

FILIPA CÉSAR

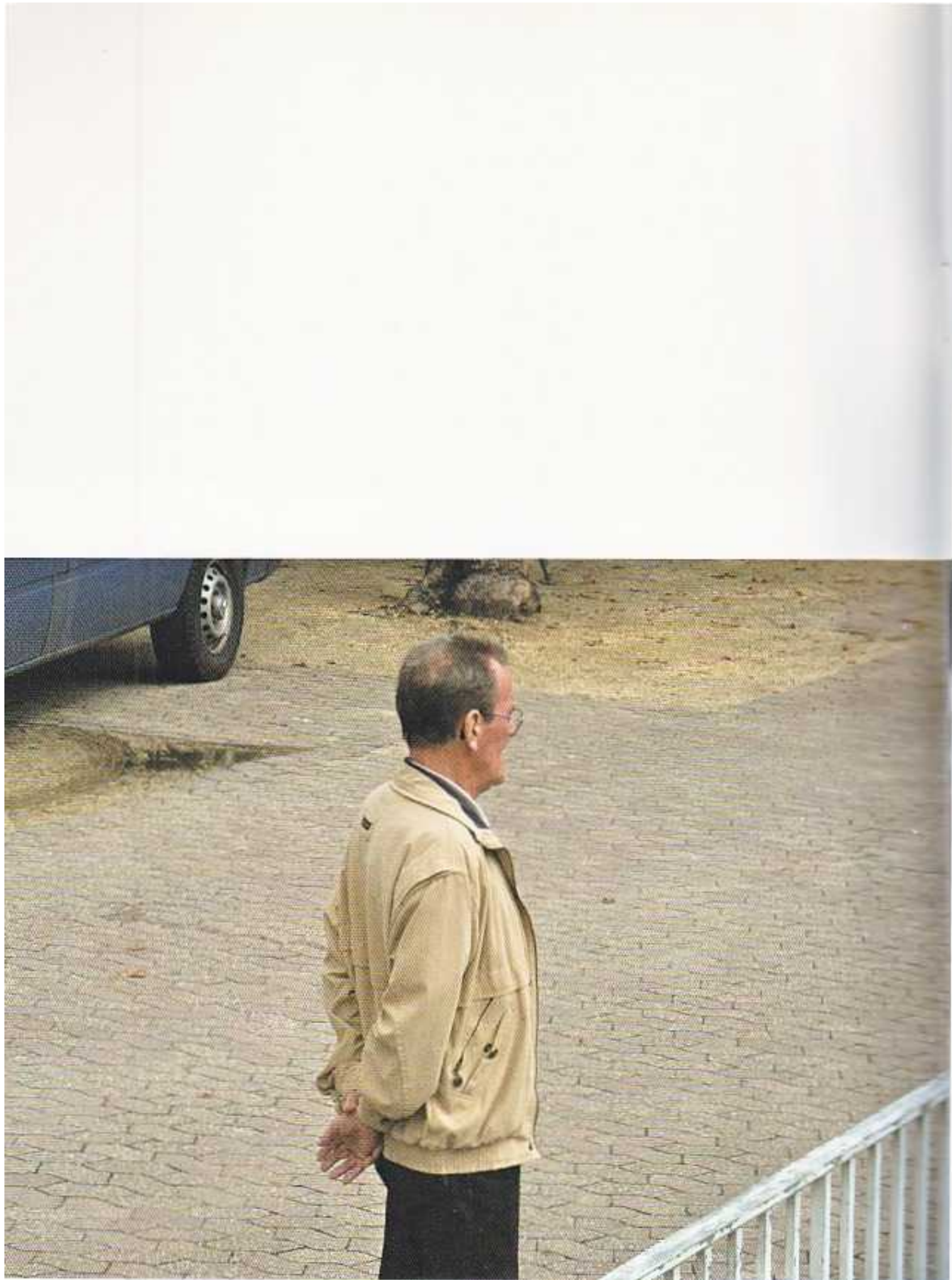
# SETS FOR THOUGHTS

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a monologue series

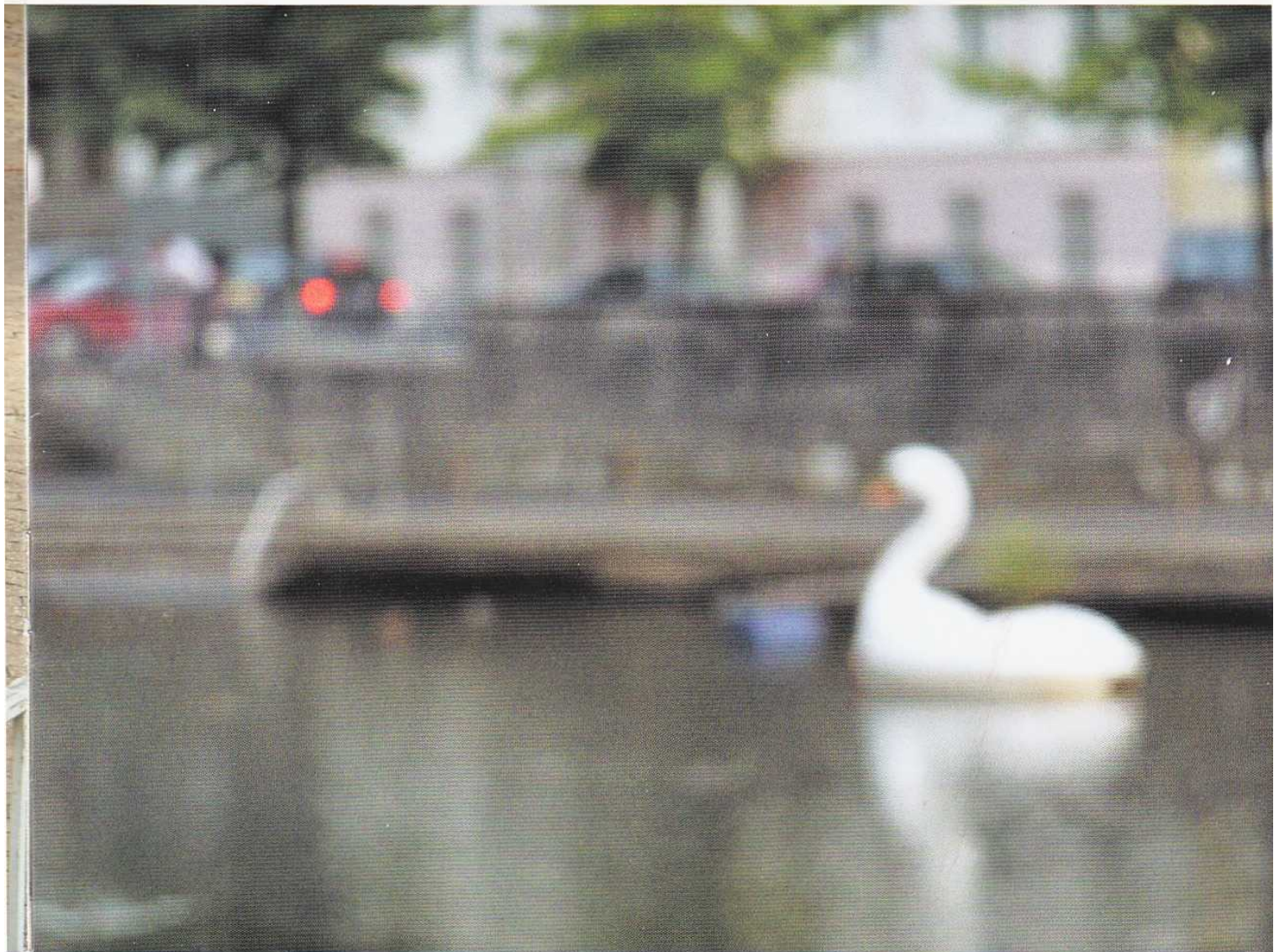


> Insert: NYC personals





*I am interested in analysing behaviour in citizens that are not necessarily the result of a conscious state of mind. I try to fixate those minimal, almost invisible idiosyncrasies that manifest the individual character in the citizen in a public context. Maybe I am looking for something like poetry and aesthetics between the lines of our urban everyday life. Therefore I would like to dedicate this book to all the unknown people that I observed and used as main characters for my fiction.*









Observations from Offstage  
by Andrea Edel

The moments in a person's life onto which Filipa César directs her attention in "sets for thoughts" are particular ones, well-known to everyone, but seldom considered: phases of daydreaming, of rest between actions, in which there is momentarily no acute need for action. Moments of human existence in a waking state, with no concrete duties, no distractions, and in which no reference to the world about one is demanded; moments in which the individual may drowse a little, relax and forget the compulsions which otherwise dominate life. These critical little moments Paul Virilio calls "absences" in his *Aesthetics of disappearance* (originally *Esthétique de la disparition*, Paris, Balland, 1980) or "paradoxical wakefulness", intervals in continuous, consciously-perceived time. Thoughts are severed from the contexts of reality and move in a sphere free from time and place, where an individual keeps his wishes, longings, fantasies, anxieties, ideals, memories and hopes to himself.

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Monologues appear as an primeval form of originally human thought. Like a look in the mirror or the encounter with oneself as one's alter ego, soliloquizing is also a structural act. The potential change lies in the attitude of expectation or in the perspective from which one's reflection is observed or from which the conversation in thought with the self begins, in the manner of coming to terms with the concept of "I". Inner dialogues with the self are presupposed by the assumption of different variants

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Translated from the German by Adrian Hannah









of one's own personality. Fantasy and reality are wide apart, and individual wishful images of the ideal life cannot always be brought into harmony with actual facts. That which does not appear feasible remains in the thoughts, where intentions then form, giving the principle impulses for causal chains for the deliberate alteration of reality and can also become effective in reality.

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For her series of "monologues", which Filipa César began in the artists' house *Schloss Balmoral*, as a guest scholarship holder of the *Foundation for Cultural Rhineland-Palatinate*, she traced down persons in Bad Ems, who appear in this manner to be absent. Each monologue is presented in two photographs, which combine to a sequence of duos. One picture appears documentary, showing a person from the perspective of the observer, from behind or from the side. The other has the effect of a reconstruction of this visual perception from the perspective depicted in the first photograph. The external appearance of the person in a public place is combined with his or her introspective perception.

