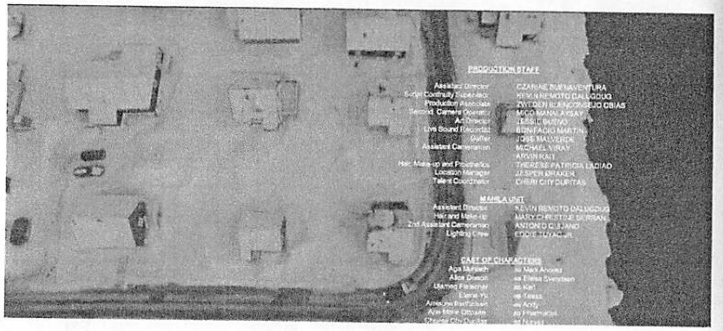


Plate 27 Stories of failed migration. Stills from *Nuuk* (Veronica Velasco, Philippines, 2019).

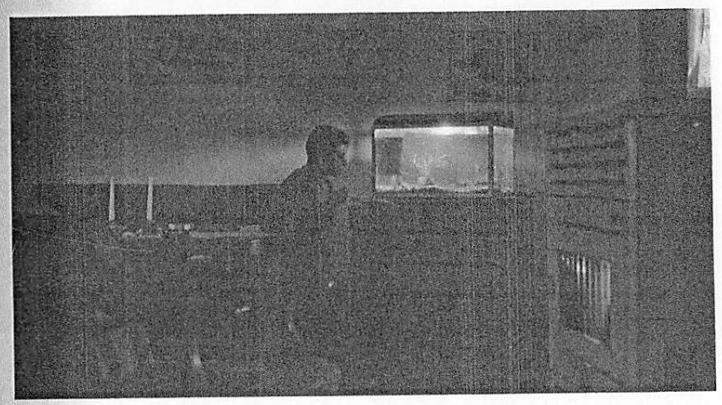
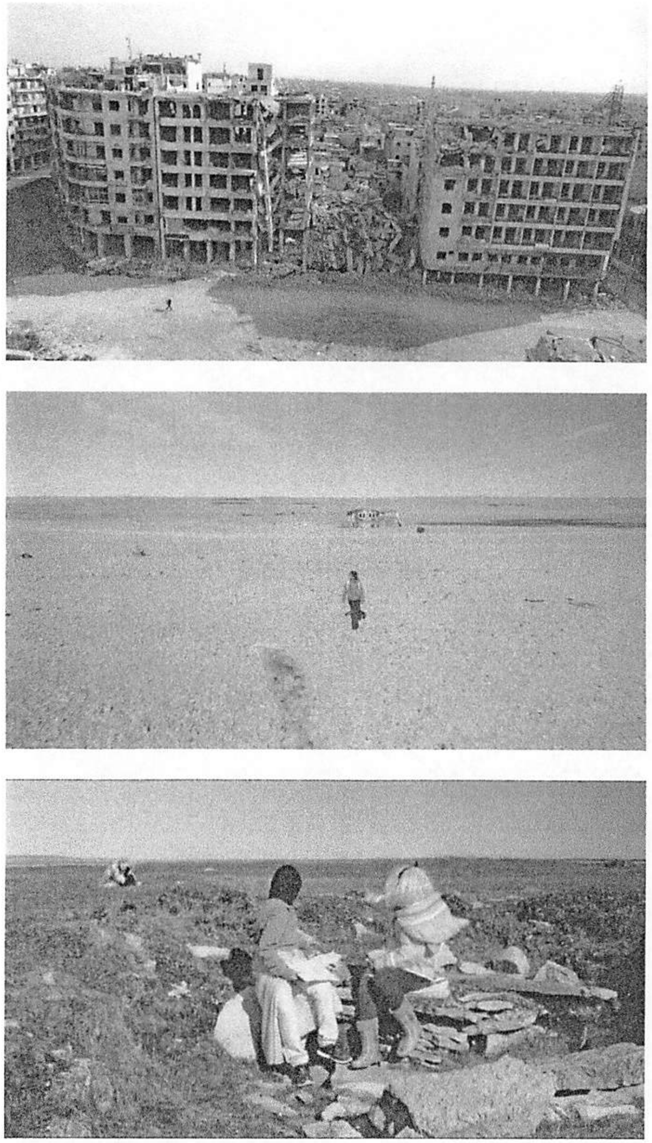


Plate 28 Planetary connections and mediated geographies. Stills from *Aquarium* (Yvonne Thomassen, Norway, 2018).



the Red's mythical act of name-giving – in turn referring us back to the Medieval Warm Period, a time when the climate of Greenland may have been comparable to or even warmer than today's. Finally, the map points to two different visions for Greenland's future: while the factories and the car point to an industrial future, the lush greenness of the map and the beach with two palm trees present Greenland as a tourist paradise.

