



*Synthetic baby, silicone, plastic, resin, mohair fiber, alcohol ink 2024*

## Sophie G Stark

LISA: Your work often incorporates silicone, resin, and hair. How do these materials contribute to the emotional and psychological depth of your sculptures?

SOPHIE: I think the silicone is so unique because it has that fleshy tendency not only in the appearance, but the weight and the feel of it. Also the hair that I use, if i'm not using synthetic hair, I use hair from my friends or people that I care about. So it's like, I can't use my friend's whole head of hair. I like to use my sideburns on portraits of me, the hair is always mine a little bit. It kind of reminds me of these Victorian hair portraits where you save the hair of the dead or hair of their lover and incorporate it into the work. So I really like using the hair from specific people and it's not very many individuals, but it's incorporated.

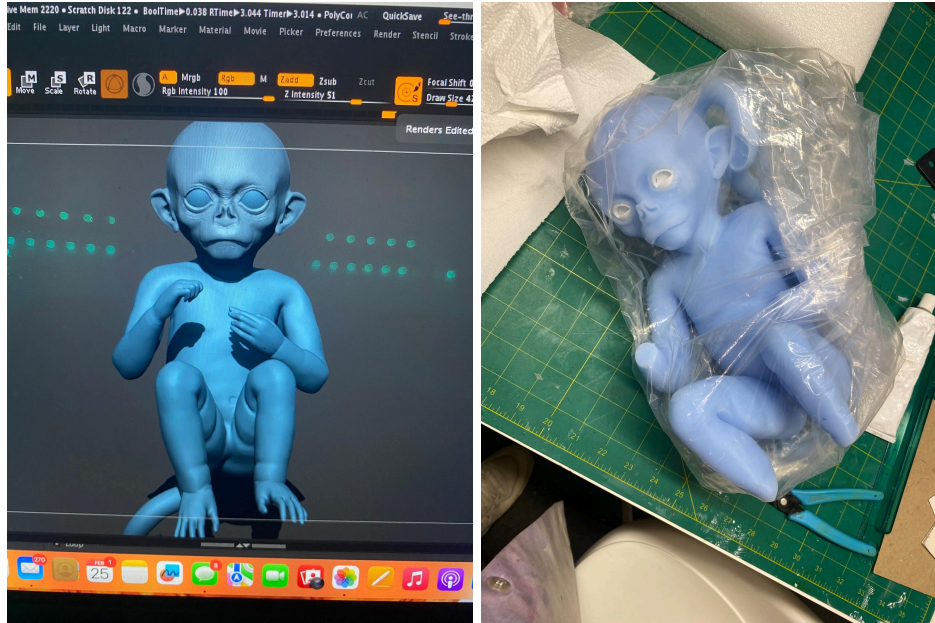
Human hair is better quality than a lot of synthetic hair because the synthetic is plastic, it's more slippery, and resin is plastic, too. I have interests in what I can do with positive and negative shapes in 3D modeling software. I like using the difference between hard and soft, to my advantage. I've made 3D printed plastic molds and cast soft silicone in the negative space.

So I think the materials indicate what I can make, sometimes I'll be like, should I make this out of silicone? If it's fleshy I'll make it in silicone, but if it's hard looking I'll make it out of resin instead. I think in the material, there's the heaviness of rubber that you can experience when handling it that resin doesn't have.



*Study table, 2024,*

resin, alcohol ink, plastic, silicone, synthetic hair, vegetable glycerin, glass vials, light box, plastic storage bins, plastic skeleton



3D Modeling and casting process of *Synthetic baby*

LISA: Your work balances between realism and surrealism. How do you navigate this thin line, and what draws you to explore this intersection?

SOPHIE: This is interesting because I've had certain artists saying my work isn't surreal, but Mary Kelly will say it is surreal, so they're always debated. And I think part of this that comes from realism is easy to identify, we're familiar with it. When dramatic situations don't fit your expectations, it can be comical. So I'm trying to embrace more humor that comes with surrealism. But I also use my dreams as a reference point for creating situations that felt surreal to me.

LISA: In your artist statements you've mentioned that horror films and religious relics inspire you. Can you elaborate on how these influences manifest in your work?

SOPHIE: I think I understand my fixations on my influences more now. I used to say I was interested in incorporating religious and film influences, but now I can specifically say I'm interested in talking about sexism through these fields. I think I have leaned more into the religious aspect, but I also think I'm picking out more about me. What is my role in religion? What is my role in horror as a femme presenting person?

In terms of the actual artwork, religious relics and movie props are great influences to my sculpture practice. I like thinking about how science fiction and religion are similar, and inventing stories and props for violent cult-like religious rituals. I borrow motifs from both Catholicism and the horror genre when making faux religious relics of my own.





