

SIKYUNG SUNG

SEESAW | May 17 – June 28, 2025

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

BB&M is pleased to present *SEESAW*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Sikyung Sung, among the most talented of the young generation of Korean painters working today. As suggested by the title, the exhibition reveals the artist working through the dualities and contradictions arising from the act of painting in an age of instant and infinite iteration of images.

In these oil on canvas works, meandering aleatory lines and expressive gestural brushstrokes move across swathes of color and impastoed patches, by turns intentional and intuitive, colliding and converging, layers subsumed under layers, opacity and translucence alternating with restless, exhilarating energy. Growing more effortless, more technically accomplished, Sung's painterly language in these new works is more conscious, and more wary, of the shadow cast by the modernist elevation of abstraction to the height of aesthetic purity. The two conjoined lexical components of the exhibition title, as the artist observes, hints at this ambivalence.

*SEE: What is unknown and thus more open, less controlled, without limits.
Immediate expectancy.*

*SAW: What is known, already seen, exerting control and limits. A distant
expectation.*

This is the perennial challenge faced by successive generations of young painters, engaged in what is possibly the most antiquated of visual genres, even as the world hurtles toward a future in which image-making by human hands seems doomed to obsolescence: How to make it new, at least a little bit, or failing that, how to make it true, to your experience, your sensibility, your time.

The challenge is especially acute for a contemporary Asian artist like Sung, whose fluency in a visual idiom formulated primarily in the West will always be viewed with a bit of suspicion. But the riposte to such skepticism is abundant in his canvases, deftly pickpocketing the best bits from his heroes—from Willem de Kooning to Michel Majerus—and reintegrating them into a pictorial world shaped, incongruously, organically, by his own lived experience: the welter of rapidly modernizing, hyper-commercialized, politically tumultuous Korea of his young adulthood, offset by a peculiarly Korean nostalgia for an ideal society harmoniously linked to nature existing in the mist of time (arguably the predominant trope in all of modern Korean painting since its emergence in the aftermath of the Korean War).

All of this is simultaneously present in Sung's picture plane, though fleetingly, layer upon ephemeral layer, which, the artist notes, is not unlike our experience of our ever-present screens. In this way, his canvases may be a perfect representation of our precarious mental space in these precarious times, hesitant to linger in the present moment, much less in the past, out of a persistent need for the next new thing, even if we know we're bound to be disappointed: Our mundane Sisyphean existence encapsulated in the "heroic" Sisyphean undertaking that is painting in our time.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



