Everything about
BABY BLUE

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Visual Communication,
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All my life, I have been interested in how relationships work between people. I have been curious, been loved, and been broken by so many kinds of relationships. Yet love is the only thing that I will always want to explore further.

So I started noting down a list of interesting “love stories” that I have experienced and telling everyone, “I’m gonna do a comic book about love”.

Baby Blue is one of my love stories that is closest to my heart. It’s a story about friendship and a one-sided love – A love from a distance.

As an artist, sometimes when it’s hard to communicate verbally, to write it down and draw everything out is the best way to express all the feelings I’ve felt.
Before becoming Baby Blue

Let me explain to you a bit about my first idea for the master project...
A MASTER PROJECT ABOUT LOVE

WHY LOVE?

I’ve always known that I want to write a ‘comic book’ and I’ve always been interested in human relationships and love. I think now is a good time to make a ‘comic book about love’. The idea started when I have realised that all my artworks are related to love. Since then, I’ve been inspired to start putting them together into a bigger piece.

I love the feeling of falling in love, having a crush, or having a special feeling for someone. I am also interested in how relationships work between people and how different people have different perspectives in love and relationships. And to write and draw about love from my experiences is a process of learning about myself.
Before Baby Blue, I was planning to write a series of love stories by collecting all romantic and non-romantic love stories that happened in my life. I gathered more than 20 stories that I’ve divided into different topics such as Dating culture: “Ghosting”, A strange kind of love, Celebrity/Band crushes, “Unrequited love” and many more.

I found that these topics were very interesting and relatable to everyone around me. But at that time, there was too much to work on under a very limited time. It was also hard for me to focus on each individual story so I decided to cut some of them out after a degree presentation.

Not actually a cult, just thought it could be my project name (cult of love)

I have a few more but didn’t write it here

Try to include boys as well <3
But then I realised that I’ve always worked on comics and writings that were related to the “Unrequited love” topic. It was at that decisive moment in late February that I made a sharp redirection to focus on only “one story” which I have called Baby Blue.
How do I start with my own stories?

Since I’m working from my memories, all of these love stories are real events from the past.

I was lucky enough to have a lot of material from those experiences such as screenshots, pictures, my own journal, notes from my old iPhone, tweets and Facebook posts. And it’s very interesting to work from them.
Music plays a big role in my life and I can't live without it. I usually think about a lot of moments I’ve had with people while listening to music. Most of the music I listen to is pop music with fun beats but also emotional lyrics behind the melodies. I think lyrics are the most important material for me because they often give me ideas to connect with my own memories and I often write and draw those ideas down.
“You Took My Love For Granted”

is one of my zines from 2019. I used lyrics from my favorite songs to visualize the moment and put them together in one small line.

All of them are sad songs and they are also related to Baby Blue but will not be presented in my final project.
Music videos give me more visual ideas for my comics. I have one comic that was inspired by “Sway”, a music video from Tove Styrke.

Skater Boys Are Casually in Love in Tove Styrke’s New ‘Sway’ Video

BY LINDSAY HOWARD | MAY 21, 2018

Director Joanna Nordahl says she wanted to portray “the kind of carefree, magical summer night when everything just flows. When time moves slowly but passes quickly.” She adds: “You’re experiencing the flickering city with someone who knows you better than anyone, moving seamlessly between adventure and comfort, between dreams and reality. To me, skateboarding equals freedom, and I wanted to capture the essence of that in the most genuine way possible.”

“The word ‘sway’ to me is very central to this whole project,” says Styrke, explaining her thoughts on the video. “Instead of focusing on a fixed feeling, we sway. It’s the movement and overlapping of all the different things we experience and feel. This song is a slice of that spectrum, and I think the video really taps in to the feeling I was trying to get at when I wrote it.”
The music video “Sway” inspired me to draw a comic called “Boylove”.

The story is quite similar to the music video itself.

