

THESIS

I AM WHO I AM WHERE I AM: VALIDATING IN-BETWEEN STATUS WITH AN
ARTIST'S BOOK AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

I AM WHO I AM WHERE I AM: VALIDATING IN-BETWEEN STATUS WITH AN ARTIST'S BOOK AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

This autobiography investigates in-between/betwixt identities about my immigration experiences as a woman of color in the U.S. Autobiography was historically used for presenting stories about the great white men (Smyth, 2016). Then, autobiography was written by white middle class women during first wave feminism to work against patriarchy and sexism (Bromley, 2012). Since 1970, women of color wrote down our experiences as a collective identity, and many Asian American art educators continue the legacy with autobiography by expressing in-between identities. I created a series of Artist's book with graphic design and printmaking based on two arts-based investigations to find my root: 1) practice-based research (Sullivan, 2004) and 2) *a/r/tography* (Irwin, 2013). I used the framework from Sullivan's (2004) argument that visual art is a theoretically grounded form of research to make an action which I was drawn to because it empowers other first-generation women of color with my experience. Also, *a/r/tography* helps me to understand my previous experience about belonging and how the idea of belonging can continuously move toward new understanding about my in-between identities, becoming transformational ideas (Irwin, 2013). I will expand to a greater narrative to generate political meaning collaboratively in future research as autoethnography.

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

An Asian Immigrant's Life Inquiry

Since I moved to the U.S. in 2014, I've worked on communicating inclusion and identity which matters to me as an Asian immigrant woman. My design is about how otherness contributes and makes this society rich from my personal experience. I pretend I am confident while empowering Asian women with a recent printmaking workshop and a small community project. However, I was struggling internally with my roots. My identity was lost between Korea and America. I searched in my memory and realized that I didn't have a solid foundation in my family of origin in South Korea but I also questioned my belongingness in the U.S. I embraced the discomfort with autobiography to accept myself and leave the comfort zone by making an artist's book.

Literature

Studies about the immigration experiences of women of color in the U.S. share a hybrid cultural identity, rejection toward linguistics, cultural otherness, marginality, and accepting in-between space (Anzaldúa, 1987; Ikas, 2002; Meng, 2022; Rivero, 1994; Sions, 2022; Song, 2022). Women of color in U.S. are recognized as outsiders, but they become others again in their mother country (Meng, 2022; Rivero, 1994; Song, 2022). Rivero (1994) transcends otherness to duality which is two places at once that "I am what I am(soy) where I am(estoy)..." (Rivero, 1994, p. 343). These studies explore in-between space as a fluid, rich, and powerful hybrid as whole being and as a collective identity (Anzaldúa, 1987; Meng, 2022; Rivero, 1994).

Historically, autobiography was bound up with a western and middle-class extraordinary male to celebrate life of the great men under the center of masculinity (Smyth, 2016). Since the 19th century, women activist autobiographies emerged in the literature from Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935), Florence Kelley (1859–1932), Margaret Sanger (1879–1966), Ida B. Wells-Barnett, activist Mother Jones (1843–1930) and others; however, most of them were white middle-upper class women (Ostman, 2021) and even they were anti-immigrant for white women’s suffrage (Harris-Perry, 2011). After 1900s, there were several astonishing feminists of color including Asian activists who wrote their autobiography to focus on marginalized people of color and their struggles, fighting against systemic racism and social injustice in U.S. (Anzaldúa, 1987; Boggs, 2016; Davis, 1974; Fujino, 2005; Mankiller et al., 2011). Many Asian American scholars currently continue the legacy and work on representing marginalized Asian voices and resist against microaggressions in daily life with autobiography (Hong, 2020; Lee, 2023; Okada, 1981; Pak, 2022; Shin et al, 2022; Tizon, 2018;). Similarly, several Asian art educators who recently worked in the U.S. wrote autobiographies to share struggles and identity recognition (Shin et al., 2022). Similar to overall immigration experiences, Asian American art educators—who grew up in Asia and immigrated in adult stage to the U.S.—have gone through in-between status and are being seen as outsider in both places, having difficulty in immigration or fitting in the host country (Han, 2022; Koo, 2022; Song, 2022). For example, one immigrant art educator stated, “...I am a drift between the United States and Korea, as though I am lost in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean” (Song, 2022, p.23). Another educator wrote, “...I have been perceived as a foreigner and/or outsider in public settings due to my Asian appearance, Korean accent, and Korean citizenship (in the U.S.)” (Koo, 2022, p.36). On the other hand, these autobiographies admit their unique positions in that they experience two different cultures and draw from the

strength of diversity to pursue beyond insider and outsider (Meng, 2022). Asian American art educators create a space for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students in class (Sions, 2022), increasing voice, and developing a new theoretical framework for students (Shin, 2022). These various autobiographies are strongly connected to discovering my identity between Korean and Asian American. I am diversifying the genre of autobiography not only as a woman, but also as a person living on a border and working to validate in between status.

