



Susi
(perfectly together)



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In the last two years, my interests and questions have focused on romantic and commercial ideas about desire, falling in love and cuir sexualities.*

I started using heart-shaped marshmallows for a project. I was interested in their plastic sponge-like materiality, as it physically resembles their appearance. At the end of 2019, I set out to prove that the industrial sponge, as a multipurpose material, embodied an economic identity through formal and informal work in my hometown. (We can find sponges in pillows, mattresses, slippers, suitcases, cleaning, and music in soundproofing and headphones.)

In 2020, I remade the marshmallow piece in the shape of a heart. After making this piece, I deeply desired to understand the heart. I started making plasticine hearts, foamy hearts, plastic hearts (multicast), and ceramic hearts. Now, I am making melted steel hearts. This last metal heart is the one that I think is closest to my incarnated heart.



Arenita, "if you are having trouble understanding a concept (bis)", marisabel arias, 2019.



And, what are you like? Creepy and Cute, via Instagram @kawaiiposting, retrieved June 29, 2021.

First, I cut a piece of steel closest to the heart shape using a machine similar to an electric saw. Then with the grinder, I gave it the final form of an industrial heart. After that, I used the die casting gun and started to melt the heart until it was as melted and burned as possible. I melted it until I saw it was about to lose all its shape. Then, when the melted heart is still burning, I take a hammer and hit it until it is engraved and the blow of the hammer is visually evident. Then, I submerged it in water using tongs so as not to burn my skin since it continued burning.

When I burnt the heart, I asked myself why I made the heart disintegrate. I might as well buy industrial hearts. But something happens in my thought process when these hearts are handmade. Something that I still do not understand, but something I know I must do to understand the commercial component of the form and shape of the heart and, at the same time, know how I am related to it through affective experiences and emotions. Maybe I am trying to understand what it means to be heartbroken physically.

The origin of the heart shape seems to have started in Greek civilisation, in the extinct town of Cyrene. The town's currency¹ used the symbol we know today as the heart. That symbol was known as the silphium seed. I found on the internet that the heart symbol comes from a very commercial seed of that town; it also worked very well as a contraceptive method. Maybe that heart shape and its sexual properties are where the idea of love was born.





Cyrene/Kyrene (Libya) Drachmic coin (520-480 BC) from Ancient Silphium trade.

Other first images of the heart also appeared in the epistles of Christine de Pizán (XV C). In her work, *Othea's epistles*², a collection of allegories, show a series of men and women who offer their hearts to Venus as an allegory of love. De Pizán's heart is one of my favourite images of the organ, the symbolisation of love through the surrender of the heart to Venus. The kind, the cute, and the concept of giving underlies this romantic symbolism. Christine de Pizán was the first professional woman writer of the Middle Ages.

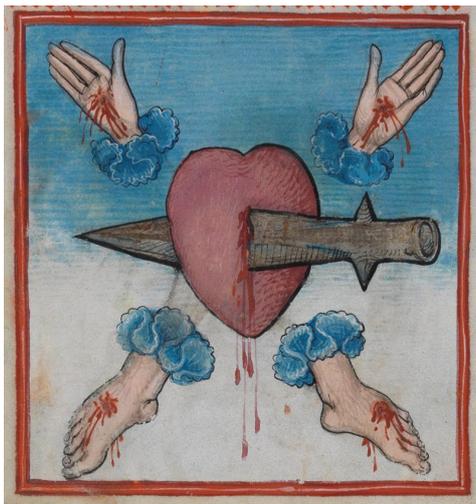
In another sense, the Catholic Church says that the sacred heart symbol was not widespread until the 17th century when St Margaret Mary Alascoque³ had a vision of the Heart of Jesus as we know it today, as the heart shape. Other sources say it is an attempt at an erroneous drawing of the human heart.



Following my desire for the heart, I enrolled in jewellery-making classes to better understand the shape of the heart's commercial uses. In jewellery decoration and commercialisation, heart products are used as a symbolic exchange currency for love. We can see it in heart-shaped lockets, wedding rings, and other ornamental jewellery.

I enrolled in a silversmith workshop. In the first class, they taught us how to forge a ring. In the instructions to make the ring, the teacher told us that we had to make an almost perfect circle where the two parts that would join to form the ring had to be perfectly together.

How does the decoration work? It is akin to someone who adorns their neck and defines themselves in decoration. It is typical for people to decorate their bodies with heart chain necklaces. Chains that hang from their necks and whose ornament is commonly a heart. A small dance happens when the body moves, the heart chain hits the chest, and the heart is again near the breasts.



Sacred Heart of Jesus of Saint Margaret Mary of Alacoque C. XVII.

After these processes, I thought about what a heart means and what and who holds it. What feelings did it provoke, and why I also felt identified with its symbolism. At that moment, I thought of one of my cats, Susi. Susi is my little cat.

I love you, Susi. You have taught me what love is, rubbing your body with all the objects in the house as if they were part of your love and your ecosystem, being afraid of everything outside the space that occupies your body.

(Susi, I got her through Facebook. She was born on December 28 in 2019, one day before my birthday. She is Capricorn like me.)

My love for Susi is real but is just as commercial as displayed in the marketing, social media and entertainment industries⁴. In the same sense, this handmade research about these groups of romantic hearts. In using similar strategies to those used in the industrialised manufacturing of this mass-produced symbol, but through handmade processes, we return to both the heart's underpinnings as a commercial object and the real organ we carry inside us.

Marisabel Arias

Basel, 2022.

Edited by Gisselle Girón.

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1, 3 The evolution of the heart as a symbol of love, La evolución del corazón como símbolo del amor. (2021, February 11). *Historia.nationalgeographic.com.es*. https://historia.nationalgeographic.com.es/a/evolucion-corazon-como-simbolo-amor_16335

2. Via Twitter @MedievalFemnist, Christine de Pizán. <https://twitter.com/medievalfemnist>. (n.d.). Twitter. Retrieved July 17, 2022, from <https://twitter.com/medievalfemnist>

4. According to the Federal Network Agency (Bundesnetzagentur), approximately 30 percent of data traffic in Germany in 2016 were images of animals. Sixty-two percent of this traffic were pictures of cats. Germany, S. N., Stuttgart. (n.d.). Phänomen der Katzen-Videos: Der Miau-Miau-Netz-Wahnsinn. *Stuttgarter-Nachrichten.de*. <https://www.stuttgarter-nachrichten.de/inhalt.phaenomen-der-katzen-videos-der-miau-miau-netz-wahnsinn.eb31878b-9730-436d-bdcf-852387210831.html>

* One of the many ways in Spanish to say the English word queer / cuir.





Susi, February 28th, 2020, Lima.



History says that in the 16th century, a Spanish painter painted the first portrait of a woman wearing a corset. The corset was made of wood, compressed over 15 years, and was so heavy that the woman could not move. The corset was made of wood, compressed over 15 years, and was so heavy that the woman could not move. The corset was made of wood, compressed over 15 years, and was so heavy that the woman could not move.



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♡ *Susi (perfectly together)*, Edition of 25 copies.
A short essay-poster, regarding the origin of the shape heart and other issues.