It’s a story about a friendship between two young boys who possess intimate feelings for each other which were similar to romantic love.
Collect my true feelings

I frequently have new ideas and thoughts popping up, and I sometimes forget them. So, I think it’s very important to write down all the things that come to mind into my notebooks, journals, iPhone notes, or even on some social media platforms (for example; Facebook posts, Tweets from Twitter, Blog).

These notes are mixed with a lot of feelings. Sometimes, they can be very emotional: sad, happy or even both at the same time. But after all, all of them are excellent material for my master project.
I pour my aching heart into a pop...
Sunday  No additional text

How many heartbreaks you have...
2019-11-20  No additional text

All the questions people have ask...
2019-11-15  

Make a comic explanation for the...
2019-11-13  longing to be close to so...

It is understandable when one pe...
2019-11-11  fine that love don’t alway... 

Random comic/story idea about t...
2019-10-06  other one is younger and...

But what I can feel is even though she looks tough and doesn’t seem to be interested in ‘love’ but to me she seems to be soft at heart and once she realized there’s some love she deserves, she will stop and think of it for sure. I mean, who doesn’t need love?

Just wondering how it feels like to be someone she loves?....😊

Notes:
2019-08-15  My life is kinda based on...

From Vice documentary
2019-07-22  (Life and love in India: the... 

Love, who’s she?
2019-05-24  She’s not better than me

Cheesy line vending machine
2019-05-14  No additional text

Love is tough
2019-05-10  Time is rough

I love you. 
I mean it.

26 January 2019 at 02:14

I pour my aching heart into a pop...
Sunday  No additional text

How many heartbreaks you have...
2019-11-20  No additional text

All the questions people have ask...
2019-11-15  

Make a comic explanation for the...
2019-11-13  longing to be close to so...

It is understandable when one pe...
2019-11-11  fine that love don’t alway... 

Random comic/story idea about t...
2019-10-06  other one is younger and...

Babyy girl
20 December 2018 at 00:40

(10/12/18)

Won’t say something stupid)

But darling it is so hard

I don’t know how to balance it. Fuck it. I need to step back a little to take care of my heart not to feel too much for you. I know it was only a month or two. I don’t even fucking know you at all and I fell in Love this much. You don’t even meet the quality of being my future girlfriend, why you? Stupid heart.
More Sketches.

FRANCISKA:

- We can be so mean to someone some time, but that doesn't mean we'll never love them. There's always a new who someone inside my heart. I never thought we'd need to be mean but all I did was just protecting my heart & feelings.

BABY BLUE

Everything. I did or everything. I say, everything. I had to show you or my friends won't speak. I'm not who they want inside my heart. I never

I'm sad but I don't know why. Maybe I'm crazy and stupid.

I DON'T DAMAGE MY SELF ESTEEM.

By giving me the worst of you, give me the best of you.
Internet memes are also my favorite things to look at. They’re funny and most of them are quite relateable to me. So I collected a lot of memes which resonated with me and somehow I’ve received a lot of inspiration from them.
In 2018, I created a mood chart to keep track of how I feel each day. I found this convenient despite my daily routine of taking short notes on what I’ve done or who I’ve seen on that day. Sometimes it just takes more effort to write my feelings down in a diary. Things can go really fast nowadays and we barely remember things we did on a particular day. So, it is important for me to write them down somewhere for myself to remember them later.
After collecting memories, I try to make rough sketches just to see how they will look like and allow myself to explore more techniques and formats.

This is a sketch that I made in December 2019 after I spotted someone who looked like a younger version of Laleh, my favourite Swedish singer. I was half-following her because she was also on the same train. In the end she took a train to Hjulsta while I had to wait for a train to Akalla.

Then I thought it would be nice to sketch all my memories down otherwise I would forget them. I usually draw scenes related to trains and subway stations. I just love them and they are a part of our everyday life so I’m sure other people can relate to it too.
This is another comic I made last semester and was planning to print with the riso machine. I still haven’t had time to do it but this is also a story which took place at a subway station and on a train. It’s all about meeting someone interesting and they coincidentally take the same route as you.
I try not to stick with only one style and like to try something more physical just to make them feel more natural.

