

For Immediate Release

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JooYoung Choi's First Institutional Solo Exhibition in Houston Opens at the Moody Center for the Arts on May 25

On view through August 26, 2023, Love and Wondervision brings visitors into the inventive, colorful, and inclusive universe of multidisciplinary Houston-based artist JooYoung Choi.



Jooyoung Choi, *The Table of Love*, 2022.

March 15, 2023 [Houston, Texas] --Opening on May 25, 2023, the Moody Center for the Arts will host the first institutional solo exhibition in Houston for multidisciplinary artist JooYoung Choi. Titled *Love and Wondervision* the exhibition will feature new and recent work by the Korean-born, Houston-based artist, including video, sculpture, painting, and the monumental installation, *Like a Bolt Out of the Blue, Faith Steps In and Sees You Through – Infinite Feels Arrangement*. The exhibition will be on view through August 26, 2023, and will be supported by free and public programming presented throughout the summer.

Equally playful and poignant, *Love and Wondervision* invites visitors to explore Choi's original and multifaceted world: an imaginary universe of colorful and inventive characters connected to each other through narratives that promote belonging and resilience in the face of racism and social division.

"We are thrilled to present the imaginative work of JooYoung Choi in her hometown of Houston," said Alison Weaver, Executive Director. "This exhibition invites visitors to engage with a host of playful characters whose stories explore the weighty topics of cultural bias, gender discrimination, and the complex intersectionality of sexuality and race."

Choi, born in South Korea and raised in Concord, New Hampshire by her adoptive family, often explores issues of identity through her personal journey and research into the media's representation of girls, women, intersex, transgender, and non-binary people of color. Through the power of storytelling, her mythical world creates a space for healing in the wake of trauma and a platform for reclaiming and celebrating a sense of self, regardless of one's circumstances.

"This exhibition explores the themes that are most important to me as an artist and a person," said Choi. "Art and wonder have helped me find myself. There is nothing else in this world that I want more than to spread this message, that the creativity inside of us can

bring us all on an incredible voyage that is led by love. The love of others who care for us and help us grow, and the love we give to others on this journey I call 'Wondervision.'"

The opening reception with the artist will be held on Thursday, May 25, 2023, from 6 - 8 p.m. The media is invited to attend a preview on May 24 at 11:30 a.m., [rsvp](#) is required.

JooYoung Choi: Love and Wondervision is curated by Executive Director Alison Weaver, with Assistant Curator Molly Everett.

This exhibition is made possible by the Thomas D. and Pamela Riley Smith Endowment for the Moody Center for the Arts. Additional support is provided by the Brad and Leslie Bucher Artist Endowment, the Tamara de Kuffner Fund, the Kilgore Endowment Fund, and the Sewall Endowment.



JooYoung Choi, *Like a Bolt Out of the Blue*, 2019. Photo by Tom DuBrock.

About the Exhibition

At the center of *Love and Wondervision* is the multi-dimensional installation *Like a Bolt Out of the Blue, Faith Steps In and Sees You Through – Infinite Feels Arrangement*, 2019–23. Its centerpiece is a sentient bed named Pom Pom Thunder whose magical sneakers enable her to travel on a superhighway of dreams, as she seeks to reunite family members who have been separated by inter-planetary conflicts. The title of the work, adapted from the lyrics of "When You Wish Upon a Star," written by Leigh Harline and Ned Washington for Walt Disney's 1940 film *Pinocchio*, reflects Choi's optimistic outlook and her own childhood experience of longing to meet her birth family. Visitors to the exhibition are invited to write their own wishes on paper stars and contribute them to this installation. In Choi's universe, having the courage to articulate one's hopes—a process Choi calls "Big Time Dreaming"—generates fuel for Pom Pom Thunder's dream-trekking sneakers, which allow her to leave the Moody at night to reunite lost parents and their searching children.

Two foundational videos central to Choi's practice will be screened in the Media Gallery: *Journey to the Cosmic Womb, Parts 1+2*, 2018, and *Spectra Force Vive: Infinite Pie Delivery Service*, 2021. These original video collages feature puppetry, animation, music, and live-action, all created and edited by Choi in her studio. Offering a glimpse into the artist's universe, the videos reflect Choi's formative influences, including Walt Disney movies, the Muppets, and PeeWee's Playhouse, as well as music ranging from rhythm and blues to punk rock. Actors whose identities are consistent with the individual puppets voice each character, nodding to Choi's emphasis on authenticity and inclusivity.

