

JAE KO

Korean American, b. Pyeongtaek-si, Korea
Lives and works in Alexandria, VA and Piney Point, MD

[@jae_ko](#)
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Over the last century, art has opened up to a range of materials and ways of shaping them that seems limited only by physics and the artist's imagination. These include processes that are infused with the rhythms of nature. Rather than depict waves along a coastline or the life cycle of a tree, Jae Ko embodies the movement, patterns, and textures of natural phenomena in her abstract sculptures.

She submerges rolls of commercial paper into transformative pools of sumi and calligraphic ink. As the paper absorbs the colored liquid, the rolls expand, undulate, and become saturated with lush, velvety color. In addition to this sea change, Ko's work reunites two different forms of trees: paper made from pulped specimens and sumi ink produced from the soot of pines. All the while, the concentric circles of her forms suggest the rings of growth that slowly aggregate during a tree's lifespan.



Left: Jae Ko, *JK2158 Red on Ash Black*, 2023, rolled paper and colored ink
Right: David Carlson, *Talking with a Bird*, 2023, acrylic on canvas

Jae Ko has been recognized with numerous awards including grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Anonymous Was a Woman, and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. She has also received multiple awards from the Maryland State Arts Council and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States, Canada, Asia, and Europe, including at such venues as The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC; Contemporary Art Museum, Houston; and Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, The Phillips Collection, and Grounds for Sculpture, and among her commissioned work is a major piece at Meta's (Facebook) Washington, DC headquarters. She received her MFA from the Maryland Institute of Art after earlier studies at the Toyo Institute of Art and Design and Wako University, both in Tokyo, Japan.