Arts-based Research: Practice-based Research

I produced reflections on my experiences not only using autobiography, but also applied two arts-based research approaches: practice-based research (Sullivan, 2008) and a/r/tography (Irwin, 2013; Lasczik et al., 2021). I created a series of Artist's book with printmaking as an arts-based autobiography project, to research within the realm of finding my root. I was first interested by Sullivan's argument that creative and cultural investigation through visual arts could be a form of research. He asserts that research goals transform human's idea and thought which can be challenged by various methods in art compared to those offered from the social sciences (Sullivan, 2008). Using the painting practice as a case, he claimed painting as theory, form, idea, and act. 1) 'Painting as theory' is not only a rhetorical appeal (visual, emotional, and ethical) but can be a theoretically grounded form of research because visual art is one significant form for creative inquiry. 2) 'Painting as form' means new forms and images open the possibility to extended meaning of media experimentation. 3) 'Painting as an idea' is that artistic practice is a personal interest and intention as well as a public understanding about how they perceive the world around themselves. 4) 'Painting as an act' is artistic practice which has been used as an instrument of social and political action to make social critique and political visual statements (Sullivan, 2008). Therefore, the imaginative and intellectual work of artists shared a similar

function as research to discover individual, social, and cultural inquiry as 1) Painting as Theory. This paper is based on arts-based research from Sullivan's ideas to validate my status through 2) making a new form to combine with design and printmaking, to illustrate 3) both my personal and immigrants of colors' stories, as 4) an act against microaggression toward immigrants, and to embrace my immigrant experience in this country.

Practice-based Research: A/r/tography

With the consideration of art as doing research (Sullivan, 2010), A/r/tography helps me understand myself as transformational ideas (Irwin 2013; LeBlanc et al., 2015) because my belonging moves dynamically with the new understanding about myself and my country. A/r/tography is a form of practice-based research in the field of art and art education (Irwin, 2013; Irwin et al., 2004; Lasczik et al., 2021; Sullivan, 2010). According to Irwin (2013), "A/r/tography is a research methodology, a creative practice, a performative pedagogy that lives in the rhizomatic practice of the in-between" (Irwin, 2013, p.198). Irwin (2013) argues that A/r/tography is a journey over time to imagine the past and future in the present sense of becoming. These in-between spaces reject binaries that rush to certainty and instead pursue becoming an integral being in social, cultural, economic, and political process (Iriwn, 2013). For example as an art educator, artist, researcher, and teacher cannot separate, but interconnect with each other to enhance meaning and engage each together to make social inquires and collective works (Irwin et al., 2004). I am weaving these research methodologies — autobiography, practice-based research (Sullivan, 2010), and a/r/tography (Irwin, 2013) — to allow myself to engage and explore deeply about my identities. I accept my past and current experiences as they continue to 'becoming' in-between identity while blurring boundaries in two different cultures.

CHAPTER II: WHO AM I/WHERE DID I COME FROM?

Art and Books in my Childhood

Looking back, art and books were like my friends, allowing me to discover how I feel and how to comfort my inner world. I was born in 1993 in Jeonju, South Korea. I was not born into a happy family. At the very beginning of my mom's married life, my dad left her alone and didn't take care of his family. This incident left a deep scar on my mom, which affected me in her womb as suggested by Leelavathy et al. (2022). I was a tough temperament baby and I cried constantly. My brother was born and he required a lot of attention from my mom. My mom needed to bring him to the preschool where she worked as a teacher. Thus, I was alone in my early childhood. After preschool, I mostly played, watched TV, and ate snacks by myself. Although my mom did her best and loved me, it was challenging to feel roots and warmth in my family. In this loneliness, my best friend was books and drawing. Drawing is in my nature. At the start of my memory, I grabbed a crayon and drew with it. I used many sketchbooks to draw and make a story, build characters, and play with them. Likewise, I loved books because I could travel anywhere and anytime with them. I learned how to feel, think, and respond to the world through art and books. This interest in art grew into a passion to become an artist.

A restart in the U.S.

Unfortunately, the art education system in South Korea gave me frustration. I needed to take a practical art exam which requires realistic drawing and painting to get admitted to an art college. I had to go to a private art class to prepare for the exam at an expensive cost. The art teachers in that class frequently compared my style of drawings with other peers. My artistic confidence plummeted. Moreover, I was too nervous on the day of the practical exam and couldn't show my skills. I was disappointed about myself and gave up art. Later, I applied for the

occupational therapy program at Howon University. In my junior year, I was financially supported by my state, Jeollabuk-do for an exchange program in the U.S. I selected the school with a great occupational therapy program and a solid English program, and found Colorado State University (CSU). Surprisingly I met my husband in Fort Collins, and I had a strong desire to make a happy family to find secure roots and warm belongings. I got a chance to restart everything in the U.S. after marriage and immigration. I wanted to explore art again in a different country. I was hopeful that the art education system in the U.S. might differ from South Korea. My new journey started at the Art and Art History Department at CSU in fall, 2015. Art was the best friend in my lonely childhood. Even though I gave up on art once, art called me again to start in the new country. I was ready to reconnect my world with my dream of being an artist.

Feeling in-between

Leaving familiar things, transitioning to another country, and experiencing in-between status has been the most challenging thing since I immigrated to the U.S. (Han, 2022; Koo, 2022; Meng, 2022; Sions, 2022; Song, 2022). I considered myself a bystander in the first few years after immigration. My time here was temporary and the U.S. was simply an opportunity for me. I would eventually return to Korea after finishing my degree. My thinking changed after my son was born here. The U.S. could be a place I connected with. I deeply considered the meaning of home again, not only for me but my family. In addition, I missed Korea in my memory, but it also changed quickly, and some new things feel unfamiliar to me such as ordering food by touching a kiosk screen instead of talking with a person. It seems like all Koreans in the line are comfortable to use it quickly. I was uncomfortable using this new technology even though I am a graphic designer who is used to adopting new technology in my work. Moreover, my mindset has been changed as an immigrant living in the U.S. and I criticized patriarchal culture that I

grew up with in Korea. I sense myself as a visitor or traveler in South Korea because of unfamiliar new culture and my different mindset as Asian American. I felt awkward and embarrassed about this confused identity. I'm Korean, but Korea is no longer my home. My home is in the U.S. with my son and husband. However, I questioned my belonging in the U.S. when some Americans challenged my real home asking, 'where are you *originally* from?' They thought I was Asian looking and had a strong Korean accent so I might be from somewhere else. These realities gave me a sense of loss. I am split into two different worlds: South Korea and the U.S., like other people who shared similar experiences (Song, 2022; Sion, 2022). I was afraid about my status and felt I wasn't normal. Normal was belonging to only one world like the people who doubt my status and ask me questions. I internalized microaggression and didn't fight back. This moment of transition was awkward, uncomfortable, and even frustrating between South Korea to the U.S.

