

PALINDROME November 5 - December 17
JEONGSU WOO SOLO EXHIBITION

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

BB&M is pleased to present *Palindrome*, a solo exhibition of new works by Jeongsu Woo opening on November 5 and running through December 17, 2022. Among the most closely watched young Korean painters working today, Woo mines motifs and signifiers from various temporal and cultural strata—from historical paintings to illustrated literary texts—to deploy them in a distinctly contemporary way. Hovering between homage, subversion, and innovation, his canvases, characterized by a sophisticated sense of palette, brushstroke, and draftsmanship, stand as a testament to the enduring relevance of the craft of painting.

In this, his first solo presentation with BB&M, the artist is showing new paintings revolving around the trope of Narcissus to examine contemporary society's obsession with the self. As suggested by the exhibition title—referring to a word or phrase that reads identically backwards and forwards in a closed, reflective circuit—these works draw an analogy between the tragic condition of Narcissus, the submersion in illusory images of the self, and the self-reflexive, self-obsessive tendencies in our culture today. Against a background of repetitive decorative patterns, harlequins and floral motifs, fading into gradations of seductive hues, Woo layers gestural strokes and images of Narcissus appropriated from historical paintings and illustrations. The surface of his canvas thus echoes and deconstructs the image and meaning of the allegorical pool—as both a reflective mirror and an endless void.

Woo's practice offers a view of the present through an intricate palimpsest of references and allusions, juxtaposing iconic patterns and motifs traversing historical sources—from medieval tracts on religion and philosophy to Renaissance paintings—with elements gleaned from the more idiosyncratic nooks in contemporary subculture, illustrations found in volumes of speculative fiction, for instance. All of this is wedded to a distinctive visual language that takes unabashed pleasure in lively mark making and deployment of sumptuous colors. Rare among painters of his generation, Woo seeks to rekindle a belief in painting's capacity to gather the cultural fragments of our age and propose a form, an aesthetic structure, to generate beauty and meaning, however contingent and perishable.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Born in 1986, Jeongsu Woo is among the most closely watched young Korean painters working today. As suggested by the title of one of his artist's books, *Flâneur Notes*, his work conveys the sensibilities of an urbane, witty observer. His boulevards are not merely physical, however. They traverse genres and periods, cultural motifs high and low, and elements both sensuous and sublime. His canvases may be seen as a record of the feelings and sensations of these aesthetic wanderings, and a visual approximation of what it means to be a young painter in the metropolitan East in the early 21st century—highly attuned to a cultural history defined by the West but free to sample and remix it into something entirely of its own time and place.

A sophisticated palimpsest of references and signifiers that elide temporal and cultural parameters, Jeongsu Woo's painting is as likely to layer harlequins

and floral patterns (à la Patterns & Decorations) with flat iterations of Morandian still-life vases as to appropriate antiquarian images from illustrated literary works, while slyly undercutting the often weighty scenes with the utterly contemporary and ubiquitous smiley face. Alternating between homage, appropriation, and subversion, his work is an acknowledgment, nonetheless, of the enduring craft of painting, characterized as it is by a sensitive attention to palette, gestures and strokes of the brush, and pictorial composition.

Jeongsu Woo has held solo institutional exhibitions at Doosan Gallery, Seoul, and Doosan Gallery, New York (both 2020); Kumho Museum of Art, Seoul (2018); and OCI Museum of Art, Seoul (2016), among others. His work has also been included in important group shows at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Korea, Gwacheon (2021); Ilmin Museum of Art, Seoul (2021); Total Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul (2020); Seoul Museum of Art (2019); and Gwangju Biennale (2018).

His work is held in numerous private collections, as well as notable public collections including the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul; Kumho Museum of Art, Seoul; Mimesis Art Museum, Paju, Korea; OCI Museum of Art, Seoul; and Doosan Art Center, Seoul. Jeongsu Woo received a BFA (2010) and MFA (2015) from Korea National University of the Arts, Seoul.

