

WHEN ART REPRODUCES THE UNPRESENTABLE SUFFERING

– HORNSLETH VILLAGE PROJECT UGANDA: WE WANT TO HELP YOU, BUT WE WANT TO OWN YOU

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Introduction

In Kristian von Hornsleth's *Hornsleth Village Project Uganda*, which carries the motto: *We want to help you, but we want to own you*, the villagers of the small town Buteyongera in Uganda make a trade with Hornsleth. The villagers take the name Hornsleth and are issued an ID-card with their new names in exchange for a pig or a goat. The inhabitants that receive an animal are obliged to give away half of their first breeding. Furthermore they be photographed with their new ID-cards and the photographs will later on be exhibited by Hornsleth. The trade is documented in the documentary film *Hornsleth's project: Art or colonisation?* by the Danish broadcasting network DR2 and in a book that contains all the photos and descriptions of the project written by amongst others David Kateregga and Richard Mulondo, which both participate in the project.

The works has been and is still highly controversial. On the Danish foreign departments homepage one can read, that James Nsaba Buturo, Ugandan Minister of Ethics and Integrity, is threatens Hornsleth with the police. Buturo says:

This man is not good for the country. He owns a cult, talks dirty and has no respect for God. As soon as he comes to the country, the police will catch him and investigate his activities.¹

He also says to *The Monitor*:

It is unacceptable that a foreigner can violate our sovereignty.²

¹ <http://www.hornsleth.com/display.php?fileId=30>, 29. oktober, 2007

² <http://www.monitor.co.ug/news/news10276.php>, 29. oktober, 2007

A different approach to the Hornsleth one can find in *The New Vision – Uganda’s Leading Website*, where Ntegye Asimwe from Mbarara University writes the following:

People from Mukono, who have only taken a name in exchange for pigs or goats have done in with their own free will and have not been forced by anyone. Ugandan people are poor and everyone that has a solution to the problems with poverty shall be welcome.³

The two very different approaches argue that Hornsleth is violating the Ugandans autonomy by or that he is contributing to a solution to the poverty if the Ugandan people.

This article argues the doubleness that Hornsleth presents as a Western figure with financial and economic power, reproduces the social structures in Uganda, which is crucial for the understanding of this project. With Hornsleth's role the project takes shape and tries to show the cultural and social state of Uganda. This is shown through positioning Hornsleth as he decadent Western money man in opposition to the “other”, which is the villagers. When the Ugandan people take the name Hornsleth they make a trade and become a part of Hornsleth's publicity stunts. The trade can be criticized for being a of of Hornsleth's publicity strategy, but it also serves a goal as an illustration to the motto “We want to help you, but we want to own you.” The art has therefore a double position. The art is no longer in the Western artistic forum and it is not art in itself, but in fact the Ugandans that are the “other”. It is not enough just with deconstruction and representation of the social categories. The art must out of the reality-representation relationship and stimulate and study the social spaces. Only after this displacement can the overall social structures be changed. Two social structures, both linked to globalisation must be changed. First of all the ideology behind the representation of globalisation must be changed, so the globalisation proceedings and complex relationship is looked upon with a positive attitude. Secondly the globalisation must become a world wide phenomenon, that does not marginalized certain groups of people and regions. The quality of the Village Project is that Hornsleth in the portraits of the Ugandan villagers is able to simulate the reproduced inequality and a Ugandan uprising against this. The project represents paradoxically the unrepresentable. Human suffering can according to Levinas not be seen directly in the face, but the unrepresentable suffering lies in the production of the ID-cards, so the suffering is included in the portraits, which indicate the violation

³ <http://www.hornsleth.com/display.php?fileId=32>, 19. oktober, 2007. Mukono is the region, Buteyongera is in.

committed towards the development countries caused by Hornsleth, the Western World and the beholder.

The art of intervention and the ethical twist of the art critic

The Village Project shall be seen in extension of especially two modes in the modern history of art. The conceptual art and the art of intervention. Both modes can be linked to Nicolas Bourriauds conception on relational aesthetics and Claire Bishops conception of the social function of art.

Conceptual art is a genre in which it is the core idea and the concept itself, which is the actual work of art. The idea can be brought to life, materialized or documented in different medias and with diverse methods.”⁴ The materialisation and reality of the idea is a crucial point in the art world from the 1960s and ahead. The trends were originally dominated by the British and American artists, but also European movements like Fluxus and Arte Povera blossomed. In Denmark the conceptual art scene came with artists like Albert Mertz, Sven Dalsgaard, Stig Brøgger and artists from 'Eks-Skolen'. I In the 1980s the conceptual arts were reinvented in galleries like 'Baghuset'.⁵ In the 1990s the artistic and conceptual tendencies continued and many of the artists own galleries such as Max Mundus, SAGA Basement, Kølners Kontor and Otto were important. Also events such as ”Street Sharks”, where artists exhibited in public spaces in Copenhagen become a trend.⁶ It became a big part of the art scene and regardless the fact if it was planned or by chance, it gets inspiration from precisely those years where the conceptual art blossomed.⁷ One can therefore point at “a strong new-conceptual movement in the past 15 years in Denmark.”⁸ Also with Hornsleth the idea is the most important thing. But when he communicates that the Ugandan people are left outside the opportunities of the Western World, because they weigh in their own interests higher than the opportunity to give financial support to the Third World countries, it is not the original conceptual idea about creating valueless area in which the

⁴ Bonde, 2006, p. 273

⁵ Bonde, 2006, p. 273. The backhouse was done by Peter Rössel and Peter Holst Henckel in 1987.

