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### POP-ART BY TADEJ

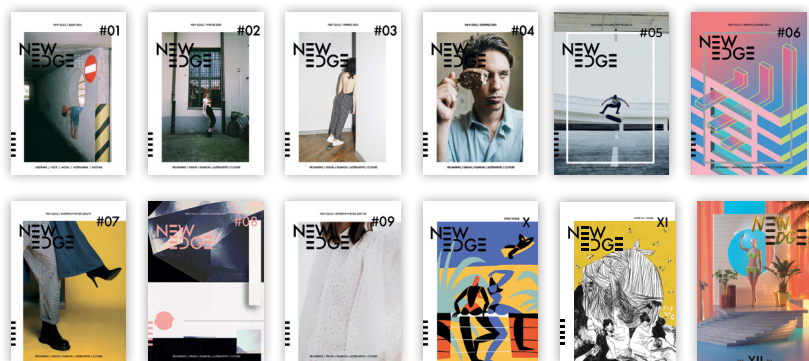
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Being part of New Edge magazine as a cover illustrator for Issue XIII 2020 was an amazing experience. It seemed like a funny coincidence

that Anja emailed me just a couple of days before I sent them my message about doing a collaboration with them. They always impress me with their content and it's such a pleasure to read it every single time. Kudos to that.

Since this issue is all about love, I decided to do an illustration of a pop-heArt with my signature eye and crown on top of it. XXX symbolizes hugs but it's also the most known dutch sign for Amsterdam where I've been living, happily, for the past 4 years.

# IT'S THE END OF AN ERA



We started from scratch, and over the past (wonderful) six years, we found a huge number of people who identified with our idea, who were willing to help us, and valued our shared work. Together, we shared a spot in our cultural space, created amazing content, socialized at events and had a great time.

We never imagined that our project would grow so much that we would hang out together at three events, where we also introduced a print edition of our magazine. As a team, we tried our best. We worked on our own initiative, without sponsors and financial help. We worked because we thought it was important to create our magazine and a space for young creatives to express themselves freely. We received quite a few confirmations, the biggest one being that we had the opportunity to work with each of you who contributed your share and that we were among the eight finalists at the Rector's Award.

After six years of consistently creating content, we've found ourselves on different paths in life and so the New Edge team has decided to press pause on our magazine for a short time, reflect on the work done so far and consider how to proceed.

The thirteenth issue includes the works of some creatives we've collaborated with in the past and personal essays from our team of writers, making it all the more special. With this issue, we are saying our goodbyes for however long this break should last. In the meantime, we will focus more on our website that will still be active and serve as our main space for publishing your submissions and featuring your work.

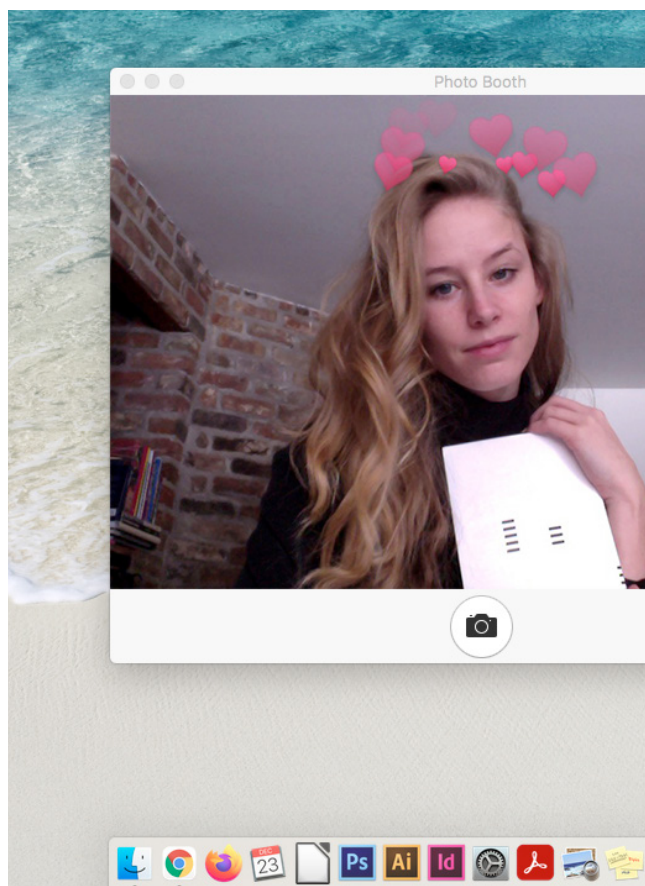
**Thank you for all the love over the past 6 years. We want to give at least some of it back to you. Welcome to the LOVE issue. —**







## **EDITOR IN CHIEF'S LETTER**



# 6 YEARS OF LOVE

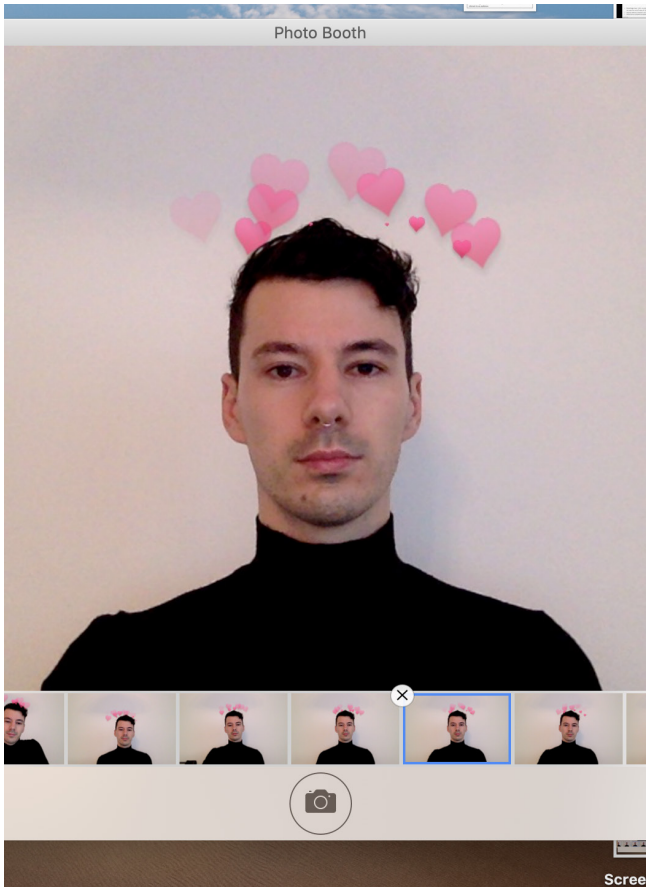
I can't really express my feelings ... But I would like to sincerely thank you for 6 years of love, your cooperation, and all your contributions to New Edge magazine.

Over the past wonderful six years, we shared a webspace, created beautiful content, socialized at events, and had a beautiful time.

In my eyes, the future is hopeful. I believe you can do anything if you believe in it. New Edge is proof that there is so much people can do if they wholeheartedly stand behind a project important to them and to anyone in a similar situation. It was wonderful to see how much creativity we have and that we are hugely willing to create something we like, something that means something to us, even though we are not paid for it.

Thanks! The journey with you was wonderful, with your help we learned a lot, and we are overjoyed for all the moments we spent together! Once again, we thank you with all our hearts for your cooperation, for all the help, support, and motivation, without you, the operation of our platform and our magazine would not be possible.

Thank you!  
Anja Korošec —





# OH, WHAT A GREAT TIME IT'S BEEN.

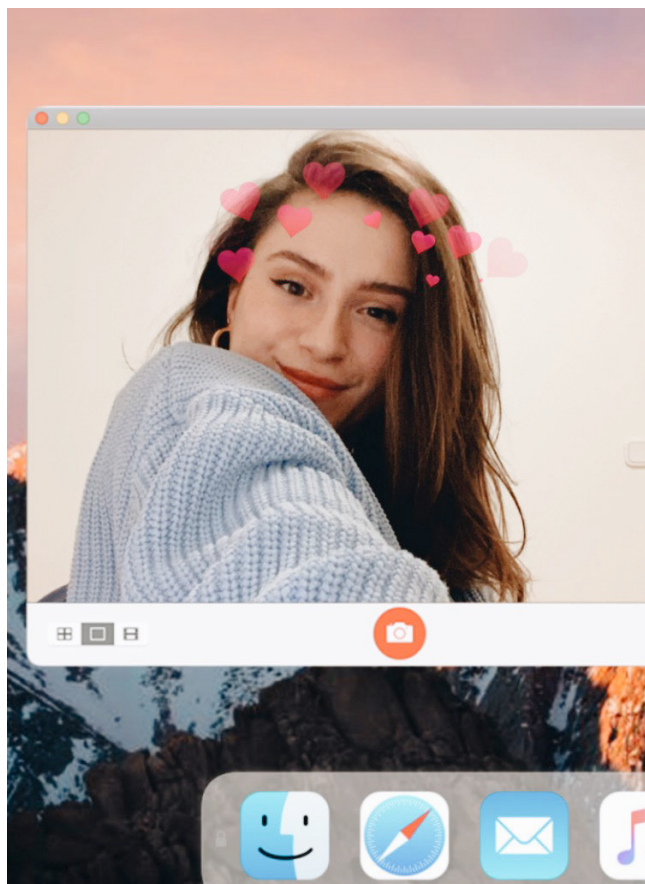
I would like to say THANK YOU to all of the talented creatives I've had a chance to work with. And I mean everyone from the amazing photographers, precise make-up artists, stunning models, and assistants... I wanted to write a full list, to thank you all individually, but it got longer and longer and exceeded my word count before I was halfway done.

Above all, New Edge allowed me/us to work with some exciting young designers that are working extremely hard at pushing their vision in a society that is not the best at supporting them - I would like to imagine we were at least a tiny bit involved in the shift.

No matter what happens with us, I would like for young people to work hard, be ambitious, creative, and most of all fight for what they believe in, fight for culture, fight for equality and fight for the all-important opportunities that we all deserve.

Here's to our future.

Anže Ermenc —



# THANK YOU!

I could write an endless list of things why I love being alive and most of them would include humans. I love it when the ground freezes in winter and people fall and laugh at how ungraceful it was. I love it when people remember to text not call those who don't like answering calls. I love it when people let out that small chuckle when their glasses fog up in winter. I love when people see a dog and point it out excitedly like they're kids again and seeing a dog is the event of the week. I love when people take the first bite of a really good dish and close their eyes and do a little dance. I love when people can't remember a word in a language they're communicating in and they just say it in their native language. I love when people laugh so hard, they have to hold on to something because they can't breathe in between laughs. And I love when people talk about something that they're passionate about and their entire faces light up.

And most of all I love when people get creative. I love when people express themselves through art - I believe it's a small piece of magic that we carry through all of the lives we're meant to live, past, present and future. Bodies moving to the rhythm of music, eyes closed because we're all living the same moment at once. Paintbrush strokes on canvas, raw pencil on blank paper, making something beautiful out of something so ordinary. We take letters and mould them into words, string those words into sentences to bare our minds, we pour our souls and feelings into songs and lyrics. We capture moments with lenses and make them timeless. The spectrum of human creativity is a universe without limits and

sometimes we pluck small leaves off every creative branch and combine them into a magazine and sometimes that is everything.

