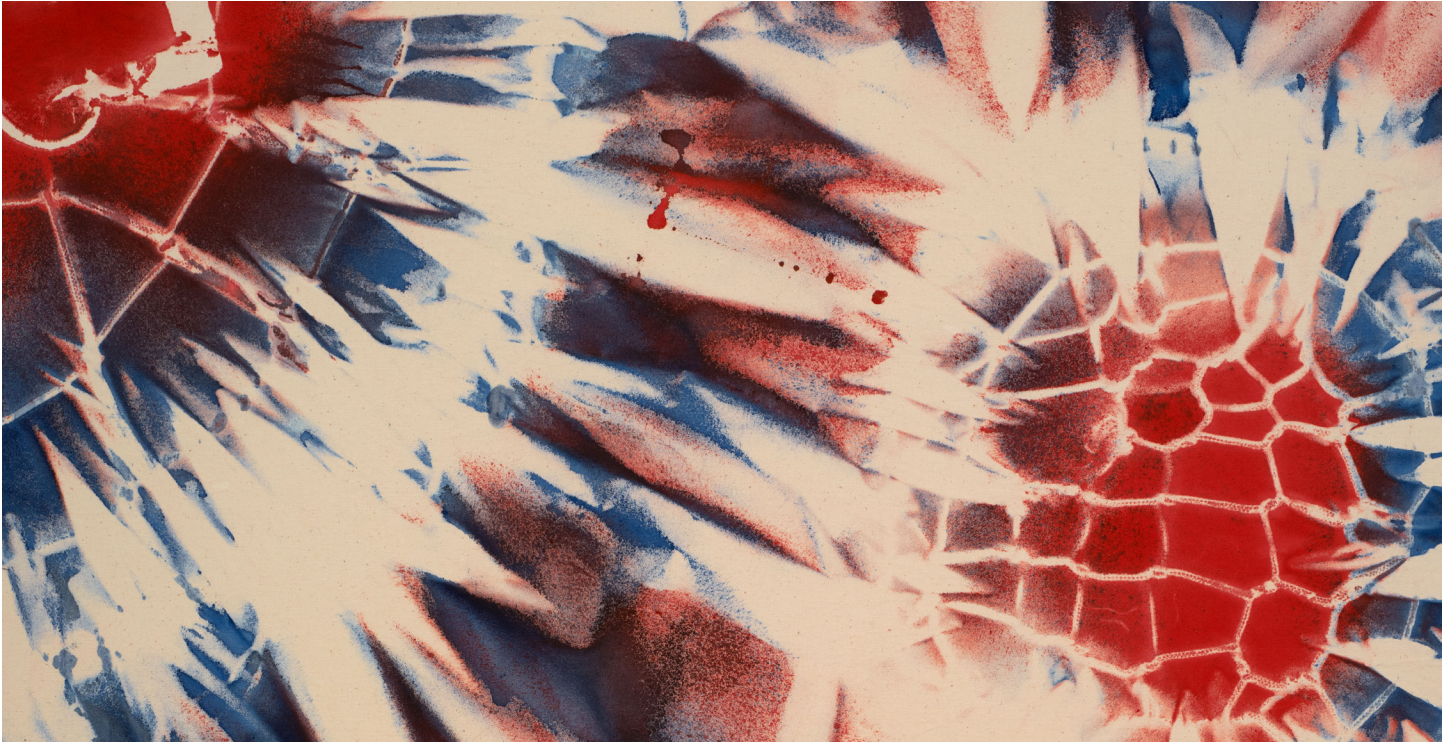


Maia Ruth Lee
hold shimmer wind

May 18 – June 15, 2024



In periods of trouble, we move, as if blinded, through populated fields of unknowns. At the seeing-borders of being human, we witness, *red, blue, blue, blue, blue, green, yellow, blue arrival* as if these signifiers of real physical embodiments: the sun, ocean, sky, the ever witnessing trees, are the trail marks to some distant shore we can escape to. It is an ancient pain, to sever and quarter the luscious color fields of the natural world with inky human progress. Our existence belies *unnatural* borders. Borders between kin. Borders between violence, and disaster. Borders, a malingering ink blotch we write as natural human history.

Maia Ruth Lee's creations trouble these borders within and without. Unbound canvases, flag like, summon the ghostly promise, and illusion of nationhood. An enormous bondage sculpture suspends its mass, looming, like cloud-disaster, above us. A blank canvas, all potential, diminishes into patterns, shaping and inscribing into the natural world, a recognizable statecraft.

Maia's exhibition takes what we are helplessly born into—border's statehood—and severs it from selfhood. The familiar semiotics of what we recognize, rather than be wholly broken, is made slant. The familiarity of a rising sun is restored to its primal shape by a change of its color, as if to argue, why are we divided into fractions by an accident of fate? Abstraction regains its power. Abstraction returns as nature. The power we grant to the violence of the recognizable diffused into a riot of its natural forms and colors.

What happens when we allow every boundary and border to fracture into oblivion? What happens when we search for the humanity beyond our own makeshift boundaries to recognize the humanity in others?

By Jimin Seo

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Working across painting, sculpture, photography and film, **Maia Ruth Lee** has crafted an elegant visual lexicon that takes on the complexities of the self in times of dissonance and globalization. Lee was born in Busan, South Korea, grew up in Kathmandu and Seoul, spent over a decade in New York City, and has lived in recent years in Salida, Colorado. Migration lies at the core of her experience. In her practice, Lee brings this cross-border perspective to bear in works that often evoke wayfinding in the form of maps, atlases, and banners. An underlying interest in language, translation, symbols, and signs runs throughout her work. The body, too, is an enduring concern for Lee, whose bound baggage and textile works metaphorically visualize the accumulations and contours of a life. Navigating universal phenomena like loss and change, Lee's tender, expansive practice embodies journeying itself, giving form to migrations of people, tongues, and ideas.

Maia Ruth Lee (b. 1983 Busan, South Korea) lives and works in Salida, Colorado. Recent solo exhibitions include François Ghebaly, Los Angeles (2024, 2022); Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (2024); Tina Kim Gallery, New York (2023) and Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver (2021). Lee participated in numerous group exhibitions including Center for Visual Arts, Denver (2023); Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (2022); Whitney Biennial, New York (2019) and Studio Museum 127, New York (2019). Her work will be featured in the 2024 iteration of Prospect New Orleans, *Prospect.6: the future is present, the harbinger is home*.

Jimin Seo was born in Seoul, and immigrated to the US to join his family at the age of eight. He is the author of *OSSIA*, winner of The Changes Book Prize. His most recent projects were *Poems of Consumption* with H. Sinno at the Barbican Centre in London, and a site activation for salazarsequeromedina's Open Pavilion at the 4th Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism.