

## L'intervalle - Le Blog de Fabien Ribery

Literature, photography, artistic practices, the humanities, and philosophy / Interviews and reviews. **Fabien Ribery** is a writer, a professor of modern literature, a lecturer at the University of Western Brittany (UBO), and a freelance journalist.

### Story of the Eye

by photographer **Benita Suchodrev**

Of course, Paradise is now.

For this, we are fortunate to possess a sensitive body, and a heart capable of being filled with compassion.

Paradise does not exist in isolation; it requires the other, who acts upon us like a revealer.

Might ecstasy — which could also be called holiness — be the experience of enjoying all twelve senses at once: the five known external senses, and seven internal senses, waiting to be regenerated?

*Find Me Paradise*, by Georgian-born artist and emigré to the United States, now based in Berlin, Benita Suchodrev, is thus a search for paradisiacal states through situations of intensity.

Published by Kehrer Verlag, this densely imaged book, with its deep blacks, is an exploration of the luminous darkness through which its author has travelled.

Here, there is an existential continuum that does not fundamentally separate life from death, but embraces in its gaze a totality of experiences, faces, and bodies.

The photographic corpus is abundant; it is a tide, a current, a flood of encounters laid bare, cut, and at times superimposed — an ode to the multiplicity of wandering human souls with an unabashed sexuality.

The whole is baroque, carrying a profound fire that unsettles bourgeois conformity.

But make no mistake: if the photographs are sometimes raw, Benita Suchodrev's gaze is one of great tenderness, without judgment or any desire to rank or hierarchize people and their behaviours, even when they are practitioners of BDSM.

*Find Me Paradise* should be approached like the French Revolution according to Clemenceau: as a single block, unified, made up of echoes, correspondences, dialogues, and undercurrents of conversation.

Everything sways, because life is like that; everything offers the possibility of awakening as well as falling. The raven of melancholy leaned over our cradle, and ever since our first exile we have wept bitter tears.

Sheep look at us; we are grotesque, naked, wonderful.

Mists, fogs, clouds.

Luminous halos.

Skies of a fantastical tone.

Haunted houses, haunted bodies, quests for pleasure.

We move through the night, drunk, through the exhausted city, amid showers of burning jellyfish.

We play, we dance, we burn ourselves up.

Benita Suchodrev loves sleight of hand, the magic of metamorphosis, love in its most unvarnished form.

We must pass through death while still alive, in order to be reborn.

Animality within the human, wildness, social cruelty casting fellow sufferers into the streets.

Children, the elderly, trans people.

Operation, sublimation, transformation.

Everything is theatre, a human comedy, a disproportionate effort to exist beneath the gaze of God, the roe deer, the discarded condom, and the dead bird.

A Shakespearean atmosphere of the end of a reign or a civilization.

Androgyny, fairgrounds, seductions.

*Find Me Paradise* is an Orwellian film, a journey to the outermost reaches, a coming-of-age tale.

Virgins, half-Bowies, automatons coming to life.

It is the pulse of the backstage world, the joy of losing one's way, the overturning power of illumination.

The beauty of a raw, truthful world, impatient to live and eager to fling its corpse onto the ironing board of the necropaths.