To Anja and Anže, who took me on board all those years ago and believed in my creativity when I wasn't confident enough to believe in it myself, thank you. Thank you for making this chapter of my life so special. Thank you for the opportunity to meet so many incredibly talented people and share their stories with my little interviews. Thank you for giving me a space to share my thoughts with my columns. Thank you for always being there for me when I was stuck creatively and for encouraging me when I wanted to branch out and explore new artistic fields with creative direction and fashion, not just my words. We created something incredibly special and amazing together. I love you.

To all the creators who were part of our journey, thank you. Thank you for trusting us with your work and choosing us as your space for expression. To the writers, thank you for trusting me with your words; I tried my best to have your voices heard when I did my little corrections. Thank you for being honest and raw, for sharing your minds and your emotions with us and our readers.

And to you, reading this, believing in us, staying with us until the final line of our little magazine, and being part of our community,

Thank you. I love you.

Maja Podojsteršek —

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Become friends  
with your demons.  
Have a cup of coffee  
together, then say  
thank you and  
move on.

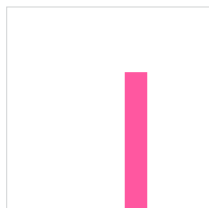
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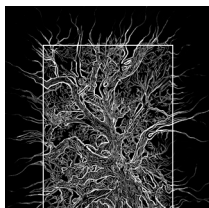
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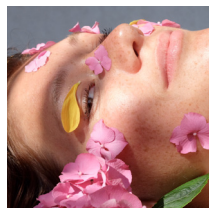
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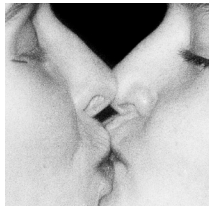
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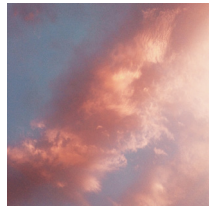
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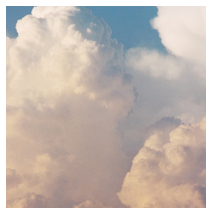
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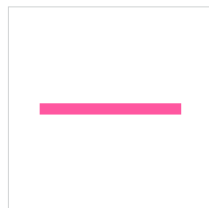
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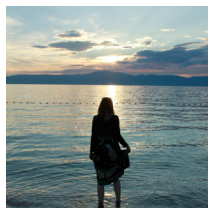
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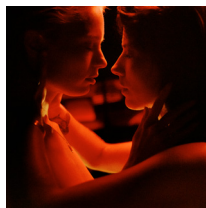
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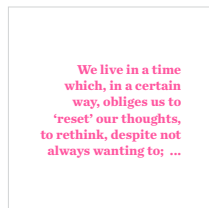
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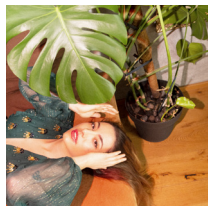
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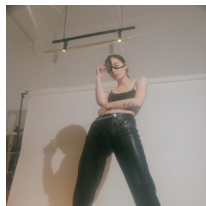
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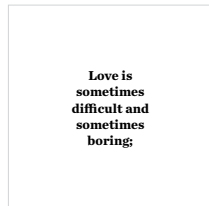
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ALTERNATIVE

ŽIGA KUHEL



LOVE  
— *is* —  
FLUID(S)



## **“There’s this illusion that homosexuals have sex and heterosexuals fall in love. That’s completely untrue. Everybody wants to be loved.”**

When I heard these words from Boy George, it got me thinking. We as humans seek something beyond just a sexual attraction; we wish for love and affection. Going back to the illusion Boy George is referring to, it makes us perceive gays as not normal, not human. This is one of many prejudices people have against gays. These predispositions are revealed with the unequal treatment of gays. An immense amount of bullying stems from such perception of gays, causing them to feel like outsiders. “How you came into this world is wrong, and you should be ashamed of it,” was echoing for years not only in my head but in the heads of most of the gays as well. It has a massive impact on the development of a child’s self-image since what they are, is also what society disapproves of.

I believe the perception of homosexuality, retained in the opening quote, simply derives from the fact that people who are opposing homosexuality can’t fathom the idea of two people of the same sex being affectionate and having a deeper connection. To love an individual of the same sex is considered as an invasion of something only heterosexuals are allowed to possess.

On the contrary, gays are damaged individuals. In most cases, they do not love themselves and require better self-love. Years of repression does a lot of emotional damage, resulting in many mental issues and unhealthy behaviours gays can take on. That is why gays can be superficial and based on how other people perceive them especially their competition. Their existence relies on the fact that they want to be seen, to make up for all the years of being unseen, lacking a voice. The self-image gays have, is usually distorted due to the heteronormative society they live in. This makes obtaining love hard for them.

I came to terms with who I am when I was about 15. Up until then, I felt like I was only a shell of a person. There was simply no me. I wanted to talk like people around me did, I wanted to walk like people around me did, I loved the way other people wanted me to love. I just desperately wanted to fit in, but as an overly flamboyant boy, I struggled to fit in most of my middle and high school years. Kids are known to be very straightforward, and that was no

different in my case. Fairly quickly, I got feedback from my classmates that there was something off about me. So I hid from any source of judgment into the space limited by 4 walls. The silence was my best friend, and I didn’t let the feelings and emotions come to the surface because I didn’t want to lose my safety. But through the years of hiding myself, I developed bad social anxiety. At my worst, this meant I couldn’t cross a crosswalk because I was so ashamed of myself, and I thought everyone around me was observing and judging me as I was doing the most basic human interactions. If silence was my best friend in my dark times, I made self-love my best friend during my self-discovery. I had to. By allowing myself to live my truth and surround myself with people who support me for what I stand for and more importantly love me for who I am. This allows me to finally live a life I deserve.

So, yeah. Love is fluid. It is not restricted by the love that we get only in a sexual relationship. It also portrays in friendships as well as in family. I think platonic love is greatly underrated. This applies to everyone, but especially LGBTQ+ people. They don’t say, “you get to choose your family as a gay person,” for no reason. Some people in a gay’s life might not approve of their choices, abandoning them either mentally or physically. This is why everyone, especially gays, needs to surround themselves with people who support their true-self.

At the end of the day, society needs to realize that false accusations and prejudices emotionally damage people, especially in the early stages of life. I told you my story, so you don’t make anyone go through something similar. To all of you that find themselves in this story, one way or another, I just have to say that it takes time. Don’t repress anything, and talk to whoever you know won’t judge you, but for the love of God, don’t suppress your feelings and your truth. You won’t save yourself from it. It will come back. I can assure you. So just remember:

### **It’s in our diversity we find our unified strength.**

LOVE

**GARNIR2**





# **LJUBEZEN LJUBAV LOVE**

**For yourself, your friends or even strangers.**

When I was thinking about love and this column, I was somehow channelling my inner Carrie Bradshaw from *Sex and the City*. You know, imagining I'm sitting in an apartment in New York City with a closet full of designer clothes and my only concern is my next date and what to write for my next column. Well, apart from the fact that we're complete polar opposites in our lifestyles, are we really that different? Is falling in love with yourself or finding your significant other really that different for people? The places where we could potentially meet them are probably not the same, but the fundamental human need and desire to be loved is.

Whenever in a relationship, I always have a feeling that I'm a part of a threesome. It's always me + my partner + my work and everybody wants and deserves an equal share of my love and attention. It's not easy, not at all. My love for my work is endless, the emotional attachment is strong, and all of this can be super hard to handle if you don't share or understand the same level of passion that I have. It's a constant battle of who wants or needs more and, in the end, how much I can possibly give?

I often wonder if love can ever be simple. Passion has multiple times exceeded the limits of my mental and physical capacity and I'm totally aware of wanting too much. To expect so much of myself in my 24 hours is insane. If you are even a little like me, I suggest you inhale and exhale. Breathe. Pause in the vortex of constantly chasing your dreams 'coz it's fucked up. You get fucked up. Always wanting to give more because you think you are not giving enough to your loved ones. I'm tired. This grind is killing me, and this is not the first time I am writing about this. I'm fed up with the same questions and beating myself down over the same answers. To think about what I am without Pirate Piška. Only Tjaša. Only Piška. Separated but forever together. Balancing things out. Still, I crave for more and more and more. And I'm not talking just about work. I'm talking about everything that I find interesting and lovely around me. Despite the pandemic and everything that came with it, there is still so much beauty around us. I see it. I feel it. Above all, I just want to live.

When I'm alone I'm thinking about having breakfast with you. You, who I don't know yet. Dancing and drinking wine in a tub at 2

am. Watching old movies. There are things that bloom only when shared. Laughing so hard at your jokes that I fall off the chair. Love so gently it makes me cry. Love so hard it hurts my body and the sweet pain reminds me of you.

But what if no one wants to love so hard? What if everyone is just building walls with pieces of their bruised ego? What to do when pain is no longer sweet, but just a sharp knife across the heart? So poetically, but unbearably painful in real life. Is it really that much easier to just scratch the surface and never fully express our emotions if we all know that this will just bite us in the ass eventually? This is for certain. For sure. People forget there is just one step from the surface to the deep worlds of our being. They forget to explore 'coz nobody reminds them that it's not scary. At all. It's necessary. Become friends with your demons. Have a cup of coffee together, then say thank you and move on. Express your desires. Love yourself. Do it. It's not easy for everybody, but it is doable. Don't let your demons, often even dressed as people, pull you this way or that way. You go wherever feels home for you. But to be fully grounded, you must know yourself first.

So, what does it actually mean to love yourself? Self-love is definitely something many of us have not learned at home or in school, but it is something we learned on our own with many ups and downs along

the way. There are no words to explain how I love a quote by Jonathan Van Ness from the Fab 5: "You are a rebel if you choose to love yourself. Choosing to love yourself is so against the grain of what we're taught, honey." This is gold. Society has been on low vibrations for way too long and people are drained. Commercials telling us how we need to buy more to be happy or how

we need a partner to feel loved and have a constant group of people giving us high fives to feel validated. Sure, it's the best feeling in the world to have a support system around you, but what does it matter if you don't feel good about yourself first?

Coming from a place of a broken foundation, I would never in a million years thought I would be able to write something like this. To be able to be

at such peace and hunger to discover more about myself and to love with every fibre of my heart at the same time. If you think this is just sugar-coating-random-bullshit... Well, it's not. And if you think love can't be simple, you are wrong too. It is. You just have to dig deep first.

So.

Start now.

Love yourself.

Dig deep.

Go. —

**Become friends  
with your demons.  
Have a cup of coffee  
together, then say  
thank you and  
move on.**

**LOVE**

**SEEING RED  
KRISTIЈAN ŠVAB**

MUA: Lea Bole

Model: Laura Medle







**ALTERNATIVE**

**MAJA PODOJSTERŠEK**

# **EPILOGUE: FOR FIRST LOVES**

*April 2018*

First loves are a lot like this. Stealing glances at each other and smiling when you catch the other looking. Shouted conversations over too-loud music, cold fields and crowds of people. Duality in a multitude, steady hands mid-fall; I didn't know that first loves came with trust falls. Secrets and fears told into ears while staring at the night sky because the truth behind someone else's eyes might just be too much. The thought of someone understanding what you're going through is so incredulous and unbearable you can't stand to face it. Fingers brushing over hands, hands resting on shoulders, standing on tiptoes. Dancing with the wrong person while the right one watches and wishing it was them instead. First loves are getting up the courage to ask if you can stay longer, and first loves are replying - nervous and excited - that you'd love that. First loves are endless walks and makeshift ships on seas of pebbles, acting like children on playgrounds well past midnight. Stopping in the middle of the road and wanting to walk away the first time you finish each other's sentence. First loves are seeing a discarded shopping cart and knowing immediately it's a streetcar named Desire, a race car, a carriage, you sit, and I'll steer. I didn't know that first loves sped through empty shopping centres like they're a new-found land waiting to be claimed. First loves are standing over highways under yellow lights and not knowing how to say goodbye. Hugging tightly because the cold is biting. Running home in opposite directions because the dark is too daunting.

