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**SOUTH FLORIDA, U.S.A.**

## **Desire, jealousy are love artist's medium**

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Kathe Izzo is in town for a few days and she will love you for \$500. She is earnest and no prude.

Said treatment need not involve seduction. Tender mothering, furtive infatuation and profound but platonic affection are also available.

Izzo is a love artist. "I'm very provocative, really sexy," she said on the phone last week. "There's sort of a European energy, too, a French movie sexiness." Her voice was throaty and full and it seemed wise to believe her.

She was flying down from New York for Art Basel, anyway, so an appointment for wooing seemed called for. It would take place by cellphone on the unromantic streets of downtown Miami, artist and patron roaming alone among the lunchtime crowds, perhaps passing each other unawares. Laughter and suspicion would kindle desire. There would also be shopping, because gifts imply "a little more commitment." When she felt the time was right, there would be a face-to-face meeting, followed by -- who knew what?

"The thing about this is, it's perfect no matter what happens," she said.

The falling in love and the afterglow of love may be documented in various media for future artwork; furthermore the experience of love itself and any emotions associated therewith -- joy, sadness, desire, anxiety, jealousy, etc. -- are considered art in and of themselves.

### **DEFINE PATRON**

This last part clarifies the loved one's role: you are not, by plunking down your 500 bits, becoming a "john" or "customer" or showing yourself to be in any way "pathetic" or ``needy."

You are becoming an "art patron," Izzo's preferred term, and this will become clearer still if she can get the Internal Revenue Service to recognize her as a nonprofit institution.

The good folk of the IRS, who have less of a reputation for appreciation of the artistic avant-garde than they perhaps deserve, will mull that over in the next few months.

Wooing began on schedule on the appointed day. "Just walk," she said. ``Call me if you're moved by anything."

The patron walked up North Miami Avenue, past stores where unfashionable clothing sells cheap. He saw nothing there that would make a good gift for a head-over-heels artist and nothing that moved him to call.

### **PROWLING**

Soon she called him. "I'm looking at a phone booth," she said. ``There's a woman with a stroller. She looks too young to have a child, stressed."

Perhaps, recounting this observation, she hoped for him to see the world as she saw it, thus to see her. She was starting to fall for him. But then she hung up.

When she called again, it was with a tone of reproach. "Are you too shy to call me?" she said. ``Time goes by

and we don't speak and I just worry."

He was unused to such clinginess and supposed it was just her way of expressing affection.

But the matter of the gift weighed crucially on him now. He needed something to show her he was not stony and remote; that he was, in fact, lovable.

They would meet soon. He race-walked past unsatisfactory empanadas, necklaces and plastic dump trucks. Finally he found a kaleidoscope. It was attractive and affordable, probably something an artist would want, if she didn't have one already.

## **THE ENCOUNTER**

That afternoon they met on the palazzo outside the art museum. He saw her first: trim with swelling lips, a brunet with shoulder-length hair in curls, older than he but with better skin. She had beautiful skin.

He touched her shoulder and she turned and kissed him, rubbed the cool wet underside of her top lip across his.

She handed him giant pencils from the dollar store, a terra cotta angel and an empty candy box. She held the kaleidoscope up to the light and seemed well pleased.

They talked about love. He did not believe at first but she explained it. "There are a million love experiences every day," she told him. ``People love you. Just not in the way that you want."