

Artist Statement

To put a story into words is to say that *this* is the important story. I choose to create visual narratives because they are fluid and open-ended. Through my work I negotiate boundaries and create layers, both in terms of meaning as a storyteller and process as a printmaker.

I admire contemporary artists like Shahzia Sikander and Kerry James Marshall who re-invent traditional art forms from within. My work draws upon the heritage of East Asian painting and printmaking, particularly from Japan's ukiyo-e period, but with a critical distinction: I eschew the use of the drawn or painted (out)line. The dominance of delineated contours in these works stems from classical Chinese literati painting, which is rooted in calligraphy. Therefore, in Chinese we often say that one does not 'look' at a painting, but rather 'reads' it (*du hua*). By employing shape and pattern rather than contour, I create openings in the narrative, moments when edges are lost then rediscovered. This erasure of outline contests the authority of the written, rejecting linearity both literally and symbolically.

I am interested in exploring how a multiplicity of stories can co-exist within a single image. At the surface level, this polyphony is found within the depicted figures, objects, and environments, and the ways they relate to one another. However, there are also narratives which extend beyond the image. I freely overlay my own memories with moments in history; my own imaginings with well-known stories. I also reference diverse cultures through patterns, drawn from a personal visual anthology collected through research and lived experience. The resulting accumulation of perspectives and accounts rewrites the conventional boundaries of storytelling, expanding the way we experience narrative.

This layering of stories is physically translated into the color separations of printmaking. I work with limited color palettes in order to make each layer essential to the image. This includes the paper itself, as the addition of subsequent colors creates negative space. I am drawn to how these distinct strata mutually create and depend on one another, blurring the lines between them and producing new meanings in spaces of overlap. These material entanglements mimic the narrative entanglements which result from my layering of the real with the imaginary, the personal with the collective. In my work, I weave together these worlds of co-existence into a visually cohesive image.