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Hardly anyone can actually remember what was in fact seen during these daydream phases, as normally no attention is given to them. You were dreaming with open eyes. All channels of perception remain open; noises, smells, light penetrate, but are only perceived as from a distance, or unconsciously. The gaze is, so to speak, parked in a kind of waiting position, and visual perception is reduced in its functions to a minimum. Nothing is focussed on. For a while, you stare away as if able to see through things. These observations of perceptual physiology are transferred by the photographer to her camera and photography technique. The reconstruction photos, too, are blurred, and the choice of the picture

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fragment is orientated to the direction in which the person observed was looking. Filipa César records images that really should not exist, because they are copies of unconscious perception, excluded from direct observation.

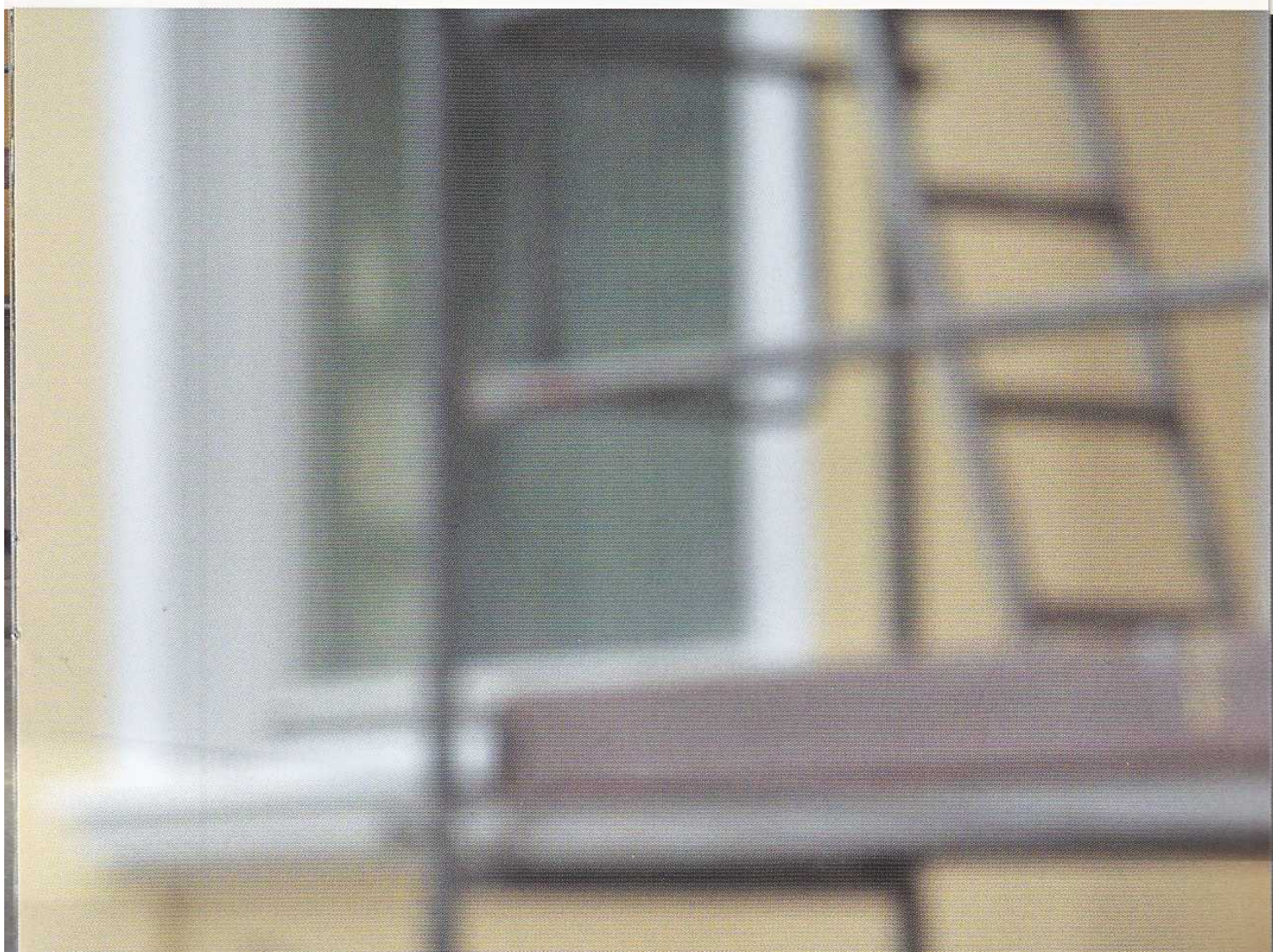
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It is paradoxical that precisely these pictures show nothing but sections of the visible world. Apparently arbitrary excerpts from the area the person observed is momentarily looking at, details of house walls, rows of empty chairs in a park, shop windows or the play of water in fountains and rivers. For the moment of recording, the photographer brings her own perception through the camera into correspondence with that of the person observed, without giving up the independence of her subjective perspective. Her artistic autonomy in the aesthetic choice of section of the picture, point of time of the recording, focus and exposure concurs here with her perspective as observer. Filipa César enters into the manner of seeing of other people. At the same time, she rises above the persons observed by making her conception of observation transparent to the beholder of her photographs but not to those persons she has approached unnoticed in the street in order to observe and photograph them. The daydreamers are in a quasi-autistic condition which the photographer does not disturb or interrupt. She remains offstage, unperceived by her targets.

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The beholder can be placed in the role of the observer, with the effect that one seems to be able to penetrate into the thoughts of the persons observed. The reconstruction photos of the daydream pictures function as a point of contact to the sphere of the inner world of fantasy. Their puristic

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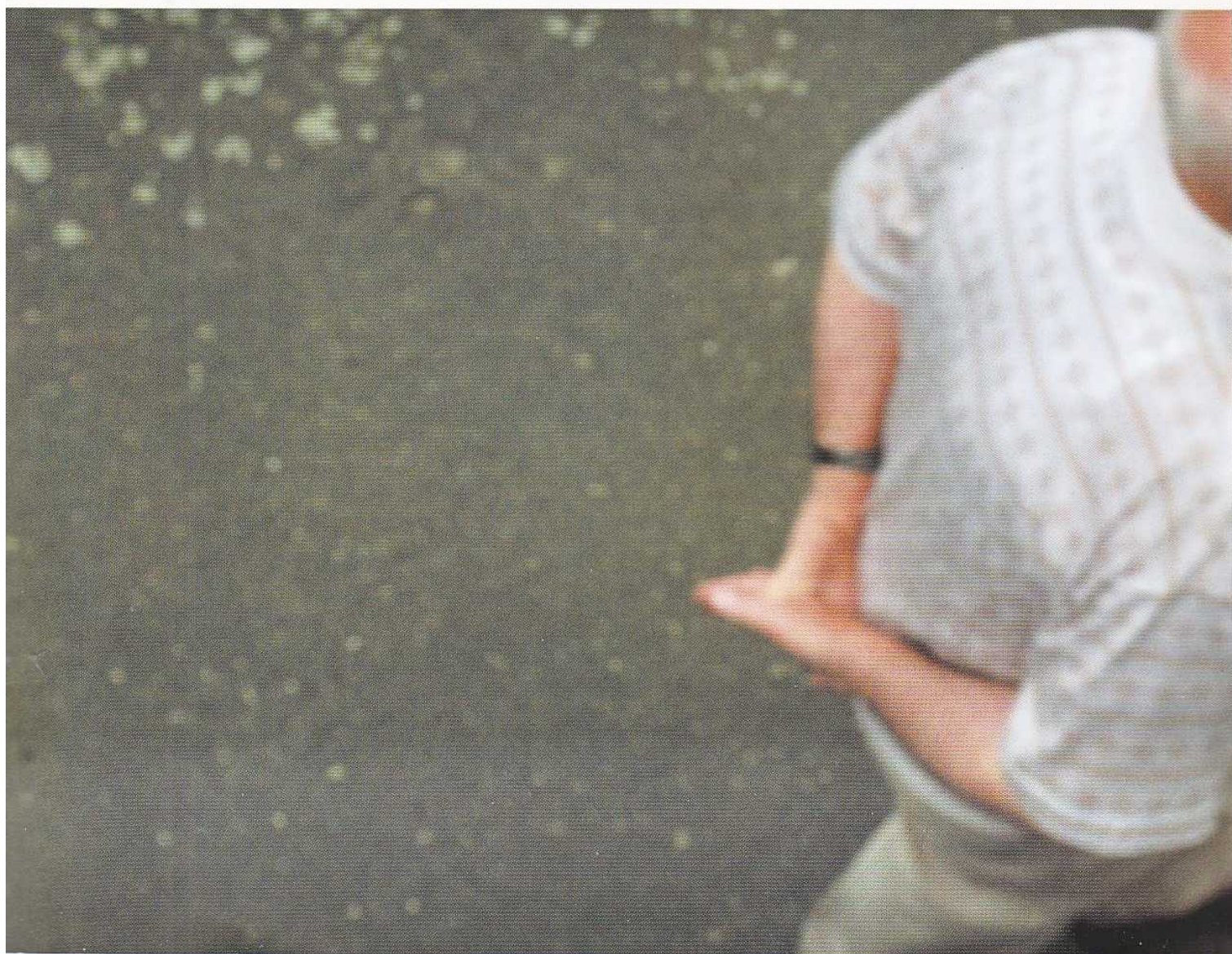


structuring appears as a dogmatic rejection of everything which cannot be embedded totally in this life. In the "monologues" of Filipa César, no other visual stimulus is given for the presentation of dream pictures than brutally frank perceptions of the present-day world.

