

Sketching across borders:

Borderscapes through a/r/tography as living inquiry

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Abstract

This article explores borderscapes as multilayered or displaced geopolitical and cultural borders through a/r/tography as living inquiry. Art making (via cartoons), arts-related research, a/r/tography, and border studies constitute a broad interdisciplinary framework for the study. The starting point is that a/r/tography as living inquiry provides an approach where interdisciplinarity can be seen more in terms of a “rupture where in absence, new courses of action unfold”, than as “a patchwork of different disciplines” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 898). Hence, the main research question asked is: What kinds of new actions and understandings develop with ruptures involving visual arts-related research and the borderscape notion featured in this project? The focus is on the cartoons that address borders from different perspectives. The a/r/tographic viewpoints of metaphor and metonymy, openings, and embodiment are used to analyze these cartoons, their making processes, and ruptures that are linked to them. Moreover, I use general vantage points such as playfulness and temporality (memory) in my analysis. What was learned from a/r/tography in this study is how an a/r/tographic viewpoint could help to specify the symbolic ruptures within the visual and theoretical understandings of borders. In

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addition, the idea of playful openings was developed here to overcome not only the visual ruptures in the cartoons, but also those ruptures that are caused by the limitations of memory. Consequently, four ruptures – symbolic, visual, internal, and temporal – were approached as new actions and understandings that help to reconsider the border theory. For instance, it became clearer how the idea of borderscape touches on shifts of perspectives (identities) besides border spaces and other border processes. Thus, the observations in this paper can be used in the future for developing the study of the diversity of the border studies conceptualizations. Furthermore, the article provides insights through which to rethink connections between arts, scholarly disciplines, learning, and living inquiry; inward and outwards, as well as back and forth in time.

Keywords: a/r/tography, borders, borderscape, comics, comics-based research, drawing, metaphor, rupture

Introduction

In this article, I explore borders through the perspective of a/r/tography as living inquiry. The discussion bases on my work where I combine artmaking (i.e. comic-making) with the study of the complexities of geopolitical and cultural borders. Historically speaking, a/r/tography and arts-related research, similar to border studies, rest on interdisciplinary backgrounds. A/r/tography links to educational studies, arts therapy, and anthropology (see Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 20; Leavy, 2012, pp. 6–7), while border studies descend more from geography and political studies. Thus, its viewpoints vary from the geographical to the political, and from the cultural to the poetic-aesthetic (see Scott, 2020; Rosello & Wolfe, 2017; Kurki, 2014; Schimanski, 2006). Of course, such subject areas as the symbolism of borders as well as geography and spatiality are also addressed in a/r/tographic contexts (see Sinner, 2017; MacDonald & Moss, 2015; Carter, 2014; Bickel, 2012; Hannigan, 2012).



Figure 1. At the border. One of my early drawings on the topic of borders. © Kari Korolainen 2018.

Points of Departure and the research question

What interests me the most in a/r/tography as a form of living inquiry is that how it promises to provide “[...] an understanding of interdisciplinarity not as a patchwork of different disciplines and methodologies but as a loss, a shift, or a rupture where in absence, new courses of action unfold” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 898). Accordingly, and using Springgay et al. (2005) as my primary inspiration, I am interested in the viewpoints that a/r/tography provides for thinking of – and with – ruptures in arts-related border research. Thus, the aim in this paper is to explore what kinds of new actions and understandings develop with ruptures involving visual arts-related research as well as the borderscape notion in this project.

The starting point from a border studies stance

From a border theory stance, the starting point is that “[...] the power of borders emerges not only from their institutional and legal nature but also from their symbolic and identity-forming significance” (Scott, 2020, p. 5). I am interested in the symbolic power of borders, from learning and experience stances. My work links particularly to the discussions about *borderscapes* in that borders are approached as “multilayered spaces” that involve “[...] making and remaking of different forms of border space

[...]” (Perera, 2007, p. 206). It follows that I understand the term “borderscapes” in a sense that border spaces could be in a state of progress in reflection of these symbolic terms.

Nowadays, for instance, the viewpoints of sociopolitical and cultural in/excluding processes are vividly discussed within the border studies framework (see Krichker, 2021; Nyman, 2021, pp. 189–191; Dell’Agnese & Amilhat Szary, 2015, pp. 4–5; Brambilla, 2015). Taking into consideration the objective of this paper, it is sufficient to mention that these processes are also broadly discussed from literary representation (Nyman, 2021) and from sonic (Nyman, 2019) stances, as well as from the viewpoint of the visual representations of borderscapes in the EU heritage narratives (Turunen, 2021), or when exploring “heritage as bordering” (Andersen & Prokkola, 2021), just to mention a few examples.

The discussion in this paper developed over the process of considering what a/r/tography has to offer for approaching the powers of borders and their interdisciplinary study. In addition, I have been broadly interested in what comprises recognizability within border-related processes. One of the underlying questions in my project at its early stage was to consider how borders are comprehensible. Figure 2 is included in this article to illustrate how I previously approached the topic of the comprehensibility of borders in 2018.

