This I Believe: personal statement - Tomo Suyama

I believe that there doesn’t have to be a single answer to everything. I was born in the United States to a Japanese family and I have spent my childhood both in America and Japan due to my father’s job. I have also lived in India once, and I even moved to different places several times inside Japan. It has always been hard for me to pin down my identity either as American or Japanese. I always asked myself -- “where is my hometown?” -- just to find out that I don’t have a clear answer to that question.

Over the years, I have finally started to realize that there doesn’t necessarily have to be a single answer to those questions, and that I can be proud of my unique background that forms the person who I am today. I am proud to say that I am both an American and a Japanese. I am proud to say that San Jose, Bangalore, Kagawa, Chiba, Tokyo, are all the places that I can call my hometown.

So how has this belief influenced my art? My favorite type of art is not one style. I am fascinated by realistic paintings as much as I am by very stylized designs. I believe that a single artwork can contain as many genres as the artist wants. Just as there doesn’t have to be a single answer to my identity, my art does not have to have to be identified with a single style.