⁶ Bonde, 2006, p. 274

⁷ Bonde, 2006, p. 273

⁸ Bonde, 2006, p. 276

art can grow, but much more the message in the work of art. What is communicated is a cultural thought about the structures in the society.

With the new conceptual art there is a formal disagreement with a particular expression in art headed towards significant spaces in reality. This means the spaces of art and the institution must not always be forgotten, but on the other hand can be used as a space of possibility for documentation of the concept and the critic of art. Hornsleth uses in fact photographs in documentation and publicity of the idea, *The Village Project*.

The new-conceptual movements idea is closely bound with the intervention of different types of art, which has since the late 90s been declared as a political and cultural movement.⁹ The intervening arts shall be seen in extension to the concept of social plastic or social sculpture, which was created by the German artist Joseph Beuys. In the social plastic the art will get a new intervening role which can be as a event, happening or a lecture. Hornsleth himself considers *The Village Project* as a social sculpture, as a exhibition without mass that defines itself from social relations that are set up and together create an expression.”¹⁰ The project is alive in the relation and in the intervening reality of the spaces between the Ugandan villagers and Hornsleth.

The Village Project is a extension of the concept of both conceptual art and intervening art, but also presents a shift. First it does not stop the art form itself and secondly it is bound to the global worlds political issues and environment.¹¹

⁹ Bonde, 2006, p. 313

¹⁰ Borello, 22. januar 2007

¹¹ The tendency to look away from global problems. For instance Gallery Rum 46 in Århus, that in 2002-2003 arranged a number of events under the title "Gæstebud", the art festival "Minority Report" in 2004 i Århus, Ellen Nyman, who was dressed up as a Somali woman singing the Danish National anthem "Det er et yndigt land" on the staircase to the Danish Governments headquarters on election night in 2001, Claus Beck-Nielsen, who went to Iraq, USA and Iran with the idea creating more democracy and a worldwide parliament, Morten Hartz Koplars movie AFR, about the fictional murder of Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (who by the way was about to save the world with a grand helping programme in Africa), and the artist Jan Christiansen, who in December 2007 fought with Karen Jespersen about the right to have the Internet name www.velfærdministeriet.dk, which he had bought, before the State decided to have such a name to their next idea.

When art clashes with the global worlds social and political problems it is because of the opportunities in art. Art can change the spaces of reality, a theory described in Nicolas Bourriauds *Relational Aesthetics*. Bourriaud tells that any critic of the society is meaningless if it is based upon the illusion of a marginal position.¹² Therefore must art give up on the critic of culture and society as a sole art form and instead test arts resistant. Also here there is an important message to remember, that Hornsleth keeps the institution as a space of documentation.

The question is how the relational arts intervention will matter for the reality which it steps into. The relational work is what Bourriaud calls "the space", in connection to the different spaces that occur in a piece of art. The work itself is alive in the space and becomes "a model of a highly resourceful world, because it gets elements that are separated to meet up"¹³ and creates new spaces. The work wants to create and build up actual spaces in the present time.¹⁴

Bourriauds idea was that art will represent a fully formed world, has met a lot of critic, which in headlines tells a different theory in which art can not change the world. Art is only to be experienced by the present audience.¹⁵ In *The Village Project* one can surely separate the active intervention from documentation. Hornsleth's project has created actual changes in the Ugandan village: The villagers have received a new name and they have received an animal, which has changed their opportunities radically.

Despite the fact that Hornsleth creates a space in Uganda, the piece of art is not mikroutopia according to Bourriauds theories. The space is not a positive utopia, but a reproduction of ordinary norms of trade with foreign help. The trade "a pig for my name" is not free and therefore it implicates that there is trades with the Ugandan people on one hand, while the other hand takes away the essential opportunities to participate in the global world market.

Hornsleth does not build a utopia space which is central, but in the reception of *The Village Project* there is critic of the social intervening works and is a model for a positive community with the

¹² Bourriaud, 2005, p. 33

¹³ Bourriaud, 2005, p. 18

¹⁴ Bourriaud, 2005, p. 48

Ugandan people. The expectation about a social intervening work relies on the positive spaces in the “ethical twist in the critic of art”. Claire Bishop calls this ”the social twist”. Works that are not a part of the social twist has traditionally had a weak position in the commercial world of art, when common projects and social intervening works does not need to be documented in the traditional shape, but often in social events and performances, that can not be sold in the same manner as traditional documentation.

