

BLADE STUDY

Taehee Whang
Wake Me Up (Inside)
October 6 — November 1, 2022

For their first solo exhibition at Blade Study, Taehee Whang presents *Wake me up (inside)* — a series of 3D printed sculptures, risographic prints, and video exploring how the technology of Whang's childhood has morphed into 도깨비, *dokkaebi*.

Dokkaebi are goblin-like, supernaturally occurring creatures from Korean lore who possess extraordinary abilities, like shape-shifting. They maintain a contentious and playful relationship with their human counterparts, at times playing tricks on them, and others, helping them when facing danger or financial hardship. The original form of dokkaebi, a gregarious masculine spirit, is associated with objects of nostalgia, especially antiquated household objects and appliances that have made contact with blood, possibly, as recent studies from The Academy of Korean Studies suggest, menstrual blood.

Legend describes dokkaebi in many different forms: humanoid monsters, poltergeist phenomena, haunted objects. However, the visual depiction of dokkaebi is a contemporary amalgamation of cultural entanglement, colonial erasure, and decolonial revision. Much like Donna Haraway's Cyborg, dokkaebi is a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self based on its history. The popular imagery of dokkaebi, a horned red skinned hairy man, is a modern byproduct of mistranslation and colonial erasure that started before Japan's occupation of Korea. After the erasure, Kwak Jaesik's "Korean Monster Encyclopedia" (2018) recounts the attempt to reclaim dokkaebi imagery in 1980-1990s Korean folkloric academia by gathering all the mythical beings that might be a dokkaebi. One of the few pieces of evidence of dokkaebi's amorphousness could be found in the translation of Karl Marx's "Communist manifesto" published from The Dong-a Ilbo in 1947. "A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of Communism." In that Korean translation, they used the word dokkaebi for "specter" instead of ghost (유령).

Whang's imagined software package, "Dokkaebi 1.0", represents a container for the memories harvested from the floppy disk's dokkaebi ok display. 도깨비 is a force, but it's also a "thing". As understood by Martin Heidegger's distinction between objects and things, when an object breaks or is misused, it sheds its conventional role and becomes visible in new ways: it becomes a thing. Thing theory draws upon this notion of productive estrangement to consider the meaning that physical artifacts can have for human subjects.

The napping dokkaebi at the center of the installation lays in a dream state on top of The Bliss, the iconic Windows XP wallpaper introduced by the company in the year 2000. The video sculpture installation revisits the artist's childhood family desktop while exploring queer existence of dokkaebi in relation to technology, capitalism, colonialism, and the pursuit of decolonialism.

BLADE STUDY

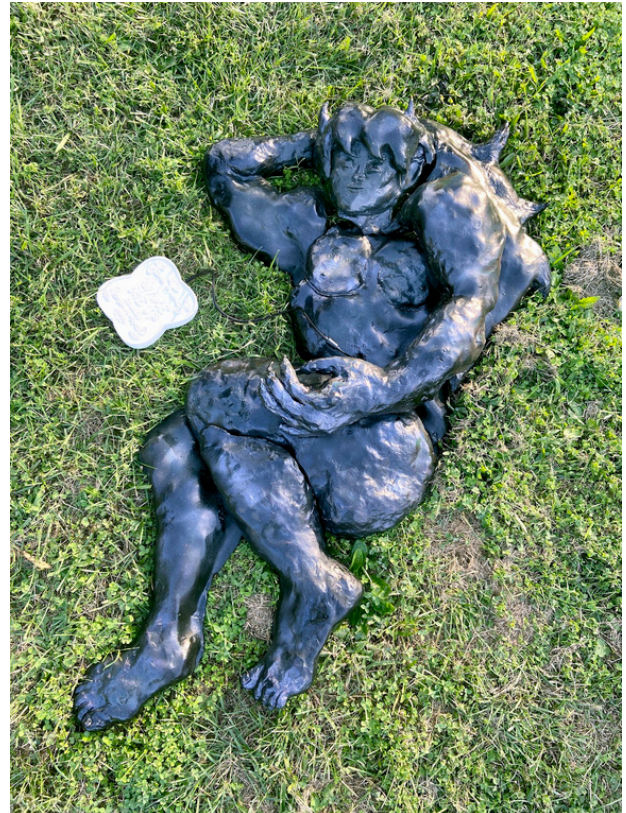
TAEHEE WHANG is a Korean-American interdisciplinary artist currently based in New York and Richmond. Their work combines experimental animation, drawing, and prose writing to propose alternative archives for familial and communal memories. They completed their BFA in Painting from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2016 and have collaborated with various institutions such as Printed Matter, Eyebeam, Abrons Art Center, Asian Art Archive in America, MoMA PS1, Brooklyn Inc, Yellow Jackets Collective, and Bubble T. They are a founder of Hyperlink Press, a publication project inspired by the early 2000s queer online communities in South Korea.