Accepting and Understanding the Self with Making of an Artist's Book

I validate the perspective that in-between status is normal by making the artist book to empower my personal story and other immigrants' stories. According to Gloria Anzadúa who is a multi-racial feminist scholar from an immigrant family, she describes this space as "...Nepantla, which is a Nahuatl word for the space between two bodies of water, the space between two worlds. It is a limited space, a space where you are not this or that but where you are changing," (p276. Anzadúa, 1987). I am a transition that isn't purely American or Korean. Still, I argue that this is a valid transition to find the concept of in-between status as Gloria Anzaldúa's experiences. Like the transitioning status in my identity, I want to investigate my artistic practice by intertwining and blurring the border between design and art. Since my childhood, a book is a natural media that allows me to grasp design, art, and narrative as autobiography. According to

Wasserman et al. (2007), “The book is an object. The book is an idea. Books inspire and are inspired by revolutions, love affairs, religions. What does it mean to make a book? ... To make a book is to gain power over objects,”(p.12, Wasserman et al., 2007). I used to make books with Adobe programs and send it to the printer. However, I want to hand make an Artist’s book in a traditional because I want to physically touch my own story with image and text to empower my history. Making an Artist’s book is a journey to validate my transitioning identity and healing moments. I want to write and decide my own story of life as a full-grown being with my autonomy.

CHAPTER III: MAKING AN ARTIST'S BOOK

Blurred Boundaries between Graphic Design and Printmaking

An Artist's Book is the perfect object to tell my story while building a part of myself. I am making a physical form of my emotion, intuition, and history through a healing process and active resistance against trauma and microaggression. I aim to use this Artist's Book to share my stories—which are embedded in a larger narrative of immigrants in the U.S. alongside glimpses into my own life—by using both graphic design and printmaking. Most designers and artists consider design and art being different because design needs to have problem-solving tactics to achieve the goal for clients or audience compared to fine art. However, I want to make a blurred boundary between design and printmaking to mimic my in-between status of being a Korean and an Asian American.

Post-digital Printmaking

I used both design and printmaking as a tangible process-oriented tradition combined with contemporary technology, which is called post-digital printmaking, to make an Artists' Book (Catanese & Geary; 2012). I used Illustrator in Adobe programs to create eight panels of the book content to show two different worlds that include many days of struggle, complexities, and tears (Fig. 1 & Fig. 2). Then, I used cyanotype process which is the oldest photographic technique by using iron compound to get cyan blue color under UV light. After mixing iron solution in a darkroom and staying for 24 hours, I brought the paper outside to be directly exposed to the sun with an image which I created with computer. Design with black typography and the line will turn to white after exposing to the sun because the black design will not get any light compared to the white part which turns blue (Fig. 3). When I put the solution-coated paper under the sun for a long time, the cyanotype turned dark blue compared to a lighter color with

less exposure time (Fig. 9). I was from South Korea, and my identity has changed as an Asian American under the sun of the U.S. like cyanotype blue color, but I have not lost my Korean identity, which still remain on the paper as white color. Cyanotype is a spontaneous, unpredictable, and experimental process which personally means immigration and transition to me. Therefore, the process with post-digital printmaking and cyanotype symbolizes and reinforces my status as in-between while making an artist's book.



Fig. 1, Seojung Lee, *You Say I Believe(Front)*, Adobe Illustrator with Black and White, 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.



Fig. 2, Seojung Lee, *You Say I Believe(Back)*, Adobe Illustrator with Black and White, 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.



Fig 3. Seojung Lee, *You Say I Believe(Front)*, Cyanotype with Etching, Outline, and Cut through Laser Cutter Media on the BFK White Paper, 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.



Fig 4. Seojung Lee, *You Say I Believe(Back)*, Cyanotype with Etching, Outline, and Cut through Laser Cutter Media on the BFK White Paper, 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.

Finding Artistic Breakthrough in a Song

I had a conflict with my Korean parent-in-law due to cultural patriarchy. My parents-in-law are good people who love their daughter-in-law, take care of me and their grandson, and make Korean food for my family. However, one thing I disagreed with them on was their perspective toward the role of women, who they believe should support husband rather than pursuing her dream and vision. In this struggle and conflict, my husband has been a big supporter

and helped me navigate my path as a future art educator. During this time, I connected my emotion with Lauren Daigle's song, "You Say," (Daigle, 2018) and it helped me to comfort my inner mind. Daigle is an American contemporary Christian music singer and songwriter. I used some of this song's lyrics that touched my heart in the artists' book contents. As stated in the song, "You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing. You say I am strong when I think I am weak. And you say I am held when I am falling short. And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours..." (Daigle, 2018). I took comfort in these lyrics when I was confused about my role, and I decided to pursue my dream. I believe that I can both desire my own dreams as well as support my family. My parents-in-law changed their mind slowly while observing my personal and career growth, and they recognized my efforts and achievements. Now they are so proud of their daughter-in-law and look forward to seeing me become an art educator in the U.S. Daigle's lyrics gave me courage to continue my passion of art, and my husband's support and encouragement made me breakthrough the crisis with my parents-in-law.

