

Christina West
Artist Statement

I sculpt human figures that transform spaces into surreal, psychologically charged environments. Viewers enter these strangely familiar spaces where the rendered realism of the figures meets shifts in scale and decidedly artificial color. In attempt to highlight the uncertainty and subjectivity that veils everyday, common experience, I use the figures to set up narrative expectations—to present a situation that doesn't provide narrative clarity or conclusion, but raises questions about the relationship among the figures and the nature of their actions.

I translate a high degree of observed bodily detail into my sculptures, though I'm not interested in glorifying the body as an end in itself. The naturalism of my bodies serves as a foil for the ambiguous narrative content. Strong recognition with the clearly articulated human form offers a way for viewers to easily enter (psychologically or emotionally) into the work and sets up expectations for a similar kind of clarity to the content. But rather, in a given installation viewers are confronted with situations where qualities such as pain, ecstasy, innocence, malice, beauty and/or repulsion are pushing and pulling against each other, without a single quality winning out completely.

My work stems from a seemingly contradictory attraction to, yet discomfort during, interactions with other people. I find other people to be compelling subjects and objects of contemplation because we will never be in their heads as completely as we are in our own. Despite the fact that, fundamentally, people are essentially the same, this lack of direct access to interiority makes others a perpetual mystery. It cloaks every interaction in uncertainty and ambiguity. But it is exactly that mystery, uncertainty, and ambiguity that make the inquiry worth returning to. And it is such complexity of understanding that I strive to infuse into my work.