

## *'A State of Unrequited Love Tarot'*

### **Phoebe Kothe**

"A State of Unrequited Love Tarot" explores the different stages of a relationship where one is in state of unreturned love. The topic of love is generally depicted as a glamorous, wonderful experience that is supposed to last a life-time. Alongside the beauty of love, I wanted to show the upsetting side of love; the obsession, the jealousy, the hurt, the insecurities. I wanted to make a deck of tarot cards that showed how it felt to be in a relationship with one-sided love.

Unrequited love can arise in different ways; whether it occurs from open relationships or toxic relationships. The specific relationship I looked at was 'open relationships' because with this can manifest doubt, insecurities, jealousy and obsessions.

To capture these stages I chose to do a series of photoshoots that would each depict a different stage of unrequited love, those being desire, sensuality, insecurity, jealousy and obsession. I was inspired by an Australian photographer, Sarah Bahbah, as she captures the desire for inner peace, pure love, fear of commitment and the paradox of wanting intimacy but craving isolation. Bahbah inspired the style of my photoshoots and the direction of my finals.

After researching the format of tarot cards, I noticed that on the majority of the cards there is not only a title but also a short description of what each title implies. I experimented with some phrases that corresponded to the titles and added them to the final works to give insight into the meaning of each card and to connect to the tarot card genre.

The original Waite tarot deck produced in 1910 by E.A. Waite is rich in symbolism and striking in its design. This deck inspired me to consider using singular image human portraits that represented the stages of unrequited love. The text type used in the original deck influenced my font style choice of 'JSL Ancient', similar to the traditional deck.

The main source of inspiration was from contemporary illustrator, Emilee Graverson. Graverson created a deck of cards called 'Personal Space Tarot' that used minimalist drawings with a limited colour scheme. The deck was intended to suit everyone and include a personal interpretation for each individual. Graverson inspired me to add the traditional numbers above the tarots to give authenticity.

I used a Krita, a free drawing application, to colour my drawings. I experimented with a wide range of techniques to create a realistic style and achieve the effects I needed. The process was not always an easy one; Krita did not recognise the pen sensitivity of the Wacom tablet I used which made it difficult to produce smooth strokes.

I am happy with the outcome of the tarot cards I produced. I worked with a style where I had high interest and with techniques I hadn't previously used. My future work in the visual arts will include further developing my digital drawing skills.