Story#1: I Believe What You Say

I selected several words from Daigle's few lyrics (Daigle, 2018), and put each verse in both English and Korean. The front side of the first page is "I Believe" (Fig 3). Each page was constructed individually, and I used acid free glue to attach it together as double-sided. The cyanotype solution on the paper accidentally made wave marks. Both sides show beautiful patterns on the paper (Fig 3 & 4). In addition, I added etching marks by using a laser cutter. I created many ascender etching lines to illustrate my current transitioning identity from a Korean to an Asian American with a positive feeling because I wanted to root down in this culture successfully. The etching effect made brownish tan colors and shapes on the front and back page. I intended this brown tone to give feeling of warmth and coziness like being at home. I am

affirming that the U.S. is my home with my son and my husband. I am not a perpetual foreigner in this land. I cut a couple words, ‘Say’ and ‘나는 믿어요(I Believe)’ to reveal unexpected cyanotype marks and color under the cut shapes. The organic movements and waves in the cyanotype, which represent my nine years in the U.S., was in harmony with straight lines, which represents again my 20 years in South Korea. This page of the book expresses my unexpected immigration to the U.S., and my continuous passion and belief in myself who is blooming in a new home as an immigrant woman.

Story#2: You Say I am Loved, and I am Held

In the front side of the second panel (Fig. 3), I used half circle patterns to mirror the Korean traditional pot, moon jar, which is not only unique to the Korean peninsula, but also, distinct from elsewhere in East Asia (Horlyck, 2022). Moon jar (Moon jar, second half 18th century) is a cultural identity with shape and color. The shape of a moon jar is neither fully round nor entirely misshapen but resulting in a mysterious and natural beauty with calm and comfort. White color in Moon jar represents Korean’s desire for white clothes which came from the ‘same heart community(일심)’ with joy and pride in ethnicity. Therefore, the moon jar represents and is appreciated as the symbol of Korean culture and a national icon. I illustrated the top view of the moon jar to show my original root, which will continue to be a big part of my identity. Then, I used a laser cutter to follow the initial design to make cut lines, etching lines, and outlines. ‘You say I am loved when I can’t feel a thing,’ repeated in English and Korean between half-circle lines. The back page has lyrics from Daigle’s song (2018), ‘‘When I am Falling Short, You Say I am Held.’ I divided the design into two different spaces to show my dual belongings to the U.S. and Korea (Fig 2-4.) I constructed ‘when I am falling short’ on the left, and Korean translation ‘넘어질 때’ on the right which looks like wobbling and falling to match with the

meanings. The background had 'U say I am held' on the left and '붙들리다(I am held)' on the right. In the second piece, I want to play with my both identities as Asian American and Korean by using typography and visual elements with the moon jar.



Fig 5. N.d, *Moon Jar*, Porcelain, H. 15 1/4 in. (38.7 cm); Diam. 13 in. (33 cm); Diam. of rim 5 1/2 in. (14 cm); Diam. of foot 4 7/8 in. (12.4 cm), second half 18th century



Fig 6. Seojung Lee, *You Say I am Loved, and I am Held*(Front), Cyanotype with Etching, Outline, and Cut through Laser Cutter Media on the BFK White Paper, 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.



Fig 7. Seojung Lee, *You Say I am Loved, and I am Held*(Back), Cyanotype with Etching, Outline, and Cut through Laser Cutter Media on the BFK White Paper, 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.

Story #3: I am Strong, and I Believe What You Say

The front page of the third panel (Fig. 8 & 9) said in Korean that, “당신이 나에게 말씀하신 것을 믿음 (I Believe What You Say).” Even though my audience can’t understand Korean, the thick typefaces with San serif font gives confident, empowered, and positive feeling. I made the most crucial word as the biggest part in composition, '믿음(trust).' 믿음(trust) is my

testimony of my faith in God and he will guide me my continuous journey as an art educator to empower BIPOC students and Asian woman living in the U.S. I hope the spirituality in this artists' book advocates other immigrants who have been struggled with in-between identities, microaggression, and systemic racism. The back page has a quote from Daigle's song (2023) 'You say I am strong when I think I am weak' with Korean traditional patterns made with laser cutter. With the three-dimensional shaped letters, I want to give a sense of robust and bold meaning with 'I am strong.' I used outlines for 'When I think I am weak' to reveal weakness is an illusion. In the negative shape of traditional patterns, I engraved 'strong' to show that the truth of my life is the strength that comes with combining two cultures and spirituality.



Fig 8. Seojung Lee, *I am Strong and When I Think I am Weak and I Believe What You Say*, Cyanotype with Etching, Outline, and Cut through Laser Cutter Media on the BFK White Paper, 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.



Fig 9. Seojung Lee, *I am Strong and When I Think I am Weak and I Believe What You Say*, Cyanotype with Etching, Outline, and Cut through Laser Cutter Media on the BFK White Paper, 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.

