

# INMAN GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 13, 2023

Inman Gallery is pleased to present

## JooYoung Choi *Discovering Truth Will Make Me Free*

July 15 – September 1, 2023

Opening Reception  
Friday, July 14, 5–7pm

Exhibition Walkthrough  
Saturday, July 15, 12pm

Inman Gallery is pleased to present

**JooYoung Choi: *Discovering Truth Will***

***Make Me Free***, on view July 15 –

September 1, 2023. Please join us for an

opening reception, Friday, July 14 from 5–7pm, and an exhibition walkthrough with the artist on Saturday, July 15 at 12pm. This is Choi's first exhibition with the gallery.

Astro-futurist world builder and multi-disciplinary artist **JooYoung Choi** (b. 1982/1983 Seoul, South Korea) documents the interconnecting narratives of an expansive fictional land she has created and named the Cosmic Womb. Her practice is highly varied, utilizing painting, video, soft sculpture, animation, puppetry, music, interactive community projects, and installation art as interwoven vehicles for storytelling. Inspired by the teachings of Fred Rogers, Choi captures this imaginary world with a spotlight on its many characters, story arcs, and interpersonal relationships guided by an ethos of unconditional love and radical imagination.

Within Choi's paracosm, the Cosmic Womb is a small planet within a larger universe called the Wonderverse. Upwards of 200 characters exist in the Cosmic Womb, including its democratically elected leader, Queen Kiok, who governs the planet with her council of six creatures called Tuplets and one Earthling named C.S. Watson from Concord, New Hampshire. Queen Kiok and C.S. Watson exist alongside a diverse community of superheroes and galactic organizations. Several characters can be spotted throughout the exhibition, including Poundcake Man, Tourmaline the Celestial Architect, Venatorious Stomp, Resilient Heart, and Albeir the Miracle Bear, as well as the villain Lady Madness.



JooYoung Choi, *Discovering Truth Will Make Me Free: The Liberation of Poundcake Man*, 2018, acrylic and paper on canvas, 60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)

*Discovering Truth Will Make Me Free* showcases work made between 2015 and 2023, including paintings, and a large soft sculpture, her first, from 2016-2017. This extended timeframe offers a unique opportunity for viewers to 'time travel' within the chronology of the Cosmic Womb and experience multiple bodies of work at once. Presented together for the first time, we see narrative threads within the Cosmic Womb emerge, unfold, and resolve simultaneously, capturing the canonical growth of Choi's protagonists as well as the development of the artist's own practice and aesthetic. While Choi's dynamic, maximalist compositions fluctuate in density, saturation, and surface texture through the years, her sense of joy, wonder, and play remains steadfast.

Both the world and its stories are heavily inspired by the artist's own biography. Born in Seoul, South Korea, Choi immigrated to Concord, New Hampshire in the United States by way of adoption in 1983. C.S. Watson, like Choi, is an adoptee Earthling from Concord, NH. Similarly, the Cosmic Womb stretches approximately 6732 miles, equal to the distance between Concord and Seoul. Through her work, Choi explores themes of loss and longing, but also healing and hope; unconditional love and pure imagination are the powerful quantum energies that fuel the Cosmic Womb. As such, the national motto of the Cosmic Womb is "Have Faith, For You Have Always Been Loved." After sustained efforts to locate them, Choi reunited with her birth family in 2007.

Guided by the power of storytelling, Choi's work explores themes such as anti-racism, gender inclusivity, transracial adoptee rights, post-traumatic growth, and spirituality rooted in social justice. As Jacqueline Chao, Curator of Asian Art at the Dallas Museum of Art writes: "Through these superheroes, villains, and their adventures and worlds... we find parallels and resonances to our own world and our lived realities today through their stories." She continues, "One does not have to be royalty, or even human, in order to be a hero to others."

Through the Cosmic Womb, Choi offers us faith in the infinite possibility of transformative care. Behind these transformations are webs of connectivity, both in the ways we show up for one another and for ourselves. *Discovering Truth Will Make Me Free* celebrates those relationships in their multiplicity: a collective relationship to the universe, shared familial relationships, and the relationship to oneself.

JooYoung Choi holds a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and Design and an MFA from Lesley University. She has exhibited at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (Bentonville, AR), Parrish Art Museum (Water Mill, NY), The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (Houston, TX), Project Row Houses, Houston, TX; The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (Seattle, WA) and The Crow Museum of Asian Art (Dallas, Texas), among others. Choi participated in the Lawndale Artist Residency in Houston, TX (2014) and the Harvester Artist Residency in Wichita, KS (2018). Choi lives and works in Houston, TX

A conversation with JooYoung Choi and Gary K. Wolf, author and creator of Roger Rabbit, will be scheduled over Zoom, details forthcoming. Additionally, Choi's institutional solo show, *Love and Wondervision*, is on view concurrently at the Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University through August 26, 2023.