INSTALLATION VIEW



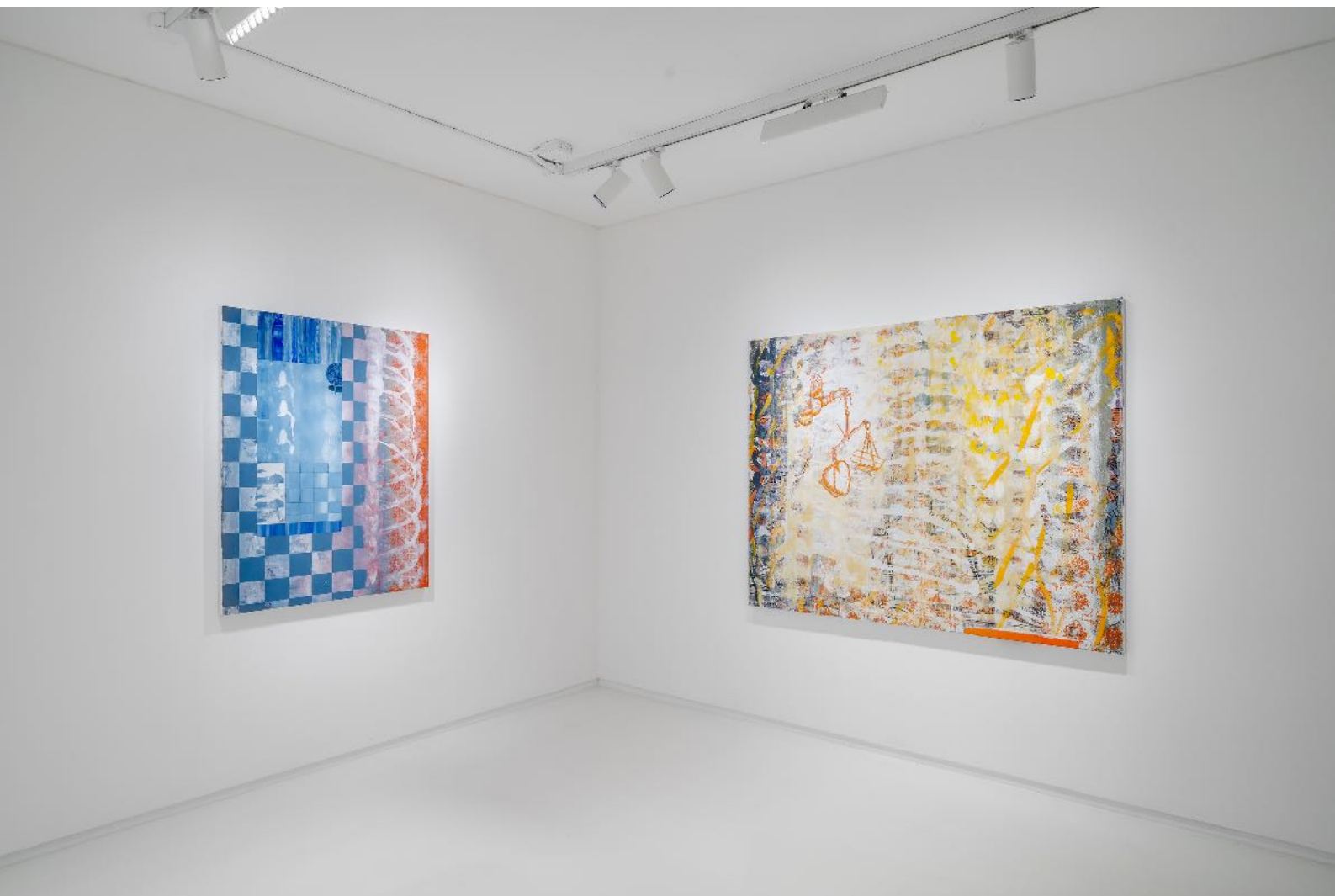
Exhibition View, *Palindrome*, BB&M Seoul, 2022. Works by Jeongsu Woo

