

2024

A glossy red heart is positioned in the upper right corner, partially wrapped by a metallic, silver-colored ribbon that spirals across the frame. The background is a light gray gradient.

Puissance de L'amour

Kai solo show



“ Pui ssance De L’ amour ”

An Attempt to capture the process and work by Kai for the
show in Saint Tropez, Work in Progress

July 17th - October 17th, 2024

BELAIRFINEART

Kai



Designed by Kirill and Ilya

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Read with Love



I n t e r v i e w

A Glimpse into Kai and His Power of Love



When Kai first asked me to interview him about his upcoming show, I was not only honored but also felt a deep responsibility to offer a glimpse into the person behind the art. I've known Kai for years, and with every painting, I feel like I get to know him better. Just as his artworks are detailed, thoughtful, and meaningful, so is the man behind them.

What sets this interview apart from the past ones is my personal connection with Kai. Over the years, I've been privileged to hear the stories and messages directly from him, making me even more attached to his works. This time, I knew it was crucial to encourage Kai to open up and share his inner thoughts with everyone.

After getting a sneak peek of the collection, we decided it was time to dive into the conversation.

Jeremy

Before we dive in, can you introduce yourself and share about what you do?

Jeremy

Could you take us through your journey as an artist and what inspired you to pursue a career in art?

Kai

My name is Kai, and I'm an artist. I use different mediums like sculpture, drawings, hanging works, murals, prints, and animation to transform common human experiences into art.

Kai

It all started because I wanted my dad to quit smoking. I took a small canvas and replaced the Marlboro logo with the word 'Morons.' The piece deeply resonated with him and he quit, then I wondered if this visual could inspire others. I started to hand make posters one by one, and I spread the image throughout the streets of Los Angeles. This led to being offered my first gallery show, then acceptance to art schools, and ultimately a world tour where I shared messages using the



Jeremy

That's quite a journey from helping your dad to becoming a globally recognized artist is truly inspiring. Did anything in your upbringing influence your artistic style?

character 'IF,' my imaginary friend. Since then, it's been a snowball effect.

Kai

Definitely. Since I grew up without cable or satellite TV, I read a lot of books, especially my dad's art book collection. I also liked the way cartoon clippings and newspapers captured wit and delivered a point in a succinct way. Growing up, my parents' favorite artist was Norman Rockwell, who is known for single frame storytelling. This ultimately became the backbone of my artistic practice, which aims to depict a story in one frame. Cartoons also became a passion, watched on DVDs or at friends' houses, where I soaked up classic animators like Tex Avery and early Disney. My graphic style was fueled by growing up in LA.

Jeremy

It's great to see how your background, shaped your style. I've had the privilege of following your work since IF's first appearance. I've seen the messages you've portrayed over the years. As we have witnessed how much IF has evolved and grown, it raises the question: Are we seeing IF or are we witnessing your personal growth and evolution?

Kai

Both. Like anything, the more you work on it, the more it develops. All humans on Earth should strive to grow, question what they are doing wrong and wonder how they could improve. I use that same momentum when I work. You create something, and once you're done, you enjoy it, admire it, and then see what you could have done better. By pushing yourself, you elevate by unlocking different levels and higher concepts. A state of stagnancy means you are going backwards because the world is advancing around you. Adapting constantly is the only way to stay ahead of the curve.





It takes time to make meaningful work, work on yourself, and ensure you're going down the right path. I believe I am evolving as a human and the work is evolving naturally. There are tens, if not hundreds, of people that are part of the process to create anything we do. People who work on concrete, bronze, patina, or animation are now specialists. I am open to listening to their ideas on ways to improve because they have very insightful input and I value them. Part of growth is being able to listen and then decide whether you want to implement the feedback or not. But you must put your ego aside. The more you listen, the more you learn. The more you learn, the more you grow. That's how everything happens in the studio. You listen and you grow.

Jeremy

Talking about putting in all that work, can you describe what your typical creative process is? How do you approach starting a new piece or a new collection?

Jeremy

So you started talking about your show, "The Power of Love." Can you elaborate on the name, meaning, and message you're trying to portray?

Kai

For a collection, I try to tap into what the theme is. Only I decide on a theme, and once the theme is set, we build towards that theme. Other times I build the works, and then the theme appears. No matter what, cohesiveness is key. Once done, you can finesse certain elements to make the theme very clear. It's all in the details. If you look at this show, a lot of the hearts are painted, or they have special effects added to them to highlight the power of love. With a cohesive collection, the message is clear and people walk away with a deep understanding of the intricacies and facets.

Kai

People grew up with varied understandings and feelings about love. Yet, at a fundamental level, all humans recognize its power and significance in everyday life. The show portrays varying interpretations of this

concept. Through experiencing the show, you come to realize that not everyone shares the same definition of the power of love, but you can empathize with their perspectives and emotions toward it. This was the essence of the show — to explore multiple facets and perspectives on the power of love.

Jeremy

I must ask, what inspired “The Power of Love”? Were there specific experiences or events that influenced its creation?

Kai

There were a few personal events. I was in a 10 year relationship that came to an end and there was a grieving process. I learned the definition of grief is having love to give and not knowing where to place it. That hit me hard because I thought, “How do I not have a place to put my love? I have siblings, parents, friends, my work, and all the people who support the work.” For me, I loved this person very dearly; I gave them a lot of my soul. The absence of this love showed me it’s power, which served as a catalyst as I redirected it to different places including myself.



Once I truly loved myself, I began to branch out. My self love overflowed and poured into others, changing my relationships for the better. To me, there is a greater purpose in the love we give to others and to the aspects of life that extend beyond ourselves. I’ve always believed in a higher power and had faith that everything unfolds as it should. Embracing each moment and cherishing the lessons has been my philosophy. Leaning and accepting the highs and lows, from challenging conversations that foster growth to effortless connections that reveal beauty, I’ve come to see that love is the heartbeat that animates our world, it keeps us ticking.

Jeremy

Thank you for giving us a little glimpse into Kai and sharing such a deeply personal journey. It’s clear that your experiences with love and grief have profoundly shaped “The Power of Love”. What makes this collection different from the past collections?

Kai

This collection started off with the title and overall theme, then we built on

that. We did cement and bronze, but we went further. Love is a universal theme that has stood the test of time. Love is resilient. We wanted the pieces to look weathered, like they had been through storms, just like how the love you have for someone has been tested. These pieces have decay or aging to show that even when love has faced trials and tribulations, it still carries its power. We aged the concrete too, but despite the aging it's shiny and bright, illustrating that the power of love remains vibrant. Love can shine through adversity, that's the power.

Jeremy

That sounds profound. The aged and weathered look really adds depth to the theme of enduring love. Can you get into more detail about what's new and different here?

Kai

Since we aged the cement, there's a lot of rubble and breakage. The patinas are very special, with unique paints and finishes that make the love shine, literally sparkle. We wanted to make everything in this show feel a bit magical.

There's a blend of old and new, crisp and decayed.

Jeremy

I want to refer to your previous show, Perfect Memories, where it was the first time we saw you combine bronze and cement. You've used bronze and cement separately before, but what prompted you to put these two mediums together?

Kai

It's about understanding where I've been and where I'm going. Cement played a significant role in my past and the history that brought us here. Bronze is a newer element in my practice, one that we're continually learning about. Blending the old with the new is essential to life. You carry your memories, hardships, and experiences with you while continually transforming. By mixing both, it represents the present. You're working towards understanding and mastering bronze while carrying the past experiences with cement. This blend anchors you in the present, allowing you to enjoy the moment.

Jeremy

Blending the new and the old to represent the present is a beautiful concept. I do want to mention the massive sculptures displayed throughout Saint Tropez, which seems to embody some of your most powerful messages. What is your intention behind creating the sculptures at this scale? How do you envision viewers interacting with them and are there any experimental elements integrated into them?

Kai

We made these giant monumental sculptures and placed them throughout the city to remind you of the strength of love. The love that is seen from afar is felt from afar. These brass sculptures sit outdoors and are about 8-10 feet tall. The bases can serve as planters, nurturing flowers and nature, symbolizing how love grows—alive and ever-changing. Alternatively, they can transform into fishponds, where life unfolds before your eyes. This concept illustrates the dynamic essence of love, highlighting its ability to thrive and manifest in natural forms.

