

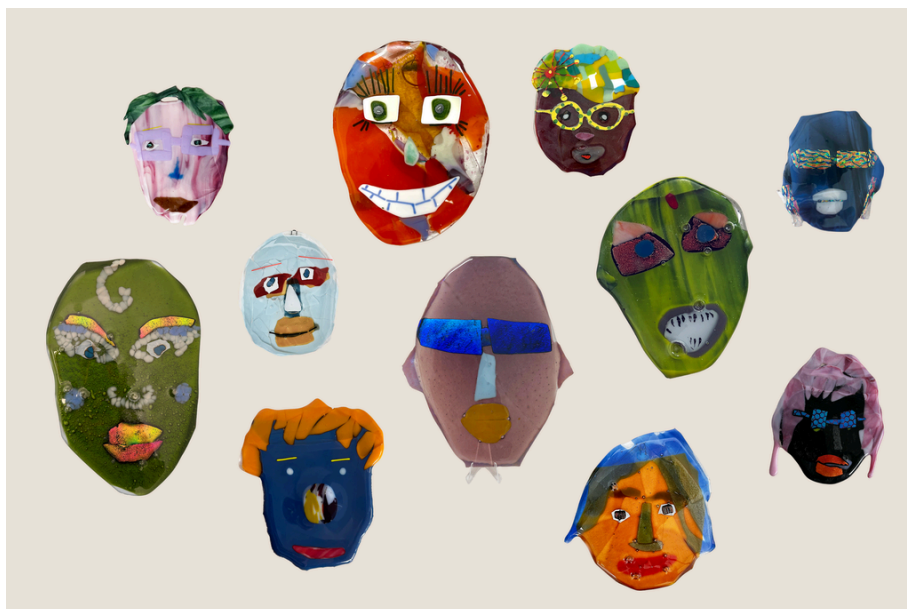
Stuck on What to Get for Valentine's Day? Here Are Some Unexpected Gift Ideas.

Glass portraits, rebellious perfumes and more recommendations from T Magazine.

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SAVE FACE

An Artist's Colorful Glass Portraits



By Laura Regensdorf

“Right now we hear so much about the ‘plastic age,’” says the Miami-based artist **Jillian Mayer**, “but if you talk to a materials scientist, glass is everywhere.” It tumbles ashore as sea glass; it forms in a flash when lightning strikes sand. And, of course, it facilitates most of our interactions onscreen. “We’re all just jerks behind glass in the end,” quips Mayer, whose work spans large-scale aluminum sculpture and video art that has sometimes garnered a colorful audience online. “Some Jerks I Know From the Internet,” the artist’s series of glass faces produced under the name Mayer Objects, puts the material to lighthearted use. The first faces came about as end-of-day whimsies while she was working on a multipart glass sculpture for the city of Miami. “When you turn on the kiln, it’s like a washing machine: You load it up and try not to waste space,” she says. In the heat, each layered collage fuses into a single, wonkily shaped avatar: a zinc-white nose and iridescent blue shades on “Gustavo,” a carrot-top side ponytail on “Julie.” The series has landed in museum shops, from the Berkshires’ MASS MoCA to the Norton in West Palm Beach. Commissions have rolled in, too, some from those seeking love letters in pancake-thin glass. For Mayer, it’s a chance to reimagine the staid genre of family portraits as “more artistic, abstracted, fun.”

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW

Vintage Floral Jewelry, Reframed With Gemstones



From left: Francesca Villa Garden Eden pink pansy earrings, \$7,000, francescavilla.it; sunflower ring, \$6,490, francescavilla.it; pink rose ring, \$6,820, francescavilla.it. Credit...Courtesy of the brand

By Angela Koh

Francesca Villa launched her jewelry brand in 2007 with pieces that incorporated Essex crystal work dating back to the Victorian era. A devoted collector, Villa scours auction houses, antique stores and flea markets around the world for jewels that she uses as the starting point for her creations. She has transformed vintage lenticulars (images that create the illusion of movement) into playful necklaces and turned antique cameos into reversible rings. For one of her recent collections, Garden Eden, Villa reimagined German intaglio flower resins from the 1950s to create an array of rings, pendants and earrings. Each piece is handcrafted in her atelier in Valenza, Italy, by master artisans and cast in 18-karat gold. Some resins have a bright enamel border, and all are surrounded by gemstones. A daffodil ring is lined with diamonds and sapphires in sunset shades, while pink pansy earrings are encircled by pink enamel as well as green peridots and tsavorites. Consider it a way to give a bouquet that never wilts.