Moving focus from one piece of art to a social intervening movement means, that the art will not be viewed upon based on its shape and form, but more on the ”creative energy which is (...) re-humanising or at least alienation in a society which with the suppressing capital business has become numb and fragmented”¹⁵ But the feeling of the arts utopic function and societies humane and society changing status has created ”an ethical twist in the critic of art”¹⁶ The focus is looked as a part of the works aesthetic quality and over to the working process. In other words “the artists will be graded because of their working process – and in which levels de give good or poor models for cooperation – and receive critic if the participated people are abused in any way.”¹⁷ E.g. Lucy Lippard tells in *The Lure and the Local* about eight points about ethics and Erik Hagoort claims in *Good Intentions: Judging the Art of Encounter*, that one must not stand back to make morale judgements about the arts. If this is done, and furthermore they will say goodbye to their traditional copyrights.¹⁸

The conflict between the social interventions and the ethical intention is a main theme in understanding of *The Village Project*. Merete Sanderhof writes for example that Hornsleth changes with no stress between the roles of being a committed fire-spirit and a cocky narcissist and a sarcastic prankster. She sees the conflict between social intervening and ethical content: ”One can not avoid getting a bad taste in one's mouth. He has used other peoples lack of freedom to stature himself – he has the freedom to help them, but will only do this if they agree to his terms”.¹⁹ A similar conclusion is reached by Mette Sandbye, who writes that “as a journalist and art critic I must question these kinds of

¹⁵ Bishop, 2006, p. 30

¹⁶ Bishop, 2006, p. 30

¹⁷ Bishop, 2006, p. 30

¹⁸ Bishop, 2006, p. 32

¹⁹ Sanderhof, 24. januar 2007

projects and set the same ethical and sharply angled questions, like with any other projects?²⁰ She sees *The Village Project* as "basically tacky and self promoting."²¹

I will in the following argue that Hornsleth in this case disqualifies the lack of morale and ethics in the work, but quite the opposite in its sea of opportunity of its success. Hornsleth does not build up utopia spaces and he keeps focus on the work and the shape of the work, the photography, despite of the social intervening form. Hornsleth just shows the course that the Western World has towards the Ugandan people.

Repositioning the art

The ethical twist that hits Hornsleth, because he is branding his name and therefore his ownership. Because the Ugandans as part of the trade take his name they become part of the whole work of art. This one could argue is the complete opposite of given up ownership in favour of the ethical social trade. There is produced a work of art and an actual trade and therefore Hornsleth and *The Village Project* is positioned in a double space: the artistic space and in the political and economic space. The double position leads to a repositioning of the art form, because it breaks with the idea of the art forum. Therefore the idea of art as being Westerns the "other" is independently torn from the Western art free space.

The double position involves that the artistic field is moved out of an actual play and that the field is autonomous and works in relation to own logics independent from the social field and economics. Bourdieu is interested in how this position that the artist has will be constituted and argues, that the artist prioritises him self inside the field, which he does not control.²² The artistic field is in this point of view a separate universe which exists with own rules within a force of owned power.²³ *The*

²⁰ Sandbye, 1. februar 2007

²¹ Sandbye, 1. februar 2007

²² Bourdieu, 1993. Bourdieu is interested in literature and uses Flaubert as an example. I will use him to get a more larger view on art and the artists right to create.

²³ Bourdieu, 1993, p. 163

Village Project is breaking with the idea and rules normal in the artistic field. Hornsleth is intervening with reality. The intervening is only a problem because it breaks with usual traditional art. But he also takes on issues on a capitalistic level. So Hornsleth is an artist but also a commentary person. In this force of comes the double positioning of *The Village Project*

Repositioning works as a break to what seems to be the art forms keywords: to position the art as Westerns the “other”. What is typical for Bourdieu when talking about art is the economic and political worlds absolute contradictions and therefore a negative association between success (especially money and power) and artistic value.²⁴ This means explicit that art is used as an autonomous social field.

In *The Village Project* art is positioned as part of the Western World and therefore part of political and economical powers. In this case art is moved out of the role as the “other”. This contributes to a breaking with the ethical questions raised, because the movement takes place through positioning of the “other”, in this case the Ugandans. Because the Ugandan villagers take the name Hornsleth they are placed as forcer's in pictures that can remind people of prison inmates, where the prisoner has a nameplate on the chest. Here Hornsleth becomes a villain and a representative of the Western powerful, white man only thinking about profit.

But the work is not a representative, but more a model of the field in which there is intervening. The representation is according to Stuart Hall with two meanings, one to describe something and the other to show and symbolise something.²⁵ Both these meanings have the representation as something else. The representation is therefore language, signs and pictures with the intent to say or represent something meaningful to someone else. The special thing about the model instead of the representation is the use of verbal, visual and mimic description of characteristic and successful events, and the model keeps parts of the original systems act to show how they work in different situations:

²⁴ Bourdieu, 1993, p. 165

²⁵ Hall, p. 15

To simulate is to model a (source) system through a different system which maintains (for somebody) some of the behaviours of the original system.²⁶

One model picks and pushes together the structures that define the relevant systems characteristics and rules and indicates the systems behaviour. When the course takes after a model it means, that the structures which are in play are part of the intervening and operational. *The Village Project* can therefore be seen as a model that indicates the global capitalism and trade with the development countries. The project operates with grand political and economical issues and the structures in play. The simulation in the model is in fact the real realisation of the game or actually the structure. And in this simulation there is created a brand new existence, because the borders between the fields are wiped out. In this case the model can manifest it self as a new artistic way of working, which gives new possibilities and structures in the social field.

