Orange to green

The world I experienced around Ilulissat seemed to contain a surprising amount of **orange**. Perhaps not as much as the striking number of containers that populate Ilulissat, but disproportionate enough to capture my attention.

Let's start at the harbour, a busy place where small fishing boats flow in and out and slimy barges are moved back and forth over the heads of people, houses and boats. At this central place, I first noticed the colour **orange**; almost all fishermen wear large boots with **orange** toe tips, **green** quarters and an **orange** upper rim. In their boots, the **blue** trousers from their overalls disappear, which, next to the boots, seem to be the fishermen's unofficial uniform.

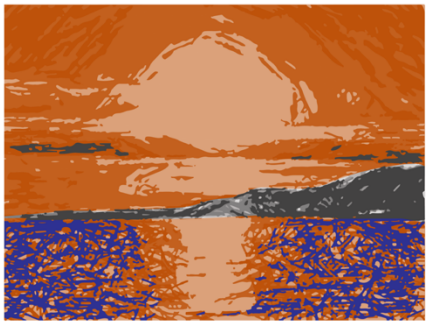
Me not being a fisherman, I did not wear boots with **orange** toe tips. Actually, none of my nine layers of clothes were **orange**, except for my **orange** waterproof work gloves. These can be found on every boat here and are anything but warm. I remember counting four and a half pairs of **orange** gloves when I first stepped on board, legs unsteady and feet slipping on icy steps while loading our scientific instruments on the aluminum boat. I am indeed not a fisherman. Instead of hunting for seal, I hunt for sediments and images of the sea floor. I am a collector. I am small in this overwhelming, **orange**-tinted world.

Our **blue** coats, the hoods pulled up over our eyebrows and the collars clamped around our lips to protect us from the rough sea winds, get covered more and more in the **grey** mud of the sediments that we bring up from the seafloor to the surface. The difference between our mud-coated jackets and the metal boat becomes smaller and smaller. Blending completely into the surroundings creates a link between the data collector and the data itself. Tubes full of mud suddenly become valuable, and so do pieces of paper on which **black** lines mark outlines of the seabed. Days with a lot of sediment cores – big catch – and little sea ice thus become 'good days' and the cake at home tastes all the better.

Based on photo of C. Oeschger

If the sea is **blue**, the land looks **orange**. Behind the colourful houses of the village starts a rough bush that changed from **green** to deep **orange** during our time here. Not only the plants are **orange**, but so are the rocks to which dozens of sled dogs are tied. It smells strongly of dead animals and fish.

In the aluminium boat, the sub-bottom profiler is ticking. It is the instrument with which we study the seabed and the thickness of the sediments that lay there. It is the heartbeat of an object that seems to have a will of its own - it does not like sea ice, nor travelling fast - and dictates the rhythm of our day.



When, at the end of the day, enough sediment cores have been collected and the sub-bottom profiler is allowed to rest, the colour **orange** reappears as the sun meets the horizon. The long sunset is mirrored in the sea, a reflection broken by icebergs and pieces of sea ice that float around like paper boats in a pond. The sunset continues as we step off the boat and it stretches over our return to the guesthouse until late at night when we sit together around a table dotted with coffee mugs and maps to discuss the next day's plans.

After the rising of the moon, an **orange** sickle hovering above the lights of the village, we are lucky to be spectators of the dancing northern lights. The bright **green** colours make me doubt the ***orange****ness* of this world, perhaps this world is rather **green**.