

THE BOOK  
OF  
HEARTS

FRANCESCA GAVIN

# The Book of Hearts

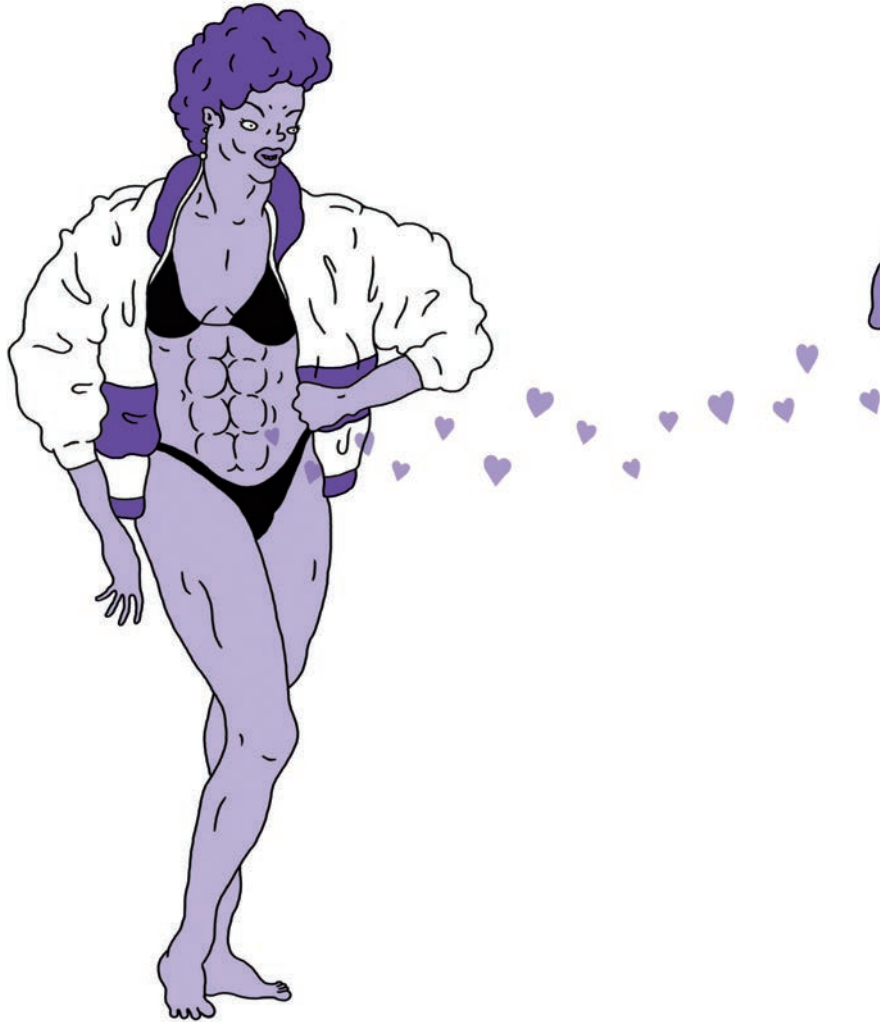


# The Book of Hearts

**Francesca Gavin**

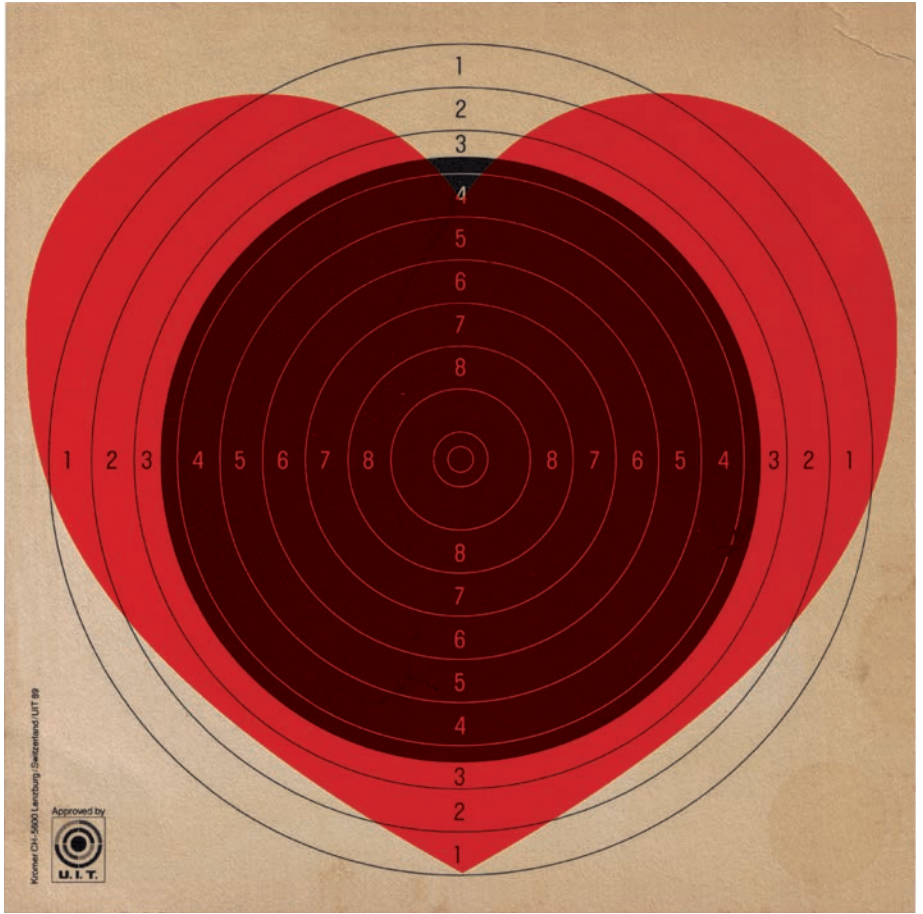
Laurence King Publishing

Below: Sean Morris, *Abs Heart Abs*, 2011.





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Above: Patrick Thomas, *Heart/Target*, 2013.

# What is a Heart?

What is a heart? A symbol? An organ? A metaphor? The heart has been an object of fascination since people first became aware of the thing beating in their chests. This book examines the breadth of visual interpretations of this symbol. Although there have been books about the history the heart, there have been none that focus on its depiction.

The first image of the heart was in a picture of a woolly mammoth on a wall of the Pindal Cave in Spain, created around 10,000 BC. The prehistoric painting depicts the animal with a red heart-shaped spot in the centre of its body.

The more traditional heart shape we know today probably evolved from the image of an ivy leaf – a plant that represented sensuality and immortality in ancient Greece. The indented heart shape was then really established in the fourteenth century. The symbol was also used in over 160 trademarks for paper manufacturers, developing from stylized leaves. For centuries, the symbol and word were intertwined with ideas of passion and love. By the nineteenth century the heart had become a cliché – only reinvented in the 1960s and 1970s, when it began to be used in pop cultural imagery.

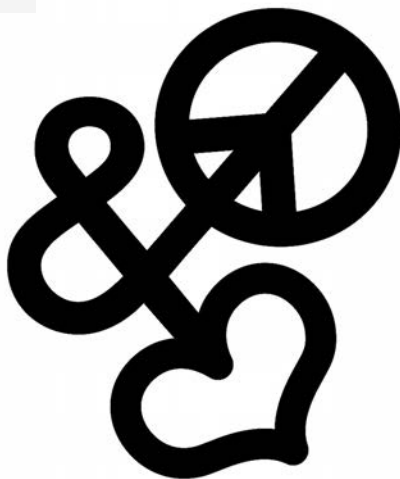
This book of hearts highlights how a universal symbol can be creatively interpreted and constantly reinvented. It captures the heart's continuing popularity, touching on what makes the history of the shape so engaging – from the guts and gore of the Aztecs and the Cult of the Sacred Heart, to the invention of the Valentine and sailors' heart tattoos. Above all, the artwork here proves why the heart has been an enduring icon of love.



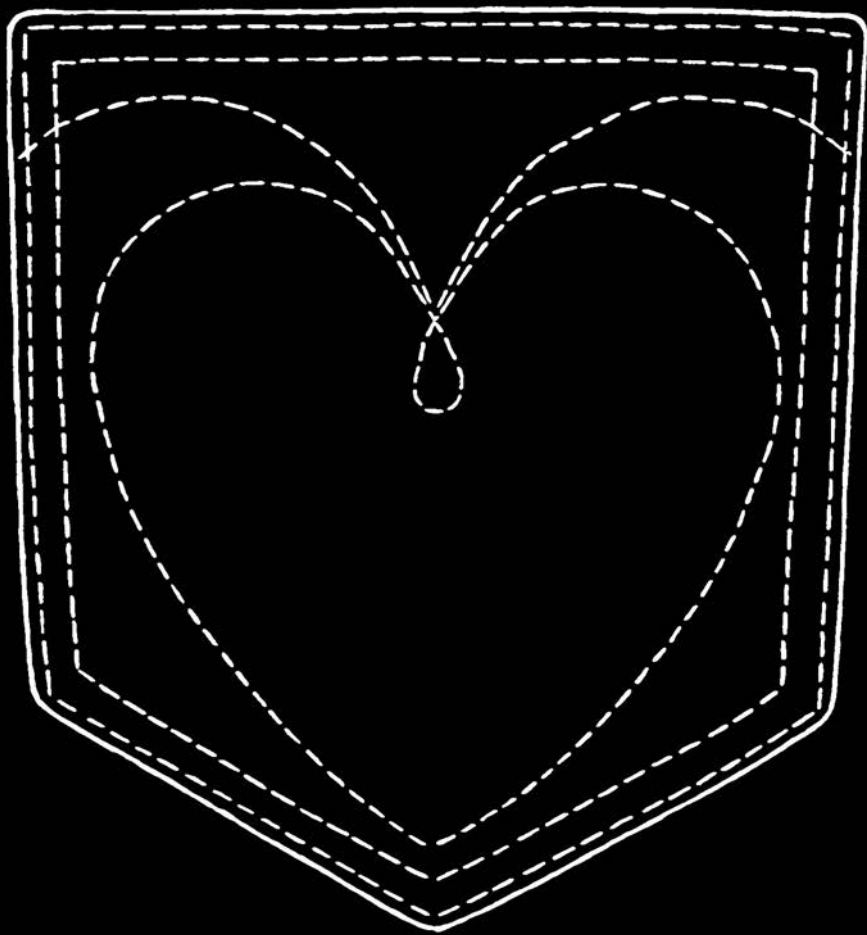
**Left:** Brian Roettinger,  
*Courier*, 2013.

**Right:** Andrew  
Woodhead, *Break  
Free*, 2011. Print  
design for Denim  
Gallery Biarritz.

**Below:** Ben Branagan,  
*Peaceampersandlove*,  
2010. Produced for  
Surburban Bliss Clothing.

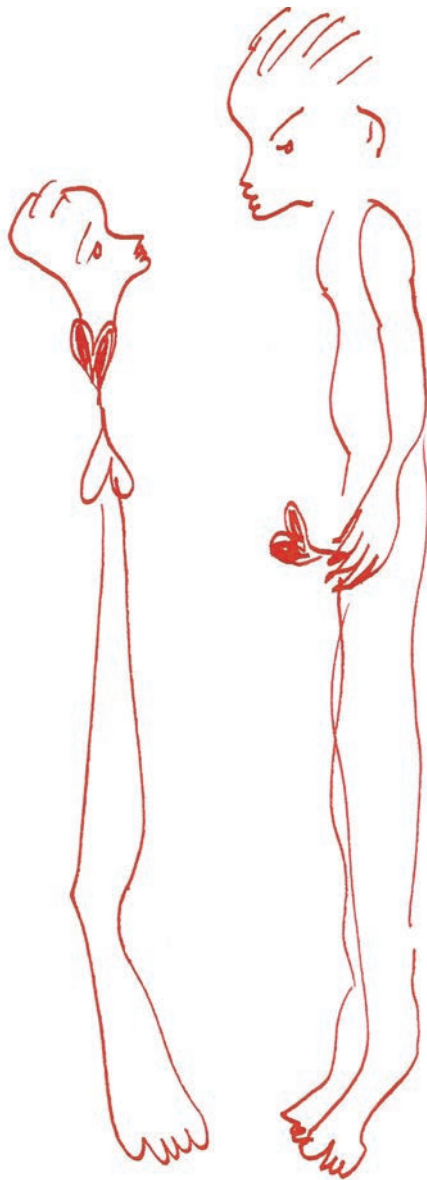




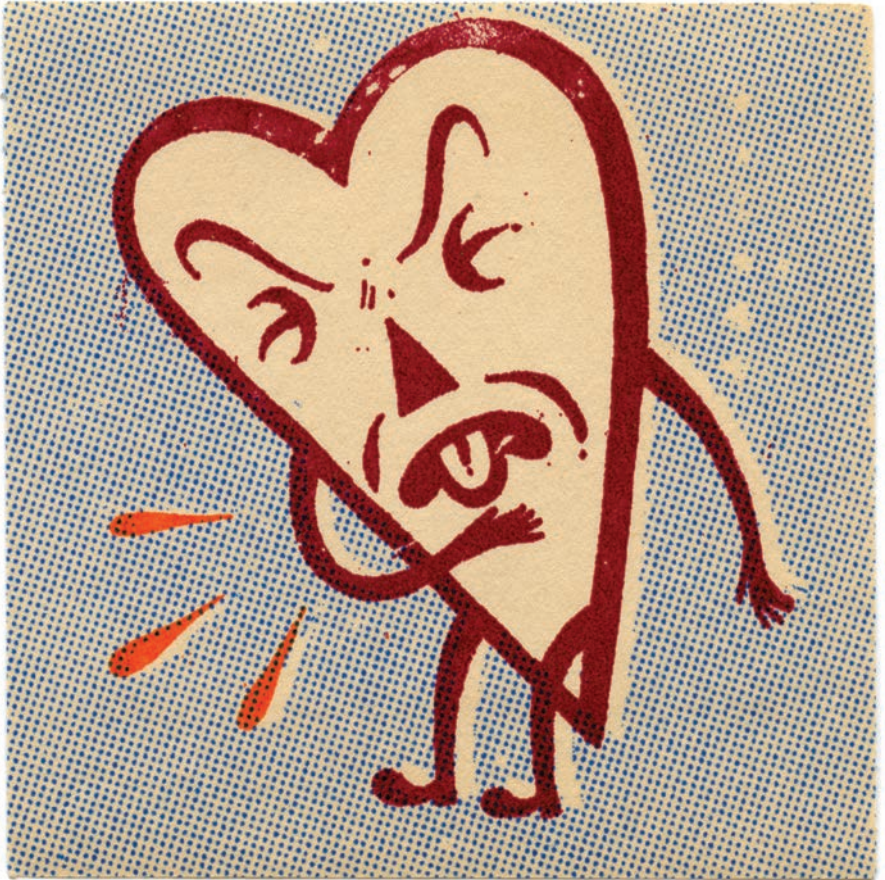


**Left:** Christian Petersen,  
*Heartpocket*, from  
the fanzine *Love*,  
2000–2002.

**Right** Annie Morris,  
*Please Love Me*, 2013.







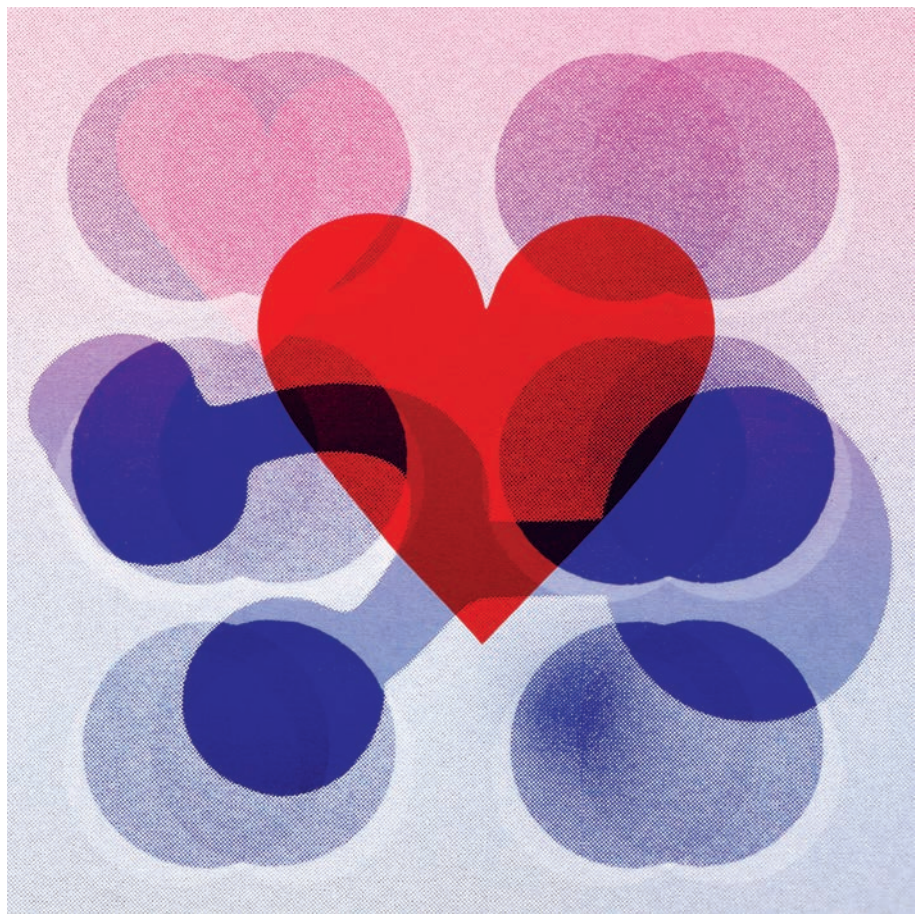
Above: Gary Taxali,  
*Yucky Heart*, 2010.

