

# Double projection

Introduction by Maj Hasager

*"Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize, ignore and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief."*

Frantz Fanon (Black Skin, White Masks)

Two continents Africa and Europe are at play in Ditte Ejlerskovs exhibition My African Letter. Not as actual places, but as imaginary places and projections of desires through an ongoing correspondence between a European and an African dreamer, as Ejlerskov states it herself.

We, the audience, know Ditte Ejlerskov exists and that she is a Danish artist, and that somewhere in the world lives a person who either is Lawyer Amadi Omorose Azagba from the Republic of Benin or pretends to be this person out of reasons one can only speculate. What is more difficult to fathom is both protagonists' motifs behind the exchange, which Ejlerskov is insinuating to be a mutual exchange of dreams, which in the end become punctuated, as both protagonists conclude from a somewhat fictionalized perspective in writing.

This Double projection of desires, positions, power structures and meeting the Other from 1) the Eurocentric view and 2) the colonized perspective, creates a embarrassing sense – is it possible to imitate these perspectives as an artist in the post-colonial era? Is it exactly because of this romanticised notion of the Other – that it becomes visible that both parties have played a role – acted out over time, that the punctuated fiction creates a glimpse of humanity between two individuals?

Is the double projection, both of the image projected onto the Other and the self image of Ejlerskov and Azagba, projected onto the screens of their computers before pressing the send button? And could this be mirroring a condition of alienation between people within society? Is looking at yourself as a projection while at the same time projecting stereotypical images through writing onto someone you are not facing or maybe never have met then a re-colonization of the virtual space between Europe and Africa or does it go both ways – perpetuating the stereotypical images to gain something: in this matter money respectively a work of art?

Who do we, the audience, picture when thinking of Amadi Omorose Azagba? Ejlerskov questions our ability to face ourselves and our anticipations of the Other, by embracing and engaging in a position of calculated naivety, where she is playing along the lines and narratives of what most people would reject as spam email. By doing so she dismisses a political correctness, and is entering a minefield of hierarchies and structures where she can and will be questioned on her motif – she is experimenting with her privileges as a Scandinavian artist without ever leaving her safe haven in front of the computer and her own reflection.