

## Artist Statement

My work focuses on my experience navigating life as a Korean-American gay man. I have been looking at online communities with a specific focus on avatars, and how their continued implementation in Internet culture has led a whole generation through an identity-defining journey. Digital avatars or icons present individuals with the opportunity to choose how they will be perceived in a virtual space. This provides anonymity, granting a comfortable space to explore things such as gender identity and sexuality. The work I create is informed by personal experiences within online communities and acted out through animal characters that are my own avatars. Parts of these animals are deconstructed into wire frames to communicate the idea of a rendered, artificial moment. In contrast, I want the emotions of the avatars involved to communicate the authenticity of the experience. I utilize clay to give object-hood and permanence to these moments generated through a screen.