

Art is the stored honey of the human soul, gathered on wings of misery and travail

THEODORE DRESSER
american novelist and journalist



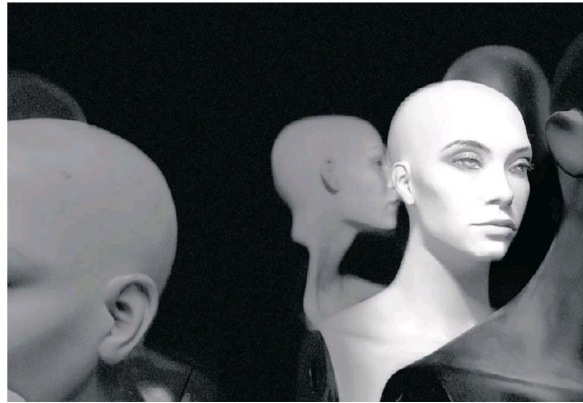
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PRINCE PHILIP UNHURT IN CAR ACCIDENT
QUEEN Elizabeth II's 97-year-old husband Prince Philip was "very shocked and shaken" after being involved in a car accident that left his Land Rover flipped on its side, a witness reportedly said.

EDITOR'S CHOICE



LIPS IN LIMBO

SaySay.Love's and Dr Eve's double-act on society being in the grip of technology takes the form of visual activism



VACANCY

Technology of loneliness



SAYSAY.LOVE

KARISHMA DIPA
karishma.dipa@iol.co.za

THE most connected yet loneliest generation.

This might be one of the greatest ironies which could go on to define society as we know it.

This paradox has seen billions of individuals and groups connect through the digital world with people from all walks of life around the globe.

Modern technology has now allowed engagements and conversations to operate on a continuous basis which are no longer limited to geographical locations or time barriers. You can text, e-mail, video call, Snapchat and upload posts to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest from the comfort of your cellphone. Despite this online revolution, loneliness, which is a catalyst for depression and suicide, remains a worldwide epidemic and is an increasing public health concern.

Longing for human interaction and connection is considered to be at an all-time high as sincerity and authenticity are continually questioned.

This was the basis of acclaimed German artist SaySay.Love's latest work, which is set to be showcased in South Africa for the first time next week.

His groundbreaking exhibition titled, *Intimate Loneliness I Sex with Things*, aims to shed light on the argument that humans have become what the artist refers to as "dehumanised, controllable and easy to manipulate". "I think that as humans we are becoming more disconnected from each other, which I feel is a result of the digital age," he told The Saturday Star. "We care more about our online image than what we are like in our 'real' lives."

SaySay.Love explained that people are fixated with being perfect in what he described as a "fake" world where we are losing touch with what is really real. "Connection with others by touching the soul, brain and body and intimacy with each other gets lost."

"Can we replace any of this with 'things' so to speak?" This lack of real human connection exacerbated by social media and online dating networks, in particular, has led to a death of romance and



HUMAN mannequins

intimacy, according to SaySay.Love.

"I feel that the effect is that people are creating a fake image of themselves and that as a society we aspire to what I call 'fake perfection'."

"We are digital mannequins, we disconnect from ourselves as we connect online. We're becoming like robots; dehumanised. "For me, love should transcend all this, you should love someone even for their imperfections."

In a bid to resurrect pleasure and romance, SaySay.Love's latest photography work will take the form of visual activism when it is showcased in Stellenbosch next week and in Johannesburg in March.

"For me, the picture should highlight the cause," he explained.

"It's what the eye sees, but more than this it's about how it makes you feel and think."

"Does it change you? Does it inspire you? Does it make you want to do something differently?"

SaySay.Love decided to work in conjunction with renowned clinical sexologist and couples sex therapist, Dr Eve for his *Intimate Loneliness I Sex with Things* project.

During his exhibition, the acclaimed therapist will debut her live performance in an installation piece inspired by the work of Serbian performance artist, writer, art film director and producer Marina Abramovic.

Dr Eve will also be offering ideas on how to combat issues of loneliness as part of the performance. "The sex therapist told The Saturday Star that SaySay.Love's latest exhibition around loneliness and intimacy overlaps with her own work which motivated her to work with him on this project."

"When I saw his current exhibition on loneliness, I was moved by his images as I feel they beautifully exemplify the loneliness, emptiness, hopelessness and despair people feel." While Dr Eve's involvement in

SaySay.Love's project is exclusive to the South African leg of the exhibition, the project received rave reviews when it was showcased at a show called *Faked Perfection* in Berlin, Germany, last year.

