

When I was a child, I experienced intense fever dreams whenever I had a temperature. One dream was just vibrating fields of black and white, pulsing with screaming energy that I couldn't hear but could feel deeply. It was a nightmare battle between light and dark that raged as my fever peaked.

This vision gave me an eerie feeling of being dislocated from something right in front, or even inside, of me. It felt cosmic and powerful, yet I couldn't hear the sounds of the display that I knew must be ear-splitting. I was there but detached from the violence, like being in the eye of a hurricane. Sleeping while your blood is boiling from a fever will make you dream crazy things.

I am experiencing that feeling more often these days; being in a quiet world, having mundane experiences, fulfilling obligations, moving along the path of my daily routine. And yet there is a horrible violence nearby, and its vibrations are penetrating everything in my environment. The gulf between the normalized world of the everyday and the reality of the doom we move almost inexorably towards creates detachment, a feeling of existential concern that makes it hard to see things as they used to appear. Going about your day while the world is boiling will make you feel crazy.

*Walking through the city, seeing the same horizon, and yet the tint of the sky is different. The warmth of the sun is changed. It seems to burn hotter as if it's going through the elements on the periodic table and the flames are red, orange, blue, green, purple, white. Someday our sun will die, and it will run out of fuel and expand to surround our whole solar system, and the earth will burn to dust. But it seems like we have a nearer doom that will strike our home, and it is one that we have made ourselves.*

Every day I choose a path through my life and my environment, most of it full of mundane repetition, the comfort of a routine, the stability of a normalized existence. There is a pervasive feeling of sadness, or weirdness, and loss. Science journalist Zoë Schlanger writes about this feeling in an essay about the word 'Solastalgia' (coined by philosopher Glenn Albrecht to describe the feeling of 'the pain or sickness caused by the loss or lack of solace and the sense of isolation connected to the present state of one's home and territory'); it's the feeling of 'watching the earthly elements of their home morph into something that feels remote, while they stay put'. Albrecht describes it as:

not about looking back to some golden past, nor is it about seeking another place as "home." It is the "lived experience" of the loss of the present as manifest in a feeling of dislocation; of being undermined by forces that destroy the potential for solace to be derived from the present. In short,

solastalgia is a form of homesickness one gets when one is still at “home.”

The loss of our home is brutal, but it can feel distant, especially for those of us who live comfortably with seemingly less attachment to our environment. What we are going through can feel far away and incomprehensible, while at the same time poisoning our perception with anxiety and doom at the edges of our mind.

*Walking is a green form of transit. Walking is also a way to alleviate depression from thinking about the doom of climate change. Every day we walk through life into the night, and then we do the same thing again. Every step is a powerful choice. We are always getting deeper in.*

Denise Kupferschmidt

October 2019

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*Solastalgia* marks Denise Kupferschmidt’s fourth solo exhibition with the gallery. Kupferschmidt received her BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. Recent solo exhibitions have been with Halsey McKay Gallery and Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto. Her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions, including at BAM, Foxy Productions, Eleven Rivington, Nicole Klagsbrun and Tracey Williams, NY amongst others. She was an organizer of the itinerant group-show series *Apartment Show*. Kupferschmidt is represented by Halsey McKay Gallery.

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