Story#4: You Say I am Loved and I am Yours

I want to condense the whole theme of this book in the final panel which is love (Fig. 10). The front panel has a rectangular stamp shape with a typographic image, 'I am loved'. I want to engrave this message into my heart and audience's mind. I am showing my vulnerabilities and identity struggle first as Asian American and Korean. I speak up and support my audience with the message that I understand you no matter what struggle you are going through. I used recurrent themes combining Korean and English to establish my identity as in-between. I used all Korean letters (| , ㅏ, ㅑ, ㅓ, ㅕ, ㅗ, ㅛ, ㅜ, ㅠ, ㅡ, ㅟ, ㅠ) to construct 'I am Loved.' I hope my audience can feel warm and supported in round Korean letters, which are then translated to English sentence. In the back panel, I juxtaposed Daigle's lyrics, 'When I don't belong, you say I am yours' (Daigle, 2023) and Korean on the left for the translation (Fig. 11). This title summarized my several years of struggling with belonging and root. I have a solid ground to be comfortable in both worlds.



Fig 10. Seojung Lee, *You Say I am Loved and I am Yours*, Cyanotype with Etching, Outline, and Cut through Laser Cutter Media on the BFK White Paper, 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.

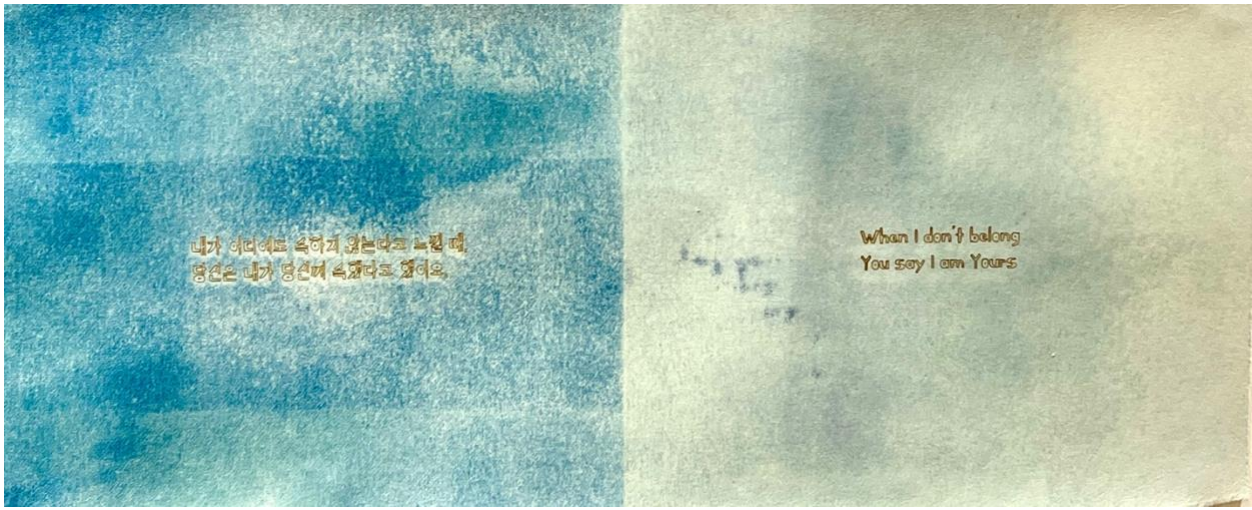


Fig 11. Seojung Lee, *You Say I am Loved and I am Yours*, Cyanotype with Etching, Outline, and Cut through Laser Cutter Media on the BFK White Paper, 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.

CHAPTER IV: METHOD

Method #1. Making eight prototypes for an artists' book

I was inspired by the artist Sammy Lee, who uses Hanji (Korean Dak Paper) to construct her autobiography with an Artists' book while asking questions and finding the answer about belonging, home, immigration, and foreign body. As a first-generation immigrant, she finds a sense of home within her Artists' book (Lee, n.d.). As a result, I was inspired to try to overcome some of my trauma as an Asian immigrant woman and moved forward to share vulnerability. My breakthrough happened during a meeting with Sammy Lee. I met her at a CSU coffee shop when she came to deliver one of her pieces to the permanent library collection. She understood my fear of working on a book for the first time and recommended using several mockups before combining contents. After constructing the book's contents, I made eight mock-ups for one artist's book. I was afraid to ruin each page when I combined each cyanotype. I wanted to find the best way for weaving my story panels into one book. I scanned and scaled down each page and printed it. For the first mockup, I folded each panel in half and laid it down in a row on the pedestal (Fig. 12-1.) In the second version, I applied glue on the tip of each page to make a long horizontal book like a traditional Korean rolling book from the edge (Fig. 12-2). I attached each vertical panel tip of edge and made a long accordion style (Fig 12-3). Also, I glued the horizontal (bottom) part of the book and attached it, but it was hard to read the contents (Fig. 12-4). I tried two more versions, and I didn't like the combination because it looked like a coupon book or pamphlet. (Fig. 12-5 & 12-6). I wanted to find a perfect format to convey my vulnerability, so I tried one more time. Lastly, I made a double-sided book with four panels and folded it in half (Fig. 12-7). This format was my favorite because the double-sided page represents my in-between status to deliver my life story as an immigrant woman. Also, this method is versatile

because each book can be combined as one book tying with a thread or displayed individually on a pedestal. Making several mock-ups is a worthy process to find the best style to elevate my book contents.



Fig 12-1. Seojung Lee, *Book Mock-Ups*, Printed on the Paper, Each Panel 2 x 4.8 Inches, 2023.

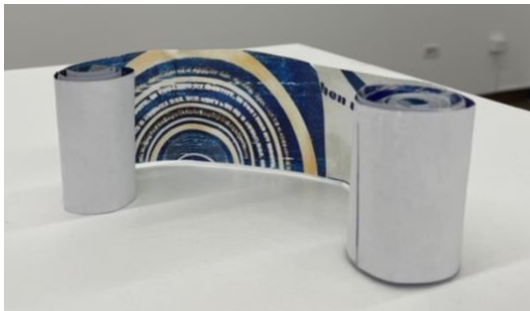


Fig 12-2. Seojung Lee, *Book Mock-Ups*, Printed on the Paper, Each Panel 2 x 4.8 Inches, 2023.

