Patryk Kurowski : Greetings from the middle of No*way

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Fotografický projekt se skládá z více než 200 pohlednic z geografického středu Norska, z městečka Brønnøysund a jeho okolí. Jeho cílem je reflexe nad tím, jak vznikají vizuální metafory turistických destinací.

Postcard as a Metaphor for a Place

The selection of postcards available in a local souvenir shop is shaped by a feedback process between the tourist and the shop, between supply and demand. By choosing images for postcards and selecting ready-made ones, photographers, graphic designers, postcard producers, and sellers decide which places, views, and perspectives the tourist can keep or send to someone. The final choice is made by the customer, who may choose based on aesthetics, feelings about the place, or even humor. Postcards that sell well are reprinted more often. As a result, more people will see, buy, keep, or send these popular images.

Setting aside the influence of other important media, this is how metaphors for different places have been shaped and reinforced. The image of the Statue of Liberty has become a metaphor for all of New York, the image of Big Ben has become a metaphor for London, the Eiffel Tower a metaphor for Paris, and Torghatten – a mountain with a hole through it – aspires to be a metaphor for Brønnøysund, a town in the geographical center of Norway.

Images on postcards contain a lie. They were taken by someone else, at a different time of day and year, in different weather, often from an inaccessible location. The camera mediated the view. The image was edited. Everyone involved wanted the place captured on the postcard to look its best. When buying a postcard, we adopt a perspective that is not our own. Even looking at postcards in the shop can shape our perception of a place. Returning to a bought and kept postcard can modify memories. Sending it to someone can create misleading impressions.

In my photography project, I propose various images from Brønnøysund and its surroundings to the viewer. My intention is not to show the truth about the place but to reflect on how visual metaphors of tourist destinations are shaped.