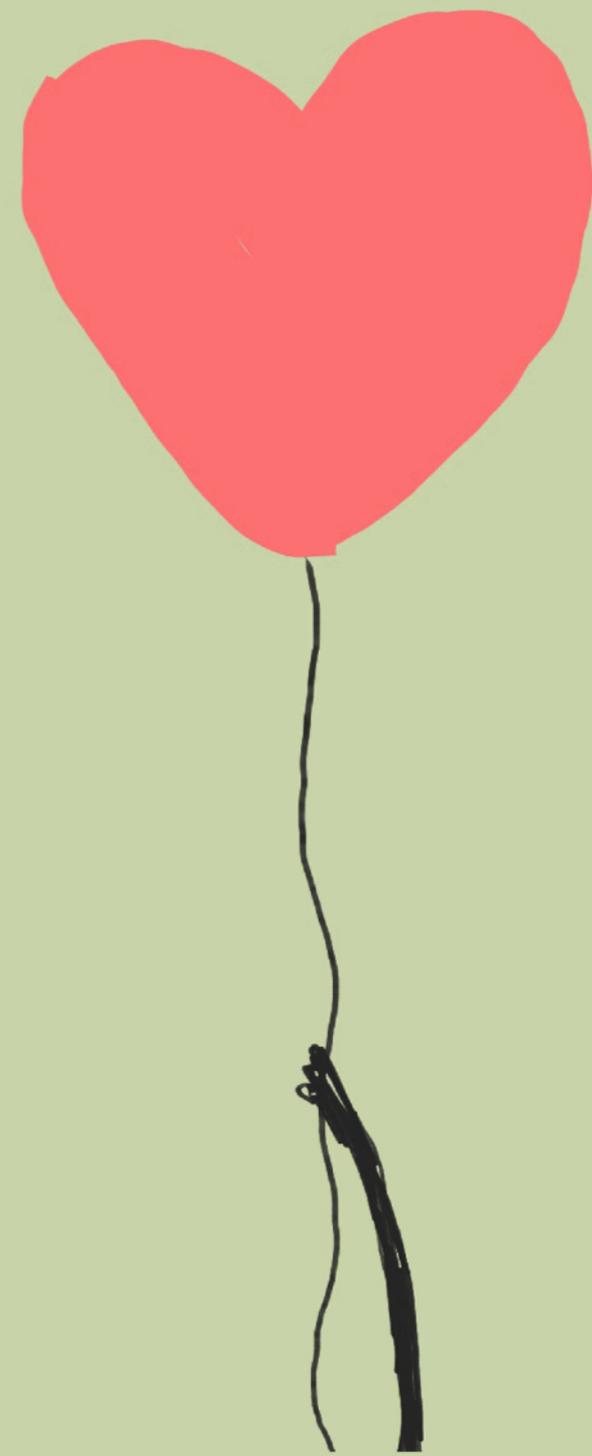


Banele Khoza

in my feels

08.08.2020 - 02.09.2020

Online Exhibition



Falling and Failing in Love

By AYODEJI ROTINWA

For more than half of 2020, many people across the world were forced to be alone by state order. A virulent disease was abroad, crossing borders, killing thousands. We had to shield. For those who live alone, this meant no friends, no family and certainly, no lovers.

Imagine then, this aloneness as an internal, ongoing state of being. Where the people we love are just close enough and perpetually out of reach at the same time. We have them only for a time. We cannot fully claim them. Sometimes, they do not wish to claim us. They are present in some ways but never all the way there. We are driven by the hope that those we desire will reciprocate in full measure.

We are inevitably disappointed.

It is this cauldron of contradictions that Banele Khoza invites us to partake in his digital exhibition, In My Feels. The format seems especially fitting for not only the times where movement is restricted as the pandemic rages on, but for its subject matter as well. We can only participate through a screen, pressing arrows pointing left or right to guide us through the exhibition. We are without the community of fellow gallery visitors.

Yet the emotional interiority on offer is shared.

How many of us have found ourselves in relationships with emotionally unavailable partners before, can relate to the feelings of love that comes and goes but never stays? As such In My Feels is a visual diary whose contents are all too painfully familiar, that invites the viewer to share, experience these feelings afresh.

You see, even in aloneness, there can be solidarity.

On the digital canvas, Khoza captures what is at stake, with both a generous and sparing use of colour to great effect. He paints men in mixes of rich pastels and hues of purple, teal, turquoise, yellow, blue. The merger gives the paintings a watercolour effect. Colour is particularly generous in the men's faces, sometimes one, a dominant choice, other times, a mix of several colours.