In its playful imaginativeness, Holm's map does not aim to provide a singular coherent vision. Rather, it articulates an informal and personal cartography that imagines Greenland's future. The product of a collaborative creative process – high school students from Nuuk and Aasiaat illustrating a book of stories with different visions of Greenland in the near future – the map encourages cognitive activity and reflection: it is placed next to Bibi Lund Olsen's short story 'Mattussaq' ('Imprisoned', 2015), whose ending imagines an independent, warm, and prosperous future for Greenland where modernity and ancestral values comfortably coexist; by the end of the story, the narrator's hopeful visions from her youth have come true (see Chapter 4). The juxtaposition of map and short story thereby asks readers – especially young Greenlandic readers – to connect the literary cartography of the story with that of the map and generate their own mental cartographies. The map's decolonial impetus lies not only in the story's vision of an independent Greenland, but more importantly in the location of cartographic agency in the individual and the community.

While Holm's map images Greenland as entirely green, our second example, the 2004 map *Qallunaat Nunaat / Denmark* (Plate 15), created by Danish artist Asmund Havsteen-Mikkelsen in collaboration with Greenlandic artist Inuk Silis Høegh, reverses Danish colonialism and imagines Denmark as a Greenlandic colony covered by ice.[14] Part of a larger art project by Havsteen-Mikkelsen and Silis Høegh entitled Melting Barricades, the map lends itself to an exploration of cartography as decolonial process and practice. The map renames Denmark as 'Qallunaat Nunaat' ('land of white people/Danes') and remodels it in the image of Greenland. Danish places are given Greenlandic names, sometimes with the Danish names added in small print and brackets, inverting the conventions of colonial Danish maps of Greenland. In a conversation with one of the authors of this chapter, Havsteen-Mikkelsen recalls what gave him the initial idea: 'I was flying home from Nuuk … looking at an in-flight magazine … and I was looking … down at all these glaciers and then you see all their names … all these Danish kings. So I got the idea … because the whole project was to reverse power relations.'[15]

However, the map is more than a simple reversal of power relations and gains much of its decolonial energy from the ways it embeds embodied experience and personal (hi)stories. These emerge if we look at the map

not as a finished product, but as a site of dynamic and relational processes, interactions, and performances. Like Keviselie's *Sábmi*, this map is a folded place. Parts of it are accessible to anyone with some knowledge about Denmark and Greenland – such as the places named after well-known Greenlanders (e.g. 'Hans Enoksens Land'). Many place names, however, require knowledge of Kalaallisut. Humour is a recurring strategy in names like 'Aqagutaartut Illoqarfia (Århus)' ('town of hung-over people'), 'Nunap Utsussua (København)' ('the land's big vagina'), 'Aatap Ikiaqutai (Frederikshavn)' ('grandfather's undershirts'), or 'Unip Tipittup Illoqarfia (Kalundborg)' ('town of the stinking armpit'). These examples not only evoke and satirise colonial mapping/naming traditions that imagine conquered lands in terms of (usually female) bodies (think of Virginia) but also suggest that the cartographic mediation of geography is entangled with human bodies. For Havsteen-Mikkelsen, 'there is something about humour that makes you relativise your own position'; the fact that the place names invite laughter undermines the serious claims to authority of colonial cartographies and makes a decolonial statement. Finally, these place names are significant for thinking about the map as a site of collaboration: while Havsteen-Mikkelsen conceptualised and produced the map, he sought the help of a Greenlandic social worker in Copenhagen, who came up with most of the place names.

The map is also the result of collaboration and interaction in a different sense as many places are named after people and institutions that contributed to Melting Barricades. One example is Malik Høegh (Silis Høegh's uncle), the lead singer of the legendary Greenlandic band Sume, with whom Havsteen-Mikkelsen and Høegh spent time during the project in Nuuk. Accordingly, the part of the sea at the bottom of the map is named after the Høegh family to acknowledge the involvement of various Høeghs in the project. Another example are the names of art school students from Nuuk who participated as volunteers playing the part of soldiers in the project's staging of a campaign to create a Greenlandic army and a military bunker. In this way, the imaginary physical geography of the map also mediates a human geography consisting of both public figures and ordinary citizens, sometimes only mentioned with their first names, underscoring the personal dimension of the stories that shaped the map and the entire project.

