



JENIE GAO STUDIO

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At its core, my work is about claiming space and creating records for the stories, identities, and environments we might otherwise miss. I specialize in mediums including printmaking, murals, public art, social practice, and storytelling, art mediums that can be used towards democratic purposes. Through print and woodcarving, I can express the work it takes to define and defend our beliefs. Through murals and installations, I can claim space for representation. Through social practice and storytelling, I can work with the community to change dominant narratives and expand whose stories stand the test of time.

I create allegories and subjects centered on intimate points of disagreement, and the dichotomies we navigate. For example, the animals in my artwork originate from the same ancestors, but often find themselves divided, much like how some of the most painful divisions are not among faraway strangers, but between relatives and neighbors. The homing pigeons allude to my childhood and the time I spent raising them with my father, and how these messengers of peace and war created a rare space of healing amidst intergenerational trauma. The tree-headed people grow slowly and infinitely, and are separated from their roots. I think about my own experience, as a second generation Taiwanese and Chinese American, close to my ancestors in terms of time yet distanced by geography and language. We remain connected through that distance, as long as we can keep stories and cultural heritage alive.

The purpose of this work is to get us to think about how we judge the world, and coexist or conflict with others. It is to get us to pay attention to the systems we create and amplify. It is to get us to ask what we claim space for, and whose stories we favor. There is something old and retold about the stories in my work, yet made new and different. With each generation, there are opportunities for familiar players to meet again and restart their legacies.