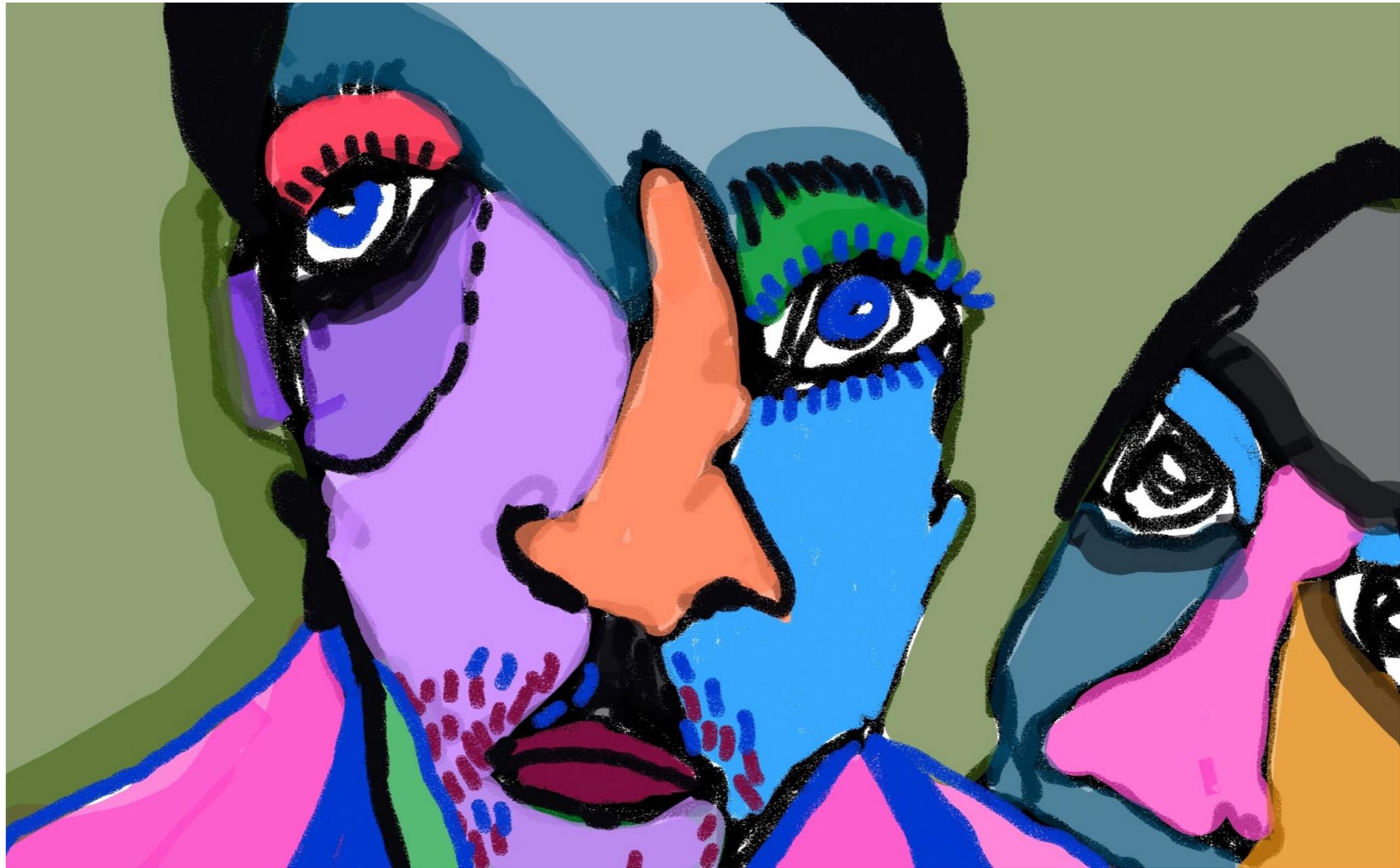
Although some of the forms are caricaturish, there is still some definition. They could pass for portraits. The forms are fluid. One man looked at from different angles, has more than one face. He is one man and many other men like him. There is never a shortage of broken, damaged men, after all. His expressions are broody, eyes set to an angle, and lips pursed. Where there is more than one man in the frame, though seemingly joined, a palpable divide is apparent. They are turned from one another.

Khoza contrasts his enthusiastic use of the colour wheel in his paintings with works that are more spare or monochrome, in black or white, adding text on the canvas to great effect. Here the work is less left to interpretation and more literal, which gives them in part a comedic and also poignant effect. We see a frame full of blue tears pouring from glasses. The pair of glasses is the character. It said, "He cancelled". In another monochrome frame of orange, the text is more sobering: "I hope he treats you like somebody he loves."