Perhaps the most personal and at the same time relational fold of the multilayered map is its connection to Havsteen-Mikkelsen's family history. The artist's great-grandfather was the well-known polar explorer Ejnar Mikkelsen, whose expeditions to Greenland were entangled both with Danish efforts to consolidate its colonial authority over Greenland and with cartography, an important part of the 1932 East Greenland expedition of the Scoresbysund Committee led by Mikkelsen. Havsteen-Mikkelsen

became aware of his family's implication in Danish colonialism when writing a historical pamphlet for the North Atlantic House in Copenhagen in 2003. However, 'all [his] critical remarks about Danish colonialism were edited out'. It was at the North Atlantic House that he met Silis Høegh, which led to the two artists planning Melting Barricades, which Havsteen-Mikkelsen viewed as both a form of 'atonement' for his family history and a response to the censoring of his pamphlet: declaring the invasion of the world and Denmark in Nuuk and Copenhagen 'created the conflict that I felt had been edited out' and 'commented on the militarisation of the world' at a time when the US had just invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, with Denmark participating in the Iraq War. The two artists thereby quite literally put Greenland on the map, both by pinning Greenlandic flags all over a world map and by creating *Denmark*.

Denmark emerges from various stories, histories, and relations that range from family history to global geopolitics. In addition to reversing Danish colonialism, it is a multidimensional map of individual and collective bodies that have made Greenland what it is today and continue to transform it. It reaches into the deep mythological and historical past with place names like 'Sassuma Arnaa' (the pan-Inuit goddess of the sea) and 'Independence I'/'Independence II' (the first Inuit cultures that reached Greenland several thousand years ago). The latter also point to possible futures, especially as they are situated right next to 'Namminersornerullutik Oqartussat' ('Home Rule'). The copresence of individuals, Greenlandic companies (e.g. the 'Air Greenland Fjord' in the Southwest), Greenlandic rock bands (such as 'Sume' and 'Chilly Friday', grouped on the Røsnæs Peninsula), older spelling variants (as in 'Kilivfak', a large legendary animal now spelled 'kiliffak'), and references to Inuit culture beyond Greenland (such as the Alaskan Yupik bank Pamyua) creates a plural and heterogeneous map that expands in time and space and opens up increasingly the more time one spends with it. Classifying the map as 'Indigenous' or 'non-Indigenous', furthermore, may make little sense: it is grounded in a web of collaboration that transcends the binary although the map itself was made by a Dane while, conversely, 'everybody wanted Inuk to be the one who made the artwork'. In more ways than one, the map emerges from relations and interactions; its cartographic mediation is constituted by a wide range of dynamic performances and processes.

Our discussion of *Denmark* as a decolonial map raises questions about what can be considered cartographic activity. As scholars of Indigenous cartographies have argued, mapping need – and should – not be restricted to Western conceptions. We therefore conclude this section with some reflections on mediations of geography that can be thought of as cartographic although they are even further removed from 'conventional' maps than

Denmark. In 2016, a Swiss journalist found a message in a bottle dating from 1997 in a remote fjord in East Greenland. It contained a brief account of the progress of the journey of four men who were rowing more than 800 km from Ittoqqortoormiit to Ammassalik (Tasiilaq). The excursion was one of many in a lifelong project of former Greenlandic Broadcasting Corporation (KNR) journalist Piitaaraq Brandt, who in 1958 began to circle the Greenlandic coast in sections without a motor – on skis, in a boat, and on dog sledge, sometimes alone and sometimes in the company of others. Over the years, Brandt managed to travel almost along the entire coast of Greenland, using largely Greenlandic materials and Greenlandic food. Even after a stroke in 2004 forced him to move about with the help of a rollator, he was soon back on his journeys, as he explained in 2016: 'In the summer of 2006, I was again travelling by boat, and I have been exploring the fjords of the West Coast until now.'[16] During the 1997 trip in East Greenland, Brandt and his companions left several messages in bottles along the coast, one of which was the one found by the Swiss journalist.

Brandt's journeys are a decolonial mapping project in that they produce and mediate geographical knowledge that differs from colonial modes of knowing and organising space. The cartographies they generate emerge from the body experiencing and traversing space over many years. Brandt is a well-known figure in Greenland, and his travels were followed attentively. They took place in the period of Greenland's gradual decolonisation and were co-financed by Home Rule. They played an important symbolic role in contributing to mental cartographies of reclaiming Greenland for Greenlanders by inscribing the body in space: 'He regretted that only foreign adventurers were travelling around and got to experience Greenland' (Andersen 2010, par. 1).[17] His travels were mediated in various ways, not only through the stories and accounts of his explorations that circulated in various channels in writing and film. In the summer of 2010, for instance, he took photos of summering places that were important in Greenlandic history (Andersen 2010, par. 5), which can be viewed as an activity of mapping and creating connections with precolonial Greenland. Brandt's journeys also affected conventional cartography in very concrete ways: thus, in 1991 he proposed the renaming of Kaffeklubben Ø ('coffee club island') off the north coast of Peary Land as Inuit Qeqertaat ('island of the Inuit/of humans'), which was subsequently 'authorised by the Greenland Place Name Committee' (Bennike and Shea 2019, 17). While the narrow Danish name, which dates from an expedition in the 1920s, refers to a coffee club at the University of Copenhagen (Kleivan 1996, 144), Brandt's inclusive name claims the island simultaneously for the Inuit and for all of humanity. The reclaiming of what was long considered the world's northernmost island for Greenland was also performed symbolically by the erecting of a

Greenlandic flag on an *inussuk* (cairn), a large image of which appears in a 1993 issue of the Greenlandic magazine *Tusagassiat* (published by KNI). The article in which the image is placed, written by Brandt, begins in the following way: 'Our land has not been circled yet by one person during a single generation' (1993, 16); he later adds that '[t]ravelling around the land is also an inspirational journey for a novel about the ancestors' immigration and settlement along the coasts' (1993, 18).[18] Brandt's embodied practice of space thus looks both back (retracing the movements of the ancestors) and forward (creating new spatial experiences and explorations led by Inuit).

Brandt's journeys and the objects, names, and stories they generated – including the journey of the message in a bottle across time and space – are part of a living cartography of Greenland that connects the time-space of the early Inuit with contemporary decolonial activity. His messages in bottles are cartographic in this sense: they are inscriptions of human activity in the land. Projects like Brandt's can thus make us recognise that mapping exists in other places than on paper. In an Arctic context, where dynamic and ephemeral maps, e.g. on sand, snow, and even in the air are part of Indigenous geographical knowledge (Rundstrom 1990, 157), this recognition can displace harmful assumptions about the supposed superiority of colonial ways of knowing. The idea of living decolonial cartographies also extends to the circulation of different forms of mapping in different media – for instance, the Ersersaaneq ('creating knowledge through images') project, led by Greenlandic graduate students in collaboration with the National Museum of Greenland, aims to free Greenlandic artefacts from the confining space of the museum (whether in Greenland or elsewhere) by creating 3D models that can be examined anywhere in the world. The website includes digital models of two of the Ammassalik maps that Danish explorer Gustav Holm acquired from a hunter named Kunit in 1885.[19] These portable wooden carvings 'could be flipped around as one followed the contours of the coast' (Harmsen 2018, par. 7); they 'would float if accidentally dropped from a boat and were both three-dimensional and tactile', and they 'could be read in the dark' (Lucchesi 2018, 14). There has been some disagreement over how exactly the maps were used, though it appears likely that they were used for both navigation and storytelling (Lucchesi 2018, 14; cf. Harmsen 2018).

The remediation of these maps in various forms, from a stamp issued by Post Greenland in 2000 to the Ersersaaneq models and the recent (failed) journey of a laser image of one of them to the moon as part of the MoonArk project, which aimed to send a portable museum of human knowledge and arts to the moon for future generations (Harmsen 2018, par. 14), further mobilises them. It extends Arctic geography far beyond Greenland by circulating objects that embodied dynamic cartographies in the first place: as

