

## **Personal Statement**

Soojin Kim

I am an interdisciplinary artist whose research focuses on the cultural interaction under colonialism and capitalism in Korea. I incorporate various media and skills that she acquired from my experience as an electrical engineer and graphic designer with traditional art practices. I was originally from South Korea, and came to the U.S in 2000 to study electrical engineering. After receiving my master's degree in engineering, I changed my focus of study and went to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts to study art. I won the Boit Award for my independent studio practice, the Dana Pond Award in painting, and a highly-competitive Traveling Scholars Award with a grant of \$27,000 from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts for further study and research. While I was in the Master's program, I received the Tufts University Montague Travel Grant and Graduate Research Awards. I was selected as the Bupyeong Young Artist and the SHIFTS artist of Park Young Korea Foundation, and most recently as a residency artist for MASS Moca Artist Residency and Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute. My artworks are currently represented by the Tao Water Gallery, W.Barnstable, MA, and teaching full-time at Eastern Connecticut University.

My career as an educator started with a teaching assistantship while I was studying at Tufts University. I assisted the instructor who was an amazing artist with the traditional media but had a limitation with the use of new media such as computer software to handle digital images and videos. After graduation, I did one academic year of an artist residency at PRATT MWP in Utica, NY with a teaching appointment, and currently teaching digital art & design at Eastern Connecticut University as an assistant professor.

My art starts with the stories of my family, and I am trying to present the hidden cultural & historical meaning of those stories. For example, my father's obsession with American sweets couldn't be explained without mentioning the Korean war in the 1950s and the massive cultural flux from the West to Korea. I created hundreds of drawings and interdisciplinary artworks about American sweets exhibited in many different countries including South Korea, Singapore, France & the U.S.

For a while, American sweets were the main subject of my art and now my attention has shifted to the 'Mom Pae', some sort of balloon pants that were the popular everyday outfit of my grandmother's generation. These funny-looking pants are a reminiscence of forced women's fashion under Japanese Colonial rule to encourage women's labor in early 1900. There is a lot to talk about with these pants in terms of the liberation of women's rights and their elusiveness. It is merely the beginning of the research on this topic, but I would love to carry out more in-depth literal research and produce art pieces including limited editions of a new artist's book, 'Granny Pants', 12 editions of a handmade hardcover with book pages of a traditional printmaking process and a fabric sculpture(a pant) insert. I expect that the writing retreat from this program will be a huge support for my writing portion of this book which will be the memoir of my grandmother. I am also planning to use the writing fellowship stipend to purchase books for the research and materials to fabricate an artist's book 'Granny Pants' with a handmade book cover, book pages of a traditional printmaking process, and fabric sculptures in a box. Most of all, what I am excited about would be having BIPOC faculties as an audience and a chance to converse on my art. I would love to tell my story, and also listen to their story.