PRIVATE EDEN



























IDEAS ()F HAPPINESS

by Koen Sels

The lightest and most frivolous dynamics of a butterfly resting on my unmoving hand, the dramatic, vivid contrasts of still, organic forms amidst a turbulent sea of green.

The color of dollar.

Stillness, difference & sameness.

My espresso moment.

An Iceland of the soul, crystalline, smelling of glacier & somehow, of new car. Rice pudding, brown sugar, a golden spoon, day after day after day after day. Dream destination: inhaling gasoline at the service station.

Forever on the road.

Chocolate streams, silken, not quite coming to a standstill.

Christmas decoration, the whole year through.

And even though the idea of paradise might seem unrelated to anything worldly, a pure image of peace & fulfilled desires, in fact it is very much shaped by the specific place and time, with its work life & travel plans & supermarkets & coffee cups & insecurities & ambitions. Why is it, that the recurring image of Eden in our culture is one of splendid and calm isolation and emptiness: a tropical island to be shared, at most, with 1 halfnaked partner?

Why is this mainstream dream of a 'private' Eden adjusted to one's most personal needs, instead of a joyous gathering of each and every one? A strange and paradoxical thing: a paradise not designed for & to be shared by a people of believers, but for you only, a paradise that is mostly shaped like you. Clear blue skies, freedom, great sex. The texture of marble, its cold visual temperature: a slice of the eternal, a cosmically slow movement. She was so wild & pretty & dreamy, she seemed invented by my subconscious.

The Alps, a titillating lack of oxygen, the mountain ridge screaming against a photographic blue stillness. Straight angles, primary colors, no diagonals. Curls and twists, a never-ending composition reaching out for the Lord.

A shed by a fishing pond named 'Our Happiness'.

Happiness, as the contrary melancholy of yet another spring in the midst of life slowly spreads its strange fragrances, mingles them through the smog of my daily normalcy. This image is a little lukewarm puddle of mud, far from the ever wailing highways of my country, the sirens of my culture in the grey heart of the West, or rather just far enough so I can still hear their slightest buzz, blending seemlessly with a fertile pinkish breeze, carrying the sounds of birds, bumblebees and dragonflies, a man-shaped, ocher-colored puddle in which I can just lie down without remorse or any sense of weirdness, and look up at the sharpest, roundest and most familiar clouds, a sight in which to disappear, sink in oblivion, naked and nameless, not taking anything with me but the thoughts of my daughter and girlfriend and some friends perhaps.

What does this say about me? That I should probably start to appreciate the actual, moving, social world better?

Just the walls painted white and a nice view, an infinity pool, the ocean, silence.











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