

Jillian Crochet

A surreal sense of time and disembodiment shapes my sculpture, performance and video work through repetition, haptics, and sound. Plants, natural objects, familial artifacts, medical supplies, and textiles become amorphous surrogates for my body, to unpack grief and disability. An oscillation of the subject/object relationship reflects and unsettles our understanding of nature and self. What is natural/unnatural? What bodies are included/excluded -- important?

My practice questions the medical model of disability, desire for control, and the complex ethics of genetics and experimentation. I use soft science - my own unscientific methods of failure and absurdity - to unravel thoughts about epigenetics and evolution. Experimental containers in plastic and silicone are futile attempts to preserve blobs of algae, moss, rocks, and heirlooms. They become portals for time-travel, communication devices.

My performative sculptures use tactile and embodied aesthetics to challenge the hierarchy of the senses. The way they feel against your skin, the weight and movement of the objects when you hold them, creates a phenomenological mind-body connection more primal and complex than ocularcentric perception alone.

The objects I make are more than just sculptures or performance props - they are comfort-objects. They are bodies, organs, limbs, collective grieving organisms. They are to be touched, held. They shed tears, and leak ectoplasm. They are containers to hold the tactility of emotion in its dissonance and complexity: heavy and soft, soothing and uncomfortable, seductive and pernicious. They need care.

We were already starved for touch and connection in our contemporary digital landscape, but what does/will it mean to touch in this era of highly infectious and dangerous diseases? Will we be able to relearn how to touch and socialize -- without fear? How can we explore touch in the digital realm? How do we find comfort and care in the digital?

The unceasing work of self-advocacy led me to performance. The formless, unstructured, and horizontal resist the demands of neo-capitalism on the body. They provide alternate possibilities for survival. Performance, video, and sculpture allow me to reclaim my time, my body, my power. My practice seeks to liberate the disabled body from normalized marginalization and oppression — sometimes just by showing up even if I can't open the door.