

jakob lotta's
notes on
love aiDS ;
Age Ambiguity
and the
making of
Novena Hopes

★ Graduation Documentation Journal
[digital edition]

*love***aiDS**art anthologies
Interdisciplinary Arts
Maastricht Institute of Arts
ZUYD Hogeschool
Holland
June 2025



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Table of Contents

Editor's Note	4	Audiovisual Inquiry	19
Foreword	4	3.2.1 Conception and Research	
Dramaturgical Intro.....	6	Questions	20
Position to Praxis	10	3.2.2 Production Context and	
The Soul selects her own Society.....	11	Methodological Approach	20
1. Introduction: A fag, ageism and		3.2.3 Structure, Content, and Research	
graduation	12	Outcomes.....	21
2. Conceptual Framework & Research		3.2.4 Sound as Parallel	
Inquiry: the love aiDS		Modality	22
Forcefield.....	13	4. Research, Artistic, and Entrepreneurial	
2.1 The Titular "Contraption": A Semiotic		Process: Genesis, Decisions, and	
and Political Intervention	14	Autonomy.....	23
2.1.1 Fracturing the Acronym: AIDS, the		4.1 Project Genesis and the Logic of	
Introduction of AI, and Research		Accumulation.....	23
Praxis	14	4.2 Methodological Blueprint: Intermedia	
2.1.2 "aiDS as Aid": Ambivalence, the		Fragmentation, Publishing as Activism,	
Politics of Assistance, and the Generational		Unfinishedness.....	23
Imperative	15	4.3 Realizing Novena Hopes: Process as	
2.1.3 "Love" as Anchor and Disruptor:		Research Embodiment.....	24
Affective Politics	15	4.4 The Entrepreneurial Stance: Protective	
2.2 Affective Cartographies: Ethics of Care,		Mechanism for Fragile	
Grief, and Desire	16	Memory.....	25
2.2.1 Intergenerational Tension: The Ida		5. Project Management & Operational	
and Ol'Boy X Dialogue	16	Reflections.....	26
2.2.2 Navigating Grief and Hope in Age		5.1 Planning and Iterative	
Ambiguity	17	Development	26
2.2.3 The Obscene and the Sacred: Desire,		5.2 Budget and Resource Management for	
Vulnerability, and		an Autonomous Project.....	28
Ethics	17	5.3 Navigating Logistics, Risks, and	
3. Artistic Works & Embodied Praxis: The		Responsibilities	29
love aiDS Anthologies and Novena Hopes		5.4 Collaboration and the Ethics of	
as Research		Participation	29
Output.....	18	6. Conclusion: The Unfolding Imperative,	
3.1 The Multi-Format Anthologies:		Legacy, and Latent	
Materiality, Fragmentation, and Non-		Potentiality.....	32
Linearity	18	6.1 Responding to the Unfolding	
3.1.1 From Zine to Forcefield: Evolution of		Imperative	32
Form	18	6.2 Contribution to Fields of	
3.1.2 The Politics of Print and		Inquiry	33
Materiality	19	6.3 love aiDS as a Model for Future Artistic	
3.1.3 Structural Logic: Fragmentation as		Research	33
Meaning Production	19	7. Dramaturgical	
3.2 Novena Hopes: A Pilot Study in		Outro	35
		8. Afterword	37
		9. Bibliography and References	38

Foreword:

SILENCE, still, equals, DEATH

Look, over sixty percent of new HIV diagnoses in Western Europe are among men who have sex with men. I may be one of them. This statistic the ground of my reality, the name of my community. My sexuality, my very capacity for intimacy and belonging, is irrevocably tethered to the stigmatizing history of HIV. AIDS didn't just intersect the lives of those who came before me; my mentors, my lovers, the leaders who forged our path. It fundamentally reconfigured their world, and that tectonic shift continues, fundamentally shaping how I understand safety, navigate desire, and what continuity can even mean in a life lived, like mine, for now without the virus itself, yet forever in its shadow.

The stigma born from HIV/AIDS authored a devastating narrative of contagion, decay, and social death, one that continues to be performed on bodies and in policies, even as medical realities have shifted. *love aiDS*, the artistic research anthologies documented in the unpublished *Unabridged Annotations* and presented derivatively here, scrutinizes these enduring scripts. It argues that the societal lexicon developed to manage the "AIDS crisis"—a lexicon of risk, blame, and the expendable—provided a disturbingly effective template for the ways we now narrate and enact ageism. Ageism, in this light, is not a separate drama but a later act in the same tragedy of cultural abandonment, where different actors are cast in roles of progressive invisibility, their desires deemed unseemly, their knowledge archaic, their presence a burden. *love aiDS* is an intervention in the performance of

Editor's Note

This text functions as an integral element of love aiDS. Written alongside the works, it documents the project's forcefield, bypassing the concept of finality.

Any resemblance to a finished project is purely accidental.

disposability. It is an attempt to rewrite the script, to reclaim agency, to insist that SILENCE, still, equals, DEATH – for all who are systematically written out of the story of viable life.

This Graduation Documentation, from the Interdisciplinary Arts program at Maastricht Institute of Arts, ZUYD Hogeschool, charts how *love aiDS* enacts this intervention through a deliberately unruly methodological constellation, drawing extensively from the reflective essays and processual accounts within the *Annotations*. Central to its praxis, as detailed therein, is **age ambiguity**, mobilized beyond mere intergenerational dialogue into a chronopolitical method that actively dismantles normative temporalities and the hierarchies of value they subtend. By forcing anachronistic encounters and valuing the generative potential of the old, the young, and the adult, the "explicit," and the ostensibly "obsolete" in dialectical tension with contemporary anxieties, *love aiDS* challenges linear narratives of progress, development, or decline that underpin both ageist discourse and certain historical accounts of AIDS. This operational logic, explored throughout the *Annotations*, finds its structural analogue in an unwavering commitment to **non-linearity and principled unfinishedness**. The project constructs itself as an accumulating "forcefield", a dynamic constellation of fragments, juxtapositions, and unresolved inquiries that refuse premature synthesis, thereby mirroring the persistent reverberations of trauma, the ongoing labor of memory, and the necessarily iterative nature of critical resistance. Crucially, as the *Annotations* underscore, this is **material research**; *love aiDS* insists on the epistemological weight of the tangible, the haptic, and the

embodied encounter through meticulously crafted, unbound anthologies and physical artifacts. This practice serves as a direct critique of, and an alternative to, the dematerializing tendencies of digital culture and the attendant risks of archival impermanence and decontextualization. The resulting body of work, at once archaic and urgent, playful in its recombinations yet unflinching in its critical gaze, functions as a **generative archive**, producing knowledge through its formal provocations and its demand for active, co-creative engagement. This document, therefore, serves not merely as a report on a finished entity, but as an integral component of this unfolding research, presenting a structured engagement with the *Annotations* and inviting a rigorous interrogation of *love aiDS*'s methodology as a model for artistic inquiry into the enduring structures of dispossession.

Dramaturgical Intro: Ida and Ol'Boy X

This dialogue functions as a scenographic incision into the broader structure of the documentation of *love aiDS*.

Ida and Ol'Boy X embody two epistemologies, one rooted in the aftermath of loss, the other in the illusion of safety. Set in a kitchen, a space of care and confrontation, it opens a liturgy of disagreement: generations do not misunderstand each other by accident, but by necessity.

Dramaturgically, this scene acts as a counterpoint to the intimate visual language of *Novena Hopes* and as a verbal record of the silence that often surrounds intergenerational pain. This is evidence of tension, without the need to resolve or instruct.

...

A dimly lit kitchen.

IDA, early 70s, quietly prepares tea.
OL'BOY X, mid-30s, leans against the counter, casual but coiled.

OL'BOY X
It's just sex, Ida.

IDA
Nothing's just anything, X.

OL'BOY X
It's bareback. Not murder.

IDA
It's reckless.

OL'BOY X
It's a trust.

IDA
Trust in what?

OL'BOY X
Each other. Medicine. Institutions. Life.

IDA
Life? You think life cares about your trust?

OL'BOY X
You lived your way. Let me live mine.

IDA
You're playing a dangerous roulette.

OL'BOY X
And you're—

IDA
—And I've watched too many bodies collapse to stay silent.

OL'BOY X
You see risk and nothing else.

IDA
And you see invincibility.

OL'BOY X
Not invincibility—I see choice.

IDA (scoffs)
You all confuse choice with consequence.

OL'BOY X
And you confuse fear with wisdom.

IDA (quiet, firm)
I've buried those who believed in choice.

OL'BOY X (shrugs)
And?

IDA
The cautious live longer.

OL'BOY X

Tell that to the kids getting slashed in Chechnya. Longer doesn't mean better.

IDA

It means more.

OL'BOY X

More what?

(Silence. A crack in Ida's certainty.)

More understanding that life ends?

IDA

It matters how you live it until it does.

(Ol'Boy X moves closer—charged, uneasy.)

OL'BOY X

And how does that fit with getting fucked raw in a cruise bar by a couple of POZ guys?

IDA (icy)

You're a fool.

(He steps in—too close. She pushes him back, sharp.)

IDA

Don't touch me.

OL'BOY X

Safety is just the warmth of a home you think you know.

(She slaps him—in certainty. A silence settles, dense.)

OL'BOY X (soft, furious sigh)

You wake up.

IDA

No—you do. Grow up.

(He rubs his cheek, not surprised—confirmed.)

OL'BOY X

You don't get it.

IDA

Oh, I do. I've seen this before. I've seen the aftermath.

OL'BOY X

Well, I'm seeing the present. We're not in the '80s, Ida.

IDA (quiet, cutting)

No. You're living off the dead.

(He exhales sharply—almost laughs, but there's no humor. He reaches for the kettle, lifts it, then sets it down.)