Paintings created over the past several years further depict Choi's expansive, fictional universe, called the "Cosmic Womb." *Somnioplexic Resonance*, 2016, for example, features the character Prime Weaver, a cisgender female celestial spider who creates and protects a "Tapestry of Faith." By strumming the tapestry's strings with her long blue legs, she creates music that restores hope, heals wounds, and amplifies the powers of those who listen. Choi's detailed style reflects the popular culture of her childhood, including The Maxx comic book series, Marvel Universe Series 3 cards, and the graphics of the original Nintendo Entertainment System.

Sculptural puppets of several characters featured in Choi's videos and paintings will be displayed in the galleries. Central figures such as Bunnie, a transgender female cybernetic rabbit from the future, celebrate individuality, while Sweet Slice, a professional "You Are Enough" coach, delivers "infinite pies" of truth and kindness, teaching people they are

enough, just as they are. Taken together, Choi's videos, paintings, and sculptures introduce visitors to her "Cosmic Womb" and invite them on a journey of hope.



JooYoung Choi at Houston Endowment; Photo by Lawrence Elizabeth Knox, courtesy of Weingarten Art Group and Houston Endowment.

About the Artist

JooYoung Choi (b. 1982/3) was born in South Korea and emigrated to the United States in 1983 to live with her adopted family. Interested in art from an early age, she received a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and Design and MFA from Lesley University in Boston. Choi's work been exhibited at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (Bentonville, AR), the Parrish Art Museum (Water Mill, NY), The Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, 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, TX), among others. Choi participated in the Lawndale Artist Residency in Houston (2014) and the Harvester Artist Residency in Wichita, KS (2018). Choi lives and works in Houston, Texas.

[Download the press kit for JooYoung Choi, Love and Wondervision](#)



Summer Jam 2022 at the Moody Center for the Arts.

Special Events

Opening Reception with the Artist

Thursday, May 25, 2023, 6 – 8 pm, free and open to the public, registration recommended. The opening reception will feature a brief introduction by the artist JooYoung Choi.

Pride Month Celebration at the Moody

Thursday, June 8, 6:00 – 8:00 pm, free and open to the public, registration recommended. Join the Moody to celebrate Pride Month with music and cocktails at this after-hours viewing of the summer exhibition.

The Moody Wellness Series

June 9, 16, 23, and 30 at 12:00 noon in the Central Gallery
Join us on Fridays in June for meditation and yoga in the galleries, offered through a collaboration with the Barbara and David Gibbs Recreation and Wellness Center.

Summer Jam Community Day

Saturday, July 15, 12:00 – 5:00 pm
Celebrate the summer at this all-day, family-friendly event featuring an indoor farmer's market, art activities, and local food vendors. [Watch the experience from 2022.](#)

About the Moody Center for the Arts

Since its opening in 2017, the Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University has dedicated its resources to encouraging creative thinking and original expression, enriching curricular innovation, and promoting cross-campus and community collaboration through transformative encounters with the arts. A public-facing institution, the Moody serves as a connection between the arts at Rice and the greater Houston community.

The Moody mounts three exhibitions a year in its award-winning building, curates numerous temporary and permanent public art installations throughout Rice's campus, and hosts performances, conversations, classes, and hands-on workshops. By centering these public and open initiatives on generative partnerships with artists, scholars, and students from various disciplines, the Moody presents unexpected and everchanging entry points into the arts which bridge communities and areas of interest.

Website: moody.rice.edu

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Address: Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University
6100 Main Street, MS-480, Houston, TX 77005
(University Entrance 8, at University Boulevard and Stockton Street)

General Hours & Admission:

Exhibition spaces are open to the public and free of charge Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and are closed Sundays, Mondays, and holidays. Events and programs are open to the public. For schedule, tickets, and prices as applicable, visit moody.rice.edu.

Directions & Parking:

The Moody Center for the Arts is located on the campus of Rice University and is best reached by using Campus Entrance 8 at the intersection of University Boulevard and Stockton Street. As you enter campus, the building is on the right, just past the Media Center. There is a dedicated parking lot adjacent to the building. Payment for the Moody Lot is by credit card only.

For campus maps, visit www.rice.edu/maps.

About Rice University

Located on a 300-acre forested campus in Houston, Rice University is consistently ranked among the nation's top 20 universities by U.S. News & World Report. Rice has highly respected schools of Architecture, Business, Continuing Studies, Engineering, Humanities, Music, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences and is home to the Baker Institute for Public Policy. With 3,879 undergraduates and 2,861 graduate students, Rice's undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio is 6-to-1. Its residential college system builds close-knit communities and lifelong friendships, just one reason why Rice is ranked No. 1 for quality of life and for lots of race/class interaction and No. 2 for happiest students by the Princeton Review. Rice is also rated as the best value among private universities by Kiplinger's Personal Finance.

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