Left: Hellicar & Lewis,  
*The Speed of Love*,  
2010. Commissioned by  
Darkroom for their 'Love  
and Haiti' exhibition.

**Right:** Jimmy Turrell,  
*Heart*, 2013.

**Below:** Jimmy Turrell,  
*Glance*, 2013.





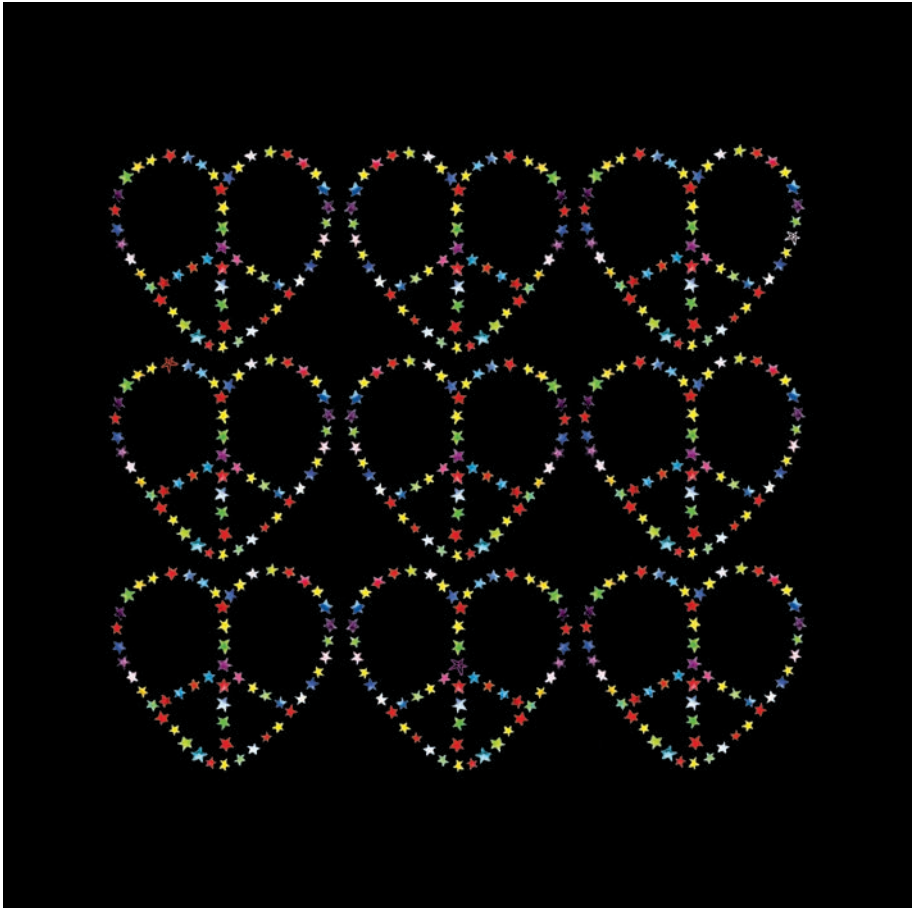




**Previous pages:**  
Ian James Marshall,  
*Berkley Blooms* (still),  
2011.

**Right:** *Patternity, Heart*,  
2011.

**Below:** Zakee Shariff,  
*Peaceloveheart Rainbow*,  
2011.



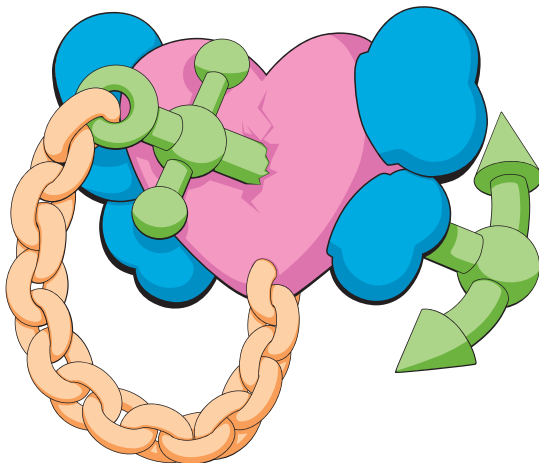




**Left:** Marta Cerdà  
Alimbau, *B&W Are  
Not Colors*, 2011.

**Right:** Théo Gennitsakis,  
*Coeur*, 2010.

**Below:** Kaws,  
*Permanent Love*,  
2010.





**Above:** Duane Dalton,  
*Gradient Hearts*, 2012.

**Right:** Kate Moross,  
*Heart Print*, 2009.



# Ancient Egypt

In ancient Egypt the heart was perceived as the centre of the body, religion and the soul. The heart had multiple meanings, just as it does today. The word *ib* stood for the heart soul, and *haty* for the heart organ.

In a culture where language and meaning were made up of images and symbols, the visual representation of the heart had specific resonance. It was depicted as a vessel with an open top and wing-like handles on each side. It was seen as a container or store that held the blood of the individual and housed that person's spiritual centre. The heart was also represented as a scarab beetle.

The heart has a central role in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, or guide to the afterlife. The dead were said to enter 'the hall of two truths', where they faced a panel of gods. Here the heart was placed on a scale and weighed against the 'feather of truth'. If the heart was heavier than the feather, it indicated a sober mind and self-control – the path to eternal life. If the heart was lighter, it would be eaten by Ammit, the eater of the dead.

When a body was mummified, most of its organs were removed and often preserved in canopic jars; the heart, since it was seen as the centre of the body, was the only organ always to be replaced in the body after it had been embalmed. It was vital that the heart was not damaged. A scarab was placed with the dead at burial sites as a spare, in case anything went wrong with the real heart. Metaphorically, Egyptian ideas of the heart seem to foreshadow many contemporary concepts. The Egyptian heart embodied love, loyalty, fertility and emotion.

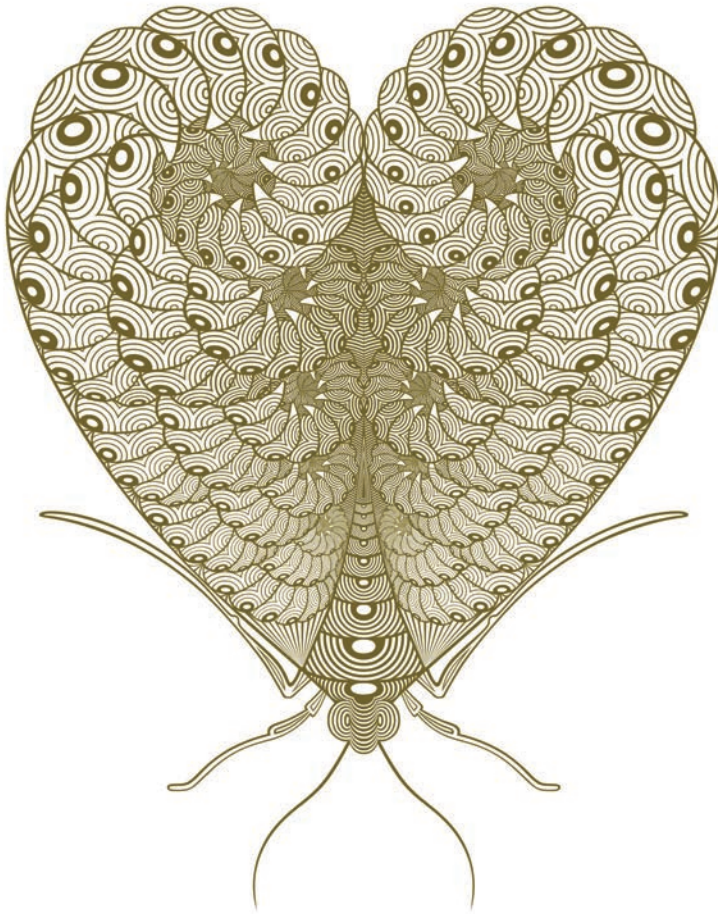
**Right:** Stephan  
Doitschinoff (aka Calma),  
O\_Coracao, 2013.



DOIT'SCHINOPE 2012



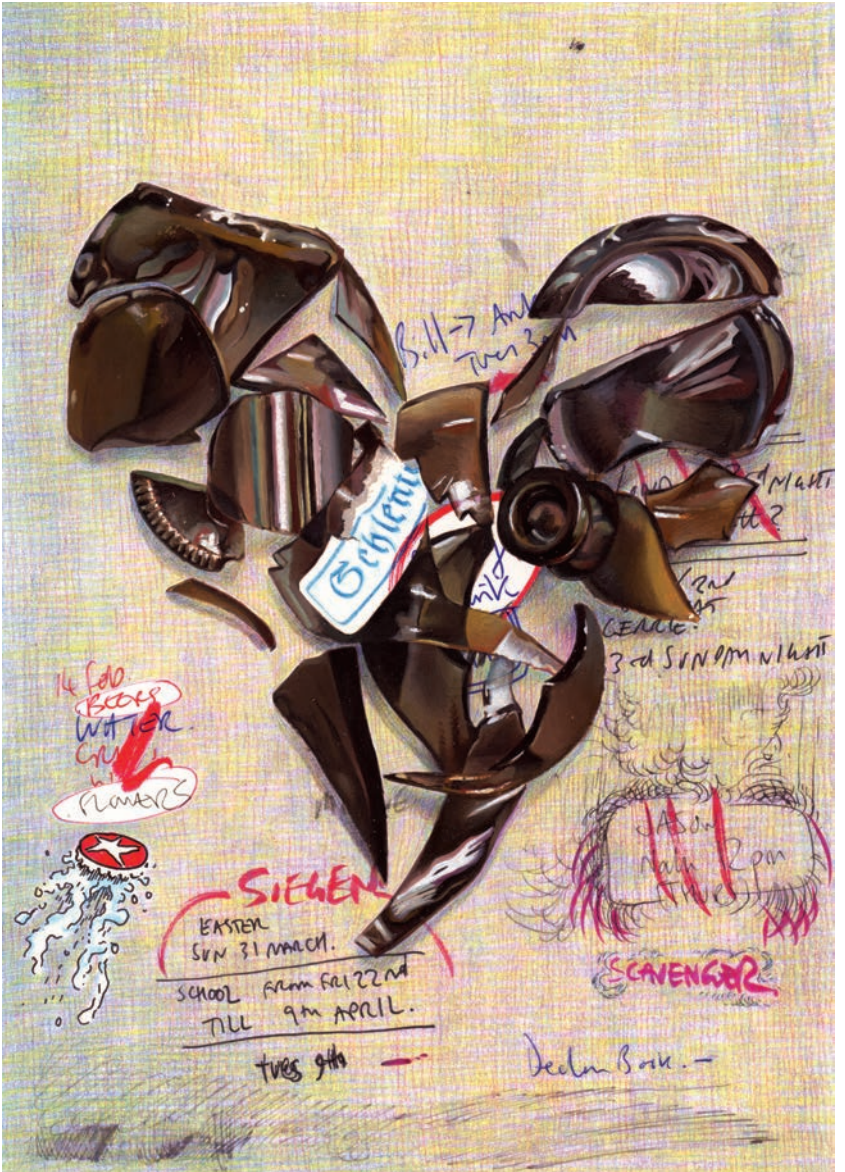




**Previous pages:**  
Cécile B. Evans,  
*KCTV Hearts*, 2013.

**Above:** Yehrin Tong,  
*Moth to a Flame*, 2013.

**Right:** Paul McDevitt,  
*26 February* 2013.



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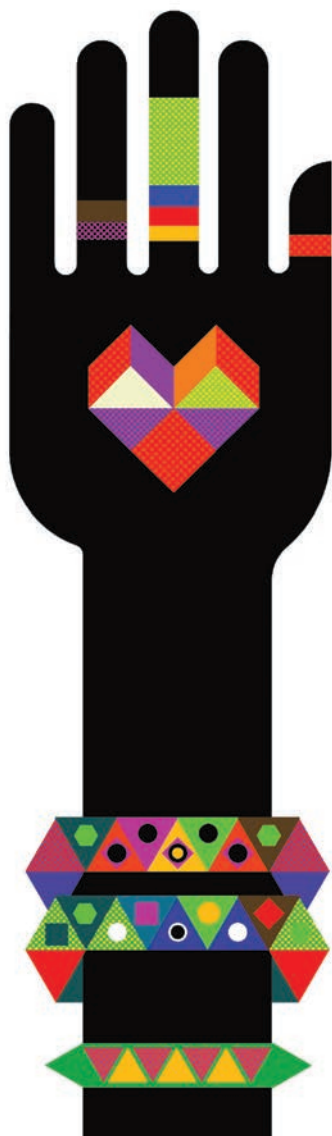
Above: Kenji Hirata,  
*The Infinite*, 2013.

Left:  
Antti Uotila, *Cat*, 2013.

Right: Jamie Cullen,  
*The Gift*, 2011.

Below: Jamie Cullen,  
*Heart*, 2011.







# Ancient Greece

The Greek fascination with the heart was rooted in myth. The story of the child Dionysus – the god of pleasure, intoxication and ecstasy – is based around the heart. The Titans kidnapped the child god, killed and dismembered him, then boiled his flesh. They saved his heart to eat last. Athena, the goddess of wisdom, informed the father of the gods, Zeus, who then destroyed the Titans with lightning bolts. Dionysus was reborn from the uneaten heart. The story established the heart as the source of life, and Dionysus as the forefather of culture.

In Greek culture, Aphrodite and Eros represented divine love. Yet the heart was not present in these romantic myths. Instead, the phallus was the focus for the erotic – often represented by the wild, animalistic Pan.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle saw the heart as an inner fire and the origin of life. All nerves led here. Emotions started here, and were in fact purely physical responses. The soul guided the body from its location within the heart. To Aristotle the relationship between heart and soul was also a metaphor for the structure of the body politic and life.

Plato, in contrast, argued that the heart was the rational centre of man, while the soul was located in the head. Sex and the erotic were legitimized under this ideal. These contrasting beliefs of how the body functioned had a huge influence on how people envisaged the heart, and influenced artists for centuries to come.

**Left:** Brett Ryder,  
*Cupid*, 2011. One of a  
set illustrating Sandi  
Toksvig's regular column  
for the *Sunday Telegraph*.



Above: Junko Mizuno,  
*Fire Bird*, 2008.

Right: Steph von  
Reisz, *Vinaigrette*,  
2013.