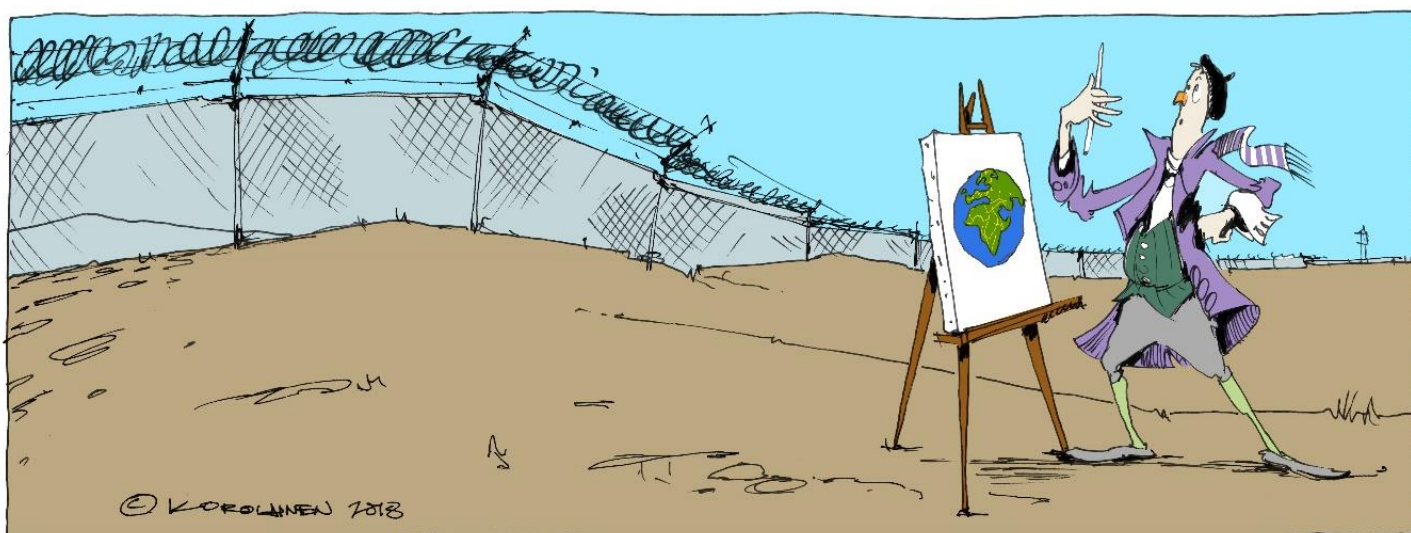


Figure 2. A Border Artist? © Kari Korolainen 2018.

The figure (or creature) in this cartoon is a caricature of an artist who is painting a border fence. However, the artwork in the easel depicts the globe from afar. On closer inspection, one can observe the thin yellow border lines on the surface of the globe. Accordingly, the cartoon raises questions as to why the artist is interpreting the border this way? More generally, what is an artist's role in comprehending, mapping, creating, or perhaps dismantling borders? The cartoon in Figure 2 belongs to a series of cartoons that I created in 2018, and are discussed in one of my earlier articles that touches on the topic of the visibility of borders (see Korolainen, 2020). The idea in this article is to get deeper into the symbolic aspects of multilayered and displaced border spaces, especially, by means of reaching out toward a/r/tography.

The starting point from the artistic and a/r/tographic stances

Professionally speaking, I consider myself firstly as a researcher and secondly as a visual artist, or more specifically, a comic-maker. This is to say, for the sake of transparency, that I do not consider myself as an a/r/tographer, strictly speaking. Rather, what drove me in this direction, is a curiosity of learning more about a/r/tography, also in terms of trying it out in practice. Therefore, I chose to use Springgay et al.'s article (2005) as my primary inspiration. Moreover, my work links to *arts-related research* (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014; for *arts based research* see Barone & Eisner, 2012), and to *comics-based research* (see Rainford, 2021; Kuttner et al., 2018; McCloud, 1994). Accordingly, my general point of departure is: "Arts based research is an effort to extend beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication in order to express meanings that otherwise would be ineffable" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 1). In this paper, the constraints of textual discursive communication are especially considered.

A more specific starting point is that the visual style in my artworks is regularly narrative rather than expressionistic or abstract. At least partly, this is due to my long-time interest in "old-style" cartoons. Hence, it is not to undermine other visual styles in any way. In addition, I believe, leaning on Sadowski-Smith (2008, pp. 2–3), that fiction can help us to create "alternative visions" of borders in the research context. Taking into consideration the interdisciplinary background in my work, this is an important notion not only methodologically, but also politically.

