

# whitewall

"Meet the Artist: Guimi You's Solo Show at Lehmann Maupin Is a Must-See"

By Whitewall

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Guimi You, "Rest," 2025 (detail), oil on linen, 65 x 80 x 1 1/8 inches, courtesy of the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Seoul, and London. Photo by OnArt Studio.

In "Breath, Island," Guimi You transforms Jeju's landscapes into luminous spaces of reflection, making this one of the season's most quietly powerful shows.

Few exhibitions this season feel as quietly commanding as **Guimi You's** "Breath, Island" at *Lehmann Maupin*. On view now, the *Seoul*-based artist's new paintings take us to Jeju Island, but more importantly, they take us into the mind of a painter navigating between solitude, memory, and tradition.

What makes this show essential is not only You's *subject matter*—a retreat to Korea's volcanic sanctuary—but the way she translates that experience into works that sit between East and West, intimacy and universality. The result is a body of paintings that breathe in rhythm with the viewer, inviting us to slow down, to see, and to feel.

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## Guimi You's Jeju: More Than Landscape

Jeju Island, often described as Korea's "island of wind, stone, and women," has long been a site of myth and cultural nostalgia. For You, it became a space of self-reflection during a solitary two-week stay.

Her paintings are not postcards from the island; they are meditations shaped by walking its oreum (volcanic hills), pausing beside magnolia ponds, and watching waterfalls carve through basalt. This is where the show's power lies: You gives us not just Jeju's surface beauty, but the act of inhabiting it. Each canvas is charged with presence—the viewer can almost feel breath syncing with brushstroke. In a *contemporary art landscape* often dominated by spectacle, her restraint is radical.

## East Meets West: A Painter's Unique Vocabulary



Left: Portrait Guimi You, 2025, courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Seoul, and London. Photo by OnArt Studio.

Right: Guimi You, "Pause," 2025, oil on linen, 80 x 65 x 1 1/8 inches, courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Seoul, and London. Photo by OnArt Studio.

Part of what makes "Breath, Island" so compelling is You's ability to fuse two artistic traditions into a singular voice. Trained in East Asian painting, she inherits an understanding that painting is not about depiction but evocation. Her brushwork recalls the atmospheric washes of Korean ink landscapes, evoking mist, memory, and the passage of time. Yet her years in the UK and US left their mark: oil paint becomes her vehicle, used with the delicacy of ink but grounded in the materiality of Western modernism.

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*"Her brushwork recalls the atmospheric washes of Korean ink landscapes,"*

This synthesis is neither compromise nor collision—it feels inevitable. In You’s hands, Eastern transparency and Western density meet in perfect balance, creating works that feel at once timeless and entirely of this moment.

### Key Works You Can't Miss



Installation view of Guimi You’s “Breath, Island,” at Lehmann Maupin New York, September 4 – October 18, 2025, photo by Studio Kukla.

Several canvases anchor the exhibition and are worth spending real time with. *Noble Silence* (2025): A spare interior of a Jeju guesthouse becomes a meditation on solitude. The stillness is almost audible, a reminder of the sacred quiet needed for creativity. *Rest* (2025): Figures linger in a garden at Mt. Halla’s base, their outlines softening into the landscape. The painting beautifully dissolves the boundary between human presence and natural terrain. *Pause* (2025): A view of bonsai framed by a greenhouse window becomes unexpectedly profound. It’s a study in growth, patience, and restraint—a metaphor for painting itself.

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Across the show, you'll find subtle traces of the artist—objects, shadows, fleeting figures—that tether these landscapes to lived experience. They're less about place than about being.

### Why You Should See "Breath, Island"



Guimi You, "Rest," 2025, oil on linen, 65 x 80 x 1 1/8 inches, courtesy of the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Seoul, and London. Photo by OnArt Studio.

What makes this exhibition unmissable is its insistence on slowness and attention. In an art world oversaturated with speed and scale, You offers spaces that are intimate, atmospheric, and deeply human. Her canvases are islands themselves—floating refuges where East and West, past and present, solitude and community coexist.

For anyone interested in the evolving dialogue between cultural traditions, or in the role of painting as a tool for reflection, "Breath, Island" is not just worth seeing—it's essential. This is an exhibition that lingers long after you leave the gallery, its rhythms still echoing in your breath.

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## About Guimi You

*Guimi You (b. 1985, Seoul, South Korea; lives and works in Seoul) is a painter whose work explores the emotional resonance of landscapes, interiors, and moments of quiet solitude. Through a vibrant and poetic use of color, she creates atmospheric scenes that blend observation and imagination, capturing the fleeting sensations of memory, reflection, and presence. Her paintings often depict tranquil environments—flower-filled hillsides, still ponds, domestic spaces—that become sites for introspection and deeper engagement with the act of seeing.*

*Originally trained in East Asian painting, You's understanding of its pictorial traditions—where painting is not an act of depiction, but of evocation—anchors her approach. Her mark-making recalls the layered transparency of ink washes and the restrained harmony of traditional Korean landscapes. After studying in South Korea, she lived in the United Kingdom and the United States, where she began working with oil paint and immersed herself in Western painting traditions. Her work now sits at the intersection of these two cultures, combining the delicacy and fluidity of ink with the depth and materiality of oil. Rather than portraying specific locations, her paintings conjure spaces shaped by memory and imagination, where color, brushwork, and atmosphere converge. Within these dreamlike environments, anonymous figures drift through scenes that feel both deeply personal and universally resonant, each one imbued with a quiet, otherworldly presence.*

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