Ersersaaneq member Malu Fleischer explains, '[t]he goal here is to try and create a new way to for the public to view the Ammassalik maps that reflects their dynamic nature as three-dimensional objects' (quoted in Harmsen 2018, par. 12). Havsteen-Mikkelsen and Silis Hoegh's *Denmark*, too, has developed a life of its own: it was reproduced in part on a Greenlandic stamp in 2012, and recently served as the cover of a book on Greenlandic views of Denmark published in 2019 (Høiris, Marquardt, and Reimer 2019). According to Harmsen, 'in Inuit tradition, the act of making a map was frequently much more important than the finished map itself. The real map always exists in one's head' (2018, par. 11, based on Rundstrom 1990). Perhaps it is such a mobile and performative sense of cartography that will prove most effective in displacing the static orders of colonial cartography. Whether stimulated by the playful cartographic fantasy of a high school student, the personal and social narratives embedded in a map of Denmark as a Danish colony, or a message in a bottle whose writer travelled around the Greenlandic coast, the most important decolonial mapping takes place in the minds of the cartographers that we all are.

Non-Indigenous artists' perspectives on unmapping the North as mental/resource frontier

Paralleling Indigenous artists' use of the map form to challenge state imaginaries that marginalise Indigenous sovereignty and understandings of place, the map form also has been utilised by non-Indigenous artists to challenge statist visions that instrumentalise the North as a resource extraction frontier. The objectives of these non-Indigenous artists are sometimes different from those of Indigenous artists, and they often address different narratives. However, non-Indigenous artists, like their Indigenous counterparts, build their critiques by harnessing the map's unique powers to problematise assumed relations between constructions of the self and the nation, as well as the territory of land, water, air, and ice that links the two. As scholars of cartographic semiotics note, the map – by representing the state as an actual space with defined boundaries and a distinct shape – makes the 'imagined community' of the nation an apparent reality, while also legitimising the state that governs it and providing a means for an individual to locate oneself in that reality by finding one's place in the territory that the map represents (Anderson 1991; Winichakul 1997). Engaging with this power of the map form, counter-mapping artists use cartographic aesthetics to trouble this seemingly naturalised and timeless correspondence between nation, state, and self, leading to critical perspectives on both the unity of the territorial state and the essential nature of one's ties to that state (Wood 2010).

These uses of the map as artistic intervention are brought to bear by Norwegian artist Tomas Ramberg in his work *Norschach* (Plate 16). *Norschach* was displayed in Oslo in 2006 as part of Ramberg's solo exhibition *Jamais vu*, a multimedia commentary on the way that petroleum has come to define Norway and Norwegians since the 1970s.[20] As Ramberg recollected in an interview with the authors:

> It was a very rhetorical exhibition [and] kind of also personal in the sense that I was born in 1973. I had this revelation that my childhood was really taking place inside of the most aggressive kind of build out of the Norwegian oil industry, when it really got going in the early 70s, and into the 1980s also ... . Suddenly Norway was plugged into this global corporate supercapitalistic engine ... . And it hit me, like, 'Wow. This was Norway during my childhood, and I must have been deeply affected by it.' ... [So the exhibit was me] digging back into, like, what was my experience and how did it juxtapose with the experience of Norway during this era [as an emergent wealthy petrostate with high levels of wealth and consumption].[21]

Ramberg was further motivated by a high-profile lawsuit at the time, where some of the divers who had done pioneering work for the nascent North Sea oil industry were suing to recover damages for long-term disabilities. Coverage of this lawsuit, in particular, spurred Ramberg to consider the ways in which notions of selves, bodies, the nation, production, consumption, sacrifice, nature, and oil in Norway had become inexorably intertwined in just a few decades, to the point where, by the early twenty-first century, an artistic intervention was required to disentangle them. Thus, Ramberg titled the exhibition *Jamais vu*:

> *Jamais vu* is supposed to describe something that you're so enmeshed in that you cannot even see it. You just don't see it because you're so in it. So the idea was that we, at least in my generation, were so born into and enmeshed in this oil world that we couldn't see past it.[22]

In addition to *Norschach*, the exhibition featured a range of artistic creations: paintings using neoprene wet suits as canvases, 1970s-style travel posters featuring oil wells in swimming pools, a montage of the Royal Norwegian coat of arms with corporate logos and dripping oil. *Norschach* stood out, though, for its invocation of three unique elements: the map, the Rorschach inkblot, and the mirror. These elements were combined to intimate the depth to which oil had insinuated itself into the soul of Norway and the souls of Norwegians. A (Norwegian) viewer approaching *Norschach* would immediately recognise the references to both the map of Norway and the inkblot. Upon closer examination, one would see one's reflection in the glossy, black plexiglass, a mirror of spilled oil that reflects images of both the viewer and the image of the Norwegian

landmass. Through this double mirroring effect, where both the image of the nation and that of the viewer are overlaid in a psychologically charged montage, the viewer is invited to differentiate themselves from the images: the double image of the nation, the reflection of oneself, the mediating materiality of oil. Concurrently, however, the insistence of the mirroring suggests that individuation is not truly possible. As Ramberg describes:

> [The Rorschach blot] is basically a sign for introspection and psychoanalysis. It has a visual impact [because] the minute you start creating a symmetry, suddenly our minds start creating all of these references that link up with our psyche in a particular way ... . So the active ingredients in the *Norschach* piece would be that mirroring, pointing to a psychoanalytic kind of self-introspection. Also the map, as that points to all that you are, and there are all sorts of implications with mapping, to politics, culture, histories of territorial claims. Maps say that on a general level. And there's the glossy black plexiglass that looks like oil. It's a black mirror, and that communicates that it's about you and yourself. And the state. Because Norway is basically an oil state. There's no debate about it. It's a solid, complete oil state. And I'm trying to invite you to introspect about that and to acknowledge the full ramifications of being an oil state.[23]

By inviting viewers to insert their *projections* into the map – in the visual, cartographic, and psychological senses of the word *projection* – Ramberg invites them to reflect on the bodies and alternative futures that have been sacrificed in the making of the Norwegian petrostate.

Although Ramberg's original impetus was to give voice to the silent suffering of the early North Sea divers, the work's relevance continues today as Norway's strategy for development and, ultimately, national identity is linked to the opening of new resource frontiers in the Arctic offshore, and the closing off of alternative pathways (Steinberg and Kristoffersen 2018). Indeed, moving beyond the specific case of Norway, states with Arctic territory are increasingly promoting visions of the Arctic as part of 'nation-building' strategies that turn space and, by extension, citizens into vehicles for resource extraction. Ramberg's use of the map form raises critical questions about what 'we' – as nations and as individuals – become when our essence becomes defined by the resources we extract from the environment. In short, although it was conceived to speak to a specific moment in Norwegian economic history, fifteen years after its original production *Norschach* remains relevant. As a broader critique of Arctic resource imaginaries, it challenges the (re)constitution of the North as an economic and geopolitical space that expresses state power, and it draws our attention to the potential ecological and human sacrifices made in that process.

Conclusion: the decolonial significance of counter-mapping (in) the Arctic

The examples provided in this chapter – taken from visual art, mapping strategies, reversals of maps, and political visions of space – demonstrate the conflict that lies between the use of land and its geographical portrayal. If the entire Arctic can be seen as a colonial space, examples of cartographic reversal can be found among Indigenous peoples like the Inuit and the Sámi but also non-Indigenous people(s) who share the need for a reversal or a 'counter-mapping' perspective on Northern spaces. In her analysis of forest cartography and its effects on the Indigenous peoples of Kalimantan, Indonesia, Nancy Lee Peluso uses this term to describe such a strategy, which she sees as a way of reclaiming the techniques and methods of representation in order to reverse their political consequences (1995, 384) According to Hirt, these initiatives allow Indigenous peoples to strategically use maps, which are so frequently connected to colonial power, for their own benefit (2009, 171).

Therefore, it is not surprising to find such counter-mapping perspectives in different works and strategies all over the Arctic, a territory that was first seized by colonial powers through an almost abstract mapping conquest, with little or only basic knowledge of the land. The different peoples who live in this immense territory – most of them Indigenous – retained this ground knowledge, which is now re-emerging and counterbalancing the power of colonial mapping that has been used against them. In each of these cases, cartography functions as a both cultural and political tool.

Counter-mapping serves to reveal the consequences of power on the depictions of the land, the colonial erasure of cultures and connections, as well as the arbitrary nature of the planet's 'extremes', which vary according to where one places the 'centre'. It can also serve as a tool of negotiation for Indigenous people(s) in their efforts to reclaim the use of land. However, using the instrument of the oppressors against them does not restore an Indigenous perception of space and territory. It is tantamount to fighting on enemy soil, with the adversary's own weapons. Decolonial reversals also have their limitations, as Hirt notes:

> Over the last decades, counter-mapping has become a decisive strategy for Indigenous communities and organizations ... . However, this resistance and the struggle for emancipation have been primarily developed within the epistemological frameworks of Western mapping science and have lacked critical reflection about what Linda Tuhiwai Smith has described as the decolonization of Indigenous methodologies. (2012, 107)