**Left:** Julie Verhoeven,  
*Neckline, Sweetheart*,  
2013.

**Above:** Julie Verhoeven,  
*Heart Attack*, 2013.

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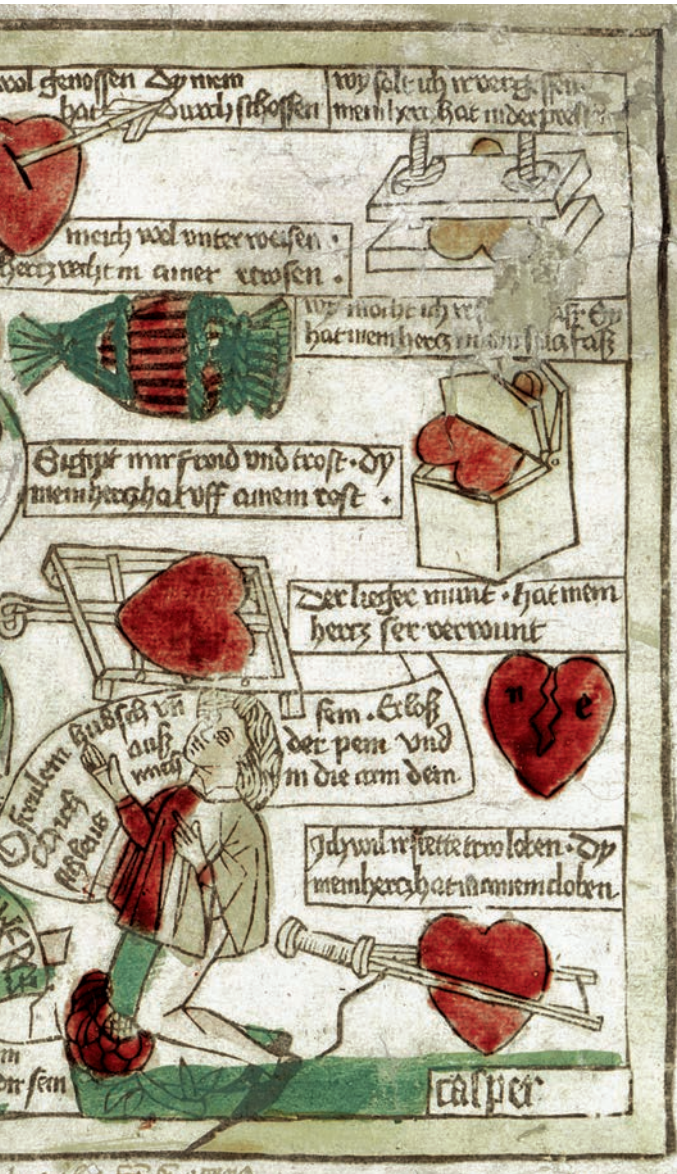
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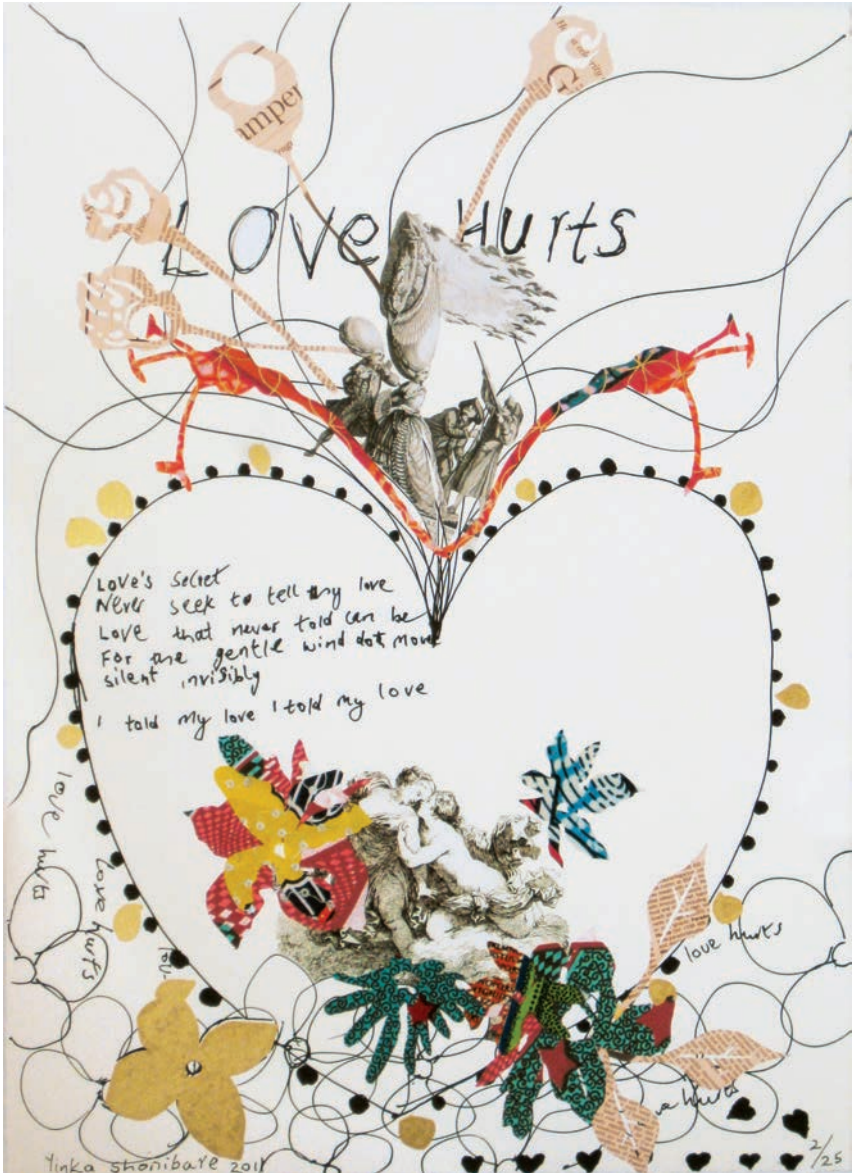
Left: Master Caspar, Venus and the Lover (Frau Venus und der Verliebte), c. 1485.





**Above:** Antony Micallef,  
*Heart Shaped Girl*, 2002.

**Right:** Yinka Shonibare,  
*Love Hurts*, 2011.



# Christian Hearts

The Bible is one of the most heart-obsessed books ever written. The word 'heart' is used between 800 and 1,000 times – depending on who is counting. The ancient Hebrew *lev* (heart) meant the emotional inner life, personality, understanding and collective mind of society.

St Augustine of Hippo was central to the dominance of the heart in Christian iconography. His autobiographical book, *Confessions*, written circa 400 AD, describes the heart as the way for man to know God. Christianity in the Middle Ages was a physical experience. The body was a vehicle for emotion and revelation. Symbols of love and eroticism were transferred to the love of Jesus. The arrows of Eros were transformed into the spears in Christ's side. The heart became the symbol for religious passion and love, compassion and the suffering of God on behalf of man.

The symbol of Christ's heart was widespread in the late Middle Ages in altarpieces, illustrations and paintings. Images of the heart did not employ the stylized form we know today; it was depicted as an acorn-like shape with an opening at the top, like a bottle.

The Virgin Mary's heart was often represented as studded with arrows and surrounded by wreaths of flowers. The flaming heart, burning with devotion, was first depicted around 1500. Broken or wounded hearts became objects of piety. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, nuns made numerous heart-shaped devotional objects. These included picture frames, oil lamps, medallions, inkwells, matchboxes, holy water stoups (basins) and reliquaries. However, the heart symbol became increasingly kitsch and began to lose its cultural potency.

**Right:** *Allegory of a bad conscience: The state of a man who thinks seriously about the bad state of his conscience, and who begins to be affected by it, 19th century.*



L'estat d'un homme qui pense serieusement au mauuais estat de sa Conscience, et qui commence a en estre touche.

Ballaer. P. Ballaer



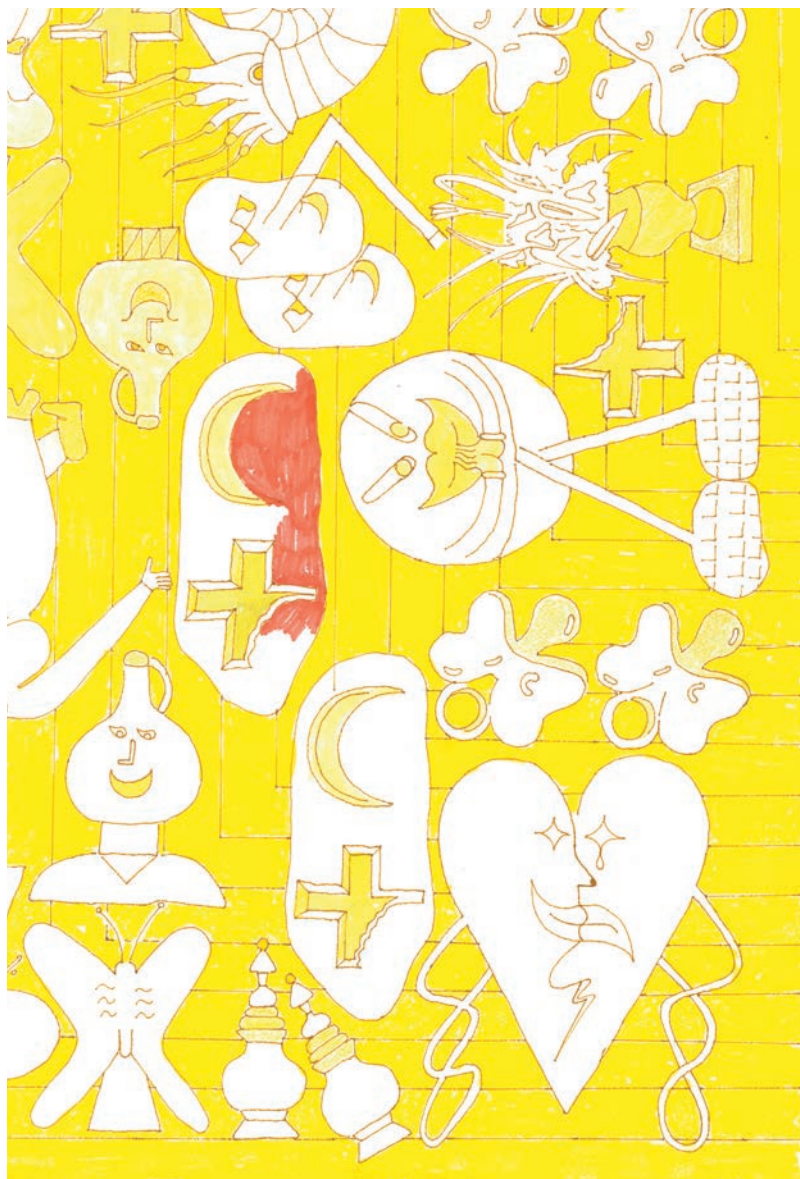
1960-61

P. Picasso

**Left:** Paul Klee,  
*A guardian angel*  
serves a small breakfast,  
from the yearbook for  
1920.

**Right:** Emma Rendel,  
*youandmeonholiday1954*,  
2013.







**Above:** David Sandlin,  
*Holy Mate-rimoney*, 1993.

**Left:** Keegan McHargue,  
*Untitled (Sampler)*, 2010.



**Left:** Wolfe von Lenkiewicz, *Heart of Sorrows*, 2006.

**Right:** David Godbold, *And finally (finally)...*, 2013.

**Following pages:**  
Gary Baseman, *Toby's Immaculate Heart*, 2005.



And finally...







BASE  
MAN



# The Age of Chivalry

If you want to find a moment when the heart was separated from the physical and transformed into a romantic ideal, look at the Middle Ages – when the heart became a romantic pin-up. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a new wave of creative expression emerged, which included a redefinition of femininity, new musical forms and literature. Courtly love was based around highly ritualized poetic scenarios where devoted lovers could not be together. Consummation was not the focus. This model of unrequited love was established by Chrétien de Troyes' Arthurian legends and the story of Tristan and Isolde.

During the Crusades, when distance was a strong feature in relationships, the heart became a metaphor for the emotional. The idea of the exchange of hearts was used as an expression of mutual love. Lovers joining as one became the focus of religious and secular literature. Idealized emotional transactions were created as a new approach to human nature. The Church was not a fan of chivalric love, as it took the focus away from God. Nonetheless, at this time it promoted the ideal of faithful marriage. Contemporary romantic love is still based on these constructions. The wildness of eroticism and physical passion were replaced with ideas of fidelity and noble emotion.

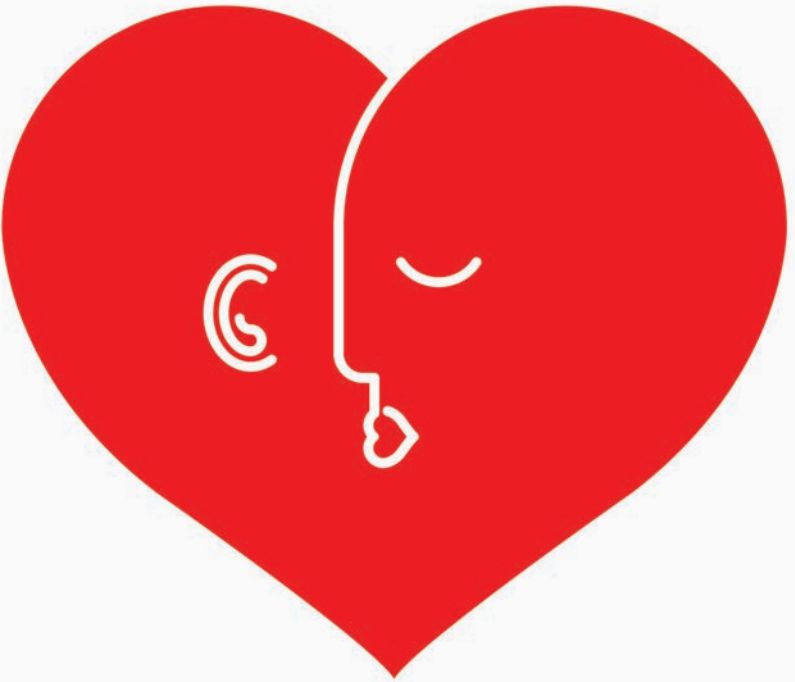
Visually, the symbol of the heart was not often used during this period. The heart was more a feature of poetic language and lyrics. The amorous visual motifs of the time were flowers, birds, roses and romantic couples. The heart shape was yet to become visual shorthand for love.

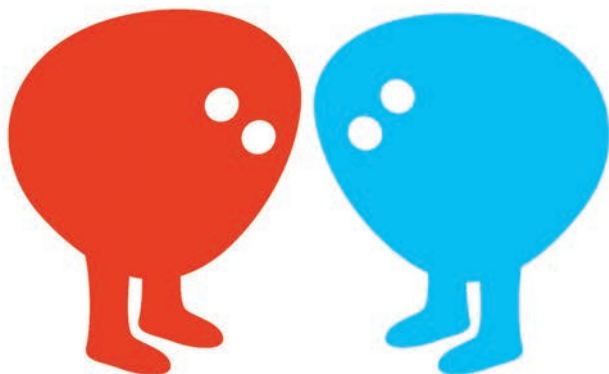
**Left:** *The Open Country of Woman's Heart*, c. 1833–1842.



**Above:** Craig & Karl,  
*2 Become 1*, 2010.

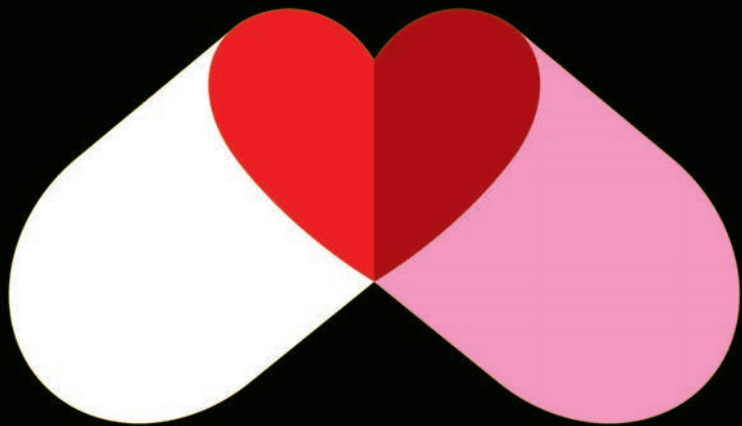
**Right:** James Joyce,  
*Untitled*, 2010.

