

## Artwork information

*Include artist, title, date, and link to high-resolution image.*

Artist/Photographer: Adam Fuss (British, 1961)

Title: Love

Date: 1992

Link: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/281940?ft=love&offset=0&mp:rpp=40&pos=1>

## Notes

*Highlights from your exploration of the artwork, such as: What drew you to this work? What are some of the key things you noticed and discussed? Were there any places where you and your partner had different observations or interpretations?*

- The contradictory view of the title and the artwork. Without looking at the label and any background information, it would be hard to relate “love” as the title, since the entire artwork has a sense of creepiness.
- Another interesting part would be the impression about this artwork. It seems like this work is really in detail, but also the feelings and thoughts associated behind the work are very abstract.
- The technique used for the artwork. When first looking at the artwork, the element does not look at paints. It felt like the artist had stuck everything onto a transparent plastic sheet.
- The unique composition of the color used in the artwork. The entire artwork was composed of dark red color, which seemed similar to blood. But without looking at the information, one can already tell that the mix of yellow and green in the middle does not seem artificial.
- One key thing we discussed was how this artwork was created. The label information from the website did not give clear information about whether the rabbits were actually slaughtered. But we both agree that the lines seemed like intestines and other inner organs of two actual rabbits.

## Aspects for consideration

*Aspects of the artwork you are interested in exploring, or think might come up naturally, during your dialogue. Please indicate if there are specific aspects you plan to focus on in your dialogue.*

- The contradiction between the feelings the artwork conveys to us and the title “Love” (dark vs. romantic).
- Techniques and materials the artist used when constructing the artwork.
- The symbolization of rabbits.
- If there are any concerns or ethical issues beyond the artwork.

## Questions

*Open-ended questions to encourage observation, dialogue, and interpretation; structured in a way that moves participants toward “big ideas.” (Note: During your dialogue, you may not ask all of these questions, or might not follow this order exactly!)*

- After a close observation, what have you noticed (3-4 min)?
- What kinds of feelings do you have (3-4 min)?
- Now let’s take 30 secs, please think about one word you would be given as the title for this work (2 min).
- Now you know some background information, what interpretations you might have about the relationship between this title and the artwork (3-4 min).
- Anyone knows why the photographer uses the rabbit as the main element?
- **Optional:**
  - Do you think this artwork involves ethical considerations?
  - Do you think conventional art making will be replaced by digital one?

## Information

*Key pieces of information that you think may come up during the dialogue, based on your discussion questions and/or observations you think participants are likely to make. (Note: You may not share all, or any, of this information during your dialogue!)*

Background information of the artist Adam Fuss:

“Adam Fuss was born in London in 1961 and grew up in rural England, where he first began to document the natural environment through photography. This led to an experimentation with unconventional photographic processes and his eventual abandonment of the camera altogether. Fuss’s works are ghostly manifestations of light and shadow because of his intention to avoid the detailed clarity of traditional photography.” (Cheim & Read)

Adam Fuss's statements about ideas underneath artworks:

"I do deal with death, but to me death isn't necessarily morbid or taboo. It's a part of life."

"I'm still on this idea that you don't take the image, you make the image."  
(FRAENKEL Gallery, 2022)

### Techniques used in this artwork

Adam Fuss used a cameraless technique called photogram, which requires objects (rabbits), light and light-sensitive material (Cibachrome paper), to construct this artwork. Photogram worked in the way like placing objects directly onto the surface of a light-sensitive material and then exposing it to light (Wikipedia, 2022). The usual result is a negative shadow image with variations of colors depending on the transparency of objects. In short, "areas of the paper that have received no light appear white; those exposed for a shorter time or through transparent or semi-transparent objects appear grey, while fully exposed areas are black in the final print" (Wikipedia, 2022). "Other artists who have experimented with the technique include László Moholy-Nagy, Christian Schad (who called them "Schadographs"), Imogen Cunningham and Pablo Picasso" (Wikipedia, 2022). X-ray is one of the variations of this technique.

Adam Fuss used Cibachrome paper as the light-sensitive material. This paper stopped produce in 2012 due to the decline in market demand and expanded popularity of digital image making (Wikipedia, 2022).

