

Featured Member

AATA

May 18, 2017



Elim Mak, MPS, ATR-BC, LCAT is an art therapist working at Housing Works, an advocacy organization in New York City dedicated to helping clients living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and homelessness. She has experience with a variety of populations, ranging from adolescents to the elderly, in diverse settings, including inpatient psychiatry, addiction disorder facilities, outpatient clinics, and community health settings. Before her career in art therapy, Mak was a professional comic book/storyboard illustrator and graphic designer in advertising, publishing, and media for over 17 years. Regarding her AATA membership, Mak says, “it is a vital way to stay connected with the art therapy community at large.”

Mak is a fine art painter with training in traditional Tibetan art technique, through which the sheer execution of brushwork is mindfulness practice in and of itself. She exhibits her paintings at Figureworks Gallery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and has shown in numerous galleries around the Tri-State area. Her passion for art as a powerful healing agent is what drove Mak to pursue a career



that uses the creative process with a more directly positive impact on people. She graduated with Honors from Pratt Institute’s Art Therapy & Creativity Development program. To read more about Mak, visit her bio page on the [NY Historical Society website](#).

Mak was attracted to art therapy because it offers a space for one to be authentic, without judgment, labeling, or feeling scrutinized; it invites creative experimentation, exploration and self-discovery. She explains, “Sometimes, it is about expression when words may not suffice or are too difficult. Sometimes, it is simply about containing the present moment. And oftentimes, that is just enough.” As a person of color, Mak would like to see more diversity in the profession, because she believes that “racial and sexual identities are so much more fluid now than they have ever been before.”

“Fire Rooster” by Elim Mak. 2017. Acrylic and gouache on masonite board.

Artist statement: As an art therapist and artist, I believe it is our civic and moral duty to rise and mobilize for the well-being of our country, to strongly advocate for inclusiveness, diversity, and respect for all humans and for planet Earth. The 2017 Chinese zodiac symbol of the Fire Rooster has many relevant implications, especially in our current political climate. The rooster represents splendor, courage, protection against evil spirits, strong work ethic, motivation, and constancy. Grit and pluck may ruffle feathers, but practicing virtuous discipline has never been more significant. The time is now. A new era has dawned. The rooster crows. Wake up!

