**Statement - Christine Dehne**

The self-portrait is the central concentration of my work. However, this is not a self-portrait in the traditional sense. In recent work, I have been exploring the differences between the ways we perceive ourselves and the ways others perceive us. Often, the distance between these two realities is quite large. In order to honestly explore this vast topic I have created an autobiographically based character, “the Dirty Girl”, on whose exploits I focus in my work.

The Dirty Girl has been judged to be dirty by those around her, a judgment that is based on a code of etiquette, which, for some reason, she does not have access to. In contrast to those who judge her, the Dirty Girl has no problem discussing topics which society normally would deem undesirable.

I am working within the gap between self perception and perception of others and use the Dirty Girl to discuss the topic of loneliness. Loneliness is an emotion that is universal; everyone experiences it at one point. As our world becomes increasingly global and technology follows us into our own homes, it becomes increasingly difficult to actually be alone. Ironically, feelings of isolation and loneliness are as pervasive as ever. These emotions are shameful and embarrassing to us. This humiliation and isolation often lead us to behaviors that are quite strange. Often we become consumers, constantly shopping for the “perfect” companion who will understand us and take us away from the loneliness. It is these behaviors that I find so interesting and attempt to explore with the help of the Dirty Girl.

Working as a female artist in the Twenty-first Century, my work is reminiscent of the “Bad Girls” shows of 1994. My work references the work of these artists; however, I am from a different generation of feminism than these artists. My work also suggests that of Mike Kelly, Tony Oursler, and Paul McCarthy, in the use of materials and subject matter. I often use battery-operated toys, which I rewire and recover so that they more accurately depict the work as seen through the eyes of the Dirty Girl. With a very rough, handmade, craft material and plastic aesthetic I create videos, manipulated toys, and installations, attempting to address the social issues that concern me in a playful by critical manner.