The futilistic manifest and the fear of globalisation

Also Bourdieus idea about that the artist can in the symbolic area if also he/she loses in the economical and political,²⁷ is seen in *The Village Project*. The repositioning is the extension to the double positioning, because Hornsleth can not play a role and change the economical and political field if the art is a separate field, when being a direct critic of this field. The work must deliver a direct critic in the same field in which it exists. The opportunities of art is believed to be the exact stepping stone for the artist to reach the other position. This is also linked to the notion of futilism, which Hornsleth uses as a method to make possible for the intervening in a world that defines the meaningless.

In *The Futilistic Manifest* Hornsleth defines futilism: "Futilism builds on the words futile and ism. The futile is the meaningless and the ism is the given process of this."²⁸ The meaningless is expanded to "the unbelievable amount of noise and signals, which one is forced to sort out if one wants

²⁶ Gonzalo Frasca 2003, p. 223

²⁷ Bourdieu, 1993, p. 169

²⁸ Hornsleth, 1997 B, p. 9, # 3

to function as a socio politically well-established human being.”²⁹ The meaningless is expanded to a complex and modern society, a global world. Futilism becomes a method in which the global world can be seen as and global questions about the relationship between poor development countries and rich capitalistic countries can be understood.

”The discussion about loss of value was everywhere and I saw inner images of smart people clinging on to their own piece of modern timber in the black value obsessive whirlpool. I did not understand why they didn't just let go of the modern super-thoughts and become a part of their own true reality.”³⁰ ”Futilism works so our confused and emotional time does not fall into the hands of a one way lust for power driven by empty promises about safety and pseudoholism.”³¹

Futilism includes the limited freedom:

Futilism is the name of a process and a method wherein one can for instance produce art, which refuses to be beaten by what fragmented world driven by loss of value and being meaningless. The concept works with the idea of that the all surrounding meaningless is in fact meaningless and that this obvious lack of meaning in reality the key to freedom of yet to seen dimensions.³²

Futilism and the meaningless makes freedom possible and gives art a new role:

Art can for the first time in History with correction be the icebreaker instead of in centuries to be made tired of the evolution and commentary and courting it after religions and power systems have defined the official course.³³

²⁹ Hornsleth, 1997 B, p. 4

³⁰ Hornsleth, 1997 B, p. 4-5

³¹ Hornsleth, 1997 B, p. 13, # 31

³² Hornsleth, 1997 B, p. 10, # 11

³³ Hornsleth, 1997 B, p. 26, # 96

The futile space is now the space where all opportunities are possible and open, a quality one can also find in Deleuze and Guattari's slippery room. The slippery room is the room of the nomads and this room is structured differently than the governments and the inhabitants' land.³⁴ The most crucial factor is the difference between the room of the nomad and the room of the State. The nomads' space is developed by tracks and is moved straight forward with the lane.³⁵ It is the core of the futile that the room is located, but not bounded. That is what Hornsleth does when he in *The Village Project* shows the relationship between capital Western power and Ugandan people as a representative for the poor development countries. Therefore Hornsleth trades with the Ugandan and shows that they are not in any way part of the futile space of globalisation.

With help from futilism Hornsleth can position himself and his project in a social field, which is not only for the sake of art. On the grounds of easy-to-go-by cultural materials, that is the space of globalisation and the uneven relationship between the Western World and the Ugandan villagers, a new identity is created.

Through repositioning there is an overall social structure³⁶ with thoughts on globalisation has been redefined. Globalisation is based on opportunities for the slippery room and therefore must everyone get access to its potentials. But where project-identities as the one Hornsleth established by the help of his position, he breaks with the idea of holism, because it limits the futile and limits the amount of opportunities.

Meeting the "Other"

The futilistic object in *The Village Project* is as previously mentioned the relationship between Hornsleth as a representative for the Western World and the Ugandan villagers representing the development countries.

³⁴ Deleuze, 2005 (1980), p. 491

³⁵ Deleuze, 2005 (1980), p. 491

³⁶ Castells, 1997, p. 8

But with futilism as a starting point Hornsleth will change the relationship between the rich and the poor countries. This by adding different identities to the project. Hornsleth's overall identity must cooperate with the overall identity of the project and the Ugandan opposite identity.

In the clash with the imperialistic discourses it is crucial who is looking at the work of art and how the different parties address each other. The sender and receiver are important according to Judith Butler, in understanding the ethics and meeting between people. In *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence* she argues that we must accept that messages given between differently understanding parties can sometimes fail.³⁷ It is a mistake to believe that ethical autonomy has anything to do with finding and standing by your own will. If we believe we can set our names at our will, we lose the point in relation to our ethical demands.³⁸ The address can therefore show us, how different identities are set in the meeting with the "Other".

