

Contact:  
Marni McEntee  
Director of Communications  
Direct: 608.257.0158 ext. 241  
marni@mmoca.org

---

MEDIA RELEASE: JANUARY 23, 2023

---

## MADISON MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART PRESENTS *SERTRALINE DOLLS*, A VIDEO GAME-BASED WORK BY NEW MEDIA ARTIST AVA WANBLI

Ava Wanbli  
*Sertraline Dolls*

On view April 1-  
August 20, 2023  
Imprint Gallery



>  
Ava Wanbli  
*Sertraline Dolls*, 2021-22  
Screenshot

MADISON, WI— In her first solo museum exhibition, Chicago-based new media and performance artist Ava Wanbli brings her video game-based work *Sertraline Dolls* (2021-22) to the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMoCA) this spring. On view in the Imprint Gallery from April 1-August 20, 2023, the exhibition will invite visitor engagement with the game. Admission to MMoCA's galleries is free.

@AvaMirage

mmoca.org

*Sertraline Dolls* is a first-person, single-player game merging multiple formats of the artist's body. It provides a meditation on self-production through sexual expression and consumption of the body. The viewer, who themselves become an active participant in the work, encounters multiple representations of the artist's body, each taken from 3D scans over a period of six years that include various poses, guises, and costumes.

Set in a cyberpunk-inspired futuristic wasteland, the player must navigate the disorienting landscape, encountering body after body, each reflective of various stages of the artist's transition and experience as a trans woman. The player encounters these renderings of the artist as they attempt to complete each task of the game and collect various objects needed to move on to the next level.. The work reflects on the complexities of what it means to be a trans woman in sex work and in the world against a neo-gothic background that is both psychedelic and comforting to viewers who have spent time in open-world games.

Contact:  
Marni McEntee  
Director of Communications  
Direct: 608.257.0158 ext. 241  
marni@mmoca.org



---

MEDIA RELEASE: JANUARY 23, 2023

---

Says Wanbli, “A glitch is not the broken aspect of a system but instead is exposing the innards of the system that is in itself broken. In this, the trans body is a glitch to a broken system of gender and sex that is in need of reworking.”

The fourth level of the game, designed to be attainable to audiences during a visit to the gallery, is set in a soothing, meditative space. The player is rewarded for their interactive efforts with the culmination of the game—a video work. The video piece, depicting animated women with angel wings dancing against a pastel backdrop, is a reflection on rebirth and death that revolves around the temporalities of trans bodies. The video, in the words of the artist, is a “heavenly strange party space for the girls to dance.”

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Ava Wanbli (b. 1989) is a Chicago-based new media artist. She uses video, performance, 3D scanning, sculpture, and video game engines to reconstruct dynamics of disruption and intimacy embedded in acts of eroticized mediation of the body. In ritualized actions, Wanbli addresses consumption and the production of the self through avatar proxies and celebratory acts of transcendence. She is an alum of The School of the Art Institute of Chicago’s Film, Video, New Media, and Animation Department and currently lives and works in Chicago. In Chicago, Wanbli has exhibited work at Links Hall, Sullivan Galleries, Zhou B Art Center, and ACRE Gallery. Also in Chicago, she has served as MANA Contemporary New Media Artist-in-Residence and is an upcoming resident of Space P11 Gallery. Her work also was featured at the Supernova Digital Animation Festival in Denver, Colorado.



### **ABOUT MMOCA**

The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art is always admission-free. Its vision is to be an organization that fosters the exchange of ideas and creates experiences that will inspire a wide audience; be a nexus for the work of emerging and established regional, national, and international artists; serve as a catalyst for the continued development of a vigorous community of artists; and provide a forum that will encourage people to be challenged by, reflect on, and make connections between art and the world around them.

The Museum includes four galleries and The Shop, a space to provide interactive contemporary art experiences and educational workshops to the community. The Rooftop Sculpture Garden provides an urban oasis with an incredible view which serves as a lovely venue for weddings, art openings, and cinema. The adjacent Rooftop Lounge is used for community and collaborative art pop-ups, as well as a reception area for Museum events. Please visit [mmoca.org](http://mmoca.org) to learn more.