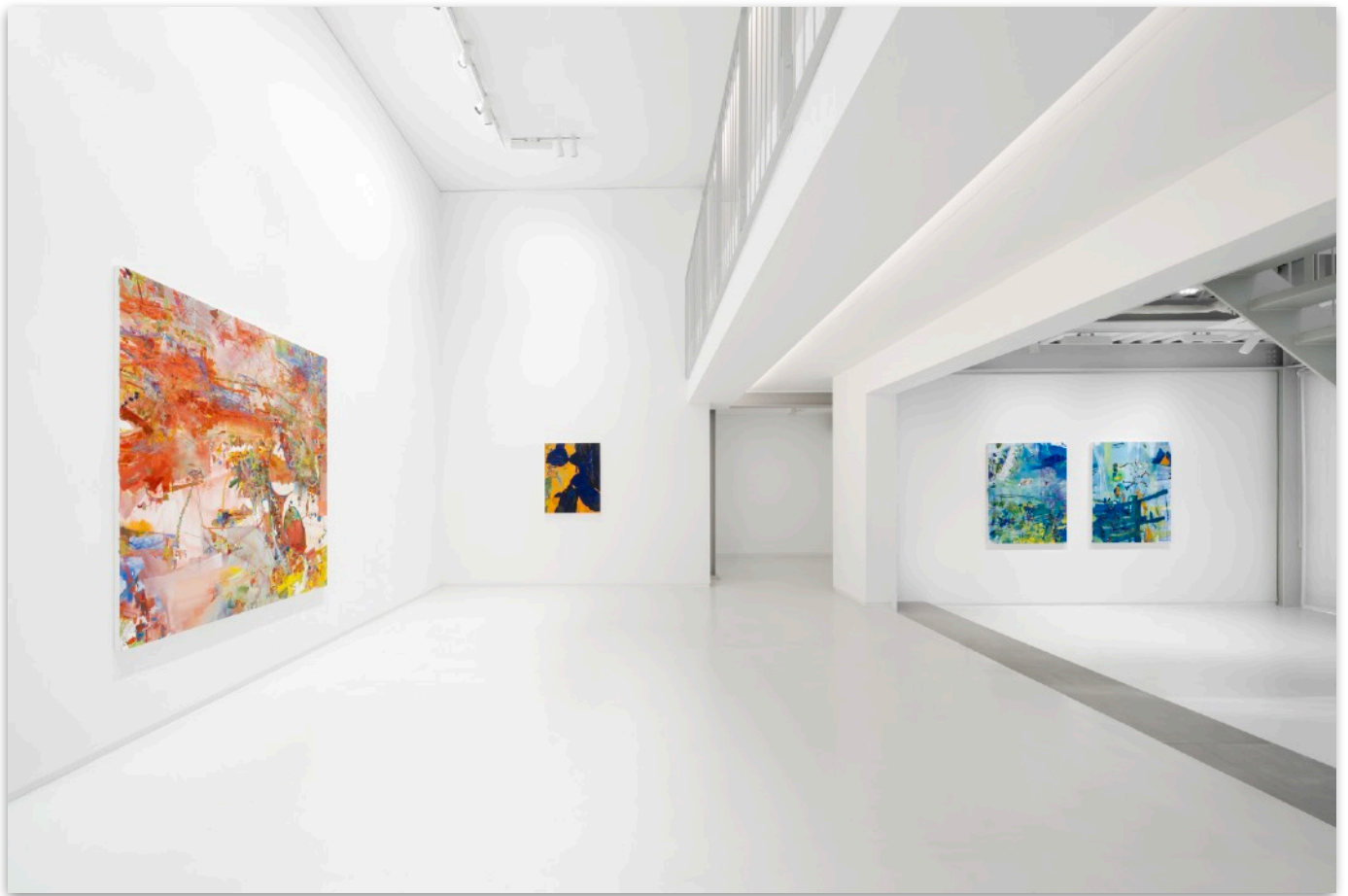
Sikyung Sung (b. 1991) is among the most noteworthy emerging Korean painters today, gaining increasing attention with his distinctive modes of visual expression.

Alternating between improvisation and intent, chance and choice, Sung produces abstract paintings that showcase free-spirited brushstrokes and bold contrasts of color.

He allows the formal structures of the pictorial space to emerge from intuition, the spontaneous choices in the moment coming together to shape the composition. In lieu of specific forms, the artist pursues something approaching a pure visual language through aleatory permutations of the brush, resulting in an exquisite melding of intersecting patterns and expressive mark-making on the canvas.

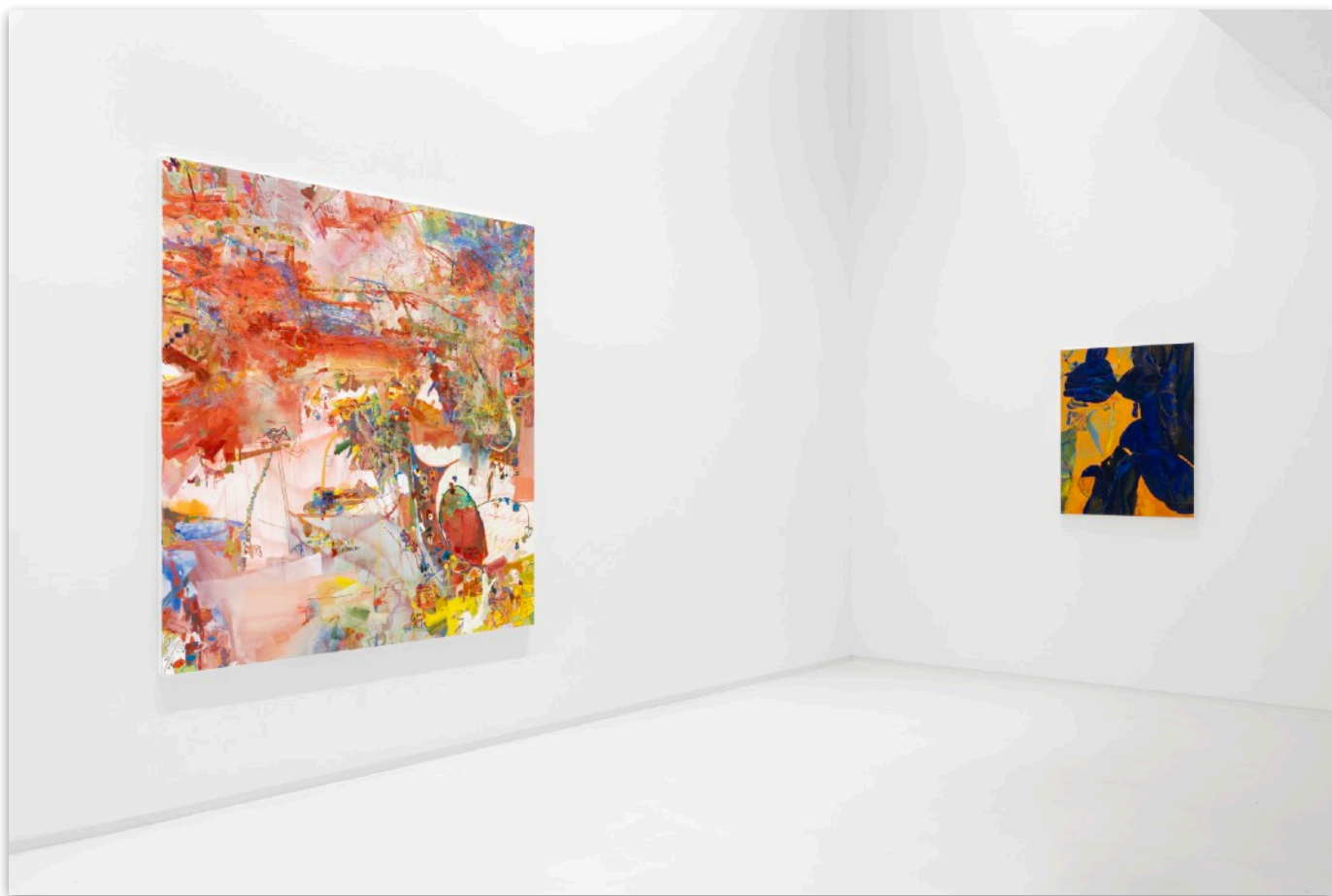
Sung holds a BFA from Hongik University, Seoul, and an MFA from the Seoul National University of Science and Technology. His solo exhibitions include BB&M (Seoul, 2025), d/p (Seoul, 2023), and Space Heyong/Shift (Seoul, 2019). His work has been included in group exhibitions at BB&M (Seoul, 2025, 2024, 2023); INTERIM (Seoul, 2024); DMZ Art Project (Paju, 2024); Factory2 (Seoul, 2023); Hongik University Museum (Seoul, 2023); P21 (Seoul, 2023); Art Space 3 (Seoul, 2022, 2019); Perigee Gallery (Seoul, 2021); and ONE AND J. Gallery (Seoul, 2020, 2016).