Jeremy

I also noticed that in this collection there are a few new messages we haven't seen before, could you share your interpretation of one of them?



Kai

Yearning is one of my favorites, easily, because of its size and medium. We did something we've never done. Yearning is two big "IFs" facing away from each other, upset. But there are little "IFs" made of rhodium inside of them that are trying to connect. Sometimes, two people go in different directions, but their inner child yearns for that connection again. Most of the time, we are too stubborn to reconnect. Even when you're not talking, not friends anymore, not close, your soul still yearns for that connection. That's how powerful love is. "Love Lifts Us Up" is also one of my favorites. It's a heart lifting a bunch of characters. The Power of Love can lift one person up, but it can also lift up a group of people. When one person shares their love, it can brighten everyone's day and spread like wildfire.

The message behind “The Missing Piece” is we think we’re missing that one piece. If you look closely, you’ll notice that the heart is red, but the piece being held is pink, it doesn’t fit. Usually, the piece that we think is missing to feel whole is within ourselves. It’s not something you find from someone else. That’s usually the one piece that’s missing in every human: truly accepting yourself, giving yourself grace, understanding that everything is never going to be perfect, connecting to something larger than yourself, a higher purpose or power, and cultivating that missing piece from within.

Jeremy

There are a lot of new materials and a techniques. Are there any professional challenges or breakthroughs that you have been trying to do for a while?

Kai

Well, making the heart float within the thought bubble on “The Thinker” was incredibly difficult. The struggle is 537 pounds, we really pushed ourselves on the technical side in this show to the next level.

Jeremy

I’ve noticed that with each new piece—whether it’s a sculpture, a print, or a painting—it feels like we’re getting to see another layer of who you are. It’s like you’re gradually revealing more of yourself through your art. Does the process of keeping your personal identity mysterious empower you to break free from conventions and express aspects of yourself that others might keep hidden?

The patinas and finishes are crazy and the beautiful holographic effect is insane.

Kai

No great art comes from hiding. If you hide, you don’t make great work. So, you must be vulnerable. You must peel back the layers of what you’re dealing with. Then the hardest part is not making it about yourself. I want others to see themselves in the work. I think that’s where I find greatness. I find greatness in taking something personal that makes me feel vulnerable and making it broad and open enough for others to derive their own interpretation and meaning from it. For me, that’s what great art is.

As the conversation with Kai wraps up, it's clear that his art transcends creating beautiful pieces; it's about forging deep emotional connections. Kai has shared his personal journey, showing how his experiences have profoundly shaped his work, from helping his dad quit smoking to becoming the artist he is today. His story showcases the transformative power of art.

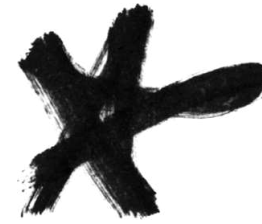
His latest collection, "The Power of Love," is a deeply personal exploration of love's many facets. By blending his own experiences with his art, each piece reflects the strength and resilience of love. Kai's work challenges us to view the world and ourselves with greater empathy and depth. Listening to Kai discuss his personal connection to each painting was profoundly moving. We're reminded of how art, fueled by genuine emotion and creativity, can profoundly impact our lives. Kai's willingness to be vulnerable and share his personal journey makes his art even more compelling, resonating deeply with everyone who experiences it.

Kai, your art carries powerful and meaningful messages that resonate deeply with me. It's not only a pleasure to admire your artwork, but I also cherish knowing that I can pass on these values to my daughter. Every day, as she gazes upon these paintings, she will be reminded of these essential lessons. It's a reminder for all of us to leave paths of love and happiness for the next generation. I hold immense admiration for you, grateful to have you as a friend.

Jeremy Benhamou

Edited by Ashley Yaghoobian





Adapt i n g
const ant l y i s
t h e o n l y w a y t o
st a y a h e a d o f t h e
c u r v e .





La Pui ssance De L' Amour

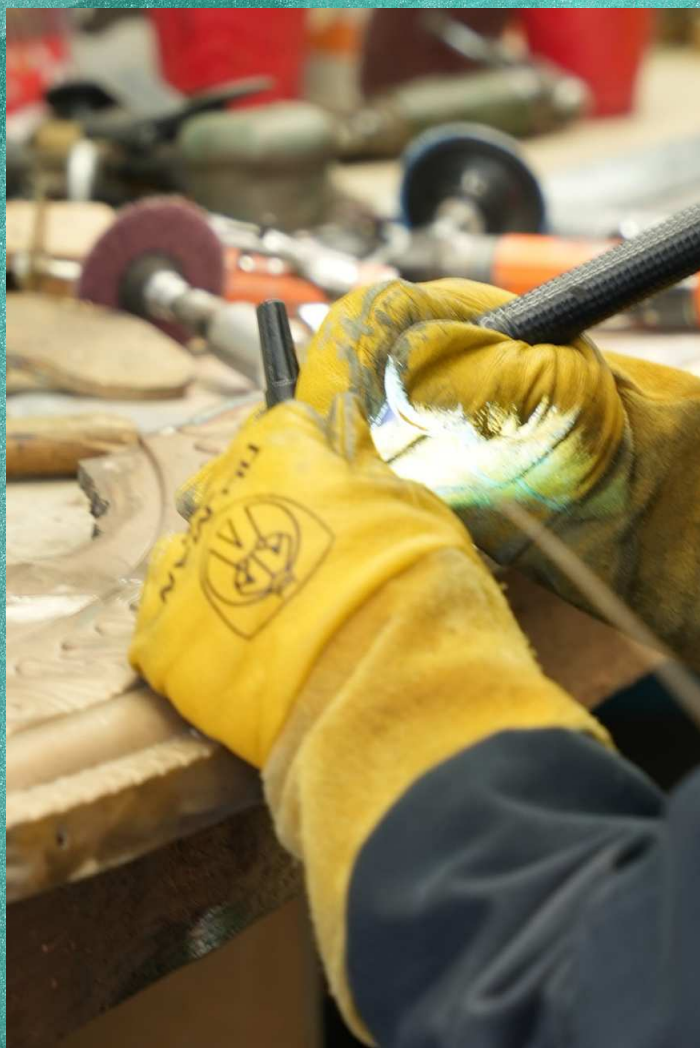




A state of
stagnancy means
you are going
backwards because
the world is
advancing around
you.







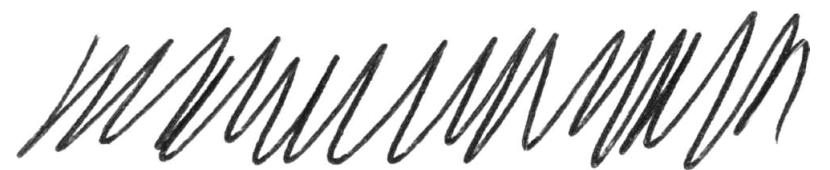
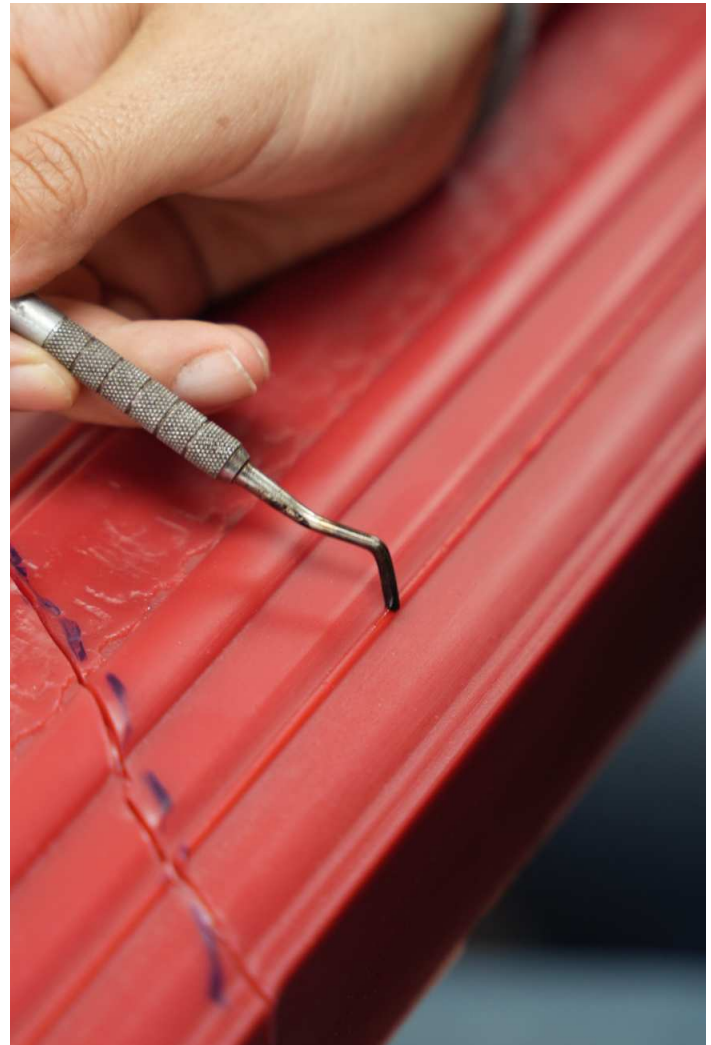


