

Artist Statement

Cathy Della Lucia

My work engages with themes of (im)permanence, (un)belonging, and the gamification of the construction of identity, drawing on my experience as a transracial adoptee. Through multi-part sculptures that are built to come apart, I reflect on the modularity, complexity, and contradictions of identity by repositioning the relationships between body, tool, and toy. The carved units making up the sculptures draw from misaligned and misplaced fragments of everyday life that relate to, without being a body—a half-bitten fishing lure, shoddily fixed car body, an abandoned crutch, a bobby pin in a refrigerator. These elements are signifiers of distraction, but are created through obsessive attention.

I choose to use materials that can respond to touch at its most aggressive and sensitive tenors. I am drawn to the universal familiarity of clay and wood histories in domestic spaces and their association with objects of protection, consumption, ritual, and violence. These materials can become both structure and skin, container and contained. Their inherent identities can be coaxed out with oil or disguised behind color and varnish. The laborious process of carving, sanding, and reassembling is like renewing acquaintance through touch and translating through abstraction. Using furniture joinery techniques and tension, I am able to create forms with bodily presence using offcuts and scrap material that can be easily taken apart, repositioned, manipulated and put back together on my own. In addition to altering visual and structural relationships, the sensory cues created from the squeak of a tight dowel or the grumble and click of a joint sliding together offer an alternate way that familiarity can imbed itself in objecthood. By exposing the joinery and leaving some voids unfilled, I am making space to consider the less obvious types of connections— haphazard, illusory, and secure— that make up our own constructions of identity and temporary perception of wholeness.