EXHIBITION VIEW



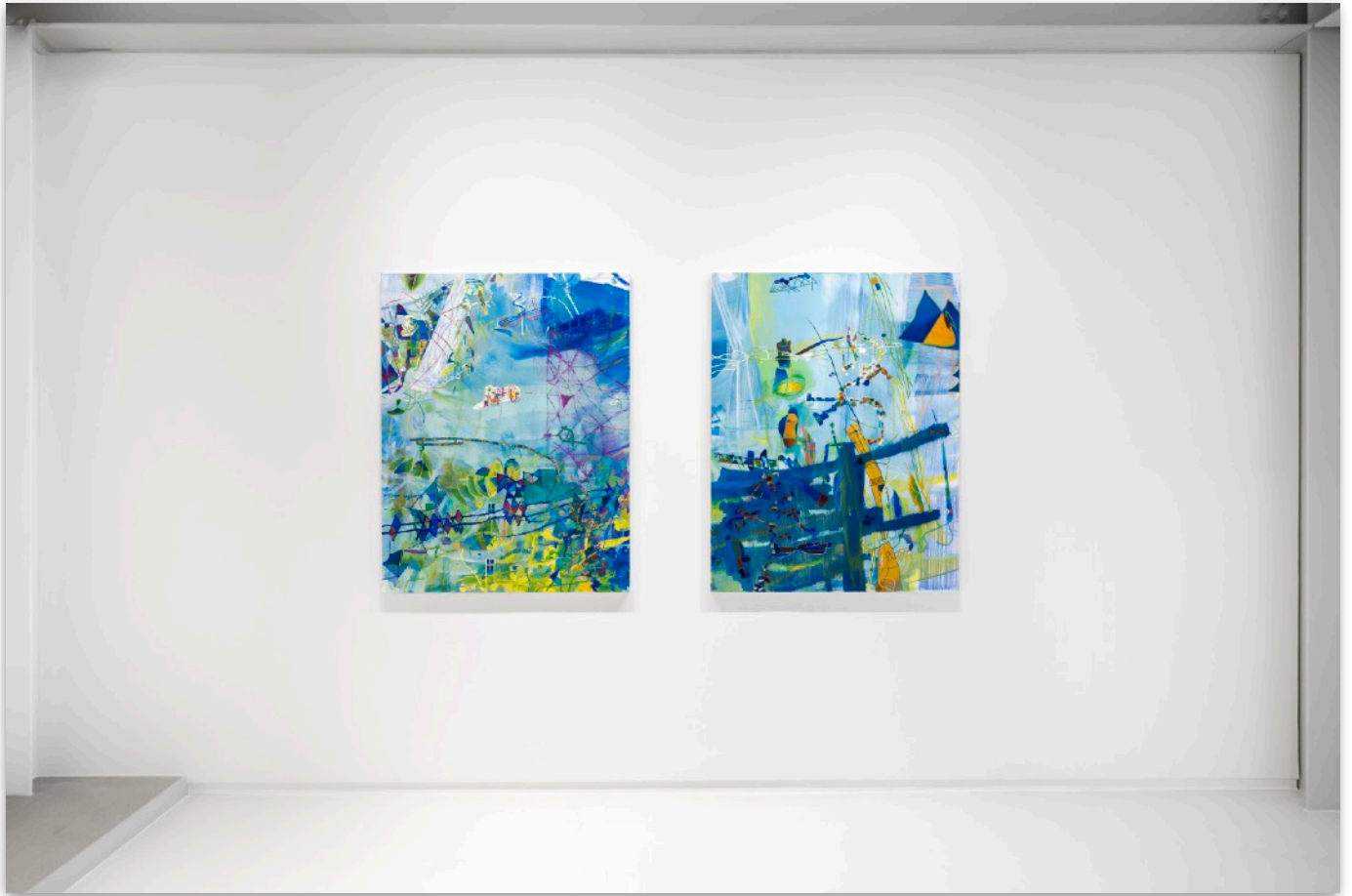
Exhibition view, *SEESAW*, BB&M, Seoul, 2025. Works by Sikyung Sung.