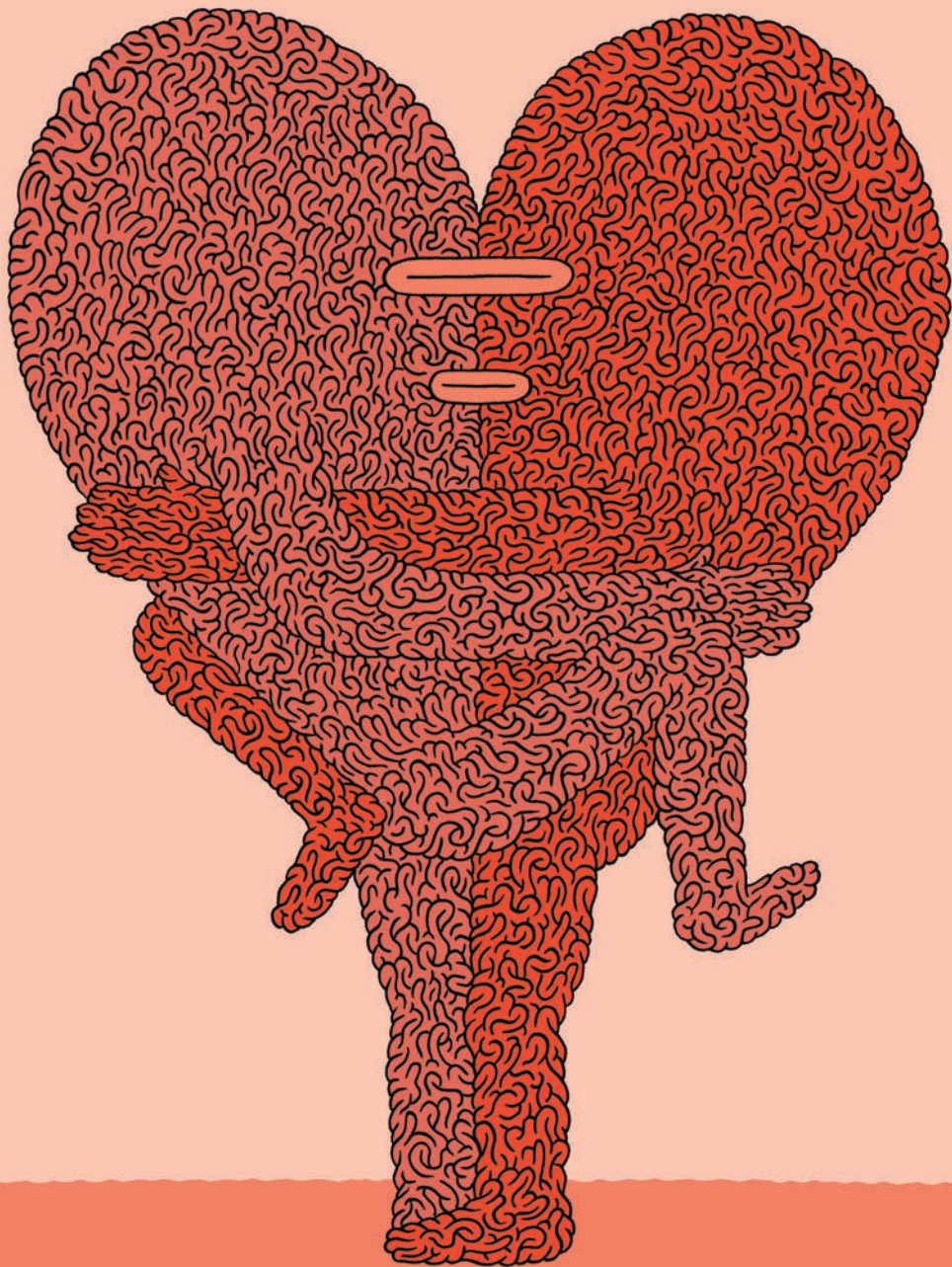


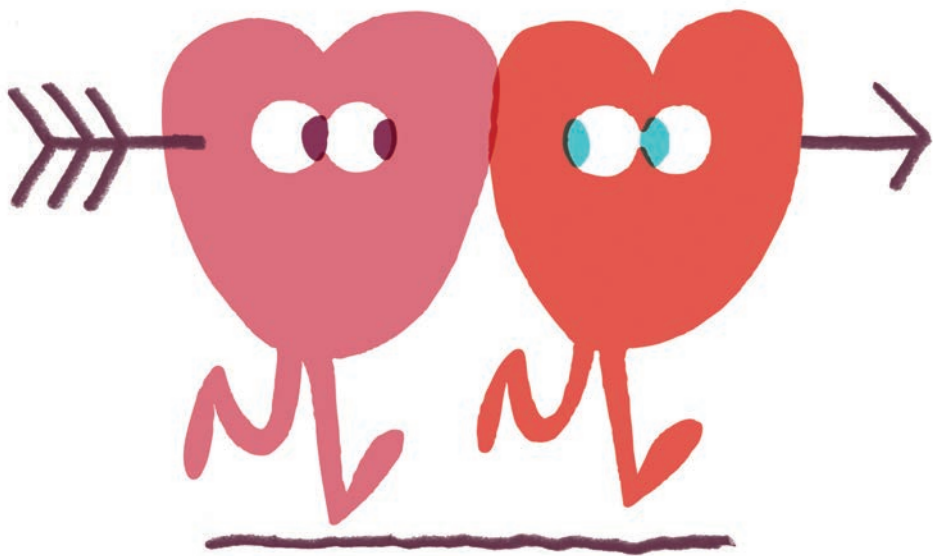


**Left:** Geneviève Gauckler, *Heart*, 2012.

**Right:** Noma Bar, *Protect Your Heart*, 2012. Published in the *Guardian*.

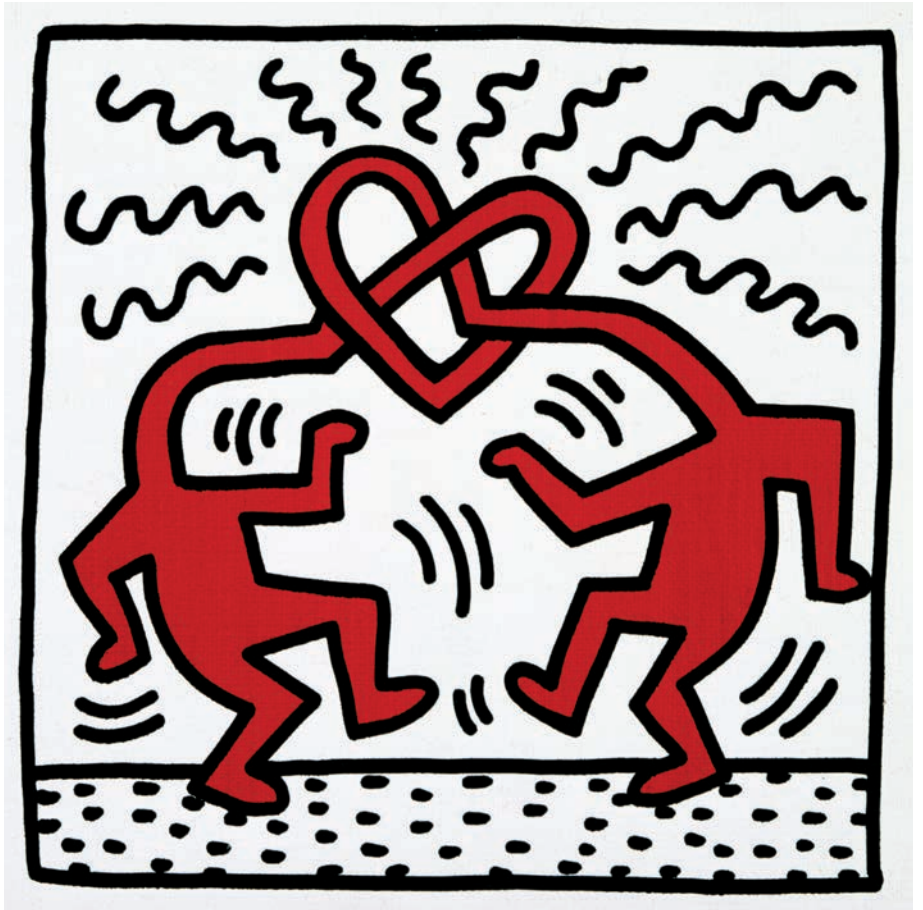






Above: Tim Lahan,  
*Jack Spade Valentine's  
Day, 2012.*

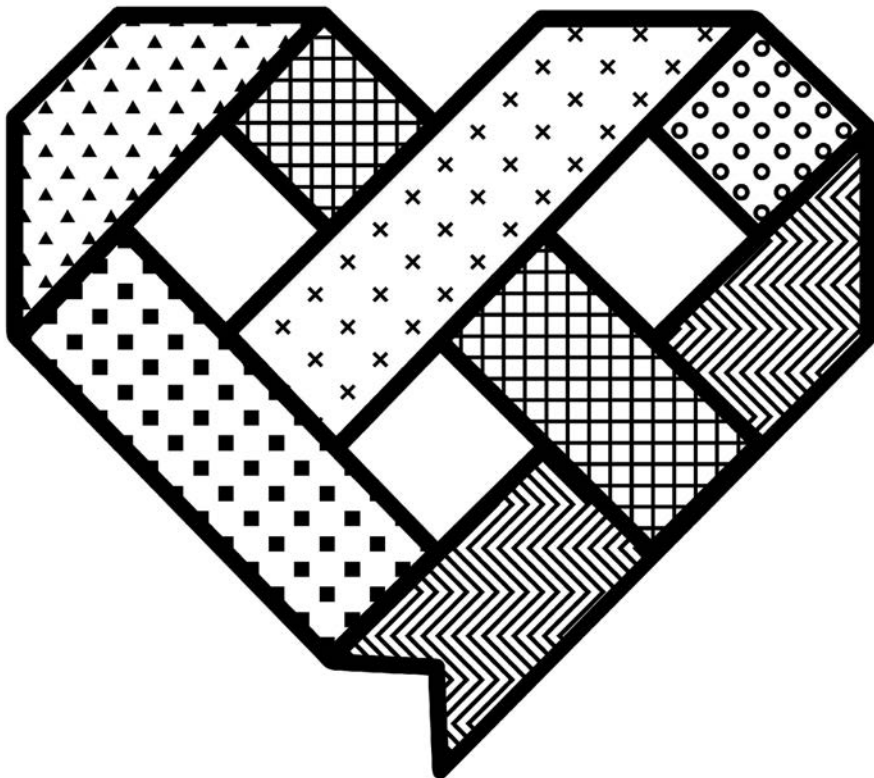
Left: Luke Ramsey,  
*Heart Hug, 2013.*



Above: Keith Haring,  
*Untitled*, 1989. © Keith  
Haring Foundation.

Below: Emily Forgot,  
*Ribbon Heart*, 2012.

Following pages:  
Rob Ryan, *All of the  
Words in the World*, 2010.  
Created for the British  
Heart Foundation.







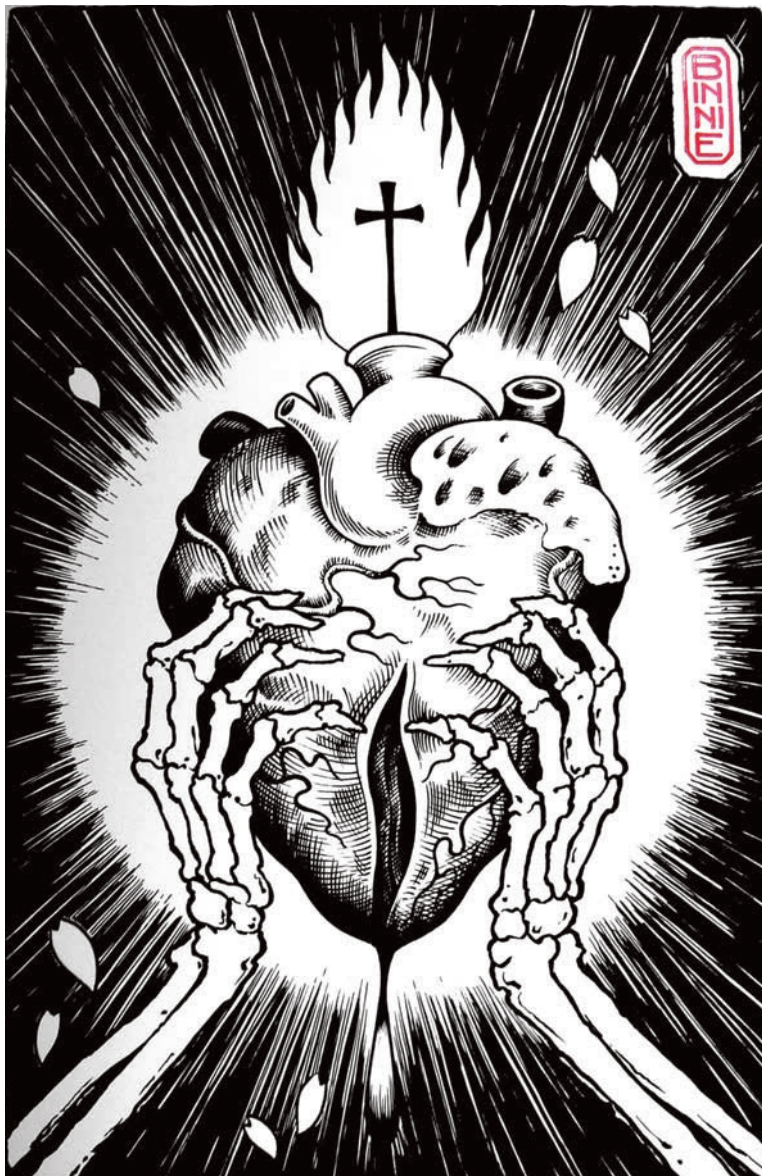
# Cult of the Sacred Heart

The worship of the heart began in the High Middle Ages, growing out of ancient ideas of blood and sacrifice. The Cult of the Sacred Heart emerged from the visions of various female saints between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. These women saw Christ and sucked on his wounds or swapped their own heart for his. There was a sublimated undercurrent of sex, penetration and absorption within the description of these manifestations. This brief northern European cult then exploded in the seventeenth century.

The woman to take heart worship to a whole other level was the French saint Marguerite-Marie Alacoque (1647–1690). She belonged to a convent founded by St François de Sales, whose coat of arms was notably a fusion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On 27 December 1673, she had a vision of the Sacred Heart, shining, transparent and surrounded by a crown of thorns. She saw Christ remove her heart, place it within his own, set it alight and put it back in her body.

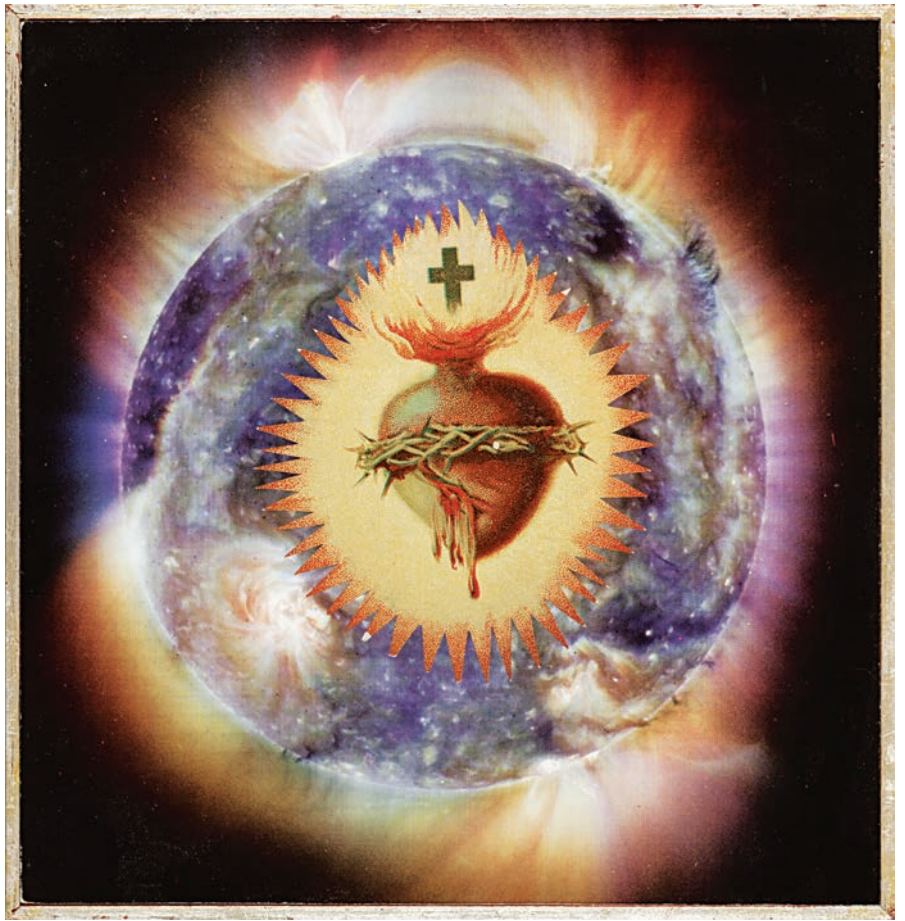
After this experience, in a twisted, somewhat revolting version of the Eucharist, Alacoque would heal the ill by kissing their sores and ulcers, or by eating their vomit and pus. Her followers used the heart symbol as a form of spiritual propaganda; painted hearts were circulated as flyers. Jesuits, aware of the mass appeal of the symbol, spread the cult. The Sacred Heart was championed – in contrast to the Protestant’s focus on the simplified heart shape. The passionate, visceral heart personified the sensorial end of the Catholic Church.

**Right:** Alex Binnie,  
*Heart*, 2008.





**Above and right:**  
Aleksandra Mir, *The  
Space Age Collages*,  
2009.





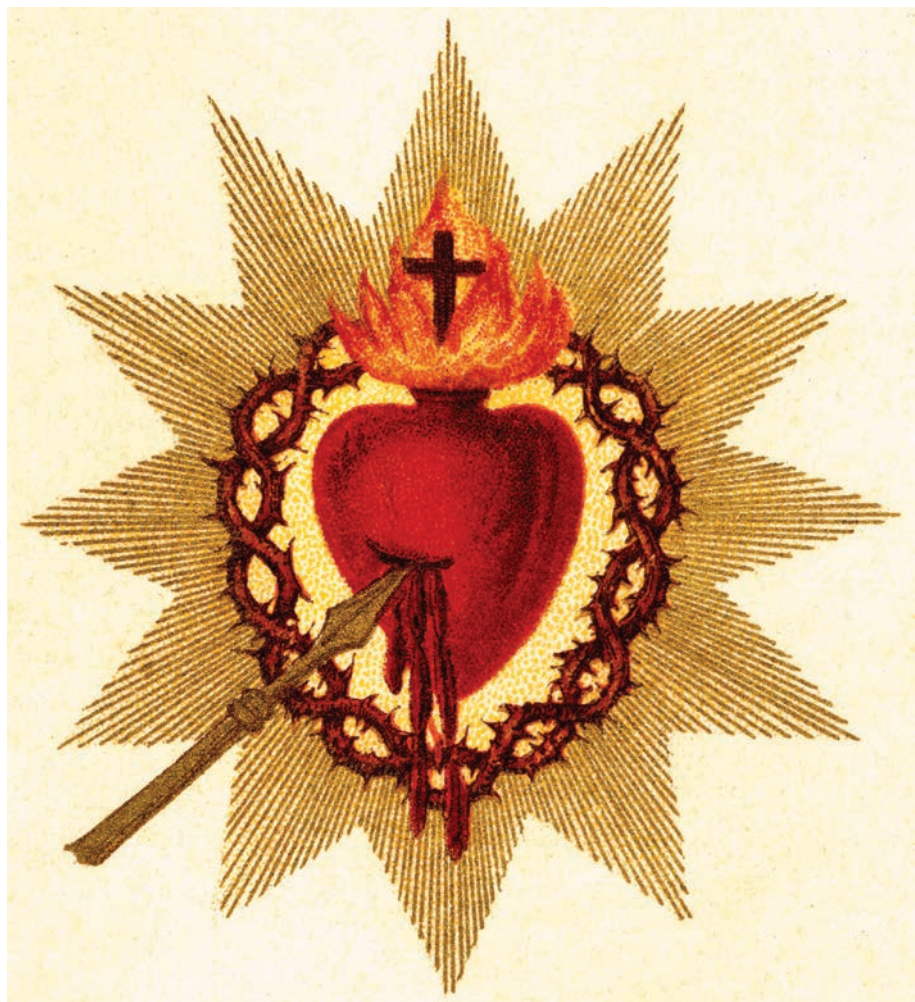
Above: Randy Mora,  
*Torre Bianca*, 2010.