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Every conception of a scene refers back to observations. It is precisely in this stability that the pictures of the "monologues" are able to give concrete points of reference for speculation on the private background which might determine the lives of the persons observed and the contents of their daydreams. Behind all the dreams there are other stories, and minimal indications are enough to raise questions as to the personal circumstances of their lives and to set off investigation of causes. The physical attitude of the persons, their clothing and positioning on the street or their choice of direction in looking speak volumes. The assumption that the "monologue" depicted on pages 6-7 is in a relatively problematic or perhaps even tragic context is apparent from the seemingly dejected, bent attitude of the woman lost in her thoughts and averted strictly from her surroundings with her head against a wall. The wish to escape from the world for a while is recognizable in the physical attitude of almost all the dreamers depicted, whether they are clasping their hands behind their backs, turning their backs on what is happening in the street or folding their arms in defence against reality. The drama evoked varies according to the relationship in which the individual seems to be placed physically regarding his surroundings, down to the relatively trivial-seeming daydream situation, for example in the "monologue" on pages 4-5. Here, the points of reference, the surroundings of a pleasant, sunny park landscape, a relaxed sitting position in a garden chair and light walking

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clothes, describe rather a situation of calm, which appears like a daydream scene of a gentleman with remembrances of those absent, perhaps deceased.

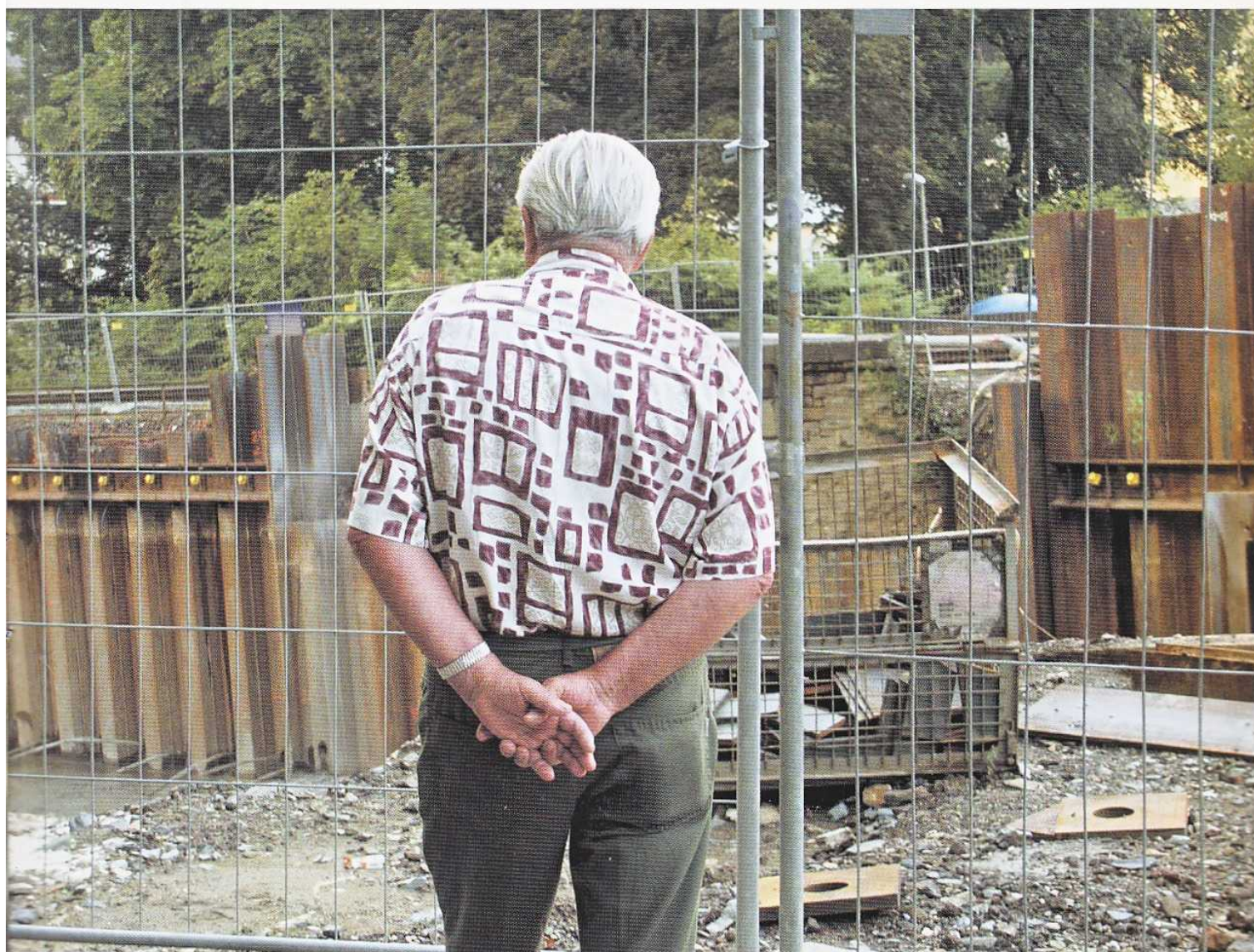
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Every "monologue" is a portrait of a person of whom no concrete information is given, such as name, address or date of birth, but whose individual history and personality can be read from the photographs. Over and above the concrete representation of each individual, the series offers in its constant elements points of reference for the investigation of general human behaviour, perception mechanisms and capabilities having to do with the daydreaming situation. The second constant theme is the place, Bad Ems, in which Filipa César developed the concept of her "monologues", recorded her observations of daydreamers and took the first photographs of the series. Basically, the artist thus developed a possibility of exploring the area of her working stay, to which she had come on the invitation of the *pépinières européennes pour jeunes artistes*. She considers Bad Ems from the perspective of other people, through the eyes of daydreamers lounging around here with nothing special to do. From this standpoint, Bad Ems appears as a meta-location in which real life does not seem to take place, as a dreamy, almost ghostly, empty-seeming town, reminiscent of a theme park or an open-air museum. Its existence as a nostalgic spa town, whose heyday as a tourist attraction lies in the past, temporally and functionally detached from the familiar contexts of the world of work and everyday living, offers the ideal background for "absences".