Khoza's exploration of insufficient love or abandonment in *In My Feels* is part of a career-long preoccupation with finding one's self in romantic situations. In previous exhibitions, *Temporary Feelings* (2016), *Lonely Nights* (2017), *LOVE?* (2018) the artist has brought the intimately personal to the canvas, literally painting issues, feelings that once upon a time were the stuff of secrets but now, young people are increasingly finding permission to speak out loud. It is a reminder you are not alone and others are going through the same. It can be cathartic. It may inspire longing or memories that were previously banished.

It will be fascinating to see what Khoza does next with this subject matter and what he brings to the canvas. A resolution? A final installment in this unofficial series perhaps. Or perhaps just the ability to feel and say something that author Toni Morrison captures perfectly in her 1992 historical novel, *Jazz*.

"I didn't fall in love. I rose in it."



Between Us

2020

Digital Drawing
on Hahnemühle museum
etching paper.

edition of 3



Them again (2020)
Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper
Edition of 3



Gym crush (2017)
Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper
Edition of 3

To: my soul-mate

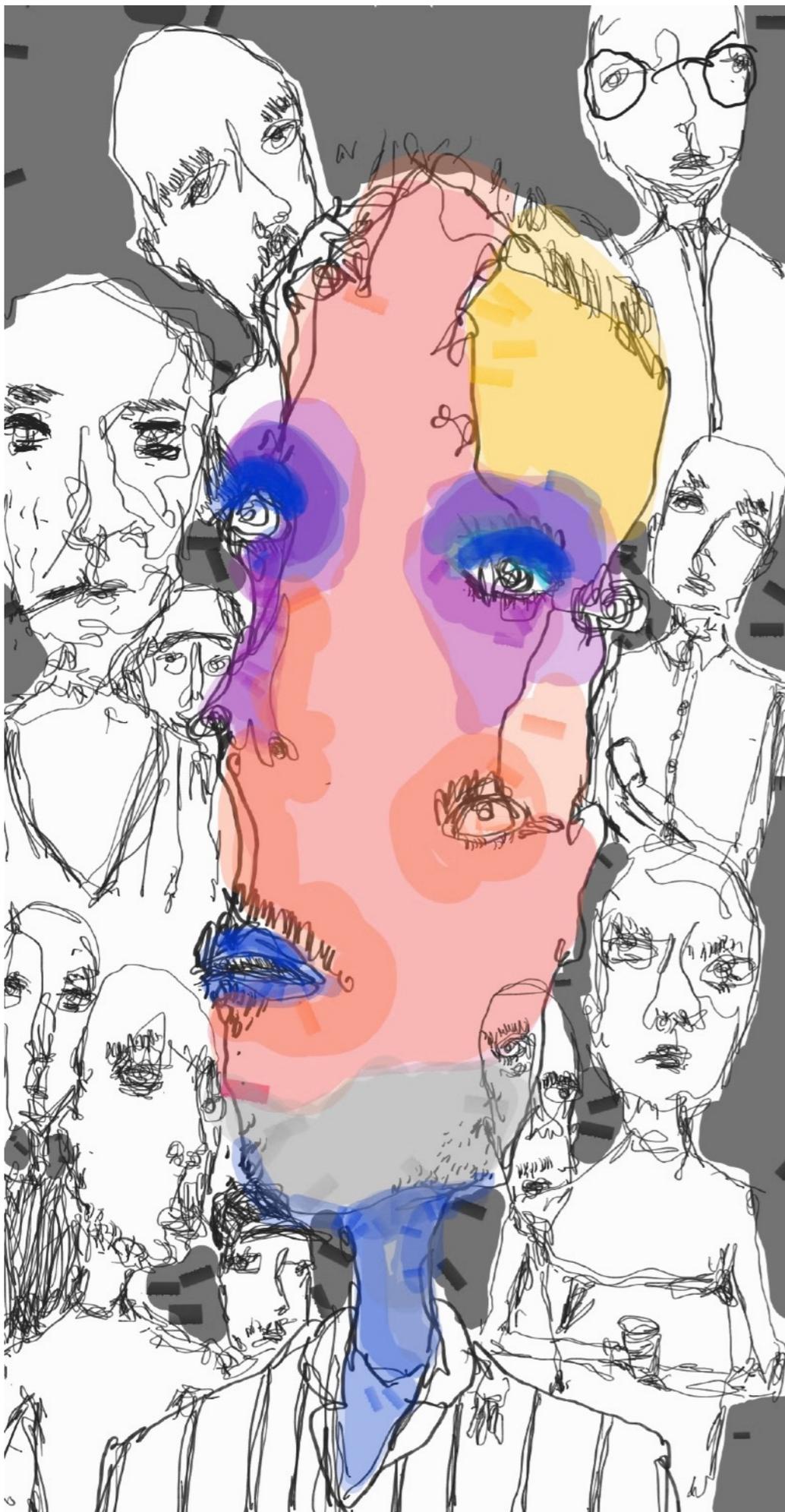
Bring your whole self to the table
the broken parts and the wounded
your unrealized dreams
your insecurities and flaws
your imperfections (no one is perfect)
bring your weaknesses, for we will
build in truth and heal all that
~~makes you think you have to be~~
~~perfect for me.~~

For you have loved and dealt with my
broken parts doubts and
fears. You - are what I have
been looking for.