Right: Peter de Wale,  
*Christ Child in a Heart*,  
1470.





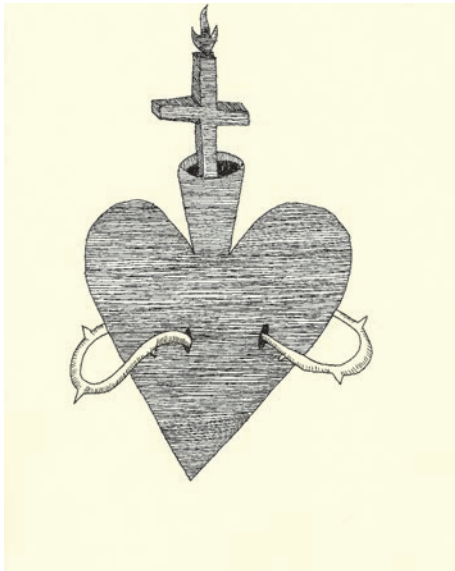
Above: Marco Wagner,  
*Heimat Gerne*, 2011.



**Left:** *Sacred Heart*,  
German, c. 1880.

**Right:** Angelique  
Houtkamp, *Love*, 2010.

**Below:** Robert Rubbish,  
*OH MY CROZONE*, 2012.





# Aztecs and Mexico

The Aztecs have a rather gruesome reputation when it comes to the heart. The last major independent culture of Mesoamerica thrived from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. The Aztecs believed in the imminence of the end of the world, which could only be abated by regular human sacrifice. To be chosen as a sacrificial victim was considered an honour and a path to eternal life. Living victims were placed on slabs at the pinnacle of Aztec pyramids. A sacrificial priest would then cut their chests open with a flint knife, remove their hearts with his bare hands and offer it to the sun gods.

When the Spanish Conquistadors invaded in the sixteenth century, their first duty was to erase Aztec culture. When they arrived, almost 15,000 Aztecs were sacrificed annually. With the blessing of the Catholic Church, the Spanish massacred the Aztecs as heretics, which decimated the population and obliterated the culture's literature and history.

The Church later tried to assimilate the Aztec fascination with heart iconography and the Catholic Sacred Heart. Colonial painters in native villages would mass-produce Baroque Catholic imagery. Hallucinogens were widely used by all levels of Mexican society in the seventeenth century. As a result a hyper-decorative religious aesthetic began to develop.

After the Mexican War of Independence of 1810 to 1821, the religious kitsch of the country's visual culture began to define the nation's identity. The heart became an icon of national courage and was used as a symbol of independence in the 1910–1917 revolution. The connection between the political, the religious and the heart in Mexican visual culture continues to this day.

**Left:** Javier Rodriguez  
Garcia/Lobulo Design,  
*Do Epic Shit*, 2013.

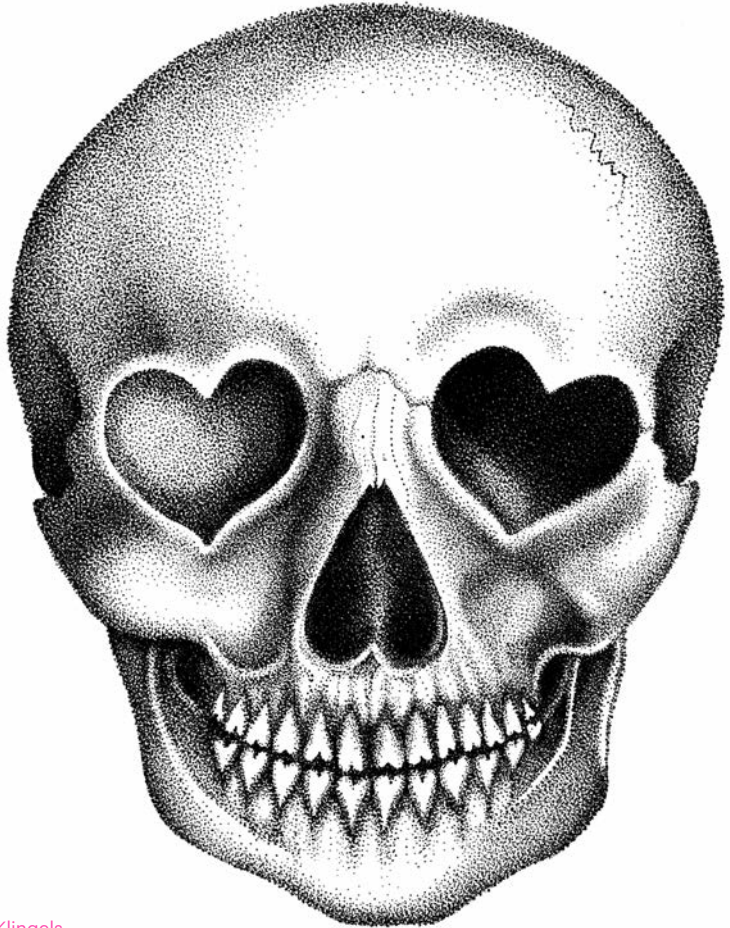




Left: Craig Robson,  
*Angel of Death*, 2012.

Above: Craig Robson,  
*Mystery*, 2013.





**Right:** Izzie Klingels,  
*Love Forever*, 2012.

**Left:** Jonathan Zawada,  
*It Was on Earth that  
I Knew Joy*, 2009.  
Created for Sixpack  
France to promote the  
film and exhibition at  
Scion Gallery, Culver  
City, California.

**Left:** Christian Petersen,  
*Heartscalpel*, from  
the fanzine *Love*,  
2000–2002.

**Right:** Jonathan  
Zawada, *Misericordia*,  
2010. Created for  
Sixpack France.

**Below:** Donald Urquhart,  
*I Love Luger*, 2006.





# Playing Cards

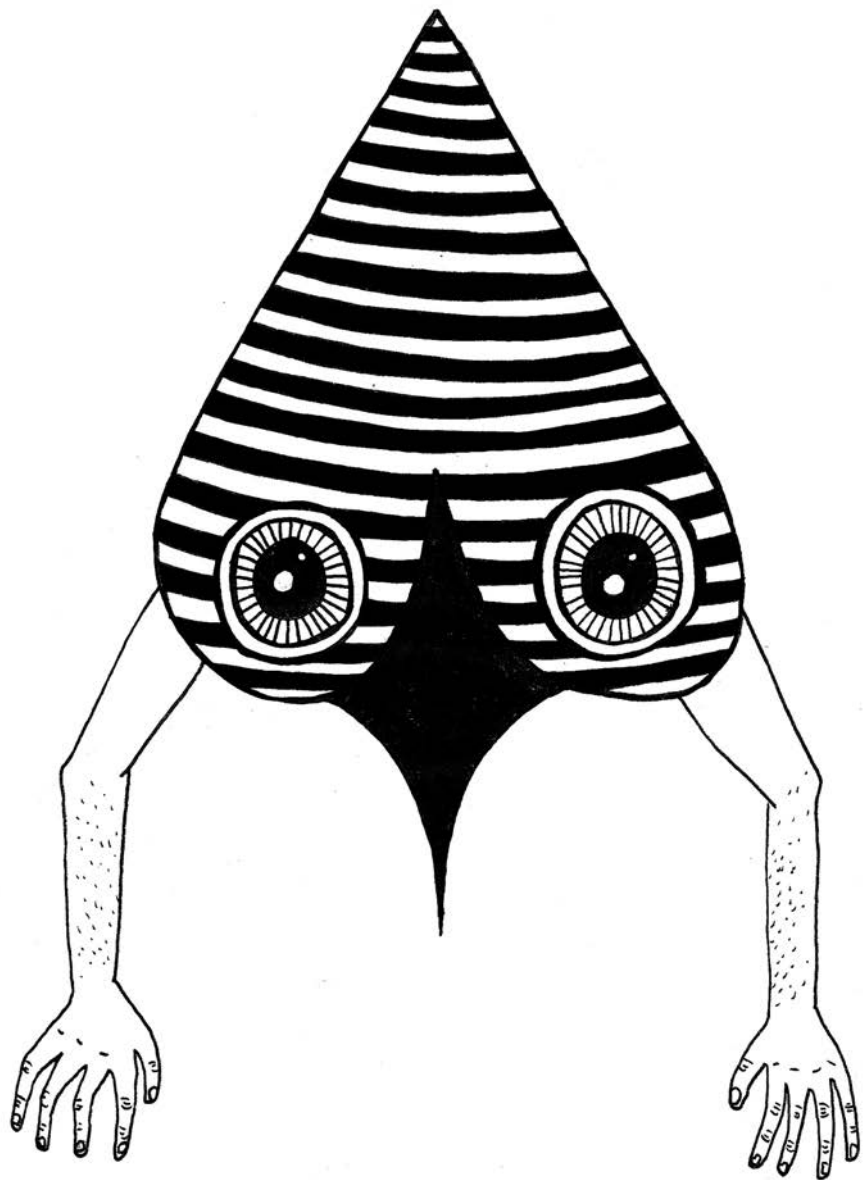
Playing cards were very influential in disseminating the heart symbol. They were probably invented in China or Korea, before their existence was recorded in Europe in the late fourteenth century. Originally the four card suits were swords, chalices, coins and batons. One argument is that the four suits stood for four socio-political estates – swords for the aristocracy, chalices or cups for the clergy, coins for burgers, batons for peasants. This referenced the Holy Grail and the blood of Christ.

The Spanish were the first to modify the design of cards but it was the Germans who made hearts (*Herzen*) a suit. The symbol replaced cups, alongside bells (*Schellen*), leaves (*Grün* or *Laub*) and acorns (*Eicheln*). French decks popularized the heart symbol, which was simpler for manufacturers to create and players to remember.

Cards were given as keepsakes and wedding gifts. The imagery on playing cards in the seventeenth century often focused on education – depicting historical characters, mathematics, geography or grammar. The court cards also began to depict French kings.

Satire and dissent began to appear in card imagery. One popular French deck could be seen as a critique of Henry III. As the third son of Catherine de Medici and Henry II was a transvestite, the King of Hearts was painted as carrying a fan, while in the same deck, the Queen was shown with a sceptre – arguably in control. In England, the ever-furious Queen of Hearts was the central adversary in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The illogical character of this satirical portrayal of Queen Victoria could be seen as a representation of the unexpected, sometimes violent, aspect of love.

**Right:** Chris Bianchi,  
*Untitled Heart*, 2013.





Left: David Sandlin,  
Seasons, 2010.

Below: David Sandlin,  
Love-Lust, 2010.

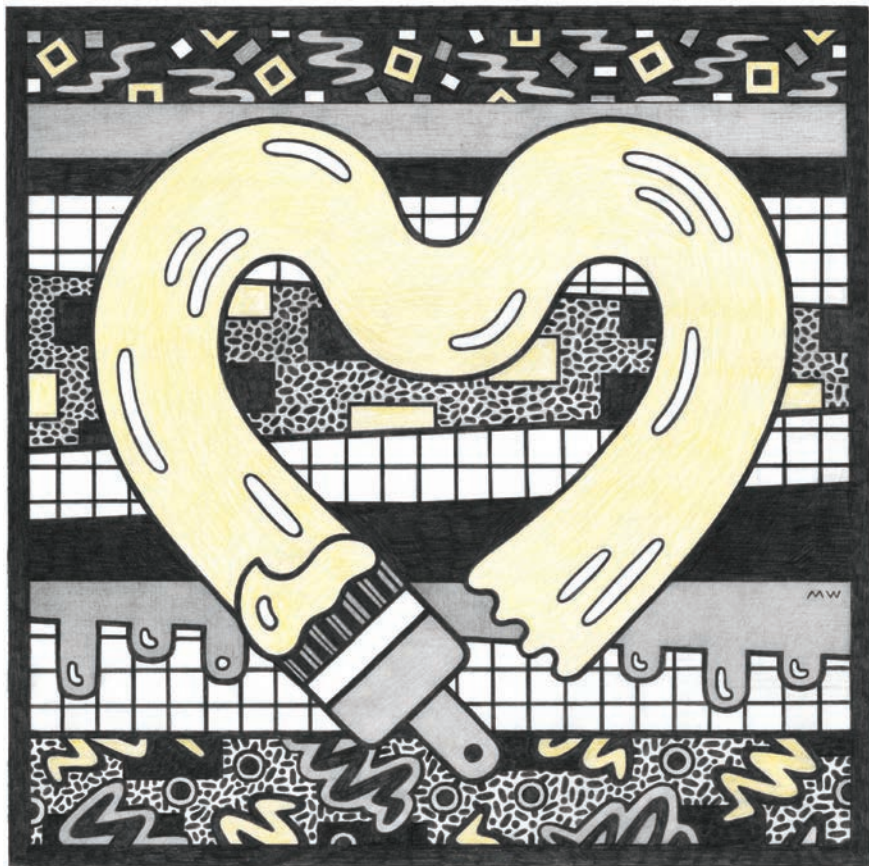




Left: James Joyce,  
*Two Dollars*, 2013.

Below: Scott Campbell,  
*Heart*, 2011.





**Above:** Maya Wild,  
*Painted Love*, 2013.

**Right:** Brad Downey,  
Matthew Murphy and  
RWO Stone, *My Funny  
Valentine*, 2010.





**Left:** Saya Woolfalk,  
*Pretty Little Multi Culti  
Girls*, 2006.

**Below:** Seana Gavin,  
*Universal Love*, 2013.



Right: Chris Uphues,  
Williamsburg Heart  
Mural, 2008.







# Emblemata

The lasting popularity of the heart symbol owes much to seventeenth-century bestsellers – emblemata. These books were intellectual guides to moral life. Each emblem would be split into three parts – a motto, an illustration of the page’s concept, and a descriptive text in verse. The first emblemata book, *Emblematum Liber*, was written by the Italian humanist and juror, Andrea Alciato, and published in 1531. Eighty editions had been printed by the end of the seventeenth century.

It had hundreds of imitators. The first emblemata on love, *Quaeris quid sit amor?* (You want to know what love is?), was published in 1601 with engravings by Jacob II de Gheyn and verse by Daniel Heinsus. It gave birth to a genre – *emblemata amatoria*.

In these books the heart became a conceptual, or in some cases literal, protagonist. The heart was depicted as suffering, surrendering, broken, flaming, winged, as a book, in a brick oven, even with a foreskin. Daniel Cramer’s *Emblemata Sacra* presented the heart as a personified character in forty scenarios. Cramer had many imitators, and his hearts were often used in northern European architecture and Lutheran churches. Symbols were a way to sidestep the forbidden nature of imagery under Protestantism.

People would put the emblem prints and page into handmade anthologies in order to create new meanings and interact with the work. They were also used in games of conversation between the sexes. The heart was a perfect symbol for this nuanced culture of symbolism.

**Left:** FriendsWithYou,  
*I Heart You*, 2004.



**Left:** Chris Bourke,  
*The Way*, 2012.

**Right:** FriendsWithYou,  
*Protection*, 2002.

**Below:** Craig & Karl,  
*Love*, 2010.







Left: Jacob Ciocci,  
Peter Glantz and Becky  
Stark, *Your Heart Is  
A Prism*, 2011.







**Above:** FriendsWithYou,  
*I Heart Malfi*, 2002.

**Right:** Nigel Payne,  
*I Love Tea*, 2006.

**Opposite:**  
FriendsWithYou, *Love  
Buddy*, 2006.





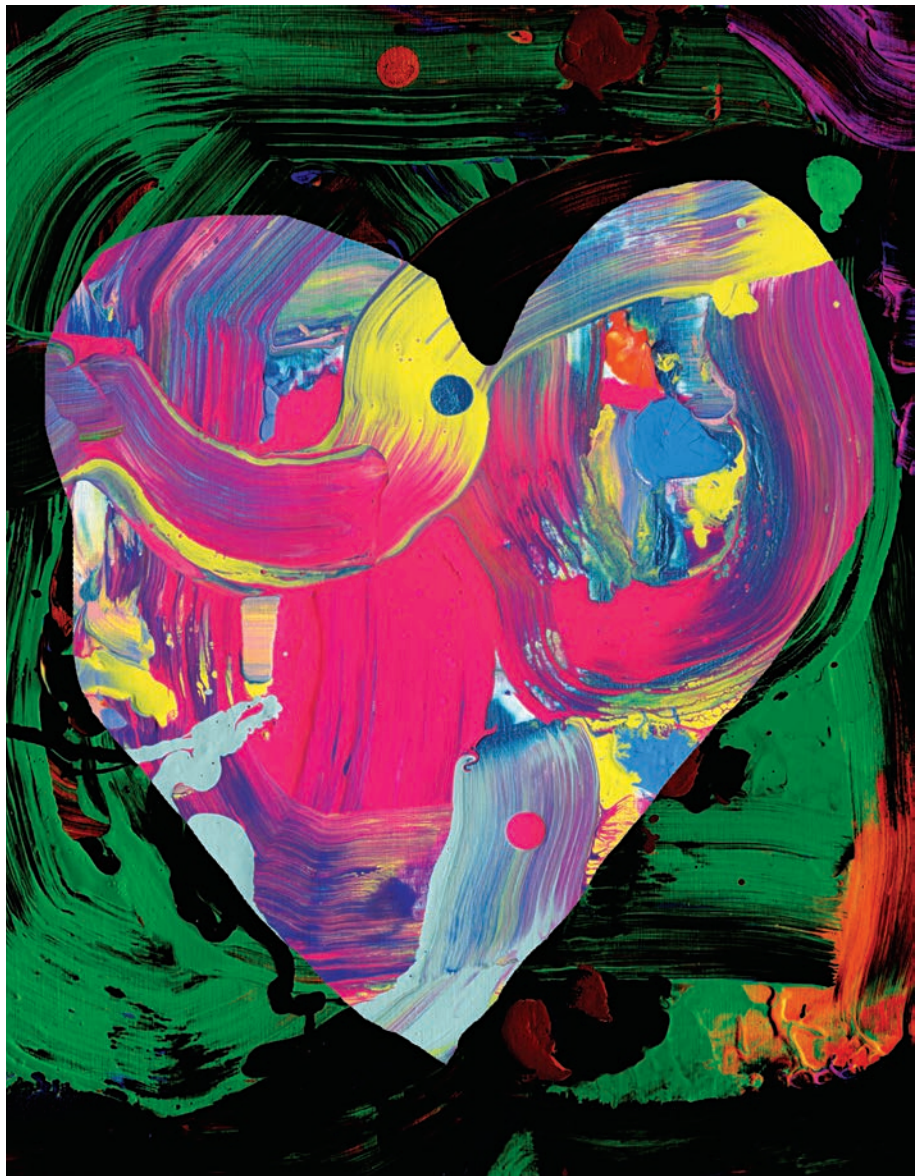
# Valentine's Day

The origins of Valentine's Day have long been debated. The three St Valentines who were martyred seem to have had nothing to do with romanticism or lovers. Instead, the Roman spring fertility rite, Lupercalia, has been sited as a source for Valentine's Day. Held in honour of Faunus, it involved two blood-stained nobleman's sons running naked in the street, whipping all in their path with goat-skin thongs. The relationship to Valentine's Day, however, is probably a coincidence of dates.

