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K.K.Kozik Wild Kingdom @ Røbling Hall
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A lone figure hiking through exotic landscapes carrying only an umbrella could represent the painter K.K. Kozik. These vistas of the mind appear like Victorian travel photos, collected to document one's journey through mystical lands on the Grand Tour.

Our culture's insatiable appetite for information has created a situation where some say that every idea has been thought, every sight has been seen, and every feeling felt. Thus has been born a new enterprise, the art of paraphrase. Jorge Luis Borges wrote adventure stories with research as the subject. The worlds created in these stories were not those known through first hand experience, but instead worlds imagined using information received and interpreted through others.

Like Borges, Kozik's pictures represent stops on an interior journey rather than an exterior one. They appear to be fashioned like theatrical props, out of bits and pieces of preconceived ideas or images, rather than from actual observations. Many of the scenes are devoid of people. Lush vegetation and undecipherable light sources give these landscapes a strange luminescent quality, less naive and perhaps more obsessive. Three Wishes Garden is a large view of an oriental garden. Small figures perform maintenance work. A path circumnavigates the park while a woman stands in an oriental gazebo surveying her realm. The green of the lawns and the pink and blue of the flowering trees are colors never seen in botanical catalogs. Burning Bright is a nocturnal view of a city. The central image is a tiger in a brightly painted carnival wagon that has been parked in a small back alley. The street is empty except for the local kitty cats that seem to want to hang out with the big guy. This painting has a Felliniesque cinematic quality I enjoyed. To follow Kozik's travels you won't need a roadmap, but Freud's Interpretation of Dreams might help.

James Kalm