To my soul mate (2020)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper

Edition of 3



Busy

2018

Digital drawing on
Hahnemühle museum
etching paper.

Edition of 3



At the alter (2018)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle

Museum etching paper

Edition of 3

So much time wasted on bags

Wasted time (2020)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle

Museum etching paper

Edition of 3



Ugh (2019)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper

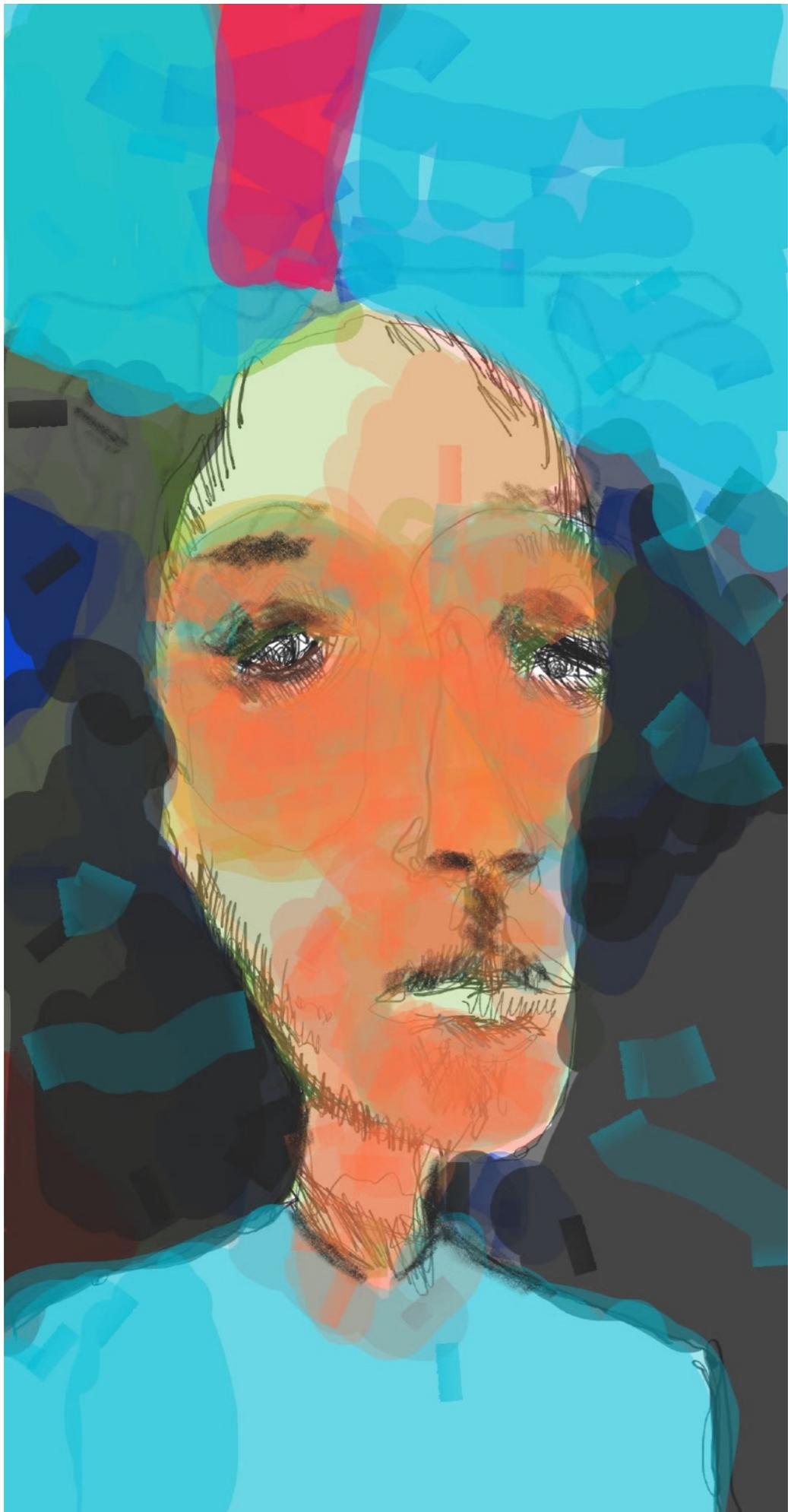
Edition of 3



Default type (2020)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper.

