

## Karin Hillmer - Infinity and Dreams

In the fifteenth century Hieronymus Bosch may have been the first artist to create surreal and highly personal images aimed to parallel concepts of a specific text, which is the Bible. In spite of the apocalyptic imagery of the book of Revelations, it is equally remarkable that these radical paintings were embraced by the church.

By placing Bosch's accomplishments next to works of the early surrealists and Dadaists from the early 20th century, you may marvel at similarities and how well Bosch survives. Max Ernst, Salvador Dali, Joseph Cornell, Frederick Sommer are a few of the artists who worked in that vein in the modern era. However, their art is unrelated to any specific literary work and refers only to personal open ended narratives.

Sommer spoke for many of that genre by saying that one must, either find the subject to make the picture—or construct the subject to make the picture. Karin Hillmer's thoughtful constructions conjure the tradition of these artists.

Karin Hillmer has bravely taken on two intimidating tasks. The first being to create visual poetry that respectfully relates to the writing of Jorge Luis Borges, without attempting a literal translation. Borges' writing is from the world of surreal dreams and fantasies. Her photographs are a response in kind, to Borges' wondrous complexity. None of these tableaux could succeed without her mastery of form and her precise control of camera and lighting. Unlike many of the surrealists who chose anonymous imagery for their work, Karin Hillmer has dared to sample the work of Renaissance heroes, such as Benozzo Gozzoli, Botticelli, de la Tour, and others. Undoubtedly, these add rich notes, but at times their familiarity and power threaten to steal the show.

A second vital part of Karin Hillmer's work is her concern for the book as an artifact. She understands the importance of controlling all physical aspects of the book making process. She has assumed total responsibility, including the book's design, the quality of the printing, the typography, and the binding. Few artists would take on this demanding second job. Knowing that the sum of these details mark the final reading of the images, she has gone that second mile.

Regardless of the viewer's grasp of Borges' writing, this is an intelligent and provocative body of work that stands firmly on its own. Like Borges, Karin Hillmer expects the viewer to find a personal path on the journey.