

b. 1976 in Astoria, Oregon; lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico

One of my earliest memories is hearing yellow sing a song. Logic says it was the bees, but the hum was not the sound of bees. I felt and heard the color energy vibrating. Growing up, we had a lot of pets and a lot of tragic pet deaths and I was scared of bad things happening. Sometimes the bad things happened and sometimes they did not. I enjoyed making things out of wood scraps and took woodshop instead of home economics in middle school. I did not sew until I was in college but grew up in a house filled with colorful fabric and with a mother and sisters who sew. My mom told me once that I sew like a construction worker, which remains true to this day.

I lived on the West Coast until my early thirties and now live in New Mexico. The beauty here is sparse and sharp and the light glows around the edges of day and night. When the pandemic began, I started climbing the trees on the acequia irrigation system that rambles off the Rio Grande. These trees are ancient cottonwoods that reach as conduits from the dark richness of the earth to the luminous sky. They embody the unity of darklight. They are grounded, and they lift to the light. They carry energy knowledge within and are portals reaching for the stars. I was born during the equinox when the veil is thin and when I climb high, I sense the wind can carry me off to the other space. I sometimes leave gifts meant for the star children in the lumens of the trees. I make the frames for my sculpture out of poplar, which I discovered are related to cottonwoods as members of the same genus, Populus. No wonder they feel like home. No wonder they recognized me, because I too am a tree.

J P 제 피, with masculine and feminine spirit, is a tree. 제 피는 나무입니다.

My work is a space of soul exploration, one that I couldn't name until after I was embraced by a rainbow light. The connection between color and the soul is uncanny and energetic, and this kinship sustains my commitment to developing colorsight. My work has been described as an artistic oxymoron: both loud and quiet, solid and transparent, hand-made and precise, delicate and aggressive, exuberant and restrained, formal and emotional. It is a reflection of me, an artist of blended culture who is both loud and quiet, urban and rural, delicate and aggressive, masculine and feminine, adventurous and routine. I have found it absurd to define myself as anything other than all of these things, because I hold all of the possibilities in me simultaneously. So do you.

I am left-handed, a survivor, curious enough to often be confused, the child of a survivor of the Korean war, queer, bigender, and bicultural, which means I do not blend in even when among "my people." I wonder who those people are and when we can have a drink and a good laugh. I sit in discomfort most of the time. I rarely get asked if I am married or have kids. Somehow, I ended up being the shortest of all my sisters and cousins. What a strange and frustrating title to carry for someone who takes up so much space. I am comfortable being uncomfortable and occupying the in-between and relieved to have had my ego ripped to shreds a few years back. Are you confused yet? Me too. I can be as opaque and as transparent as my artwork, all at once. I was told by my spirit allies to stop hiding, and so here I am. I am inserting myself into my artwork. I was always there in the background, so I laugh as I say this. Here is my hideous beauty for you to ignore. I discovered that if I sit in stillness long enough, ambiguity opens to limitless space and reveals truth. A joyful, ecstatic truth.