SaySay.Love's controversial project was based around mannequins to portray the idea that humans have become somewhat inanimate, frozen objects despite the realness captured in their facial expressions.

"I wanted to create a body of work around my mannequin photographs, searching for their souls and at the same time highlighting some people's fascination with inanimate objects and how they develop human connections and relationships to these objects."

The use of mannequins personated the idea that people often have more of a virtual persona than a real one. "Human interaction is replaced by a virtual presence and emojis express your emotions from behind your

computer / tablet / mobile screen, often hiding what is real."

SaySay.Love said this exhibition, which would be revealed in South Africa for the first time, aimed to stir emotions.

"This exhibition will be a strong statement about what is real and what is 'plastic, so to speak. I think that my focus is always on what can be seen beyond the eye."

This is not the first time SaySay.Love has exhibited in South Africa.

In a bid to bring awareness to the beauty and wealth of water and in the midst of water shortages in the Western Cape and other regions around the world, the retired entrepreneur last year showcased the photography exhibition *The Gift of Water* at Gallery One11 in Cape Town.

The artwork was captured primarily in Cape Town and was inspired by the precious liquid life-force.

"To be part of the community being able to make people realise that water is a resource but also something so beautiful that it should be respected and worshipped in a sense makes me proud."

"This is my mission: to make people see the beauty with the heart and soul."

This is not the only love affair SaySay.Love has with the country.

His appreciation for the local art scene has had him sharing his time between Berlin and Cape Town.

"South Africa has become such an innovative place for the arts and the audiences are very receptive to new ideas and I really enjoy seeing the reaction to my work here."

"In Europe, sometimes things feel more mainstream and more manipulated by politics, so I enjoy the experimental space that South Africa provides to share your work."

He finds the discourse around local art intriguing.

"I really love the diversity of the work and also how very important issues such as those surrounding gender are addressed."

While he hopes to create a dialogue around intimacy and loneliness with *Intimate Loneliness I Sex with Things*, he adds that the project required a lot of mental preparation.

"I have thought a lot about how our lives have changed so quickly. With progress comes alienation and so I am trying to show this alienation through the image."

He hopes that his exhibition will make people appreciate things and understand that connecting with each other in intimate ways is a beautiful and pleasurable thing.

"We take these things for granted. When we see something really beautiful, do we stop and take the time to really connect with that moment or are we too busy to stop, to feel, to appreciate?"

The exhibition will be at the GUS Gallery in Stellenbosch, Cape Town, from January 22-February 1 and the Agog Gallery, in March in Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

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METRO

■ INTIMACY

Dr Eve gets even more creative to bring happiness

KARISHMA DIPA

DR EVE, whose real name is Marlene Wasserman, is no stranger to the local love, sex and relationship scene.

Throughout the years, she has helped rekindle the romances of scores of couples.

But when the clinical sexologist and couples sex therapist came across German artist SaySay.Love's images around the theme of loneliness and intimacy in the age of the digital world, she felt that she could provide even more value to her services.

Dr Eve has decided to be a part of the artist's latest exhibition in South Africa, which showcases the lack of real human connection, exacerbated by social media and online dating networks in particular. These have in part led to the death of romance and intimacy.

"I was moved by his images as I feel they beautifully exemplify the loneliness, emptiness, hopelessness and despair that people feel," she told The Saturday Star. The sexologist said the issue was close to her heart as she was often confronted with it during her therapy sessions.

"Loneliness is a worldwide epidemic and a public health concern. At its core there's a longing for connection and intimacy without technological interferences."

"This overlap in my work and SaySay.Love's work motivated me to work with him."

In her endeavour to join SaySay.Love in the battles against loneliness, Dr Eve will debut a live performance in an installation piece inspired by the work of Serbian performance artist, writer and art film director and producer Marina Abramovic.

This performance will take place on January 30 at the GUS Gallery in Stellenbosch, at the same venue where SaySay.Love's exhibition will be held.

Dr Eve will also be offering ideas on how to combat issues of loneliness during her engagement, where members of the audience are also invited to engage in connective ways with her and each other through the experiential piece.

The sex therapist adds that while the digital world, including online dating platforms, offers people the opportunity to meet others from many different walks of life, she encourages all of them to make their daily connections with people in the real world.

"When online, meet up with people in real life as soon as possible to establish eye-to-eye gazing and human connecting."

This, she explained, had far more benefits than the digital world could offer.

"People are lost and confused in this unregulated space."

"It has led to disconnection in real life, leaving people feeling more depressed, lonely, unhappy and alone in their relationships and sexuality."



People are lost and confused in this unregulated space

DR EVE