

INMAN GALLERY
WONDERLAND

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JooYoung Choi: 'You Have Always Been Loved'



JUNE 2, 2026  Greg Cook

“Have Faith for You Have Always Been Loved” read streamers curling across a 2026 mixed-media painting in JooYoung Choi’s exhibition “Adventures of the Quantum Soup Surfer” at Amherst College’s Mead Art Museum in Amherst from Jan. 27 to July 5, 2026. In the painting, one girl seems to whisper this message into the ear of another girl—perhaps a vision of a young Choi herself.

The Houston, Texas, artist dreams up magical “astro-futurist” worlds out of superhero comics and kids TV shows and immersive installations. They can feel like a wondrous escape from and a bulwark against and a triumph over her alienated childhood. A place instead where “you have always been loved.”



*JooYoung Choi, “Have Faith for You Have Always Been Loved, Narraplexic Arrangement No. 2,” 2026.
Acrylic, gouache, Flashe, Korean Color, water-soluble crayons on mineral paper, paper and canvas.*

Choi was born in Seoul, South Korea, in 1982 and was adopted by a family who raised her as Stacy Schwindt in Concord, New Hampshire, where she sometimes ran into racism in the predominantly white community.

Texas Monthly reported in 2022: “Because she was born out of wedlock, her birth wasn’t officially recorded. ... A relative sent her away when her parents weren’t present, setting off a family drama that lasted for years and led to her mother and father splitting up. Her father searched the country’s orphanages for a decade trying to find her.”

While studying at Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston in 2007, Choi reunited with her birth family during trip to South Korea. Which prompted her to begin using her birth name, and later change it legally.

“By the time I got to grad school [at Lesley University in Cambridge], I had found my birth mother, my birth father. I found out I had two brothers and a little sister and all these aunts and uncles and cousins,” Choi told New Hampshire Public Radio in 2023. “So there was this abundance of love that was filling this void that was part of my life growing up. And so when I got into graduate school, I really didn’t know what to paint about anymore. And I realized that I used my imagination over all those years to kind of create this magical realm for myself that I think kind of protected me.”



JooYoung Choi. “Resilient Heart and the Tree of Miracles; Children Need Love Like Flowers Need Rain: Quantum Soup Surfer Arrangement,” 2018-2025. Wooden armature, quilt poly-fiber batting, fleece, poly-fill, metal hardware, screws, poly-foam, felt.

“For over a decade, Choi’s work has centered on developing narratives within a highly structured imaginary realm known as the Cosmic Womb,” Mead Art Museum explains. “‘Adventures of the Quantum Soup Surfer’ brings together early and recent paintings, a sculptural installation, and video works that chronicle one character’s journey of

self-discovery. Long known as Nina Blue, the Quantum Soup Surfer first appeared in the Cosmic Womb as a professional imaginary friend, contributing to the journeys of several legendary heroes of the Cosmic Womb.”

“The Cosmic Womb,” Choi wrote on her website in 2018, “is a magical realm that has become home to every snow person we thought melted away, every imaginary friend we grew out of, here they all are welcome.”

Resilience is a major theme—that Choi centers in the title of a dazzling cartoon come to life 2018-2025 installation of magical felt and fleece flowers and snowmen and fire-creatures and clouds and angry slices of bread and cacti and worms and bees and women: “Resilient Heart and the Tree of Miracles; Children Need Love Like Flowers Need Rain: Quantum Soup Surfer Arrangement.”



JooYoung Choi at opening reception for “Adventures of the Quantum Soup Surfer” at Mead Art Museum, Amherst, Feb. 20, 2026. (Photo: Maria Stenzel, Amherst College Office of Communications)

