Artist Statement

Lalana Fedorschak

In my studio practice, I create sculptures that approach the figure as a theatrical object. Bodies, both human and animal, are distorted and staged as performers of subconscious instincts: anxiety, fear, and desire. My work functions within a lineage of Surrealist, feminist sculpture that treats objects as psychological proxies. My work is informed by artists like Toyen and Eva Hesse, the early early works of Louise Bourgeois, and Nancy Grossman's assemblage sculptures. I take influence from late-1980s body horror films, Queer abstraction, and camp, which I reference through exaggeration and dark humor. I explore emotional states that are socially suppressed but physically felt.

The human figure is central to my work, with ceramic forms acting as surrogates for real flesh. Disembodied tongues, bruised skin, and ambiguous creases speak to intimate touch, vulnerability, and erotic tension. I make non-traditional displays like prop furniture, welded steel anti-pedestals, and triangular corner pedestals that blur the boundaries between domestic interior, theater, and exhibition display. Materials are theatrically cast to perform as something they are not truly. These choices question the authority of the exhibition space and create the sense that the figures are aware of being seen.

I use animals as proxies for human emotions, exploring anxiety and survival responses. I focus on rabbits and rodents because of their prey status and their proximity to humans. In my exhibition *Strange Encounters*, rabbits are frozen in fear, responding reflexively to a perceived threat. In my following exhibition *Chaser*, I present rabbits as playful and autonomous, teasing the viewer with their elusiveness. By diffusing human emotion through animal figures, I create a disarming and unsettling distance that invites viewers to laugh, flinch, and see themselves reflected in the work.

In earlier work, I examined rodent mating behavior, specifically the lordosis reflex: a posture of submission and receptivity. *Rat in Lordosis* depicts a female rat with an arched back, serene expression, and braced claws, evoking a complicated mixture of arousal, compliance, and agency. The albino specimen, associated with laboratory testing, draws attention to the value systems that render certain lives disposable. I want the viewer to feel an uncomfortable proximity between human and animal bodies.

Across my practice, figuration is a tool to express a slippery, formless, and non-coherent self, shifting between human and animal, controlled and panicked. I queer the sculptural canon through genre masquerade: craft materials passing as fine art objects, objects performing as bodies, sculptures behaving like props. My work explores alienation, self-observation, fear, and intimate touch through theatrical forms that are powerful and evocative. Through imitation and synthesis, I explore the slippage between natural and artificial, erotic and grotesque, giving my objects autonomy and permission to misbehave.