OL'BOY X

We don't owe each other grief.

IDA

You don't get to decide that.

OL'BOY X

Ah; but you do?

IDA

I lived through it. I earned that right.

OL'BOY X

And I live now. I claim my right.

(Their gazes lock. Neither blinks.)

IDA

You think you're unlimited.

OL'BOY X (hums wicked theme, grinning)

Unlimited, unlimited...

IDA (shakes her head)

You're brave when it's convenient. You play with risk because you think medicine will clean up after you.

OL'BOY X

Medicine does clean up after us. You just can't bring yourself to believe that we don't have to be afraid, unlimitedly.

IDA

You should be.

OL'BOY X (amused, tilting his head)
So I can perform your grief? Wrap myself
in some secondhand tragedy and call it
wisdom?

IDA
So you don't mistake a safety net for wings.
(Silence. He leans back, crossing his arms.)

OL'BOY X
Well, I like fucking. I like fucking raw.
Feeling someone real. Someone big,
flooding me—
(She throws a kitchen towel at him. Sharp,
disgusted.)

OL'BOY X
So's walking down the street. So's loving
someone. So's trusting anyone, you hag.

IDA (deadly quiet)
Watch your mouth.

OL'BOY X
Fear isn't wisdom.

IDA
You haven't watched people disintegrate in
front of you.

OL'BOY X
And you think that because you have—

IDA
There are things worse than death.

OL'BOY X (scoffs)
Yeah, Undercooked Potatoes.

IDA (a beat, then with quiet venom)
An arrogant brat.
(He smirks—half amusement, half disdain.)

OL'BOY X
You act like you're some oracle. A prophet
of suffering.

IDA
I don't need to be a prophet. I was there,
you swine.

OL'BOY X
Yeah? And what did you do, Ida? Sang
Candle in the Wind while you took notes
for later?

IDA (steely, quiet)
We didn't have the luxury of later.

OL'BOY X
Exactly and now you wanna make sure I
don't either.

IDA
I want you to understand what you're
throwing away.
(His voice lowers, weight pressing in.)

OL'BOY X
I'm not throwing anything away. I'm
choosing. That's what you don't get. I
decide how I live. Not fear. Not disease.
Not you.

IDA
And what if the choice isn't yours to make?

OL'BOY X
It always is. Even in death.

IDA (snaps)
Spare me this philosophy.

OL'BOY X (grinning, relentless)
Oh, you into pragmatism? Well, I'm the one
getting tested. I know my status. And if I
catch something? I deal with it. That's life,
baby gal.

IDA
You think control is immunity.

OL'BOY X
Jesus!

IDA

You're a child.

OL'BOY X (leaning in, smirking)

And so are you.

(A long beat.)

IDA

You're right about one thing.

OL'BOY X (mocking)

Oh?

(She steps forward, eyes locked on his, close enough that he can smell her perfume —Cabotine, sharp and green.)

IDA

You think you invented living. Like every generation before you wasn't also young, wasn't also fucking, wasn't also convinced they were the first to truly understand freedom.

OL'BOY X (softly)

Maybe.

IDA

...you're not as free as you think.

(A silence. The kettle hisses. Ida turns, lifts it from the heat.)

OL'BOY X (shrugs, quieter now)

You're making too much of this.

IDA

And you're making too little.

OL'BOY X

Guess that's the difference between us.

IDA

One of many.

(She pours the tea. He watches. She slides a cup toward him —not a peace offering. Just an inevitability. He picks it up, cradles it in his hands.)

Position to Praxis

Two years ago, the Position Paper on the position of Jakob Lotta outlined an initial trajectory through intersecting fields of personal memory, traditional craft, technological experimentation, and socio-political critique. Framed by the metaphor of the *cul-de-sac-spirale*, a dead-end as a site of recursive potential—it considered how an art practice might draw from feminist philosophy, spiritual engagement, and the reconfiguration of heritage to disrupt normative temporalities. At its core, it posed a challenge to art-making: how might aesthetic intuition and ethical care be mobilized to confront the structural violences of ageism and patriarchy?

The paper's emphasis on mature femininity as a critical framework, evoked through figures like de Beauvoir, Butler, and Hogenová, functioned less as an identity claim than as an epistemological orientation. What emerged in the work that followed was a broader and more urgent engagement with age ambiguity as a self-coined method. The focus widened from the symbolic weight of mature femininity toward a systemic inquiry into chrononormativity itself, revealing how age is organized, punished, and rendered invisible across lines that exceed gender. The gay child and the aging woman became figures of complicity, each positioned outside the futurities that structure belonging.

Likewise, the dialectic between tradition and technology, initially framed as tension between memory and experimentation, deepened through applied practice. The philosophical and spiritual sensibility that the Position Paper sought to preserve found

new form in the material strategies that developed: thick rag paper, consumer-grade video devices, performative inserts, unbound publications. These methods became a form of resistance to dematerialization, an insistence on presence, however partial, insufficient, or degraded.

The *cul-de-sac-spirale* moved from conceptual metaphor to structural logic. The work no longer sought forward motion, but embraced accumulation, interruption, and lateral spread. Rather than resolve the tensions named in the Position Paper, the project carried them across formats, registers, and encounters. It translated critique into form, theory into typographic and sonic decisions, memory into method, and failure into coherence.

Yet several questions remain. How might the original emphasis on mature femininity have evolved, had it remained central? Could it have sharpened into a more systemic critique of time itself, or dissolved entirely into other generational alignments? What alternative paths might have opened had spiritual engagement taken the lead? Could the philosophical core of the Position Paper have found resonance in dematerialized formats, or was materiality always going to assert itself? And how would the early call to confront ageism and patriarchy have translated into artistic strategies if the frameworks of cultural abandonment or typographic intervention had never arrived? These open questions linger as reminders that each conceptual turn forecloses others. *love aiDS* emerges from one set of choices, but others remain present, folded into the project's very structure.

The Soul selects her own Society

Emily Dickinson, 1830-1886

*The Soul selects her own Society —
Then — shuts the Door —
To her divine Majority —
Present no more —*

*Unmoved — she notes the Chariots —
pausing —
At her low Gate —
Unmoved — an Emperor be kneeling
Upon her Mat —*

*I've known her — from an ample nation —
Choose One —
Then — close the Valves of her attention —
Like Stone —*

c. 1862

1. Introduction: A fag, ageism and graduation

This document constitutes the official graduation submission of Jakob Lotta, developed within the Interdisciplinary Arts program at the Maastricht Institute of Arts, ZUYD Hogeschool. It is not a summary or a retrospective rather a derivative form, compiled from, and structured by, a larger, deliberately withheld document titled *Annotations on love aiDS Art Anthologies* (referred to as Annotations). That body of work, written in tandem with the artistic process, remains unpublished because the project it records is still active, still accumulating. This submission presents *Notes* drawn from that evolving core.

The Annotations function as the primary textual scaffold for love aiDS. They are composed during the fact: a writing practice that moves alongside the works, tracing decisions, doubts, recursions, and refusals. Within them, the term “forcefield” describes the project’s methodological shape: unstable, relational, and resistant to finality (Annotations, p. 2). Their refusal to conform to a single medium, form, or institutional function is the fundamental structure. This documentation engages critically with that material, distilling and re contextualizing key threads without aiming for exhaustiveness or closure.

At the centre of love aiDS is a sustained confrontation with the legacies of the AIDS crisis, the violence of ageism, and

the intimate entanglements of memory, sexuality, care, and risk. These themes are formalized through method, material, and medium. *The Annotations* map this constellation, and this document builds a navigable path through it. It articulates how the project’s conceptual tensions are held and complicated across its visual, sonic, and textual registers.

Following the structural expectations of the Interdisciplinary Arts Graduation Manual, this journal addresses four core areas: conceptual framework, artistic works, processual development, and project management. But each section retains fidelity to the ethos of love aiDS: fragmentation, age ambiguity, and affective intervention. The coherence presented here is provisional and strategic, made legible for institutional purposes, without flattening the unruly system it emerges from.

By detailing the ‘what,’ ‘how,’ and ‘why’ of love aiDS, this documentation offers insight into the work’s artistic, political, and conceptual stakes. It presents love aiDS as a working framework that engages memory as method, publication as activism, and the unfinished as a principle of resistance.

2. Conceptual Framework & Research Inquiry: the *love aiDS* Forcefield

The foundational assertion guiding *love aiDS*, as explored throughout the *Unabridged Annotations on love aiDS* (hereafter *Annotations*), is that "Nothing's just anything, X." (Ida, in *Annotations*, p. 13). This statement, derived from the dialogue between Ida and Ol'Boy X, reflects the project's core philosophical orientation: a resistance to simplistic equivalences, a refusal of reductive narratives, and an attunement to the layered, situated, and often contradictory nature of lived experience, particularly at its intersection with temporal, social, and technological forces. The conceptual framework of *love aiDS*, developed extensively in the *Annotations*, emerges from a critical interrogation of several intertwined domains: the historical trauma of the AIDS crisis; the contemporary social reality of ageism; the potential and pitfalls of artificial intelligence (AI) in relation to care; and the complex, ambivalent dynamics of love and aid. These domains, as the *Annotations* argue, are explored not in isolation but as components of a dynamic "forcefield" (*Annotations*, p. 2, 22) where meaning is contested and continuously, unpredictably unfolds.