The meaning of the meeting with the other can be understood by the help of the face, a concept introduced by Emmanuel Levinas, and discussed by Butler. The face explains how others outgo ethical demands against us, which we are not in liberty to deny: "It seems to be that the "face" of what we call the "Other" makes an ethical demand upon me, and yet we do not know which demand it makes."³⁹ In *The Village Project* there are two faces: Hornsleth and the Ugandan. Hornsleth addresses the Ugandan and therefore influences their identity and will. But also the Ugandans' faces are clearly important as they in the pictures show the performative violence, which they undergo because of Hornsleth and the Western World. It is therefore in the meeting with the "Other" and the face, that Hornsleth can discuss his critic of the striped room.

³⁷ Butler, 2004, p. 130

³⁸ Butler, 2004, p. 130

³⁹ Butler, 2004, p. 131

The market, globalisation and the development countries

The rich Western countries have an identity which is introduced by the dominating institutions and society with a goal to expand and rationalize their dominating status.⁴⁰ The identity generates a civilian society that internalises power and agrees to a defined normal identity. This means, that the rich countries as a group legitimize and expand their power. But the power they have is based on the globalisation. When the Western World keep their power it is a certain type of globalisation, which is based on ideological representation, an attempt to keep and define the globalisation course in the world society.⁴¹

Mobility and opening borders are just part of the whole scale. Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift actually have seven different modes in which they look at characteristics of globalisation.⁴² In this case it is interesting to follow, that all seven aspects of globalisation are important, but the first six lead to a global geography. Even if we see globalisation as "space of flows"⁴³ or a chain of locations put together,⁴⁴ it is crucial the geography is changed and the different spaces are key areas with a concentration of economical and cultural power. Globalisation is therefore not equal, both regions and social groups will risk being marginalized and this problem is seen in *The Village Project*, where Uganda is a representative for the development countries. So even though globalisation in the force of futalism is defined in a positive manner, it will be important to make it larger to avoid marginalisation in certain areas.

The relationship between the development countries and the Western World has to be seen in a historic view to understand the marginalisation Hornsleth is attacking. After World War II a system where The Soviet Union and America had more power than anyone else, there was actually talk of three different worlds on planet Earth. As decolonisation came in different areas things changed. This was against the wishes of The Soviet Union and America. From around the 1960erne the Third World countries were divided from the Western World.

⁴⁰ Castells, 1997, p. 8

⁴¹ Dividing globalisation, gloabality and globalism is found in Jansson, 2004

⁴² Amin, 1994, p. 3-5

⁴³ Castells, 1989

⁴⁴ Storper, 1997

After the fall of the Berlin-wall in 1989, the downfall of The Soviet Union in 1991, there is only America as a superpower. The economical situation can now be considered as a promising sign for everyone, because good and fair trade is considered to limit violent uprisings, but the optimistic view becomes more and more criticized, because the countries independence is lacking.

The critic which amongst others is found in the works of J.A. Hobson and in Frantz Fanons works about colonisation tell the story about how the poor countries are still dominated by rich countries industrial and capitalistic ways.

Since the 1980s people have talked about free trade as a way to development. People argue that countries can benefit and take advantage of the free trade. But that is too much of export optimistic thinking.⁴⁵ A countries export is the motor of growth and a way to increase growth and keep developing.

The Village Project takes a critic towards the optimistic thinking. Free trade is seen as a natural part of the globalisation, but there are still many areas in the world, that are not global yet, and the rich countries can continue their hold on the power. The motto of the project is "We want to help you, but we want to own you". Because the deal is conditioned by the fact that "we want to own you", it makes us think about the very fact that the relationship between rich and poor countries implicate a certain type of neocolonisation.

Hornsleths trademark is the decadent rudeness which is in fact a reproduction of the rich countries ways of commercial thinking.⁴⁶ Hornsleths name is everywhere: On the colourful paintings, a Rolex watch, a gun, a dildo with the engraving slogan: "Fuck You Art Lovers 1998"⁴⁷, on cufflinks,

⁴⁵ Branner, 2001, s. 161

⁴⁶ In his use of the market Hornsleth is on the same path as the commercial and market-oriented art, which got it's breakthrough in Denmark with the exhibition "Luxury Culture", that without any negligence referring to its sponsor Faxe Beer on the poster and in the catalogue. People have stopped feeling to bad about advertisements now and the money that can be earned is still important. Gade, 2006, p. 10.

⁴⁷ Hornsleth, 2005, p. 111, 143, 146 og 160

keyrings, rings, jewellery and more engravings such as "Kill the bitch" and other slogans⁴⁸, pictures of Bill Clinton, Marilyn Manson, Pamela Anderson, Lene Siel and Osama Bin Laden is overpainted by Hornsleth, and on porn-photographies Hornsleth stands on top of the models.



Furthermore Hornsleth advertises on his homepage for "Cultural Engineering", which is about branding of different companies through art and architecture. Hornsleth calls this "Intelligent advertising through cultural projects,"⁴⁹ and proclaims that he as an artist and architect can consult and makes programmes for cultural identity for corporations that wish to brand themselves. Furthermore he argues that many companies have not yet realized that traditional advertising is not enough to keep the attention and loyalty of the consumer.⁵⁰

Hornsleth is brand and a businessman who promotes himself and stages himself. When he as an artist uses society as a stage, he is intervening with society. He enhances human patterns which according to Goffmann always is a scenic performance, like when people have the freedom to choose their roles and appearance. Hornsleth can be brand and be socially active. Critics have rejected this with reference to that his social activeness in Uganda is purely a publicity stunt and not credible

⁴⁸ Hornsleth, 2005, p. 140

⁴⁹ www.hornsleth.com/template/t02.php?menuId=9

⁵⁰ This is seen before. In the 1980s companies branded their names in art museums, works of art and more, which was possible because artists lack of financials.

because of the branding. . The interpretation of *The Village Project* and how you see Hornsleth is another example on how branding art can confuse people, expect Hornsleth's loyal consumers.

