


words Sarah-Jane  
photo Candace Gottschalk

diva people

# true love ways



KATHE IZZO IS A BRIGHT AND bubbly Italian-American who's dipped her toe in everything from film-making and erotic fiction to performance art. A loud, vivacious character with a passion for food, sex, meditation and travel, she has a cult following in her hometown of New York, where she's exhibited work in various galleries. Her latest creation, *The True Love Project*, is an on-going piece of experimental theatre that involves her giving strangers the opportunity to experience real, unconditional love. 'It's hard to describe what I do, but I've always been interested in lifestyle as art, and my work and life have always overlapped,' confides Izzo. 'Most of the installations I've done have included my physical body, and I came up with the idea for this project when a curator encouraged me to just do what I normally do, and call it art. I fall in love easily, and people seem to fall in love with me easily. So, doing a project based on love seemed a natural progression.'

The first *True Love* experiment took place in the Big Apple in April 2002, and has happened in Los Angeles, Miami, Frankfurt, Berlin, Boston and Cardiff. For her Manchester debut, Izzo will be setting up a special Museum of Love in the Lingerie department of *Ab Fab* department store Harvey Nichols. There'll be mouth-watering chocolates, sweet-smelling candles, a library of love, containing seductive records, books and films – and a bed in which Izzo will be taking naps in between sessions. Those ladies curious enough to book an appointment with her should expect to spend anything from 15 minutes to two hours, depending on their specific 'needs' and 'desires'.

Though she tries to prepare for each session like an athlete, Izzo

suggests she never tries to control what happens between her and her prospective love partners. 'Basically, I just try to focus on each person and what they want,' she says. 'Some people want to be quiet and intimate, others like to walk and talk a lot. As for what we actually do, it can involve anything from cooking and sleeping, to shopping or going to the cinema together.'

A resourceful single mother with three teenage daughters, Izzo has tried her hand at everything from bar-tending to house painting, and has spent the last seven years supplementing her art by teaching creative writing to troubled teenagers and prisoners. It's a tough job that requires a lot of time, energy and motivation, but Izzo is clearly a very determined and passionate woman. 'It can be a real challenge getting people to open up and express themselves, but I'm usually pretty good at finding a way in,' she admits. 'In fact, someone once told me intimacy was my medium.'

If she gets the funding, Izzo hopes to take over a gallery for six months next year and do a special *True Love* installation involving six different individuals all living with her for two- to four-week periods. She hasn't found the right women yet, but the men she's chosen to participate include a Cuban man in his 40s, a Jewish transgender F2M in his 30s, and a British gay guy in his early 20s. 'I haven't worked out the details yet, but the idea is we isolate the love experience in public in this one room,' she suggests. 'Providing everything goes to plan, the love should create an energy you'll be able to feel when you walk in the space.'

Asked if all the wooing and seducing ever gets exhausting, Izzo laughs: 'This is the art project I've been waiting for my whole life. I could do it forever.' ♦

'I FALL IN LOVE EASILY, AND PEOPLE SEEM TO FALL IN LOVE WITH ME EASILY'

KATHE IZZO IS RESIDENT AT HARVEY NICHOLS, MANCHESTER, FROM MAY 6TH-12TH. TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT IN HER LOVE MUSEUM OR FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE *TRUE LOVE PROJECT*, VISIT [WWW.QUEERUPNORTH.COM](http://WWW.QUEERUPNORTH.COM)