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The "absence" from reality, the transition into a mental space, the sensation of being alone with

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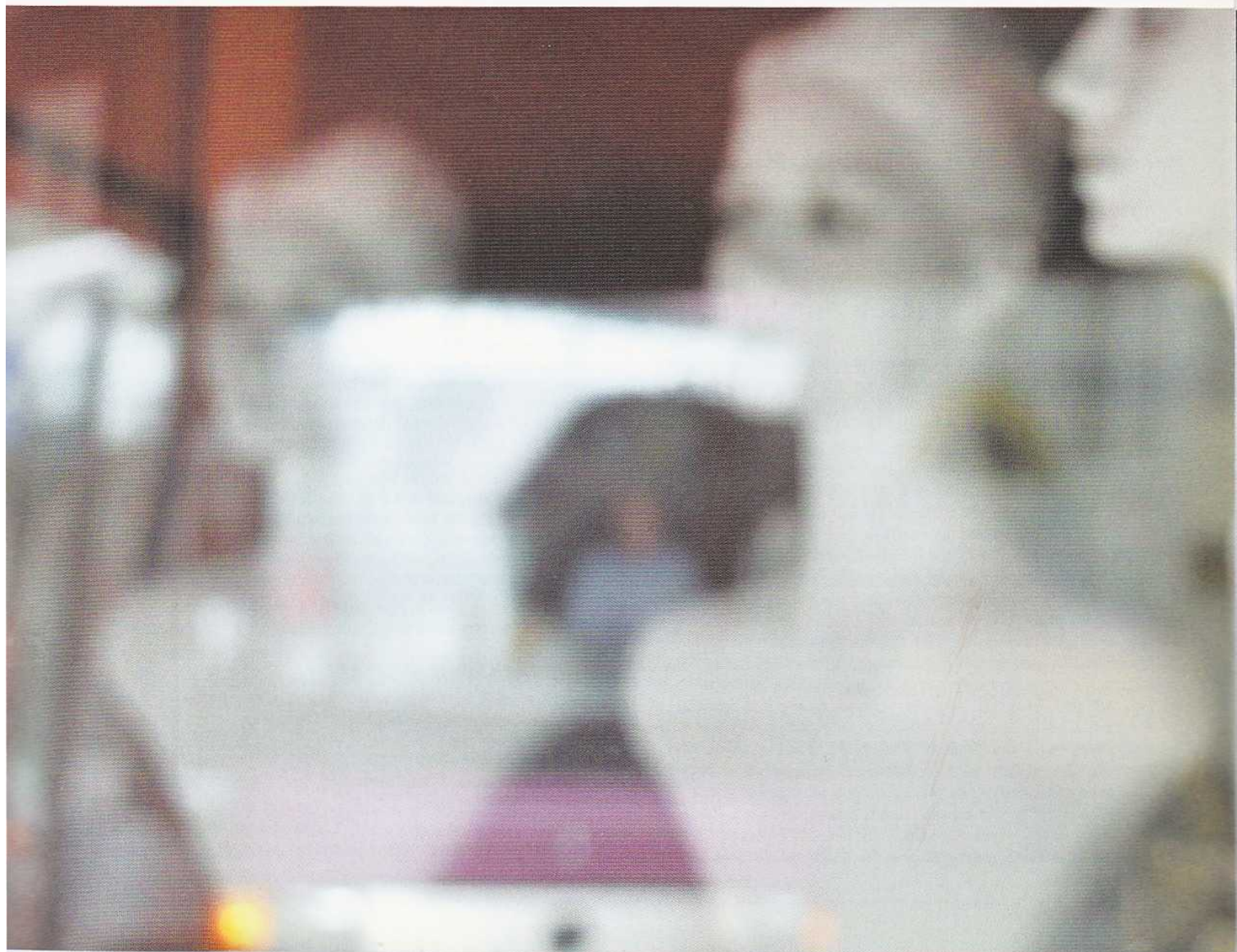






oneself and the inner dialogue with the self: these characteristic elements of the "absences" are typical of another situation, that in which people are to be found while at prayer. The perspective of the photographer as observer of people from offstage can be connected to concepts of the divine or the medial. All the figures depicted by her are representative of one's own questions on the interrelations between one's own presence and the existence of the world. On the basis of the greatest possible neutrality and the perfectionist instrumentation of her documentary photography, Filipa César sets forth open spaces for the interpretation of her pictures. By means of her specific observation and reconstruction, unconscious visual perceptions become points of departure for individual interpretations and are thus transposed from the subjective to the collective view of the world. Everyday things and objects which happened to catch the eye, such as a lightning conductor, builders' scaffolding, a brace, a drainpipe or a telescope can appear as significant for the individual beholder as a specifically chosen symbol. What makes which picture into a signifier depends on the degree of openness with which an observer perceives reality.