But again there is a double twist between Hornsleth as a economical and cultural player, which is seen on the branding of the art up against the social activist that the branding can not control. It seems that branding is crucial to make publicity for the project and for the project to have success as a piece of art. We have Hornsleth's position against the "Other". When the Ugandans take Hornsleth's name and make this trade possible they become part of his publicity. Critics are against this way of trade, but with the motto "We want to help you, but we want to own you." there is an allegory to the rich capitalism contra the poor development countries. This fact is true and we must accept. The same is seen in Hornsleth's case:

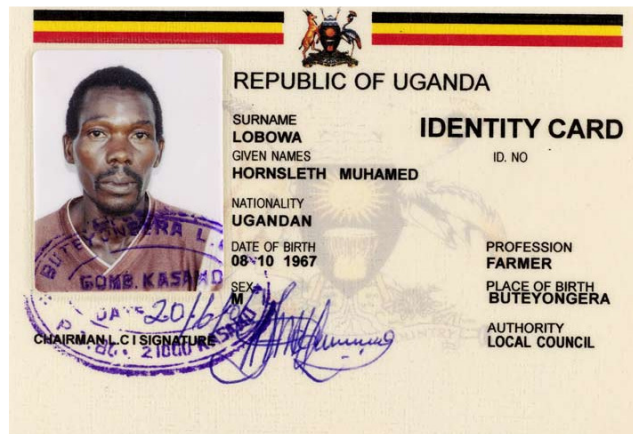
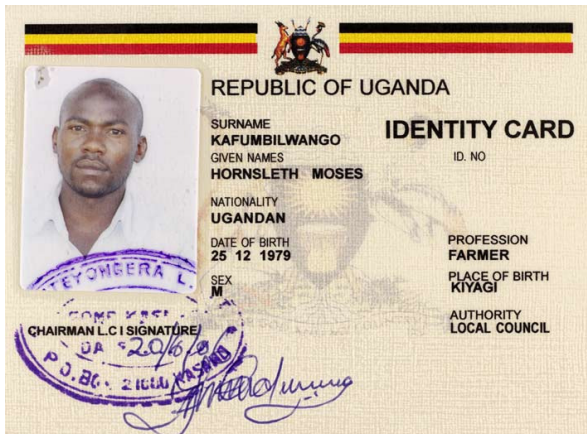
These people are so poor, that they do not have a fair choice, when I offer them an animal to trade for my name. They are so poor, that they would have named them selves Coca-Cola, if that was demanded.⁵¹

And therefore the Western identity is clear and the poor countries have not the opportunities to say no to such a trade and Hornsleth's trade is therefore on the same scale as any other trade made between rich countries and poor countries in general.

The trade as a whole is a picture of international structures, but also in the small scale it is illustrated on e.g. the ID-cards. Ugandans have traditionally Ugandan surname but not Ugandan first names. The two Ugandans shown on the pictures are therefore named Moses and Muhamed as a first-name and Kafumbilwango and Lobowa as a surname.⁵² In this way they are religiously linked to Christian and Islamamic.

⁵¹ Elgaard, 31. march 2007

⁵² Hornsleth, 2007, p. 192 and 156



“The Missionaries made a trade which is still relevant with the conditions: ”They promise eternal life and food. If you leave you 10.000 year old tribe religion, and you believe in that Jesus Christensen then we will promise you eternal life and joy. Plus every sunday you can sit in front of the priest and drink the in his living room..”⁵³ But also a more imperialistic critic is raised when de Ugandan villagers carry European first names such as Philip Hornsleth Gimugu, Joyce Hornsleth Nakabugo, Charles Hornsleth Juuko og Richard Hornsleth Mulondo.⁵⁴ Through the names Hornsleths work is underlined and shows a pattern which already is there, and he is just reproducing his work in the already existing and same patterns.

Despite of the globalisation and the futile spaces there is a positive value based structure none universal, but slippery because the Western way is affecting the third world countries. If the globalisation must be slippery it will result in a consolidation of “a constitute of global capitalism”.

They rich countries are undergoing critic for not being interested in involving other countries and in global capitalism and in stead only focusing on their own “national development”. Focus is still the same. The Western politics about international growth is a discurs and a practical way for them to keep State sovereignty and territory, which functions as strong ideologies.⁵⁵

⁵³ Christensen, 28. august 2006

⁵⁴ Hornsleth, 2007, p. 130, 129 og 136

⁵⁵ Af critic by e.g. Weber, 2004, p. 189

Both ideology and practical work in politics about international evolution makes the global lack of balance stronger and must be changed both as a analytic frame and as a organisation principal in world politics. This is seen in *The Village Project*, when Hornsleth imitates the global worlds commercial systems. The reproduction of the world scene is necessary. He can not just give them the animals and take the pictures. It is important that the villagers take his name. The futile lies precisely in the trade and in reproducing reality.