The anthologies were formed as a series of decisions, rejections, impulses, and doubts accumulated over time, tracing what was done, what was avoided, and what was learned (*Annotations*, p. 5). It formed through accumulation and collision : between works, time periods, and forms of address. It came from observing responses, from being gay and aging, from reading about the AIDS crisis while others spoke of futurity, and from choosing not to simplify when references went unknown (*Annotations*, p. 5). These *notes*

themselves are "fragments of a method, written from within the process rather than after it," offering context and showing how certain choices came into focus while others were left behind (*Annotations*, p. 5-6). *love aiDS* is thus framed not as a brand, theme, or final project, but as a response: to absence, to structure, to refusal, to memory that cannot be trusted yet must be honored. Form is never neutral, nor is it fixed; *love aiDS* is what was built within the institutional and personal experience of its making (*Annotations*, p. 6).

The essential inquiry behind *love aiDS*, as the *Annotations* lay bare, begins with age as a site of neglect, surveillance, and shame. "Ageism is not secondary. It is foundational. It operates quietly, because silence is its method. It disempowers through invisibility, dismissal, and delay" (*Annotations*, p. 6). Ageism, cloaked in politeness and policy, enacts erasure, denying bodies their futures and discrediting memory. To confront ageism is to interrupt the smooth narration of time, to refuse disposability, and to ask: "Whose future is being extended, and at what cost?" (*Annotations*, p. 6). This is the concern, the work. "And then—the word was AIDS" (*Annotations*, p. 6).

The *Annotations* recount a pivotal feedback session where the comparison of ageism to AIDS was deemed potentially "hurtful." This moment did not shut the project down but "anointed it" (*Annotations*, p. 6). The issue was not misunderstanding, but recognition: "that ageism, soft-spoken, polite, unmarked, might deserve the same cultural sirens, the same red-lettering, the same mourning. That a stigma doesn't need to kill fast to kill thoroughly" (*Annotations*, p. 6). The comparison was not about protecting the memory of the crisis, but preserving the comfort of now, because "AIDS still shames. And age still disappears. And placing them side by side didn't confuse the issue, it revealed it" (*Annotations*, p. 6).

This framework directly engages the imperative: "Remember, SILENCE = DEATH"

(*Annotations*, p. 7). As someone in a high-risk group, the artist's sexuality and relationship to intimacy are "inextricably tied to the legacy of HIV." The necessity of PrEP reflects a landscape where sexual practice is continually monitored within a system shaped by a specific viral history (*Annotations*, p. 7). To survive the AIDS crisis, or to come after it, means inhabiting a "temporality that was never guaranteed." Surviving, biologically or historically, often leads to a "cultural penalty," where aging is perceived as an aberration, a remainder, and survival is recast as a burden (*Annotations*, p. 7). The refusal to disassociate from the legacy of HIV/AIDS is thus a political act, affirming a duty to continue articulating new modes of relation, solidarity, and survival, acknowledging the past as a foundation for contemporary practices of care, strategy, and erotic knowledge (*Annotations*, p. 7).

2.1 The Titular "Contraption": A Semiotic and Political Intervention

The project's title, *love aiDS*, functions as a primary site of linguistic and conceptual intervention, a "titular contraption." Language is a system of recognition, and *love aiDS* is thus a linguistic intervention, an assertion of multiplicities. Positioned at the intersection of history and futurity, queerness and technology, crisis and care, it invokes memory while challenging meaning, activating the tension between the personal and the expansively political. The title refuses passive reading, forcing an encounter with typography as capable of psychological rewrite, reimagination, and reappropriation.

2.1.1 Fracturing the Acronym: AIDS, the Introduction of AI, and Research Praxis

love aiDS invokes the most visceral associations with the word AIDS, a term historically linked to fear, devastation, loss,

and stigma. Yet, it avoids containment by that singular history; it fractures the word, opening it up, reconfiguring its resonance, and allowing new potentialities to emerge. The title functions as disruption and invitation, an insistence on re-examining what has been and what could be.

The conventional capitalization "AIDS" signifies the pandemic and its attendant crisis, social and political abandonment, activism, mourning, and survival ; a structuring force in the modern understanding of queerness. To invoke AIDS is to enter a lineage of grief, rage, radical love, and defiance, engaging with the legacies of ACT UP, Gran Fury, David Wojnarowicz, Hervé Guibert, Essex Hemphill, and Nan Goldin. It is to acknowledge how the virus reshaped culture and language, becoming a political fault line that revealed state neglect and mechanisms of social exclusion. *love aiDS*, however, moves beyond mere memorialization or a hunger for neat confines of remembrance. Instead, its destabilizing typography, the interplay of lowercase and uppercase, forces the eye to move across the letters, making it impossible to read "AIDS" in a singular, fixed way. This split is a fracture, an interruption, an insistence that meaning is not static.

The intrusion of the lowercase "ai" is a deliberate contemporary distortion, a shift into the technological, the algorithmic, the artificially intelligent. Ai : artificial intelligence, tands as the current horizon of both utopia and dystopia, a tool promising to revolutionize medicine while also being a technology of surveillance, bias, corporate extraction, and depersonalization. Placing AI in direct conversation with AIDS, *love aiDS* gestures toward the technological and moral evolution of healthcare, where Ai plays a role in HIV treatment and PrEP accessibility. Critically, it raises questions of depersonalization: what happens when care is outsourced to algorithms, when responsibility is diluted through code, when the intimacy of activism and human-to-human solidarity is

replaced by digital solutions claiming efficiency but erasing accountability?

The introduction of "ai" forces a collision between the human cost of the AIDS crisis and the increasing reliance on non-human intelligence. It asks whether lessons from AIDS activism ; mutual aid, direct action, refusal to be ignored, are carried into the technological realm, or if AI, in its promise of automation and optimization, distances us further from the urgency of human-driven care. The linguistic slippage where "ai" also reads as "I" in various languages further embeds the personal within the digital and historical. This fractured typography, defying the clinical, bureaucratic labeling of bodies and histories, mirrors fragmented experiences of navigating systems of control and aligns with activist and experimental literary traditions that use form to challenge fixed meaning.

2.1.2 "aiDS as Aid": Ambivalence, the Politics of Assistance, and the Generational Imperative

The title *love aiDS* also activates the verbal potential of "aids": to assist, support, to offer help. In this sense, *love aiDS takes* on an additional meaning: love as a force that aids; love as intervention, as assistance, as direct action.

This positive framing is immediately complicated by the critical awareness that aid is rarely neutral. The history of international aid is fraught with colonial entanglements, power imbalances, and interventions claiming humanitarianism while often serving political or economic interests. The AIDS crisis itself was deeply shaped by these dynamics: global disparities in access to medication, the role of pharmaceutical companies in prolonging suffering, and power imbalances between wealthier nations and those most affected.

Thus, *love aiDS* interrogates the very notion of aid: who administers it, who qualifies for it, and under what ideological terms it is granted.

It asks whether love itself can function as a form of aid ; and whether aid, as a structure, can ever be disentangled from its legacies of discipline, exclusion, and conditionality. The title holds a double gesture: one of intimacy and one of indictment. It recognizes that to be helped is not always to be held, and that love, like policy, can be delivered with stipulations.

This critical attention extends to the architects of modern aid logics. Figures like Madeleine Albright, whose international diplomacy yoked humanitarianism to American strategic dominance, or Nancy Pelosi, whose domestic leadership often cast support for marginalized communities within the limits of bipartisan viability, embody the contradictions of institutional care. Their legacies exemplify the selective nature of the state's response to the AIDS crisis ; who was protected, who was expendable, as well as the structural neglect of aging populations, whose visibility tends to vanish at the moment care becomes inconvenient.

love aiDS reanimates these questions in the present. It foregrounds the entanglements of intimacy, policy, and memory, treating aid not as a solution but as a site of unresolved tension. It does not ask for purity, but for clarity: to expose how support is staged, to question for whom it is designed, and to insist that care; like age, is very political.

2.1.3 "Love" as Anchor and Disruptor: Affective Politics

The first word of the title, "love," is positioned as the disruptor, the anchor. It serves as a counterpoint to crisis, a romantic defiance against apathy. It is the insistence that AIDS, as much as it is about loss, also embodies the radical forms of love that emerged in its wake; the love that fueled activism, built chosen families, and refused to let those lost be forgotten. Love was, and is, a survival strategy.

Mirroring the critique of aid, however, love is presented as complicated: not always innocent,

not always righteous. It can be exclusionary, possessive, conditional; it can function as an alibi, a justification for harm. The phrase "love aids" can suggest love as an agent of assistance, or as facilitating harm. Love as something that aids systems of control, love as something that can be weaponized.

This duality is crucial. *love aiDS* does not seek a singular answer or resolve into a conclusion. Instead, it remains open, layered, shifting, asking us to consider love in all its contradictions: as an act of care, resistance, and as a force that both binds and betrays. The power of the title *love aiDS* lies in its refusal to settle into a single meaning. It bypasses categorization, forcing an ongoing process of interpretation. It is historical and contemporary, deeply personal and explicitly political; playful and subversive, heavy with memory yet pushing forward. It functions as a site of tension between past and future, human and machine, crisis and care. It forces an encounter with language as something active, something that shapes how we experience the world. In this sense, *love aiDS* is also a method. Its ultimate form remains in motion, designed to be misread, reconsidered, spoken differently each time. It is a linguistic event insisting on multiplicity, imagining what language; what care, what crisis, what love—might become.

2.2 Affective Cartographies: Ethics of Care, Grief, and Desire

Beyond its conceptual and temporal interventions, *love aiDS* navigates a complex affective and ethical terrain, charting the emotional landscapes shaped by love, loss, historical trauma, and intergenerational connection. The project insists on a profound attentiveness to affect, recognizing its political weight and the ethical responsibilities inherent in representing pain, resilience, and vulnerability. This is explored through direct

confrontations with intergenerational tension, the nuanced navigation of grief and hope within the framework of age ambiguity, and a critical engagement with the dialectic of the obscene and the sacred in relation to desire and ethics.