First loves are a lot like this. They're messy and raw like a cut that runs too deep. They burn bright, and they burn fast, first loves aren't fireworks; they're wildfires, infernos with minds of their own. They devour, they push, and they pull. For first loves are tidal waves, and the absence of warmth. Whole yet empty because you can't act on them, conversations ending too soon, hands apart for too long, devoid of contact. Words

written and erased, words left unsaid, hanging in the air with whispered 'I know what you mean'-s. They're gaps in time. I didn't know first loves came with so much anger and pain. I didn't know things are easier to say when they're shouted over the phone in the middle of the night, alcohol spiking the blood and volume. Apologies and long conversations on where it all went wrong. Promises of trying to do better. I didn't know first loves came with building walls.

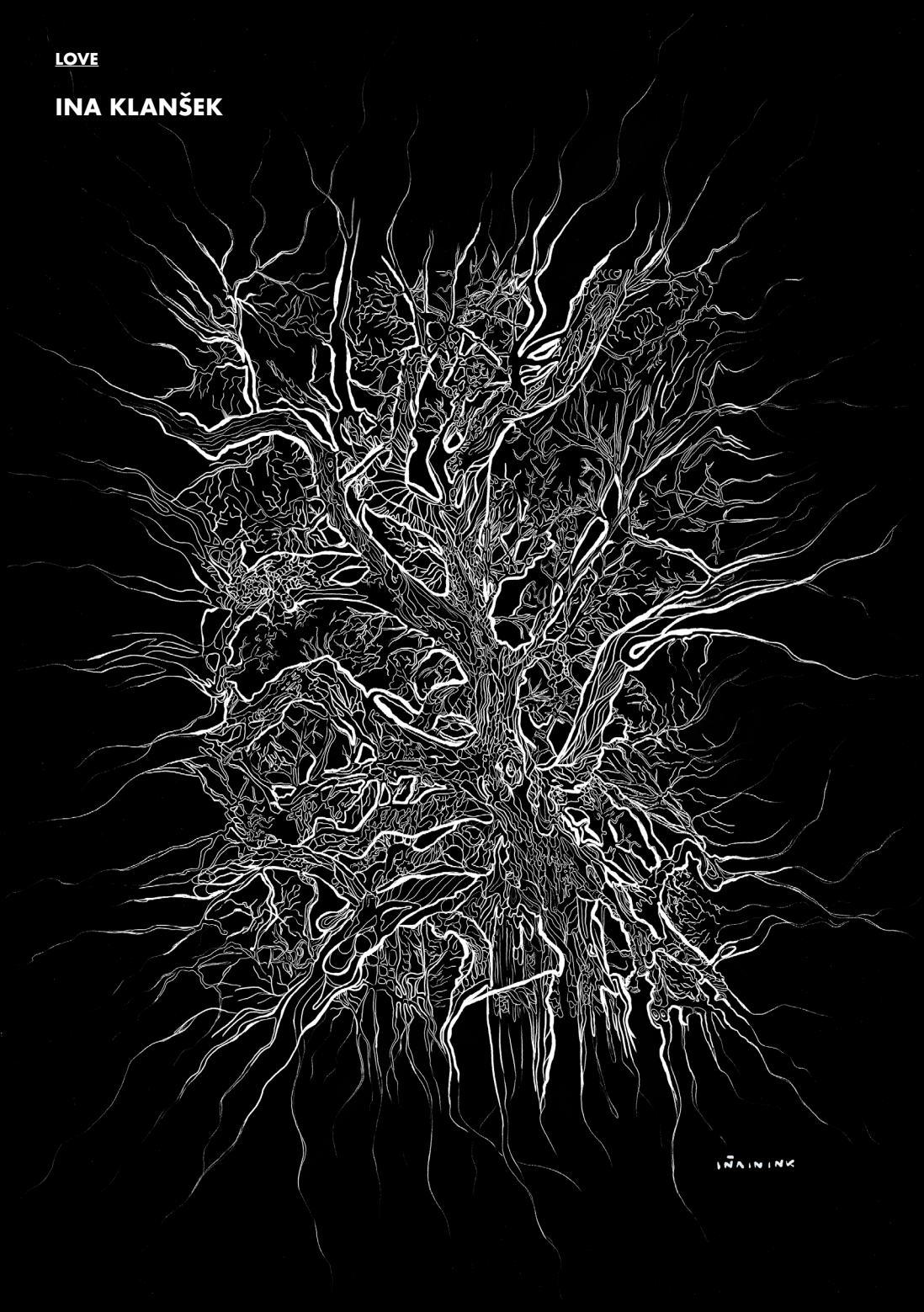
First loves are a lot like this. Ships passed in the night and trains missed because they're going too fast. Blue coats and take-away coffee cups, extended hands reaching for each other but missing by an inch because of cold feet. Laughter and fear because you don't know how to act once you've been granted so much freedom. Standing at the red light and wanting to move closer but then it turns green and it's over. Longing and tiptoeing, talking into the night, mixed signals because neither wants to say too much, but it's also not enough. Long distance 'I miss you'-s and promises and plans. And then silence, utter and complete and deafening. First loves are heartbreak and misunderstanding and points of no return. Healing and mending only for the sting of it all to come back, and healing and mending some more until it all fades away and what's left is just debris and smoke and memories and pink peonies.

First loves are a lot like this. First loves are a lot like you, a lot like me. A lot like you and me, but never a lot like us. First loves are sometimes meant to be but not always. I didn't know first loves came with learning; learning to accept and to love and to let go. Learning how to be happy with, how to be happy without, and how to be happy for. And in the end, wishing all the best. Moving on to second and third loves 'once more, with feeling.'

■

LOVE

INA KLANŠEK



INAINIK



# EVERYDAY DISPLAYS OF LOVE

**There is an expression in German which describes a feeling of deep sadness about the inadequacy or imperfection of the world. Weltschmerz, they call it, the pain of the world.**

I propose an antonym, Weltverwunderung if you like, the awe of the world. The feeling you get when you realize how much beauty there is in the world, and not just the obvious sunsets-and-rainbows kind, but all the covert beauty found in the most ordinary of things, the one that takes you by surprise and squeezes a hand of unexpected elation tightly around your heart.

But mostly I mean the beauty of actions of people around us, fellow ordinary humans, their gestures of kindness and all the hidden love underneath. Because if you look for it, you'll find that love, actually, is all around. Yes, I am directly quoting that movie, you know, the one with all the characters and all the stories which in the end turn out to be somehow intertwined, with love being the steady undercurrent of it all. I especially admire the portrayal of all sorts of love: not just the big romantic one, the one that we all automatically think of first, the one with the capital L. No, there is also fatherly caring love, platonic love between (sometimes unlikely) friends, unconditional love of a sibling, and all the variations in between.

The idea originates far in the past, actually. Ancient Greek philosophers wrote about eight distinctly different kinds of love: eros, the passionate love of intimacy and infatuation; ludus, the playful beginning stages of love; philia, the affectionate love in friendships;

storge, the love that flows between parents and children; pragma, the mature love that develops over time; mania, the obsessive kind of love; philautia, the love towards one's self; and finally agape, the selfless affection for anyone and everyone, love for the world.

Still, these are all fairly big loves, with their pomp and flourish, the ones that get perhaps too much spotlight. In their shadows is what is often overlooked: the little things that people do in the name of these loves. All the small acts of love, so tiny that they can easily go unnoticed, because they are not some grand gestures but rather ordinary mundane ones. Everyday displays of love. The way my mother returns from the garden with her hands full of peas because she knows it's my favourite vegetable. The way my friend massages my stiff neck even though his own shoulder hurts, too. The way another friend sends me how-are-you-today inquiries complete with a little nickname we have for each other. The way I take my stressed self for a walk in the fields under the late afternoon light and consciously just breathe for a while to exhale away the tension that builds in my shoulders after hours of studying. The way a certain boy writes first and proposes a videochat and then shyly proclaims that there are no bad front camera angles as long as I'm in frame and doesn't even know about the explosions of very specific joy he causes in my chest. And then, there are even smaller loves, the



**Love is the motivation for  
our every decision, and the  
foundation of our every  
sentiment. We nurture love  
for other people and call it  
kindness, love of ourselves  
conceals as pride, loving  
money shows as greed,  
love of being admired as  
ambition or vanity. Even fear  
of death is just love of life.**

---

ones that may be missed altogether and not be labelled love at all, but that would most certainly be blind of us. Because what else is there beneath it all – when you get to the essence of kindness and consideration and care – but the unassuming love for other humans? It is present all the time. It's in the hands of the conveyor belt worker who makes sure to align the edges of the product stack so that his colleagues down the line will have less work. It's in the patience of the bus driver who waits for me while I sprint to catch it. It's in the frown-lines of the store clerk who informs me that, unfortunately, they're all out of my favourite kind of chocolate and can she help me with anything else? It's in every single handout that is given to students in advance of the class, so they don't have to write their hands off during the lecture. It's steaming from the cups of warm tea that the head-nurse brings to the med students that are doing their traineeship on the ward.

It may not even be towards any single person but rather towards the world itself, just sending the good energy out there. It's the way my father swerves on the road just enough to run over the walnut that the birds have placed there for the cars to crack open so they can eat the soft insides. The way people share their favourite songs and make playlists for strangers on the internet who might share their deep 2am emotions. The way my favourite singer reads hand-picked poems every now and then and adds his hopes of people having a good day and that, if their week has not been very good, it is at least very nearly over. The way there are riots in the face of injustice and the way ordinary people come together to raise funds and goods for other less fortunate ordinary people.

And these small loves are just the ones that happened around me in the last month – now imagine how many there are, with all the people, all around the world, every day. I bet not even a single second goes by without someone, somewhere, releasing their tiny love into the universe. You can name it agape, or good karma, or not name it at all, but it will still be there, making this world a little nicer to live in.

That's why I, too, send funny videos and how-are-you-really-doing-on-this-lonesome-day messages to my friends. Why I go and refill

my mother's glass of water even when I don't really feel like getting up to do it. Why I draw smiley faces and have-a-nice-day wishes into the foggy windows of the bus. Why, when there is a particularly beautiful sunset, I send a photo of it to my grandma, and she then shares it with her Facebook friends so they can feel the beauty of it, too. Why I forgive those who make bad choices and say even worse things which sprout from their ignorance and fear. Why I wave to the little kid in the car beside mine at the red light. Why I make sure to add a kind word in as many conversations as I can, because it could at least slightly improve the shitty day that the person might be having. That's also partly why, these days, I stay at home even though I bodily ache for the company of people and the energy of crowds and keep my mask on even when my sweat-moustache starts dripping down my chin. It's because this is how my own love shows, because this is how I care for and encourage and comfort and dote on and protect both my most loved ones and random strangers alike.