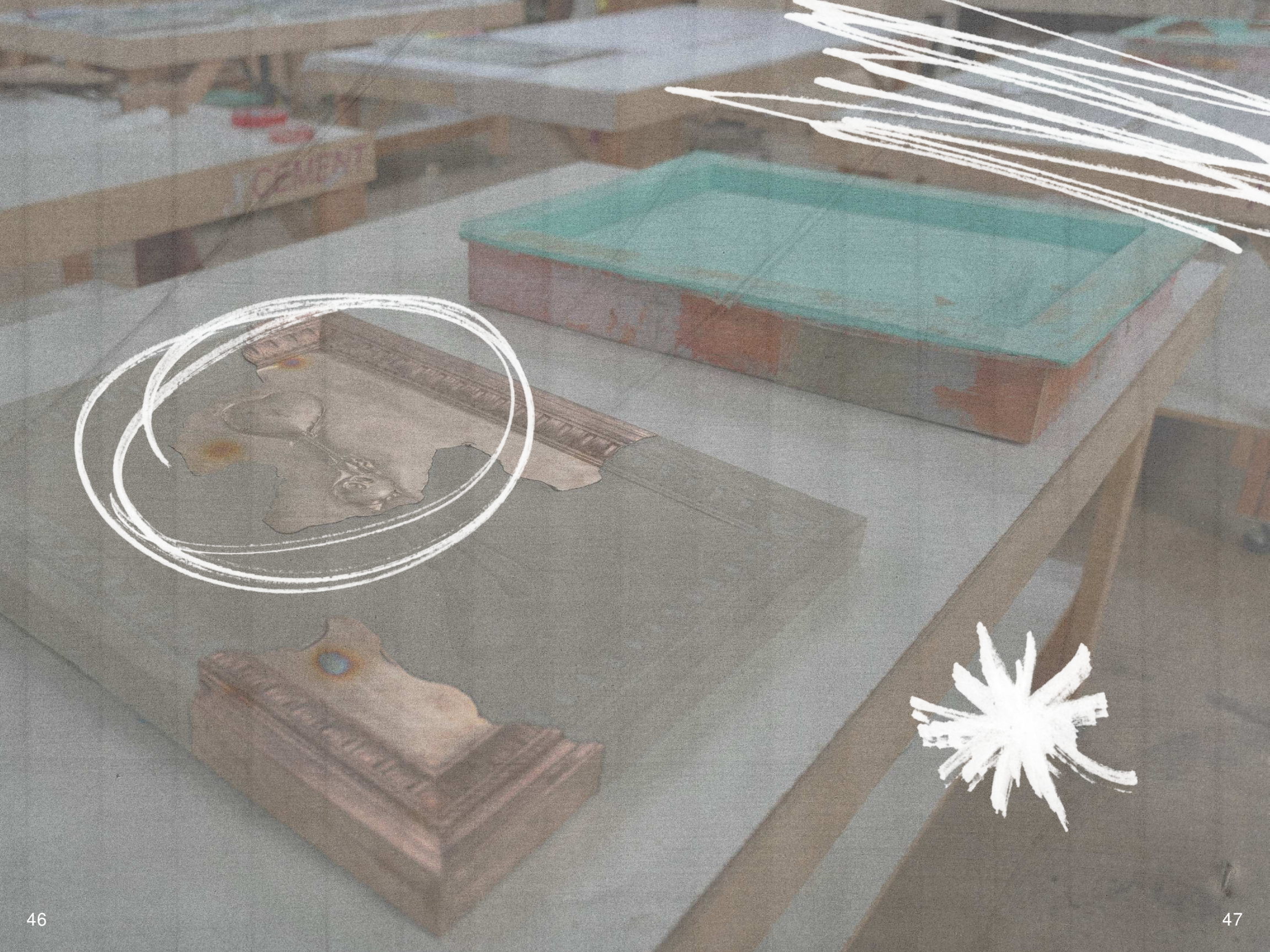
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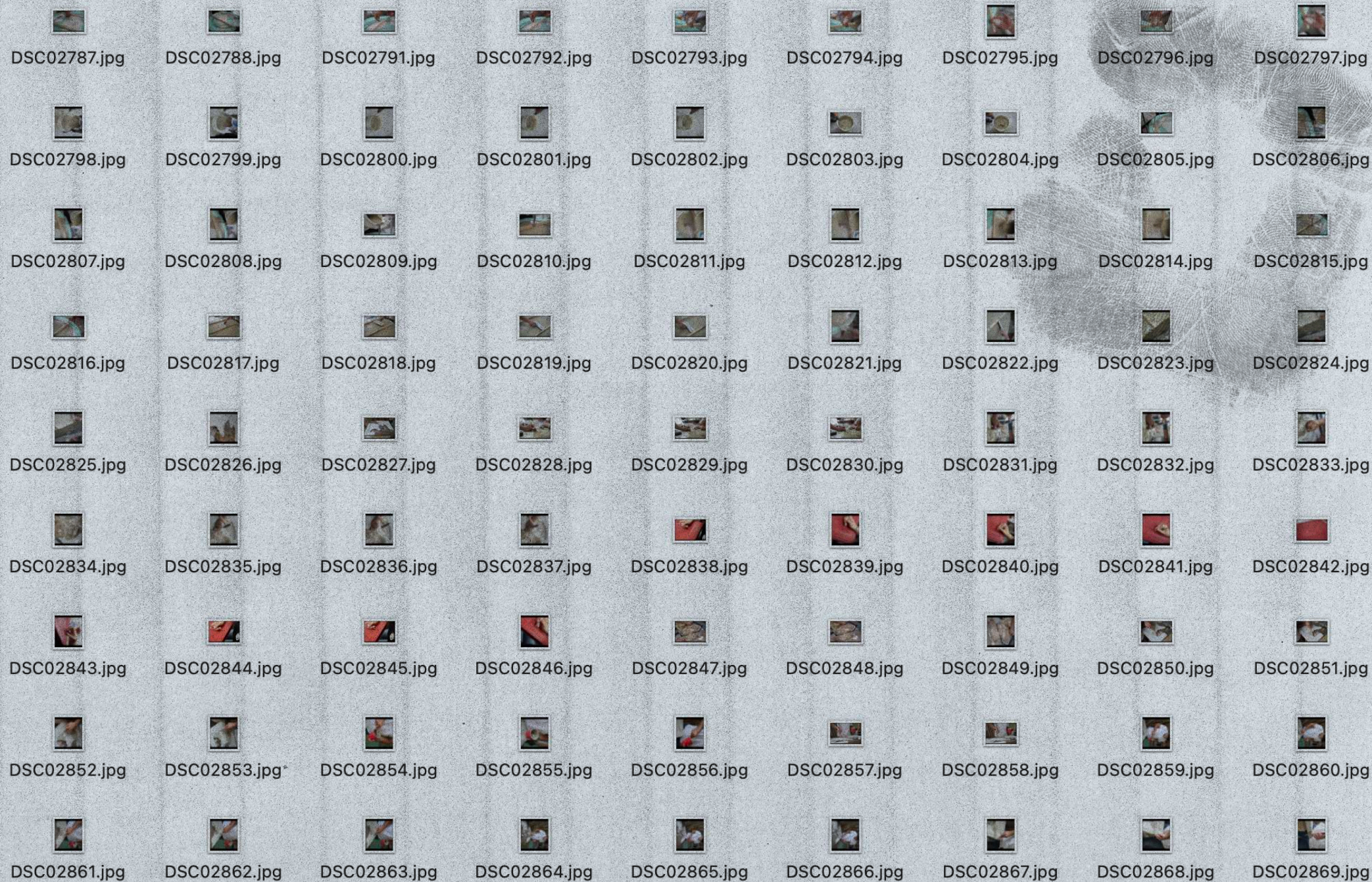


The absence
of this love
showed me it's
power, which
served as a
catalyst as I
redirected it
to different
places
including
myself.