2.2.1 Intergenerational Tension: The Ida and Ol'Boy X Dialogue

The dialogue between Ida and Ol'Boy X, presented earlier in this document as a "scenographic incision" drawn from the *Annotations*, serves as a clear articulation of the project's core affective and ethical tensions. Set in a kitchen, a space of both care and confrontation, it functions as a "liturgy of disagreement," illustrating how queer generations may misunderstand each other "not by accident, but by necessity."

The exchange reveals visceral clashes rooted in differing lived experiences of history, risk, and safety. Ol'Boy X's assertion of present-day security afforded by medical advancements ("We're not in the '80s, Ida"; "Medicine does clean up after us") is met by Ida's profound caution, born from the devastation of the AIDS crisis ("You're living off the dead"; "I've buried those who believed in choice"). Ol'Boy X perceives "choice" and a form of "invincibility," while Ida sees primarily "risk" and "consequence." Her poignant statement, "We didn't have the luxury of later," directly contrasts with his perceived freedom and underscores the project's critique of normative, often foreshortened, timelines imposed by historical trauma.

This dialogue functions as "evidence, not instruction," capturing the "accumulation and collision" that characterizes the project itself. Ida's warnings ("You're playing a dangerous roulette") and Ol'Boy X's dismissiveness ("You're making too much of this") highlight a fundamental schism in how history is felt, how safety is perceived, and how grief continues to shape the present. Their struggle, culminating in a shared, silent moment over tea; described

as "not a peace offering. Just an inevitability", embodies the project's refusal to resolve these profound dissonances into a harmonious whole. Instead, *love aiDS* allows them to remain in potent, generative tension, reflecting the complex affective realities of intergenerational experience.

2.2.2 Navigating Grief and Hope in Age Ambiguity

"Age ambiguity," as a central methodological and affective space within *love aiDS*, allows the distinct emotional experiences of different generations, particularly grief and hope, to coexist and collide. Ida's caution is an expression of profound grief, fear, and fierce protective care, born from the trauma of "watching too many bodies collapse." Ol'Boy X's assertion of freedom and trust, conversely, can be interpreted as a form of hope, a desire for a future unburdened by past terrors, or perhaps a defense mechanism against the weight of inherited trauma.

love aiDS produces knowledge about the complexities of intergenerational affect by exploring how grief is transmitted, resisted, or transformed across generations, and how collective memories of trauma shape present emotional possibilities. The film *Novena Hopes*, as detailed in the *Annotations*' chapter "The Making of NOVENA HOPES," directly engages these themes through its focus on "intergenerational memory, queerness, and the fragile architectures of care." The very form of the novena as a devotional structure of repeated prayers, gestures towards a hope that is "precarious, more ambiguous... Hope here is a practice, not a promise." This nuanced understanding of hope, rooted in persistence and embodied practice rather than certainty, offers a significant affective insight relevant in contexts of ongoing crisis. It contributes to affect theory by demonstrating how hope, even in its most vulnerable and uncertain forms, can function as a resilient mode of endurance and a quiet form of resistance.

2.2.3 The Obscene and the Sacred: Desire, Vulnerability, and Ethics

love aiDS deliberately engages with what the *Annotations* term the "obscene". defined not merely as the sexually explicit, but as "that which should not be seen, and yet insists on appearing." This includes grief in its rawest forms, the vulnerabilities of aging bodies, and desire itself, particularly gay desire, which has been historically marginalized, pathologized, and deemed obscene. The project juxtaposes this "obscene" with the "sacred," understood not in a conventional religious sense, but as "the fragile act of remembering those who did not or could not speak," or the "devotion to what is unresolved."

This dialectic, explored particularly within the making of *Novena Hopes*, produces knowledge about the ethical complexities of representation when dealing with vulnerable subjects and intimate experiences. The artist's self-positioning within the work, "My body became the subject... my own presence as the fag, as the grandson...I could not disappear behind the camera. My body was always there, intervening, even when I tried to recede", is an ethical act of self-implication. This approach avoids an extractive gaze, instead implicating the researcher/artist within the affective field, resonating with feminist and queer ethics that emphasize relationality, accountability, and the unsettling of traditional subject-object dichotomies.

The project grapples with the ethical inquiry posed in the *Annotations* regarding *Novena Hopes*: "How do I hold what you hoped for me, when I am not exactly what you hoped I would become?" This question explores love, expectation, and the acceptance of difference across generations. The "adult" aspect of the work, described in the *Annotations* as "obscene, pornographic, erotic... self-expressive with soft boundaries... raw, unapologetic, knowing," challenges conventional notions of age, sexuality, and

propriety. By asserting the validity of desire and embodied experience across the lifespan and refusing to sanitize these aspects, *love aiDS* contributes to a more expansive and ethically nuanced understanding of human subjectivity, particularly for those often rendered asexual or invisible by ageist or heteronormative scripts. The project's embrace of "fragility" and "insufficiency", evident in material choices like the Nokia N95's "low resolution, grainy textures" and its refusal of "seamless integration", cultivates an ethics of care rooted in attentiveness to the partial and unresolved. This demonstrates how care can be enacted through artistic practice by valuing presence over precision, and witnessing over authoritative pronouncement.

3. Artistic Works & Embodied Praxis: The *love aiDS* Anthologies and *Novena Hopes* as Research Output

The research questions and conceptual framework of *love aiDS* are not merely articulated *about* its artistic works; they are *embodied by* them. The project's artistic output structured as multi-format anthologies functions as an "independent publishing framework" where form, material, and structure actively perform the research itself. This praxis is fundamental to how knowledge is produced and disseminated, treating the material document (in its various forms) as a temporal, affective, and critical structure that both holds and disrupts the present.

3.1 The Multi-Format Anthologies: Materiality, Fragmentation, and Non-Linearity

The *love aiDS* anthologies can be characterized by a deliberate choice to manifest physically in a multi-format structure. This approach evolved from an initial, "unruly idea" for a zine into a critical framework. The decision to not collapse diverse cultural fragments (cooking, gardening, sex, health, coloring books) into a single, polished form became a deliberate methodological stance. This structure, distributed across separate sheets, issues, themes, and registers, reflects a world where continuity is unassumed, knowledge is partial, and survival is an ongoing process. The anthologies find their logic in "anthological fragmentation" rather than "stapled folios and single-issue resolutions," insisting on accumulation, interruption, and return.

3.1.1 From Zine to Forcefield: Evolution of Form

The initial concept of an "eclectic zine" that gathered typically separated or dismissed cultural fragments matured into a critical framework. This fragmentation mirrored the conditions *love aiDS* addresses: the interruptions produced by AIDS, the exclusions sustained by ageism, and the precariousness of gay belonging. As of now, the anthologies consist of "sheets of thick rag paper, unbound but encased," incorporating "audio-visual works that do not explain but resonate," and "text-only issues punctuated by ready made as gifted objects." This formal strategy is an "insistence to force the reader or viewer to make choices. To touch, reorder, carry and interpret," making active engagement integral to the project's epistemology. This evolving methodology, shaped by inquiry, contradiction, and situated production, refuses cohesion for its own sake, advancing instead a dynamic "forcefield."

3.1.2 The Politics of Print and Materiality

love aiDS proceeds from a critique of dematerialization in contemporary publishing. A deliberate choice is made to engage with "physical print," specifically utilizing "uncoated, textured, and variably sized stock." This decision pushes back against digital formats that can necessitate "rhetorical simplification, visual coherence, and thematic predictability" for algorithmic legibility. The material form is valued for its "capacity to retain evidence of production, variation, and sequence," its ability to "accumulate wear, respond to handling," and its resistance to "instantaneous duplication."

This material engagement produces knowledge about the affective and temporal dimensions of interaction. A physical object, which can be "archived, annotated, stored, or handled without technological mediation," invites a different kind of attention than a screen, fostering a slower, more embodied relationship with the content. By making these conditions visible, *love aiDS* foregrounds the non-neutrality of form and its role in constructing meaning; medium is a contributor to epistemology and temporality. Paper is selected not for symbolic reasons but for its structural utility: offering durability without permanence, non-linear accessibility, and modular extensibility.

3.1.3 Structural Logic: Fragmentation as Meaning Production

The "Publishing and Structural Logic" of *love aiDS* is characterized by a "deliberate refusal of singular medium dominance or final formal resolution." The project is constituted through "multiple, overlapping media formats; including print, film, digital video, performance documentation, textual inserts, and archival fragments." Each medium is deployed as an "independent component within a distributed, intermedia network," reflecting a

commitment to destabilizing fixed narratives and aligning with contemporary artistic research and queer theory.

The printed component, often articulated through loose sheets rather than bound volumes, engages with experimental publishing traditions favoring modularity and openness. However, films like *Novena Hopes*, songs, dialogues, and hybrid essays are "equally central to the overall structural logic." Textual contributions of essays, scripts or reflections, are treated as autonomous yet dialogically connected, presented within loose-sheet issues or separate formats, avoiding traditional hierarchies where text explains visuals. Material decisions (handmade rag paper, inkjet, industrial or no binding) are one methodology among several, coexisting with digital and performative components.

This expansive structural logic situates *love aiDS* within contemporary interdisciplinary discourses, resisting a closed archival logic. It proposes an "open-ended compositional approach that adapts and expands over time, inviting multiple modes of reception and interpretation." This structure is itself a critical intervention, "asserting multiplicity, dispersal, and methodological non-compliance as conditions for meaningful engagement." The anthology's physical structure reflects its open editorial logic; distributing itself across separate sheets and inserts held together by physical rather than thematic coherence, it accommodates revisions and interruptions without requiring reformatting of the whole.

