

# Space Program: Rare Earths



Isak Wisløff—05 My journey to [Vesta](#) Mission Control

Let us forget about our present political economy, for a *tad*, and concentrate on *hegemony*: the relations of *cultural* domination where the articulation of our action-range is at stake. Make no mistake: there are interested parties—both political and corporate—out there, who are interested in limiting, and even eliminating the potential for initiative/activism defining at this juncture.

We can define hegemony as the X-factor erasing the working-conditions of mining and assemblage in the digital sphere. That is, the X-factor at work when the working conditions are *documented* and *explained*, and that such documentation and explanation will act as a *substitute* for the reality of the working-conditions: realising a *swap* that makes their existence “liveable”.

It is possible to develop any degree of sufficient precision in showing how X works. However, X does not stop here. It wants the inhabitation, empathy and emotional connection with the *working conditions* by circulating photo and video-materials narrating them (while securing copy rights, of course). So that the actual *erasure* of the working conditions are matched by their virtual.

It is also possible to develop any degree of required precision to show the extent to which this is happening. In effect, that the representation of the working conditions is not helping. Because the people responsible are not interacted with—nor brought into conversation—or, alternatively, brought to trial. Our legal system is not likely to take on this challenge on its own.

So, what does it take to be specifically responsive—rather than globally responsible—in all that we do? The X-factor, here defined as hegemony, is decomposed into two: *how* it works ( $T_1$ ), and its *extent* ( $T_2$ ). Our present techno-culture affords this kind of accountability (though it may not always allow it). But it will emerge if we want to act specifically ( $T_0$ ) on hegemony.

That is, according to this formula—  $T_0 | X = T_1 + T_2$  i. That is, the *vectorial sum* between the operations documenting and explaining the strictly unacceptable, articulates together with imageries providing an emotional outlet for the same unacceptable conditions. These two elements—explanation and emotional outlet—are not separate: they form a single unit in a hegemonic compound X.

The initiative to counteract emulation, substitution and erasure is thus made to be through investigation: by screening, intercepting and framing till the required level of precision is reached, for the critique of hegemony to become sufficiently specific to allow criticality. That is, building up a potential until a critical threshold is reached, where an avalanche of *alternative action* defines.

Such course of action doesn't define by its degree of radicality, but by its local possibility and ability to move, adapt and redefine (cf, Nicolas Bourriaud's curatorial criticality discussed in [The radican](#) [2009]). The logic of the above equation is reaped from Arne Næss engagement with a site—[Tvergastein](#) ( $T_0$ )—how he built a cabin there ( $T_1$ ) the years he spent in it ( $T_2$ ).

The legacy of Arne Næss is suspended in this duality: on the one hand, it invites the kind of permanent inquiry—extending the self—while it, on the other hand, it is not readily accessible. The hegemonic gesture is to keep the cabin as a treasured isolate, while marketing tourism in the wider outdoors expanse around it: the precincts expanding from Ustaoset to mountain Hallingskarvet.

Hence the mix of debarring access and expanding involvement, as held in the equation above. An alternative line of action is to learn from the model, move on and apply it elsewhere. Which is the approach explored here. That is, making the vectorial sum of *path-finding* ( $T_1$ ) and *goal-seeking* ( $T_2$ ) explicit and insisting that it is site-specific, time-local and its work deeply connected.