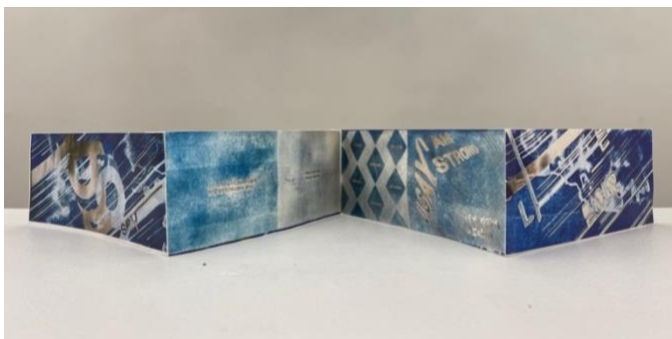


Fig 12-3. Seojung Lee, *Book Mock-Ups*, Printed on the Paper, Each Panel 2 x 4.8 Inches, 2023.



Fig 12-4. Seojung Lee, *Book Mock-Ups*, Printed on the Paper, Each Panel 2 x 4.8 Inches, 2023.

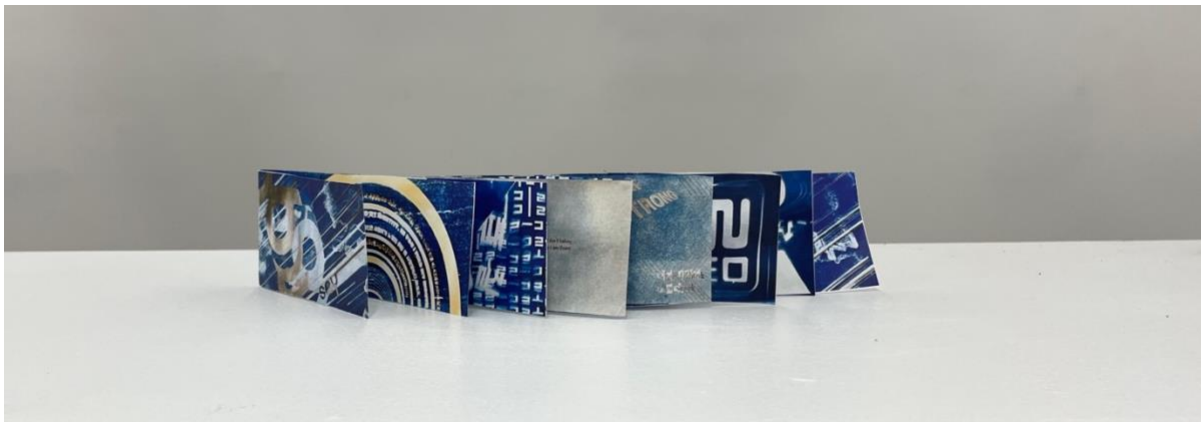


Fig 12-5. Seojung Lee, *Book Mock-Ups*, Printed on the Paper, Each Panel 2 x 4.8 Inches, 2023.

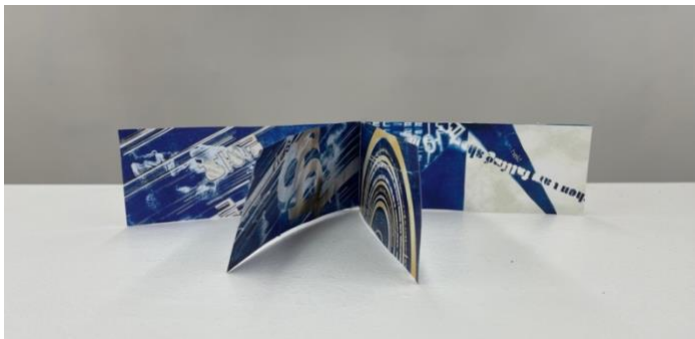


Fig 12-6. Seojung Lee, *Book Mock-Ups*, Printed on the Paper, Each Panel 2 x 4.8 Inches, 2023.



Fig 12-7. Seojung Lee, *Book Mock-Ups*, Printed on the Paper, Each Panel 2 x 4.8 Inches, 2023.

Method #2: Making Holes to Represent my Trauma and Healing with Red Threads

I found a perfect format and a binding idea from the mockup processes, and I further utilized holes and patterns to visualize resilience. I designed each hole with Adobe program, cut it with a laser cutter, and made patterns with red strings to show my transitions from hurt to healing. Each hole symbolizes my personal painful experiences. Making patterns with red threads means I am embracing these experiences and transcending as healing process. Moreover, I designed different holes for each page because every immigrant experience and trauma differ from person to person. I made a total of four different hole designs. One of the hole designs is a sentence in Korean and English, 'You are enough' (Fig. 13-1). The second design has each letter in the Alphabet and Hangeul representing two different worlds in my heart (Fig. 13-2). The next hole design was one line of small circles on the top and bottom, and three lines of circle holes on each edge. I made x marks with red strings to cure our wounds (Fig. 13-3). The last hole design has three lines of circles on the top and bottom, but the laser didn't go through to the bottom of the paper. The circles and lines became irregular patterns, and this accident gave the more profound meaning that I am embracing my life even if sometimes it's unexpected and uncontrollable (Fig. 13-4).



Fig 13-1. Seojung Lee, *I am Strong and When I Think I am Weak and I Believe What You Say* *DETAIL(Holes and Strings)*, Laser Cutter and Red String on the Cyanotypes, Each Panel 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.