I’ve tried techniques such as soft pastels, color marker pens and paper collages. I also love playing with shadows and sometimes I use my old photographs as well.
Since most comic formats are in a “square format”, frankly, I am already tired of it. The square format seems to limit my work in showing emotions. So I tried to explore some new techniques in the following short comic about the unclear relationship between two persons.
I find it is easier to put more facial expressions on animal characters in their cartoon version than on human characters. I did some research and tried to draw a lot of different faces from them.

However, I’ve made some characters appear expressionless based on their personalities.
“All I Have to do Is Dream”
is a short comic I made in November 2019. I tried to draw ‘rough sketches’
for these stories and tried to change my characters into animals since
I didn’t want to draw a specific person. This one is an edited version
which I have published online as well.

After finishing only 11 pages of the sketch, I suddenly decided to do
a self-publishing prototype by printing 50 copies of those pages with
the riso machine. Then, I gave them away to people by placing them
in the ‘free magazine zone’ at the front door of Konstfack.

My main goal is just to gain feedback and comments on my work from strangers.
After publishing the zine on the website *tapas.io* - an online comic platform, I sent the link to my friends in both Thailand and Sweden and asked for feedback. I realized it’s easier to collect feedback and comments online than offline since I’ve seen people taking all my zine at Konstfack but not sharing any feedback or comments.

The feedback that I got back from my friends was quite impressive and extremely useful to me on improving and redirecting my project.

Here is some of the feedback that I have picked to show.

"Maybe it makes me feel confused. I don’t know if it’s a dream or not, or if it’s reality in the end, or still a dream? And I think it is about a not so good love story, I think about heartbroken love. I feel sad for him (the fox) he dreams about his girlfriend but he must accept that they cannot be the same like before. I think that they loved each other, then she stopped and he becomes sad and he still loves her." - Friend 1

Friend 2:

It deals with rather negative feelings. But I think that the cute anthropomorphized characters sort of balance it.

I also think that it is something most people can relate to; the feeling of loneliness that comes from the fact that most time we don’t have the courage to connect with other people.

Friend 3:

I really like the portrayal of the two characters especially the details of their facial expression! And I like the idea of mixing reality and dream, which actually works on me because I thought the two were in some sort of relation, in real. I’m a bit confused on page four, when cat lady says “Two days in a row” and the following conversation, I’m not sure if I follow the scene except that the two were arguing over something... The narrative here is emotional, but I would love to have a more “story” alike scene instead of the cat lady shooting “why” questions.

My understanding is that the aggressive, emotional, angry dream is

Friend 4:

I think its cute, dreamy, story is like a fresh love. While reading I got confused of the lines of the convo like “yes we met last month twice and you told your friend too” For example this was quite confusing I thought what was this supposed to show to the readers about their relationship. So thats probably the only down part that I got.

Their relationship was a bit vague like how the cat was feeling towards the dog but maybe that is the point?

Friend 5:

I really like the gold riso print it looks really cool! And the gradients made with it are amazing! I like the characters facial expressions you did really well with that! All the small space prints on fabric, the tiny plants as well in the backgrounds. One thing that I think could benefit this comic is if maybe someone with english as their first language could help with the grammar in the dialogue between the cat and the dog, I think the tempus/time forms are incorrect, and it became confusing to read. At the first page in the “hey!?” Speech bubble the line of the frame crosses the bubble which I personally would prefer if it did not have the frame line inside the speech bubble. Maybe move the text a bit higher in the bubble so the spacing becomes even on top and
After reading all the feedback, I have learned that people perceive my animal characters as a certain gender, which is different from what I expected.

When I created animal characters I wished to take all the genders away. However, that wasn’t my only intention. I also wanted to explore how I can avoid making my characters resemble specific people.

When I’m working on Baby Blue, there are some sketches with animal characters that I wished to use as another form of my human characters. “All I Have to Do Is Dream” is a story which is related to Baby Blue’s story timeline as well. But in the end I decided not to use it in Baby Blue because it might confuse readers by having different kinds of characters instead of only human characters.

