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Houston Artist JooYoung Choi Takes Audiences on a Fantastical Trip to the Cosmic Womb at the Crow Museum of Asian Art in Dallas

Part of the museum's 'Texas Asian Women Artists' series, the Choi exhibition runs through Sept. 4

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Published: February 24, 2022



JooYoung Choi, *Discovering Truth Will Make Me Free: The Liberation of Poundcake Man*, 2018. Acrylic paint and paper on canvas. Photo: Christopher Henry. Courtesy of the artist and Nancy Littlejohn Fine Art.

Contemplative art that explores important themes of race, culture, and identity need not be somber in tone. Houston-based Korean artist JooYoung Choi proves this in her new exhibition, *Songs of Resilience from the Tapestry of Faith*. Showing at the Crow Museum of Asian Art of The University of Texas at Dallas, the multidisciplinary works take visitors on a fun and multifaceted journey into an imaginary world Choi calls the “Cosmic Womb.”

Choi’s exhibition is the third and final installment of the museum’s *Texas Asian Women Artists* series, a showcase of contemporary Texas-based artists whose work has been underrepresented in visual spaces. *Songs of Resilience from Tapestry of Faith* runs through Sept. 4.

In her work, Choi explores what it means to belong and find your way in a complex environment with regard to race, gender, and gender orientation.

“In a time when many are experiencing feelings of loss, sorrow, displacement, invisibility, and oppression, JooYoung Choi’s *Cosmic Womb* uses imagery, narrative, and sound to present a bright alternative world and an inclusive place of belonging,” says Jacqueline Chao, the museum’s senior curator of Asian art.



Still image from JooYoung Choi’s *Journey to the Cosmic Womb, Part 1 & 2, 2018*. Courtesy of the artist and Nancy Littlejohn Fine Art.

Works in the exhibition include bright and whimsical paintings, life-size soft sculpture characters and puppets, and mesmerizing videos depicting fantastical creatures inspired by childhood influences such as *Sesame Street*, *Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood*, and Marvel Comics Universe. “It’s not about escapism,” Choi explains. “For me, being able to make work about the hard, difficult things in life that maybe we can’t resolve, we can process them in a new way.”

Featured in this exhibit is the premiere of her latest video, *Spectra Force Vive: Infinite Pie Delivery Service*, which was made with contributions from voice actors from around the world representing a variety of ages and gender identities. “It’s about children whose parents can’t find them, so they create a new family,” Choi says. “They go around the universe reminding people that you don’t have to fight for your slice of the pie. We all have our own pie and our own path and vision for our lives.”

Choi was born in South Korea and brought to the U.S. through adoption. While in college she searched for and reconnected with her birth parents. Much of her work is based on her joy and powerful sense of connection in finding her birth parents and Korean culture. “I want the show to celebrate all these different experiences I had that have been woven together to create my own tapestry of faith, that brought me on the journey to go to Korea by myself and find my birth family,” Choi says.

A few of the pieces in the installation—including *Like a Bolt Out of the Blue*, *Faith Steps In and Sees You Through*—include vibrant flowers created by school-aged children and their art

teachers, and even some young museumgoers as the installation was going up. Each flower represents someone who loved them unconditionally.

A childhood friend's experience with racism in Choi's neighborhood, which resulted in her family moving away, are reflected in the painting *Big Time Rescue*. As Choi describes the figure inspired by her friend, "I made her into this character I named Jade Weaver, with magical strands that can lasso and pull things—she's super strong." The imagery feels at once heartbreaking yet hopeful.



JooYoung Choi, *Like a Bolt Out of the Blue, Faith Steps In and Sees You Through*,

When it's all too common to feel unraveled by constant change in our own daily lives, *JooYoung Choi: Songs of Resilience from the Tapestry of Faith* offers a healing retreat into a colorful, cosmic dream. "I hope it brings up those memories of your own childhood, regardless of background," she says. "Hopefully it can bring up that inner child part of yourself, and that you remember your song of resilience."

JooYoung Choi: Songs of Resilience from the Tapestry of Faith runs through Sept. 4. On March 10, the Crow Museum will host an in-person conversation with JooYoung Choi and related activities associated with the exhibit.

<https://texashighways.com/travel-news/houston-artist-jooyoung-choi-takes-audiences-on-a-fantastical-trip-to-the-cosmic-womb-at-the-crow-museum-of-asian-art-in-dallas/>