

# HANDLE WITH CARE

Solo exhibition by Leila Victorin

*This collection is ultimately about love.*

*I remember going into my dad's office and finding a closet full of bubble wrap - I asked "what's this for" and he responded simply with "for stress."*

*In graduate school I was diagnosed with ADHD and would spend most of my lectures drawing hundreds of multi-colored dots with markers to deal with what I now recognize to be "stress...anxiety."*

*There was something about those repetitive dots that was – meditative in a way?*

*I grew up wishing I could change so many things about my childhood - about my family. I understand now how much our collective anxiety impacted our behavior and how we showed love and affection.*

*I had really large feelings - as most kids do - but I worked really hard to suppress them and make them much smaller than they were — holding them somewhere in my body to maintain peace at home. Now as an adult, I remember several very specific childhood moments with often complex and conflicting emotions and instead of suppressing them - in this collection, I've chosen to honor their magnitude by releasing them just as they appear in my memories.*

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*In the last 9 months of creating this collection, I've been able to find acceptance within my life as it was and as it is. I've started on a path to relieving the stress of resentment and disappointment that has prevented me from moving forward.*

*I've had a chance to think through each of these memories as I've created each little dot - each little bubble - I've meditated on the rage, sadness, joy, laughter, disappointment, and gratitude of my inner child. I've worked through what each of these moments meant and asked, "why do I remember these in particular?"*

*I believe after all of that, it was love. Visual representations of the sought after embraces, the "I love yous", the "peace" – that had been masked under coping mechanisms.*

*This collection brought me to acceptance of the love I received - exactly as it was - but now with compassion and understanding.*

*As I prepare to raise my own baby girl - I know I will make mistakes, I know I will disappoint her...I only hope that she will grow to understand how much I love her.*

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Special thanks to:

Mom and Dad - My brother Arthur - My husband Emmanuel - My late cat J and studio companion

My friends who have talked me through different aspects of this collection and who helped me complete it when I wasn't sure it could be done.

Ayo - for the music! (Find him on Spotify @amenohix)

Patch and Remington - Thank you for allowing me to tell this story

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