Here is a short comic I used in Baby Blue’s first dummy. But then I decided not to use it anymore since the characters are cats and this might confuse the readers.
I also wanted to do something to make people interact with my work. So, I put this paper in the GFI department and got some interesting feedback.

I think it’s fun to have people interact with my work!
During Valentine’s week in 2020, some of my friends in Visual Communication and I decided to organize a small exhibition at the Student Union Gallery for 3 days.

In the exhibition, I showed some of my work related to “Baby Blue”.

A Valentine’s Exhibition
At that time, I was deciding on how to continue my master project. Originally, I planned to weave several love stories into one comic book. But when this Valentine’s Exhibition happened, I only selected work related to Baby Blue because it was easier to use one story in a small exhibition. Surprisingly, it was very nice to give my work some space to show and see them from a bigger perspective.

After exhibiting it, it gave me a clearer perspective in focusing on Baby Blue since some of my friends were able to relate to it and understand the story. So that’s when I decided to pick Baby Blue and work from this story as my master project instead of using several stories.
An Exhibition Workshop

And in March, we had an exhibition workshop with MYCKET. I picked one of my work called “In the Comet” to exhibit. It was great trying to think of other ways to change my work from a ‘flat’ format into something more physical. I created two characters into a 3D-like form from materials MYCKET provided.

“In the Comet” a short story about two blobs trying to be friends.
“In the Comet” is a short story related to Baby Blue where I took a passage from my journal in the past to work on. At first, it was only a plain text about how I felt in some specific moments with some person and I thought it might be fun to turn texts into visual storytelling.

In the Comet

We bumped into each other today in the bathroom. If we still were friends, I'd have no choice but to say hi. A small conversation, I could have a say, but I ignored her. It was like a bad dream, and I just went out of it. You know how it goes. I saw her again after a while, but whatever...

There is a small conversation we had today made me think about whether humans can be friends with each other or not. I mean, do people always have to feel the other person's heart? Do we really need a long time to feel or have done some tough things together to call it love?

Love for me is something very hard to feel, and I'm not sure what this feeling is. I mean, I don't want it to feel like something but the feeling is too different to love, and it's something similar to love.

I may not have a lot of history with her or have helped her through a tough time or something like that, but I feel like she's still there. I can't ever leave her, and it has been a year and something already.

I don't know how I can or how I will handle it. I used to feel like this feeling things to grow again, and I wish to be friends with her again, but I'm afraid of trying to ask her out the first time. Is it going to be difficult to ask her? But why? What's going on? Am I still like her? And is this really the time to try to be close to her again? I wonder and be ready to be friends with her again. I sometimes really need advice, but it's hard to start talking again and again. What do I do?

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Then I created two characters which I called “blobs”. Because of their blobby shapes, they might be ghosts or unknown creatures.

Original texts that I turned into “In the Comet”
We bumped into each other today in some corner of the comet.

Those small conversations we had today made me think and wonder why heart can be soooooo weak from feeling so much for someone?

I don’t know how can or how will I handle if this feeling starts to grow again.

and is this really ok to try to be close to this blob again?
When we were planning for our exhibition, I was thinking of showing my project in different formats, not just as a book. Some of my stories would be presented in different forms such as in animation, poster, song, post-it notes, etc...

A rough sketch of my exhibition space.

A second rough sketch of my exhibition space.
Babys Blue is a comic book about friendship and romantic love that is told by two characters.

I want to explore more on understanding a complicated feeling between romantic love and friendship love.

Since relationships are very complicated and difficult to understand, I think it’s a good way to go through a journey with the main character and see how she’s dealing with her own feelings.
My Baby Blue materials are from my personal journal/diary, my facebook posts, my tweets from twitter, my pictures, my sketches and drawings. Since all of them are from “me”, it was quite easy to start with.

But working with memories is not always easy and there are some mixed feelings along the way. Sometimes, it’s very hard to work with memories because I’ve had bitter feelings from the memories between me and someone who had been involved with my feelings, and who inspired me to use these materials to work with. When I have to go back to those memories, it was like repeating them again and again.

