

# Surrender

Judit Kis

Text by Chelsea Pierce

“That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below, to perform the miracles of one only thing.” — Hermes Trismegistus

In using her own body and subjectivity as a tool within her confessional art practice, Judit Kis establishes intimacy between herself and the viewer to instill an emotional impression. Focused on self-care and healing, she has recently explored Indigenous uses of plant medicines in ritual and 1950s psychiatric experiments with psychedelics to work through trauma. Creating her own sensory spaces, both virtual and physical, she explores the boundaries of conscious and subconscious existence. This approach offers potential for healing by identifying patterns and confronting harmful cycles through interaction with her installations and performative video series. The meditation on mind and body at a micro level speaks to a larger connectedness between self, society, and nature, bridging mental health with ecological sustainability.

STANDARDS, bricks cast in different materials – concrete, marble, ceramic, wood – and inscribed with traits or actions – ‘anxiety’, ‘desire’, ‘care’, ‘vulnerable’, ‘remember’, ‘nurture’ – epitomize her conversion of the metaphysical into the material. Users can manipulate them as they choose, contemplating their nature, flaws, and desires to build a new self-image, brick by brick. These constructions in the gallery space speak to the formation of identity in the virtual space, whereby a social media user makes similar selections in the presentation of their online selves. The social media series CYBERLOVE occupies a digital presence to create a diaristic account of a failed relationship. Likewise, ruminations on past events, communications, and aspirations in I HAVE NEVER HAPPENED inspire introspection. This process of identification, reflection, and creation is at the core of her socially engaged practice.

Kis earned her MA diploma in Intermedia from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, and her process and conceptualization is true to the Fluxus spirit from which ‘intermedia’ emerged. Her collaborative approach underscores an open view on the role of art. Practitioners of confessional art, Tracey Emin and Félix González-Torres, for example, foreground the artist’s self. However, she takes a step further, inserting the autobiographical into a participatory paradigm where the artist’s self can meet the other. Art is a pathway and Kis paves her own road, brick by brick, and hopes that some are brave enough to follow it.