EXHIBITION VIEW



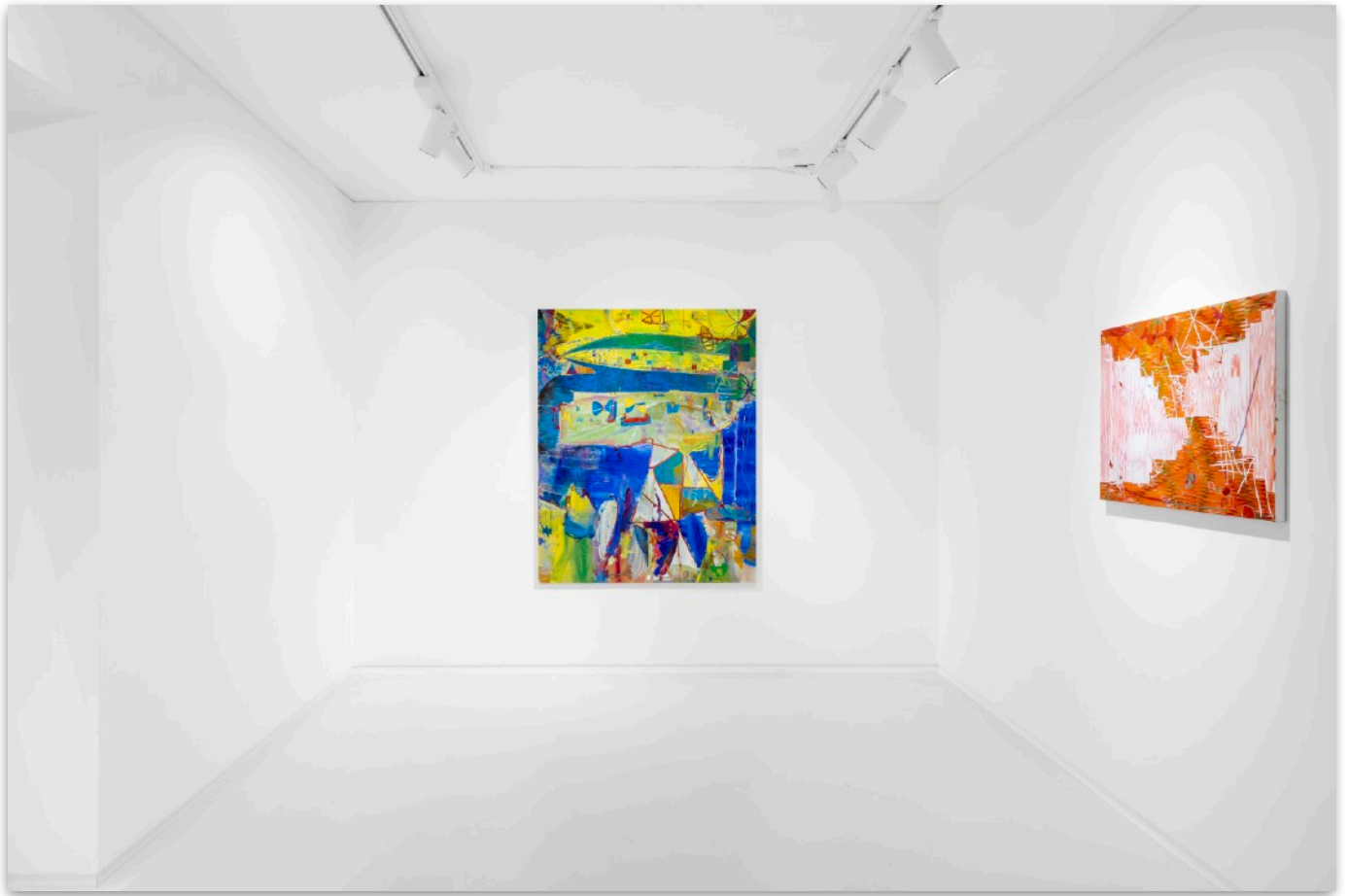
Exhibition view, *SEESAW*, BB&M, Seoul, 2025. Works by Sikyung Sung.

EXHIBITION VIEW



Exhibition view, *SEESAW*, BB&M, Seoul, 2025. Works by Sikyung Sung.

