

The Muse

As a Rihanna fan art project I was initially dragging from the web and imposing on to paparazzi pictures my studio time — thinking that was it. Today when my photos of the pop star are selected from the flood, printed, pinned to my studio wall - reread, repainted and hung in a show, there is no Rihanna flesh left in the artistic equation.

Also, lured to Barbados by an email scammer a few years back, I was drifting around in Rihanna's world looking for something. Something undefined. A connection to something? A myth? A muse? The scammer and I wrote many emails to each other. These letters shaped my journey, my field of interest and my muse – which I am now going to tell you about. All letters were published in a book and they also became a film before I turned my eyes back into the palette and my studio work.

One day, long after my dreamy Barbados expedition, a painting woke up and said: “Hi. You made me up, Ditte. I am no longer a representation of the pop star. I am a myth you created in your head.” Self-description..? I was in shock. But as I studied the painting (depicting who I thought was Rihanna) I immediately understood that I had painted a paparazzi-ish painting that had no direct coherence to an actual IRL happening. It was fantasy. “I am the echo of your own gaze,” the awakened muse told me. “Thus I must be the creator”, I concluded and began a search for reason in the relationships between artefact, maker, owner and user.

A crucial brick in the final creation of my muse was laid when I discovered the ruin of Paradise Beach Club in Barbados. Here, the yet unveiled muse found leisure in the abandoned rooms, on the beaches and in a tone of graphic aesthetics imitating the 1980's when the resort was up and running. Some representational works are illustrating this, and a number of large scale abstract paintings are renderings of the aesthetic ideas. Here she is too. She is the color gradients. She is the lines going across the large canvases.

Through this body of work, I pose that certain images amount to more than the essence of the desires and expectations we direct at them. As in the practice of religion, a cult image is a human-made object that is venerated for the deity it represents. But sometimes this image is believed to have its own powers, to grant wishes or otherwise affect people.

I guess my main inquiry is to ask whether contemporary humans have a weakened capacity for dreaming? Do we lack the art of searching without looking for concrete answers?

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