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'MEET' SINGLES FIRST VIA WEBCAM

Love at first byte

ARTY | Stag and Dove's dating site is Banksy-esque

essentials

- **Weekly culture updates on art events** happening around London which are normally closed to the public
- **Matchmake a couple** using video profiles and send them on a blind date
- **Online style and love advice**
- **Competition prizes including weekends away** at an 18th-century venue in Le Marais, Paris

RETNA WOOLLER
for thelondonpaper

IT MIGHT sound like a stretch of the imagination, but if graffiti artist Banksy designed an online dating site, it would probably look a bit like www.staganddove.com.

If you're finding Facebook poking all a bit passe, this site features edgy singletons, stencil art and loft-style parties, where London's single set can mix.

Gone are the virtual kisses, chatrooms and thumbnail profile shots of other sites. Stag and Dove lets users wink at each other, place names in a little black book and call users they spot online.

Site creator Clive Fleury says he hopes to "take the risk factor out of blind dating by

giving people a chance to get to know each other through a webcam first".

He adds: "That horrible feeling of meeting for the first time isn't so daunting if you've had a conversation with them online."

If you want a quick taster, a three-day membership is £1.50. Or sign up for a month for £8.99. If you're really keen, you can join for a year, which will set you back £69.99.

For online dating novices, Stag and Dove seems pretty simple.

Graffiti art litters the background as buttons and kitsch sketches of old-school telephones ring when someone is trying to contact you.

You can deny them access if you're not keen, or start

chatting if you are. My online black book is filled with types such as La Dispute, who describes his shag status as "now and again" and his take on drugs as "have you got any?"

A section for your favourite things asks for one-word answers and the "me, me, me" part covers income and smoking, as well as music preferences.

If you decide not to share your profile with another user, you can always choose the "get lost" option.

Television producers Emma Willis, from Clapham, and Elliot Hawkes, from Wimbledon, both 30, were matched because of their "opposite sex equivalent" status. Willis said speaking to

Hawkes first by webcam made a big difference.

"Unlike on MySpace, it was much easier to get to know him before meeting up," she said. "I could tell that he was genuinely funny."

Their first date was the launch of The 5th Collective artists' studios in Wapping's Gallery Yujiro (tickets were £100 but Stags and Doves paid £25).

"I joined the site because it seemed a fun way to go out and meet people," says Willis. "If something else comes from it, that's cool

too, but I don't have expectations."

Hawkes says their date was "full of flirty banter". He adds: "I'd like to see Emma again. We'll see what happens."

www.staganddove.com



WEBCAM FLIRT
EMMA WILLIS
ELLIOT HAWKES