*Anointy, resin, alcohol ink, gel nail polish 2024*

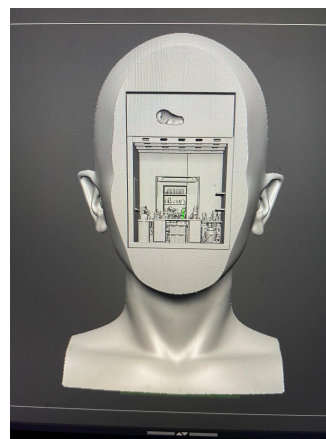
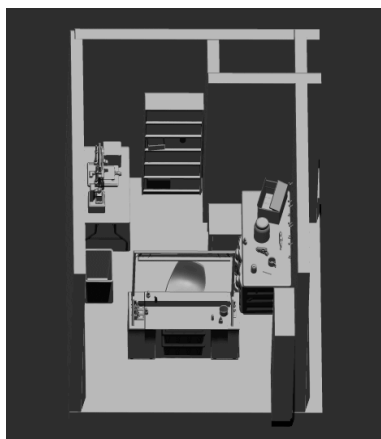


*Father son holy ghost, plastic, resin, LED lights 2024*

LISA: Some of your earlier sculpture works give physical form to memories and emotions. How do you approach translating these intangible experiences into tangible objects?

SOPHIE: With 3D modeling, I'll be working with a shape of the object in a basic gray color, and it helps me be intentional about the shape of something and the meaning of it. You can be more intentional with the sculpting when there's an undo button and you have more control over the shape.

I think about the memories you have from a dream, especially right when you wake up. It feels so tangible, but it never happened. Now, with 3D modeling and printing, I can quickly create replicas of places and objects from my dreams or memories.



3D Modeling process of *Father son holy ghost*

LISA: Your art merges humor with horror. How do you achieve this balance, and what role does humor play in your exploration of darker themes?

SOPHIE: I like mixing the jokes with horror. There are some difficult issues that I want to talk about, and I think the humor softens it. I made a rubber hot pocket, sort of talking about being a woman, and being seen as a sex object before I've been seen as a mind. And then some of the male professors were saying "this is poking fun at women." I was thinking that I made it to make fun of them. It's funny when you make something humorous and then maybe the message doesn't reach the audience. But I think the satirical way is better for me personally.



*Cock pocket ever virgin (moldy), cock pocket (amber), silicone, flocking powder, resin, alcohol ink, gel nail polish 2023*



*Piss virgin pimple pop, cock pocket demo video, Installation View*

LISA: Do you ever feel vulnerable when sharing such personal and visceral work with the public? How do you cope with the reactions of your audience?

SOPHIE: Yes, I think that changes as you code more of your experience in the work than before. Before I was very candid about what happened to me and my trauma and then people were so hungry for details.

I kind of developed this food metaphor of food that is repulsive and appetizing, like the food with bones in it or like a hot pocket that's a sex object. I started making more humorous work, like the silicone hot pocket, after I had bad experiences talking about more vulnerable artwork. So when I made the hot pocket, some of them got it as satire, and some of them gave me the response I was expecting, with the keyword "sexist". And I was like "Haha, now you fell into my trap." So it's like a tool for me. And even though I couldn't make something beautiful, I could make something that made someone else look stupid.

LISA: Is there a specific piece that got lots of feedback in your thesis show at Mateo Gallery?

SOPHIE: I think the hot pocket, because I have a video of someone using it and it's gross. But I also think of the angel that I made. You can tell it's not living, but when you walk into the room, you feel the presence of a person. But as far as the criticism is concerned, it's the hot pocket.



*Angel Gabe awaiting the second cumming, plastic, resin, synthetic hair; natural hair; chiffon, safety harness, carabiners, LED lights, vape cart, vape battery, 2024*



LISA: Are there any new materials or techniques you are interested in exploring? Like animatronics?

SOPHIE: I think that's where it's heading. I think after watching people hold my little monkey baby, I want to animate silicone skins. The hair and the resin and the silicone go perfectly with animatronics and puppet for bringing a little bit of life. We were playing around with the monkey, making it look like it was breathing a little bit with a back massager, and it seemed so strange to watch something be animated, so I would love to learn more animatronics.

LISA: You've described your work as a form of personal catharsis. How does the process of creating these sculptures help you navigate your own emotional landscape?

SOPHIE: I think they're so time and labor intensive that you feel It's a really good distraction. When you're grinding on the model, I think I've always wanted to do rigorous methods to distract my mind, but I think also having a 3D model, you can be so purposeful about what you're wanting to depict. So that has been so empowering in terms of I know what it should look like and I can finally execute. My hands hurt from doing traditional sculpting, so the computer lets me fix things right away super efficiently. And now you can propose a diorama of something, a large scale, you could say, I need these full sizes, but here's the maquette. It's so empowering to use that tool.



*Piss virgin institutional outhouse, plastic, resin, mica powder, synthetic hair, natural hair, water, toilet seat, plastic storage bin, 2024*