VISUAL FEAST

A Powdered Doughnut Dish and More Food-Shaped Tableware



Clockwise from left: Bordallo Pinheiro pitaya dessert plate, \$60, us.bordallopinheiro.com; John Derian apple saucer, \$100, johnderian.com; Porta radicchio serving bowl, \$132, porta-nyc.com; Augarten doughnut box, \$240, abask.com. Credit...Courtesy of the brands

By Jinnie Lee

If your sweetheart's love language is cooking and entertaining, consider giving them a piece of trompe l'oeil tableware resembling a food item. The New York-based decoupage artist John Derian and the Parisian ceramics brand Astier de Villatte have collaborated on a handmade saucer that looks like an apple, perfect for presenting slices of fruit. For a leafy salad, there's a radicchio serving bowl courtesy of the Brooklyn home goods store Porta, which is fired in a wood-burning furnace in Italy and painted with detailed leaves, inside and out. Those with a sweet tooth will get a kick out of a porcelain box shaped like a powdered doughnut from the Austrian company Augarten — it works well as a creative vessel for sugar or jam. The Portuguese pottery company Bordallo Pinheiro, which has specialized in humorous earthenware since 1884, offers a dragon fruit plate. This one's bright fuchsia (on theme for Valentine's Day) and will work well when it comes time to serve a slice of homemade dessert after date night.

SMOKE SHOW

Perfumes With Notes of Tobacco



From left: Coqui Coqui Tabaco room diffuser, \$210, aedes.com; Santa Maria Novella Tabacco Toscano soap, \$35, us.smnovella.com; Régime des Fleurs Gold Smoke, \$190, regimesdesfleurs.com. Credit...Courtesy of the brands

By Jamie Sims

One summer in high school, I attended a statewide residential program for gifted students. Participants were assigned a discipline of study based on an academic or artistic strength, and mine was math — deeply unglamorous to my 15-year-old self. To compensate, I took up smoking clove cigarettes with the drama kids. I fell for an actor named Lonny who was several inches shorter than me, with a cloud of brown curls. I thought of Lonny when I smelled the clove top notes in Gold Smoke, a rich, limited-edition perfume released by Régime des Fleurs just in time for Valentine’s Day. A number of brands offer more classic takes on tobacco-based fragrances, like Coqui Coqui, the perfumery and hotel company founded on Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula. Its Tabaco eau de parfum, layered with verdant herbs and saddle leather, smells like a cowboy did a fresh load of laundry for you. The room diffuser would make a nice gift if choosing a perfume for your loved one is too intimidating. Santa Maria Novella’s Tabacco Toscano fragrance is another favorite, a truly unisex scent. The soap comes wrapped in a pretty box, and at \$35 it’s an affordable option that still feels luxurious. I’ll give myself the candle version and burn it while listening to the Indigo Girls’ cover of “Romeo and Juliet” by Dire Straits — which I had on repeat while I was grounded by my RA for staying out past curfew with Lonny.