Research question

I mentioned at the beginning that in a/r/tography, instead of a multidisciplinary "patchwork", ruptures are central "[...] where in absence, new courses of action

unfold” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 898). In my work, the focal aspect emerging from this stance is that “[...] living inquiry is an embodied encounter constituted through visual and textual *understandings and experiences* rather than mere visual and textual *representations*” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 902). Following this line of thinking, my examples in this paper serve as a route to discuss the embodied experiences of ruptures in my work, and not only in terms of what I think my cartoon represents. However, the visual styles that I emphasize in my artistic work involve understandings and experiences that can be difficult to grasp textually. What motivates me to address this topic is to think how to write of – and with – these ruptures constructively. Therefore, the main research question is: *What kinds of new actions and understandings develop with ruptures involving the visual arts-related research as well as the borderscape notion in this project?*

To specify these ruptures and new understandings illuminatingly, I delimit my analysis only on certain a/r/tographic standpoints. Accordingly, “living inquiry” comprises the general framework, while “metaphor and metonymy”, “openings”, and “embodiment” serve as more specific viewpoints for my discussion (see Springgay et al., 2005). I analyze the interplay of these notions through an idea: “There is both a loss of meaning and simultaneously a realization of it, invoking the presence of what it is not, and also what it might become” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 905). This is at the core of my analysis to approach the topic of rupture and the new actions and understandings from an a/r/tographic stance. In addition, I will reflect my analysis through perspectives that originate from elsewhere. Consequently, I will examine the “openings” through the “playful” means of doing research when using comics (Bartlett, 2012, p. 215). In the latter part of the paper, I discuss the embodiment from a temporal (memory) stance.

Living inquiry of lively borders

To start, let me briefly return to Figure 2 because this cartoon visually illustrates the a/r/tographic renderings of metaphor and metonymy. From this stance, the main point in Figure 2 is that the painting made by the artist-character invokes some other border meaning (globe) than is perceivable at the site (by the fence). To put it in other words, the artist in this cartoon uses a visual metaphor of the globe to interpret the scenery at the border fence in that “[...] one signifier takes the place of the other in the signifying chain [...]” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 904; see Farinella 2018, pp. 7–9). Moreover, “the doubling aspect of metaphor” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 905) is

apparent as the painting in the easel invokes or realizes borders from the bird's-eye view (top-down perspective). It is possible to understand this in terms of the openings in that borders do not seem to restrict the artist, at least in their imagination and artistic work. In this sense, the artwork in the easel would invoke a possibility to see "alternative visions" of borders (see Sadowski-Smith, 2008). However, it is possible to interpret Figure 2 alternatively, so that the cartoon depicts the world where borders have become so commonplace that even the artists paint them like any other landscapes.

From metaphoric to metonymic borderscape

I continue my discussion with a page from my sketchbook dated January 2022 to illustrate briefly how I started to approach the topic of borderscapes artistically in my project (see Figure 3). These sketches are one of my earliest interpretations of the notion "borderscape" in terms of border spaces as "multilayered spaces" (see Perera, 2007, p. 207). The sketchbook page includes sketches of someone looking through a chink in the curtains, or a border, and noticing their own rear. This motif comprises an interpretation of the notion that borders are not necessarily observable in "a specific space" (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2007, p. xxviii). The situation in the drawing can be understood as a metaphor for displaced borders.

Moreover, my drawings in Figure 3 could be interpreted through the simultaneous "loss" of meaning and a "realization" of a new action (or meaning) of border (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 905). For instance, the expressions of the characters illustrate the astonishment and a loss of meaning caused by the "displaced" border. It is possible that the characters in these sketches know what is happening, or that they have lost track of the situation they are facing. In the latter case, however, it is possible to ask what action or meaning is simultaneously realized? If the character does not know what is going on, then how there could there be explicit realizations of new actions or meanings? Instead, the border would only limit the action, and I understand this so that there is a symbolic rupture at the heart of my sketch, similar to the one at the heart of the borderscape notion.