And the best thing, the very best thing about it is that these little loves usually bounce right back, like people are eager to give and return theirs, like exchanging them is the most natural thing. And you know, it just might be. It's what makes us human, what keeps us going, what makes every single day worthwhile. It's what keeps us strong so we can weather this storm of a year with bodies and souls as unscathed as possible, and one day, soon, re-start our lives and be able to once again pour all of our big and small loves into the wide world freely and without limitations. —

**LOVE**

**EVA TKAUTZ**

Photo by Eva Tkautz x Maya Zupano



## **LOVE FOR ORDINARY OBJECTS.**

Every day, we interact with objects.  
They have a set of properties that tell us how to use them.  
What if we used them differently, in unexpected ways?

## **WHAT IF**

...a bag of soil became a vase, refueling birthday tulips that are slowly starting to wilt?  
...a paper clip went beyond functional, and acted as a decorative object? Like, a piece of jewellery.  
...tulips shifted from a static object on display, to a piece of clothing we wear as we go about our lives?  
...we created an ensemble of seemingly unrelated, curious items from the kitchen, just letting our ideas flow?

**This is about love for ordinary objects.**  
**The experimental mindset that pushes us to reuse them in fun, unconventional ways.**  
**Plus, it's green.**

# MORE-THAN-HUMAN-LOVE

**Awakening our heart intelligence, adaptability, liminality, creativity, is how we become supernatural in the upcoming age of posthumanity - Love is at the heart of the cosmic evolution.**



**Polymorphic ritual** - Concept, MUA: Agnes Momirski, Fashion design: Brencha, Photo: Sara Rman, Models: Agnes Momirski, Ana Marija Garafol, Sofiya Kruglikova

As we stand on the critical cusp of change, separation, and transformation in our current social and personal realities, the material body and its survival and evolution, become our primary concerns, and the very site where trauma, transformation, technological innovation conflate. I will briefly outline how *Love*, a highly elevated emotional state, impacts physical wellbeing, but also the role of *Love* in the upcoming age of posthumanity. *Love* and human evolution are in inextricably intertwined, and my thoughts below meditate on their relation now and in the future.

In times of change, *Love* acts as a remedy - gently moving us out of survival mode, or the illusive sense of separation. On a biological level, *Love* is an emotion soothing our nervous system - it moves us into a state of the receptive mode, of consciously basking in the energetic field of the heart center, and its synergistic powers. *Love* is linked with awakening the heart consciousness, as it ensures the attunement of our nervous systems into an encompassing ecosystem.

The science behind the heart intelligence, linked with the emotion of *Love*, shows that the heart center exudes an enormous electromagnetic field, healing the body and the environment. *Love* moves us into state where the heart, mind and emotions are in an energetic alignment. This is also called heart coherence, an optimal physiological state associated with increased cognitive function, emotional stability and resilience. *Love* therefore paves the path to our posthuman condition - a condition of fluidity, alterity, liminality. *Love* has a biological, emotional and spiritual role in the upcoming post-anthropocene age. *Love*, pleasantly elevating us, inspires towards adaptability, trust, flow, and optimism,

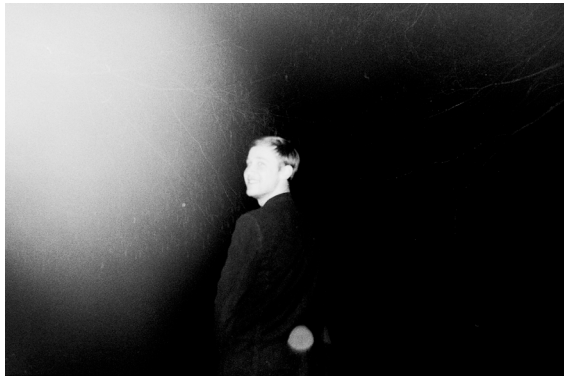
marrying our inner contradictions and aspiring towards a more-than-human condition. *Love* eases us through states of change, and into our metamorphic embodiment as a pattern of resonance between long-standing dichotomies between ancient and modern, body and consciousness, self and otherness.

The survival of our material body, at present and in terms of human evolution, depends on returning to a state of unconditional *Love*, for its immense transformative powers upon our biology and the ecosystem. In the words of David Abram, american anthropologist, we're entirely embedded within a more-than-human world which is permeated by relational (participating) consciousness. I like to believe that as humans we are becoming supernatural, enhancing, re-engineering ourselves, and in order to do so, we have to revive the more-than-human knowledge and the all-embracing *Love* to sustain the future humanity and aid the ailing planet. Hence, I believe that inner work and arcane traditions (practices which connect us with our heart intelligence) have a large role in the scientific and technological projects of reengineering humanity, towards overcoming our genetic destinies and cultural conditioning, as well as traumatic conditions such as separation during lockdowns.

Therefore, *Love* is at the heart of the cosmic evolution. *Love* is a metasyntesis, a convergence of interplanetary consciousness. The superhuman is rather a superlover - for human evolution is a daring adventure in *Love*. *Love* has a necessary role in seeing the humanity transform itself upward and beyond the separation of the physical body, beyond dualities and binaries, now and in the future. ■

**LOVE**

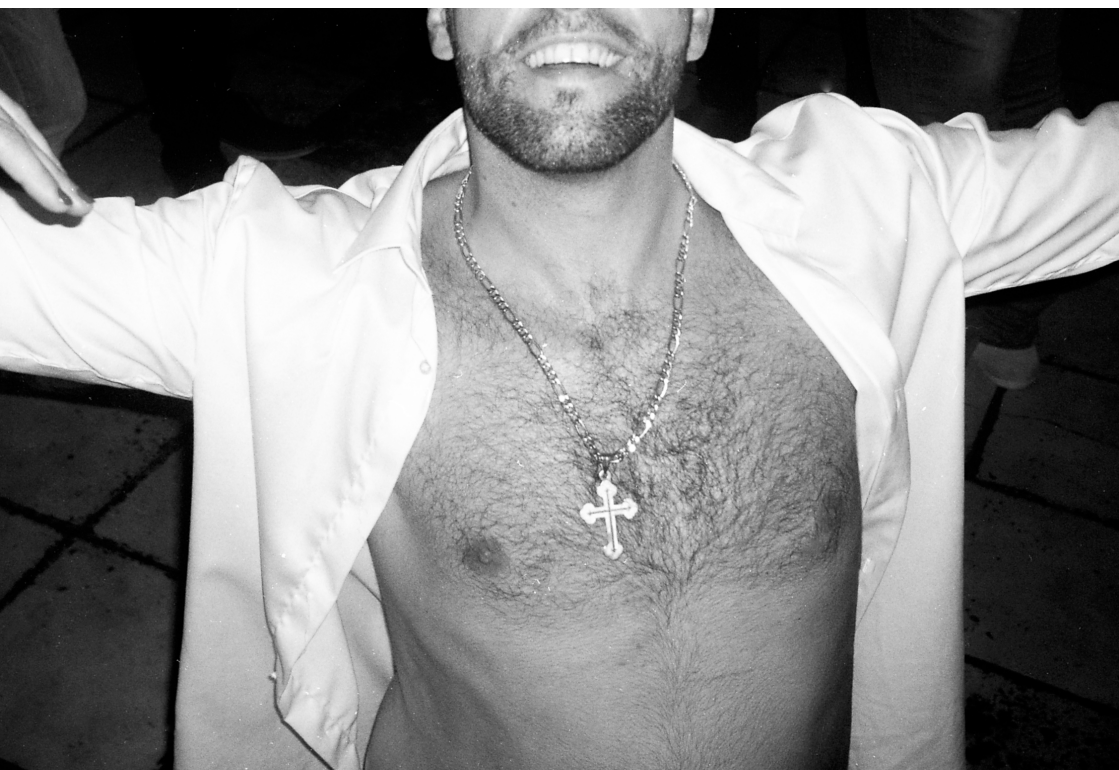
**NIK ERIK NEUBAUER**



**Love and Celebration series.**

It is about showing joy, love, parties,  
as well as their consequences.  
Very simple and a little cheesy.





# MOMENTARY BLISS

**It was one of those September nights when the air is starting to be slightly crispier, but the feeling of summer's ecstasy is still in full motion.**

I was heading home from my dear friend's place after spending hours indulging in amazing food, wine, deep talks, and yeah, shamelessly listening to our favourite 2000s artists. While I was walking, my heart was so full of joy it wanted to burst out of my body. It was pitch dark with no one in sight, which usually sets off my anxiety, but still, I decided to put on my headphones and get my mood going with some modular synth techno.

When I reached the U-Bahn station, the serene landscape burst into a loud drunk mainstream scene. I continued to find a less crowded spot escaping into the track I was listening to. When the train finally arrived, I got a message. I briefly glanced at the screen and saw it came from the other side of Europe. Inside, I nervously scanned the space searching for as solitary a spot as possible. Moments later, I eagerly opened the message. It was a song. I pressed play and let myself go completely while the train rushed at a smooth pace. What followed next was probably one of my most intense emotional rides of the year. What I felt was not only the pleasure of the amazingly crafted track but an immediate burst of affection for the person who sent it to me.

Coming back to reality on a sunny yet much crispier November day, I still vividly remember exactly how I felt. Even though I wouldn't necessarily need any further explanation of what had happened in my

brain in those moments of bliss, I actually do have one now. Recently, I came across this insightful article from S. Koelsch called *"Brain correlates of music-evoked emotions"* which triggered my curiosity to dig up some more on this topic. Why is it that music evokes powerful emotions in us even without physical contact?

According to functional neuroimaging studies on music and emotion, music can modulate activity in brain structures that are known to be crucially involved in emotion. Sounds pretty logical, right? Yet, it is not. You see, humans primarily evolved emotions to help navigate through dangerous worlds and situations. Music compared to food and safety is not really something we would consider for survival (or maybe we should?), and somehow it activates similar brain areas.

According to a study led by Zattore, what music and survival have in common are patterns. Namely, recognizing patterns such as smoke for fire is an essential human skill. And what else is music if not a pattern? Our brains love safety, but they also love challenges. So the key is a combination of correctly predicted musical structure (based on the listenings from the past) and a minor disruption of this predictability that gives us an even higher release of dopamine.