Futilism allows no pseudo vision or utopia spaces, but challenges the very starting point in already existing cultural and social fields. Therefore the projects success is based on whether the dialogue is equal or not. The global capitalism is the solution.

And furthermore the projects success is based on the certain Ugandan people have to resist accepting the project and thereby becoming a part of it.

The Ugandans experience with Hornsleth

The critic of the striped room is mainly pointed towards Western capitalism and neo-colonial standards and on how the hegemonic ways influences de dominated, especially regarding economic ability and identity construction both as individuals and as groups.

First of all the Third World can despite of a territory ownership primarly be associated with post colonisation and there the situation is today a different diversity.⁵⁶ Secondly the Third World is no longer a meaningful reference point for global politics and there is therefore a complete the lack of political influence. The reference to the Third World is today first and foremost a political and based on ideology.⁵⁷ But still the concept is alive in the organisation of global capitalism and the administration of social and political opposites regarding equality and poverty.

⁵⁶ The situation after 1990 is so complex that you can find more and various classes of nations.
⁵⁷ Williams, 1994

This reproduction of the Third World takes place in the trade between Hornsleth and the Ugandan people, because of the meeting between him and the “other”. The relationship between them reproduces an 'us versus them' theory as described in Edward W. Saids' *Orientalism*. He presents the categoric distinction between people is not based on mobility, contact and information, but contains a social process with exclusion and inclusion. Therefore the categories remain the same despite the fact if the globalisation changes participation and status.⁵⁸ His theories are in extension to an artificial Western imagination – a construction – which can not be changed, because it is constructed in solid patterns and in discrepancy with reality.⁵⁹ The construction of the “other” also effects the real relationships and the West therefore has the power to force things on to the “other”.

Said points out, that the colonisation is the direct link to why the reinvention of Third World countries are the way the are and points at the economic neo-colonisation as a main factor.

In *The Village Project* the Ugandans are simply too poor to reject the offer. Hornsleth forces them to make the trade and therefore he shows, like the theory goes, that because of the Western construction he can force the “other” to agree with him. This is also shown in the actual pictures from the village that show the people standing behind barbed wires and at the same time they lock up animals. This is done with Hornsleth's own stickers and art in the colours of black, red and yellow – as shown below.



⁵⁸ Frederik Barth describes these proceedings with a look upon ethical categories and yet without the globalisation perspective. .

⁵⁹ It is problematic, when Saids course can not be changed and is totalitarian, because it means the discurs is the same over large amount of time and does not take in consideration the historic perspective. E.g. The fall of the Berlin wall, Said just takes the same course as Foucault and his idea about: "We can call a group of speak for a discourse in the formative area." (Foucault, 1969 p. 153 quoted by Marianne Winter Jørgensen and Louise Philips) This is in the first and foremost case a fine starting point. The problem is just that Foucault has a tendency to identify one and only one discourse in every era which is the same as Said, and therefore not enough. If one in stead of that could loosen up and use others such as Laclau and Muffes theories, one can keep the view on power and seize the covet for hegemony, to define the situation.

Stuart Hall also says, "the notion that identity has to do with people that look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same, nonsense."⁶⁰ Factors like ethnicity, religion and culture is not always creating identity but there is a value put to these factors by the groups values. Identity is not a essential core, but processes of cultural learnings, which is cultural processes made between people. Identity is therefore a negotiation between self biographic material and the same material told by someone else. This can be the "other", society, the State and so on.⁶¹ So identity is both collective and individual. The truth value needs not to be crucial, because identity is created based on imaginary identities. Identity is therefore culturally based: "Our selves – our identities – are made in culture, rather than something we inherit from nature."⁶² Hornsleth is the authority in the village because he through his power can tell about the Ugandans biographical and cultural material.

The Ugandan must necessarily fill their basic needs, which Abraham Maslow describes in his pyramid is food. When hunger and thirst is set one can concentrate about other needs. Second step is safety. Hornsleth offers animals which can ensure a future income, so he is providing safety which can set the hunger and thirst for the villagers. This is underlined by David Kateragga, who participates in the project and says:

Sub Saharan people are actually dying. Uganda in particular with a life expectancy of 46 years. Not because we Ugandans want to die that early, but simply because our people do not have a single coin to buy medicine and the basic necessities to keep living.⁶³

The safety and security that they get in representative in the Hornsleths name, which they take. The trade is an example of the relationship between the villagers and Hornsleth and the authority that and the current course that the villagers are meeting, when they meet Hornsleth ans must give in to his demands.

