

 MADE IN CANADA

PORTFOLIOS BY:

BARBARA PROBST

EXPOSURE #33: N.Y.C.

SUSAN LAKIN

TELEVISION PORTRAITS

JEFF HARRIS

SELF PORTRAITS

E-J MAJOR

LOVE IS...

BOOK REVIEW:

KAYLYNN DEVENY

THE DAY-TO-DAY LIFE OF

ALBERT HASTINGS

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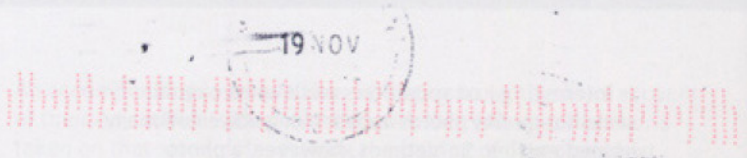
Love is...

Postcards from the Edge
BY E-J MAJOR



love is...

HARD WORK



Emily-Jane Major
FREEPOST NAT22451
LONDON
E8 4BR





love is...

My Son
Tyler

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love is...

A Connection
Between
Anyone
or
Anything

4 JAN
2005

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love is... wanting to be
with someone all
the time!



Also ~ Love is..... where
the heart is!

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love is...

INFINITE.

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Good Luck with this
exciting project from
a fellow artist.

Love is... Three years ago, London-based artist E-J Major began asking strangers to divulge their thoughts on this most profound, yet indefinable subject. The answers, sent anonymously on postcards, reveal richly individual reflections on a universal emotion, both joyful and bitter, some weighty, others flippant. But what is love exactly, other than a much-abused word? The inadequacy of language is central to much of Major's work, which often takes snippets of source materials—books, drawings, magazine articles, or in this case film stills from *Last Tango in Paris*—as the start point for her investigations.

The process—her engagement with the materials and where that takes her—is as important to her as the end result, and typically the projects take months or years to complete. For *Love is...*, she created a high-resolution screenshot of each second of Bernardo Bertolucci's controversial 1972 classic, making a single postcard from each one. She then hand-delivered the cards to strangers' letterboxes around London and the West Midlands,

with her freepost address on the back, together with a message that asked recipients to return it with their thoughts, as part of "an enquiry into love".

She received around 50 or 60 returns per 1,000 delivered. "Occasionally, the film itself becomes the subject of the response for those who recognize it from the still or just respond to the image," says Major. "But even when this is not the case, when the response is placed below the image, the temptation to make a correlation between the two is strong."

We've all seen the *Love is...* cartoon (which Major never directly refers to), with its cutely drawn boy-and-girl couple—naked, yet sexually unaware—complete with folksy proverbs. In the late 1960s, Kim Casali began making them as love notes to her future husband—ironically, because she couldn't find another way to express her feelings for him—and only later did they become an international phenomenon, read around the world.



love is... JUST A WORD

Royal Mail Herefordshire Worcestershire
07.02.05
08-14 pm
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love is... a fragile mirror reflecting soft hidden thoughts of
wishes poets and dreams carried along on a tide of
careless happiness cupped whole within the hearts and
souls of numerous pilgrim beings breathing breathless
canon's at the oceans edge.



Emily-Jane Major
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love is... graceful yet solid, supple & pliable, love listens
and heals, love reflects and reverberates deeply and willingly,
love is whole, sets no limits and remains gracefully
solid and supple to the changing needs of loves will.



love is... wanting my husband to come to liberty
with me but I enjoy his company, but not
forcing him to be as I know he'll be very happy
loving

love is...

giving the first slice of
your poached egg-and-crumble
to your favourite rat. ^{Julian age 5}

love is? What is love?
Who knows? love is an
artichoke with all its layers
and in the very center,
it is sweet. But love comes
in so many forms, who knows?

Kiana age 13
and Sean's products
from their

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love is...

PUTTING SOMEBODY ELSE OR
SOMETHING ELSE BEFORE YOURSELF.
OR MAYBE ITS THE STRIVING
FOR AN INTANGIBLE IDEAL . . .

Emily-Jane Major
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As a contrast to the cartoon's schmaltz wisdoms, nothing quite captures the real emotional intensity of sexual relationships as well as *Last Tango in Paris*, which explores the sadomasochistic shadow regions of love. The film—sumptuously shot, but better known for its infamous “butter scene”—tells the story of a distraught, middle-aged man (played brilliantly by Marlon Brando) who, after the apparent suicide of his wife, begins a cruel affair with a young girl (Maria Schneider), who eventually kills him.

“The film was chosen because it’s one I regularly replay in my head,” Major explains. “I wanted to see it as a series of stills that would then each have its own journey, only some of which would make it back to me. *Last Tango* has long been defined by the sex scenes that created such scandal at its release, but it is

a film about, at least, a quest for love, and a cross-generational entanglement both liberating and tragic.”

The film was cut or banned in some countries it was released in, and for many the abusive relationship remains difficult to identify with. But it surely points towards a truer, more complex understanding of love, relationships and sexuality than the myth of romantic innocence that Casali projected. The premise for the film’s tense psycho-melodrama is extreme, but in some sense we’ve all been there.

In Major’s work, the film stills hint at an interior world, between fact and imagination, where love-lives of all kinds are played out. They serve as prompt, or a counterpoint, to the words of the respondents, and together they illustrate that for any two people, love never means the same thing.

SIMON BAINBRIDGE

