

Paradise Series

an installation with specifically designed tools activated during a performance, allowing the designer to escape her mundane daily life



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Inspiration & process



The starting point of Paradise Series is an essential part of human nature: the dream of a life better than the one we know. The world stands for limits and we feel the urge to transcend these limits, to escape the mundane aspects of our daily lives.

Inspired by photographs of modernist architects imagining and creating utopian models for a better society in their studio, Sofie Deckers started to direct preferable scenarios for herself between the walls of her living room and class room. In doing so, she created an interplay between herself as a director, the puppeteer creating the scene and herself as the character, the puppet who becomes part of the scene.

Images of beaches, palm trees and swimmingpools appeared intuitively and she discovered a strong influence of an imagery that is widely circulated and socially

shared. Paradise is an omnipresent timeless figure expressing a yearning for that which is absent or desired. It has shifted over time and adapted itself to changing purposes and circumstances. Today, in our modern western society, paradise has become a commodity on the tourist market, a highly controlled construction that responds to the needs of Western tourists to transcend the limits of daily life. Escapism is produced and sold in an easy accessible form: a getaway to an exotic remote island. However, it is an artificial construction that ignores the local reality of these destinations and the imagined experience can never be reached, because it doesn't exist outside the imagination.



Installation & performance



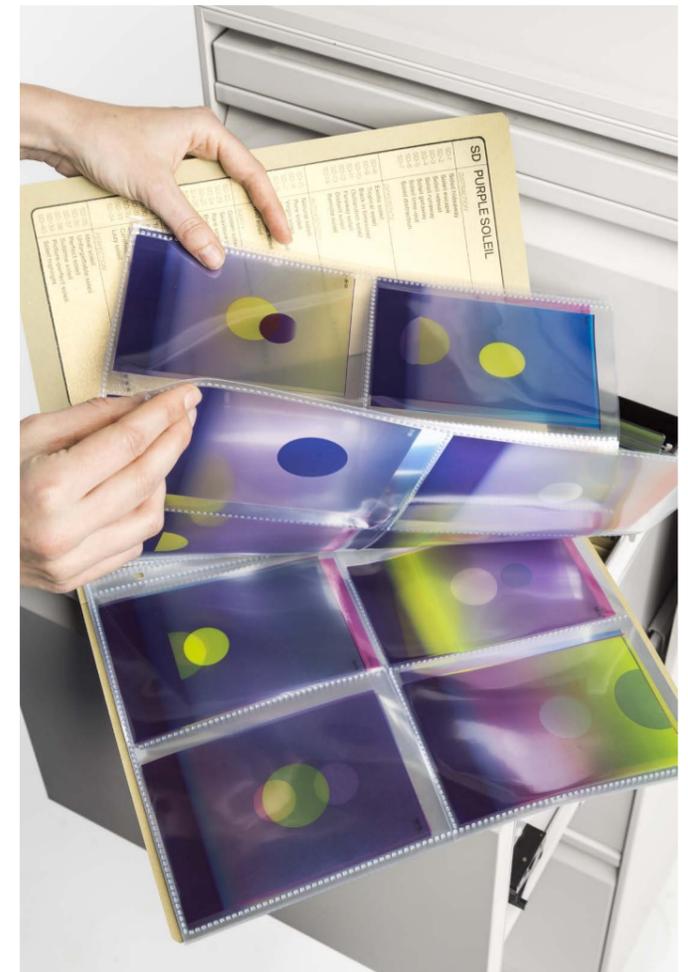
With the installation and performance that brings it to life, Sofie Deckers becomes the director of this collective fantasy of paradise with the help of movable and easy to set up elements (a file cabinet which contains a build-in overhead projector, a roll-up screen and a screen and office chair on wheels). The content of the file cabinet is based on a research in many travel catalogues. While at first sight the offer seems very large, it turns out to be very limited. The Seychelles, The Caraïbes or The Maldives, three Island-groups that are each located in another continent and that therefore vary significantly, are all standardised to the same form containing the same ingredients.



Consequently, the cabinet contains four ingredients: a swimmingpool, a palmtree, a sunset and a cocktail, each available in a large offer with not a real variation. With the help of roll-out samplers a choice can easily be made and codes refer to files that can efficiently be found in the well-organised drawers. Files are not sorted by location, but by colors and forms and subsequently named and rated in which way they respond to our different needs.



For instance, swimmingpool *golden oasis*, palm tree *palm treasure*, sunset *unique evening shade* and cocktail *precious kiwi* will rate high on rarity, while *easy pool*, *lazy palm*, *chill seaview* and *tranquil papaya* will give more fulfillment when looking for tranquillity.





Subsequently, paradise can easily be assembled with the use of the overhead projector. When work is done, Sofie Deckers rolls the office chair in front of her creation, takes a seat and finally relaxes and enjoys the view while having a sip from her cocktail. Eventually, every creation of paradise is captured on a polaroid photo, that becomes numbered and filed in the cabinet.

Paradise Series started as a personal investigation, whereby the designer was figuring out how to create an escapist setup to direct preferable scenarios for herself. However, it became a broader societal reflection as well, laying bare to how the tourist industry today responds to this natural human desire to transcend the limits of daily life.

Technical specifications

Size occupied space: 6m x 6m

Elements: File cabinet (40cm x 80cm x 120cm), overhead-projector, roll-up screen on tripod (180cm x 180cm), screen on wheels (70cm x 100cm), office chair

Materials inside the cabinet: suspension files, riso-printed dividers, prints on transparent paper, camera, sunglasses

Length of performance: 10 minutes

Light: LED light integrated in the cabinet + light of the projector (no external light sources)