3.2 *Novena Hopes*: A Pilot Study in Audiovisual Inquiry

The first *love aiDS* entry film, *Novena Hopes*, follows a structural expansion of the publishing logic established in the print-based anthology, serving as a continuation of its material and conceptual inquiries through a different medium. Film is employed here as a "time-based publishing strategy; selected for its

capacity to present simultaneity, duration, and embodied presence, which cannot be rendered through printed matter." The decision to shift from print to film emerged from an awareness of the page's limitations in representing certain forms of affect, temporality, and politically interpersonal urgency. While print issues are organized around discrete entries, the film operates as a "durational encounter," engaging the viewer through sound, pacing, and movement, introducing non-verbal elements. It is part of a broader investigation into how publishing modes are shaped by technical affordances and how different mediums activate different dimensions of experience.

3.2.1 Conception and Research Questions

Novena Hopes began as a meditation on "intergenerational memory, faggotry, and the fragile architectures of care." More than just the first film entry, it is "an attempt to create an other kind of archive that holds space for the broken, the unresolved, the tender." The title gestures toward the devotional structure of a novena, but here, "hope is not tied to resolution or divine intervention. It is more precarious, more ambiguous. Hope here is a practice, not a promise."

The decision to work with film arose early in the research process. I went into the project with the motivation to make a film, not only because of its temporal affordances but because the page was insufficient for holding the immediacy I was confronting. During those nine days, my grandmother's heart was failing. She was scheduled for surgery at the end of the filming period. There was a real possibility I might lose her. I needed her voice to be there; recorded. The film offered a means of transmitting the sonic and affective presence of those days: her heavy breathing, hesitation, everyday gestures, the atmospheres that surrounded us. This urgency clarified the choice of medium. Film, more than print,

allowed those fragile energies to be held without reduction.

The initial inquiry guiding *Novena Hopes* concerned what it means to hope in the confrontation with fear; personal, cultural, epidemic-related, and structural. It asked how to represent phenomena that "reside in memory or resist straightforward communication through static forms." The central question was about inheritance: "What do we inherit from those who came before us, not in blood or property, but in gestures, silences, refusals? And how do we live with what cannot be passed down...?" This evolved into the film's core inquiry, directed both to a family member and to myself: "What did you hope I would find, when I stepped out into the world?" and later, "How do I hold what you hoped for me, when I am not exactly what you hoped I would become?"

3.2.2 Production Context and Methodological Approach

Novena Hopes was shot entirely on a Nokia N95, a mid-2000s mobile device. Naturally, this technological choice was intentional. The camera's limitations; "low resolution, unstable focus, restricted dynamic range, were accepted as conditions of the ideological process," with visual quality remaining consistent with original hardware, uncorrected in post-production. This methodological position commits to the "unenhanced capabilities of an outdated digital device, positioning the act of filming as an extension of personal publishing rather than professional production." The camera is a tool for "situated witnessing, bound to its technical limitations, and therefore bound to the conditions of real-time, hand-held, domestic, and improvised documentation of personal truth." This aligns with traditions of amateur and independent filmmaking, resisting archival simulation or analog emulation, instead relying on the "historical specificity of its own recording device to locate itself

materially within a post-analog, pre-streaming digital era."

Production began "in proximity, close to the ground of what felt familiar but already slipping. With absolutely nothing mapped out in advance; no storyboards, no fixed shots or stories to capture." The process was a listening, with the body, camera, and the Nokia N95's limited means. "The device itself dictated the pace. Its smallness, its imperfection, became a guide. It reminded me that this was not about precision but about presence." Much filming occurred in spaces "thick with personal history," like the grandmother's apartment. Nothing was staged; objects appear half-seen, people half-heard, and this partiality was intentionally retained. At times filming alone, the artist's body became the subject, fumbling with the camera, "captur[ing] my own presence...I could never really disappear behind the camera."

3.2.3 Structure, Content, and Research Outcomes

Novena Hopes is structured by nine "hopes," each corresponding to a filming day and forming a cumulative structure that mirrors the arc of a life. These segments vary in duration, tone, and emotional intensity. Symbolism of dialogues, prayer gestures, domestic habits, and ambient elements hold their own authority, shaping a non-linear record of care, aging, and presence.

Aging is the condition under which everything occurs. It is seen in the time required for tasks, in the tempo of speech, in the air between gestures. The film does not position the older body as spectacle but insists on staying with its rhythms and allows for intergenerational witnessing without imposing closure or judgment.

The nine hopes serve as loose anchors for each day's material. They are:

1. *Hope for a beginning that remembers its end.*
2. *Hope for a fall that fashions flight.*
3. *Hope for a closeness that doesn't demand agreement.*
4. *Hope for care.*
5. *Hope for soft boundaries.*
6. *Hope for presence in a room that won't name you.*
7. *Hope for mercy.*
8. *Hope for a dignified death.*
9. *Hope for an end that remembers its beginning.*

Together, they form an inner architecture, an arc that lives within the material. The film abstains from answering a central question; it performs the question nine times.

A core structural tension animates the work: between who I am, and who she is. Between my pharmacopolitical present, structured around PrEP and DoxyPEP, and her embodied, daily negotiation with aging, documented through her long list of medications at age 85. This tension is not resolved, but it is documented. It is us. That shared, uneven field gives *Novena Hopes* its force. The intimacy here is rigorous and the differences are recorded.

This recording extends beyond the film. I have archived the process through a printed companion booklet, which includes a mirrored documentation: her medications, and mine. Her list, long ; mine, short and prophylactic, but no less systemic. I frame this encounter explicitly: the booklet opens with the word FAG and closes with HAG. A gesture not of insult, but of unlikely inheritance. These are terms that haunt queerness and aging; they are also the

terms that name a path. The nine hopes live within that arc. Or perhaps: they accept it.

3.2.4 Sound as Parallel Modality

Sound in *Novena Hopes* was a parallel modality for engaging with the project's thematic concerns. Source materials included original recordings, samples, and fragments of ambient noise. The score was composed to serve both structural and affective functions, with deliberate use of silence and unfiltered environmental sound, emphasizing the inherent meaning of the recorded surroundings. Sound entered the frame like the visual: I let the noise of daily life bleed into the footage; the whirl of an old heater, the creak of furniture, a television murmuring in another room. I did not isolate these sounds from the images. They were part of the texture, part of the experience of being there.

This sonic orientation emerged from environmental listening and a commitment to music as a tool of memory and temporal structure. It also responded to the specific sound qualities embedded in the archival footage I worked with. These recordings carried a grain, a frequency, a spatiality I found deeply evocative, so I began emulating them in the score. This created an ambiguity around the origin of the music: Was it composed now, or then? Who is speaking, and from what time?

I approached sound within a lineage of intergenerational and observational practices; especially the long-term documentary methods of Helena Třeštíková. But instead of extending her durational narratives, I reinvented them through music and inclusion of archival footage. In *Novena Hopes*, sound and music intervenes. It carries tonal ambiguities, introduces interruptions, and builds its own space of time-confusing (age-ambiguous) emotional witnessing.

Composing the score allowed me to construct a parallel mode of care that resists linearity and emotional resolution. It holds contradictions

and serves as a counterpoint to the film's partial, fragile visuality, producing a layered encounter between tone, voice, environment, and memory.

The soundtrack was also released as a standalone audio work as a parallel publication modality. It operates both independently and relationally, as an acoustic extension of *love aiDS'* publishing logic, asking how queer memory and archival practice might be carried through sonic environments rather than text.

4. Research, Artistic, and Entrepreneurial Process: Genesis, Decisions, and Autonomy

The trajectory of *love aiDS*, from an initial, "unruly idea" (*Annotations*, p. 9) to a robust framework for artistic research, is best understood as an "accumulation and collision" (*Annotations*, p. 5). This section details the key decisions and evolving process that shaped the project, demonstrating how the research inquiry, as articulated throughout the *Unabridged Annotations*, was embedded within the artistic practice and its operational strategies.

4.1 Project Genesis and the Logic of Accumulation

Jakob Lotta "did not begin this program with a clear plan. [He] brought with [him] a history of detours across cities, across disciplines, across unfinished beginnings. What [he] wanted was simple, if not easy: to stay with the work. To develop a vocabulary in language, in method, pace, and judgment" (*Annotations*, p. 5, Preface). Over several years, this involved extensive writing, music production, moving image direction, and a maintained visual practice. Decisions were made quickly or labored over; ideas defended or allowed to collapse. "At times, [He] lost confidence in the very idea of cohesion. But something held" (*Annotations*, p. 5).

The education received was a "testing ground," marked by contradictions between what the artist was drawn to and what was encouraged, a process described as "not always productive, but... formative" (*Annotations*, p. 5). Rather than orienting around a specific medium, patterns were tracked: recurring topics, forms,

scenes, tensions; the use of material, framing desire, memory's role, aging images, sound's presence. A sense emerged "not of a unified project, but of a system that's responsive, unstable, intertwined by certain commitments that remained consistent even when the form shifted" (*Annotations*, p. 5).

love aiDS "formed through accumulation and collision between works, between time periods, between forms of address. It came from watching how people responded to what [He] made... It came from being gay and aging, from reading about the AIDS crisis while people spoke about futurity. It came from finding [himself] in rooms where no one knew what [He] was referencing, and choosing not to simplify" (*Annotations*, p. 5).

4.2 Methodological Blueprint: Intermedia Fragmentation, Publishing as Activism, Unfinishedness

The *Annotations* (p. 22, referencing Chapter Six material) frame *love aiDS* as a "robust and evolving framework for artistic research," articulating a "methodological blueprint" derived from its core principles. These principles are prescriptive, offering a replicable approach.