But not everything was sad and gloomy. Sometimes, there were good memories to think back to and work with as well. And to use those memories in Baby Blue is a great way to be honest with my own feelings and to be able to express everything.
In my first dummy version of Baby Blue, it looked more like a real-journal book which contained different sketches and handwritten notes. I got a lot of great feedback that it looked like a real diary. The rough style and handwriting really made them feel like they were getting a glimpse into my mind. A lot of feedback said: “It’s personal and honest”.

But after a tutoring session with my tutors and supervisor, they told me to draw more ‘moments’ between two characters and due to covid situation, I had to change from ‘hand drawn and scanned drawing’ to drawing digitally with a Wacom tablet which totally changed the ‘rough’ style and took away the sense of being a ‘journal-like’ book. I kind of wanted to keep a rough style but with the limited time, I couldn’t afford to plan it out again. So Baby Blue ended up with a digital-style drawing after I took away most sketch pages.
Some sketch pages I took away from Baby Blue final version.
As I've mentioned before, I was trying to explore a lot of different techniques and formats. But in the end when I chose to focus on Baby Blue, I decided to use a very simple style by using limited colors (mostly Blue and Pink) and simple comic panels. I also tried to add some shapes and a playful background to make it less boring and match the character's emotion.
Here are different drawing styles & format I used in Baby Blue
Here are different drawing styles & format I used in Baby Blue

Sample pages

IT FEELS LIKE
TIME FREEZES AFTER WE GET REJECTED BY SOMEONE WE LIKE.
IT WAS OVER A YEAR AGO, BUT WHY CAN'T WE MOVE ON?
IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE STUCK... IN THE SAME PLACE AND TIME
AND THE MORE WE SEE THAT PERSON'S FACE, THE MORE IT HURTS.
IT HURTS MORE WHEN THEY TRY TO BE YOUR FRIEND...

[Geek Mei - Song from Jelly, Rocket band]
“Blue” is a sad color?

In the beginning, I was thinking about Baby Blue as a sad story. But the more I worked on it, the more I got to learn and got closer to my own characters and I love them dearly. I felt bad to portray them as being sad, so I wrote an additional part with a positive feeling at the end.

The reason I chose the title “Baby Blue” is because when I think about this character, I think about the color Blue, which gives me these keywords:

Sadness, calmness, the sea, the sky, something very deep but beautiful.
“Friendship and Romantic love”

Baby Blue is a story of love and friendship between two people. The story is told by the main character who falls in love with a friend and gets to know each other through different events until she finally decides to confess her feelings and receives a different answer than what she had expected.

After the main character has heard the unexpected answer from the other character, she will have to deal with a lot of challenging feelings. But little did she know that to be rejected or if the other person doesn’t feel the same way she felt, doesn’t mean that that person doesn’t like her.

That’s when I tried to write the other character’s perspective to help readers understand both sides of the situation they’re in.

At first, I put Baby Blue into the category of “Unrequited love” but I think it sounded too sad. So maybe focusing on something between friendship love and romantic love is a bit softer.

I think the story of Baby Blue can be related to by a lot of people. No matter if you have been in the same situation or not, love is universal.
Since the spring exhibition will no longer be in a physical format, I decided to do my work digitally and uploaded the finished version on issuu.com. Even though I don’t like the idea of my book in an e-book format, it is the best way to show my work during this situation.

Link to Baby Blue: https://issuu.com/vc2020/docs/baby_blue
Baby Blue will be printed as a physical format as well.

The first version is made through Risograph printing.
Final Examination

This year due to the corona virus situation, we weren’t able to have a physical exhibition and that included the chance of meeting our opponents in person. But since it’s 2020, we can easily move everything onto a digital platform. Even though it cannot be compared with the ‘real and physical experience’, it went well.

I was lucky enough to have a wonderful opponent, Alle Eriksson, and other participants who have made my examination full of warmth and joy.

Here are some interesting comments and feedback that I received from Alle Eriksson on Baby Blue.