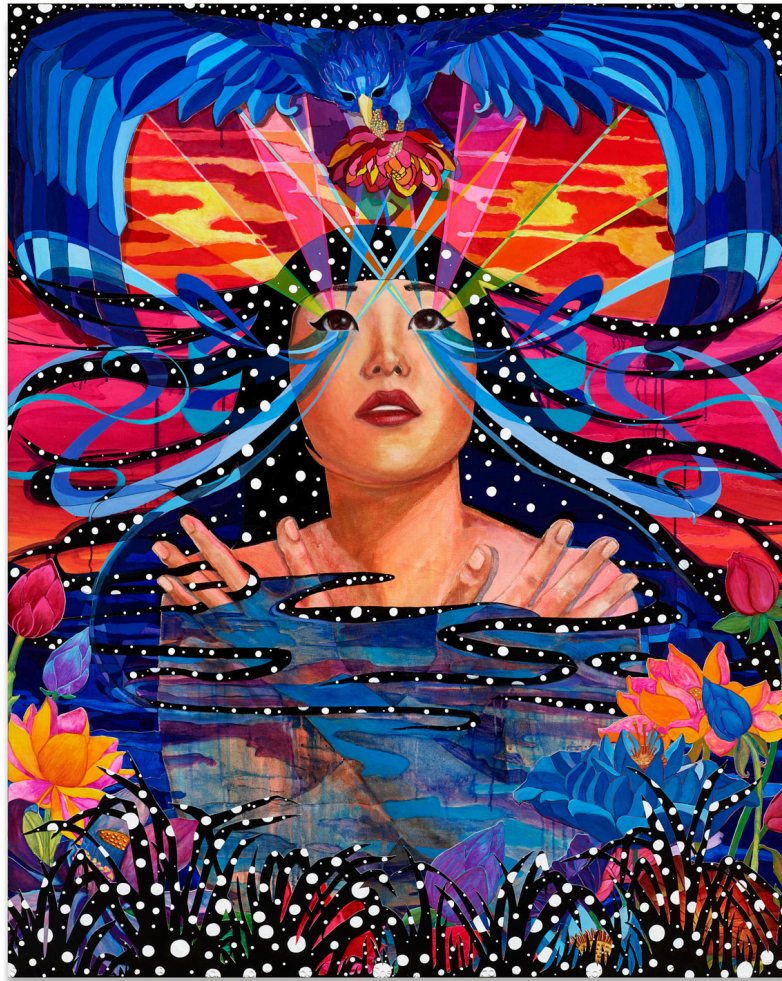


JooYoung Choi. Details of “Resilient Heart and the Tree of Miracles; Children Need Love Like Flowers Need Rain: Quantum Soup Surfer Arrangement,” 2018-2025. Wooden armature, quilt poly-fiber batting, fleece, poly-fill, metal hardware, screws, poly-foam, felt.





JooYoung Choi. Detail of "Resilient Heart and the Tree of Miracles; Children Need Love Like Flowers Need Rain: Quantum Soup Surfer Arrangement," 2018-2025. Wooden armature, quilt poly-fiberbatting, fleece, poly-fill, metal hardware, screws, poly-foam, felt.



JooYoung Choi. "She Was a Blue Bird Dreaming of a Rainbow She Could Follow," 2025. Acrylic, gouache, flashe, Korean color, water soluble crayons on paper and canvas.



JooYoung Choi, "Songs of Resilience from the Tapestry of Faith," 2022 Acrylic, gouache, vinylpaint, carbon transfer, Gelli print, airbrush, frosted Duralar, and cut paper on canvas.



*JooYoung Choi, "Sacrifice of Putt Putt,"
2013. Acrylic, paper, and canvas collage on canvas.*



*JooYoung Choi. Detail of "Resilient Heart and
the Tree of Miracles; Children Need Love Like
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JooYoung Choi, "Welcome Home, We've Been Waiting for You," 2015 Acrylic paint and paper on canvas.



JooYoung Choi, "Big Time Rescue," 2017. Acrylic paint and paper on canvas.



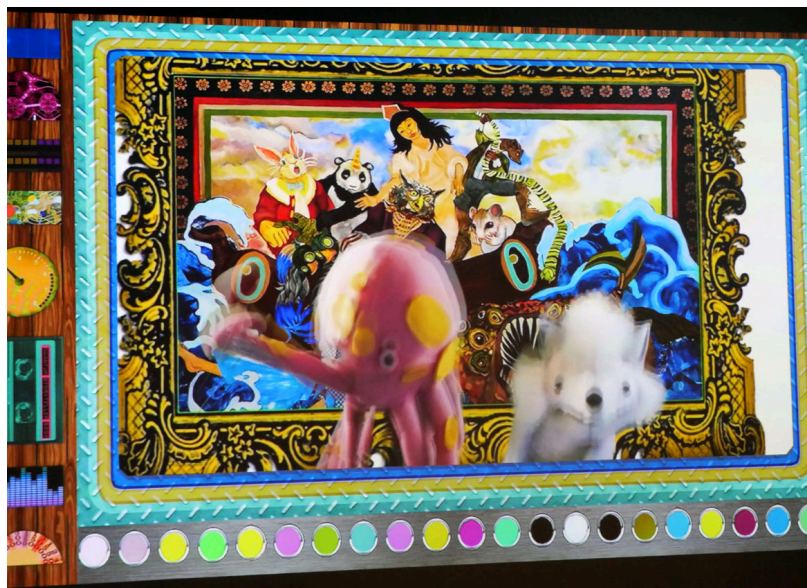
JooYoung Choi, "Discovering Truth Will Make MeFree: The Liberation of Poundcake Man," 2018. Acrylic paint and paper on canvas.



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*JooYoung Choi, “Journey Vision 5000: Glorious
 Quest Edition,” 2025. Remixed video compilation.*



JooYoung Choi, "Vision of Technicolor Justice," 2025. Acrylic, gouache, Flashe, Korean Color, water-soluble crayons on mineral paper, paper and canvas.



JooYoung Choi, "Journey Vision 5000: Glorious Quest Edition," 2025. Remixed video compilation.



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