



NEW PUBLICATION 2023

Julia and Émilie de Cooker
Funafuti
i aso nei / aujourd'hui / today

Photographs by Julia de Cooker
 Text by Émilie de Cooker
 Designed by Guillaume Buleté
 Hardcover
 18 x 24 cm
 120 pages
 73 color illustrations
 English, French
 ISBN 978-3-96900-118-9
 Euro 38,00

Intimate portrait of an island culture in the Pacific Ocean, threatened by rising sea levels

Funafuti, one of the nine atolls that form the independent state Tuvalu, is a surprisingly tiny fragment of land emerging in the wide Pacific Ocean, measuring barely 2.8 square kilometers. Intrigued by the unexpected human presence on this remote island, photographer Julia de Cooker and her sister, writer Émilie de Cooker, flew in to appreciate its particular culture, conscious of its ominous destiny: in a few decades Tuvalu will be submerged by the rising seas. Despite the grim curiosity that led them there, they focused on depicting the joyful daily life on the atoll, guiding them to the unavoidable reflection about their own manner of living and occupying the world. This book offers both an artistic and philosophical portrait of *Funafuti i aso nei* (today). It is also a plea against global standardization and for diversity, which creates life.

From the text by Émilie de Cooker:

Intrigued by this human presence in such an unlikely spot, our curiosity about Tuvalu is tinged with tragedy. The threat of its impending disappearance hangs over these islands, an inexorable consequence of rising sea levels. While we in no way wished to ignore the dire situation that has thrust this archipelago into the limelight, we chose instead to focus upon life as it is currently led there, a life filled with song and dance under a blazing sun. We set out to explore the archipelago's cultural distinctiveness, to look at both the unusual and the ordinary and question our own ways of living in the world, even as we would confront the challenges to our equanimity and preconceptions that are part and parcel of encounters with the other.(...)

Here, on this little scrap of an island, Denis Diderot's art of inverting values in order to take Nature as a benchmark, celebrating candor,

and making a plea for tolerance suddenly takes on its full meaning. Beneath the rustling palms, standing on the burning sand by the peaceful lagoon, I felt the nostalgia for a natural state that permeates the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. I am tempted to believe in the much debated premise that the harmony of humans with Nature is only possible if humans do not believe they can possess land. It is the appropriation of land that creates inequality among humans, and leads one to conceive of Nature as an object which one can dispose of as one likes. When will we finally understand that everything is not under our control?

Witnessing the tableau of the people of Tuvalu's ancestral relationship with Nature, against the backdrop of its accelerated destruction, makes me question our will to be free of it. I see this as an example of our excess. It is about time that we rediscover, or perhaps even discover, a means of creating a balanced relationship with Nature. This is the challenge, and the tightrope, of contemporary ecology – it is ultimately a challenge of wisdom.

Julia de Cooker holds a diploma (2012) from the Ecole Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne, Switzerland.. She was a finalist at the La Gacilly photo festival for the Prix Nouvelles Ecritures pour la Photographie Environnementale (2021) for the project *Funafuti*. Kehrer Verlag published her book *Svalbard, an Arcticificial Life*, about a unique community near the North pole, in 2017.

Émilie de Cooker holds a degrees in educational science and philosophy. She teaches philosophy and runs an equestrian centre in Normandy where she develops coaching techniques.

Please note:

These photographs have been copyright cleared for worldwide print and electronic reproduction in the context of reviews of the books only. Print media: No more than THREE photographs plus the cover image from the selection can be used in total – they are not to be used on the cover or cropped. Online media may use a total of TWELVE images in a gallery.

For further details, press images, permissions and review copies, please contact the publisher's press office:

Barbara Karpf, barbara.karpf@kehrerverlag.com or pr.assistance@kehrerverlag.com

Kehrer Verlag, Mannheimer Str. 175, 69123 Heidelberg, Germany
 Phone +49 (0)6221/649 20-18 | Fax +49 (0)6221/64920-20
www.kehrerverlag.com

Press images



01_
© Julia de Cooker



02_
© Julia de Cooker



03_
© Julia de Cooker



04_
© Julia de Cooker



05_
© Julia de Cooker



06_ © Julia de Cooker



07_
© Julia de Cooker



08_
© Julia de Cooker



09_
© Julia de Cooker



10_
© Julia de Cooker



11_
© Julia de Cooker



12_
© Julia de Cooker