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## ★ GOING UNDERCOVERS ★

*I am a private detective that needs someone special in my life. I love to socialise and dance, but I'd rather be doing it as a "couple" than a single. My sense of humour is a scream and I shoot straight from the hip. I usually can spot a liar/cheater/player within 2 minutes of meeting them (male or female), and I move away very quickly from those types. I am 100% faithful, honest and respectful, and those are the only things I DEMAND from any partner in life. I am very laid back and everyone I meet feels comfortably right away with me, for they look in my eyes, and they see who and what I am, and they know they have nothing to fear from me. I am very sensual and uninhibited. I like the same in my partner, and I like public displays of affection, with good taste of course.*

## DRONE SEEKS BUTTERFLY FOR ★ FLYING LESSONS ★

There must be more to life than work. We all hope to find someone who can communicate without words. That hasn't happened for me, so I must use language I've been studying Chinese for about 4 months. It's been a struggle, but I know I can learn Mandarin. I have my sense of humour, never was cynical and still have hope. Who and what we are, is sometimes defined by what we do. "You become what you are" seems to be true for most people enjoy my work. I'm the Chief Engineer in a communications building and believe we are not put on this earth to be alone, there's someone for everyone. I'm loyal to friends, patient with children, good to strangers and faithful as a Magnavox. I'm not a great looking "guy", but I am a good-looking man.

## --- SOME SPICE WILL BE NICE ---

I'm honest, reliable, caring, sensitive, spontaneous, creative, emotionally and mentally stable, with a great sense of humor.

## Dynamic French Connection

Une Femme: Dynamic, vivacious, possessing a tremendous joie de vivre. Amused and bemused by all that she sees/observes and continues to discover. At ease in the company of people with a realistic view on life and the world, whilst possessing a thirst and zest for living. Enchanted in the company of those with charisma, fun to be with but also kind, respectful and caring towards others. Favours the encouragement and promotion of educational, scientific projects and new discovery thus helping others less fortunate. Very passionate and romantic yet feet firmly on the ground. A good sense of fun, culture and the ability to realise that life is a big stage where it is totally up to us how we choose to manage or play the part. Enjoys seeing and buying works of Art, crystals, sculptures, and antiques. Listening to music: classical, jazz, blues and a varied choice of folk and other songs and music. Loves opera, primarily Italian opera: Verdi, Puccini, Rossini, also Bizet and Mozart. Has fun when browsing through books, enjoys sailing, swimming, cruising, scuba diving, travelling, some skiing, (and more...). Classic cars racing, reading, playing back gammon, chess (though not very good yet). Regularly goes to theatre and concerts. A butterfly that needs to see, feel, smell and touch everything that has to do with life beauty charm and elegance. Does not suffer fools gladly (but likes to help out). Cannot abide lazy, unreliable nor mean people in any way shape or form, particularly when directed towards those defenceless or less fortunate. The world is hard enough there is neither need nor justification to make it any harder or meaner. Finally for now or at least til we meet properly: Favours intelligent, humorous conversations and good food. It is all up to you now!

## Where Is My Marlboro Man?

More about The Kitty: I believe that a relationship should compliment each partner, and inspire them to be better people. I think that the man of my dreams will be everything I need, not because he possesses "perfect" qualities, but because he is who he is. He will have a good heart and mind and everything he says and does will be like food for my soul. Loneliness really sucks! I think I have been alone for too long. I am going to give this a try and hopefully I will get somewhere with it. Loneliness hurts. Loneliness is not for the people who love love. Love being in love with love, love what love has to offer. I want someone to love. Are you out there? IF U ARE JUST LOOKING FOR "FUN", FORGET IT!! I would like to think of myself as fun-loving, personally charged, keeper of all secrets, and adorable. I don't like sports, but will watch them if that special man in my life likes them and then at half time I will try to make time :) My ideal date... humm... Swanson frozen tv dinner, and a rented movie? That can change depends on how much I like my date. I would like to think I am guarded. I don't tell people more than they NEED to know about me or what is going on in my life. I am kind of secretive. If you are out there feel free to call out to me, I'm waiting :) I am the proverbial 'celestial whisper' hanging on the wind in wait.

## Good Things Come In Small Packages

*I am sensitive, but not weak. I am romantic, but not hopeless. I have a positive attitude, and good sense of humor. I am sociable but sometime like to be alone. I enjoy reading, drawing, walking, dancing. I like dogs, cats, and parrots (all become talkative, even cats.)*

## • Ready To Settle? •

Ever feel like you've reached that time in your life when all seems to be falling into place and the desire to finally settle down is in the horizon? Although I've been feeling like that for a few years, the people I've met haven't quite convinced me they're the one for me. I'm sure some of you feel the same way after being engaged and having tried just about every conceivable place trying to meet the so-called "right person" and to no avail. But don't get me wrong: I meet more than my share of women since I'm very outgoing, confident, funny, happy, independent, and yet, the chemistry is VERY HARD to find, to put it mildly. So, here we are...you reading and who knows what I'm doing at this time? but rest assured, I'm not bored. Too energetic for that, too ambitious for that, and too focused to waste time being bored. However, we all have our reasons for being here and my reason is to AT LEAST find someone compatible enough to start as friends and hopefully develop into something worth the time spent trying to know one another. So, if you've gotten this far, how about taking the time to reply and take a chance on reality.