BIG PICTURE

Documentary Photo Books That Capture Love, Lust and Community



Clockwise from top left: “Not Six” by Yurie Nagashima, \$190, kabinyc.com; “Queer Dyke Cruising” by Del LaGrace Volcano, \$60, climaxbooks.com; “Renegades San Francisco: The 1990s” by Chloe Sherman, \$50, artbook.com. Credit...Clockwise from top left: courtesy of Kabi NYC; courtesy of Climax Books; courtesy of D.A.P. Books

By Carla Valdivia Nakatani

Say “I get you” with a fun, sexy documentary photo book! This Valentine’s Day, Climax Books will release “Queer Dyke Cruising,” an archival photo book featuring images shot by the American photographer Del LaGrace Volcano on London’s Hampstead Heath in the late 1980s. Taken together, the series is a tribute to the rebellious and loving energy of the city’s queer community at the time. Similarly, “Renegades San Francisco: The 1990s” by Chloe Sherman captures everyday queer youth during a joyful and experimental era in San Francisco. Sherman affectionately documents a pivotal moment in recent queer history, during which creativity thrived outside of the mainstream. Lastly, I love “Not Six” by the Japanese photographer Yurie Nagashima, published in 2004. She documents life with her boyfriend turned husband turned ex-husband over the span of seven years, reversing the traditional genders of photographer and muse. You can find “Not Six” and other titles by Japanese photographers (both cult and legendary) at the New York City shop Kabi.

Citrus to Summon Brighter Days



Clockwise from left: Marmalade Grove citrus box, from \$43, marmaladegrove.com; Recchiuti candied orange peels box, \$40, recchiuti.com; Dandelion Chocolate Japanese citrus collection, \$110, dandelionchocolate.com; Rincon Tropics citrus, from \$30, rincontropics.com.

Credit...Courtesy of the brands

By Ella Riley-Adams

Citrus fruits are commonly eaten and gifted around Lunar New Year, when they represent luck and prosperity. It's good timing, considering that winter is citrus season in Southern California, where the Carpinteria-based farmer Nick Brown grows the blood oranges, Meyer lemons and tangerines that he ships around the contiguous United States under the name Rincon Tropics. Extend the symbolism to Valentine's Day with a box of shining fruit from Brown's farm or the Ojai-based company Marmalade Grove, then offer to make your date a lemon meringue pie or whole-orange snack cake. If you prefer a premade confection, the San Francisco brand Dandelion sells a trio of candied, chocolate-covered Japanese citrus peels in pretty hexagonal packaging, while Recchiuti, also based in San Francisco, offers a 20-piece box of orange peels swathed in its signature semisweet chocolate.

Candleholders With Character



From left: Laetitia Rouget Nina Green candleholder, about \$193, laetitiarouget.com; Eve candleholder, about \$385, laetitiarouget.com; Tulip candleholder, about \$172, laetitiarouget.com. Credit...Courtesy of the brand

By Mackenzie Oster

I like to ward off the winter chill by filling my home with the warm glow of taper candles — mood lighting always provides comfort amid the snow and slush outside. Encourage loved ones to do the same by gifting them a candleholder designed by the Lisbon-based ceramist Laetitia Rouget, whose pieces always come with a sense of levity. The three-pronged Tulip style, with its chunky blossoms and hand-painted detailing, is particularly fitting for Valentine’s Day. For those who celebrate Galentine’s Day, the Nina Green candleholder — a figure of a woman in a strapless green gown dotted with pink and yellow flowers — evokes a feminine spring celebration. And the Eve, available in blue, terra cotta or rose, would add eye-catching adornment to any dinner spread (while also nodding to the Year of the Snake).

A Tropical, Chewy Lunar New Year Dessert



The writer and curator Su Wu (@imrevolting) makes tang yuan, a warm dessert of mochi-like dumplings and sweet broth or syrup that's traditionally served on the first full moon of the year. Wu's grandmother, who spent most of her childhood in Taiwan, passed down her recipe, and the dish has changed slightly with each generation. "My version is reflective of the diaspora of my extended family," says Wu, "and of desserts from other places that celebrate Lunar New Year." Tang yuan dumplings are often stuffed with red bean or black sesame paste. "But I like to serve it in a way that's more tropical," says Wu, who looks to the flavors of Vietnamese chè, a collection of desserts that incorporate fruit like lychee and mango, and Singaporean chendol, a sweet iced drink loaded with pandan jelly and coconut milk.