The real foundation of Valentine's Day appears to be a line in Geoffrey Chaucer's poem, 'Parlement of Foules' (1382). The poem was written in honour of the engagement of King Richard II and Anne of Bohemia. Chaucer wrote 'For this was on seynt Volantynys day / Whan euery bryd comyth there to chese his make' ['For this was on Saint Valentine's Day, when every bird cometh there to choose his mate.'] If birds paired up in February, it followed suit that people would do the same.

The first Valentine note was written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orléans, who sent it to his wife, when he was held in the Tower of London after the Battle of Agincourt. He wrote, 'I am already sick with love, My very gentle Valentine.' After that William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser and John Donne all wrote poetry about Valentines. Numerous folk traditions emerged around pairing youths on Valentine's Day. The Industrial Revolution then took these folkloric practices and turned them into an industry.

**Right:** Maya Hayuk,  
*Untitled*, 2013.



Below: David Saunders,  
*The human heart will  
beat 2.5 billion times  
during one lifetime  
(I have skipped a few  
times already though),  
2013.*





Above: Antoine et Manuel, *Cheries Cheries*, 2008-2009. Poster for gay and lesbian film festival.

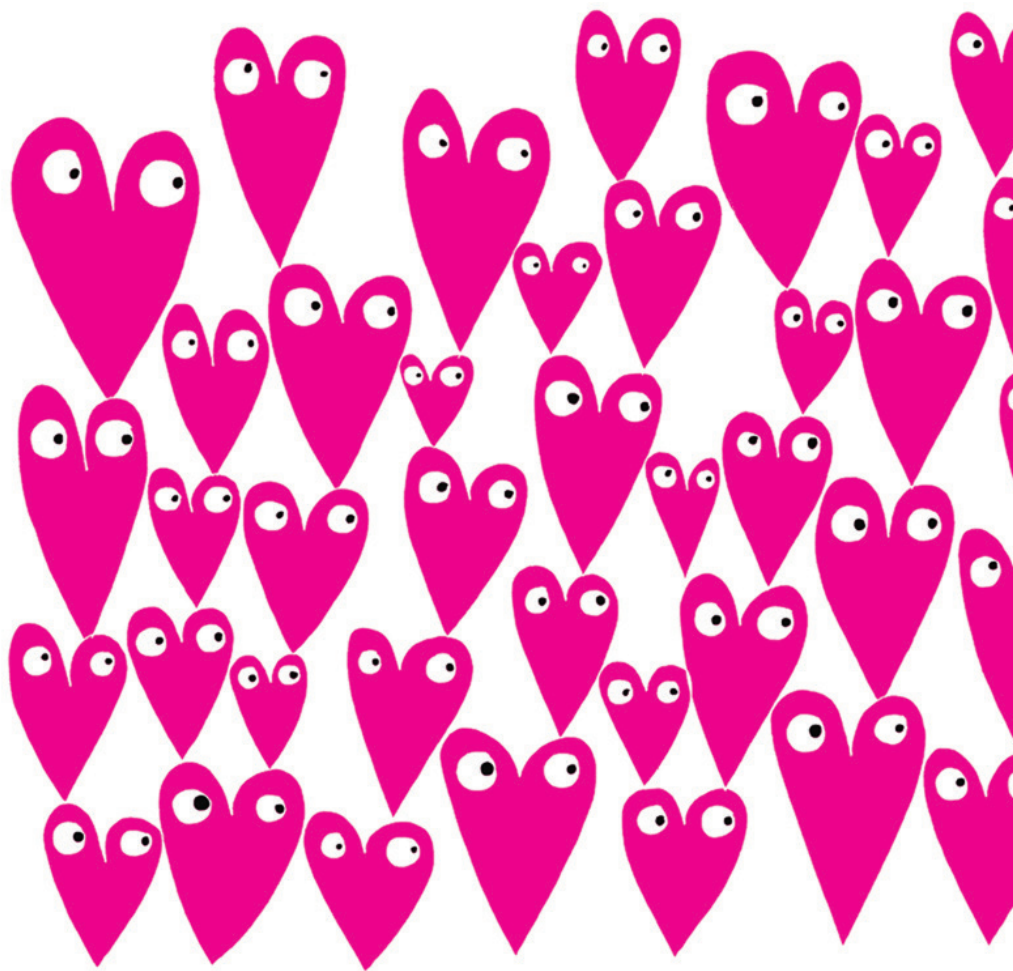


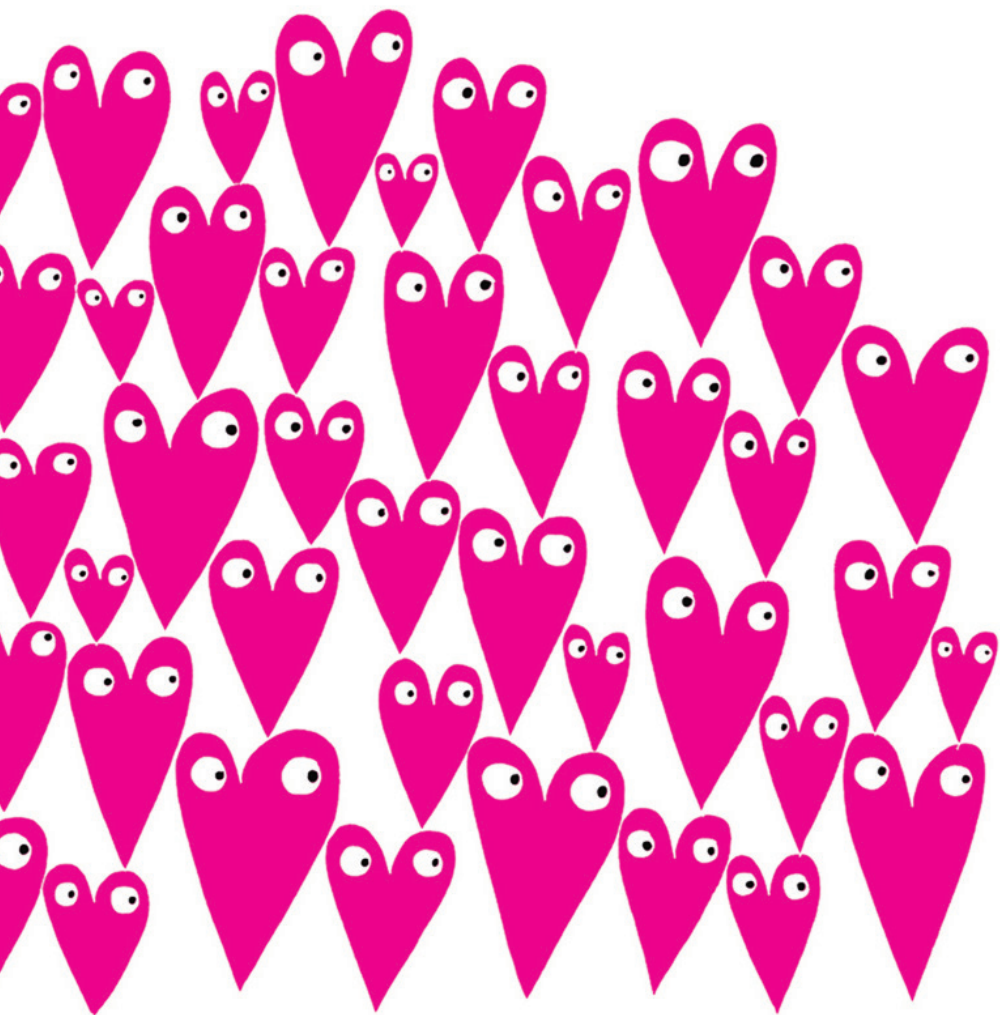
**Above:** Tim Noble & Sue Webster, *IY YOU (I LOVE YOU)*, 2000. 298 coloured UFO reflector caps, lamps and holders, Foamex, aerosol paint, electronic light sequencer (12 × 3-channel spell, fill & shimmer effect).

**Right:** Tim Noble & Sue Webster, *fuckingbeautiful* (snow white version), 2002. 8 neon sections, transformers.



Below: Rina Donnersmarck,  
*Suspicious Hearts*, 2011.







**Left:** Hvass + Hannibal,  
*Untitled*, 2013.

**Below:** Hvass + Hannibal,  
*Untitled*, 2013.

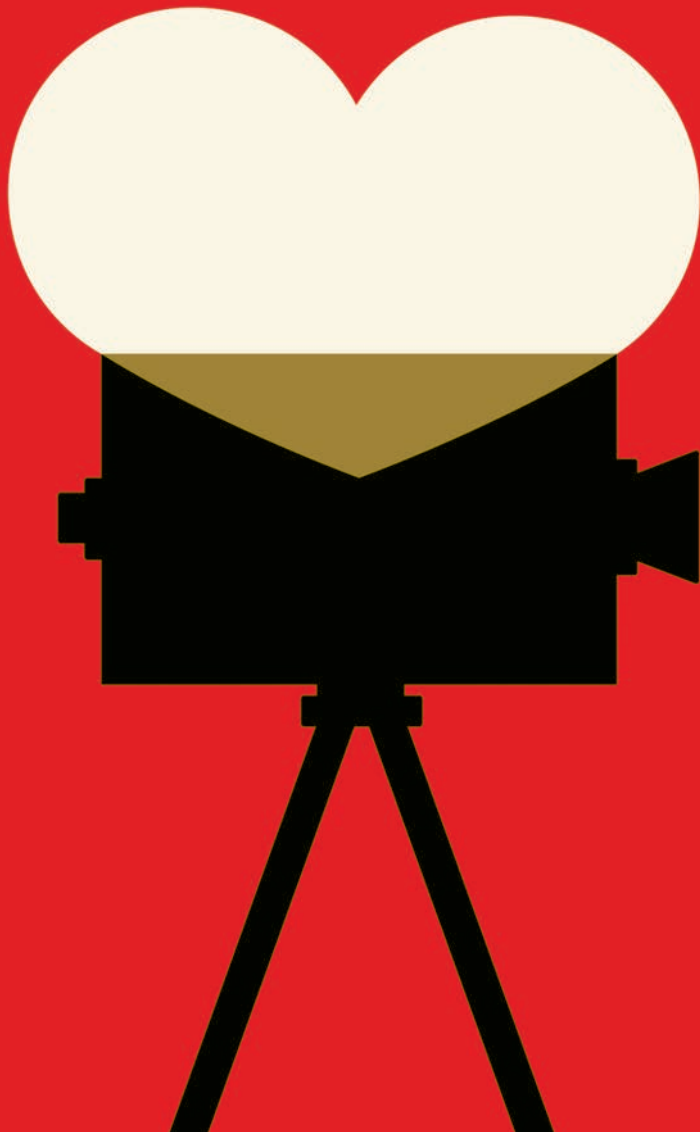
**Right:** Hudson Powell,  
*Floral Tat*, 2013.

**Following pages (left):**  
Noma Bar,  
*Rom Com*, 2012.

**Following pages (right):**  
Noma Bar, *Protect Your  
Heart*, 2012.









Love You.  
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Jaxali

# Valentine's Cards

Although the intention may be romantic, the endurance of Valentine's Day reflects the history of industry and capitalism. By the seventeenth century it was customary for men to give women love tokens or decorated letters on this day. By 1760, this had developed into expensive gifts, flowers and sweets.

In the 1780s, printed 'greetings' cards were created in Germany – decorated with imagery such as winged cupids to give on New Year's Day. These *Freundschaftskarten* were brought by German settlers to the US, and also flourished in Britain. They were handmade, with cut heart and hand motifs, often covered with tiny messages of love.

The first commercial Valentine's cards were created in the 1840s by an American woman, Esther Howland. At the same time, the Penny Post in Britain and the United States Post Office Department led to a huge transformation in communication and the Valentine's craze exploded. Cards were embellished and ornamented with lace and coloured paper, satin and silk. The visual focus was on cupids, pastoral couples, birds and flowers. Copious books were published on what to write in Valentine's cards, with verses ranging from the lewd to the sentimental.

The heart – usually combined with plump cupids – became the Valentine image of choice, particularly after the increase of picture postcards and lithography between 1907 and 1914. The commercial success of Valentine's Day, reinforced by the card industry, can be interpreted as a desire for humanity to express love and emotion.

**Left:** Gary Taxali,  
*Love You*, 2013.



**Above:** Sarah Dennis, *Swimming Heart*, 2013.

**Right:** Rob Ryan, *We Had Everything*, 2010.



Guss  
 Heil  
 Herzen  
 welche von dem  
 Licht der Liebe  
 erleuchtet

weder durch Hoffnungen auf einen  
 Himmel noch durch  
 Kälte vor einer  
 Irreführung werden

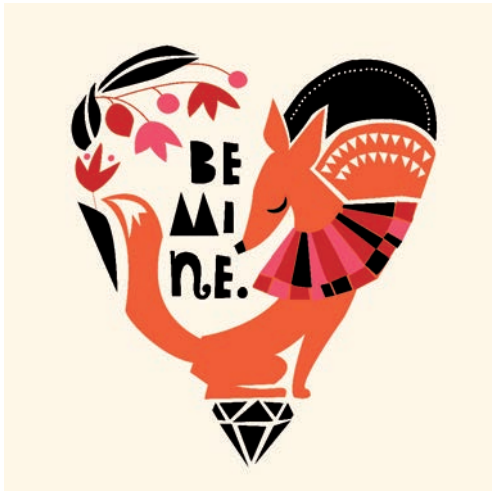
OZ.HANISH  


Han

**Left:** Johannes Itten, *Saying* (Spruch: Gruss und Heil den Herzen, welche von dem Licht der Liebe erleuchtet und weder durch Hoffnungen auf einen Himmel noch durch Furcht vor einer Hölle irregeleitet werden), 1922/1923.

**Right:** Ellen Giggenbach, *Engaged*, 2013. Lagorn Design note card.

**Below:** Darling Clementine, *Florence the Fox* (Be Mine), 2012.





**Above:** Victoria Foster,  
*Oh Floral Heart*, 2013.

**Right:** Alessandro  
Maffioletti (aka Alvino),  
*Heartbeat*, 2009.



# The Organ

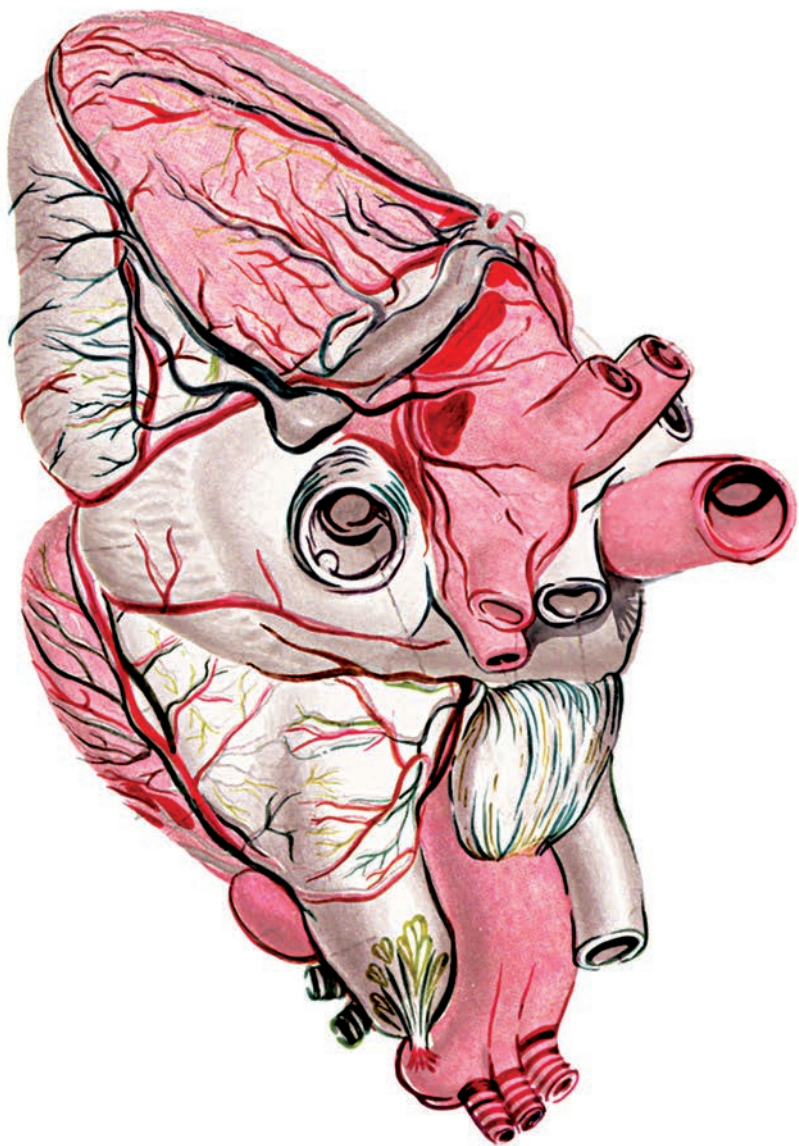
Humanity has always been captivated by how the heart works. The ideas of the Roman doctor and philosopher, Galen of Pergamon (129–216 AD), dominated ideas of the heart's role in the body for centuries. Influenced himself by the ancient Greek doctor, Hippocrates, Galen saw the heart as part of a system involving four elements, or humours – blood, yellow bile, phlegm and black bile. These humours had physical attributes, as well as emotional effects.

Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia* describes the heart as the location of fear in the body, and a lake, where blood would accumulate as in a ditch. 'Heart' was also Tudor slang for the vagina. People were unaware that the heart is a muscle that pumps blood around the body, believing instead that it pulled in blood. Indeed, a misinterpretation of medical descriptions may have led to the invention of the indented heart shape.

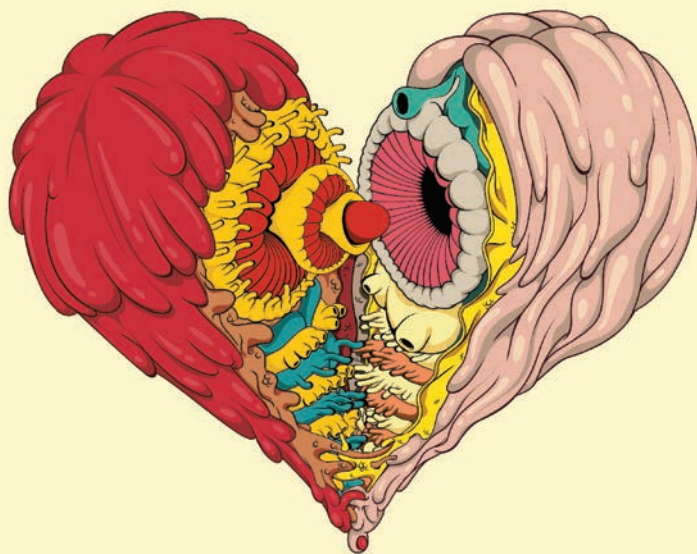
Visual understanding of the heart changed dramatically in the seventeenth century, as the organ was dissected, labelled and examined. English physician William Harvey firmly established how the heart worked in 1628. His book *De Motu Cordis* destroyed the concept of humours in one fell swoop.

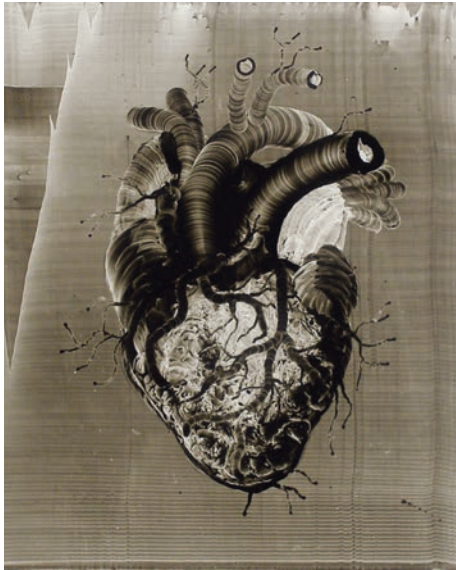
Contemporary science has discovered the relationship between the heart and emotions is not just myth. The heart has been shown to play a vital part in the control of hormones and in responses to thoughts and feelings. The heart may be an organ, but there is still metaphor and poetry within its walls.

**Right:** Howie Tsui,  
*Dr. Pulmonari*, 2013.







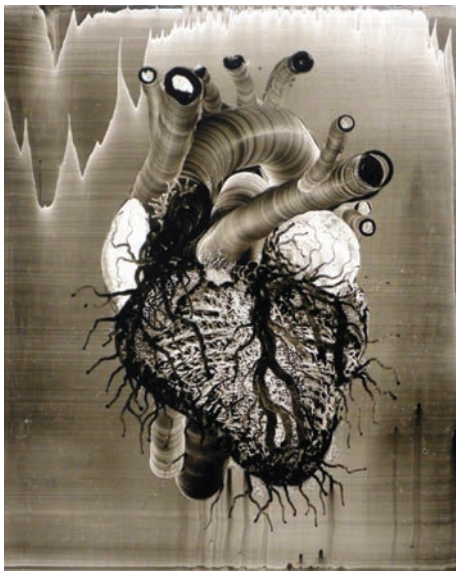


**Previous pages (left):**  
Renaud Vigourt,  
*Laboratory Accident*,  
2013.

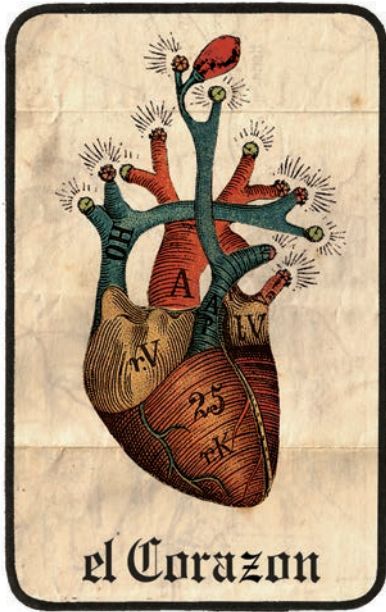
**Previous pages (right):**  
Alex Trochut,  
*Heart*, 2009.

**Left:** Matthew Killick,  
*Heart 1 & 2*, 2012.

**Right:** Diann Bauer,  
*We are Meat*, 2013.





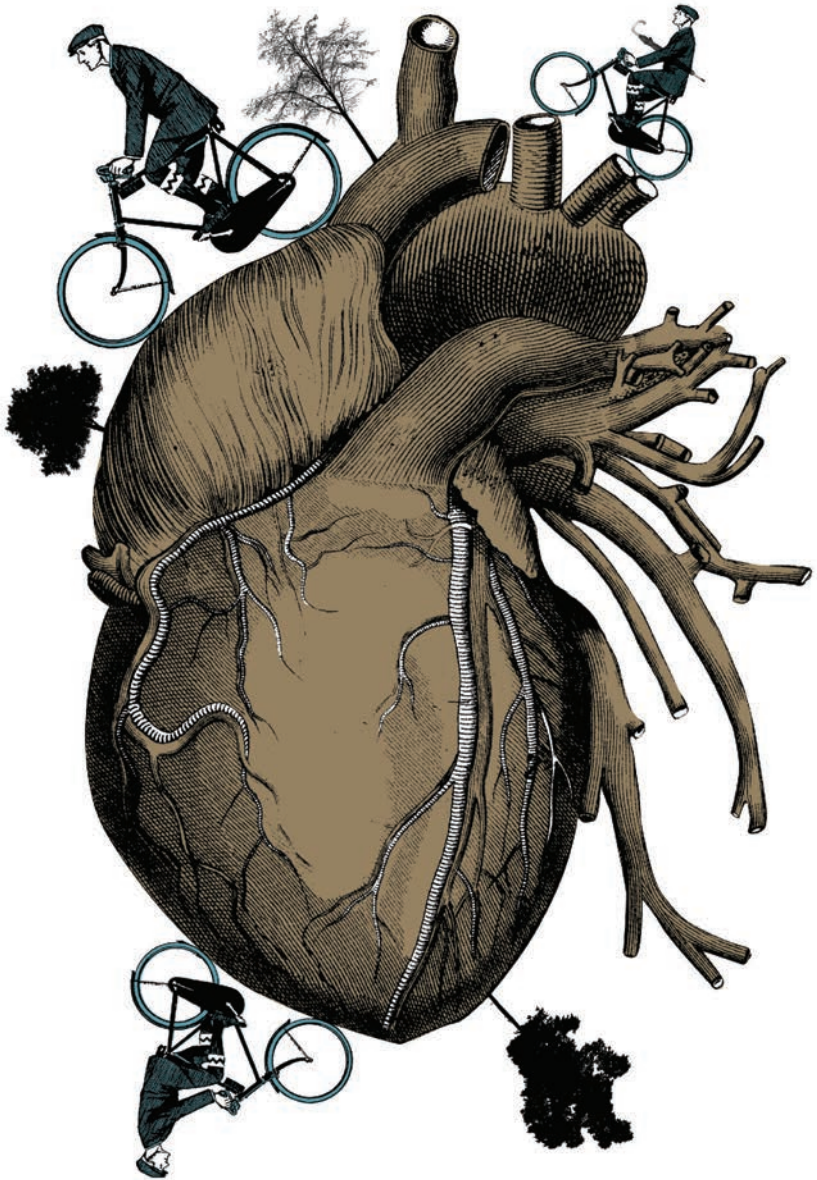


**Left:** Lynn Hatzius, *El Corazon*, 2009. One of a pack of cards for the traditional Mexican game of Loteria.

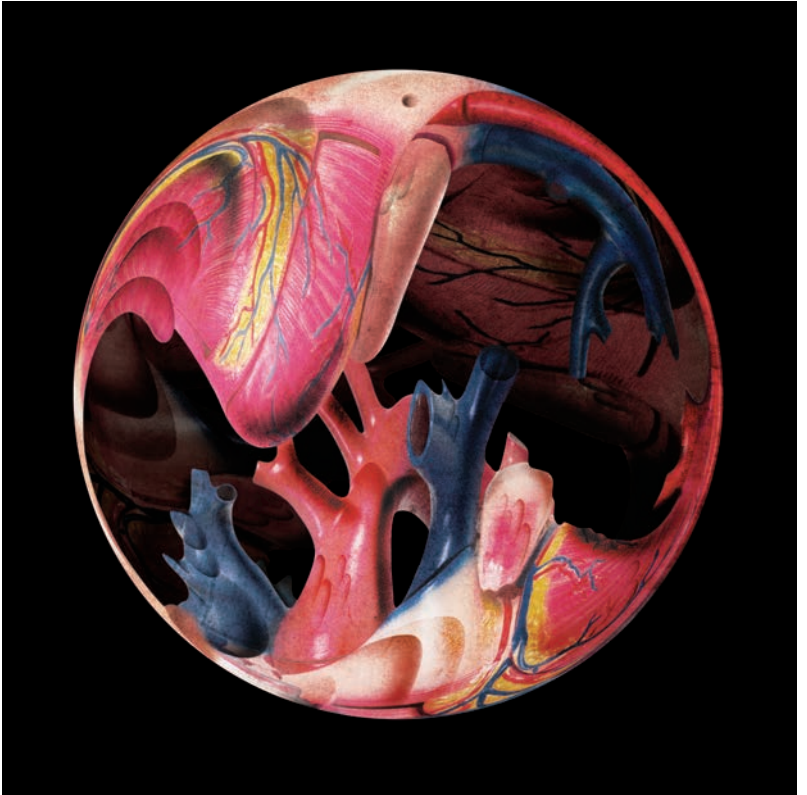
**Right:** Derya Öztürk, *Herzrad*, 2007.

**Below:** Amy Louise Olszak, *Heart Box*, 2012.









Above: Mario Hugo,  
*Heart*, 2013.

Left: Sam Chivers,  
*Untitled*, 2012.



# Tattoos

Like heart symbols, the earliest tattoos had a magical and protective significance, and were found on mummies in Egyptian tombs from 4000 to 2000 BC. The ancient practice was prohibited by the Catholic Church and began to disappear after the Norman conquest of England in the eleventh century, although it continued to thrive in Asia.

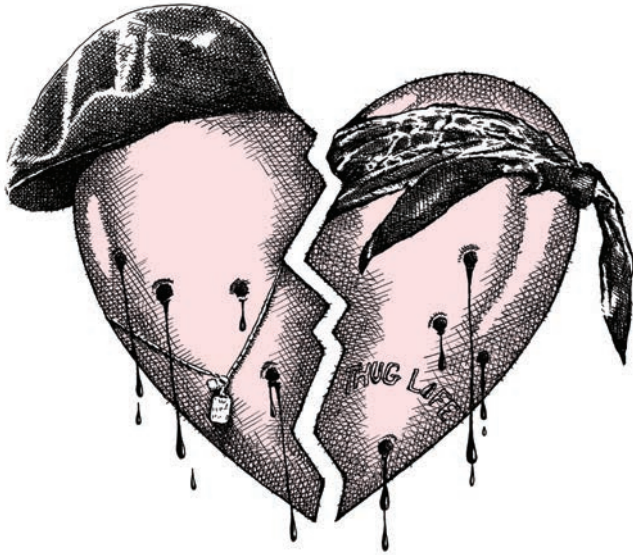
The word 'tattoo' was introduced by Captain James Cook. It was taken from the word *ta*, the Polynesian verb for 'knock' or 'strike'. Sailors were the first to disseminate tattooing techniques, and the heart was one of the earliest motifs adopted by them, alongside stars, initials and, later, ships, anchors, mermaids and flags. These symbols were meant to ward off storms, shipwrecks, the evil eye, shark attacks, plague and venereal disease.

The peak of tattooing's popularity was in the early 1900s. Even King George V and Czar Nicholas III were tattooed while visiting Japan. After World War I, tastes changed and the practice came to be associated with criminal culture. In 1962, after reports of hepatitis outbreaks and blood poisoning, tattooing was made illegal in some US states, and severely restricted by law in others.

The heart image, however, survived as a strong visual motif in underground tattoo culture. US artist 'Sailor Jerry' Collins created his own aesthetic blend of Western and Japanese tattoo art. His aesthetic is still evident as an influence on many contemporary heart tattoos. In 1950s and 1960s gang culture, heart tattoos were a sign of ownership. One gang tradition was for couples to get matching hearts containing their initials tattooed above their nipples.

**Left:** Jean Jullien,  
*Tattoo*, 2013.





Above: //DIY, Biggie & Tupac, 2010. Movie poster, 'Sound and Vision' series.

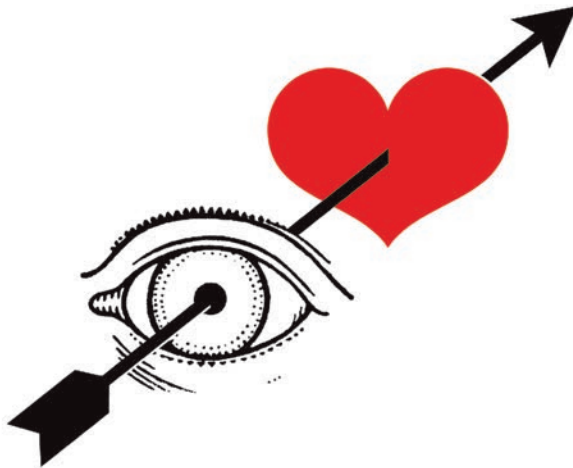
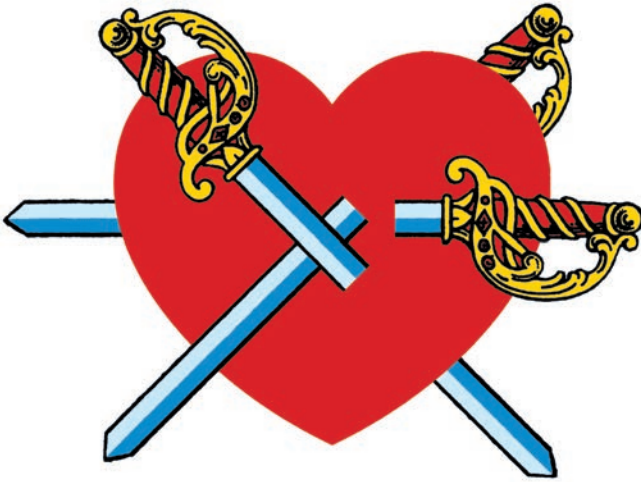
Left: Scottmove, No no no no..., 2013.

Right: Jody Barton, Falling Love, 2013.