Dokkaebi 1.0

2022

34 x 53 x 9 inches

Polymer clay, epoxy, polyurethane foam, floppy disk reader, PLA 3D print, enamel paint

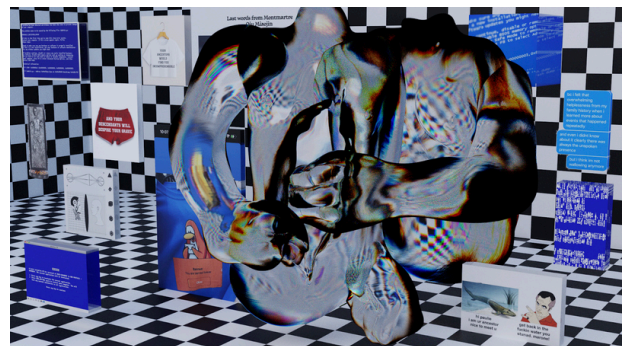


Blue folder: Death is another transition

2022

26.7 x 15 inches

Digital inkjet print on archival paper, polymer clay, PLA 3D print



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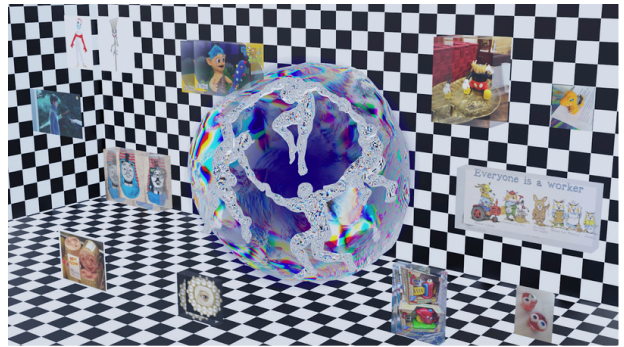
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Red folder: Intermingling things

2022

26.7 x 15 inches

Digital inkjet print on archival paper,
polymer clay



Wake me up (inside)

2022

10:38 Video Projection



Wake me up (inside)

2022

6 x 7 x 1.5 inches

Floppy disk, one 3D rendered jpg, 4in
x4in 3 risograph printed artist books,
PLA 3d print, floppy disk reader
Edition of 20

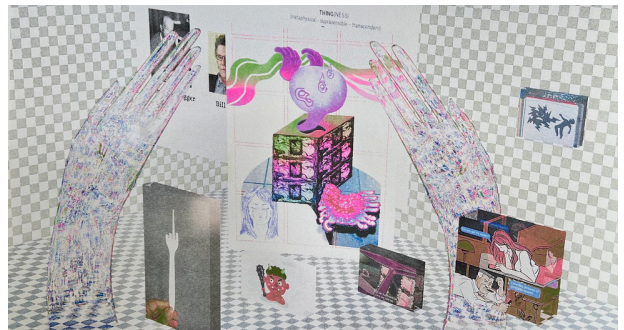


Red folder: things around us

2022

17 x 11 inches

Risograph, polymer clay, 3D print

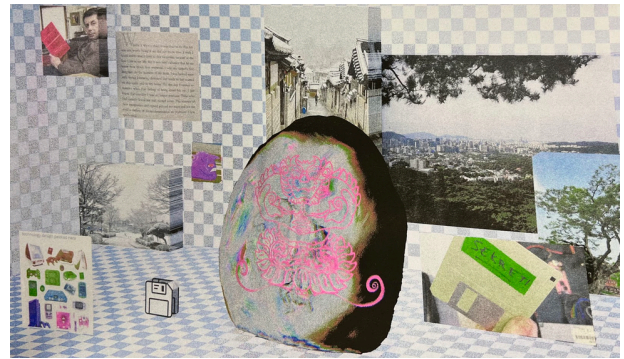


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Blue folder: all about love- it's a sekret!
2022
17 x 11 inches
Risograph, 3D print, polymer clay



Green folder: Skeumorphic goblin
2022
17 x 11 inches
Risograph, steel, Swarovski crystals



Green folder: Wake me up (inside)
2022
17 x 11 inches
Risograph, 3D print



BLADE STUDY

Blue Folder: Transference

2022

11 x 17 inches

Risograph, polymer clay



Red folder: Dokkaebi! Born!

2022

11 x 17 inches

Risograph, steel, Swarovski crystals, steel chain



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