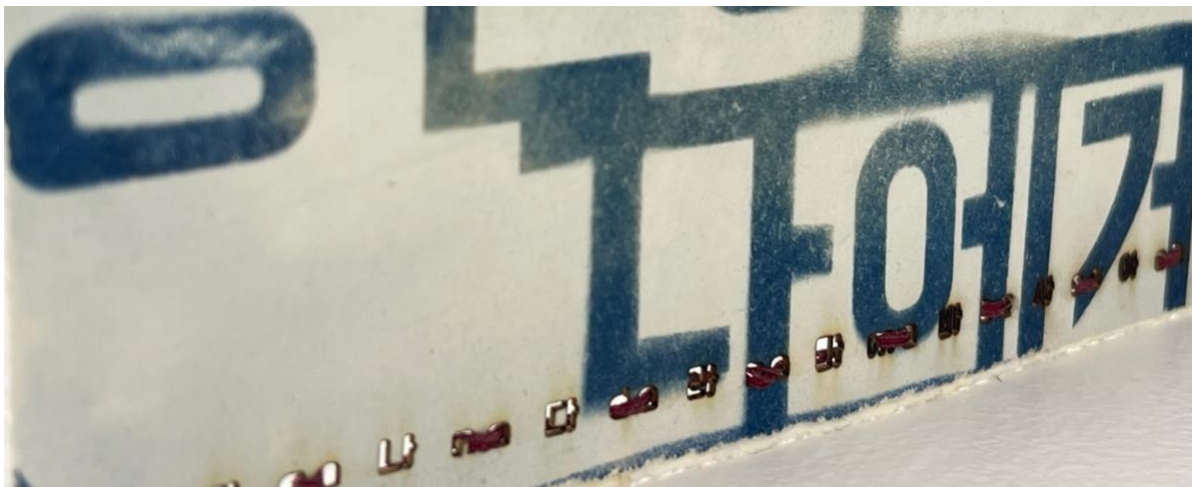


Fig 13-2. Seojung Lee, *I am Strong and When I Think I am Weak and I Believe What You Say* *DETAIL(Holes and Strings)*, Laser Cutter and Red String on the Cyanotypes, Each Panel 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.



Fig 13-3. Seojung Lee, *You Say I am Loved, and I am Held* *DETAIL(Holes and Strings)*, Laser Cutter and Red String on the Cyanotypes, Each Panel 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.



Fig 13-4. Seojung Lee, *You Say I am Loved and I am Yours DETAIL (Holes and Strings)*, Laser Cutter and Red String on the Cyanotypes, Each Panel 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.

Conclusion

My Artist's book has two different ways to be set up in exhibition. First, I use one red string to bind the pages to one book to tie together my weakness, pain, and trauma stories (Fig. 14-1). Second, this book can also be exhibited with individual pages in the gallery space (Fig. 14-2&3). I can unwind one string and place it as each piece on the pedestal. As I put each page on the pedestal, I am elevating my immigrant status and embodying space as an Asian American in the U.S. I didn't want my personal story—which had a lonely childhood, grew from an unhappy family, survived unexpected transiting to the U.S, and had difficulties with parent-in-law—to be disclosed to others at the beginning of this project. The power of making an Artist's book is I had courage to share my weakness and to show my blooming and healing from my wound. I moved further to combine laser cutting technique to try different binding methods, finding the perfect result to support my story better. I successfully created a physical form for my vulnerability and personal struggle to live here in the most beautiful way. In addition, autobiography allowed me to deeply analyze my experiences and personal history before and after coming to the U.S. and accepting my identity as a transition. I am feeling comfortable about

my status in both countries. I could be in a transitioning position until my last day of life, and this is valid as an immigrant woman. Finally, I am justifying my blurred boundary to imagine a society where differences and transition are welcomed and tolerated. I will expand my personal stories to a greater narrative to validate women of colors, acknowledge insights, and awaken intuition on how immigrants contribute to the U.S. in further research as autoethnography. My narrative will support different immigrant experiences in colored communities and imagine new pathways to move forward as an art educator.

