Xavier Cha | Instagram and digital representation

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Andrew Kachel and Xavier Cha talk about censorship, digital representation, and her controversial contribution to ♥Like: A BOFFO Instagram Project.

New York based artist Xavier Cha's work engages with the presentation of self in networked culture. Inhabiting modes of translation and manipulation that aid the digital circulation of information, Cha's work also offers insight into coded desires that are manifest across social media platforms. These desires were central to a work Cha made for the Instagram art initiative ♥Like: A BOFFO Instagram Project. BOFFO is a non-profit arts organization focused on producing projects in public spaces, and this project was its first effort to approach a social media platform as a viable mechanism for presenting new and ambitious art. Cha was one of six artists to participate. The terms of participation were broad: each artist was asked to make a new body of work that in some way critically engaged the platform, bearing in mind its unique opportunities and constraints. Each would have full control over posting their new work on @boffo_ny for a one week period, provided they worked within Instagram's terms and conditions of use. Cha situated her commission directly against these conditions, presenting content in non-native forms as a means to slide past filter mechanisms, and to circulate prohibited images. In an attempt to unpack this work, Cha and I conducted an email correspondence a few weeks after it was posted on Instagram.