**Previous pages (left):**  
Tim Noble & Sue Webster,  
*Toxic Schizophrenia*  
wiring diagram, 1997.

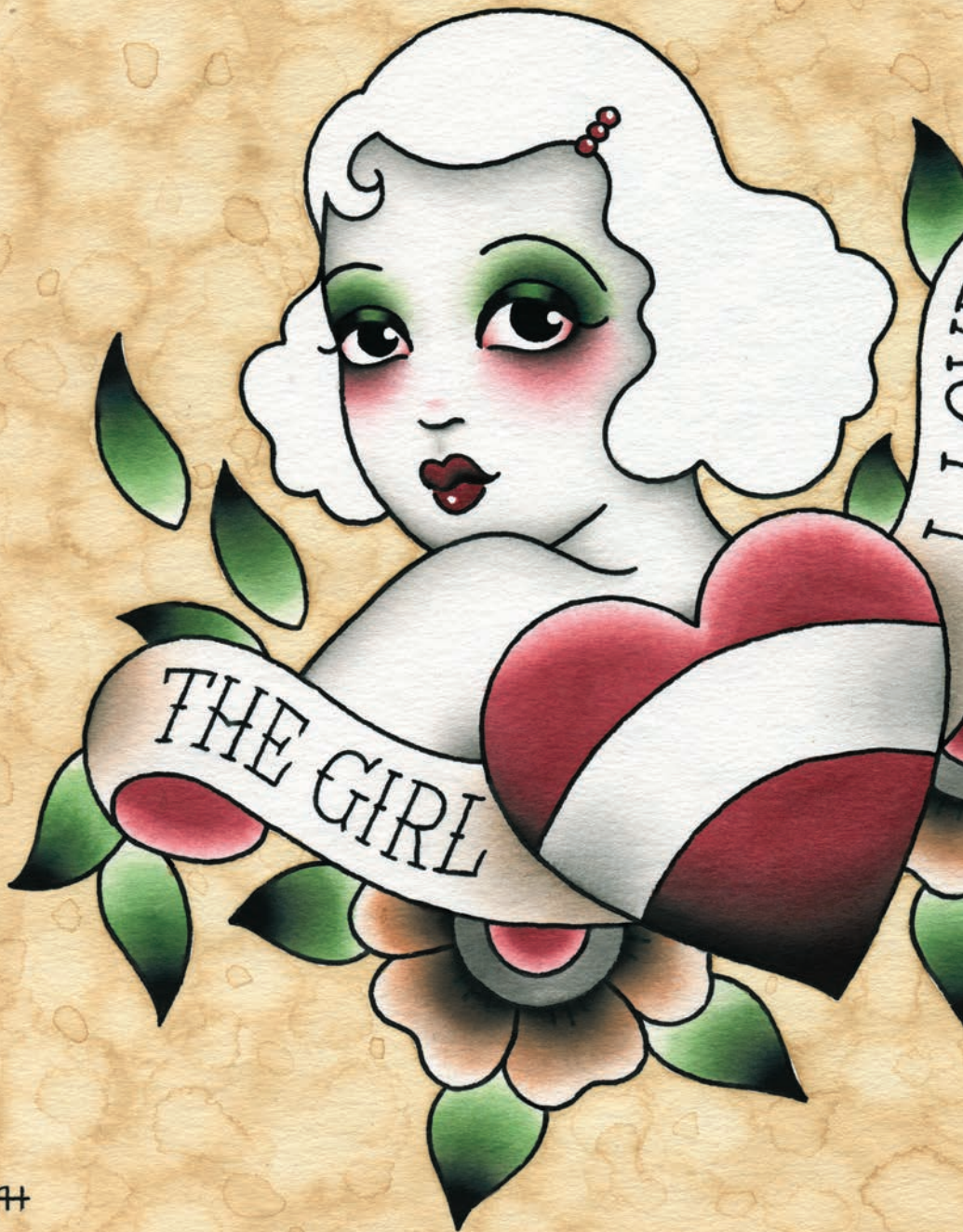
**Previous pages (right):**  
Tim Noble & Sue Webster,  
*Toxic Schizophrenia*, 1997.

**Above:** Mikel Jaso,  
*Untitled*, 2011.

**Left:** Mikel Jaso,  
*Untitled*, 2011.

**Right:** Christian Petersen,  
*Heartskeleton*, from  
the fanzine *Love*,  
2000–2002.





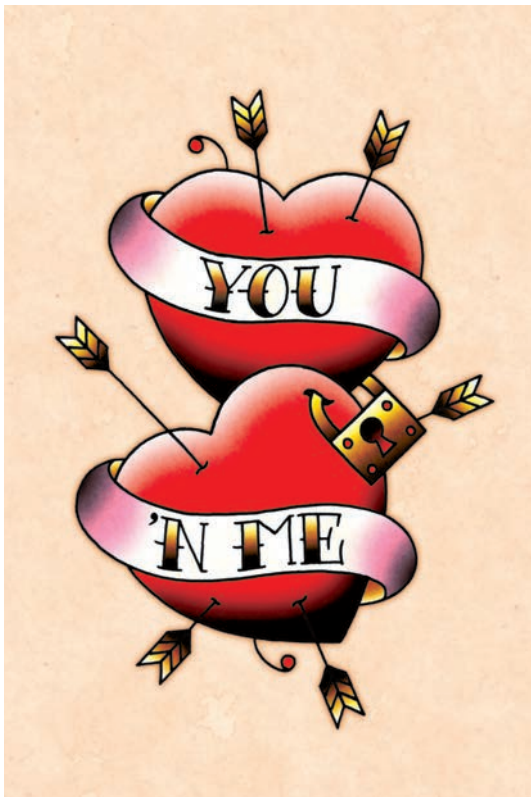
I LOVE

THE GIRL



**Left:** Angelique Houtkamp, *The Girl I Love*, 2008.

**Below:** Angelique Houtkamp, *You N Me*, 2005.



# The Gothic Heart

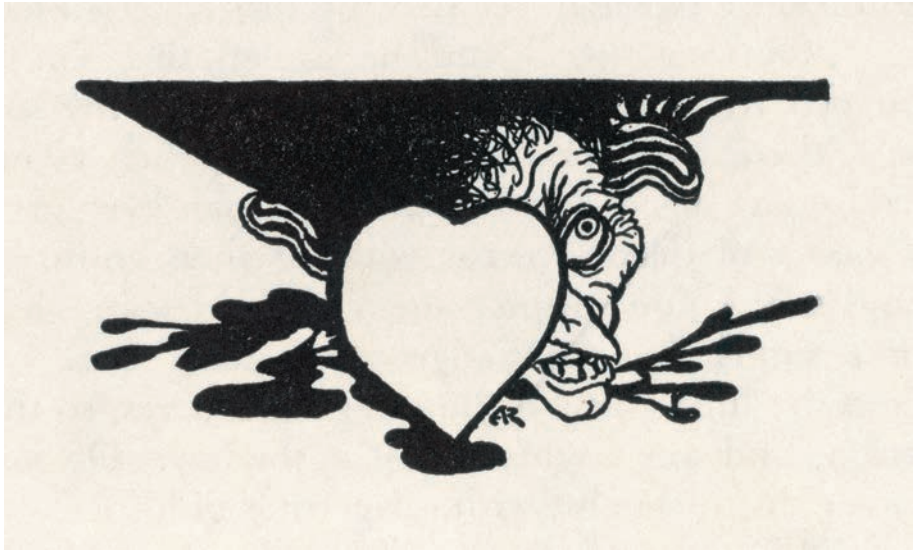
In the past ten years, the representation of the heart as an organ has become increasingly popular. This is undoubtedly connected to the rise of gothic imagery that followed in the wake of September 11, 2001, as well as the rise of tattoo images in mainstream culture. The relationship between the gothic and the heart goes back a long way. Stories of eating hearts recur in ancient Greek, Aztec and Egyptian cultures, and even in early chivalric stories. This gory narrative can still be seen as reflected in the current cliché of eating heart-shaped chocolates.

Edgar Allen Poe's short story 'The Tell-Tale Heart' is a fascinating example of the heart's role in gothic literature. It is written from the point of view of a murderer, who kills an old man, then dismembers and hides the body beneath his bedroom floorboards. He begins to hear an increasingly loud violent heart beating from beneath the floor and, overcome with fear and guilt, confesses his crime.

The heart played an important role in mysticism. It represented the sun in the human body and was vital in alchemical thinking. Alchemy was seen as a demonstration of the desire to purify the heart. The heart was also a magical object. Buried bull and sheep hearts stuck with pins have been discovered all over Britain. A pigeon heart hung above a door was said to bring a lover. A pierced animal heart placed beneath a pillow was thought to invite death. In these darker contexts, the heart became a metaphor for romantic obsession.

**Right:** *Le Succube*,  
c. 1870.



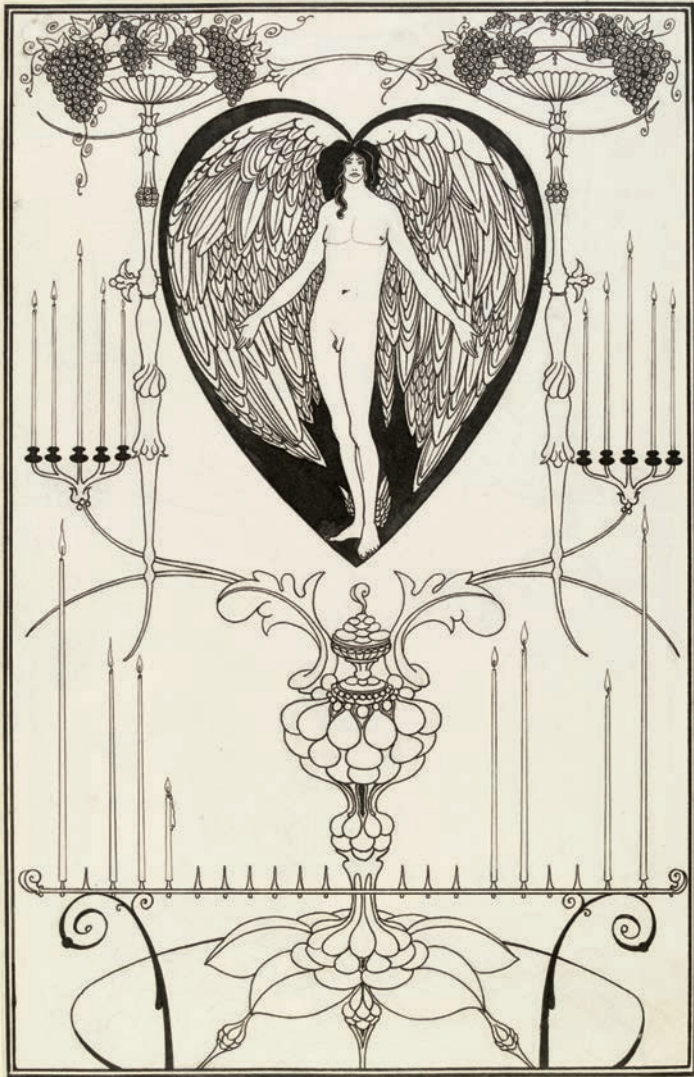


**Above:** Arthur Rackham,  
*Telltale Heart*, 1842.

**Right:** Edvard Munch,  
*The Girl and the Heart*,  
late 19th/early 20th  
century.

**Opposite:** Aubrey  
Beardsley, *The Mirror  
of Love*, 1898.







Above: Neal Fox,  
*Heart of Darkness*, 2013.

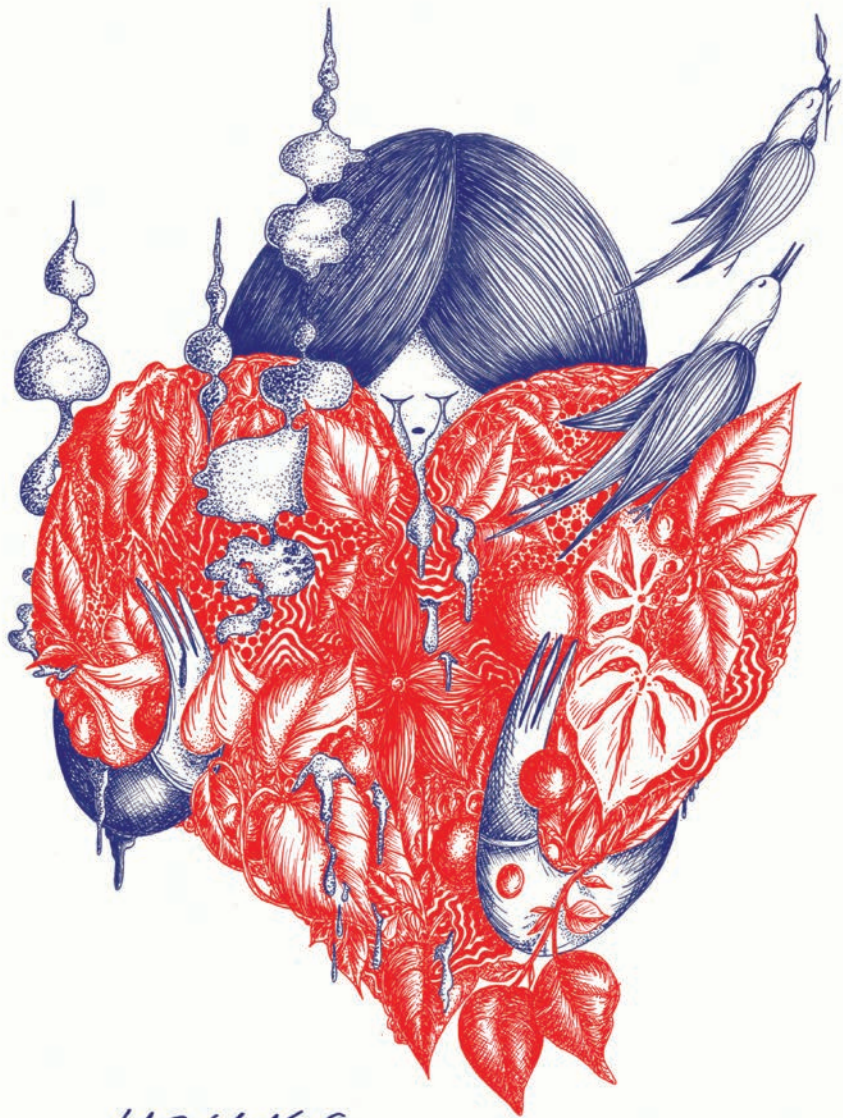




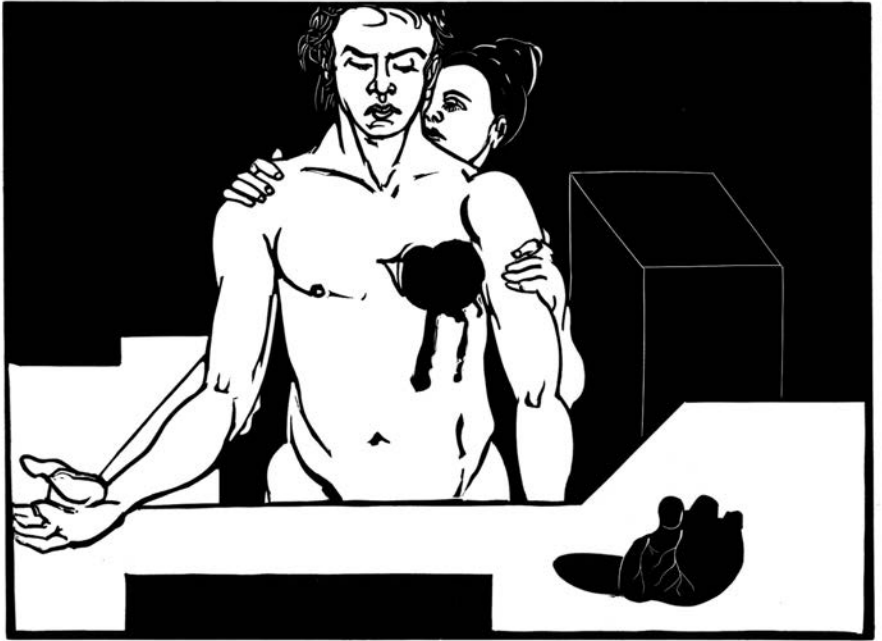
**Left:** Shok-1, *Heart Noose*  
- East Germany, 2010.

**Right:** Dan Hillier,  
*Aperture*, 2013.





YOUNG  
HEARTH



Above: Andrzej Klimowski, *Small Heart*, 1995.

Left: Merijn Hos, *Young Hearth*, 2013.

# Acknowledgements

To the family Gavin, in particular Seana for her research assistance, and Paola for her incredible sub-editing skills. I'd also like to thank all the artists in the book for their kind inclusions, Donald Dinwiddie, Helen Rochester and Laurence King, Victoria Camlin for St Pancras coffees, and the writing of Louisa Young, Ole Hoystad and Gail Godwin among others on the heart's history. I'd also like to thank the British Library for making the text research one of the most enjoyable experiences of my life – where I learnt that the word 'fascinating' comes from the Latin for erect penis, *fascinus*.

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Francesca Gavin is the Visual Arts Editor of *Dazed & Confused*, Art Editor of *Twin* magazine and a contributing editor at *Sleek* and *AnOther*. She has written four books, including *100 New Artists* and *Hell Bound: New Gothic Art*. She has also curated a number of exhibitions, including 'The Dark Cube' (Palais de Tokyo, Paris), 'E-Vapor-8' (319 Scholes, NY) and 'The New Psychedelia' (MU, Eindhoven). She is the curator of the Soho House collection and has written for publications including *Vogue*, *wallpaper\**, *GQ*, *Time Out*, the *Guardian* online, *Art Review* and the *Sunday Times* Style section.

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