

Body Cartography

Seung Ah Paik

20 March – 26 April 2025

Gratin gallery is pleased to announce Seung Ah Paik's *Body Cartography* - the artist first solo exhibition in New York and her first with the gallery.

Through her paintings, Seung Ah Paik defines a map of the body characterized by patterns and memory—recurring poses, gestures, and textures that surface unconsciously. Refusing to represent a mere image of the skin, Paik transforms her canvases into metaphorical skin—something deeply personal yet evocative of viewers' own bodies. As the canvases exist as extensions of the artist herself, Paik distorts the distance between artist and artwork, merging them into a singular entity characterized by intimacy and emotional closeness. *Body Cartography* represents skin and the human body as tangible, living records—each blemish, wrinkle, or callous signifying the passage of time.

These topographical markers connect moments in time to physical sites of transformation, transfiguring skin into what Paik terms “emotional terrain.” Paik is by no means new to the practice of morphing body and landscape, however. Her paintings serve as testament to the inextricable bond between nature and humanity, gradually eroding this barrier until her paintings become physical maps. With wrinkles as trajectories charting growth and defined lines suggestive of boundaries, the human form self-records its age while becoming a metaphor for external landscapes. Paik's paintings navigate both emotional and physical terrain, epitomizing “living records” that are textured with the substance of being.

Through gentle explorations of the complexities of skin, Paik's paintings serve as living maps and personal archives. Charting a journey with her brushstrokes, she says “My background colors shift in response to my own internal landscape.” Her artworks afford viewers the opportunity to map Paik's process and glimpse into her internal cartography. Paik seamlessly transforms that which is internal into external corporeal maps, meant to be followed and understood as one's own. She does exactly that by painting entangled limbs and sloping breasts from obscure perspectives, presenting the illusion of looking down on one's own body to establish a sense of familiarity. Paik reconstructs her body as a collection of objects observed from disjointed angles, complicating relationships between artist, viewer, and the created image.