- **Intermedia fragmentation** is a method of "critical inquiry." Avoiding "singular medium dominance" and embracing "'insufficient' yet powerful media" (like the Nokia N95 used for *Novena Hopes*) is a research strategy, modeling exploration through "multiple, sometimes contradictory, perspectives" and establishing a "direct methodological lineage" for research on multifaceted phenomena (*Annotations*, p. 22).
- The **publishing praxis** is an "Activist Intervention." Establishing an

"autonomous publishing entity" focused on "small-scale production, archival control, and strategic non-alignment with dominant institutions" is a "contemporary act of activism." It aims not just at content dissemination but at "building resilient infrastructures for critical voices," offering a model for artists maintaining "intellectual integrity and control" over work concerning marginalized themes (*Annotations*, p. 22).

- **"Unfinishedness"** is an "Ethical and Generative Stance." Consistently avoiding closure, embracing ambiguity, and maintaining seriality fosters an ethics respecting ongoing, unresolved trauma, memory, and social struggle. This is "highly generative, opening up possibilities for future dialogue, reinterpretation, and the integration of new perspectives," aligning with the core belief that "Holding its differences... is to make room for what does not fit, for what remains unfinished, for what continues to ache" (*Annotations*, p. 22, 49).

Artificial intelligence was also employed as a correlative research and archiving tool throughout the development of love aiDS. Its infrastructural function is used in drafting, transcribing, synthesizing, and reworking large bodies of material across writing, sound, and documentation. AI-assisted systems enabled rapid prototyping of complex ideas, help structure episodic content, and serve as an interlocutor in moments of conceptual uncertainty. This use; to expose how authorship is already distributed, porous, and mediated. In a project so concerned with memory, mediation, and survival, AI's presence is a working condition that further complicates the ethics of voice, authorship, and documentation. As such, the inclusion of AI mirrors the very structural logic love aiDS seeks to expose: the

blur between archive and invention, memory and interface, intimacy and code.

4.3 Realizing *Novena Hopes*: Process as Research Embodiment

The production of *Novena Hopes*, as detailed in "The Making of NOVENA HOPES" (*Annotations*, p. 48-50), serves as a case study in how these methodological principles were embodied. The decision to structure filming around a nine-day constraint, inspired by the devotional form of a novena, manifested the project's interest in alternative temporal structures (*Annotations*, p. 48). The choice of the Nokia N95, prioritizing fragility and immediacy over high-definition authority, was a conscious instantiation of intermedia fragmentation, using an "insufficient" medium to explore vulnerable realities ("Filming on the Nokia N95 was not an aesthetic gimmick... The low resolution, the grainy textures, the intimate handheld framing—all resist the authority of the high-definition image," *Annotations*, p. 48).

The unscripted, proximity-focused filming with family members ("Production began in proximity, close to the ground of what felt familiar but already slipping," *Annotations*, p. 49) embodied the project's emphasis on relationality and trust over performance, capturing "moments of 'insistence'" that resist conventional narrative framing. The editing process, which allowed nuances to emerge from accumulated material rather than imposing an external structure, directly enacted the principle of "unfinishedness" and refusal of neat resolution. The development of sound as a parallel modality further reinforced the intermedia approach. The entire process exemplified how the making of the work was inseparable from the research inquiry itself, with the original question being about "inheritance" in gestures, silences, and refusals (*Annotations*, p. 49).

4.4 The Entrepreneurial Stance: Protective Mechanism for Fragile Memory

Positioning *love aiDS* with an entrepreneurial orientation, as outlined in "Positioning *love aiDS* as a Publishing Entity: Entrepreneurial Considerations" (*Annotations*, p. 37-40), might initially seem counter-intuitive for critical artistic research. However, this is reframed not as profit pursuit, but as a "protective and generative mechanism" for autonomy and resilience. This is crucial given engagement with "fragile cultural memory" and "marginal or anti-normative perspectives," which risked "invisibility, misrepresentation, or co-optation" without an independent framework for distribution (*Annotations*, p. 37).

The "Nonprofit Logic with Entrepreneurial Structure" (*Annotations*, p. 38) is vital for precarious artistic labor. Key elements—"Small-Scale Serial Production" (limited-run editions, quality emphasis, direct-to-reader distribution), "Integrated Media Model" (print and film in parallel), "Archival Control and Intellectual Property," and "Branding as Critical Strategy" (the title as typographic/linguistic intervention)—are strategic decisions. They allow *love aiDS* to "resist absorption into institutional structures while maintaining the capacity to distribute, exhibit, and archive its own output on its own terms" (*Annotations*, p. 38). This approach generates knowledge about independent cultural production's political economy.

The project does not target a fixed audience; its approach is "situational, context-specific, and contingent," circulating through "mixed economies—gift, sale, institutional collaboration, and informal exchange" (*Annotations*, p. 39). The purpose of this operational framework is to avoid dependency on institutional validation while maintaining capacity to interface with systems affecting

funding and preservation. The "internal infrastructure—modular, self-funded, and non-hierarchical—allows for revision without rupture, and for dissemination without compromise" (*Annotations*, p. 39). Entrepreneurship here is the "necessary instrument through which a non-institutional research practice can sustain itself, evolve, and remain accountable" (*Annotations*, p. 40).

5. Project Management & Operational Reflections

Managing a project like *love aiDS*, with its explicit embrace of "unfinishedness" (*Annotations*, p. 22, 29) and its navigation of a "forcefield" of accumulation and collision (*Annotations*, p. 2, 5), requires a flexible and adaptive approach that diverges from traditional project management. Developed over a multi-annual program, culminating in the 2025 graduation submission, the project's evolution dictates that planning is inherently iterative rather than strictly linear, constantly responding to insights gained during the artistic and research process itself. This section reflects on these operational aspects, drawing from the internal project records and strategic considerations outlined within the *Unabridged Annotations*.

5.1 Planning and Iterative Development

Initial planning for *love aiDS* stemmed from an "unruly idea" and a personal history of "detours" across disciplines and unfinished beginnings (*Annotations*, Preface, p. 5; Year 3.2, p. 8). Key decisions that shaped the project into its current form—such as the commitment to materiality, the development of the multi-format structure, the undertaking of *Novena Hopes*, and the definition of its entrepreneurial stance—emerged organically over time rather than being predetermined from the outset (*Annotations*, Preface, p. 5). Project management, therefore, had to accommodate this organic growth, allowing for unexpected turns and prioritizing the integrity of the research and artistic impulse over adherence to a rigid schedule. The decision-making process involved learning "how to defend an idea, and

when to let it collapse" (*Annotations*, Preface, p. 4), continuously integrating feedback, and remaining attuned to the project's evolving "forcefield" (*Annotations*, p. 2).

The following timeline, an "Archival Transmission / Internal Report" excerpted from the *Annotations* (p. 23-24), illustrates key phases and milestones in the project's development between Summer 2024 and June 2025:

love aiDS — Project Timeline & Milestones (Summer 2024 – June 2025)

ARCHIVAL TRANSMISSION / INTERNAL REPORT

- **Project:** *love aiDS*
- **Cycle:** 11.2024 – 06.2025
- **Status:** ACTIVE, MULTIPLE ENTRIES
- **Compiled by:** System Node [L.ADS/EX-01]
- **Access Level:** Experimental-Public
- **[ENTRY 01 — CODE: ALLY-XXL]**
 - **Date:** 11.2024
 - **Location:** Maastricht → London
 - **Note:** Initial ignition. Tension high. Tabloid format deployed.
 - **Incident:** First contact with public through "ALLY XXL" issue. Printed in France. Content includes opening provocation (LIFE IS SO COLD), situating ageism as existential erosion. Distribution begins through clubs, clinics, and independent bookstores. Editorial method: unfiltered urgency. Visual

- density: high. Emotional charge: unregulated.
- **[ENTRY 02 — CODE: K-UP]**
 - **Date:** 12.2024
 - **Follow-up release.** Rapid cycle.
 - **Title:** “KNOCKED UP”
 - **Themes:** Reproduction, refusal, grotesque tenderness.
 - **Print conditions unstable.** Symbolic language heightened.
 - **Erotic register:** baroque.
 - **[ENTRY 03 — CODE: SERIES-ONSET/o3]**
 - **Date:** 01.2025
 - **Subject began numbering system.** Issues now labeled “o3–o6”.
 - **Emergence of LOTTA DESIRES** as a recurrent format within format.
 - **Typographic disruption present.** Inserts appear without forewarning.
 - **Status of editorial control:** intentionally deteriorating.
 - **[ENTRY 04 — CODE: BLEED]**
 - **Date:** 03.2025
 - **Material shift.** Inkjet deployed on thick rag paper. Unadvised. Effective.
 - **Note from system:** “Printer damage probable. Aesthetic result: divine.”
 - **Tactile ritual begins**—subject prints alone, often nude.
 - **Pages misaligned by design.** Surface becomes text.
 - **[ENTRY 05 — CODE: COCKIN]**
 - **Date:** 04.2025
 - **Dual issue:** “o6” and “Cockin’ Book 1” released.
 - **Erotic devotional language dominant.**
 - **Simultaneous Event:** *Novena Hopes* filmed over 9-day span.
 - **Catalyst:** Grandmother’s surgery, mother’s absence.
 - **Anchor word:** “Hope” (password used at hospital check-in).
 - **Structure of film:** revealed through living prayer.
 - **[ENTRY 06 — CODE: X-TEXT]**
 - **Date:** 05.2025
 - **Editing of *Novena Hopes* complete.**
 - **Ex-partner involved in post.** Tension productive.
 - **Soundtrack finalized.** Subtitles translated.
 - ***love aiDS* textual o1 issued:** includes essays, fragments, side-confessions.
 - **System stress test:** passed.
 - **[ENTRY 07 — CODE: GRADIENT]**
 - **Date:** 06.2025

- **Presentation at academic checkpoint (graduation).**
 - **Status:** Not terminal. Reframed as entry point.
 - **All components**—print, video, music, erotica—interlinked.
 - **Public exposed to multi-surface archive.**
 - **Objective:** Transmission over explanation. Transmission achieved.
- **[ENTRY 08 — CODE: UNFINISHED PRACTICE]**
 - **Date:** Ongoing
 - **Next scheduled objects:** Cockin' Book 2, culinary drop-outs, liturgical pornography, prayer for intergenerational absorption.
 - **Subjects maintain system as open, iterative, tactically inconsistent.**
 - *love aiDS* remains in motion.

