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IRINA KULIKOVA by JUERGEN TELLER

– DEVLIN MAY CARE – When John Devlin began his studies at Cambridge in 1979, he was overwhelmed by the architecture and atmosphere, haunted by the spirits of the university’s alumni, like Newton, Darwin, Turing and Hawking. He immersed himself intensely in his studies, and soon suffered a mental breakdown. Devastated to leave Cambridge, he returned to his hometown of Halifax, Nova Scotia enshrouded in a deep, immovable melancholy and nostalgia for his alma mater. Recovering on the shores of the Minas Basin, he began to draw a series of architectural sketches reminiscent of the university’s most iconic edifices, the King’s Chapel and the Gibbs Building. Dissatisfied with merely reconstructing Cambridge from memory, Devlin soon began to design elaborate plans for an artificial island he longed to construct: Nova Cantabrigiensis. Meticulously drawn in ballpoint pen and crayons on the back of unemployment slips, unlike its source of inspiration, Nova Cantabrigiensis is equipped with lasers, rotating fountains, carousels and pools, and populated by stick-figures and canine-like creatures, all of whom wear halos. Over the course of nearly a decade, Devlin’s more than 360 sketches not only detail his insular vision, but offer insight into his process: veined with intricate arabesques and diagrams, they tell the story of a man on the hunt for the “King’s Constant,” a ratio he suspected lay hidden somewhere in the proportions of his favorite Cambridge buildings. If he could find this sacred formula, he theorized, he would be able to recreate Cambridge’s atmosphere anywhere in the world. –



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