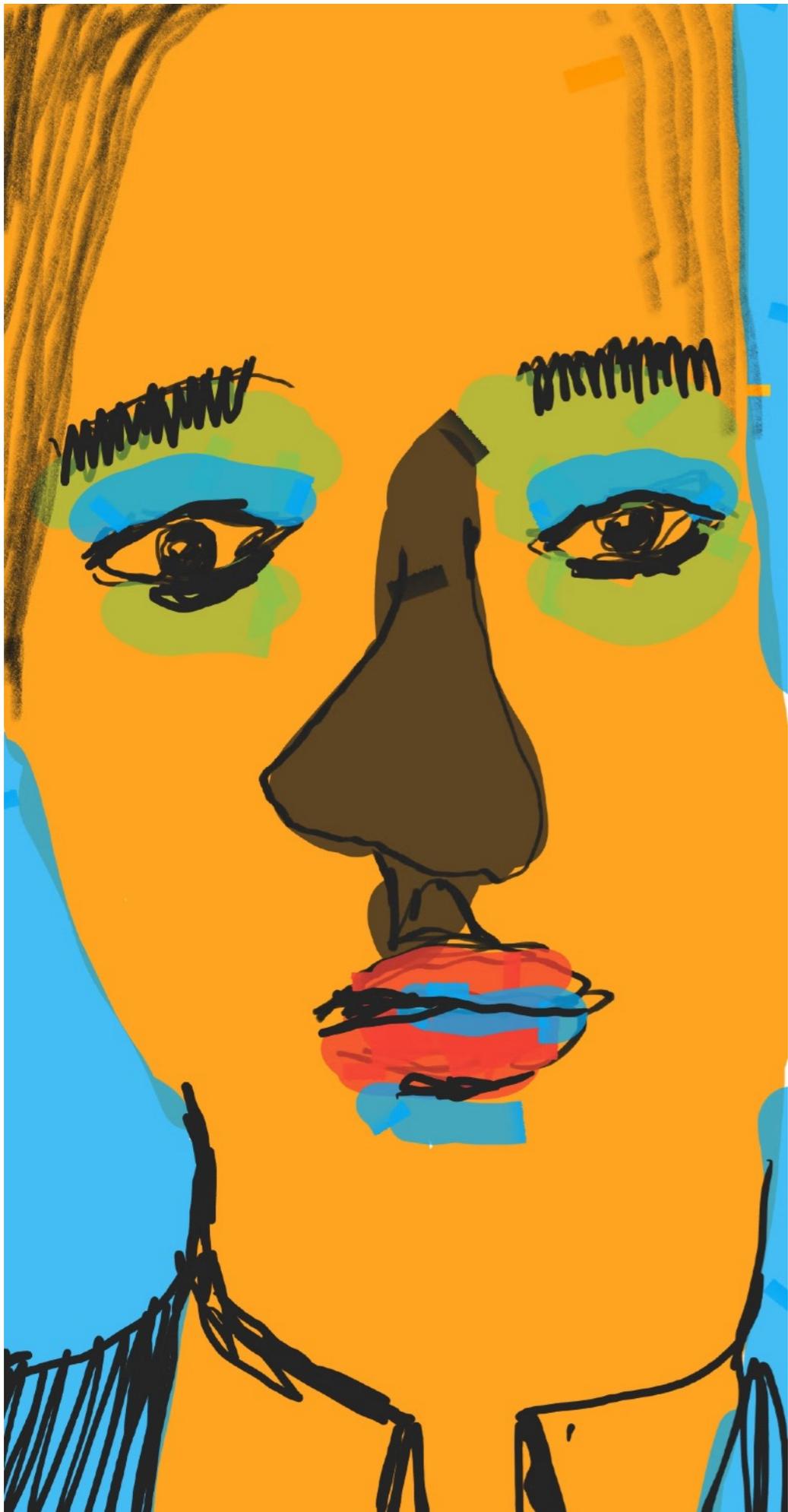
Edition of 3



Blues (2020)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper

Edition of 3



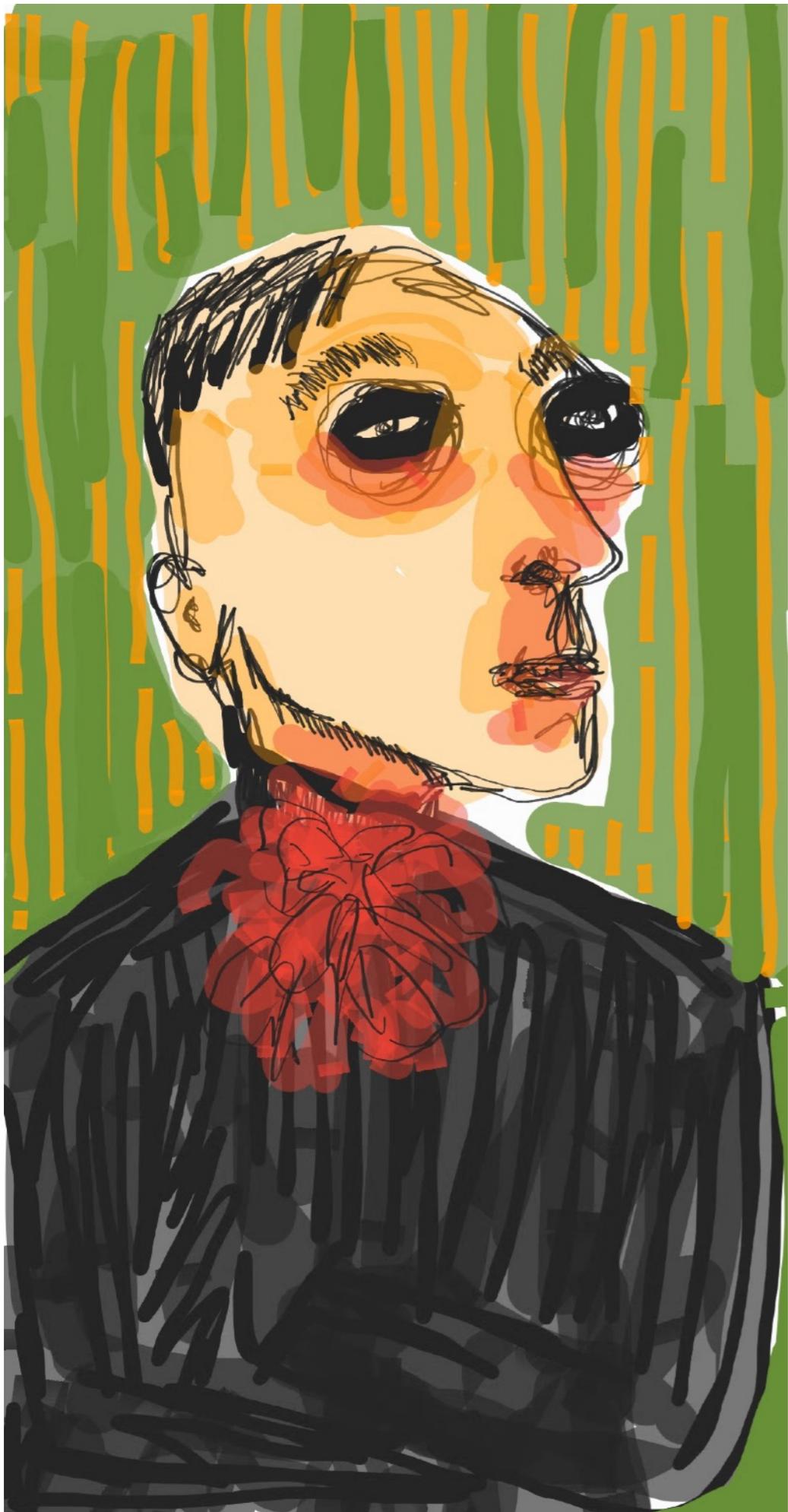
Again and again (2020)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper

Edition of 3

I hope he treats you like
somebody he loves.

I hope... (2020)
Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper
Edition of 3



He is so pretty (2019)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper.

