



# Adam and Eve

## Eden's Tree of Love

An artist book by Sam Kerson and Katah

### Artist statement

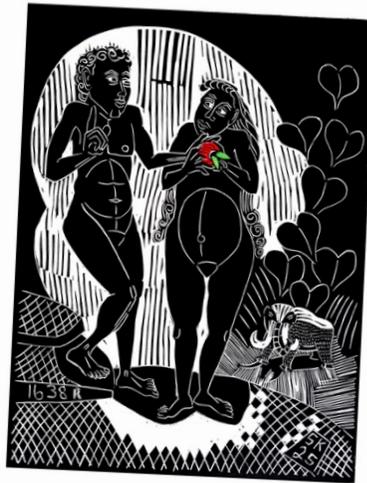
Many of the questions that are raised by the Garden of Eden story are expressed in our *Adam and Eve, Eden's Tree of Love*....

We started working on this reflection in Ii, Finland, when our Mammoth project was finished in 2022. There is a very pleasant public library in Ii. Katah had paperwork to do before we went on to France and I went with her, riding our bikes across the island, Iinsari, to Ii village.

Once, at Three Kings, on January 6, 2010, we performed a large fire-show on the ice-covered Ii River, right in front of the library. Right out the window from where I was looking at the etchings of Adam and Eve with the elephant in the background. We might say, I opened a book at random and saw, Rembrandt's full-bodied, voluptuous wife and he himself reminding her that there were limits. And in the background an elephant, cousin of our mammoths.

We went there all week. I with my drawing kit, Katah with her administrative and travel concerns. There were very few art books in the Ii library. I took it as an admonition; take your time, study the etching, the drawing, the concept, the formula, the composition, the elephant. Every day we went, beautiful late summer weather. Eve's critical look, Eve's loving presence. Adam's concern as well as his uprightiness, his poise, his assurance. The well-done hands and feet the curves of the bodies, the space in the drawing; the depth, with the elephant ensconced in the forest. How was it done? With a line with a shadow, with the open space with the delicate expressive smile?

The Rembrandt etching is dated 1638. Hmm, Dürer? Van de Goes? Cranach? Did they all make pictures of Adam and Eve? This is how we started our study of these 20 Adam and Eves, loosely adapted from artists long gone. Also inspired by artists of recent history. The latest being Rousseau and Susan Valadon, the British poet Ted Hughes, the Cuban painter, Wifredo Lam, with a nod to Botero at the exit.



FLOWERS BLAM BIRDS SING  
If in DOUBT TRUST Your heart  
CRUNCH!  
FIRES RAGE ICE MELTS!

Plenty for us to think about considering the tension between our modern gender-bender tendencies, and all the religious overtones. To us it seems the most important version of the story is by John Milton? Which is still patriarchal and strictly heterosexual. We read John Milton's version in *Paradise Lost*, which Milton wrote in 1650. He was blind and spoke the entire poem. Milton did not ask our modern question; Could Adam and Eve have continued being the gardeners of a perfect garden? Would they choose to live like that? How were they going to get free? they needed knowledge. Knowledge would liberate them.

Surely Eve bore Adam? Was Adam his mother's lover? Oedipus. A bit of a conundrum. Later resolved by immaculate conception, or emergence in a fully grown state, like Athena from the head of Zeus. Or Eve created from Adam's rib. There are other old Mythology's, stories of sculptors who create images so close to reality that the much-loved stone comes to life. Or the gods grant life to the ordered clay. Ovid's character Pygmalion, created his own lover, Galatea. Or was Galatea "created" by Venus? Gender questions. Who has the power? We chose to make an image of Eve creating Adam. Inspired by our daughter Sophie's abilities to shape marble into loving forms.

There is not much said about the drama of Adam and Eve in the bible. The old school artists were taking advantage of the little that was said to make their own statements about man and woman, love and life; what risks they might take and how they lost the Peaceable Kingdom. It was Eve who took the critical step. Adam hesitated. But finally, they were together; two humans, two lovers with one fate.

