

Margaret Lee
it pushes back
Leeahn Gallery, Seoul
November 15 – December 30, 2022
[exhibition link](#)

margaret-lee.com



Leeahn Gallery presents Margaret Lee's solo exhibition *it pushes back*, on view November 15th to December 30th. This is the New York-based artist's first presentation in Korea and will feature 12 new paintings as well as works from three previous painting series.

Throughout her practice, Lee has moved through various mediums and methods in her interrogation of representation and value production within the visual field. A decade-long commitment to this line of inquiry lead Lee to question the grounds of these past interrogations, not as an all-out rejection but rather to challenge herself to look more closely at where the self might be situated when untethered from materially understood signs and symbols. Moving to abstraction allowed her to flip the analysis inwards with the intention of creating space to acknowledge the unshakeable influence of memory and imagination on her understanding of experiences conditioned by time. Lee's gestures reflect the entanglements that arise when interiority and exteriority collide and her compositions are contingent on allowing that which arises in the moment to push back.

Press links:

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Passivity seemingly marks the experience of accumulating time along familiar pathways, until it doesn't. Breaking with assumed understandings allows for a cumulative view and reveals overlooked marks. At this point of engagement, that which comes into focus demands more than acknowledgement, it pushes back.

- ML, 2022 Seoul

There is a stretch of highway that looms large in my memory and has recently been reincorporated into my local movements with some regularity. This road, though not particularly unique, is marked by a chaotic junction point where the two straight parallels are interrupted by circuitous ramps that lead to elevated archways. Passing through and under this amalgamation of infrastructure was once thrilling but over the years became something to endure. I didn't think much of this directional move towards my origin point as the familiarity of the road allowed for an easing back into a dissociative state where the experience of the present dissolved into my tangled memories of the past. An understanding of place was seemingly a given being that up until a few years ago, I had never lived further than 10 miles from my place of birth.

Circumstances inevitably present themselves in ways that demand a break from recursiveness. Situations once understood as consistent or unchanged in one's psyche become incongruous, revealing the chasm between memory and the present. The paintings in this exhibition exist within this space and their formal compositions are informed by the repeated experience of traversing through the aforementioned junction point. Far from constant, each passage is conditioned by time and thus offers perspectival shifts. Hard lines and soft edges meet and make their way through translucent and opaque gestural layers that complicate the paintings' directional comings and goings.

Though the color palette of pink, silver, gray, black and white is carried over from previous bodies of work, these paintings are a departure in that they were made without the non-traditional painting materials (nails, screws, newspaper, rope) I've relied on in the past to create layers, depth and surface tension. Letting go of these material underpinnings allowed for space to better understand where gesture emerges from when untethered from materially understood objects and images. Over the course of making these paintings, my desire to locate the point of emergence was replaced with questioning my attachment to this imagined point and assumed understanding of halves and wholes.

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Margaret Lee
IPB.01, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 68" x 2"



Margaret Lee
IPB.02, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 68" x 2"



Margaret Lee
IPB.03, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 68" x 2"



Margaret Lee
IPB.04, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 68" x 2"



Margaret Lee
IPB.05, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 68" x 2"



Margaret Lee
IPB.09, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 68" x 2"



Margaret Lee
IPB.08, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 34" x 2"



Margaret Lee
IPB.07, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 34" x 2"



Margaret Lee
IPB.06, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 34" x 2"