This timeline demonstrates the project's iterative nature, its responsiveness to emergent catalysts (e.g., grandmother's surgery influencing *Novena Hopes*), and its commitment to an "unfinished praxis" where the project itself remains an active, evolving entity beyond fixed deadlines.

5.2 Budget and Resource Management for an Autonomous Project

The commitment to "Small-Scale Serial Production" and high-quality materiality (*Annotations*, p. 37, 40) significantly influenced budget allocation. As detailed in the

Annotations (p. 25, and from the Graduation Document OCR p.17), the budget for *love aiDS* and *Novena Hopes* development was approximately €2,000 to €3,000, sourced through a combination of personal funds, informal support systems, and targeted micro-grants. Financial decisions were guided by a "nonprofit logic with an entrepreneurial structure" (*Annotations*, p. 38), privileging quality, intimacy, and long-term resonance over mass-market profitability or rapid expansion. Each cost reflects an investment in legacy: a desire to produce work that sustains symbolic, tactile, and discursive value over time.

Budget Overview (Approximation):

- **Printing & Production (paper, bulk printing, ink, material tests):** ~€1,000–€1,200
 - This occupied the largest share, encompassing multiple forms of print experimentation (rag paper, transparent foils, improvised binding methods). All fabrication was conducted in-house, emphasizing control, ritual, and resistance to industrial standardization.
- **Audiovisual Production (Postproduction tools, sound mastering, subtitling for *Novena Hopes*):** ~€600
 - Modest in equipment terms (primarily the Nokia N95), but dedicated resources were required for ensuring accessibility and coherence.
- **Distribution (shipping, event print runs):** ~€150–€250
 - Costs shaped by informal networks: in-person bookstore placements, direct drop-offs, club and clinic outreach.

Shipping was integral to the work's movement.

- **Travel & Logistics (Primarily Netherlands-UK):** ~€1,000
 - Minimal yet crucial, enabling research and distribution, with movement understood as a mode of publishing.
- **Sonic Publishing (Mastering, digital distribution, small-run physical editions for parallel sound release):** *[This cost was mentioned in Annotations p.25 but not itemized in the Graduation Doc OCR p.17 breakdown. It would fall within the overall €2000-3000 range or be an additional small cost.]*
- **Archival Efforts (Cloud infrastructure, encrypted drives, physical storage):** *[Cost not specified, but implied as part of preserving files for future reactivation. Likely modest.]*
- **Personnel/Honoraria:** All collaborators contributed unpaid; emotional labor, translation, and dramaturgy were negotiated through personal relationships. Honoraria offered to key collaborators (editing, translation, material handling) were gestures of reciprocity.

This resource structure reflects a “nonprofit logic with entrepreneurial structure” (*Annotations*, p. 38)—privileging archival durability and targeted community circulation over market scalability. Resource management consistently focused on enabling the project's autonomy and ensuring the quality of the physical objects as embodiments of the research, rather than being tied to traditional institutional funding or specific pre-defined deliverables (*Annotations*, p. 25, 37).

5.3 Navigating Logistics, Risks, and Responsibilities

Managing multiple formats (print, film, sound) and specific material requirements (unbound sheets, AV components, readymades) posed significant logistical challenges (*Annotations*, p. 26). Sourcing particular paper stocks, coordinating small-batch printing, packaging complex objects, and navigating non-traditional distribution channels ("direct-to-reader," "situational," "mixed economies" - *Annotations*, p. 39) required careful planning and execution outside standard logistical frameworks.

The project, as outlined in the *Annotations* (p. 37), explicitly acknowledges risks associated with its subject matter and approach: "invisibility, misrepresentation, or co-optation" of "fragile cultural memory" and "marginal perspectives." The entrepreneurial and archival strategies (*Annotations*, p. 37-38) were direct risk mitigation responses, ensuring the work's message and form remained under project control. Ethical responsibilities were paramount, particularly when dealing with sensitive topics like AIDS history, ageism, vulnerability, and involving personal and family histories (*Annotations*, p. 26, referencing Ch 9 & Ch 5 material). The project's "ethics of care rooted in 'fragility' and 'insufficiency'" (*Annotations*, p. 21) extended to the management process, prioritizing attentiveness and responsiveness over purely efficiency-driven models. The "disobedient map" nature of *love aiDS* (*Annotations*, p. 2) meant navigating institutional expectations (like graduation requirements) while staying true to its inherent resistance to conventional structures.

5.4 Collaboration and the Ethics of Participation

Collaboration, though often informal, was integral to *love aiDS*. The "unprompted

participation of family members" in *Novena Hopes (Annotations, Ch 9, p. 30)* highlights a model of collaboration based on "trust rather than performance" (*Annotations, Ch 9, p. 34*). This necessitated careful navigation of the ethical dimensions of involving individuals in a project touching upon sensitive personal and collective histories, emphasizing their agency by documenting moments of direct interaction or hesitation (*Annotations, Ch 9, p. 34*). All individuals featured in *love aiDS Art Anthologies: Novena Hopes*, including family members, participated with full awareness of the artistic and documentary nature of the project, and no material was captured without consent (Ethics of Participation statement, *Annotations, p. 25*, after the "Jakob Lotta, The Hague, June 2025" sign-off).

Beyond direct participants, the project acknowledges broader influences and contributions. As stated in the *Annotations*(Ch 9, p. 34), the "Credits function as a formal acknowledgment of all contributors, including individuals who influenced the work indirectly," framing this as a "process of tracing lineage and continuation beyond traditional production roles." This broad understanding of collaboration aligns with the project's core themes of intergenerational connection and chosen kinship.

Key Collaborators and Partners (for the development of *love aiDS* and the film *Novena Hopes*)

- **Creative and Emotional Collaborators:**

- **Branislav Stevonka:** Former partner and postproduction collaborator on *Novena Hopes*, contributing dramaturgy, writing, and emotional tension within the editing process (*Annotations, p. 24*).
- **Grandmother:** Primary subject and intergenerational

collaborator in *Novena Hopes*. Her gestures, values, and domestic spaces shaped the film's emotional and temporal grammar.

- **Mother and Father:** Present both in the film's archival lines and within the broader *love aiDS* constellation.
 - **Grandfather:** Contributed posthumously through archival materials (personal tapes, ephemera), reinforcing the project's intergenerational resonance.
 - **Lucie Charbonneau:** Writer and editor. One of the first external viewers of *Novena Hopes*, whose critical and affective feedback informed final revisions.
- **Mentors and Supervisors (Maastricht Institute of Arts, ZUYD Hogeschool):**
 - **Marjolein van der Loo:** Graduation mentor and critical interlocutor in the initial framing of the research.
 - **Petra Quaedvlieg:** Offered guidance during the preliminary stages of the project, contributing to dramaturgical considerations.
 - **Isabel Ferreira de Sousa:** Provided structural advice, conceptual coherence, and key reflections on integrating past writings with the emerging trajectory of the research.

- **Screening Venues and Distribution Nodes:**

- **Lumière Cinema, Maastricht:** Hosted the first public screening of *Novena Hopes*, enabling its presentation within a cinematic context.
- **Superstore, Dalston:** Nightlife venue and cultural node where early issues of *love aiDS* circulated informally.
- **Gay's the Word, London:** Historic queer bookstore that supported early dissemination and dialogue around the publication.
- **Housmans Bookshop, King's Cross:** Radical bookseller whose political ethos aligns with *love aiDS'* publishing stance; currently distributing the publication.
- **Limestone Books, Maastricht:** Local distribution partner and ongoing archival site for printed issues.

- **Institutional Archiving:**

- **Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), National Library of the Netherlands:** Official depository of *love aiDS*. All published issues are submitted and preserved in the Dutch national archive, ensuring long-term public access and safeguarding cultural memory.

6. Conclusion: The Unfolding Imperative, Legacy, and Latent Potentiality

This Graduation Documentation has charted the ambitious terrain of *love aiDS*, a project that, as explored throughout the *Unabridged Annotations*, frames itself as a dynamic "generative forcefield of potentiality" (*Annotations*, p. 22, 23) for artistic research. Through its critical engagement with memory, crisis, care, and temporality, embodied in its multi-format artistic praxis and supported by an autonomous operational strategy; *love aiDS* offers a compelling case for research that resists easy classification and embraces complexity, insisting on the value of the "unfinished" and the "unruly."

6.1 Responding to the Unfolding Imperative

The *love aiDS* project, as articulated in its *Annotations* (Afterword, p. 24-25), culminates in an "unfolding imperative": a call to translate its rigorous, often unsettling insights into action, challenging the reader/interlocutor to internalize its critical praxis; is an active engagement, demanding that we:

- **Reconfigure our Relationship with Time and Continuity:** This involves dismantling age-segregated thinking, cultivating intergenerational kinship based on affinities rather than mere chronology, valuing elder cultural production, and ensuring that survival, particularly for those who have endured historical trauma and stigma, is not recast as a burden but recognized as a resilience; a source of vital knowledge.