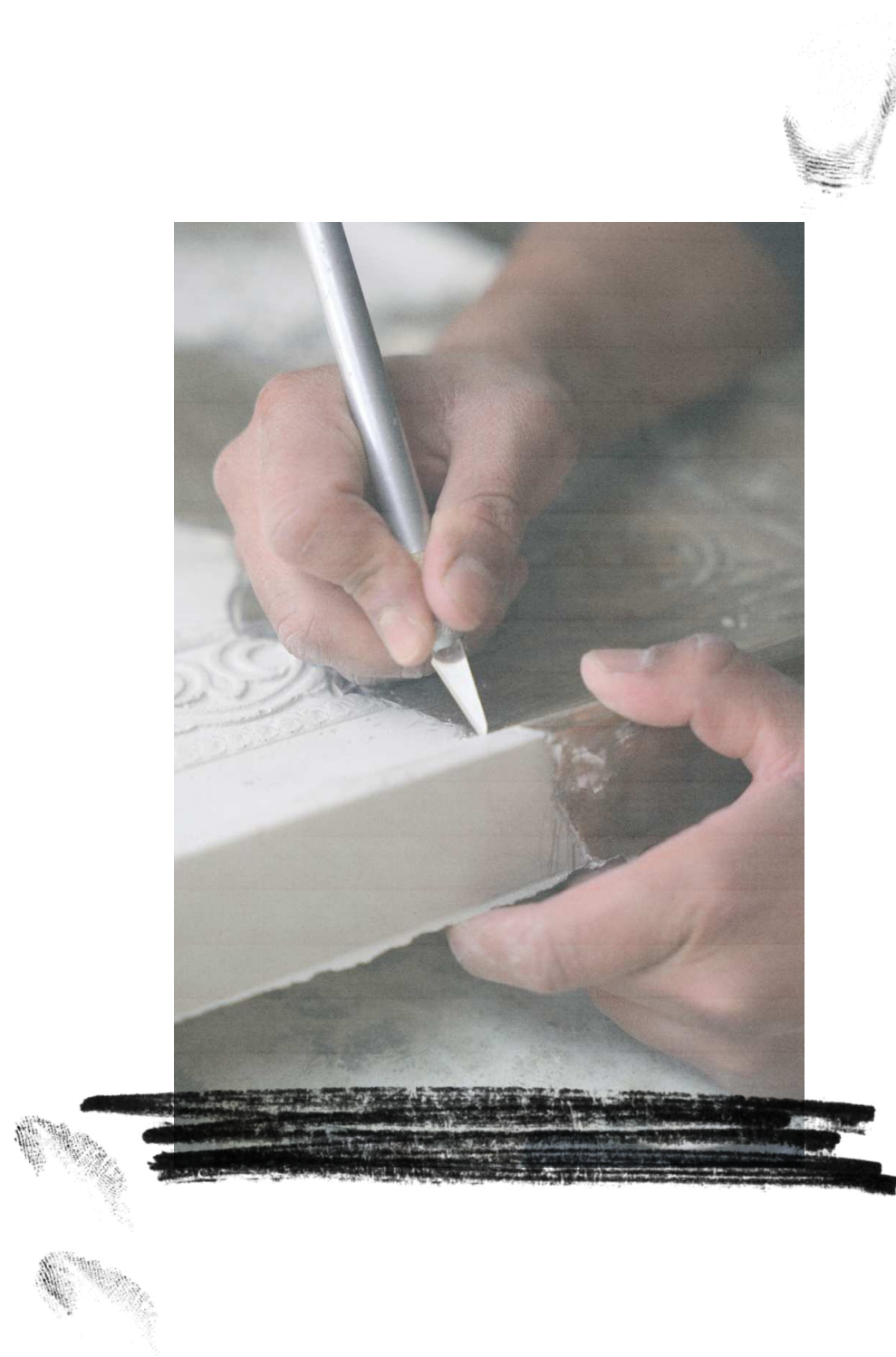
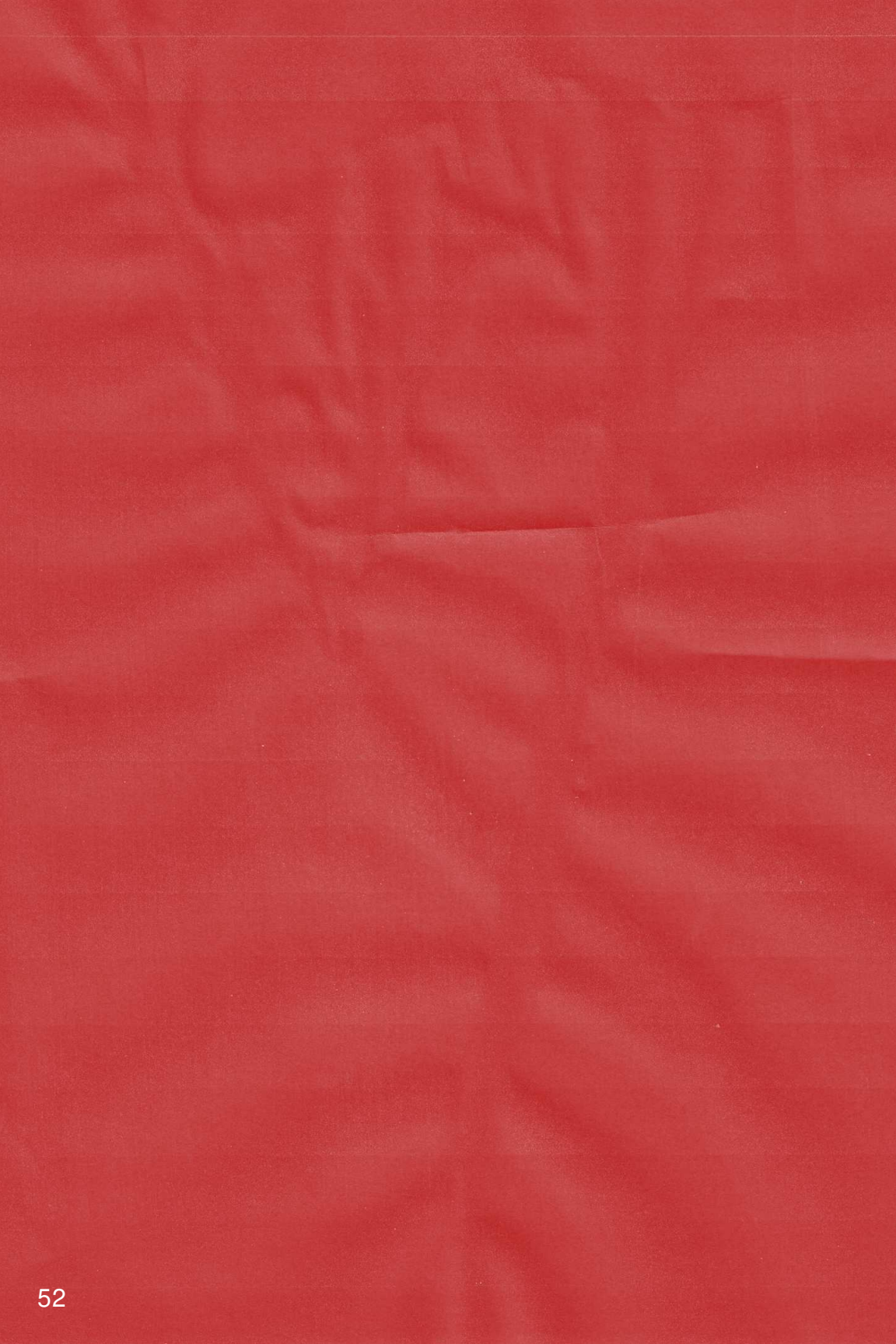
















La Pui ssance

De L' Amour

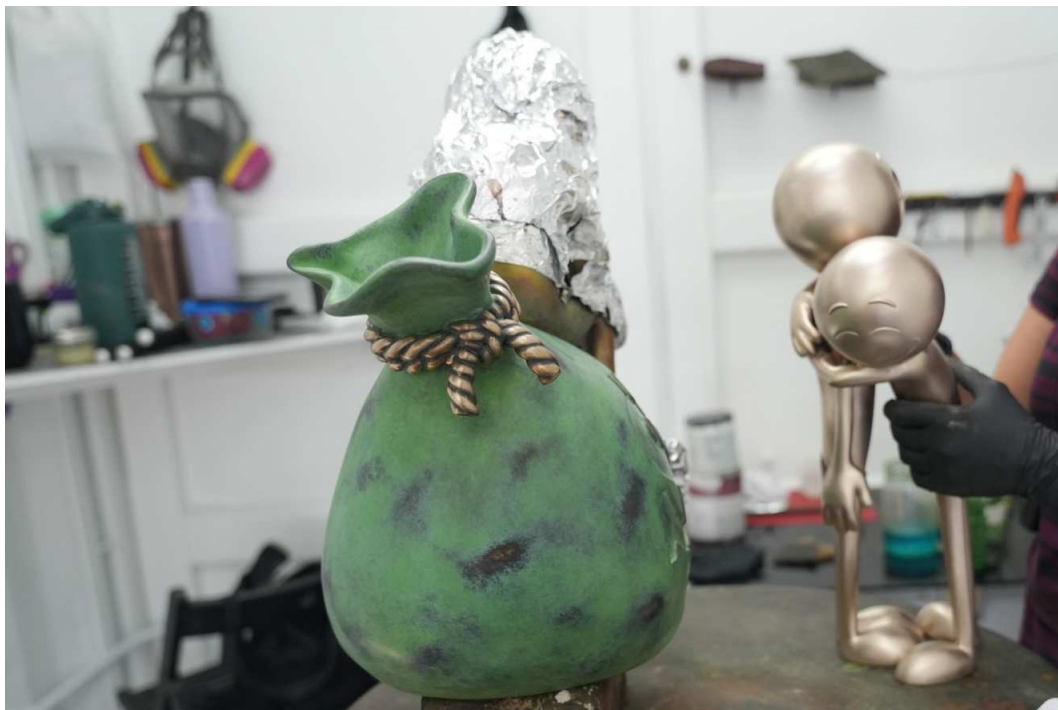






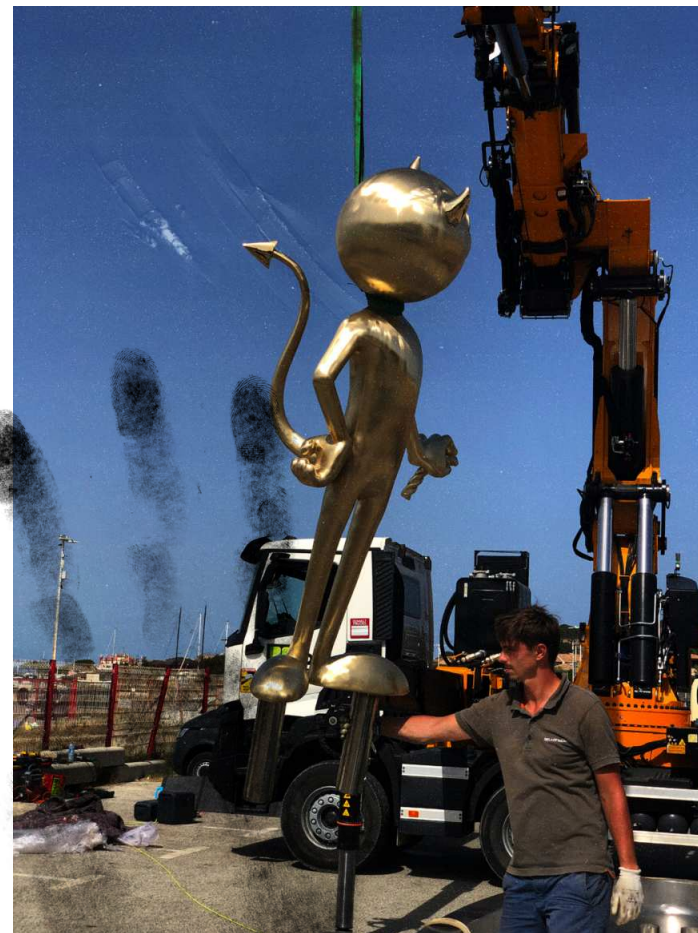
La Puissance De L'Amour











Monumental Sculptures





Love vs Money

Brass / Stainless Steel / Fiberglass
122.047 63 86.6 Inches
310 160 220 CM
992.08 Lbs
450 Kg
Edition of 3 + APs







The Thinker

Brass / Stainless Steel
110 70 70 Inches
280 175 175 CM
1190.5 Lbs
540 Kg
Edition of 3 + APs





BELAFFINE/ART
KAI
LOVE HOLDS US TOGETHER
ARTS & CULTURE
CITY OF NICE
COMMISSIONED BY THE CITY OF NICE
2018



Love Holds Us Together

Brass / Stainless Steel / Fiberglass
122 63 86.6 Inches
310 160 220 CM
992.08 Lbs
450 Kg
Edition of 3 + APs







Endless Possibilities

Brass / Stainless Steel / Paint
110.236 124 70 Inches
280 315 180 CM
1455 Lbs
660 Kg
Edition of 3 + APs

100



101



BELPAIRE/ART
KAI
THE STRUGGLE
DANIEL BELPAIRE
1997
GOLDEN BRASS
100 x 100 x 100 cm



The Struggle

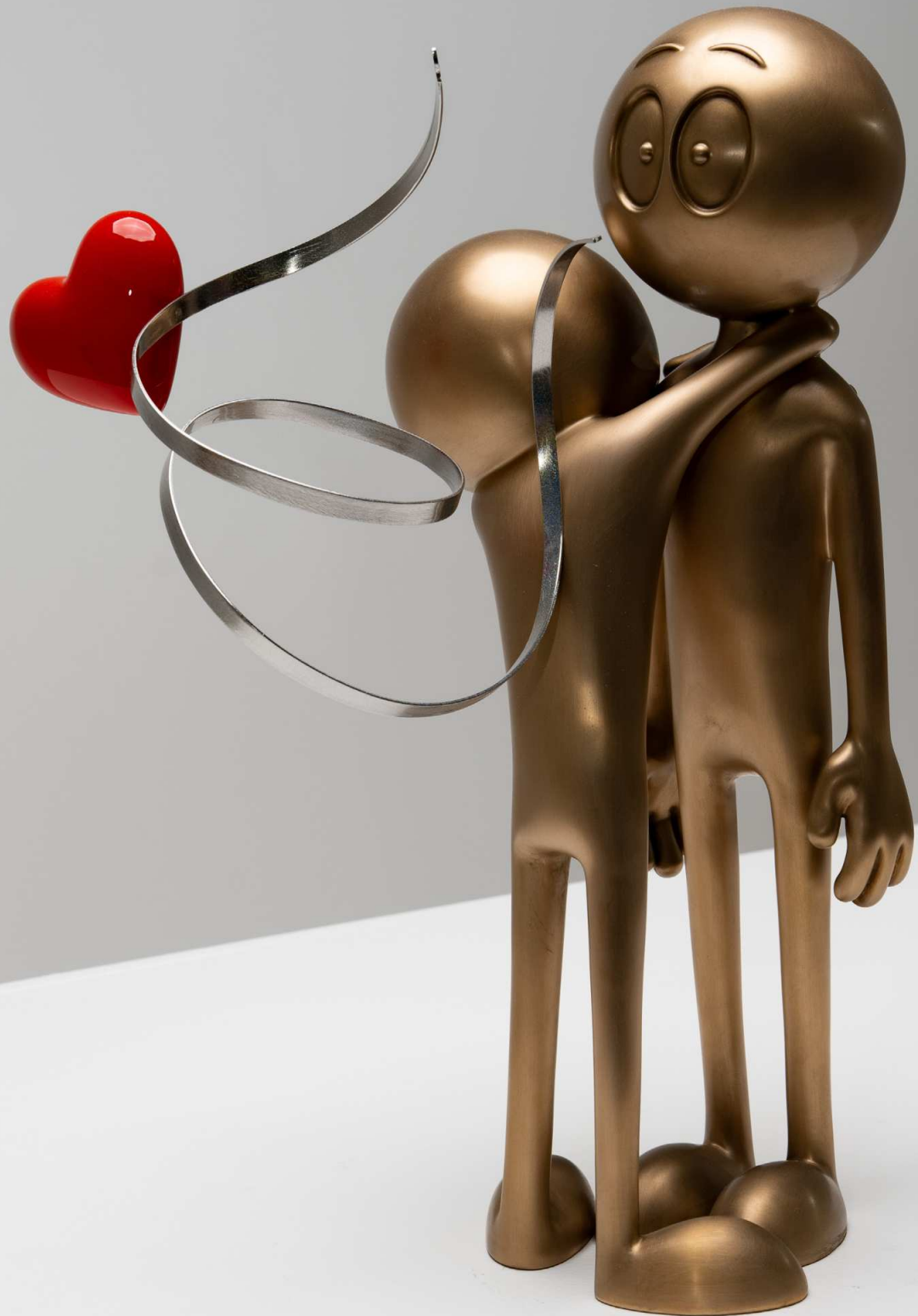
Brass/ Stainless Steel
122 295 96 Inches
310 X 750 245 CM
3130 Lbs
1420 Kg
Edition of 3 + APs