-Colors: First, Alle mentioned that she thought the Blue and Pink colors I used were representing a masculine and feminine role and she really enjoyed the hints of a 80-90s pop culture style in Baby Blue. When I was first working on Baby Blue, I only thought about the color ‘Blue’ because the person behind the character gave me a feeling of ‘Blue’ in so many ways (for example, a little sadness, loneliness, tenderness, etc…). And the main character which is ‘me’ is pink because I think pink is more playful. If I put them together, pink and blue would make a perfect combination. To give a more perspective, I have always been interested in the 80-90’s art style and as a consequence, it appears a lot in my artwork.

-Music: Since I put a lot of music and lyrics into Baby Blue, Alle also mentioned several songs like “Little Girl Blue” by Nina Simone, “Take On Me” - Aha, “Big Yellow Taxi” - Joni Mitchell, etc... and that really made me happy that someone can totally relate to and understand that music can also represent a lot of feelings and emotion in artwork.
-**Love**: Alle said “Love is a universal feeling. It’s timeless. Sad love is also timeless. There are countless songs and books about it, and you have placed yourself in this timeless frame with extra markers”. She also mentioned how brave it is to be in love, especially with a friendship on the line which is one of the hardest things because it’s a big sacrifice. How hard it is, how much it takes to say ‘I think I like you’ in whatever ways.

-There’s one page that Alle mentioned where I put one colorful drawing of the two characters drinking beer together and it shows that one of the characters is a POC (Person of color). I didn’t realize that before since I used only pink and blue for the main colors in the book, and as the main character is me which I’m also POC, it’s great to know. I would love to try portraying more POCs in the future.

-The other thing that made me feel happy is that Alle saw that in my book, I used two ‘girl characters’. However, I didn’t try to emphasize a ‘coming out’ topic or make a statement of being an LGBTQ character. It’s not that I don’t care about it but I was more focused on how two persons can like or love each other since love is universal, it’s for everyone.
Feedback on the final book version

After I published Baby Blue online, I sent the link to my friends and got a lot of great feedback. Below is some of the feedback that I picked.

“After I read Baby Blue, I think about those times when I was younger, maybe in teenage years when I liked someone and got confused by that feeling. And also, it gave me the same feeling as ‘Blue is the Warmest Color’ in a comic version.”

“The story is beautifully told, I love the way you picture those delicate, sensitive, yet real emotions when we (all) have those crush experiences. It is really relatable especially when you highlight those detailed gestures of another person, which perhaps are only noticeable to the person who’s having a crush on someone.”

“I kinda feel neither happy or sad after I finished reading it, it is a complicated feeling but a little sad after all. I also like that you include another character’s point of view which makes the story clearer. I feel so relatable!”

“I can totally relate to the story, it reminds me of those old times when I liked someone at school. Also the ending is kinda open which gives me spaces to think of what could happen after!”
Conclusion

To work on a personal story as an artist:

When I chose to work on this project, I always knew that it would affect my feelings in some way since it was a part of my memories and there is a person behind the story who inspired me to write and draw.

In the beginning, I was having a hard time working on it. On some days, it hurt my feelings so I decided to take a break until I was ready to continue working on it. But things aren’t always easy since I use my own experiences and memories as material for my work. There will always be some people who would feel uncomfortable recognising themselves in my artwork even though I will never reveal names or their identity in my work.

There were days when I lost all my confidence in continuing this project and almost felt like throwing everything away. But it was already too late since I was at 80% of the process at that time. Furthermore, I had already fallen in love with my project so it was hard to change the direction of the project. I was also in a very unstable mood where anyone’s comments on my work could change my opinion of the project each time I talked to them.

So I started talking to a lot of people who understood me best. They are my classmates, my friends (both in Thailand and Sweden), my tutors and my professors.

All of their advice and encouragement made me realise that I still have very strong emotional support and they told me to keep on working and do whatever I have been doing. One of the best advice I got was:

“Sometimes you can have a bigger perspective or something as an artist or writer to make uncomfortable choices. Because if no one would ever do it, a lot of great stuff wouldn’t exist.”

And that brought back my courage and confidence to keep on doing what I love.