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Annie Sprinkle & Elizabeth Stephens' Love Art Lab is Oh-So-Romantic!

BY TANIA HAMMIDI

It has been an amazing year for Annie Sprinkle and her lover, trans-media artist and college professor Elizabeth Stephens. The two fell madly in love and together they decided to address the war one heartbeat at a time.

Sprinkle and Stephens are creating a seven-year art project called "Seven Years of Love as Art." And, in case you didn't know, Sprinkle is a renowned former porn star turned sexologist.

"We created the project from three events: The war in Afghanistan; the annulment of historical same-sex marriages in San Francisco; and artist Linda Montano's project 'Seven Years of Art as Living,'" said Sprinkle. Stephens explained that the culminating limitations set on gay civil liberties stemmed from the same greed that feeds the war. "Love can be a powerful weapon for social change," she said. "Love can create change not capitalism, money or power."

Stephens is an artist whose 15-year span has kept a keen eye on lesbian desire, technology, and serious and rigorous play around the topos of transformation. "I never realized that one person could be a whole uni-

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verse," Stephens said. "I am totally delighted because I have had a big crush on Annie since the '90s. We are committing to love in our lives."

Sprinkle responds with a deep smile. For a woman with the title "Sex Goddess" and appearances in more than 50 porn films, she also has accolades that include a doctorate in human sexuality and two celebrated books: *Dr. Sprinkle's Spectacular Sex: Makeover Your Love Life* and *The Sluts and Goddesses Video*

Workbook. It may seem that there is nothing new to learn about love, but according to Sprinkle this is far from true. "Love has become very tangible. It is like a pillow," she said. "It can catch you when you fall—it softens any blow."

Each year of the "Seven Years of Love as Art" project is organized around one color and its attributes. The first year will be organized around the color red which attributes security and survival. This began with a December wedding, "Red Wedding One." More than 30 GLBT and straight artists, academics, sex workers and other friends created the wedding and attended it decked out in red to commemorate the first year.

Sharing with the community is a key component of Sprinkle's and Stephens' work. "Cuddle," which Sprinkle describes as "a horizontal world view," invited gallery-goers to spend seven minutes on a cozy bed with the two. In Moscow, "X-Treme Kiss," a bank of video monitors featuring a close-up shot of the two artists kissing each other caught the attention of the Orthodox Pope of Russia.

The project addressed survival head-on late in the year when Sprinkle was diagnosed with a malignant breast tumor. A big scare, the diagnosis gave way to "Breast Cancer Ballet," a beautiful piece designed to survive and demystify cancer. "Making difficult things into art helps lubricate us through the process," said Sprinkle, who is now in good health.

Indeed, the very sexy "Hairotica" photo series shows Sprinkle and Stephens making love while cutting Sprinkles' hair, and "Love Infusion" testifies to all the



Annie Sprinkle (left) and Elizabeth Stephens canoodling

ways in which love, community and sexual desire sustain us through tough times.

One year and 20 performances later, Sprinkle says they are ready for survival to be over and they are ready to move on to the orange year: "Sex and Creativity!" "This year promises to be edgier," she said.

With the "Love Art Lab" at the helm of a seven-year performance project, the GLBT community is certain to experience more nuanced, explosive, endearing and provocative performances on love. The Love Art Lab will take place Sunday, Feb. 12 at the Sepulveda Unitarian Universalist Society Church (9550 Haskell Ave., North Hills), where Sprinkle and Stephens will be speaking. For anyone overdue for a Unitarian service, this is one not to be missed. Service begins at 10:30 a.m. It is a perfect place to visit with your sweetie on Valentine's Day and open your mind to the many possibilities of love. There is no doubt that if you do you will experience love that can change the world.