When playing pleasurable music our

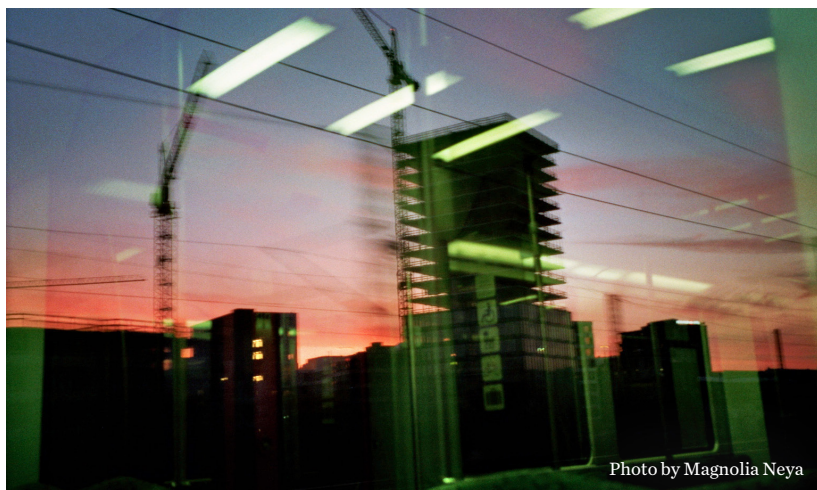


Photo by Magnolia Neya

body releases the hormone and the neurotransmitter dopamine. Our brain labels this as a reward and evokes an emotion of pleasure (similar to indulging in food or having amazing sex). Furthermore, our body reacts simultaneously with the pace of music: an emotional peak gives us the chills (or so-called frissons), a fast beat speeds up our heart rate, and a likeable melody makes us want to move. In this way listening to music is an effective way to regulate, enhance, or diminish (un)desirable emotional states. Evidence shows that: *“People who consistently respond emotionally to aesthetic musical stimuli possess stronger white matter connectivity between their auditory cortex and the areas associated with emotional processing, which means the two areas communicate more efficiently (Sachs et al., 2016).”*

Music does not only boost your mood but also brings people together. Engaging with music can lead to co-path, meaning that interindividual emotional states become more homogeneous. We all remember nations serenading on the balconies in the spring, trying to keep some joy in the peak of the otherwise unimaginable dark and sad times. Breaking such empathy in two also means bringing two closer through a shared love of specific music. Just as

Aristotle thought of love: as a composition of a single soul inhabiting two bodies.

Last but not least, music is communication. Neuroscientific and behavioural studies have revealed considerable overlap between the neural substrates (a part of the central nervous system) and cognitive mechanisms underlying the perception and production of music as well as of language. So next time you want to say something, you can just play a perfect track for it. Furthermore, I personally think music can help to transfer energy. A wave that starts inside of your heart, slowly rising until it crashes into another human body.

Among the things we needed to learn this year was how to feel and experience love without contact. For some of us, that meant escaping and going inwards more often than before. Escapism into social media has often served as a quick bandage. Nature has helped us to stay calm and grounded. And many of us found a deeper connection in those tiny fractures of sound. When the world stopped its fast pace, and a deadly silence gave us the creeps, we found love through music. Dancing and singing and clapping and screaming. Air kissing and hugging our souls. A soothing rhythm of Love has been born. ■



## SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Art Direction: Anže Ermenc

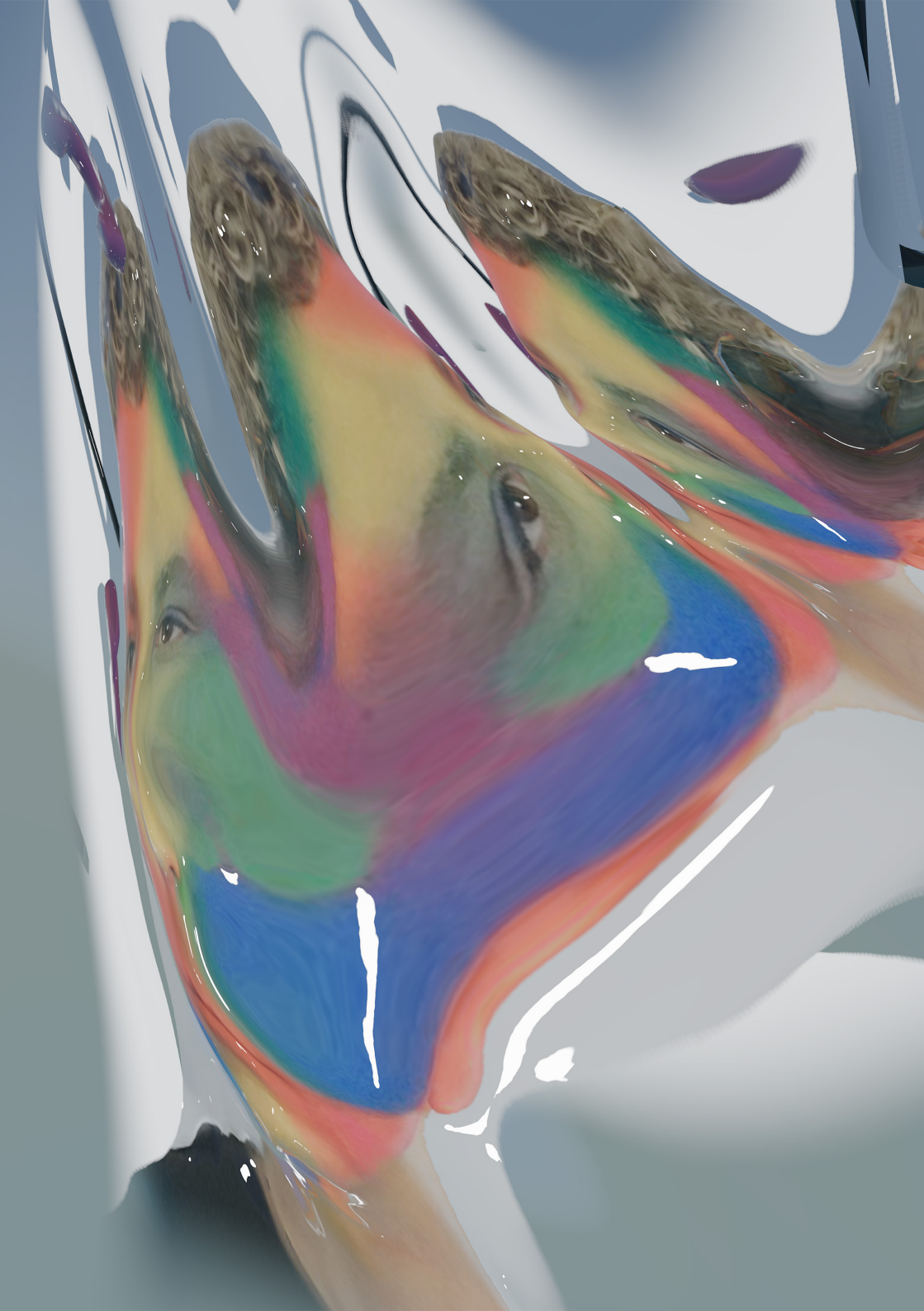
3D Artist: Anže Mrak

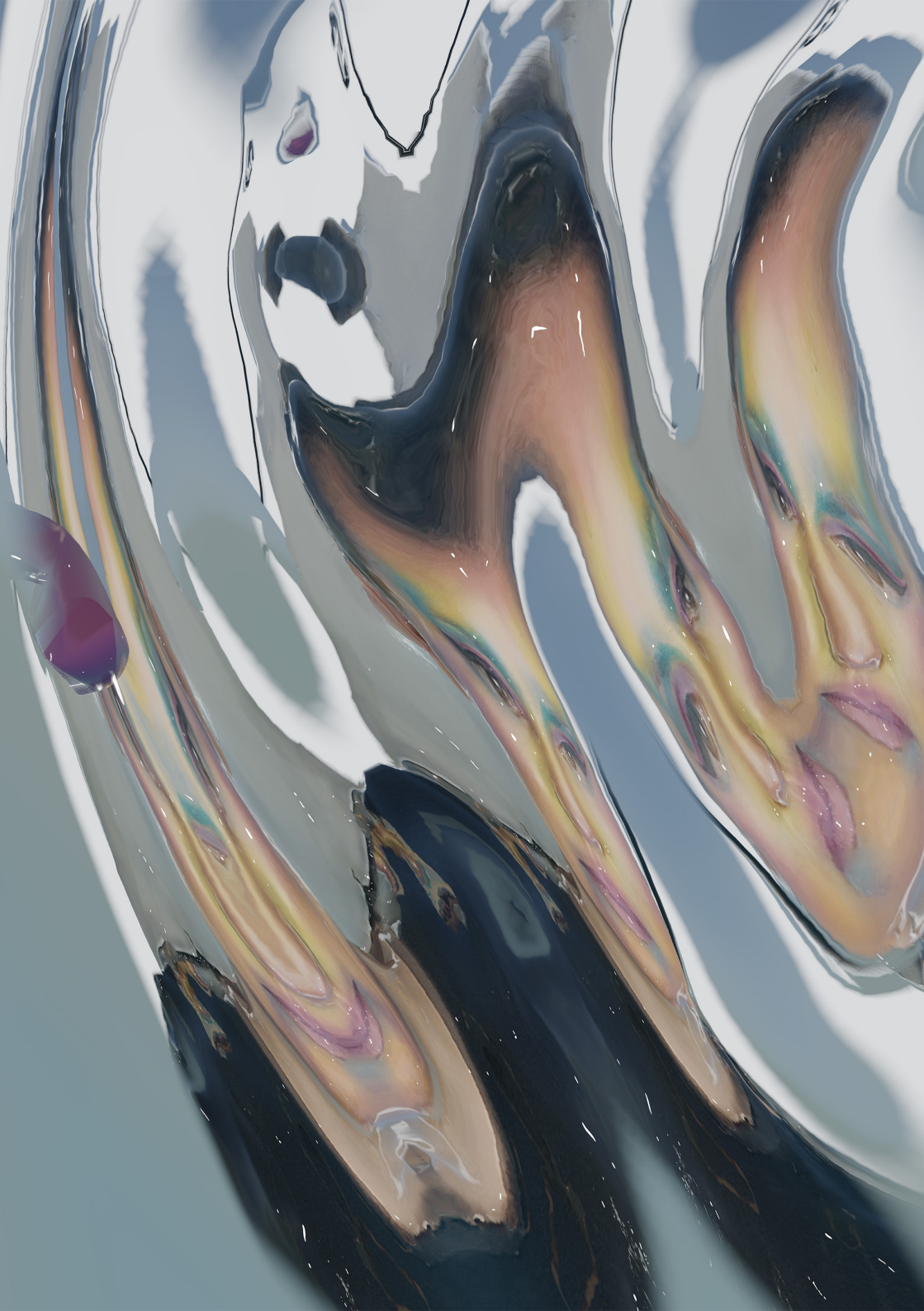
MUA: Gox Miljic

Models: Gox and Jana

The editorial was produced using modern technologies and social media, respecting the government guidelines regarding social distancing.















# SELF-PORTRAIT OF LOVE

## **14TH OF FEBRUARY**

I cried my way into this world on a red and pink holiday of capitalism or as people with significant others refer to it as “the day of love”.

I was a pretty calm baby born to an unmarried couple, who barely had a place to live and whose big purchase was a microwave. Shortly after my birth, He got a big promotion and over the years my household grew for a sum of a TV, a real dishwasher and my very first (plastic and pink) microphone in which I would scream and drive my great creators mad.

When I was one, He and She got married. I don't really remember the wedding, but according to the pictures they certainly weren't bored.

A couple of years later we got a new addition to our collective residence, my little Brother, who would, later, scream into the microphone alongside me.

Long story short: I had a pretty lovely and certainly lively childhood with a great pinch of chaos.

