

The Anatomy of Lindsey Mendick's Love

At Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate, the artist's most accomplished exhibition to date dissects the intensity of long-term relationships through fragile ceramic forms

BY SOFIA HALLSTRÖM IN EXHIBITION REVIEWS | 16 JUL 26



A slowed-down version of Patience and Prudence's 'Tonight You Belong to Me' (1956) plays on loop in Carl Freedman Gallery. This unsettling song sets the tone for Lindsey Mendick's solo exhibition 'Where You End and I Begin', which charts the experience of long-term love from its honeymoon period through a clinical dissection, before ending in full-blown psychological and body horror.



Lindsey Mendick, 'Where You End and I Begin', 2026, exhibition view. Courtesy: © the artist and Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate; photograph: Ollie Harrop

In the first room, dramatic, deep-red curtains line the walls, on which hang ceramic panels printed with Polaroid-style photographs documenting intimate glimpses of Mendick and her partner, Guy Oliver ('Spicing Things Up' series, all works 2026). Nearby, a circle of glazed ceramic vases rewards close attention: *The Kiss* is studded with renderings of the couple's protruding lips, punctuated by image transfers of kisses from film and television, while *I Ate You Alive* is covered in pictures of heart-shaped balloons interspersed with holes ringed by teeth. Oversized praying mantises climb the vase's lime-green surface; the female insect is known to eat the male, one of many references in the show to sex and sacrifice in the natural world.

While making the show, Mendick read *Bitch: A Revolutionary Guide to Sex, Evolution and the Female Animal* (2022) by Lucy Cooke, which argues that zoology's patriarchal approach has distorted interpretations of female behaviour. Mendick draws on this same insight, using insects and animals to point to the unruliness and brutality that occur in nature and to argue that human sex and relationships are messier than we might think.



Lindsey Mendick, 'Where You End and I Begin', 2026, exhibition view. Courtesy: © the artist and Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate; photograph: Ollie Harrop

In the second room, Mendick's exploration of the carnal instinct becomes more personal, with love emerging as a compulsion the body cannot function without. Two sickly green, concave walls flank a pair of mortuary-style tables; on one sits a ceramic sculpture of Oliver's trainers crawling with bronze snails (*Holding on for Too Long*). Detailed ceramic tableaux line the walls, one of which immediately stands out: *You Used to Love That About Me* contains an image transfer of a doll that the poet and painter Oskar Kokoschka commissioned after his relationship with Alma Mahler collapsed. Devastated by their break-up, Kokoschka had a life-sized replica of Mahler built to his specifications, which he dressed, took to the opera and, by some accounts, eventually destroyed in a fit of drunken grief. Mendick's own confessional object-making sits in conversation with that history, as she, too, remakes Oliver through objects related to him. The room reads as love dissected and cut open on the table – an intensely honest, visceral plea of adoration from a woman who cannot live without her partner.

The final room is stark white and centres on a large-scale raised platform on which fragments of ceramic body parts are attached to metal armatures (*Where You End and I Begin*). Mendick and Oliver become one in something

close to a Frankenstein's monster, assembled from the ceramic parts of two people who love each other too much to stay separate entities. Yet, however fused these bodies become, a gap remains. You can never quite know what the other person in a relationship is thinking or doing, especially when they are out of sight. That unknowing is what the room unravels and interrogates.



Lindsey Mendick, 'Where You End and I Begin', 2026, exhibition view. Courtesy: © the artist and Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate; photograph: Ollie Harrop

This is Mendick's most exposed, all-consuming exhibition to date. Every work was made by her own hand, without assistance, which matters here as clay is not a forgiving material. The sheer technical command on display and the confidence required to let something so breakable carry so much feeling are easy to underestimate. 'Where You End and I Begin' refuses to argue that love is toxic or that it is redemptive. It insists that both can be true at once, and that body horror can be the most honest way to describe how love can feel. Sex, insects, animals, cigarettes and wombs all fuse into the same overwhelming, inseparable whole. It is grotesque, humorous, deeply personal and unmistakably Mendick's most accomplished work.

Lindsey Mendick's 'Where You End and I Begin' is at **Carl Freedman Gallery**, Margate, until 30 August

Main image: Lindsey Mendick, 'Spicing Things Up' series, 2026, glazed ceramics. Courtesy: © the artist and Carl Freedman Gallery, Margate; photograph: Ollie Harrop