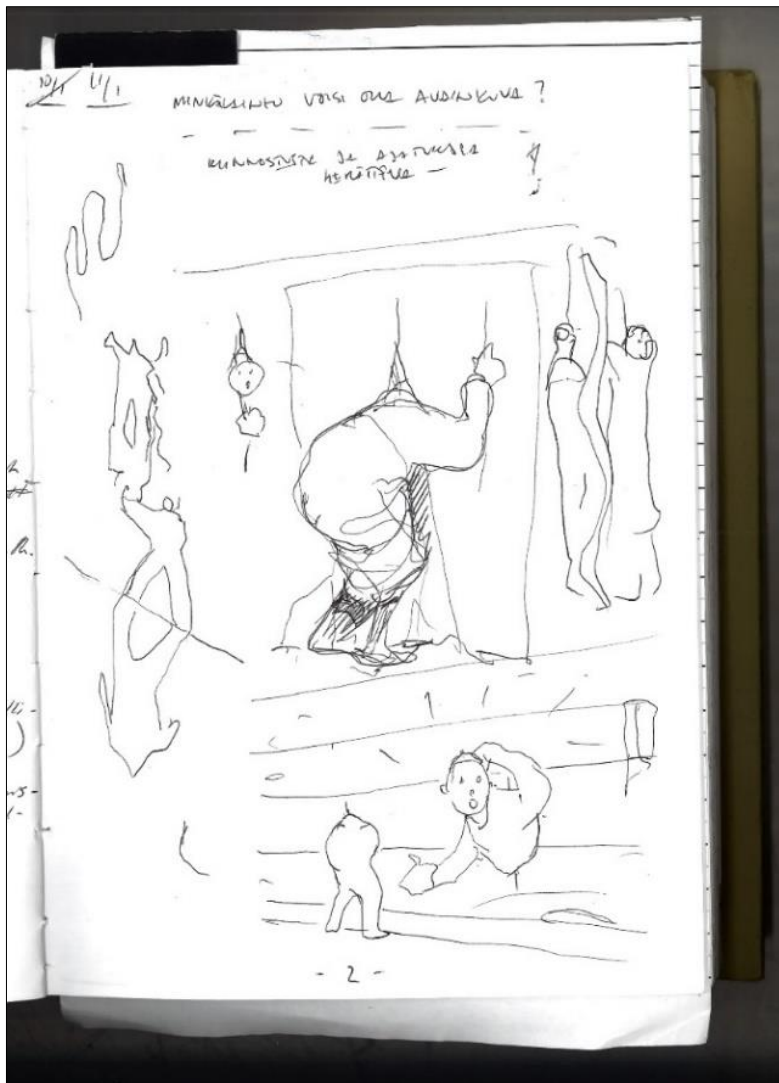


Figure 3. Sketches for the Project. Jan 11, 2022. © Kari Korolainen 2022.

Furthermore, the a/r/tographic conceptions above enable the analysis to move from the visual analysis to other directions, and from the symbolic ruptures to new actions. I mean that the realization of new actions and meanings occurred in this case in a sense that these sketches helped me to grasp the metonymical meaning potential of the borderscape concept. To be more specific, the a/r/tographic concepts and considerations of this drawing especially helped me to understand how this sketch captures the metonymical idea of a displaced border. Even though it seems that I formerly managed to capture this idea visually, I have not found the words to summarize it textually until now. This is an example of how the artistic work in my case occasionally extends, in good and bad ways, “beyond the limiting constraints of

discursive communication” (see Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 1). For instance, when understood in a/r/tographic terms: “Metonymical meaning is not intended to close spaces with singular interpretations but instead, allow for the ambiguity of meaning to shift in space and time” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 904). In my opinion, this is exactly what the notion of borderscape is about, but it does not mean that it would be easy to textually grasp this shifting ambiguity. This is featured in the next case:



Figure 4. A Borderless Border Drawing: “Border(e)scapes.” © Kari Korolainen 2022.

I continued with the sketches in Figure 3 at the beginning of my project, and Figure 4 is the finalized artwork from this stance. The idea was to use this image in my project poster, and the drawing was later published on my project website. The image in Figure 3, as well as a few other sketches are published on my project website under the subtitle *Sketches*.²

I already mentioned that living inquiry is not so much about visual and textual representations, as it is about understandings and experiences (see Springgay et al., 2005, p. 902). Of course, I have not experienced anything like what the characters for instance in Figures 1, 3, and 4 go through in those fictional scenes. However, I was

² see <https://uefconnect.uef.fi/en/group/borderscapes-within-folklore/>

able to do sketches of this kind because comics involve “the ability to show what cannot be seen by normal human vision” (Kuttner et al., 2018, p. 406). This is personally perhaps one of the most captivating reasons for using comics in the research context in the first place. By way of the cartoons in this article, I was able to imagine for instance the amazement caused by this (not so ordinary) existential situation. Thus, these artworks illustrate how I chose to emphasize ruptures instead of patchworks when interpreting the idea of displaced and multilayered border space.

Openings from the viewpoint of playfulness

Above, I have argued that the metonymic ruptures emphasized in *a/r/tography* bear a resemblance to the metonymic ruptures within the borderscape theory. In the following, my analysis will proceed to exploring this observation from the stance of how borderscapes can be seen from the *a/r/tographic* rendering of “opening”: “There are openings like holes worn with time, reflecting the fragility and temporality of meaning. Other openings are cut deliberately and act as invitations to enter into and look through, offering new views and perceptions, encouraging dislocations and disruptions.” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 906)

As discussed above, the notion of borderscape which I introduced in the beginning of the paper suggests that borders are not typically regular in their form, nor are they located in regular spaces. In the following, I approach this line of thinking through the notion that comics provide access to “playful” means of conducting and communicating research (Bartlett, 2012, p. 215). In particular, I argue that the *a/r/tographic* openings could be seen in terms of playfulness within the comic-based research context.

The scene in Figure 4 is somewhat unusual or “playful” in that there is an empty space between the rear (on the left) and the front part (on the right) of the creature. Another aspect of playfulness is the pun in the title *A Borderless Border Drawing: “Border(e)scapes”*. Firstly, there would be an inconsistency within such a border-drawing that does not include a border in the first place. This, of course, refers to the notion that within the borderscape thinking, borders are not necessarily located in their regular spaces. Secondly, the subtitle of the cartoon “*Border(e)scapes*” makes reference to the idea of breaking through borders. Hence, Figure 4 is an image of a breakthrough. When compared with Figures 2 and 3, the playfulness of Figure 4 is highlighted because in addition to the wordplay, the visual focus is clearly on the creature whose body parts are (playfully) at a distance from each other. In other

words, lack of visual background elements directs the focus to this character and the distance between its rear and back parts.