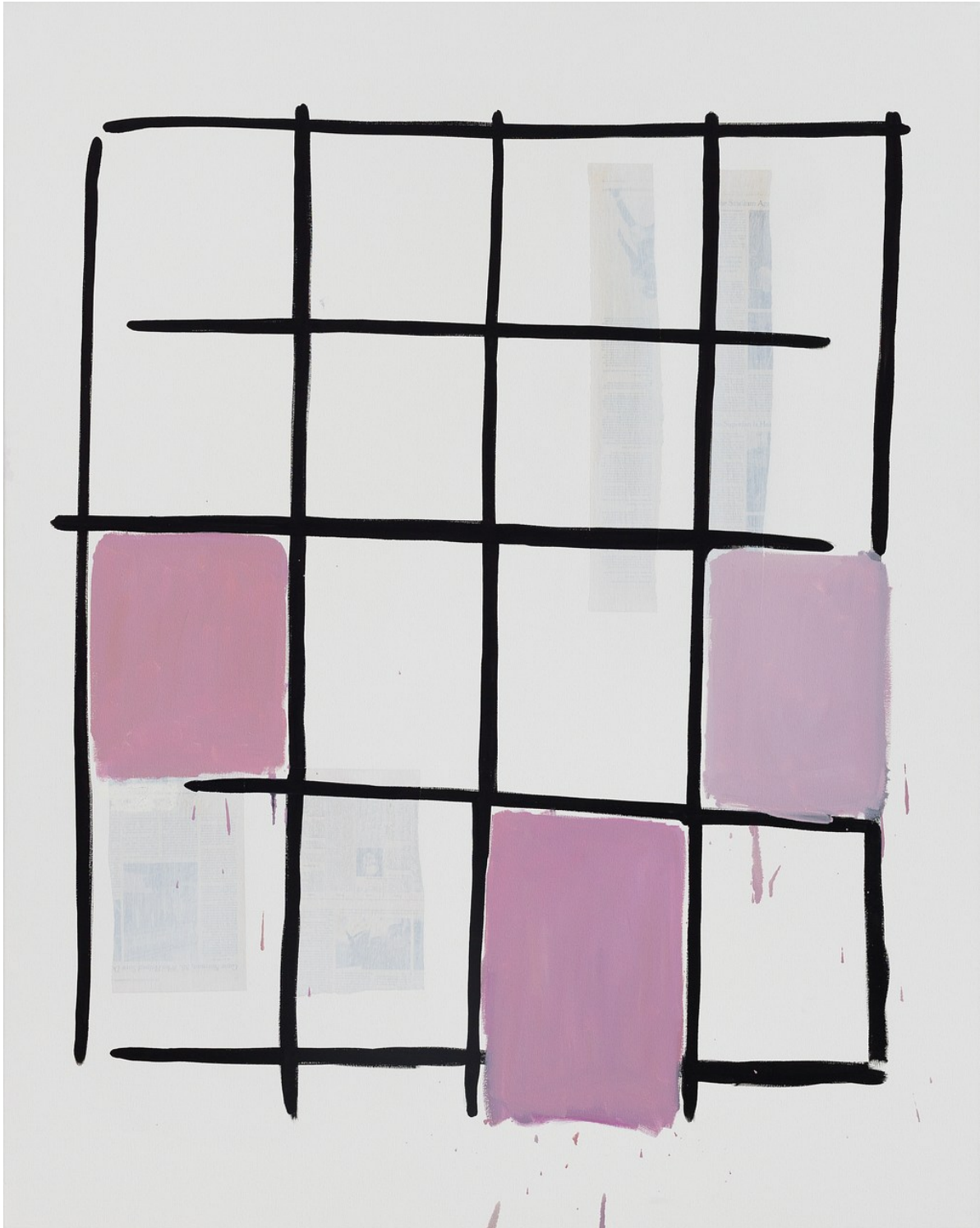
Margaret Lee
IPB.13, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 34" x 2"



Margaret Lee
IPB.17, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 34" x 2"



Margaret Lee
IPB.11, 2022
oil on linen
68" x 34" x 2"



Margaret Lee
P,B,G. 01, 2020
Oil paint and newspaper on canvas
48" x 60" x 1.5"



Margaret Lee
P,B,G. 03, 2020
Oil paint and newspaper on canvas
48" x 60" x 1.5"



Margaret Lee
P,B,G. 02, 2020
Oil paint and newspaper on canvas
48" x 60" x 1.5"