Lilith is named in the creation myth of the Sumerians. A sister to Inanna. Were their two women in the garden? And what about the creation of humans being the role of women and their biology?

Eve must have given birth to Adam? Who gave birth to Eve?

Are these questions preposterous? Is it just the literary form that requires this ordering of the characters? In the messier, biological evolutionary process, there are always, almost always, males and females, who reproduce through interaction. Excepting parthenogenesis.

We did not go back or search the painted origin of the story we just picked up the thread with Renaissance artists. In fact, I don't know if there is a similar story in China or India or Africa? One of our images does refer to the imaged "creation story" of Apoala, a small town in Oaxaca, Mexico, where the original couple emerge from a Tree of Life.

What about the twist that eating the apple is seen as Eve's "sin" but in fact it is what liberated them from the stasis of the garden. Eating the apple was the only way out. Eve courageously released them from their first bondage.



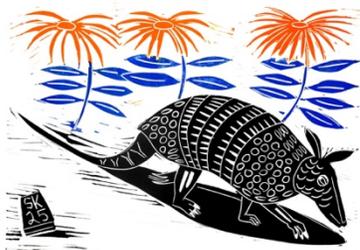
Midnight Cool Blue Light  
The Lover's Dreams Confounded  
Today is the Culprit

In our series we follow the idea into the twentieth century considering Susan Valadon, Wifredo Lam and Botero's versions of the Adam and Eve story. Dürer was interested in the question in the first years of 1500. Van der Goes was even a bit earlier.

We have added a few images about the education of the two originals in the garden. It seems they learned from the trees. The Tree of Life, The Tree of Love, The Tree of Knowledge, The Tree of Death. We imagine that frog taught them to swim and the birds taught them to sing.

With Wifredo Lam's surrealist image, we reflect on the question of time. When did the two understand time? Was there time in the garden? Chronos, father of the Greek gods had devoured many earlier infants, born by his sister Rhea, the Titan goddess. But Zeus was hidden by his mother until he was old enough to defeat Chronos. Zeus is said to have cut off the old man's balls and thrown them into the sea. The splash, when Chronos' genitals hit the sea, turned into the goddess Aphrodite. So, love was born and time began. Waiting for love? Perhaps it was the awareness of time? The Tree of Time? In a surrealist moment; Adam and Eve realized the garden was a sort of prison, a golden cage, and made their escape.

NIGHTINGALE'S Clear VOICE  
MELODIOUS HARMONY  
SONG THROUGH SOUNDS SEXY



About the animals; the story says, God created Adam and then he created the animals and Adam named them. Then God created Eve. Many of these historical images are full of animals. I tried to keep the mammoths out, just because we were working with mammoths at that time. And since they are so large, but then I saw the elephant in the Rembrandt from early 1600. And in closing we added the Armadillo.

Finally, a nod to Botero as we exit. The couple are usually depicted as being driven out of the garden. We realize that once they had knowledge they must have left on their own.

Adam is Obedient  
Eve Intuitive  
What opens The Gate is Love



Katah says, "our series speaks to the long-standing question of human origin. Our *Adam and Eve* is about love, loving humans, human encounters and the love that humans share. Love is the creative experience. Creation is love."

We are printers, book binders and engravers. We design and make our own books. Lately we have been elaborating different ways to add texts to our books. For this edition we had the idea that we could complement each scene with a Haiku, which we wrote. Then we engraved our Haikus in linoleum and printed them. Our own poems accompany the images, with our own hand-cut letters, that is to say, each poem is a unique engraved image.

Sam and Katah  
February 2026

>>> The book is currently being printed, at our *Atelier du Livre*  
It will be an edition of 20 books, we are now making the first 10  
The price is \$ 6,000 USD  
If you want to reserve your copy,  
contact us at: [dragondancetheatre2@gmail.com](mailto:dragondancetheatre2@gmail.com)  
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