

Jamie Ho
Artist Statement

I spent most of my life making attempts to assimilate into the hegemony of American culture. Through this experience, I struggled with the pressure to fit my body into the idealized mold of femininity as prescribed by Euro-American heteronormative standards. Yet it is an impossible task, as my body will always be seen as perpetually foreign in the eyes of other Americans. This realization shifted my attempts from assimilation into American culture to assimilation into the intersectionality and intricacies of my identities, as Chinese American and as queer.

Drawing from my mother's flawed knowledge regarding ancestral traditions and rituals, I create simulations of such traditions as a method of assimilation. I use the aesthetics of camp, drag, and the lighting studio as a vehicle to subvert the rituals my mother performs that bring prosperity and wealth into the family and home. By performing simulations of rituals within my work, I am critiquing the ways Euro-America consumes and objectifies Asiatic/Chinese fem-bodies. This is demonstrated in works, *Footbinding*, and *Footbinding, Begone!*. My foot and leg, clothed in pantyhose, artificial nails, and protruding orange are given the same treatment as the Ancient Chinese shoe on the pedestal, thus, equating both my body on display and the shoe are for sale. Objectness and the perception of the "yellow woman" have always gone hand in hand. As Anne Anlin Cheng writes on how Anna May Wong and Nany Kwan's personhood has been described, "for the Asian American Woman, porcelain has always been flesh and *not* flesh."¹

¹ Cheng, Anne Anlin. "Ornamentalism: A Feminist Theory for the Yellow Woman," *Critical inquiry* 44, no. 3 (2018), 433.