Bronze

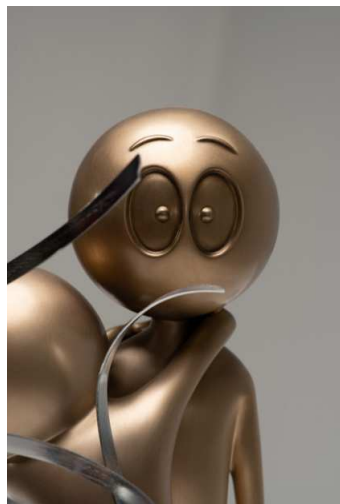
Sculptures











Perfect Hug



Perfect Hug

Bronze / Stainless Steel / Carbon Fiber

18 11 9.75 Inches

44.45 27.94 24.76 CM

24 Lbs

10.89 Kg

Edition of 8 + APs











The Thinker

Bronze / Carbon Fiber / Resin

26.25 16 9.75 Inches

66.67 40.64 24.76 CM

48 Lbs

21.77 Kg

Edition of 8 + APs

The Thinker



Hangi ng

Wr ks

Year ni ng



Year ni ng

Bronze / Concrete / Resin / Brass Plated Rhodium

24.5 21 Inches

62.23 53.34 CM

114.6 Lbs

51.98 Kg

Balancing Act



Balancing Act

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel

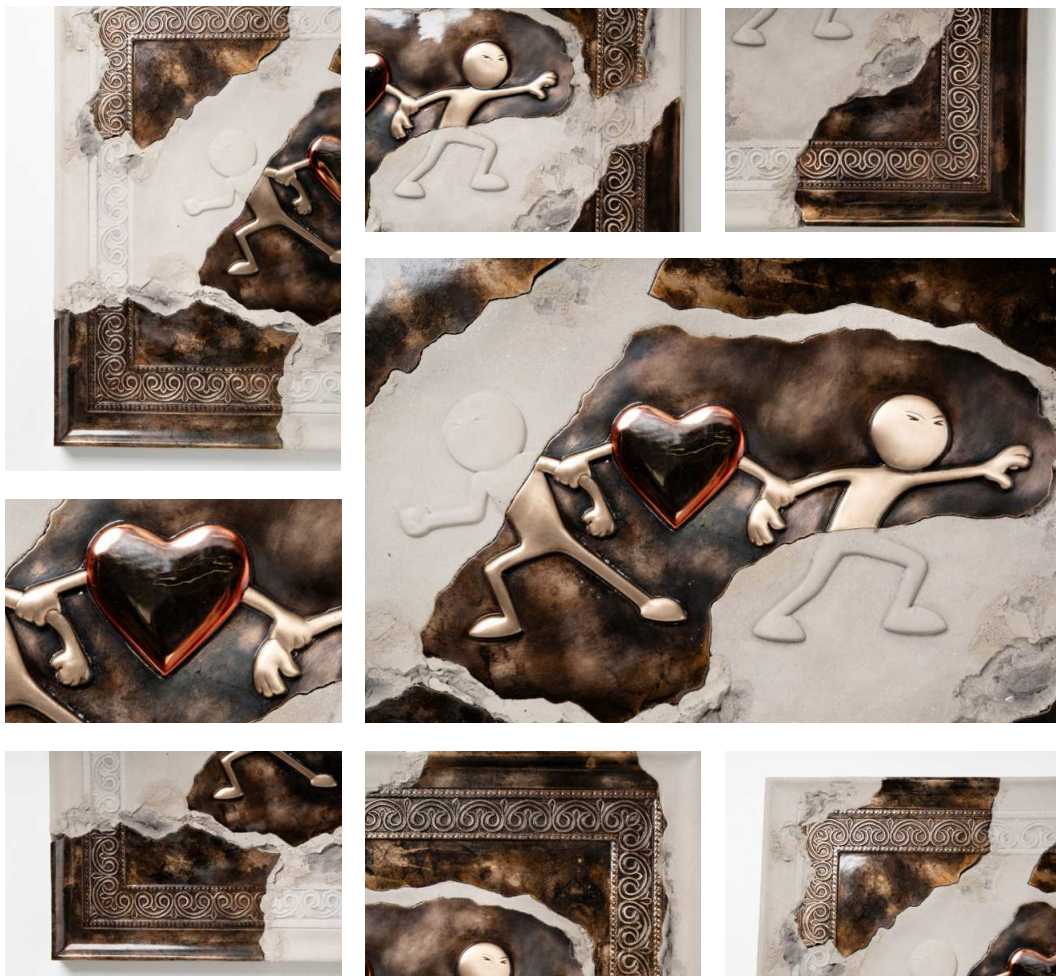
26.5 31 Inches

67.31 78.74 CM

130 Lbs

58.97 Kg

Love Hl ds Us Toget her



Love Hl ds Us Toget her

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel

27.178 34.45 Inches

69.03 87.50 CM

138 Lbs

62.60 Kg

Love Vs Mbney



Love Vs Mbney

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel

27.59 22 Inches

70 55.88 CM

70.32 Lbs

31.90 Kg

You Come First



You Come First

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel

30.692 25.202 Inches

77.95 64 CM

95 Lbs

43.09 Kg

The Thi nker



The Thi nker

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel

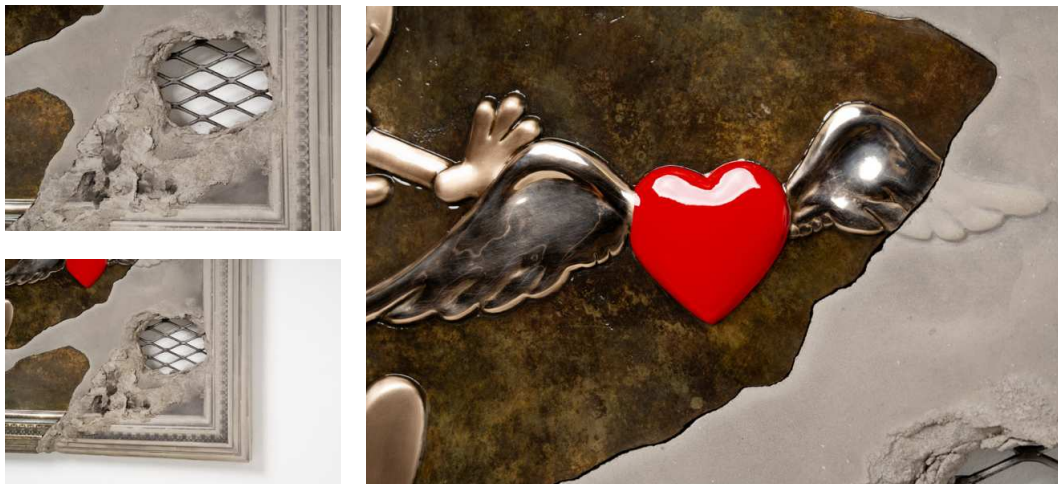
38.836 Inches

98.64 CM

150 Lbs

68.04 Kg

Chasi ng Love



Chasi ng Love

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel

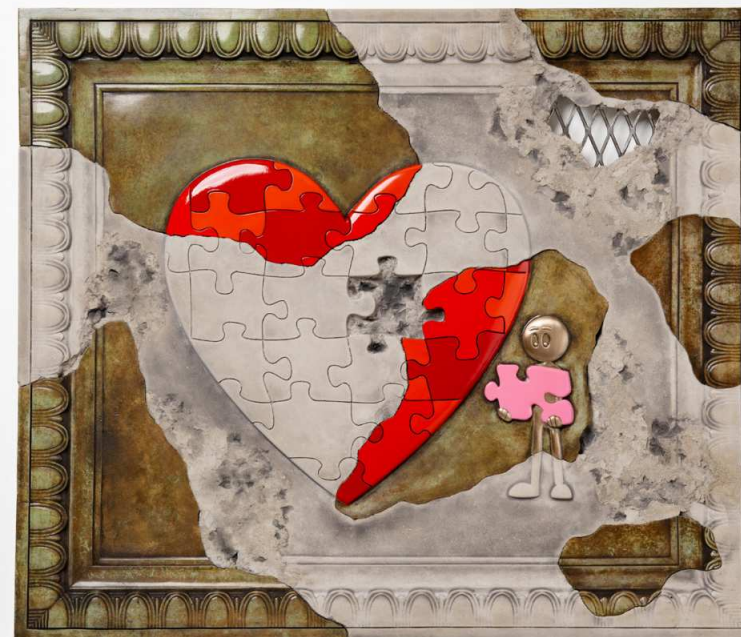
41" x 34.75" Inches

104.14" x 88.26" CM

211 Lbs

95.71 Kg

Love Puzzl e



Love Puzzl e

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel

36.75 42.75 Inches

93.34 108.58 CM

170 Lbs

77.11 Kg

Endl ess Possi bi l i t i e s



Endl ess Possi bi l i t i e s

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel

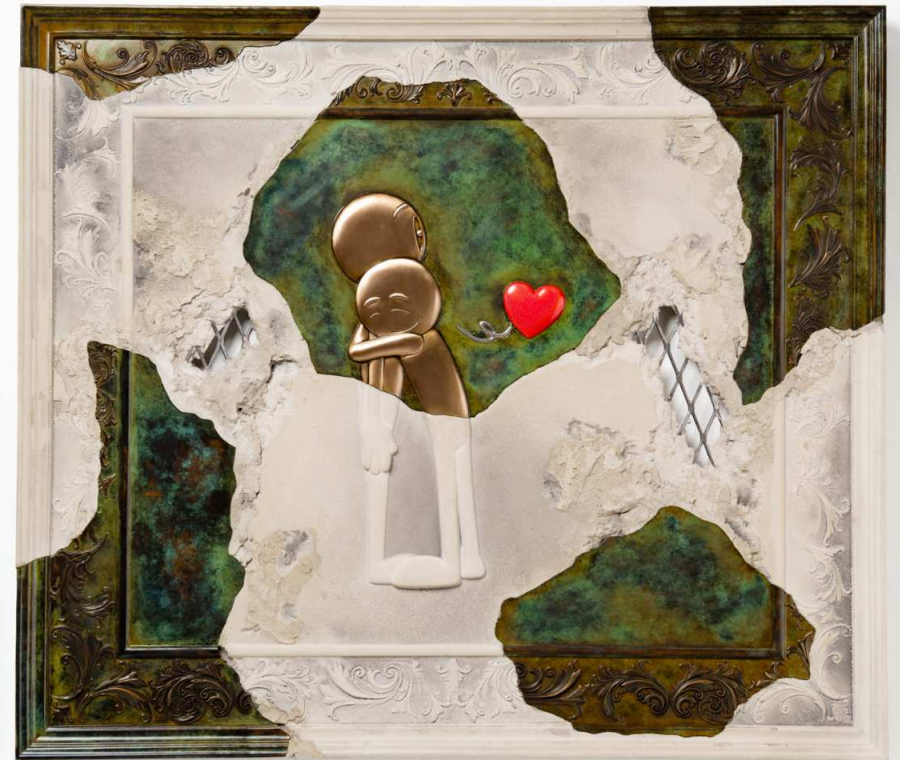
43.375 Inches

110.17 CM

204 Lbs

92.53 Kg

Perfect Hug