⁶⁰ Hall, 1996, p. 49

⁶¹ Storey, 1999, p. 80

⁶² Storey, 1999, p. 88

⁶³ Hornsleth, 2007, p. 37

In regards to the construction of identity Hornsleth reproduces the global inequality, but again the reproduction is an illustration to the existing structures in the social field. Reproducing inequality gives the Ugandan an opportunity to represent the course which they are put under, by the Western World and to talk against it. David Kateragga writes the following:

The people of my village are participating in the Hornsleth Village Project of their own free will. Absolutely none are forced into doing something that they do not want to do. They fully understand the aim of the project, and they are participating – not only to get a goat or a pig – but also because they approve of the aim of the project.⁶⁴

They accept the name, because they have no choice, but also because they recognize the necessity to talk about the inequality, if they want to change their conditions permanently and become more secure in their lives as a group. They take the name, because it gives them a voice:

We badly need a voice, and who will speak, if the Africans around the world are not speaking? I believe that this project is a part of our voice⁶⁵

Their goal is to create as much attention as possible about the uncertain situation, that they are living in and show that they are not part of the global capitalism, quite the opposite, that they are held down by the capitalism that they are not part of as a country in the Third World. .

To make people think of the fairness of the Western world aiding Africans and at the same time setting limits of international open trade markets.⁶⁶

The project that they are a part of is at one hand a performative art work using them, but on the other hand their opportunity as the “other” to show resistance.

Usually there are some common grounds for identity that is definitely bound on history, geography or biology, which makes it more easy to essentialized a humans boundaries.⁶⁷ But the

⁶⁴ Hornsleth, 2007, p. 37

⁶⁵ Hornsleth, 2007, p. 38

⁶⁶ Hornsleth, 2007, p. 37

Ugandan resistant to the project which is important builds on the foundation of Hornsleths futilism talking about the ideal of global capitalism. The villagers common grounds are not based on territory , but rather the demand of being included in a larger community. They are willing to give up more traditional factors and trade that for integration in the global capitalism.

Their resistance will thereby have a more special motivation, because there is no longer talk about "the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded,"⁶⁸ but rather an inclusion of the excluders by the excluders. The Ugandan are trying through trade with Hornsleth to be included with their region in the global capitalism to avoid being left even more behind.

Reproduction of the unrepresentable

Two questions are left. First of all if Hornsleth is able to represent the violation that is done to the villagers and to the resistance which occurs as a reaction to the project. Secondly if is the Ugandan villagers facing us in the pictures set out some ethical demands, which are successfully received by the viewers.



Levinas writes about the face and meeting it:

⁶⁷ Castells, 1997, p. 9

⁶⁸ Castells, 1997, p. 9

The approach to the face is the most basic mode of responsibility ... The face is not in front of me, but above me, it is the other before death, looking through and exposing death. Secondly, the face is the other who asks me not to let him die alone, as if to do so were to become an accomplice of his death.⁶⁹

The face points out that the eye of the beholder must not kill the individual right to exist and that the “other” has a right as well. The face unspoken meaning is that “The face is what one cannot kill”⁷⁰ But why does Levinas tell about the killing and why this violation and fear in meeting the face? Butler talks about that is about non-violence. In the meeting with the the “other” the individual will fear for its own survival, but also it fears hurting the other and these two impulses are in war with each other, but they also fight each other, so they don not have to go to war. The Ugandans faces express that their own right to exist, and the reaction to the Western power is seen in their suppressed faces. Everything that is without security in life is what comes to show in Hornsleths pictures, when we see the Ugandans insecure lives.

As previously mentioned in *The Village Project* there is two faces. Hornsleths face and the villagers. Again it is Hornsleths double position that is crucial. When art is not positioned as the “other”, but as the powerful opposite, it becomes troubling for the audience to view the pictures, because they think: How shall I react, when meeting two faces, and one is violating and the other is being violated and the violater is representing my own world? Art is not an isolated form but part the Western course and therefore it is impossible to claim not being part of a capitalistic world or to disclaim everyday violation to Ugandan people.

Hornsleth does therefore not take distance from the violence. He is part of it and reproducing it. Therefore it is impossible to determine if the project is a positive illustration or a negative reproduction. It is simply impossible to conclude if Hornsleth is a social activist or a businessman..

There is actually a third option which is a positive reproduction. This third option is a social activist who creates on the rules and terms of the cooperate life as a businessman. This double sided

⁶⁹ Levinas, 1986, p. 23-24

⁷⁰ Butler, 2004, p. 134

view does not write of the work as socially intervening, but gives room to the different layers in the work. Generally the representation is a chance to humanize the project.

After the reception of *The Village Project*, it has been criticized a lot, because the Ugandan people did not represent them selves fully, but undergoing Hornsleths representation of them, their ethical situation has not been representative. But although the project does not represent the Ugandan villagers fully as individual, it still has a point to be made because it shows their suffering and violence. Butler argues that the face can not represent humane suffering, cause this has no direct suffering in the face.⁷¹ Therefore there is something unrepresentable. Hornsleth shows the unrepresentable in the pictures and in paradox the suffering is more clear in this reproduction.⁷² The paradox is held up by Hornsleth in all the photographies. Even though the face it self can not show the violence, the ID-cards are symbols of the violation done to the villagers by Hornsleth, the Western World and by me as the viewer. The face seem to be saying:

You are violating me and taking away my right to exist.

In the end *The Village Project* manages to reproduce and document the violation that is done to the Ugandan people and thereby reproducing the unrepresentable, the villagers suffering.

⁷¹ Butler, 2004, p. 144

⁷² Butler, 2004, p. 146