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Biography

Matthew Keff is an artist based in New York creating graphics, interactives and installations. Thinking over digital life and feelings, these works squish together the sugary aesthetics found in video game and internet culture. Through interactive web and app-based works as well as animations, Keff looks to reveal the more awkward nature of contemporary digital visual culture and considers the role emotions play there. This sweet-as-candy imagery is informed by attention economy mechanisms used in digital marketing, where emotional engagement is a highly valued commodity. Keff received a BFA from the School of Visual Arts and has since been commissioned by major film and music events as well as participating in exhibitions internationally including the Supernova Digital Animation Festival, Denver, US, Magdalen Art Space, Oxford, UK, CCAM Yale University, New Haven, US, Somerset House, London, UK, 4Culture, Seattle, US, Chromatic Festival, Montréal, CA, Abrons Arts Center, Manhattan, US, HereART, Manhattan, US, Tokyo Game Show, Tokyo, JP, and A Maze Festival, Berlin, DE.

Statement

My work thinks over digital life and feelings using the sugary aesthetics found in internet and video game culture. I'm interested in the psychological mechanisms behind human-to-digital interactions and how emotions are communicated and felt there. Lately, many of my projects have surrounded thoughts on gamified design and how they are used to study or steer behavior. My background working as a creative in the commercial art industry informs the techniques I use to make graphics, interactives, and installations.

I make video games intended to be continual works in progress, unfinished or otherwise broken pieces of software. Playing with these simulations creates awkward audiovisual scenarios and riff off emoticons and collectible rewards, digital candy. These software-based projects are a starting point for digital or physical installations. My installations seek to create pseudo subcultural temples filled with their associated relics by taking inspiration from mobile devices and electronics storefronts or video game convention displays. Video, vinyl stickers, 3D fabrication, ready-made mobile devices, interactive apps, and advertising signage techniques are some of the materials I turn to in this exploration.

I am influenced by the history of video art, video game art, and expanded internet art landscapes and reference the design and iconography found in current digital pop culture including video gaming and social media. The visual culture cultivated by attention economy mechanisms and used in digital marketing is intriguing. I'm curious about how emotions operate in this context and use these projects as a place to try out different kinds of audiovisual experiments.