To formulate this in a/r/tographic terms, instead of “fragile” openings, my approach in Figure 4 is to “deliberately” cut an opening in the middle of my drawing as well in the middle of the metonymic idea (of borderscape) that this drawing is based on (see Springgay et al., 2005, p. 906). Moreover, Figure 4 illustrates how “Loss can be visualized or imaged, for example a tear or a hole cut or worn into fabric. Loss is also metonymic, allowing knowledge to be split open, revealed, and ruptured.” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 905). For instance, the symbolic and visual losses are metonymic in Figure 4, as there are no visual elements referring to the surroundings. The situation that the character faces and its meaning potential are split open in this cartoon. However, this cut is not absolute because a few lines next to the creature suggest that it might be reaching out through some sort of soft substance like a chink in the curtains. Moreover, there are pieces of rubbish right next to the brush. However, the reference point of these details remains ambiguous. This is so as when making this drawing, I tried to seize the very moment when the creature notices – in surprise – its own rear part in the distance.

As I deliberately cut the visual elements around the split character in Figure 4, the interpretative contexts were opened at least in a sense that this cartoon can refer for instance to the notion of invisible borders in general (contrary to the ones in Figure 3). Therefore, it is possible to interpret the composition in Figure 4 in the sense that there might be an invisible border or a void in the creature’s conception of the self. Also, the amazement of the character is different from the sketches in Figure 3 because the puzzlement in Figure 4 lacks a referent point. I think of this simultaneously as a visual and an internal rupture.

The theoretical reach of this line of my thinking (learning) is manifested when Figure 4 is compared with such verbal metaphoric expressions of the borderscape as “[...] walls rise up out of oceans; queues are expected to form in the desert; visas lose their materiality [...]” (Perera, 2007, p. 205). In this quotation, borders do not seem to appear in presumably “regular” spaces and forms. Certainly Perera’s metaphors refer, albeit loosely, to certain surroundings – to the ocean, desert, and to visas. However, the realization of meaning potential is more specifically contextualized in Perera’s textual metaphors than in my figures. My aim in this paper is not to discuss these borderscape contexts, but to illustrate how the borderscape theory compounds

metonymic and metaphoric aspects. The discussion so far suggests that arts-related research, for instance in terms of playfulness, can be used for specifying these kinds of observations. What the a/r/tographic notion of openings adds to this, I would argue, is a conceptual framework that enables grasping the different directions of these symbolic entanglements. This is further illustrated in the following discussion.

Figure 4 possesses yet another playful feature of my artworks in the sense that the creature is a carnivalized character. The creature wears a colorful hat, which could be seen as a reference to *commedia dell'arte* or to clownery. Moreover, the creature looks at least partly like a rabbit. This in turn could refer to trickster figures such as the White Rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland*. Understood in this way, the playfulness of the image connects a/r/tographic and borderscape thinking. This is so, as the trickster figures are addressed in the discussions about border fiction (see Sadowski-Smith, 2008, p. 9). When thinking about Figure 4 from this perspective, it is possible to observe that this drawing is bizarre or playful, not only visually, but also to stand out from the scholarly discussions of borderscapes which it is based upon. In a/r/tographic terms, there is a loss of meaning and a symbolic rupture in that the sketch lacks explicit visual references to those specific border contexts that are addressed in border studies discussions. In addition, it seems that the character in Figure 4 is facing a void (or a border) within itself when brushing the surroundings (the contexts of its life). This guides my discussion closer to the issue of embodiment.

Embodiment

So far, my focus has been on the symbolic powers of borders and their directions. Thus, I have illustrated how there is a metonymical association between a/r/tography as living inquiry and the notion of borderscape. However, as mentioned in the beginning, symbolic and identity-forming concepts go hand in hand when the powers of borders are considered (Scott, 2020, p. 5). In my opinion, this matter is a linking viewpoint between a/r/tography and the borderscape notion, especially as a/r/tographic works “[...] are positioned and enacted as exchanges between text and art in ways that bring inquiry, identity, metaphor, interrogation and shared inquiry together” (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 114). In the following, this serves as a broad frame of reference to explore some identity-related or embodied perspectives that my drawings involve, particularly, when looked at through the borderscape discussion.

I produced the drawing in Figure 5 approximately around the same time as Figure 4, in January 2022 at the beginning of the project. The drawing portrays a crown-headed pike. It is titled “A Heavy Crown” because this cartoon relates to questions about where and under what surface symbolic and political power within the borderscape is manifested:

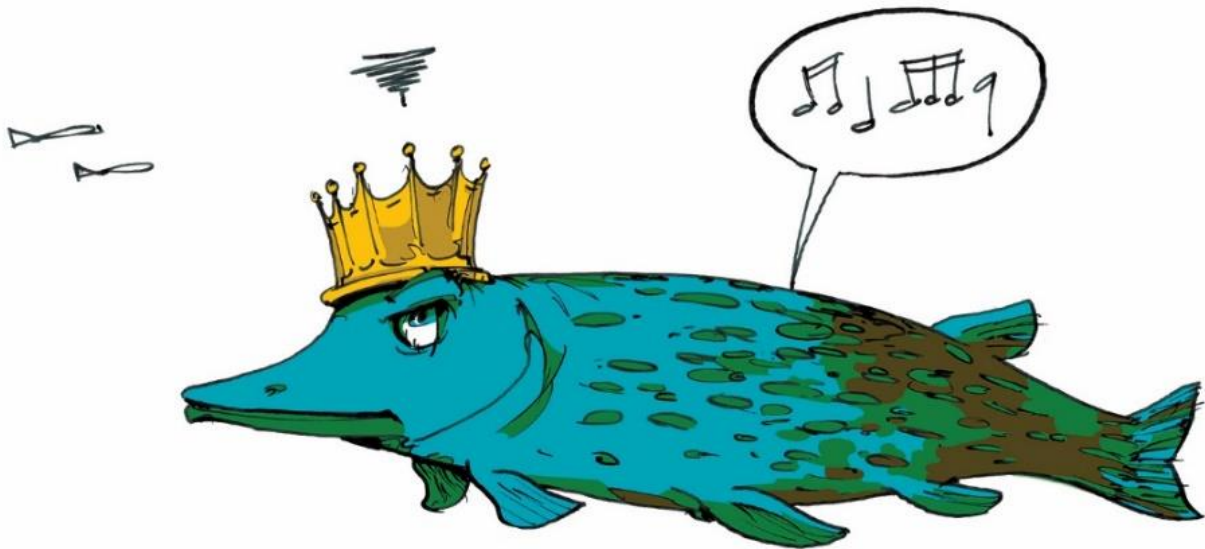


Figure 5. A Heavy Crown. (Original Version.) © Kari Korolainen 2022.

In this paper, Figure 5 is interpreted through the viewpoint of “a methodology of embodiment” that is “[...] never isolated in its activity but always engaged with the world” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 899). Hence, the pike drawing could symbolize changes such as climatic or geopolitical ones, which touch everyone, including the researcher-artists involved. Then again, the fish could symbolize the pressure of academic life, or other timely issues. At least, I can imagine myself inside the belly of the fish because at least occasionally I feel as if the turmoil of academia or the world seems to sometimes swallow me figuratively speaking.

However, the motivation to create this drawing was to think of borderscapes artistically. The starting point was that: “The borderscape is thus not contained in a specific space. The borderscape is recognizable not in a physical location but tangentially in struggles to clarify inclusion from exclusion” (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2007, p. xxviii). Accordingly, there are no specific visual elements that would explicitly refer to borders in Figure 5 (a symbolic rupture). Instead, it depicts the powers of borders that link more to inclusion and exclusion than to border fences for example.

If borders are displaced, or they can be like ‘walls that rise from the oceans’ as discussed above, who controls such borders, if anyone? What kinds of powers are involved with them – magical ones, perhaps? These kinds of questions are approached in my pike-drawing in Figure 5. For example, the crown (as a symbol of power) visually highlights power. In addition, it looks like the fish had just swallowed someone, and the speech balloon (and the notes inside it) hint that there are sounds coming out from the belly of the fish. Thus, one interpretation would be that the rulers, like the pike swallow the ruled, and control and border them. However, the drawing also enables an opposite interpretation as it looks as if the thing inside the belly is alive, and at least someone is making noise inside the fish’s belly. But is it the artist protesting alone, or perhaps there is a party going on? Regardless of specific conjectures, one way to interpret this drawing is that power is a double-sided issue.

Above, I illustrate that border metaphors and metonyms are not necessarily easy to grasp textually or visually. In this regard my discussion closes to the teaching side of a/r/tography – particularly, if we think that: “With every good learning experience, a place of difficulty causes us to attend to what matters” (Irwin, 2003, p. 76). Because I work mostly as a researcher-artist (and not as a full-time teacher), my perspective to this matter in this paper is one of learning. One reason for the challenges that have been touched on so far in this paper is no less than time itself.

Temporality

Figure 6 shows a part of a page of my sketchbook, which dates to the year 2014. This sketch sprang to mind when I was working with the pike-drawing in 2022. The starting point for my analysis in this case is that: “Through attention to memory, identity, autobiography, reflection, meditation, storytelling, interpretation, and/or representation, artists/researchers/teachers expose their living practices in evocative ways” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 903). For instance, I returned to the drawing in Figure 6 because making Figure 5 evoked a memory that I had earlier touched upon a visual motif where a fish is floating.

The visual elements in Figure 6 are sketches that link to a conference report where I tried out the comics-approach in a scholarly context for the first time (see Korolainen, 2016). The person in the cartoon, which could be a fictional trickster magician casting its spells, and the fish on the right, belong together as far as the visual composition is concerned.



Figure 6. A Detail from a Sketchbook. A Drawing on a Pike and a Character Holding its Hands Out Over It. © Kari Korolainen 2014.

The sketches on the left are separate drawings: the upper sketch depicts some kind of cube-shaped globe, while the lower one is an abstract motif, perhaps a result of my free-form doodling. Thus, there is only a loose (if any) connection to the schema of the conference, cultural studies and borders. Unfortunately, I cannot remember the details of my motivation to complete these kinds of drawings, nor I did create notes for these drawings at the time. The conference report does not clarify my motivations from this stance either (see Korolainen, 2016). But the right-hand side part of the drawing is worth considering in this article because this temporal rupture of meaning illustrates the a/r/tographic idea of the simultaneous loss of meaning and the

realization of new actions in time. When analyzing the drawing in Figure 6 from this perspective, there is a loss of the original meaning of the drawing (2014) as I now have only a dim recollection of these drawings and their subject matter. But the realization of new action within this loss is approached in the following discussion.

