

Loves Trilogy

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My work resonates with current social media trends, mirroring how we transparently share our relationships. Just as we unveil different aspects of our lives online, my art exposes the multifaceted nature of love. It aligns with showcasing emotions and connections on social media, letting viewers witness love's complexities and stages through my triptych installation. It captures the ever-changing emotions throughout the journey of love, representing distinct phases, interweaving relationship complexities, the heart's fragility, and its path to self-improvement.

Numerous artists have influenced my artistic journey. Daniel Ashram, a New York-based artist, influenced my approach to conveying emotional depth through the fragmented body parts and weathered effects in works like "Holding Hands Crystal" (2015). French artist Aristide Maillol's ability to capture movement and emotion in "The Woman Who Walks Through the Water" (1910) inspired my exploration of love's stages, emphasising unity and connection. The surrealism movement of the 1910s-'20s encouraged me to delve into my subconscious, creating personal works that reflect love's unique aspects. Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, and Frida Kahlo further enriched my understanding of love's emotional dimensions. Witnessing Thomas Hirschhorn's "Twin-Subjecter" (2011) at AGSA in Adelaide this year, with its large-scale human forms pierced by mixed media, was both shocking and mesmerising, inspiring my own large-scale 3D installations.

In the first stage, the intensity of initial love is depicted through a large-scale, realistic painting. The extreme close-up composition, focusing on a man and a woman's eye, emphasises the allure of contact in the early stages of love. Enlarged eyes with dilated pupils signify the softening of our gaze when experiencing love. Contrasting features, including sharp, defined lines associated with masculinity and soft, rounded contours linked to femininity, create a dynamic interplay on the canvas. I chose acrylic paints for their versatile blending and vibrant qualities. Employing a chiaroscuro technique, I transitioned from a dark black background to intricate light details through layering, enhancing transitions with a flow medium. I selected realistic colours inspired by the Renaissance to capture authenticity and emotional resonance, drawing from artists like Leonardo Da Vinci. One of the challenges I faced was the fast-drying nature of acrylics. Unlike the slower-drying Renaissance-preferred oil paints, acrylics pose a challenge due to their quick drying, hampering smooth blending and layering. I experimented with wet-on-wet techniques and acrylic mediums to extend drying time. Another challenge encountered was replicating the luminous quality seen in Renaissance art, such as in Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa." Emulating luminosity with acrylics can be tricky, so I've opted for a satin glaze finish to add depth and richness.

The second stage of the "Love Trilogy", is symbolised by a clay sculpture connecting two hearts through tubes, the emphasis shifts to the depth of love's connection. The tubes connecting serve as a visual metaphor, representing two individuals merging into a single entity through love. A challenge was achieving vein details on the heart using a skewer, they appeared flat due to my linear carving; I could have improved by using a more curved tool to create more 3D indentations. The use of rich red glaze in the sculpture amplifies the intensity of the connection between two individuals. This

concept resonates with American artist Kate MacDowell, known for her intricate porcelain sculptures that often blend elements of nature with the human form. MacDowell's 2013 porcelain sculptures echo a comparable sentiment, seamlessly melding humanity with the natural world. Clay's tactile and malleable nature reinforces love's enduring quality, mirroring the belief in humanity's earthly origins, echoing Dowell's themes. In my artwork, the connecting tubes show two hearts coming together. Similarly, my work and MacDowell's, draw upon symbolism and visual representations of interconnectedness to convey deeper emotional and philosophical human connection themes.

In the third stage, my work draws inspiration from tonal realist drawing artists like Andrew Wyeth, known for his detailed and emotionally evocative charcoal drawings. Charcoal, from burnt wood remnants, symbolizes the potential transformation from the ashes of love's fire. Black and white in the drawing vividly illustrate the stark contrast between love and loss, capturing the world's faded vibrancy after heartbreak. A challenge with charcoal media is its messy imprecise nature, making it difficult to achieve the level of tonal realism. One valuable lesson I've learned in the process is that to make folds look realistic, it's essential to place the darker shades at the bottom of the folds and carefully carve out lighter tones on top. This technique creates the illusion of depth and texture in the fabric, enhancing the overall realism of the drawing. A notable success in my charcoal drawing process has been the skilful use of hatching and cross-hatching techniques. Strategically layering and intersecting charcoal lines, I've added rich texture and intricate detail to my artwork. This method allows a realistic depiction of fabric folds and cocoon-like structures, while precise strokes convey subtle light and shadow for an impactful drawing.

My choice to create a personal exploration of love's stages is fuelled by my lifelong fascination with love's profound emotions. My understanding of the stages depicted in my art comes from a previous relationship that briefly underwent these transformations, sparking a significant personal change. I don't claim that all love stories are the same. I respect the individuality of each relationship. My art portrays a personal experience, not a single love story.

Throughout this artistic journey, I was challenged to create a painting and draw on such a large scale, pushing the boundaries of my smaller-scale prior artistic endeavours. What's truly transformative is that I've reached a level of realism in my art that was previously unattainable. A challenge I encountered was my relatively limited experience with clay and charcoal compared to my painting proficiency. I worked with more subtle tonal blending and light source erasing to achieve convincing 3D effects within the intricate folds of my charcoal drawing. I learnt the importance of stepping back and analysing my work from a distance, to criticise composition and assess how material choices and scale can impact viewers' experience.