INSTALLATION VIEW



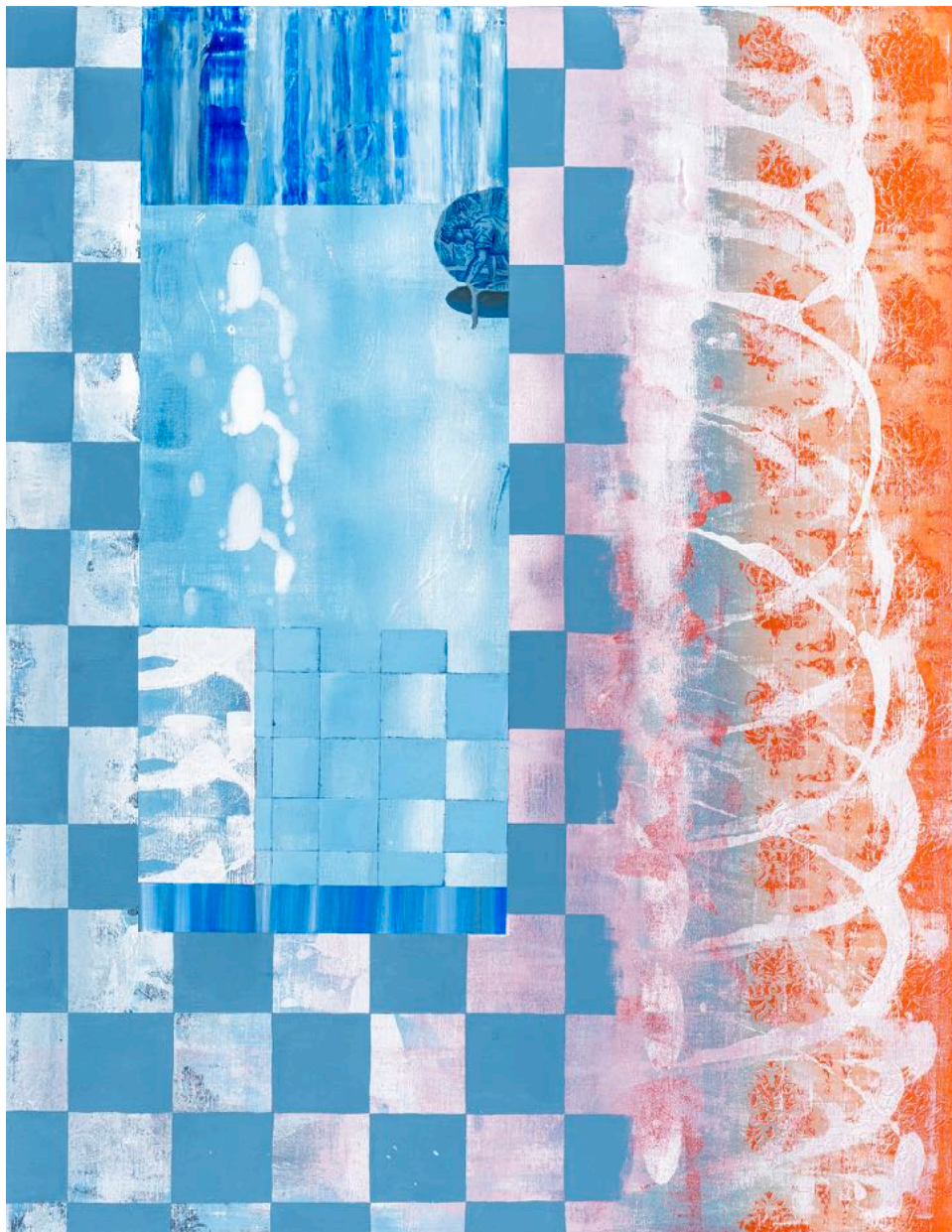
Exhibition View, *Palindrome*, BB&M Seoul, 2022. Works by Jeongsu Woo