Even though the background or the surroundings are not depicted in detail in Figures 5 and 6, there are some visual details that hint that the main characters might be under water. Accordingly, in both sketches the visual “openings are cut deliberately” (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 906), but not in absolute terms. For instance, the fish-like characters in the background in Figure 5, and the bubbles and the words “Blbl, blbl” coming from the mouth of the human character in Figure 6, indicate that the scenes might indeed occur underwater.

Furthermore, the comparison of Figures 5 and 6 illustrates how the location of the self (of the ruled as well as the ruler) in relation to the border is different in these drawings. In Figure 5, the ruler (the pike) has internalized someone (the ruled one), while in the latter Figure 6, the pike-character seems to be an object of some magical powers, rather being the user of power. The point is that these different border perspectives (referring to identities) within these metaphors can come together in a/r/tographic analysis in the first place because I visually played with the pike characters, which are depicted on a plain background. This is so, as it is possible to think that the pike is floating in the air in Figure 5, and more precisely due to the lack of visual elements in the background. Moreover, the minute fish-like characters resemble airplanes (or bombs). In Figure 6, however, the location of the scene, and therefore the motif, is ambiguous because the human character stands oddly under the water.

The playful aspects of my drawings and their interpretation above helped me to overcome the restrictions of my memory, which in turn lead me to think of Figures 5 and 6 from the position of the shift in their perspectives, and also in the sense of the methodology of embodiment. For instance, when Figures 5 and 6 were compared, despite their temporal and schematic distance, the idea of a border that is not in “a specific space” (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2007, p. xxviii) became clearer. This comparison enabled us to understand it in terms of an issue regarding shifts in perspectives (and identities), instead of a patchwork of unexpected border spaces, sites, or places. My argument is that the ambiguities here guided me to think that the

playful shifts of the perspectives (and identities) comprise a common (playful) feature in these two drawings.

New insights reflected through the border theory

In this paper, I have discussed six artworks that originate from my comic-based research. My idea was merely to consider some permeable features that might involve such interdisciplinary work. Thus, I understand that several a/r/tographic or other related discussions (e.g. about identity) were omitted from this article. Especially, my idea was focus on how a/r/tographic viewpoints provide a means to think of my interdisciplinary arts-related research “not as a patchwork”, but more in terms of what kinds of “ruptures” lie behind new ideas and comprehensions (see Springgay et al., 2005). The main research question was: *What kinds of new actions and understandings develop with the ruptures involving visual arts-related research as well as the borderscape notion in this project?* My analytical focus was on metaphor and metonymy, as well as on openings through the viewpoint of playfulness. In the latter part of paper, I have discussed how the embodied and temporal sides of these matters can entangle together. The original motivation for drawing the images in this article was to feed my scholarly imagination in terms of the border related subject matter. So, what did I learn from a/r/tography as living inquiry in this study?

During the analysis, I emphasize how the borderscape notion refers to situations where a border is somehow multilayered or dislocated (Perera, 2007; Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2007). Figures 3, 4 and 5 originate from the early stages of my work, therefore these cartoons serve to clarify the ideas involved in the scholarly border discussions. At the beginning of the analysis, I approached Figure 3 through the a/r/tographic considerations, which helped me to realize how my drawings capture the metonymical idea of a displaced border. This observation links to *symbolic rupture*, which was the first rupture specified in my analysis. Formerly, I had not found words to address this aspect. But to put it in more analytical terms, this symbolic rupture existed in between the visuality of my cartoons and the conceptuality of the border theory, even though my drawings are in fact based on this theory. Accordingly, what I learned about and with a/r/tography as living inquiry is how it could help specify the metaphoric and metonymic aspects of the (border) drawings and theory. I learned that the metonymic ruptures emphasized in a/r/tography bear a resemblance to the metonymic ruptures seen within the

borderscape theory. Accordingly, to approach the arts-related research of borders from this stance would then form a new course of action.

Another rupture that I specified alongside this study links to visual matters and everyday perception. I used the viewpoints of openings and playfulness to illustrate how visual ruptures can be metonymic, especially if there are no visual elements referring to the surroundings per se. In addition, when analyzing Figure 4, the *a/r/tographic* rendering of “openings” helped me to observe how the meaning potential of the situation (which the creature faces in this cartoon) is split open artistically. Accordingly, what I learned from the *a/r/tographic* analysis was how *visual ruptures* such as a lack of visual elements (background) or cuts in composition (split characters) could encourage us to think new ways of approaching the border theory. In this case, the *a/r/tographic* viewpoint of openings helps to reach out to the different symbolic directions of displaced borders. Hence, my analysis showed how the power of a symbolic border cuts through different forms of visual experimentation. In this sense, my paper links to the notion of how: “Defying classifications, being betwixt and between positions, as well as the emotions, fears and wishes that are projected onto the border and the “Other” on the other side of the border, all belong to the sphere of human experiences” (Kurki, 2014, p. 1066). Thus, my reading of borderscape theory through the trickster and the pike figures and their bodily internalization was one (playful) means to reach out to the broader context of “human experiences”.