## PLAN OR SPONTANEOUS?

*I am a huge sports fan, love basketball, animals, fun and spontaneous activities. I also like relaxing and pampering myself. I've been told that I am smart, funny and great to be around. I enjoy making people happy! I like a variety of music, and I can hang out with all kinds of people. If you want to know more you will have to find out!*



## my funny valentine

I'm a street-smart, level-headed lady with both feet on the ground and a pretty good brain (which takes care of a number of key body parts!) Academically successful with a thirst for continual learning, along with a rollicking sense of humor. Looking for soulmate who knows what he's about and how to share. I have come to know what is really important and I know what my priorities are. Love laughter, books, theatre, travel, museums, science, most types of music and opera. Urban exploring (people watching) is great and hanging out can be satisfying too. Open to trying lots of different experiences.

### \* LETS HAVE FUN \*

*A quick take on me: adventurer and homebody; intellectual and athletic; opinionated and open-minded; passionate and loyal; talker and listener. I am not without emotional scars, but have learned and grown from them. For me chemistry opens the door, but once inside, we need to fill it with laughter, warmth, open and honest communication, passion. I have many interests including most things outdoors, hiking, nature, photography, snow and water skiing. I enjoy fine dining, dancing and new adventures abroad. I am capable and successful, so you would have to be the same to keep my interest.*

## So Act Fast!

I'm a happy, playful kid at heart, kind and caring, looking for a friend to share my time with. Having successfully raised a kid into a happy healthy young adult, I can now relax and enjoy life a little as I wait patiently to be a grandparent. I'm looking forward to meeting that special someone that I can share my dreams with.

## Come fly with me...

*A lover of poetry & the arts, I love to write & create. During my travels I have learned that in order to find real love I have to first heal those hurts within myself that create barriers to loving relationships. And so being alone for so long has definitely been a very important step for me in learning to heal. I don't believe that there is any such thing as a "perfect lover", but just creating perfect "love"...& that search must begin within, & that is where I am at, constantly working at creating perfect love within me. It is not just about who I am attracted to, its also about who is attracted to the truth of who I am. I believe it is fundamental to take the time to polish the mirror of the heart so that the Divine Light can reflect itself brightly & beautifully. Anything good that comes from me is ultimately from Allah ta'ala. When we learn from each other, we have a chance at wholeness, so I seek someone who will add to my growth & not take anything away. I seek someone who is free of past constraints. Someone who is not afraid to express themselves & to show affection. Someone who has a good sense of humour but yet still has both feet on the ground. Someone who will be my best friend. Someone who is spiritually grounded. It is not easy trying to live in the belly of the beast which is why I will stand by, love & support my partner & will be his friend on this sometimes rough terrain called 'Life'. We are each of us angels with one wing & we can only fly by embracing each other...so if you are out there, come fly with me, Insha'Allah.*

## CURVES & CULTURE

*Intelligent, warm, approachable, with a sense of humor, good spirits. Embraceable, curvaceous and soft, very pretty and stylish, with interests in English and American literature, fiction writing, museum-going, book stores, fashion, indie rock, vintage soul music, quality TV, dogs, etc. Interested in a friendly, affectionate, and pleasurable association with a sincere, genuinely nice man. I'm happy on my own, marriage and/or constant togetherness is not a current goal. Would like to be happy in company with someone who is happy too.*

## The Real Thing, Please!

HELP! Something real! Please! No more games. I would love to meet someone special to share my time. I cook. I have a good relationship with my family. I am not into sports, although my friends are trying to change that. My life is the arts. I work in theatre and film as a fight director and stuntman, as well as visual art mediums. Very busy. However, I will make all the time necessary for the right woman. I think a good relationship is built on compassion, communication and respect (as well as about a thousand other things). I want someone to spend my romantic energy on. I have always said I would rather be by myself than with the wrong person. Well, someone took me at my word. I am ready now. Save me.

## Times change...go with the flow

This seemed like another way to meet someone, so I thought I'd try it. I love movies, the beach, sports, working out, parks, rollerblading, seeing shows and concerts, like to cook. I just want to hang out with someone and do things we both like together, have fun and good conversation and laugh. I'm a real easy guy to talk to. I can make you laugh and I listen well.

### \* Free Spirit \*

*Will try about anything, at least once. I love life and would like to share myself with that person that knows the meaning of life.*

## NO LIES

Friends would describe me as, loyal, kind, and honest. I'm financially secure, and work three days a week in the perfume industry formulating fragrances for products such as household detergents to eau de colognes. I love my work and enjoy the people I work with. This leaves me time to explore the cities parks and museums. I've travelled quite a bit. I especially like Italy. The people are so warm and a little crazy. I like most music but especially Jazz, classical and popular music from the first half of the twentieth century. I also floss regularly, eat with my mouth closed and tip well if it's my turn. All and all, not a bad date.







This book appears in connection with a scholarship of the *pépinieres européennes pour jeunes artistes* in the Künstlerhaus Schloß Balmoral from May to August 2002.

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TASTE IT.



*The imaginative look makes what is real into something imaginary,  
while it itself becomes real and gives us back reality.*

Gilles Deleuze