## **14TH OF FEBRUARY 2009**

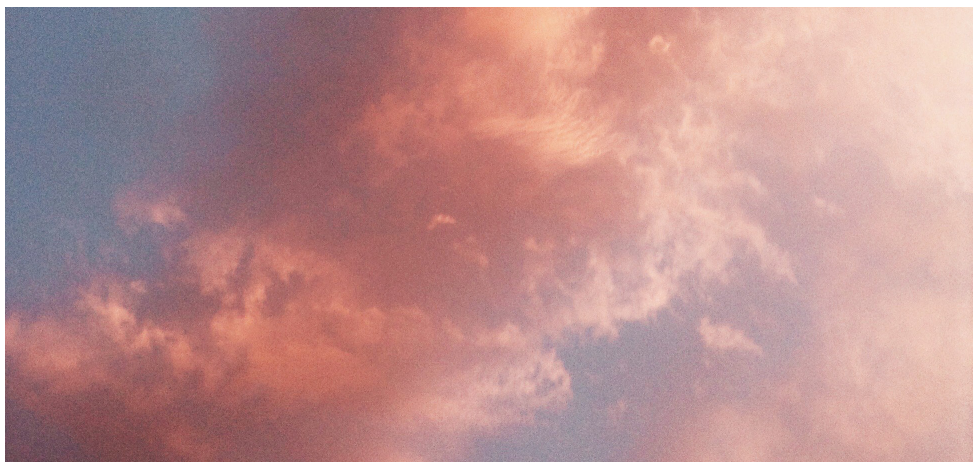
When I started school and up until around the 7th grade, I was bullied a lot. Kids weren't the nicest creatures that walked the Earth and they certainly shaped me as we know me today, I wouldn't really say I'm thanking them, but I don't hate them either.

## **14TH OF FEBRUARY 2016**

I turned 15 and had and had another one of my (numerous) teenage tantrums about how much “I hate it here”. Little did I know She was about to tell me what a microphone-screaming-2-year-old did when people around her were crying.

“She went to the bathroom grabbed toilet paper, gave it to them and told them they were beautiful.”

At the age of 15, I started a battle with an eating disorder.



## 14TH OF FEBRUARY 2020

I spent my 19th birthday with my closest friends in a movie theatre watching erotic movies from the previous century.

From a screaming new-born, I grew into a 19-year-old at the tip of her high school career, looking back at her past 19 years.

I grew from a 2-year-old wiping people's tears to a kid who got bullied to a little teenager who won battles bigger than her to a slightly older teenager who is just sitting here trying to get her point across. What I tried to illustrate with these adorable, awkward, and dark eras of my life was the way love was portrayed to me.

When I was a toddler, I was surrounded by a lovely abundance of 3 who taught me what family love is like. It's about waiting for better times to come, so you finally don't have to wash your plates by yourself. It's the love of giving, where you can finally afford your daughter's "singing lessons". It's the love of patience and sharing, that you learn from a fellow screaming companion. And

most importantly it's the love of unity, home, and safeness.

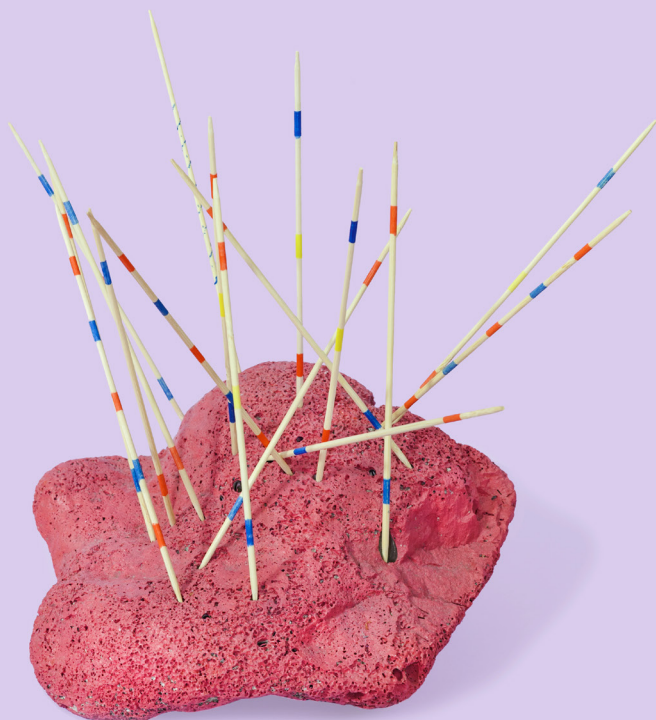
When I was bullied my whole perception of acceptance and self-love was questioned. The same happened later, but when I had won the battle the world changed. It shifted from a place of darkness and loneliness to something a little bit more helpful. I somehow managed to throw my entire mindset under the rock, change it completely and I've learned the love of self-acceptance, the love of peers around you, the love of uniqueness, the love of life lessons and the love of hate.

Although the dark ghosts of the past still pay a visit from time to time, I accept them and remind myself to be an extra kind host. Don't be afraid of them, they make me, you, us and even them human. —



**LOVE**

**LUCIJA ROSC**





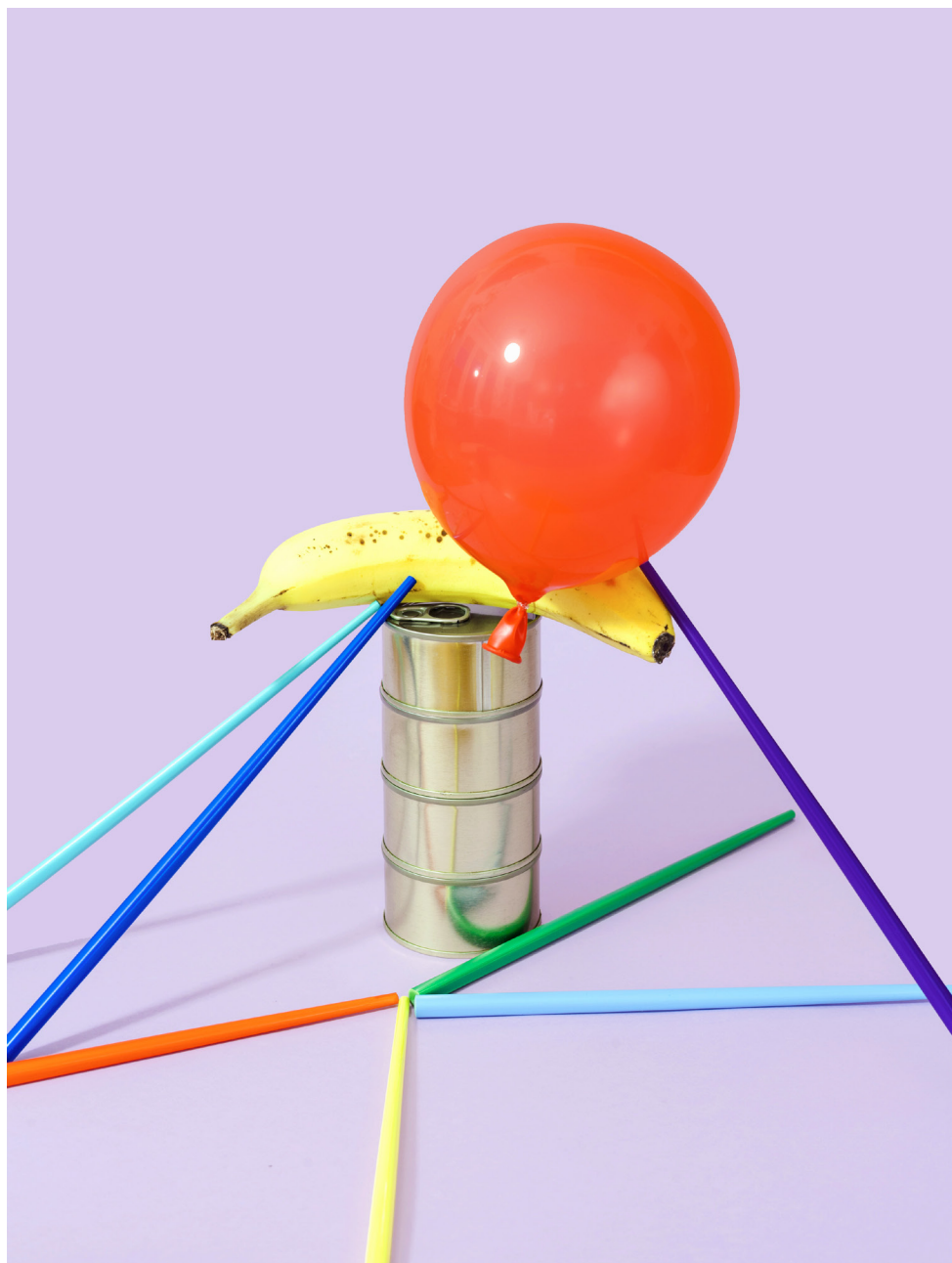




Photo by Jasna Rajnar Petrović

# LOVE IN THE DIGITAL CORONA TIMES

**Can Zoom facilitate love? Can Facebook video chat?  
What about Skype? Tinder?**

Endless questions for our generation, in the age we live in. And no straight answers, if you ask me. From my point of view, most of those tools can of course sustain love, for a little while at least. I firmly believe we are still animals in this regard, in dire need of physical touch. Caresses, hugs, kisses, skin-on-skin, this is what we dream about, not staring at each other on Zoom. Of course, this begs the question of what kind of love

I'm talking about... It's the kind that sweeps you off your feet and stops your brain from functioning, in the beginning. And then when the phase that turns you into a starry-eyed fool who can't see past their hormones stops, realising if you can continue with the person you're starry-eyed about, accept them wholly with all their faults and loveliness and form a loving partnership.

**Even after igniting a  
connection on Tinder,  
you have to be willing  
to keep that connection  
in writing for what  
seems like an indefinite  
amount of time.**

This begs another question – can I even write about this, if my experience of these states is covered in cobwebs? If the notion of love is divided into Agape and Eros, let's say I've experienced some Eros in the past few years, but all in passing. Eros combined with Agape... well, it's been a while. But how is one to find new people in a small town like Ljubljana, where one already knows so many members of one's generation and always hangs out in the same circles? The most apparent answer in our digital era is – apps. That's why, like many others, the first wave of the corona epidemic finally landed me on Tinder, after much self-persuasion.

Are you one of those people who's heard quite a few stories about people striking gold on Tinder, falling in love, and living happily ever after? Well, I am. I personally know a few of those. Are you shaking your head in disbelief? I understand because it hasn't happened to me, although I've been taking on the Tinderverse since March. Some people have told me that being on Tinder, if you're not there just for sex, requires thick skin... and overall, I agree. I was on the way to thinking I struck gold too, a few times, and got burned. Luckily no broken hearts were involved because I made my skin extra thick. There was this guy who was only really interested in himself, and this other guy who seemed lovely and told me I was lovely... until he realised we held different political beliefs. His rejection was swift and hurtful at first, but I laugh at it now, hard. Then there was this actually utterly lovely guy who had so much in common with me. We love some of the same books and movies, share a passion for the written and spoken word, he's gallant and kind, not to mention good looking. What was missing there? I couldn't tell you for sure; we worked intellectually but apparently lacked a connection physically, and most important, emotionally.

And now you may ask – how is this any different to meeting people in real life? Not much, you battle all the same doubts, traumas, and insecurities (if you're like me), save for one important thing. In 2020, if you don't count the summer in between, there is no meeting in real life. Even after igniting a connection on Tinder, you have to be willing to keep that connection in writing for what seems like an indefinite amount of time. I also admit I'm too shy to 'meet' over a video connection. The only other option is to go at it illegally. I haven't thrown in the towel just yet; there is an ignited connection that burns with a flame, with a special soul... but we're waiting to meet legally.