According to Hirt, the reclaiming of colonial mapping tools thus carries the risk of an epistemological erasure of precolonial ways of relating to the land. However, this caveat does not diminish the extraordinary transformation that is currently underway in the Arctic, making way for a newfound awareness of the consequences of being viewed as the 'margin' in relation to a 'centre' across circumpolar cultures – Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. A colonial 'North' has been conceived by the 'South', and the Arctic is still largely controlled by the rest of the world, from political, cultural, conceptual, environmental, as well as linguistic standpoints. Hamelin called for a broader act of reversal that encompasses the counter-mapping initiatives presented here, which we can conceptualise in terms of a 'recomplexification':[24] 'The North ... appears to be a mere "periphery," thus responding to the southern ideology of "englobing," when in fact, the North is as ontological a realm as the South, and is equally self-defining' (1999, 19).

While the notion of counter-mapping may at times suggest reactions to colonial structures that nonetheless remain within the latter's frameworks, the decolonial Arctic cartographies we have discussed in this chapter are not simple reversals. Instead, some of them move beyond colonial cartographies altogether and expand the ways in which the circumpolar world is mediated and understood, orienting it away from the trajectories defined by colonial powers. Indeed, in Lucchesi's understanding of the practice, '[d]ecolonial mapping is liberatory in its freedom from norms or standards' (2018, 13). While 'ancestral mapping[] encompasses any mapping or cartographic praxes developed by Indigenous ancestors' and 'anticolonial mapping' means 'actively responding to and resisting colonial violence' (2018, 11), decolonial mapping is concerned with navigating multiple realities and moving beyond – rather than merely opposing – colonial violence: 'We survive on our own terms. We survive using any technology or materials we want. We are grounded in ancestral knowledge and unapologetically Indigenous, without holding ourselves to anyone's standards on what is traditional enough, modern enough, Indian enough, educated enough, or scientific enough' (2018, 12–13).

As such, the decolonial transformations of Arctic cartography discussed in this chapter should be viewed as an expansion of cartographic possibilities grounded in a plurality of spatial epistemologies, serving a range of cultural and political purposes. Using traditional Western maps, the Nunatop project revitalises Indigenous place names and transmits ancestral knowledge while also strengthening territorial sovereignty. Elle-Hánsa's maps similarly mark linguistic and spatial sovereignty while visualising the connectedness of Sámi homelands; they have provided inspiration to several generations of Sámi and put Sápmi on the map for global audiences. Decorating walls and worn on T-shirts across Greenland, Asmund Havstee-Mikkelsen and Inuk Silis Hoegh's *Denmark* inverts colonial cartographies but also maps

a sovereign Greenland through social relations and new forms of Danish–Greenlandic collaboration. Well-known throughout Greenland, Piitaaraq Brandt's 'cartography of the feet' demonstrates the sophistication of ancestral navigational practices while inscribing Indigenous activity in the land. Meanwhile, Tomas Ramberg's *Norschach* offers a cartographic oily mirror to Norwegians, interweaving mental and material spaces to make visible and artistically intervene in the destructive entwinement of human bodies and extractive industries in the modern petrostate.

As these examples show, decolonial mapping is not only about finished products but also – and more importantly – about cartographic processes that tell stories, imagine 'restorative justice', function as 'healing process[es]' (Lucchesi 2018, 14–15), and assert Indigenous political and cultural sovereignty. Defining the North on its own terms. Attempting to make way for its complexity to counter its historical simplification (see Chartier 2020, par. 41). Offering new perspectives on the circumpolar world and revealing perspectives that have been silenced. These are the underlying objectives of decolonial mapping in the Arctic.