I continued my analysis in terms of embodiment, because I observed that an invisible border or void might exist in Figure 4 in the creature’s conception of the self. The third rupture I identify is therefore an *internal rupture*, seen as a lack of understanding oneself and the surroundings, for instance at the border. Here, I approached inclusion and exclusion in terms of perspectives, for instance, from the stance of embodied astonishment. I also illustrated how it differs when the characters in my drawings are considered: in Figures 3, 4, and 5, this astonishment concerns the embodied existential exclusion and alienation from within, while in Figures 1, 2, and 6, the astonishment is more external, and thus not explicitly embodied, but reflexive instead. In my examples, the power of the border symbols in the borderscape context links to the question of how the symbol is (or is not) internalized from the trickster point of view.

The latter part of the paper addressed these issues from the temporal aspects of the work. Consequently, I suggest that the fourth rupture is a *temporal rupture*. This was

analyzed when I approached Figures 5 and 6 through the viewpoint of memory. For instance, when I started to think of these two figures from the a/r/tographic stance in detail, I came up with an idea that these images in fact symbolize my attempts in this study to analyze borderscapes, its metaphors and its meaning potential through ruptures, and not through some preset methodology. I think this is so because a/r/tography enables the elaboration of such aspects as playfulness and memory.

The discussion in this article started from the question of interdisciplinarity. Accordingly, the analytical details and observations regarding these four ruptures – the symbolic, the visual, the internal, and the temporal – shed light on this side of the matter as well, because at the core of all these ruptures is the question of metaphor and metonymy. In this sense, my paper emphasizes the importance of taking metaphor and metonymy into consideration not only in the symbolic and the visual, but also in terms of the internal and temporal stances that are taken. The lesson of my paper is that to understand and use the symbolic, we need to be better equipped to deal with the personal matters, memory and other tricks that time plays with our lives. To put it in more general terms, this observation links to a/r/tographically oriented discussions in which the challenges of the border viewpoint in terms of “creating bridges across disciplines” (see Carter, 2014, p. 70) and the metaphor of the border (see MacDonald & Moss, 2015) is touched upon. Of course, the diversities of border languages and metaphors are also discussed in the border studies context, and it is acknowledged for example that the inquiry itself affects and expands the border “lexicon” (Konrad et al., 2019; see Scott, 2020, p. 3). Accordingly, the observations made in this article could be further elaborated on in the future, for instance, by considering these diverse lexicons through arts-related research, more exhaustively than has been done in this paper.

Furthermore, the academic (or artistic) “disciplinarity” is not only political, but also “a particular branch of learning or body of knowledge” (Moran, 2010, p. 2). For instance, Irit Rogoff considers this issue in a manner that links to the borderscapes theory:

What goes beyond the cataloguing of the hidden structures, the invisible powers, seductions, and numerous offenses we have been preoccupied with for so long? Beyond the processes of marking and making visible those who have been included and those who have been excluded? (Phelan & Rogoff, 2001, p. 34)

My artwork in this paper visually interprets how multiple perspectives to and with borders might look. This led me to think about inclusion and exclusion in terms of perspectives, for instance, through embodied astonishment or other perspectives that are one step beyond the marking of inclusion and exclusion. Of course, this is merely one example of how a/r/tography as living inquiry can provide conceptualizations to share the experiences regarding arts-related research. In this sense, however, this paper links to the aspiration to think of “the borders within us”, as well as “thought-propelling” ways to consider borders “as spaces of possibility” (see Scott, 2020, p. 20). In this light, sketching across borders is about keeping in sight not only the symbolic directions, but also their perspectives, as well those moments when they are lost.

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About the author

Dr. Kari Korolainen currently works as a senior researcher at the Karelian Institute (University of Eastern Finland). He is a folklore and cultural studies researcher, and cartoonist who is interested in the epistemological, political, and aesthetic aspects of culture and cultural traditions. His recent work combines research and art making, especially comic making. Schematically, the work touches on borders when studied through folklore. His former research interests range from the material and visual culture, folkloristic drawings, and disciplinary history of folklore studies, to the home decoration and artification. In addition, he has a degree in Fine Arts, and has worked as a graphic designer and visual artist, as well as an art teacher. Korolainen has published two graphic novels (2020 and 2024), which both link to his research.

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Artworks

The original artworks and sketches are in the possession of the author.

Figure 1. *At the border*. One of my early drawings on the topic of borders. © Kari Korolainen 2018.

Figure 2. *A Border Artist?* © Kari Korolainen 2018.

Figure 3. *Sketches for the Project*. Jan 11, 2022. © Kari Korolainen 2022.

Figure 4. *A Borderless Border Drawing: "Border(e)scapes."* © Kari Korolainen 2022.

Figure 5. *A Heavy Crown. (Original Version.)* © Kari Korolainen 2022.

Figure 6. *A Detail from a Sketchbook. A Drawing on a Pike and a Character Holding its Hands Out Over It*. 2014. © Kari Korolainen 2014.

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