

Jeon Hee Kyoung



Metamorphosis is rarely voluntary. It happens when what we want or hope for doesn't come close enough to the reality we are presented with. If we have tried to control all of the outside variables but find that we are out of options, we have no choice but to turn within and attempt to modify ourselves.

A continued hope that what we desire will become a reality often leads to anguish. When life seems to give us everything other than what we wanted, and we cannot accept it, we can be left with deep dissatisfaction. Jeon Hee Kyoung, who goes by the moniker Jeikei, creates art from within this very specific place of anguish and discontent. The impossibility of a true harmony between reality and idealism is the driving force behind her work.

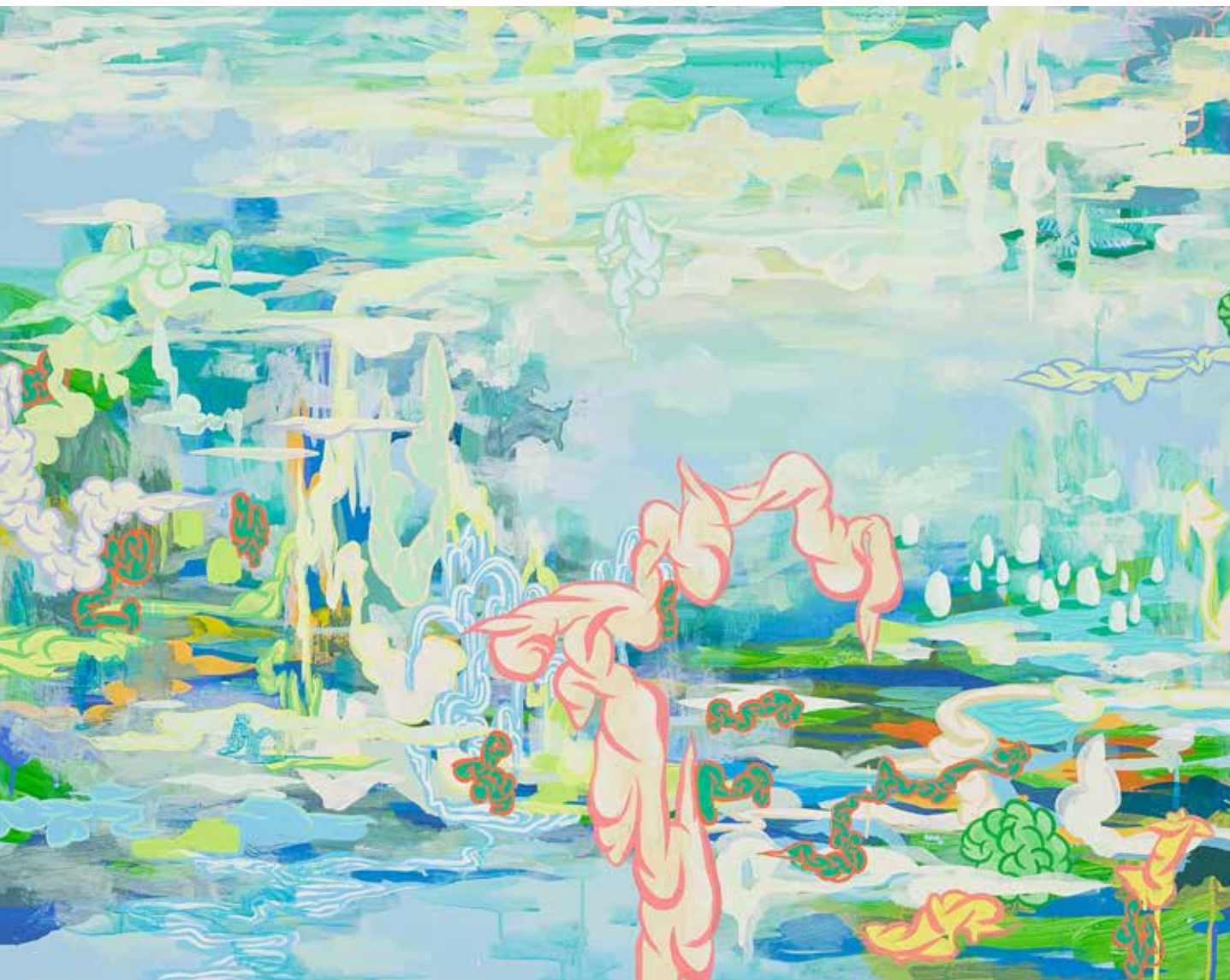
Jeikei creates installations and paintings that represent the metamorphosis that takes place when