Edition of 2



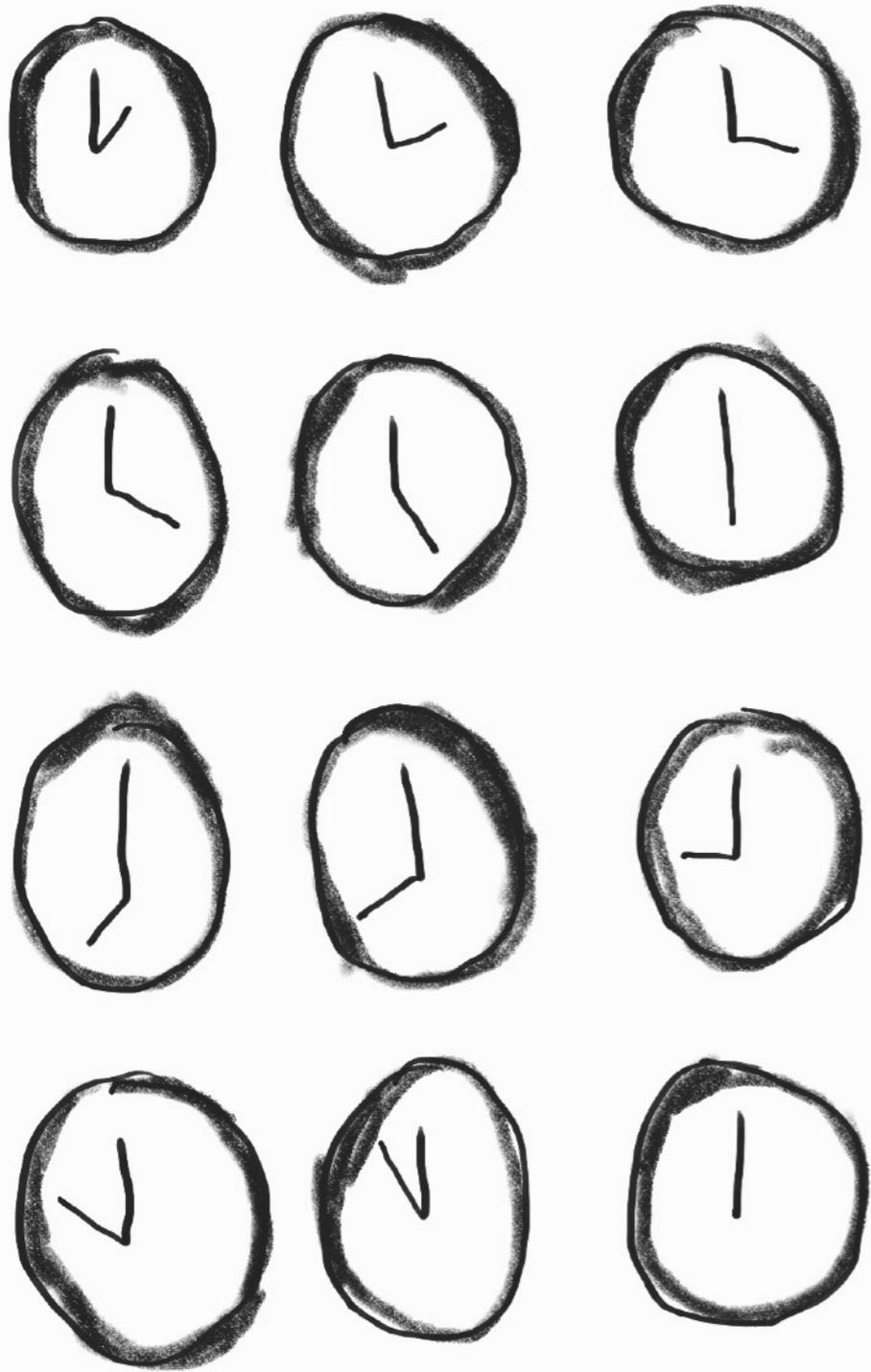
Papi (2020)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper

Edition of 3



A peek (2019)
Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper
Edition of 3



And you wait for
him.

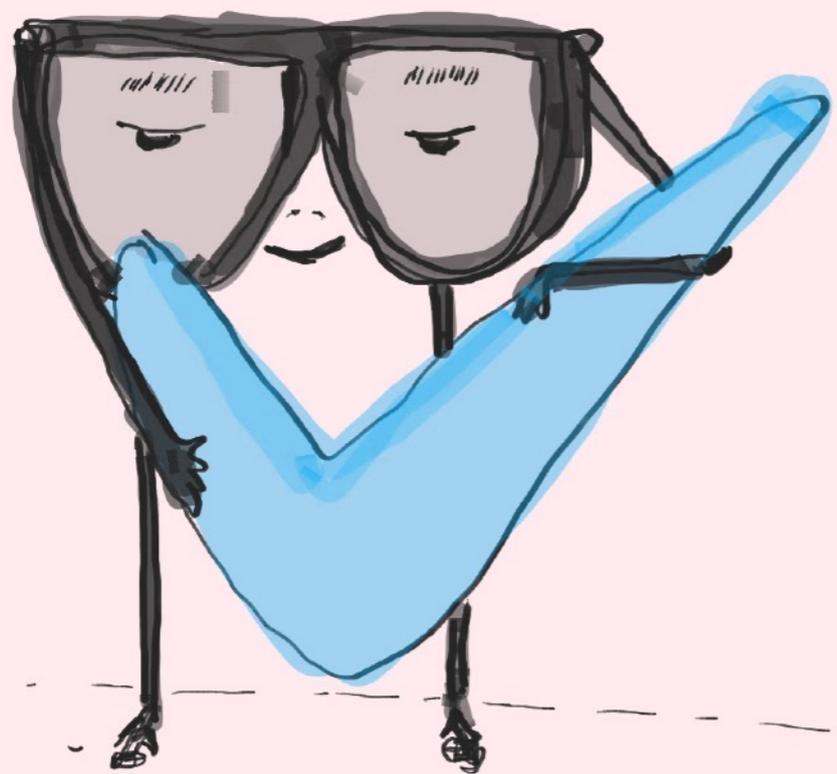
Waiting (2020)
Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper
Edition of 3

He is so beautiful

He is so married

The guy on the train (2020)
Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper

Edition of 3



for all those blue ticks

Blue ticks (2020)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle

Museum etching paper.

