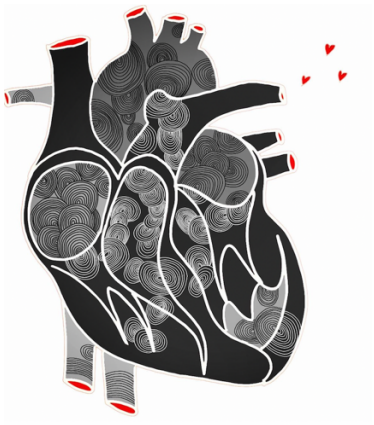
Artist Statement



I was born in Northern Japan and grew up across Asia and the Pacific, spending my summers in my parents' respective hometowns in Appalachia and the American deep south. My other influences include Ben Shahn, David Shrigley, and fellow Mississippian Walter Ingliss Anderson, who described art as a "process for grasping." Like Anderson's, my work is full of animal "familiars" with whose help we might understand more and better.

My background as an anthropologist and illustrator informs my artistic vision and process. I combine drawing with painting, zine-making and other book arts, comic art, and relief printmaking to create a variety of visual art work.

The images I work with come from my background as an anatomical and ethnographic illustrator, as well as from my own imagination and from nature. Together, they communicate ideas of exposure, fragmentation, love, comfort, tenderness and loss. To all of this I add the urgency of time, as seen in the incursion of hash marks and waiting room chairs in many of my pieces. The clock, as it were, is always ticking as we seek to give solace and await rescue, and I feel the ticking even as I paint, print, and draw hundreds of tiny objects or details in some very large and also very small pieces. To that end, my main goal is to expose the fragmented small pieces of larger things, such as the exposure of the anatomical and visceral wounds/realities of our bodies, and even body parts themselves. Leaves, feathers, rabbits, tiny chairs and other familiars come together to bind up our wounds, powerful yet overlooked in their smallness, innocence, and delight.

Generally, my work is representational, however the process of creating my work is open-ended and discovery oriented. In this way, each piece is as

much a monument to process intended to create conversations and communicate feelings. Like a message in a bottle, I am less concerned with the reaction of the eventual viewer as I am about the launching of the message and its journey. I believe in sending art into the world in this way, which is one reason I work with zines, which might be mass produced or created as gifts for an individual.

I do, however, want the viewer to feel the tensions between the small and slow and the larger impact of movement, to stop and feel dissonance, while at the same time to be soothed by the love that goes into creating work like this, and the subtle power that comes from intentional whimsy and delight. For there is joy hiding even in the darkest pieces, and for every stark image of injury and ferocity, there are comic images intended to invoke laughter and subversive joy. Even in the most ragged anatomical heart I hide the tiny rabbit, like hope remaining behind in Pandora's box. This is the promise in smallness, and the tiniest light in the dark, just for you.

