

Kay Dean

I utilize hand building techniques to make ceramic figurative sculpture that addresses discomfort with the male gaze, and the ways in which the performative and dehumanizing nature of womanhood creeps into girlhood. This dehumanization is visually represented through the fusion of human and animal traits, each girl experiencing different ratios of human to animal.

These portraits of young girls are intended to portray a sense of self-aware performance with the marks on their cheeks referencing clowning makeup, tulle covered platforms referencing traditional ballet costumes, and their configuration utilizing ideas from viewpoints theatrical technique. This incorporation of performance arts elements is both a reference to my personal history with performance, and a metaphor used to critique the ways in which women are expected to perform femininity on a daily basis.

These pieces seek to embody the tension between being inherently subject to the male gaze and the need for patriarchal approval, while simultaneously growing uncomfortable with this reality. Throughout history, especially in art, women and girls have been portrayed as objects to be visually consumed. These pieces embody conscious discomfort with this dominant perspective, and seek to evoke a haunting unrest in their viewers that parallels this discomfort many women and girls feel.