### Background information of the artwork

"Adam Fuss started the series "Details of Love"/"Love" about 7 years ago. These artworks depicted two rabbits face-to-face, surrounded by a luminous multicolored tangle of abstract squiggles (rabbit intestines). The painterly depth and range of colors are the result of an unlikely chemical interaction between the fresh innards and Cibachrome paper. Each rabbit had paws reaching toward their opposite partner, in gestures not of successful union but of eternal yearning. The emotion of the pictures reinforced the impact of a fatal and enduring connection." (Xavier Hufkens)

Adam Fuss mentioned that "the rabbit was the perfect animal, because it's a creature that absorbs a tremendous amount of symbolism – reproduction, fertility, sacrifice, innocence. (Xavier Hufkens)"

### Why use love as the title?

The artwork originated from the series "Details of Love", which was composed mostly with the configuration of two rabbits and intestines. Little information has been found about why the series was called "Love". But an interview of Adam Fuss has

discussed how he wanted to bring feelings in multiple levels within one artwork, which he thought was also suitable for the idea of “love”.

Another possible explanation would be the position of the two rabbits. In all of the artwork within the series, the two rabbits were facing each other, and their paws were pointing in the opposite direction, just like a couple trying to reach their partners, “in gestures not of successful union but of eternal yearning” (Xavier Hufkens). Fuss believed that the moment of loving needs to be isolated to maintain the eternity of love.

## **Rationale**

*2-3 paragraphs explaining some of the decisions you made in your plan, such as artwork selection, question structure, etc. Please include citations of course readings or discussions as relevant.*

*[artwork selection, question structure, the choice of information]*

The reason that we chose this artwork was because we identified a contradiction between the title and the presentation of the artwork. We felt surprised when we saw this dark frame associated with a romantic title. The creepiness reflected by red did not connect to the idea of “love” in common sense. In this case, “love” can be complexed in this artwork and contain many levels of profoundness, which deserve more exploration from multiple perspectives. We thought this contradiction indeed echoed with what Fuss has indicated in one of his interviews, “One of them was the idea of having figurative art and abstract art mixed together in the same picture. An effort for there to be a meaning and a sense of figuration and abstraction, together at the same time” (GalleryIntell, VIDEO: Adam). Another reason we chose this artwork selection was because of this unique technique that Fuss applied in the creation. Unlike other artworks, the applied technique would produce lower resolution images, which we thought would be interesting to introduce this technique to our classmates (Wikipedia, 2022).

Overall, we formed these questions after doing basic research on artists, artwork, techniques, and materials. We combined what we’ve explored and facts that can meet our curiosity when structuring questions. We initially looked at the VTS strategy to guide us in forming open-ended questions, and then added some other points to engage more audiences. Lastly, we used Hubbard’s “Facilitating Interpretive Dialogues” to check if the words we used are appropriate and questions are not leading. Delving deeper into each part, we prepared and structured questions primarily based on the VTS strategy (Yenawine, 2013). We want to open up the discussion by asking people to take a minute to look at the artwork. As what is mentioned above, we were attracted to the artwork because of the different elements and ghost-like effects in it. So, we think it would be

interesting to give others some time to explore different things in the artwork alone before revealing the background information and the title. They would firstly analyze the artwork based on their prior knowledge, which might bring up some aspects that we never noticed before. We also came up with questions about their feelings when looking at the artwork and the title they would give. And then, we would reveal the title, expecting some of them to feel surprised about it. We add an interaction here to let audiences say one word they would give as the topic because we want to involve and engage as many of them as possible. Therefore, they would feel personally connected with the artwork quickly.

There are a few questions that we listed as optional. We thought it would be interesting to move beyond the artwork if we have more time. When looking at the artwork, we always question if it is ethical to slaughter rabbits for art purposes. Even though we cannot find enough information to support our thoughts, we think it would be interesting to hear others' opinions on ethical considerations. We came up with the other question when we found the light-sensitive material used by the artist stopped mass production in 2012 because of the popularity of digital image making (Wikipedia, 2022). When technologies become increasingly important in our life, it is necessary to bring up this question to let audiences think deeply about the relationship between conventional art forms and digital ones.

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