Perfect Hug

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel

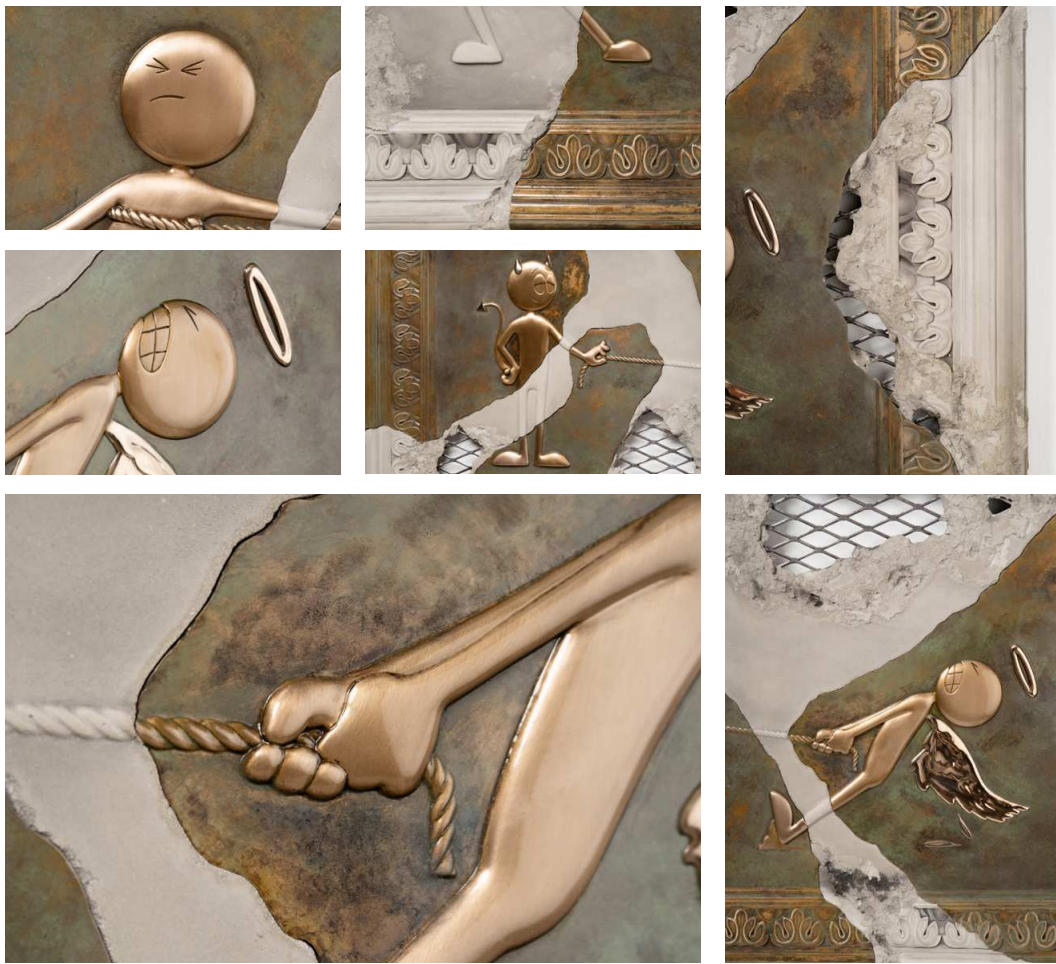
38.875 45 Inches

98.74 114.3 CM

180 Lbs

81.65 Kg

The Struggle



The Struggle

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel

41 88.25 Inches

104.14 224.15 CM

537 Lbs

243.58 Kg



Wonder Years

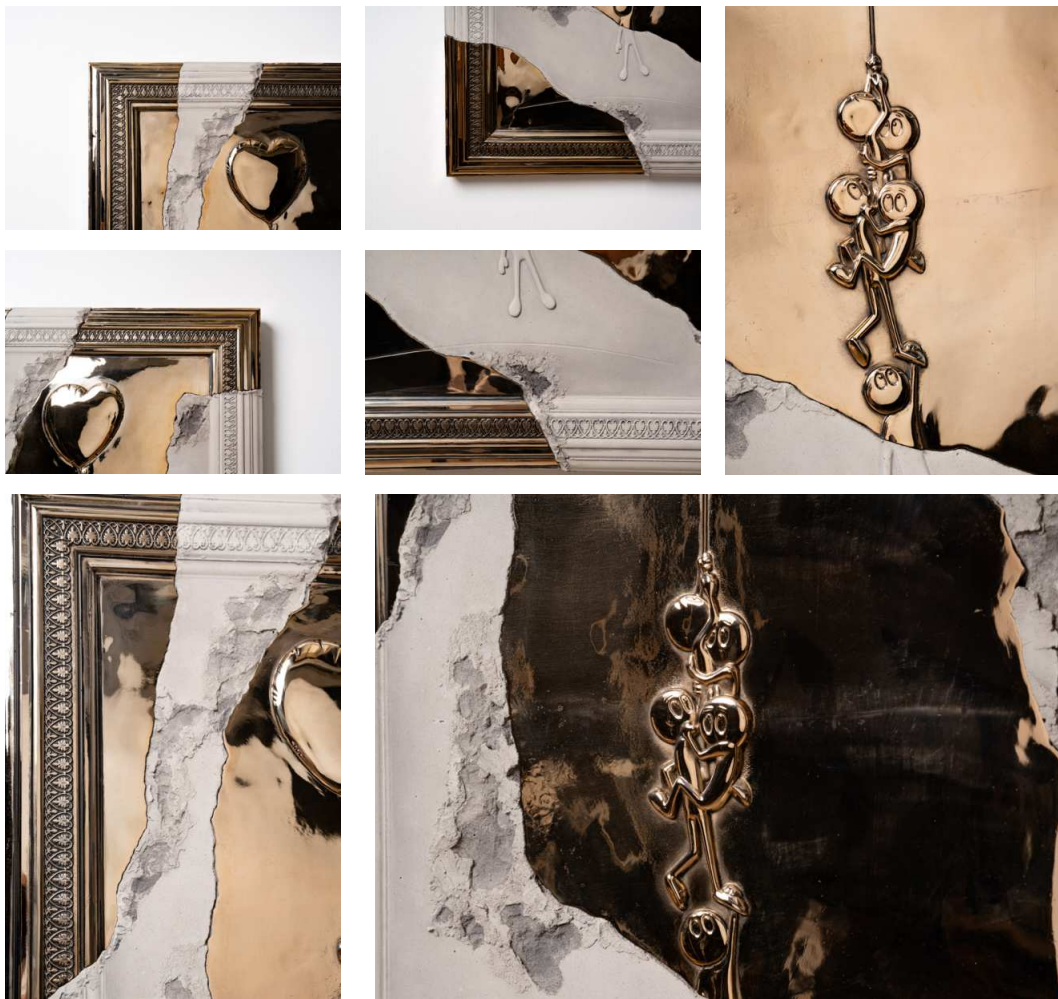
Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel / Nickel Plated

29.52 25.98 Inches

75 66 CM

82 Lbs

37.19 Kg



Love Lifts Us Up

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel / Gold

41 27.875 Inches

104 70.80 CM

80 Lbs

36.29 Kg

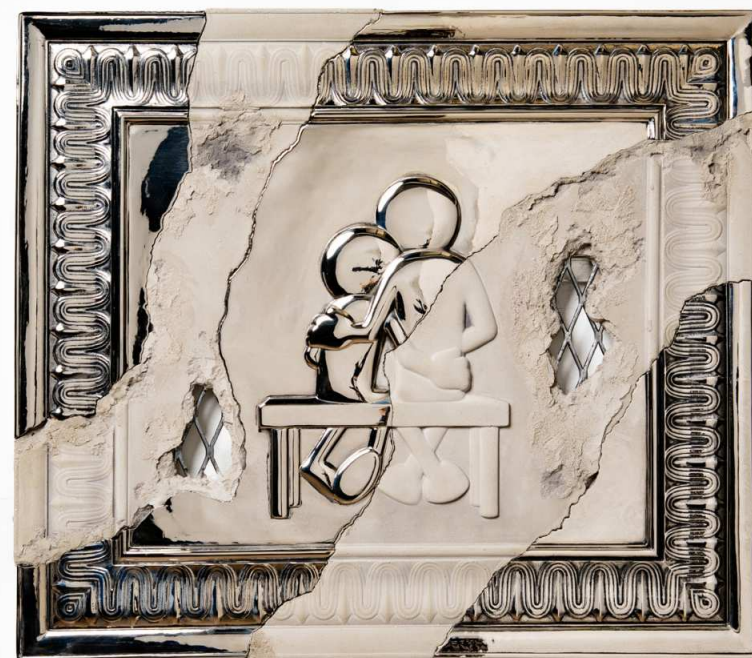
156

Love Lifts Us Up



157

Puppy Love



Puppy Love

Bronze / Concrete / Stainless Steel / Nickel

27.389 31.376 Inches

69.56 79.69 CM

158 Lbs

71.67 Kg

Thank you

Creating a body of work that will stand the tests of time is a tall order, and the only way I felt confident approaching it was by making sure its meaning came from the heart. The “power of love” fueled every aspect of the show, from conception to production, to photography and videography, logistics, installation and all the tiny things in between. Love fueled me and every single person who put their time, energy, skills and heart into this show.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to present my latest show, “The Power of Love,” in the beautiful city of Saint Tropez, in collaboration with Belaire. Merci beaucoup pour votre accueil chaleureux et votre soutien.

This exhibition is a celebration of love in all its forms and the power it has to unite us across boundaries and cultures. Through my signature character, “IF” (Imaginary Friend), I strive to create a universal language that transcends race, gender, and societal norms, allowing us to connect on a deeper level. “IF” inspires love in people by embodying the essence of acceptance and understanding, showing us that our differences are what make us beautiful. As the saying goes, « L’amour est la poésie des sens »—“Love is the poetry of the senses.”