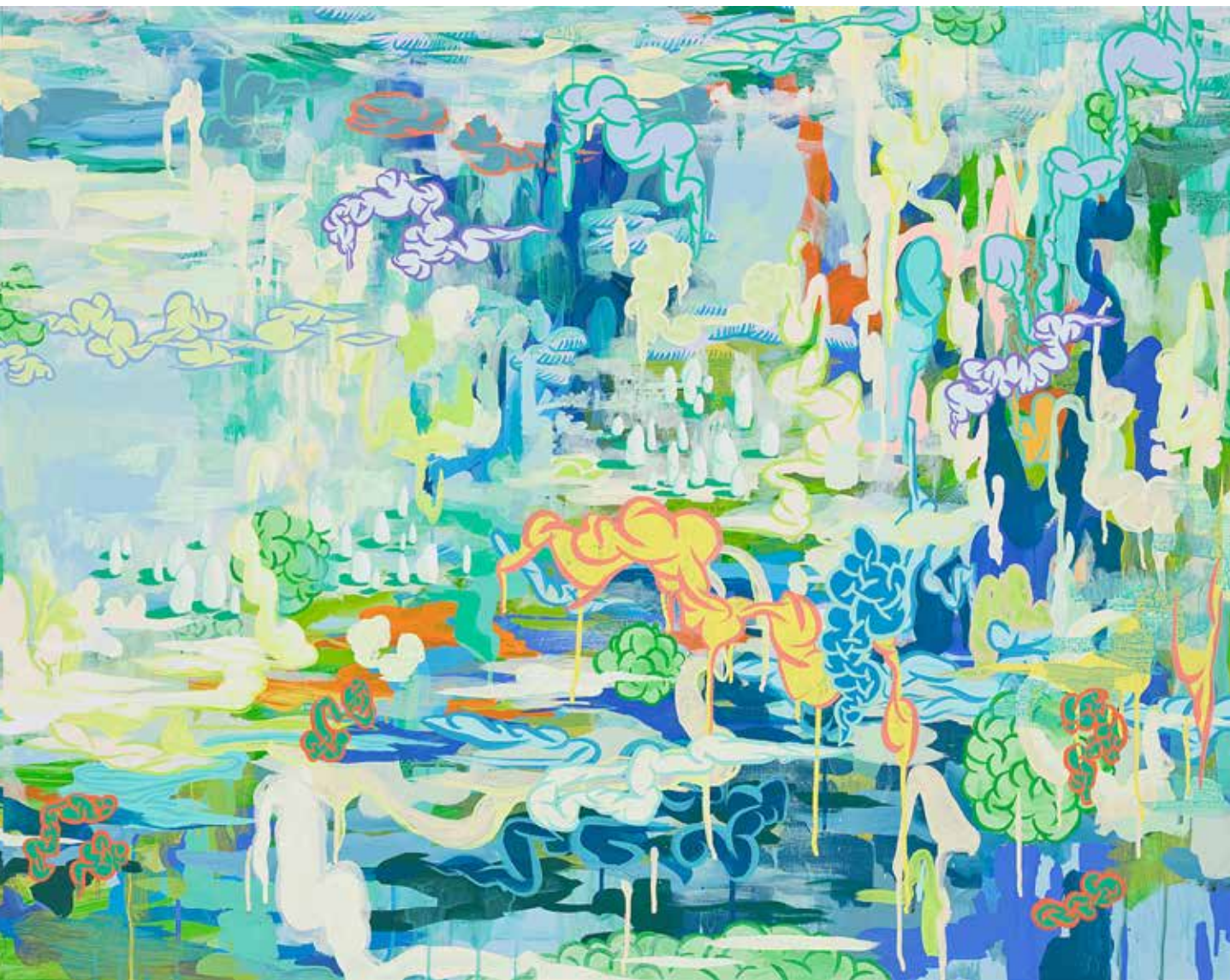
the gap between our reality and our dreams cannot be closed (or even accepted). She lingers in this place of pain involuntarily, and has resigned to learn from it and create something both beautiful and meaningful. The result is a visual representation of the artist's efforts to come to terms with her own anguish.

Her abstract paintings include luminescent colors among diverse biologically human and non-organic forms and are made through a process of painting, spilling, and overlapping. In the end, the canvas is vibrant and colorful, although the message is heavy. These bright colors could bring us back to the possibility of hope, but Jeikei's other works remind us of what that hope inevitably leads to.

Jeikei's installation work, *Practice Being Human*, presents a metamorphic series of drawings of an almost human form in a meditative pose. They suggest







an effort to reach a peaceful place in one's life while presently being in a disruptive state of messy unease. In another work, a central altar entitled *Pray for Human* displays everyday artifacts in a holy fashion – a prayer flag of receipts, relics of bottle caps, even bathroom products and cocktail napkins are presented as if they should be worshipped. These items represent us even while we are still trying to work out exactly who we are supposed to be.

Both Jeikei's paintings and installations are large in scale and wide open for interpretation. Perhaps Jeikei feels as Nietzsche did when he said: "hope in reality is the worst of all evils because it prolongs the torments

of man." Consider also the anguish and suffering Jeikei presents in light of Buddha's teachings, which tell us that once we finally give up our hopes and desires we can truly be on the path to nirvana.

A South Korean native, Jeikei earned both her bachelors and masters of fine art in painting from Hongik University in Seoul. She has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Korea, China and Taiwan. At the time of this article's publication, she will have freshly completed her seventh residency, this time at the Guandu Art Museum in Taipei. [b]

Lisa Highfill