Notes

1 While we focus on decolonial cartographies of Inuit and Sámi homelands, we acknowledge the diversity of Arctic Indigenous cultures and the rich plurality of mappings we cannot address in this chapter.
2 We thank Yannick Legault and Nay Theam for the research and synthesis work they conducted for this section of the chapter.
3 Translations from French in this chapter by Daniel Chartier.
4 A partial first version of the argument in this and the following paragraphs was presented by Daniel Chartier in French at a conference entitled 'Le Nord du Nord', held in Nancy, France, in 2018, and parts of this chapter build on Chartier, 'Renversements décoloniaux de la cartographie de l'Arctique' (2020).
5 Before the Cold War, the Canadian federal government had little to no presence in the Arctic, leaving the relationships with Inuit in the hands of trading companies and missionaries. Canada only began to show interest in the territory in the 1950s, when its sovereignty was called into question by neighbouring Arctic countries.
6 In Inuktitut, this term designates non-Inuit, especially white/European people.
7 Qumaq writes that only as late as 1964 did the Inuit become aware that they formed a territorial entity – Nunavik – determined by the relationship to an 'other', the 'South' (2009, 94, 104).
8 See www.nunatop.com.
9 Elle-Hánsa's Norwegian name is Hans Ragnar Mathisen; he is also known by his artist's name Keviselie (see Introduction).

10 Elle-Hánsa's cartographic art can be viewed on the artist's website (www.keviselie-hansragnarmathisen.net/33514843.html).
11 Interview with conducted by Hanna Guttorm and Britt Kramvig, August 2020.
12 See note 10.
13 *Allatta! 2040* can be purchased via the publisher's website (http://milik.gl/en/book/2040/).
14 A high-definition version of the map can be viewed on the website The Decolonial Atlas (https://decolonialatlas.wordpress.com/2016/03/16/danish-colonialism-reversed/).
15 Interview with Asmund Havsteen-Mikkelsen conducted by Johannes Riquet, 18 November 2020.
16 Interview with Piitaaraq Brandt conducted by Johannes Riquet, 2016.
17 Translation from Danish by Johannes Riquet.
18 Translation from Greenlandic by Johannes Riquet.
19 See https://sketchfab.com/ersersaaneq.
20 Images from *Jamais vu* can be viewed at www.tomasramberg.com/art-1#crude-oil/.
21 Interview with Thomas Ramberg conducted by Berit Kristoffersen and Philip Steinberg, 2020. During the 1970s and 1980s, Norwegian exploration was concentrated in the North Sea, and hence not strictly Arctic. By the time of Ramberg's exhibit, however, the Norwegian and Barents Seas were emerging as the frontier of the Norwegian oil economy, fusing Norway's oil imaginary with the historic role of the North as the aspirational essence of the Norwegian nation (Medby 2018).
22 See note 20.
23 See note 20.
24 This notion was developed in partnership with the Sámi and the Arctic Arts Summit, then headed by Maria Utsi, and has resulted in a multilingual publication (as of now, in 14 languages of the North and the Arctic), entitled in English *What Is the Imagined North? Ethical Principles* (Chartier 2018).

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8

Arctic comic books: Mapping circumpolar geographies panel by panel

Aviaq Fleischer, Scott MacKenzie, Johannes Riquet, and Anna Westerstahl Stenport

Since the start of the twenty-first century, there has been a global expansion of the aesthetic and narrative forms of visual storytelling through the comic book, the graphic novel, and animated moving images (see Chute 2017). The comic book/graphic novel form – in its global context – has evolved from an early emphasis on cartoons, satire, superheroes, genre fiction, or adventure stories depicting foreign lands to become aesthetically multifaceted, formally experimental, and often autobiographical. The genre's pedagogical impetus has transformed over time to engage multiple audiences while its use as a political vehicle for social justice activism has also increased. This is especially true with regard to the formal possibilities the genre offers for creating revisionist geographies and histories and imagining alternate futures. The potentials of the comic book and graphic novel to modulate and mediate different, divergent, and complementary spatio-temporal realms have become an increasingly strong aspect of the genre's success across languages, markets, and audiences. This is the case also for comics made in, about, or for the Arctic, with Indigenous artists, perspectives, and publics increasingly at the forefront.

This chapter introduces a contemporary Arctic mediated through the comic book form, examining Indigenous geographies and settler transformations of Southern imaginary geographies of the circumpolar North. It pays special attention to the emergence of Inuit artists and their collaborators in the twenty-first century. These changing geographical and graphic novel imaginaries allow for Indigenous writers, researchers, and artists to map their own territories and create popular, educational, and artistic imaginaries of the Arctic regions, using the specificity of the comic and graphic novel forms to do so. Moreover, the chapter is concerned with the medium-specificity of comics and graphic novels (the ease with which they can jump temporally and spatially) and their pedagogical specificity (the ease with which they can move across languages, their popularity with youth as a means of storytelling, their ability to distil complex ideas into a graphic form). The form, which 'taught' generations of children about the Arctic