

Lauren Hecht
Artist statement

First impressions can be deceiving. I create what appear to be light hearted and easily digestible toys as art. It is art that combines the computational with sculptural and two-dimensional design with considerations of audience and context. Taking in the whole piece quickly is initially important, but the slower and larger meaning that settles in is really what I'm after. To prolong the consideration of work that has immediate appeal, I make every little detail count. Their very purpose is to embody my sarcastic self and societal critique and a meaning that includes but goes beyond entertainment or commodity. Toy qualities such as scale, packaging, playfulness and anthropomorphism makes my art approachable to a wide audience. Like most toys, my works are fun and escapist but I don't want their reception to stop at their face value.

Whether animated or static, virtual or embodied, my creatures take the shape of organic beings. Their physical characteristics project or echo my own physical and emotional inadequacies and paranoias. Influenced by the kawaii culture of Japan, cute, somewhat juvenile imagery endears while conveying both humorous and serious issues such as human intervention in genetics that is purportedly oriented toward the benefit of future generations. Given rapid developments in this field, it is not a large leap of imagination to say that human beings will be able to engineer their own original species in the near future (and then what happens to us?). The escalating effects of global warming and other natural disasters caused by human behavior is also likely to transform us, socially and physically. These topics are very heated in the media. The toy forms of my art will hopefully allow people to see these situations in a new way, for better or worse.

I consider myself a sculptor whether I work in clay, metal or animation. Recently, the latter seems to give me the most freedom. The physicality of media like clay confers limitations, mostly in scale and perhaps complexity. Modeling forms on the computer gives me an infinite amount of space and material, but new limitations arise. The tactile and sensual joy that accompanies interacting with the material becomes diminished. This is why I am now exploring 3D printing processes, producing models and supplementary artifacts from the computer to accompany my animations. These supplementary objects may include quarter inch portable toilets in preparation for having to abandon a home or a scaled up nano robot that is the engineer for a fictional protagonist in an animated piece. These objects allow for viewers to have more of a physical connection to what is happening on a screen. The toy sets I make are fun objects to look at and interact with, but they also serve as a not so subtle warning to what may be just around the corner.