EXHIBITION VIEW



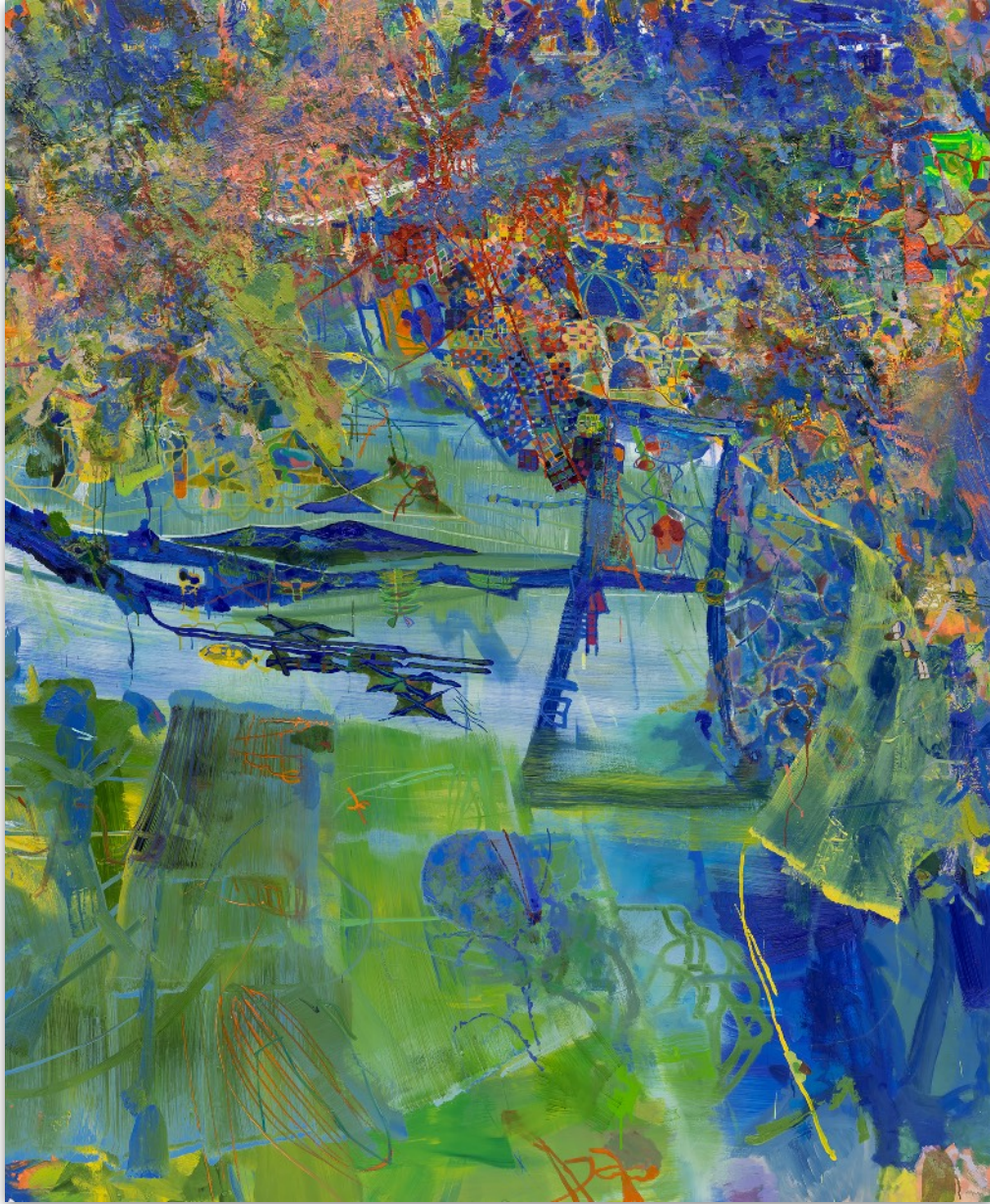
Exhibition view, *SEESAW*, BB&M, Seoul, 2025. Works by Sikyung Sung.

EXHIBITION VIEW



Exhibition view, *SEESAW*, BB&M, Seoul, 2025. Works by Sikyung Sung.

