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Curated by Festival 2026

our love (illusio) is everything that the waterfall is (doxa)
_ curated by Christian Egger

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First, to briefly explain the quotes in the title: The underlying structure stems from the German band Eisenvater and their song *Uns're Liebe* (Our Love). One line goes, “Our love is like a waterfall.” 1) I found this allegory – a powerful, mighty source of endlessly cascading, cooling, clear, refreshing water amidst the increasing drought and parchedness brought on by the global climate crisis, coming from a band in a genre (heavy metal) whose audience is known for maximum, unconditional loyalty – useful for the curatorial thinking behind this exhibition. The phrase “everything that the waterfall is” is a deliberately clunky allusion to the opening sentence of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s (1889–1951) *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. These two components are, in turn, framed by two concepts from sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002): *illusio* and *doxa* (Ancient Greek: *dóxa*, meaning “opinion”). *Illusio* describes the mechanism by which social groups – or classes and individuals – deceive themselves and are deceived regarding society’s actual power structures, thereby unconsciously contributing to the reproduction of the prevailing order. *Doxa*, meanwhile, covers beliefs and opinions taken to be real or true without ever questioning them. Transposed onto this year’s theme of *curated by*, “Our Love*”* emerges as a conviction and an assumption that is taken for granted, one that simultaneously contributes unconsciously to the ongoing reproduction of concepts of love. Trying to widen and open up the concept of love, and led by a certain over-fixation, I stumbled at the outset of my preparations from associative memories of Kim Casali’s (1941–1997) comic strip *Love Is…* and its bywords on twosomeness to Martin Kippenberger’s (1953–1997) series of canvas paintings bearing the I-LOVE-… stickers that could be ordered and personalized through the newspaper *Kurier*, and finally to a present-day little treat: the vegan LOVE gummies of the Katjes Wunderland Rainbow Edition. Things became more serious and concrete with my exploration of the photographic phenomenon of double exposure, where individual exposures blur into one another to capture multiple layers of reality, including objects of one’s affection, more holistically. I was equally drawn to the hubris of translating gestures of intimate physicality into sculpture at a 1:1 scale, and to paying personal homage to my own encounters with works I had grown to love – B. Wurtz, for one. Once, while setting up an exhibition, I was rifling through the shipping crate in disbelief, looking

for the contents, for the work itself, until I finally made out the artist's fragile sculptures, scarcely distinguishable from the safety packaging – after seriously wondering, moments before, where what I had come to love so much could possibly be hiding. And so this exhibition itself is, throughout, permeated with such searches for proof and manifestation of the theme – and with false energy too: eternal promises, and a before, a midst, and an after of an *ALMOST LOVE*! Doubts about affection, as well, and the repeated question of how destructive or bewildering relationships come to be falsely labelled as care or passion, and yet are still held to be true. It asks whether, when we experience something in everyday life, we go on longing to experience it as art – and if so, where art's symbolic advantage in this might reside? It asks how all the contradictions and misunderstandings, the conditions and conceptions of ecstasy and rapture, the most varied combinations of cause and effect in love – or indeed *illusio* and *doxa* – might escape the peculiar thrill of the why and the how, if only to record and exhibit their lack, their insufficiency, and the disappointment that an exhibition which betrays our feelings leaves behind in us. Because the more we look for love and find it, the more it becomes a fetish – and the more it becomes a fetish, the less accessible it is. And yet, since time immemorial, everything has moved in one direction alone: towards where LOVE is.

1) "Uns're Liebe" is the third track on the album *Eisenvater III* by the German band Eisenvater, released in 1995. The song was released via We Bite Records.

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Christian Egger, born in 1976 in Innsbruck, he works as a freelance curator, artist, and critic in Vienna. In addition to numerous exhibition catalogs, his texts appear regularly in international art magazines such as *ArtReview*, *Texte zur Kunst*, *SPIKE*, *Springerin*, *Camera Austria*, and many others. A selection of his essays and reviews, *Shows, Signals, Unvernehmen*, was published in 2020 by Floating Opera Press, Berlin. He is co-editor of the artist fanzine ztscrpt.net. In addition to his own exhibition activities and presentations of his work at venues such as The Horse in Dublin, the Neuer Kunstverein Wien, Kunstraum Schwaz, and Ve:sch, he has curated numerous solo and group exhibitions since 2004, including the exhibition *See you later curator... or how to say hello to the fine line between high and low* at LASSIE in Vienna.