Can I sum anything up from this scramble of thoughts? Only that love has always been hard to obtain for me, and that the digital corona age has not helped this one bit, I feel like it is farther than it has ever been. A bodiless connection is not a connection, merely a shadow of a hint of it. The only thing I'm thankful for in these times is Agape. I think my love for the family and friends who have turned out to be human and supportive and there, even in the worst of times (which these are), grew stronger. I also think that this epidemic showed us all that we cannot exist only in the digital sphere. We need those caresses, hugs, and kisses to be human. So I hope they return as swiftly as they have been taken away from us. —



LOVE

PRIMOŽ ZORKO





# FEATURES OF LOVE.

**Two summers ago I wrote a line that  
still resonates strongly in my mind.  
It reads:**

*the present;  
where those bittersweet angels await for me that aren't  
in heaven because I should have left them in hell.*

And last night I dreamt them. I profess my truth when I call them my loved ones. Each one of them was at least at some point in my reality, dear to me. Confidants to strangers. Strangers to lovers. In that subconscious dream, I was the playwright. Guiding myself through complex communication and the effect their input has (had). The personal evolution of forming ties is turbulent character development.

It's the crucial nature of a being to form relationships. A true connection offers the emotional inclusivity that human beings long for. Poets have spoken celestial words praising their lovers' existence. Beginning in enchanting eye contact, ending in sorrowful betrayals. Thus I have always had this invisible phobia of writing in the name of love. How do you live up to F. Scott Fitzgerald's amorous letters or define the tenderness of Klimt's Kiss in words? It seems unjust. Not because mine would be

inferior but because I would be afraid to admit them. It is such an unpredictable state. If I wrote about the one that ended up not working out, are those just loveless lies? Do I just recycle them for the next one? Is all love the same and, if not, is it measurable?

Embracing the vulnerability freaked me out. I guess it has to do with a social construct between the coherence of aging and the type of relationship you're in. Your teens are supposed to be for getting over with your "firsts." From the love-struck awkward first kiss to the mythical popping of the cherry. They are coloured in naïve hues and many heartbreaks. Your twenties, on the other hand: for popping champagne. Foreign lovers during hot summer one night stands. In between trying to make several long(er) term relationships not hit that iceberg. Because deep down, you know that when the time comes for Titanic to



sink, your current Jack won't take his place on your door (even though there's space for two). What finally sinks in is the realisation that you can't date a person's potential, only their reality. The thirties present a summit of giving up to a traditional continuation of the American dream. The biological clock ticking on a woman's pre-heated oven. Oh honey, now is the time to find The One and grow old together.

In reality, these stages are intertwined. Restricting ourselves by them only forbids us from enduring each other beyond them. At whatever level you consider yourself to be, re-consider having your own. This is deeply personalized per each interaction. It's not when it happens but Who it happens with. Knowing the 'who' feels like coming home from a long trip. Like sun rays stroking your body after a sea dip. Like a drunk make-out session.

An emotional attachment transcends into a physical one. In adoration, I trace his features. Micro scaled fine lines underneath the hazel longing eyes. Untamed brows stubbornly growing wild past their defined reach. Nose carved by the Greek gods. Yet lacking classicist coldness due to warm saturation of a midsummer evening glow. Pulp lips that purse when he's so focused, he zones out. A small scar just under his chin from when he fell at age 7. Down the neck towards chiselled collarbones where shadows hide. Observing constellations on the skin. Feelings of love embodied; transfigurations of the ungraspable taking shape in human form.

We feast off of each other's energy and create a unique dynamic. A sense of private mutual understanding fuels a two-way flow. Connection in its core purpose presents a receiver as an irreplaceable part of the transmission process. In this case, wireless isn't included in the package. We ache for countless strings tangled to share our vulnerability. To give out information and receive an evaluation. The latter is supported by an argumentation based on real experience. One-way interactions make us feel taken advantage of, even abused, a disappointed rage. I could describe it as Carrie Bradshaw in a Vivienne Westwood wedding dress and a goddamn bird feather in her hair throwing her bouquet at Mr. Big. When the time to cut the ties comes, someone is about to be shaken up. Those who allow themselves to let go theorise that every person is meant to be a part of your life for a certain time. For us to endure the intersection is to know a green light follows.

While mourning lost relationships, I've realised an instinct has to be explored but not necessarily with a stable narrative. As time passes, our retrospective of a past experience, perhaps even a heartbreak, might be distorted. Either by nostalgia or future interactions that, at first glance, seem entirely independent. Truth be told, each one of us is a complicated equation. Numbers don't always add up. But giving these equations a try is essential even if we can't break them. Some hearts aren't meant to be broken. —

LOVE

JOVANA ĐUKIĆ





# IT TAKES WORK

**What is love? Baby don't hurt me,  
don't hurt me, no more.<sup>1</sup>**

I'm confused. What to say? This is a bittersweet goodbye (hopefully not forever), and love can be bittersweet as well. There are so many versions of said 4-lettered word, we could say it's as diverse as its means of expressionism. When I think of love my mind is flooded with images of how it is shown. I see warm hugs, kisses, texts saying (and meaning) "How are you doing" and "This reminded me of you." I see Christmas dinner with the family, lunches with friends when you forget about time and just sit at the table telling stories, laughing. I see a day trip with my boyfriend out to Italy, enjoying the drive, sunshine and the warm breeze. I see my dog asleep on the sofa, stretched out like string cheese. And I see the heartfelt support when encountering an obstacle or the cheers when following a passion. All of that symbolises love to me. It doesn't have to be romantic, and it doesn't have to be like everyone else is used to. It can be your own thing, what is most important is that you feel comfortable and safe.

A lot of people say; "It shouldn't feel like work." And I must disagree. When two people are involved in a relationship, be it romantic or platonic, it's going to take work. You won't agree on everything because that's how we

are built. We have our own separate feelings and opinions, and thank God for that! What would the world be like if everyone just felt the same? Like in the modern democratic society governed by the rule of law, one should be encouraged to share things with the other party in a peaceful dialogue, said things could then be conversed about and with that, disagreements can be found, maybe a common point, a compromise. Maybe an agreement to disagree. But you shouldn't feel guilty that your relationship with another person takes work and no one else's does, that it's wrong. In the longer term, working through your differences and talking about them openly can be a pass for the future, because bottling them inside can certainly do you no good.

It's been a strange, sad year. So here's my wisdom: if you feel like you have to talk to somebody close to you about disagreeing on something; do it. If you need to tell someone that you love them; do it. It's gonna take courage, and it's gonna take work, but in the end, if you can avoid comparing your situation to someone else's ideal, you'll feel much freer in the long run, and after all, that's what you deserve. ■

---

<sup>1</sup> Haddaway





Photo by Živa Penko





**LOVE**

**URŠA PREMIK**

Models: Barbara, Martina

# (FASHION) SHOW MUST GO ON?

**After giving the topic of this column some thought, I eventually opted for presenting the changes in the fashion system having occurred due to the current pandemic, especially the shift concerning fashion shows in Covid times.**

Let us recall this chaotic year's fashion month in February when initially it didn't even dawn on us that this was the last one of its kind for some time. Later, during Fall/Winter 2020 fashion shows and especially during the presentations of Spring/Summer 2021 collections, the network of all networks — the Internet — became an indispensable element of the fashion world, enabling spectators to watch fashion shows anywhere and at any given time. Every fashion enthusiast or sceptic, or merely anyone who, by chance or by accident, clicked the Internet link could 'sit in the front row' together with Anna Wintour. This year's fashion season could be synonymous with digital. Some fashion

brands decided on a live broadcast of a 'classic' fashion show, including a catwalk, models, music, and either a live audience or an audience on screen — no different than Alexander McQueen's *Plato's Atlantis*, the first fashion show broadcast live, 10 years ago. Whilst others presented fashion content as conceptually developed for the digital world only, especially through fashion movies. Yet, we were able to observe an entirely contrasting concept of collection presentation in the Gucci fashion house, by Alessandro Michele. The collection, titled *Epilogue* (Fall/Winter 2020), presented via 12-hour live streaming, had no reference to the natural since the natural was replaced by the

**We live in a time which, in a certain way,  
obliges us to ‘reset’ our thoughts, to  
rethink, despite not always wanting to; as  
observed in the fashion system itself, which  
was forced to question fixed fashion rules  
and sustainability.**

artificial, namely computer-programmed elements, codes, and a robotic voice. Such fashion shows thus prove that virtual reality and screens have undoubtedly become an integral part of our everyday ‘fashion’ lives.

When reading about the impacts the current pandemic has left on the fashion system and thinking about what fashion shows will look like in the post-COVID times, I cannot help my thoughts going elsewhere. Is discussing fashion (shows) whilst combating a pandemic even appropriate? Am I selfish for doing so? Supposing someone at this very moment, albeit it may appear utterly improper to some, wishes to converse about seemingly ‘trivial’ topics, such as fashion, let them. Not primarily because of the lately-too-often-heard and worn-out phrase ‘show must go on’, but because everyone should do what they take great pleasure in, especially in moments like these.

We live in a time which, in a certain way, obliges us to ‘reset’ our thoughts, to rethink, despite not always wanting to; as observed in the fashion system itself, which was forced to question fixed fashion rules and sustainability. All existential questions that spring to mind during the first Zoom meeting in the morning, or during a phone conversation with relatives on the other side of the country or the world, have become integrated into our ‘normal’ daily routine. Without a shadow of a doubt, the current situation has changed each and every one of us; everyone has their own concerns, everyone is wondering about the uncertainty the future holds.

Could we have imagined a life we are living right now, a year ago? Probably not. Was that naive in a sense? Probably yes. Will the (fashion) world ever be the same again? I do not know, but what I do know is that I will continue doing what I love — discussing fashion. —

**LOVE**

## **URŠKA PEČNIK**

Model: Barbara Lukan







# OH WILL WONDERS EVER CEASE

*What is love?*

**is a question Shakespeare  
already tried to answer centuries  
ago in one of his sonnets, but the question  
has been round and about for much longer.**

I'm pretty sure even our ancestors were asking themselves the very same thing while sitting next to a fire or laying down, observing the stars. I'm asking myself the same question.

Many have since tried to answer – trying to understand love, express it, define it. The amount of words we are trying to use not only tells us how much there is to express but also how little we can say with any sort of certainty. Even after living the movie like the romance of life, we are still not sure what exactly happened. But we know it's there – it must be, something has to keep us together

like glue, but what is it? How? And why? What else could it be, than love itself?

I could go on and on about how we tried to define love, but what I always found fascinating is the speechlessness that subtly accompanies the words. Love leaves us speechless from the moment it starts. It sweeps us off our feet, but instead of falling onto the cold hard ground, we find ourselves falling through the worlds that are out of this one. Sometimes having no solid ground to put your feet on can be frightening – so can be love. Or its absence. Arab physicians in the 10th and 11th century were the first



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to establish a concept of lovesickness, something that we now perceive as a medical problem. There is even such a thing as 'Broken heart syndrome' where a sudden loss can lead to heart failure.

So, you know when they say that love kills? It was shown/detected that with couples in their old age after one half passes, the other one is soon to follow. The word love carries an immense meaning, but this is how intense love in all its emotion can be. We often mistakenly think, love is all roses, but even roses have their thorns. We have this picture-perfect in our heads of how love is supposed to look like, but we keep on forgetting that a good picture requires multiple takes.