Edition of 3



folks be like; this is
why you are single.

Single and confused (2020)
Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper
Edition of 3

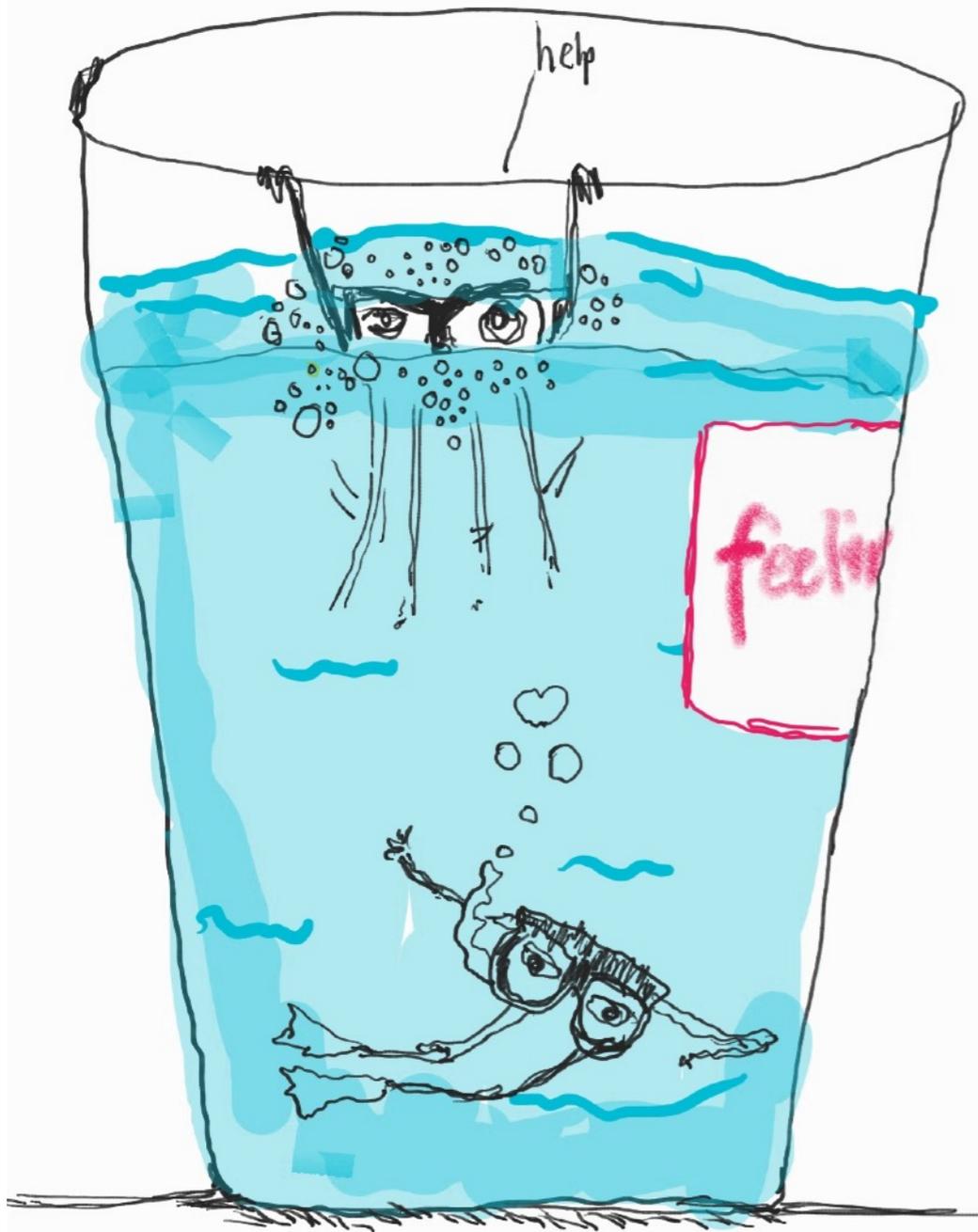
He cancelled



He cancelled (2018)

Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper.

Edition of 3



A pool of emotions (2019)
Digital drawing on Hahnemühle
Museum etching paper
Edition of 3

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For inquiries contact us on: info@bkhz.art
www.bkhz.art

