

South of No North

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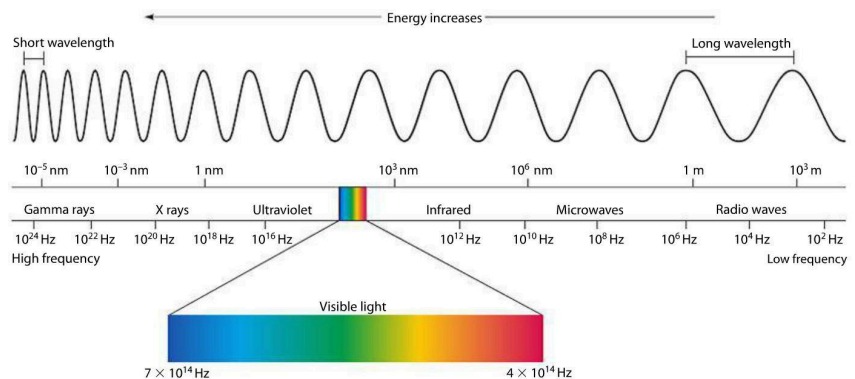
The title *South of No North* is borrowed from Charles Bukowski's attempt to describe aimless wanderings with cardinal directions, an experience shared by the geographers and the artist who put together their piece based on research in Arctic Sweden. It shows two perspectives of the Arctic cities, Luleå and Kiruna: one from the ground through photographs highlighting the ordinary built environment, and the other from the air through satellite images that capture electromagnetic ranges outside what is visible to the human eye.

Through capturing the everyday, the photographs seen here challenge the prevailing, romanticized stereotype of the Swedish North as an idyllic untapped wilderness roamed by depoliticized reindeer and their Sami herders. By focusing on everyday spaces and ordinary landscapes, photography can provide an alternative view that allows those unfamiliar with the landscape to both understand and question the social structures at play.

The traditional map offers geographical reference to the collection of photographs and outlines the extent of satellite images included in the display. Landsat satellite images are displayed using ratios of portions of the electromagnetic spectrum outside of the visible color spectrum. These remote sensing indices offer a surreal view of the ordinary through capturing elements of the landscape hidden to the naked eye. These images are built off the normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI) and the Ferrous Minerals Ratio (FM) which both use the shortwave infrared and infrared light reflectance of the earth's surface to determine specific environmental characteristics.

$$NDVI = \frac{\mu m_{(0.85-0.88)} - \mu m_{(0.64-0.67)}}{\mu m_{(0.85-0.88)} + \mu m_{(0.64-0.67)}}$$

$$FM = \frac{\mu m_{(1.57-1.65)}}{\mu m_{(0.85-0.88)}}$$



Both art and science are engaged with the constant challenge of capturing and describing the complexity and the true essence of our world. It is through blurring this epistemological border that we can see two elements of the light spectrum, operating at two different scales, enabling us to view the Arctic city as a unique site of influence, imaginaries, and environments, leading to conflicting visions of what the region is and what it should be.