SELECTED WORKS

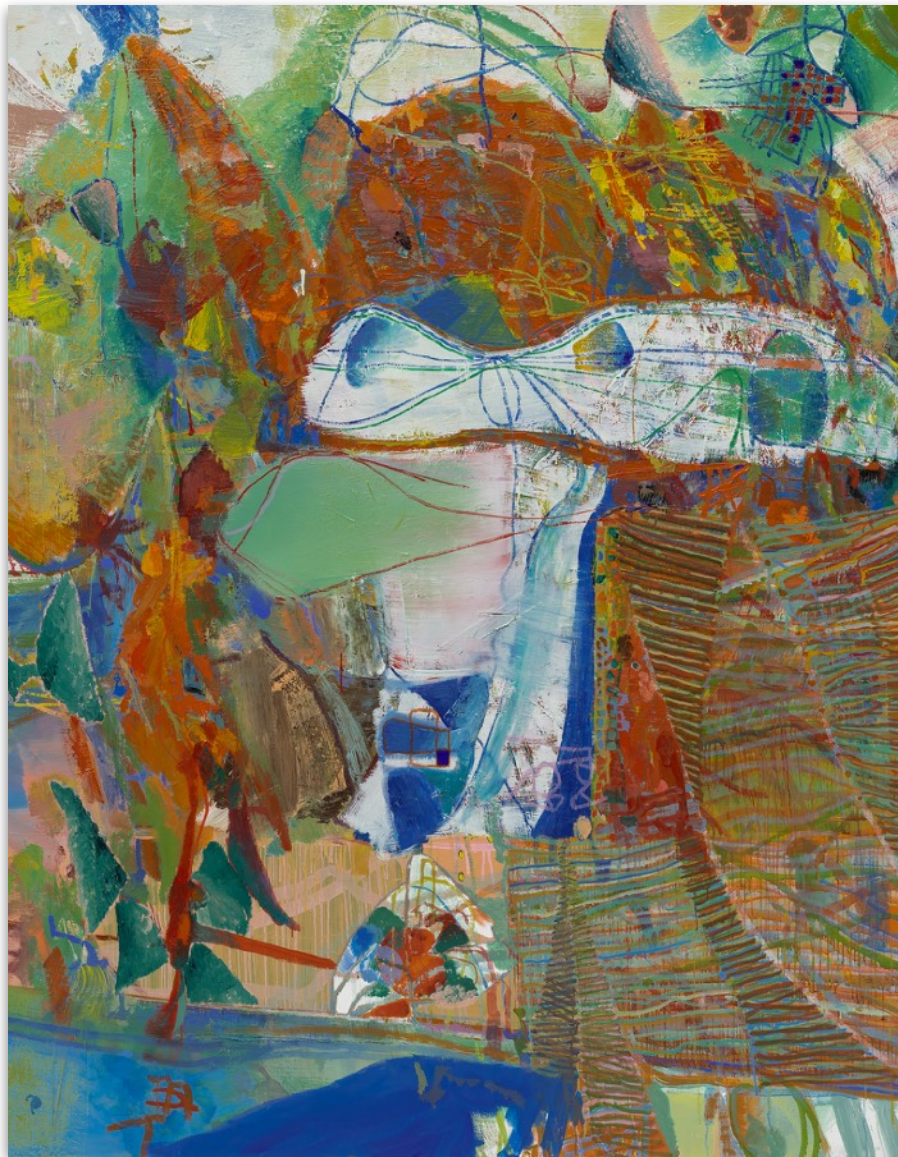


푸르른 *Blue*, 2025

Oil on canvas

204 x 170 cm

SELECTED WORKS



늦은, 반가운 *Late, Welcome*, 2025

Oil on canvas

150 x 120 cm

SELECTED WORKS



개미놀이 - 짝 *Ant Play - Tight*, 2025

Oil on canvas

90.9 x 72.7 cm

SELECTED WORKS



푸르른 장식 *Blue Decoration*, 2024

Oil on canvas

116 x 91 cm

SELECTED WORKS



수전증 연습 *Tremor Practice*, 2025

Oil on canvas

181 x 181 cm



ABOUT THE GALLERY

Beginning in 2009 as an art consultancy, BB&M has been instrumental in the ascendance of some of the most acclaimed contemporary Korean artists now on the international stage, including Lee Bul, Minouk Lim, Park Chan-kyong, and Bae Young-whan. BB&M's current iteration as an independent gallery is a joint effort between James B. Lee (Founding Principal) and Si Young Hur (Principal), who brings decades of experience in the commercial sector as Director at Gallery Hyundai and PKM Gallery and as Partner at Gallery Baton. In her previous posts, Ms. Hur was responsible for organizing and overseeing exhibitions of such artists as Liam Gillick, Olafur Eliasson, Thomas Struth, Robert Rauschenberg, and Yun Hyong-keun, a key figure in

BB&M inaugurated its gallery space in October 2021 with a solo exhibition of Lee Bul, widely recognized as the leading Korean artist of her generation. Encompassing over 2,500 square feet (233 square meters) of exhibition space over two levels, including a double-height space with a 17.5-foot (5.4 meters) ceiling, BB&M is located in the culturally storied district of Seongsu-dong, in the vicinity of Gansong Art Museum, established in 1938 as the first private art museum in Korea.

In addition to Lee Bul, the gallery's roster includes such prominent, critically important Korean figures as Minouk Lim, Bae Young-whan, Heecheon Kim, Jeongwu Woo, and Sikyung Sung working across a range of genres and shaping contemporary Korean art in an international context. The gallery also represents younger international artists rising in recognition and spanning different visual cultures, among them Alex Dodge and Miko Veldkamp.

From the outset BB&M has also sought to introduce curatorial perspectives from outside the commercial sector to ensure its program is intellectually expansive, inviting, for instance, Dan Cameron, the former New Museum curator, to organize an exhibition. These efforts reflect the gallery's long-term mission of building an exhibition program that engages both critically and aesthetically with contemporary visual ideas.

Press Contact: Jiho Oh | ojiho@gallerybbm.com | +82 10 2084 9368

Press Kit: [LINK](#)