- **Politicize Our Everyday Choices:** This demands a scrutiny of the political narratives, leadership structures, and societal policies that contribute to cultural abandonment or, conversely, foster equitable care. It compels an interrogation of whether our personal and collective choices align with a future that values all lives equally, resisting the logics of disposability.
- **Interrogate the Ambivalence of 'Love' and 'Aid':** Applying the critical lens developed through the deconstruction of the *love aiDS* title, this imperative pushes us to examine these forces in our own desires and actions. It means questioning power dynamics within relationships and interventions, ensuring that love functions as a mutual survival strategy and that aid is genuinely empowering, rather than a tool of control or conditional benevolence.
- **Embrace 'Unfinishedness' as a Political and Ethical Stance:** This involves resisting the allure of premature solutions and easy resolutions, choosing instead to dwell in the "ache" of unresolved injustices. It cultivates a societal capacity for "dwelling in ambiguity as a precondition for genuine understanding and effective, adaptive action."

This unfolding imperative underscores that the ultimate potential of *love aiDS* is realized not in its completion (a concept the project actively refutes), but in its capacity "to incite such transformation in those who encounter its disobedient, vital interrogation" (*Annotations*, Afterword, p. 25). This is the record of a process built on rupture; emotional, temporal, historical. What is presented is a "controlled detonation" of institutional expectations, personal limits, and the myth that research shall tidy itself before speaking (*Annotations*, Afterword, p. 23).

6.2 Contribution to Fields of Inquiry

The artistic research of *love aiDS*, as documented in the *Annotations* and presented here, makes potential contributions across several fields of inquiry:

- Its analysis of **ageism as a "mechanism of cultural abandonment"** explicitly linked to the historical trauma and ongoing stigma of the **AIDS crisis** (*Annotations*, p. 8, 14) expands critical gerontology and queer studies by highlighting shared systems of disability and challenging linear temporal narratives.
- The concept of **"age ambiguity"** offers a new theoretical and methodological tool for exploring identity, relationality, and potentiality outside restrictive chronological constraints, connecting with and building upon the work of queer theorists like José Esteban Muñoz and Jack Halberstam (*Annotations*, p. 15, 22, 25-27).
- The deconstruction of the **title *love aiDS*** and its layers of ambivalence contributes to critical discourse studies and trauma theory by demonstrating how language shapes, and can be used to disrupt, perceptions of crisis, care, and assistance (*Annotations*, p. 16, 32-37).
- Its critical interrogation of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** in relation to care, memory, and human agency resonates with science and technology studies (STS) and digital humanities, raising crucial ethical questions about automation, responsibility, and human connection in a technologically mediated world (*Annotations*, p. 16, 33).

- The nuanced analysis of **"love" as a political, ambivalent force** contributes to affect theory and critical love studies, foregrounding its complex role as both a survival strategy and a potential site of power and control (*Annotations*, p. 17, 34).
- Furthermore, the project's **publishing praxis and entrepreneurial stance** offer insights into the political economy of independent cultural production, arts management, and publishing studies. It demonstrates how materiality, intermedia fragmentation, structural unfinishedness, and an autonomous operational framework can serve critical, archival, and activist tendencies (*Annotations*, p. 18, 19, 22, 37-40).

As artistic research, *love aiDS* models a methodology rooted in embodied practice, intermedia experimentation, and a principled commitment to "unfinishedness," demonstrating how rigorous and impactful inquiry can be conducted through non-traditional, ethically engaged, and politically aware forms.

6.3 *love aiDS* as a Model for Future Artistic Research

love aiDS stands as a robust, ethically engaged, and politically aware framework for future artistic research (*Annotations*, p. 23). Its emphasis on "intermedia intervention, structural unfinishedness, and autonomous publishing praxis" creates a "dynamic forcefield capable of sustaining difficult questions and fostering new inquiries" (*Annotations*, p. 23). The project's inherent capacity to adapt and respond to new conditions, coupled with its principled willingness to remain "unfinished," makes it a relevant model for long-term artistic research that must remain flexible while upholding core ethical and critical commitments (*Annotations*, p. 23).

By specifically activating "age ambiguity" to uncover "latent potential" (*Annotations*, p. 23), *love aiDS* offers a rich, adaptable methodology for future artists and researchers navigating the "unsettled, yet profoundly generative, landscapes of contemporary experience" (*Annotations*, p. 23). Its legacy will be measured not merely by its existing output, but by the "subsequent research it inspires and the critical dialogues it sustains." It provides a compelling model for how artistic research can build upon previous interventions, engage with difficult socio-political realities, and use established frameworks (like the *love aiDS* approach itself) as "springboards to explore new 'latent potentialities' within complex social and personal terrains" (*Annotations*, p. 23). In its ongoing capacity "to provoke, model, and inspire," *love aiDS* demonstrates the enduring power and necessity of artistic research that grapples directly and vulnerably with the unresolved complexities of human experience, memory, interrelation, and survival. The project will continue, "as a way of staying present inside unfinishedness... This is the part where I leave it open, not to be poetic, but because that's what survival looks like" (Afterword, p. 24).

7. Dramaturgical Outro

Late spring. The chapel is overly air-conditioned. The attendees are people from different eras of his life, arranged without apparent order. The program is printed in a condensed sans serif. There is no photograph on the cover.

The woman in the third row keeps her sunglasses on, even indoors.

One of the exes sits at the back, chewing his thumbnail until it bleeds.

The man who organized the music fumbles with the Bluetooth speaker. It won't connect.

The mother—if that is his mother—stares at her shoes.

Ida stands by the side wall, between a fake plant and the coat rack. She arrived too early, left her phone on, then panicked and turned it off mid-vibration. Her hair is tucked under a cheap flannel cap. Her shoes are wrong.

She scans.

There's someone reading a passage from something vague and vaguely spiritual. Oh, It's: *Living Life Untethered* followed by *A prayer of sorts*. Or a quote from someone he never read.

Ida watches as they mispronounce a word she knows he hated.

No one flinches.

Someone laughs too loudly near the door. Someone else cries with the kind of theatrical effort that suggests performance.

The speaker finally connects. The song is the wrong version.

A slideshow begins. Half the photos are low-resolution screenshots. One of them includes Ida—accidentally cropped, caught mid-blink.

No one notices. Except her.

A young man, maybe twenty, stands alone near the urn table. Ida has never seen him before. He could be a neighbor, a hookup, a delivery driver who stayed too long one night. He keeps shifting his weight from one leg to the other, as if wanting to leave.

The ceremony ends with an awkward call for a glass of wine.

No one moves for a moment.

Ida remains still. She watches them exit one by one. She doesn't follow. She doesn't approach the coffin. She doesn't cry.

When the room is empty again, she walks over to the stack of programs and folds one into thirds, then tucks it into her handbag tagged with a reflection strip.

She then turns to the coffin and, almost inaudibly, begins to sing.

A whisper at first. A tone too low for the room.

Out of tune. But clear.

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,

Nearer to Thee—

Even though it be a cross that raiseth me
—"

She breathes in sharply. A dry swallow. Then shifts key, mid-line—half conscious, half sorry.

*"I want the good life...
But I don't want an easy ride.
What I want is to work for it,
Feel the blood and sweat on my
fingertips...
That's what I want for me."*

The line breaks. Her pitch is gone. She sings the next part too high and too quiet.

*"I want to let go of all...
Disappointment,
That's waiting for me..."*

The faint hum of the fridge unit by the altar fills the gaps.

*"I go 'round and 'round just like a circle
I can see a clearer picture
When I touch the ground, I come full circle
To my place and I am home...I am home"*

She sits on the edge of the nearest pew. The silence afterward is harsh.
Hardly reverent.

She folds her hands in her lap.
Does she pray?

Behind her, a cleaner enters quietly through the back hallway. Notices her, but leaves her alone.

Ida stands. Wipes her palms against her coat.
Walks to the door.
Takes one last glance at the back of the room.

She exits.

Just the silence that follows a voice no one asked to hear.

8. Afterword

This work inconclusive. What you've read is a controlled detonation of institutional expectations, of my own limits and of the myth that research shall tidy itself up before being allowed to speak.

There were things I couldn't finish. Things I abandoned. Relationships that fractured under the pressure of trying to make meaning out of contradiction. Some parts of *love aiDS* felt expansive, others felt suffocating. I worked in near-isolation, often unsure if what I was building could be understood at all, or if it ever needed to be.

I try to hold too much: history, grief, memory, ethics, care, porn, bureaucracy, aesthetics, intergenerational longing, the sound of a bed creaking in my grandmother's flat. Some of it is here. Much of it escaped. There are moments in *Novena Hopes* that mean more than I was able to explain. There are concepts in this documentation that deserve more rigor, more time, more clarity. If I survive long enough—and that is not a rhetorical phrase—I will keep returning to them.

The frameworks I engaged with—AIDS, ageism, queerness, DIY publishing, amateurism, intermedia collapse, are systems with real consequences. Systems I live inside. This documentation was shaped inside fatigue, economic precarity, and the institutional demand for coherence. I produced against the current, not above it. And still, I believe in what I've made, but because it insists on holding what is partial without shame.

I do not believe that surviving in dignity, aging freely and remembering queerly, can be accomplished through single works. It requires continuity. It requires logic that can adapt, fragment, self-correct. It requires nonlinear collaborations. It requires time.

I cannot know if I'll be granted that time.

But...I Hope.

Today, the day I complete this text, May 30, 2025, the New York Times reports that Donald Trump has moved to eliminate all federal funding for HIV research, redirecting resources to punitive surveillance technologies and abstinence campaigns. It is not a coincidence. The political project of forgetting is always active. To remember is a form of resistance, but resistance without infrastructure is a performance of grief. What I've made here is fragile infrastructure. What comes next depends on whether it can be sustained.

love aiDS will continue as a way of staying present inside unfinishedness. This is the part where I leave it open, because that's what survival looks like.

Consider, do not close.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jakob Lotter". The letters are connected and have a slightly rough, sketchy quality.

*The Hague
June 2025*

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*love*aiDS art anthologies
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