Plato wrote this romantic story in his work Symposium about two half persons wanting to be welded together into the whole they had once been. But are 'soul mates' really two of the same? Diotima taught Socrates that love is not a desire either of the half or the whole. We look for similarities in each other, but what if our better half is everything we are not? Even if that is not the case, it's a good reminder that sometimes we have to meet in the middle for the greater good.

The word 'love' sounds so simple, one syllable, easy to say, but the meaning behind

saying it is anything but easy to comprehend; it has the power to make us take a step, but it can also set us back. There is this scene in Friends where Rachel decides to tell Ross she is still in love with him. Monica tries to convince her not to do it because "do you know how painful it is to tell someone you love them and not hear them say it back?" but Rachel just shrugs her shoulders, saying, "I don't care." Rachel was aware how devastating her words could be, but it's like there is this pull to it, making us say it while we are hoping the risk was worth the take. And even then, it so often fails to translate what we are trying to say, always needing to be explained. I suppose no matter how hard we try to capture its essence, we still lose some words for it along the way.

We have been left with this one word – love. The more we try to understand it, the less we do. But as Sufjan Stevens sings in his song Mystery of love: "Oh, will wonders ever cease? / Blessed be the mystery of love." —



**LOVE**

**EVA LEBER**

Model: Marija Klun  
Studio: 100toes



# ON LOVE: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

**I am so terribly obsessed with the concept  
of love, it is sometimes hard to trust myself,  
that I am doing love right.**

Mind me, I do not consider myself as an obnoxious romantic, even though I watch a tremendous amount of love-based reality TV. I think I have a healthy perspective on love, based on mutual respect, support, care and acceptance, but I might be completely delusional. However, when it comes to love, aren't we all? Don't we currently all have an approach to love which resembles a retroactive semi-sound argumentation of why we chose to follow our genitalia, instead of exploring, what love feels to each one of us?

There is a deep misfortune that we face in the current society, linked to replaceability, an abundance of potential partners, inability to talk about feelings, thinking about status and looks awfully too much. When it gets hard, it is easier to just swipe left and right on Tinder. Or Bumble. Or Ok-Cupid and other dating apps, created to cater to our immediate needs. We often don't give people a chance. Not tall enough? Next! Not skinny enough? Next! Not a job or lifestyle you'd personally have? Next! And so on and so forth that we fail to touch the questions which would really indicate if we are compatible with our date. How do we treat each other? Do we make each other feel comfortable and create a safe space for communication? Do we both want kids? How much time do we want to dedicate to each other? Are we both

able to make a commitment to each other, as if it were permanent, no matter how many better people might come along? We often fail to be pragmatic and choose the most unhealthy infatuating love which caters to the 'Freudian traumas' and hits close to home.

Alain de Botton spent quite a couple of words on this topic, emphasising that we are disillusioned by the romantic idea of love, we forget that this is just a construct, which is in large dictated by the atmosphere in our society. And how, on the other hand, we are so ruthless towards our partners, we fail to understand, we are all deeply wounded and suffering from the human condition. We are experts on giving up, thinking that there is a better, more honest, passionate On Love - What it is and what it is not 2 love, which will tick all of the boxes, just around the corner. All that we have to do is swipe left and right while we are on the toilet or before we fall asleep, to find "the one".

Such love, in my humble opinion, does not exist. There is no recipe on love, however. No recipe on how to do relationships, deal with situationships, how to choose partners and get over people that are not right for us. In the abundance of situations, we find ourselves in, it is sometimes hard to judge or do the thing, which would show our love or

get it reciprocated. What if here, we would have to rethink our values? What if here, we should reconsider what love actually is? Both as an emotion and as an act towards another human being? In my opinion, in its core, love should be the act of consideration. It should be curious, selfless and kind. It should be peaceful and most of all, it should be a choice. Love is waking up every day and committing to your partner all over again. Strikingly, it is similar to love towards friends or family. Maybe it is the same love we feel to other human beings and out of them chose the special one with whom we are going to share the bed with every night, fight over how we place the spoons in the drawer and where we want to go for vacation. We add to it the perk of sexual exploration, which brings about an additional level of intimacy.

Love should be selfless and kind. Otherwise, it is everything else but love. Maybe it is the fear of being alone or just an initial attraction. Maybe it is just familiar to what we experienced as children at home. Maybe it is the need to have some material for daydreaming during the boring job or relaxation after a long day of work. We all behave a bit egotistically towards one another to try to get our needs met. But when two people come together and make the commitment to love, they take care of each other, and no egoism is necessarily needed. We don't keep tabs on our friends and family as closely as we do with our partners. Maybe because friends and family go home after a while, while you are stuck with the person you chose. And it is kind of weird that we forget that we are also terribly imperfect and difficult and that our partners are just as irritated as you, resenting your friends, that they get to go home, and that your partner... well your partner is stuck. You are stuck. People in relationships are stuck, always with imperfect people that have their own childish ways and bad days. But it is a choice, and nobody said it was easy.

## **Love is sometimes difficult and sometimes boring;**

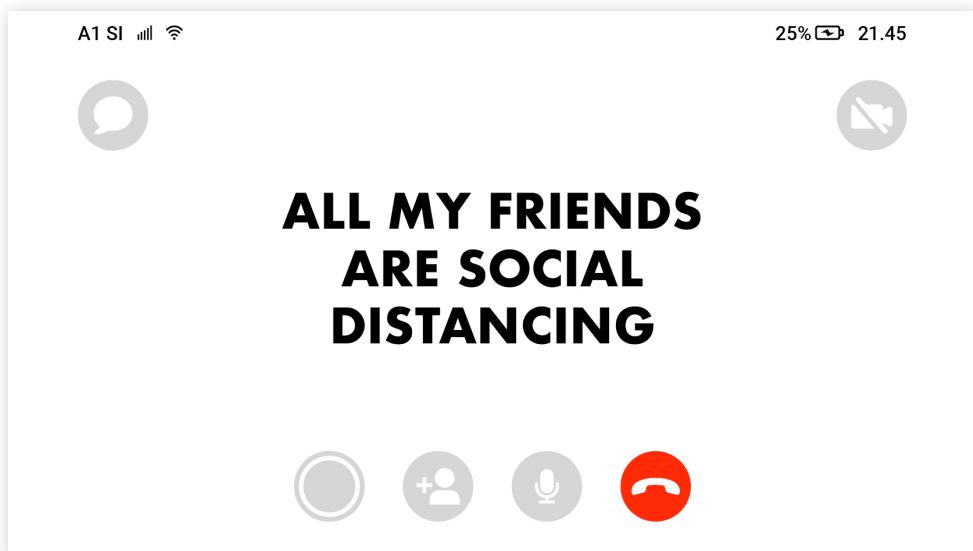
Love is sometimes difficult and sometimes boring; sometimes sad and sometimes exhausting. You can't have your cake and eat it too.

I am not talking about compromises. At least not directly. I am talking about the reality of love is far from how it is represented in the Notebook or Titanic. Because if Rose loved Jack, she would move over on that door, help Jack on, and both would survive. And Gosling wouldn't yell at McAdams, and they would manage to sit down and talk like people who respect one another and care for each other. And if we take such examples, embedded into the stereotype of the perfect relationship, we forget that in

the core of love, whatever it actually is, is respect and care. Its that we choose people we wish to be with and give them what we can, without expecting what they cannot give back. We maybe should put more effort on choice and our active contribution, rather than just passive romanticism and empty unfounded expectations of passion and intrigue, until we magically find someone (or some people) that will tolerate us forever...

We are all idiots when it comes to love. But sometimes all it takes is a choice, even if it is not made to last forever. I would urge all to kill your ego, as you are not Cinderella nor Prince Charming, to get the first-class treatment you feel you are entitled to and instead try communication and understanding, the places where, in my experience, love is born. Understand the wounds you have, the ones that make you human, ticks and tricks that make you, you. And choose to make a space safe for each other, where there is enough room for two, where you can be intimate, crazy, sad and happy. Where you can show the depths and layers of what makes you human. Build your own home of whatever colours, genders, numbers and other differences, where  $1 + 1 > 2$ . ■





MARTA, student. Lavrica, Slovenija



NAICHE, writer and poet.  
Brooklyn, New York.



NEŽA, student. Ljubljana, Slovenia



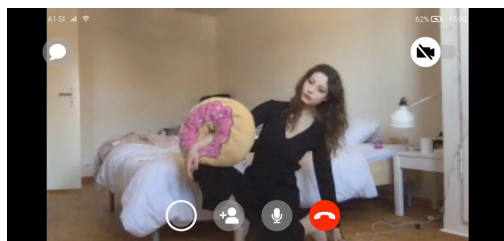
LARA, food and beverage manager,  
chalkboard creator #ljubljangsketable.  
Ljubljana, Slovenia

# **‘All my friends are social distancing’ captures a moment in time when we were staying in touch without touching.**

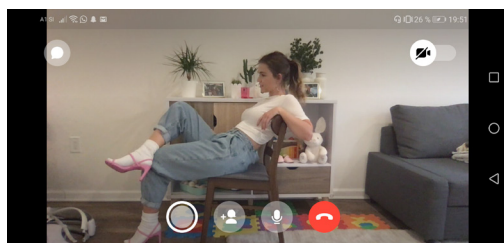
During the strict self-isolation period in Slovenia, I video-called my friends and started the ‘All my friends are social distancing’ project. Like the majority of the world’s population we’d found ourselves in that limbo state where every day felt like Groundhog day and we had to find ways to keep busy and bring some sense of normalcy into our lives in so we didn’t lose our minds completely. Video calls became a substitute for what would have been coffee dates or drinks out in the city.

The ‘All my friends are social distancing’ project portrays some of the friends I was regularly in touch with during this time. It captures the communication between two people apart. The images are poor quality, pixels forming my friends’ faces as they are screenshots taken on my phone, showing how I saw my friends while not being able to see them in person.

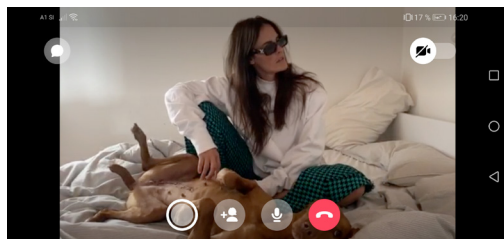
The only piece of instruction I gave them before these scheduled ‘photoshoot’ calls was for them to dress up as if they had somewhere to go. To wear clothes that had been lying around in their closets and they’d never dared wear out before. To experiment with different styles; we played dress up with the absurdity of having nowhere else to be but home. —



PIA, PhD student. Zürich, Switzerland



MILA, mom and student. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



MATEJA, founder of Frachella. Ljubljana, Slovenia



TINKARA, student and illustrator. Menges, Slovenia



ANJA, editor-in-chief of New Edge magazine. Vail, Colorado



ANŽE, lecturer, stylist, creative director and fashion editor at New Edge magazine. Manchester, UK

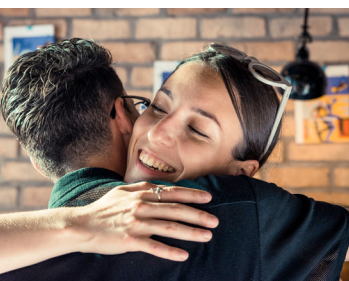


# WE LOVE YOU & SEE YOU SOON!



Photos: personal archive, Rok Vrečer, Kristijan Švab, Marko Zavernik, Mario Zupanov





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