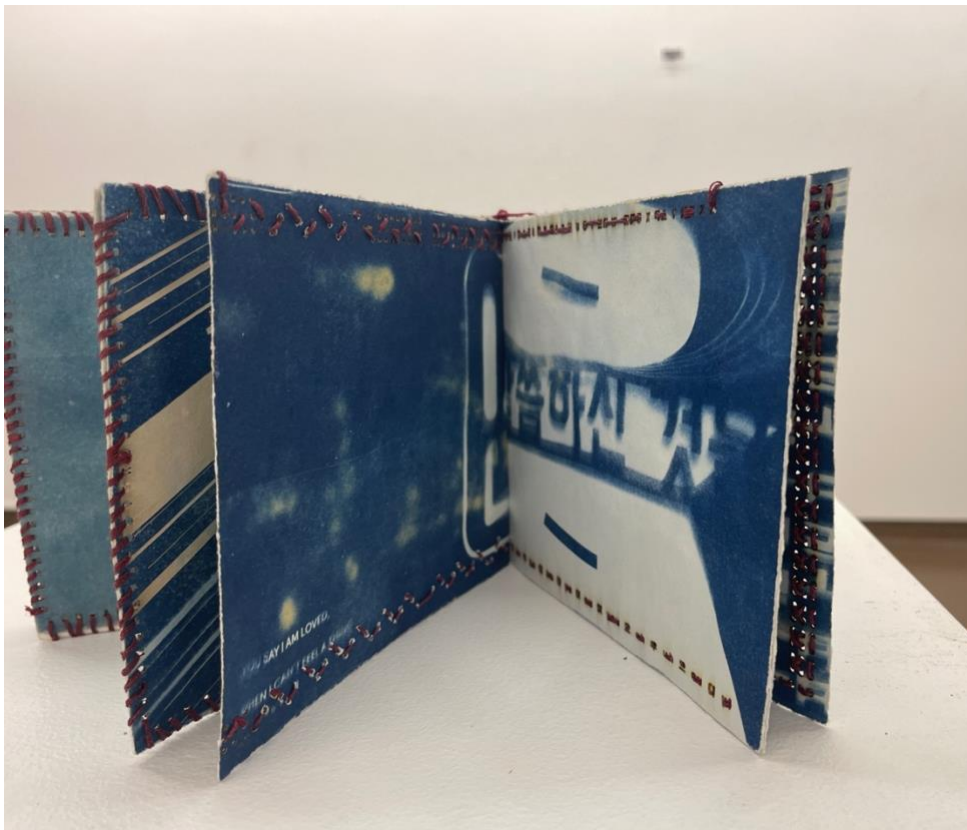


Fig 14-1. Seojung Lee, *I am Who I am Where I am*, Cyanotype with Laser Cutter and Red Strings, Each Panel 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.



Fig 14-2. Seojung Lee, *I am Who I am Where I am (Front View)*, Cyanotype with Laser Cutter and Red Strings, Each Panel 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.

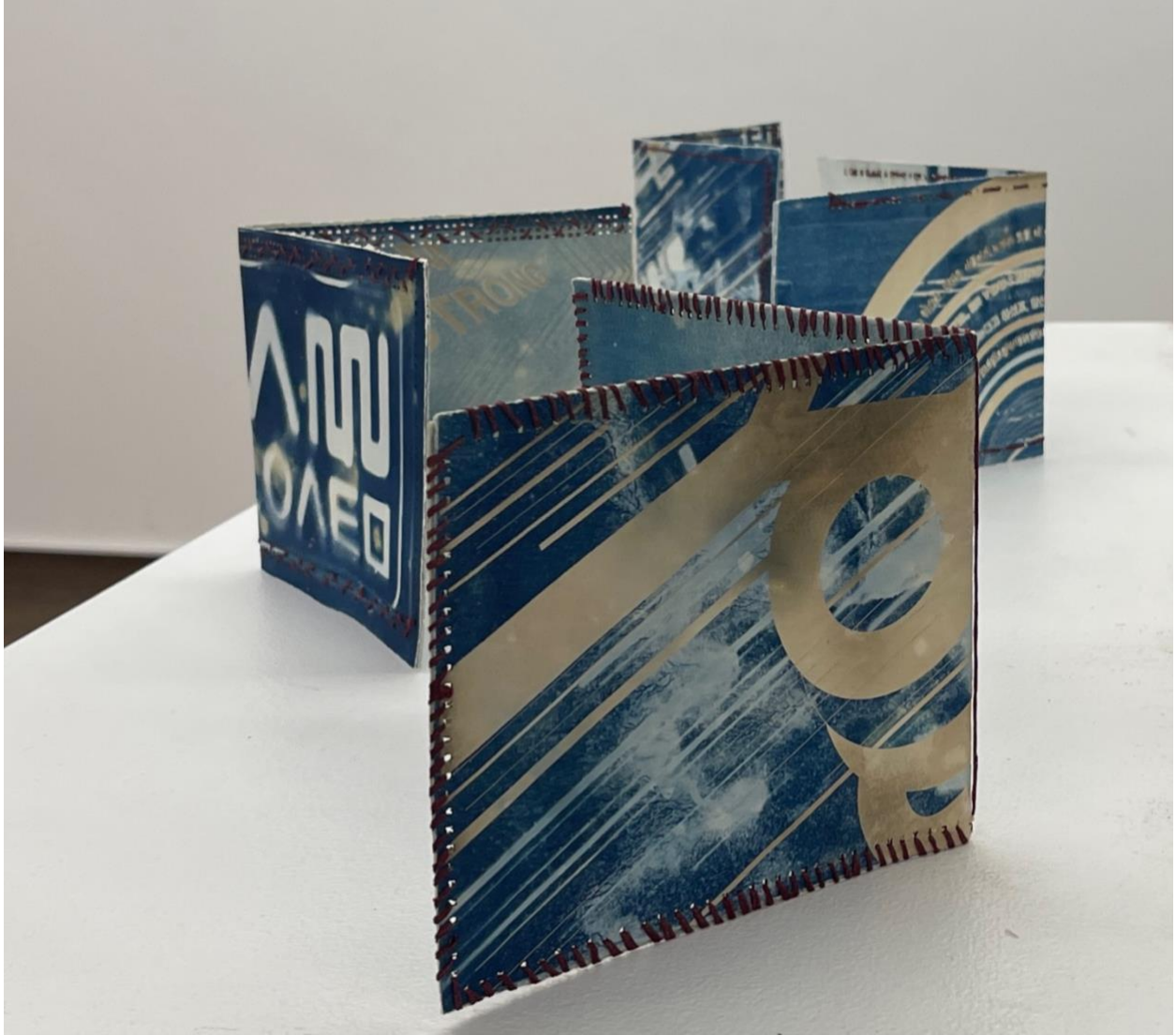


Fig 14-3. Seojung Lee, *I am Who I am Where I am (Side View)*, Cyanotype with Laser Cutter and Red Strings, Each Panel 6 x 14.5 Inches, 2023.

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