I am honored to share this journey with you and to have your support in spreading the message of love, hope and unity. Votre présence signifie beaucoup pour moi, et j’espère que vous trouverez inspiration et joie dans chaque œuvre exposée.

I am grateful to be able to host a solo show in Saint Tropez that consists of five monumental sculptures throughout the city, two bronze sculptures, and 14 hanging works. Without you, your excitement, hope, and love, this would mean nothing.

Thank you to my incredible team: B, Jerry, Matthew, Simon, Franky, Jazz, Joe, Moose, Rafa, Antonio, Joshua, Alex, Adela, Bre, Kelly, Valencia, Henry, Ernest, Billy, Raul, Alberto, Shub, Jose, Ilya, Kirill, Francois, Greg, Bernard, Linda, Laura, Gautier, Jeremy, Ash, Olea, Ron and his team, Jovani and his team, Angel and his team, my mom - Angie, my dad - Marc, my sisters - Alex and Juju and anyone who I may have forgotten.

Love is the force that binds us, the light that guides us, and the hope that sustains us. It is through love that we find our true selves and connect with the world around us. As we come together to celebrate “The Power of Love,” let us remember that love has the power to heal, to inspire, and to transform. Together, we can make a difference, one act of love at a time.

Thank you once again for your continued encouragement and for joining me in this celebration of love. May we all carry this message in our hearts and spread it wherever we go.

- et n’oublions jamais comme l’a écrit Khalil Gibran : “l’amour n’a pour seul désir que de s’accomplir “

Thank you so much, I can’t put into words my gratitude
Stay up, Kai

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