Gladstone presents Seung Ah Paik: *Floating Islands*, opening November 12, 2026 in Seoul

Gladstone presents *Floating Islands*, an exhibition of new works by Korean-born artist Seung Ah Paik, opening this November at the gallery's new location in Hannam-dong, Seoul. The exhibition brings together eleven large-scale, multi-panel paintings from Paik's ongoing *Self Configuration* series.

Paik's paintings take her own body and field of vision as their subject. Working from hundreds of photographs of herself taken from a downward point of view, she brings together multiple first-person views of her body, layering fragments of limbs and torsos into compositions in which boundaries between individual forms become difficult to distinguish. Her face remains absent, as it falls outside her direct field of vision, while her right hand is often missing because it holds the camera.

Drawing on traditional portraiture techniques from Korea's Joseon Dynasty and the floating perspective found in East Asian landscape painting, Paik reconstructs her body from multiple viewpoints into composite images. She approaches the canvas as an extension of her own skin, depicting folds, wrinkles, and other physical details as traces of time and experience. In this way, Paik considers her paintings both portraits and landscapes, exploring how familiar parts of the body can become unfamiliar when viewed from different angles or placed in unexpected relationships.

The works are made on unbleached calico, a material Paik first encountered through fashion draping at Central Saint Martins and has continued to use throughout her practice. Working over charcoal underdrawings, Paik builds the paintings through layered washes, with pigment staining and absorbing into the unprimed fabric rather than sitting on its surface. While certain anatomical details are rendered with precision, others are exaggerated or omitted, reflecting the artist's interest in the subjective nature of her own perception rather than an exact reproduction of her physical appearance.

In *Floating Islands*, Paik continues to develop the compositions of her earlier paintings, in which individual fragments of the body were often dispersed across the canvas. In these new works, the fragments are brought closer together, forming larger, more connected shapes that no longer follow the structure of a recognizable human figure. Set against broad, flat fields of color, these assembled forms emerge through a process of rearranging photographic images and adjusting their scale and position. The backgrounds do not depict specific locations or environments; instead, Paik selects colors intuitively, considering their relationship to the figures and the overall composition.

Paik describes the development of the works in *Floating Islands*:

"Floating Islands grew out of my ongoing interest in seeing the body from shifting, multiple viewpoints. In earlier paintings, fragments of the body were often scattered across the surface. Recently, they have begun to gather into denser, more singular

forms, making the body harder to read and increasingly uncanny, even monstrous—like islands floating in fields of color."

Exhibition Details
Seung Ah Paik
Floating Islands
November 12, 2026 – January 9, 2027
1 Itaewon-ro 55ga-gil, Yongsan-gu
Seoul, South Korea

About the Artist
Seung Ah Paik (b. 1979, Seoul, Korea) lives and works in Pittsburgh, USA. Her paintings explore the connection between nature and humanity, using the female body as a symbol of transformation and self-discovery. In her practice, she seeks to express her ego through paintings that deconstruct her body, not as a self-image, but as a collection of objects, viewed from multiple, shifting perspectives. This intentional fragmentation invites the viewer to step into a space where the body becomes both familiar and uncanny, and where the distance between the artist and the artwork blurs. By offering a view that is not confined to a singular viewpoint, she opens up the body as a site of exploration, transforming it into something both personal and universal, intimate yet distant. Paik studied Oriental Painting at Seoul National University (2003), followed by Fashion Design at Central Saint Martin's (2006), before returning to painting for her MFA Fine Art at Goldsmiths (2012). Paik's recent exhibitions include: Gladstone, Seoul (upcoming), Bortolami, New York (2026), Rubell Museum, Miami (2025), Gratin, New York (2025), Roy Gallery, Seoul (2024), Lubomirov/Angus-Hughes, London (2016), Hus Gallery, London (2014), Jubilee Gallery, Nagoya (2013, Lubomirov-Easton, London (2013), Noam Gallery, Seoul (2009)

About Gladstone Gallery
Gladstone is known for its commitment to artists whose prescient approaches and experimental practices have defined the contours of contemporary art. The gallery has long been an active partner in the cultivation of iconoclastic careers, fostering a roster of artists recognized for their ground-breaking contributions. Headquartered in New York and including outposts in both Brussels and Seoul, Gladstone's impact extends globally, enabling both the presentation of new bodies of work, and an amplification of the international reach of its artists. Alongside its work with contemporary artists, the gallery is steward to the legacies of pivotal historical artists and serves as an advocate for the enduring power of art. Gladstone is led by a team of partners who spearhead its long-term vision and program, building on the values of its founder Barbara Gladstone.

Press Contact
press@gladstonegallery.com