INSTALLATION VIEW



Exhibition View, *Palindrome*, BB&M Seoul, 2022. Works by Jeongsu Woo

SELECTED WORKS



Noticelfer, 2022

Acrylic, ink on canvas, 116.8 x 91 cm

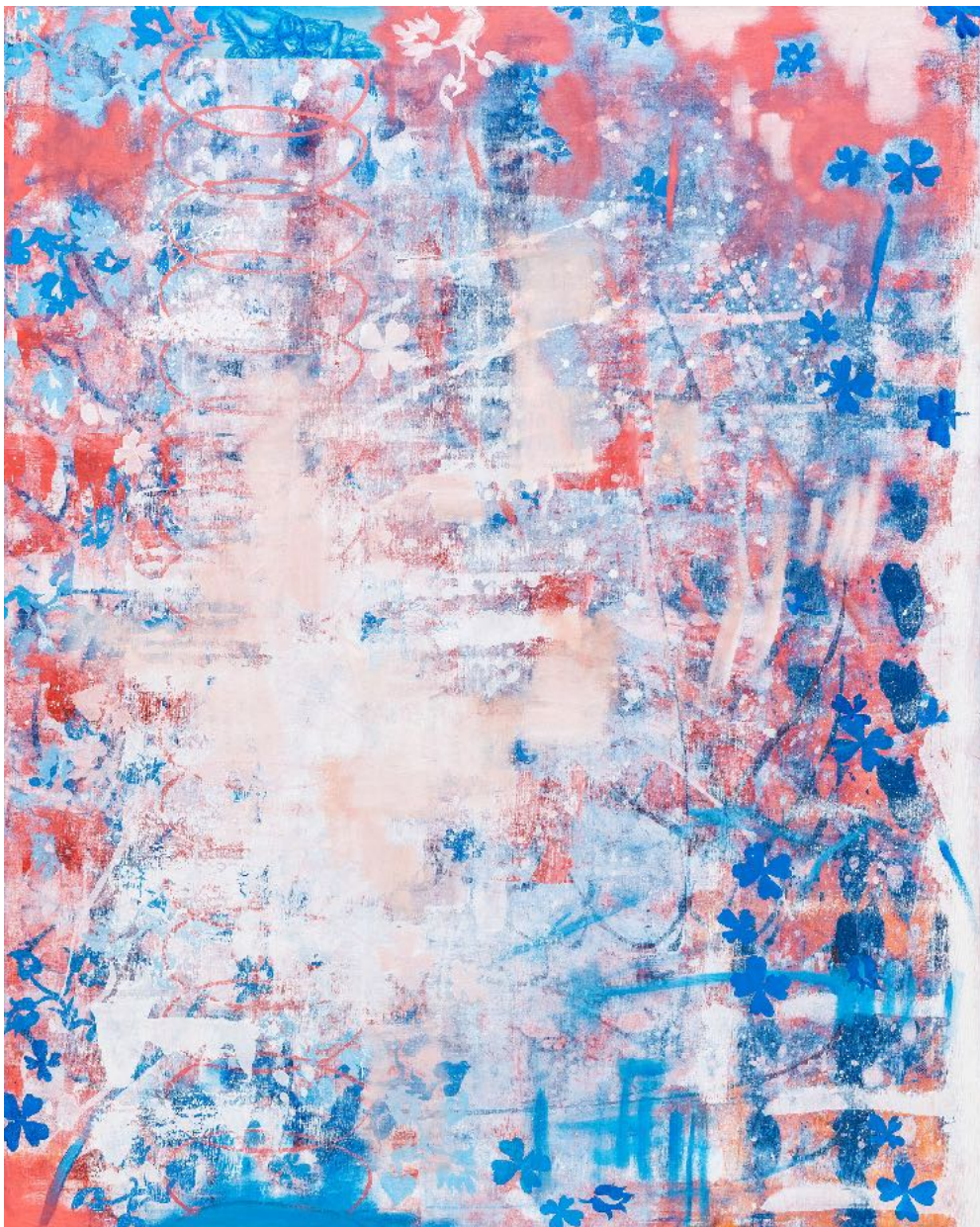
SELECTED WORKS



Noticelfer XI, 2022

Acrylic, ink on canvas, 162.2 x 130.3 cm

SELECTED WORKS



Noticelfer VII, 2022

Acrylic, ink on canvas, 162.2 x 130.3 cm

SELECTED WORKS



Narcissus II, 2022

Acrylic, ink on canvas, 116.8 x 91 cm



ABOUT THE GALLERY

BB&M was established in 2009 as an art consultancy working in partnership with PKM Gallery, Seoul, to create an exhibition program of such acclaimed Korean artists as Lee Bul, Minouk Lim, Park Chan-kyong, and Bae Young-whan, positioning the gallery at the forefront of the contemporary sector in Asia. BB&M's current iteration as an independent gallery is a collaboration between James B. Lee, the Founding Principal, and Si Young Hur, who brings extensive experience in Seoul's 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 exhibitions of such artists as Liam Gillick, Olafur Eliasson, Thomas Struth, Robert Rauschenberg, and Yun Hyong-keun, a key figure in *Dansaekhwa*.

Encompassing 250 square meters of exhibition space over two levels, including a double-height space with a 5.4-meter (17.5 feet) ceiling, BB&M is located in the culturally storied district of Seongbuk-dong, near Gansong Art Museum, the first private modern art museum in Korea. 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.

BB&M's roster includes, in addition to Lee Bul, such leading Korean figures as Bae Young-whan and Heecheon Kim among others, 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.

ABOUT THE PRINCIPALS

James B. Lee, Founding Principal, brings decades of varied experience in the art world, as a writer for such international magazines as *ARTnews* (New York), *Flash Art International* (Milan), and *Art AsiaPacific* (Hong Kong); in institutions, as the Head of Exhibitions at Art Sonje Center, Seoul, and the Director of Exhibitions at the Gwangju Biennale Foundation; and in the commercial sector as Partner at PKM Gallery, Seoul. Mr. Lee was trained in finance at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, before earning a master's in writing from Columbia University, New York.

Si Young Hur, Principal, earned a BFA in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design and an MFA from Hong Ik University, Seoul, where she studied with major figures in the *Dansaekhwa* movement, notably Park Seo-bo. Ms. Hur went on to study art management at ICART, Paris, and embarked on a career in the commercial art world, first working at a Paris gallery that exhibited Lee Ufan. Upon returning to Seoul, she served as Director at Gallery Hyundai and subsequently at PKM Gallery.

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