



For Immediate Release

Dansaekhwa

Collateral Event of the 56th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia

15.05.08 – 15.08.15

Press and Preview: May 6th and 7th, 10 AM – 6 PM

Public Opening: May 8th

Location: Palazzo Contarini-Polignac (874 Dorsoduro, 30123 Venezia), Accademia (Vaporetto n.1 and n.2)

Curator: Yongwoo Lee

Artists: Chung Chang-Sup, Chung Sang-Hwa, Ha Chong-Hyun, KIM Whanki, Kwon Young-Woo, Lee Ufan and Park Seo-Bo

Organized by Boghossian Fondation, Brussels

Contact: Zoe Chun, Communications Director (zoe@kukjegallery.com)

Website: www.venice-dansaekhwa.com



We are very pleased to present *Dansaekhwa*, as part of the official Collateral Events of the 56th International Art Exhibition– la Biennale di Venezia. Curated by Yongwoo Lee and organized by Boghossian Foundation together with Kukje Gallery, Seoul and Tina Kim Gallery, New York, *Dansaekhwa* is a landmark exhibition. *Dansaekhwa* is a comprehensive introduction to one of the late 20th century's most compelling art movements, and while its artists each has a unique philosophy many overlapping concerns unite their work. These include a strong aesthetic ideal focused on the unity between artist and nature as well as a very refined approach to mark making. This

emphasis on native cultural idioms was politicized during the 20th century when post-war Korean identity was in a state of radical flux. It is in these tumultuous times that *Dansaekhwa* evolved and helped shape modern Korean art history. While specifically rooted in a Korean context, *Dansaekhwa* must be seen as having important formal and conceptual links to parallel movements in Japan and the West including Gutai, Mono-

ha and Abstract Expressionism.

The exhibition will showcase the works of key masters who defined Dansaekhwa's development in the 1970s, providing an essential conceptual framework to appreciate this important movement. A subject of renewed interest in both Korea and internationally, this is a timely exhibition that explores a group of artists whose exquisitely beautiful and politically engaged work continues to have a profound influence on contemporary art. The participating artists are Chung Chang-Sup, Chung Sang-Hwa, Ha Chong-Hyun, KIM Whanki, Kwon Young-Woo, Lee Ufan and Park Seo-Bo.

Yongwoo Lee has organized the exhibition to trace the development of Dansaekhwa. While a seminal historical movement that has had lasting influence, Dansaekhwa continues to be a vital framework with many of its founding artists continuing to make work. As such the curator has chosen to focus on its development over five decades, from the 1960s to today. By including works completed in different periods, the curator will emphasize how the social milieu within Korea had an impact on the development and public reception of Dansaekhwa.

In order to set the stage for many of the predominant themes that came to be associated with Dansaekhwa, including its emphasis on monochromatic compositions and innovative use of materials, Yongwoo Lee has included a major group of works from the 1960s by the artist KIM Whanki. This is an historic opportunity to see Whanki's role as a foundational member in the post-war Korean art scene whose work and ideas contributed to the advance of Dansaekhwa.

The exhibition will occupy all three floors of Palazzo Contarini-Polignac, the iconic 15th century Renaissance palace located on the Grand Canal. Yongwoo Lee has chosen to use the multi-storied building to organize the exhibition, employing each floor to frame a time period or specific artist. With this in mind the ground floor will be devoted to new, commissioned work by Lee Ufan.

The exhibition will include both historical pieces from the early days of Dansaekhwa as well as more recent works. By including this range of studio practice spanning multiple decades, Yongwoo Lee has been able to frame the evolving ideas and ongoing tensions that exist in contemporary Dansaekhwa. In addition, an important academic conference focused on Dansaekhwa was held in January, 2015 and a recording of this event will be shown to engage the public and give necessary historical insight into its beginnings, as well as to frame some of the ongoing debates regarding its influence. Coupled with a range of related archival materials, scholarship and ephemera, the exhibition will be the first rigorous academic presentation of Dansaekhwa to be held outside of Korea and will be a landmark moment in its introduction to the international community.

A comprehensive catalog will be published to accompany this historic exhibition, featuring essays by leading scholars including Melissa Chiu, Director at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C.; Doryun Chong, Chief Curator at M+ Museum in Hong Kong; Joan Kee, Associate Professor at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Lewis Biggs, Chairman of Institute for Public Art in Hong Kong; Mika Yoshitake, Assistant Curator at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; Yongwoo Lee, President of the International Biennial Association; Jeremy Lewison, former Director of Collections at Tate; and Alexandra Munroe, Samsung Senior Curator at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Yongwoo Lee is currently the executive director of Shanghai Himalayas Museum and the president of IBA (International Biennial Association). He was the founding director of the Gwangju Biennale in 1995 and served as the president and general director of the Gwangju Biennale Foundation from 2008 to 2014.

Over the last thirty years he has worked to present the aesthetics of difference on an international stage, curating and reexamining exhibitions related to the discourse of visual culture as social practice. His curated exhibitions include *Electronic Maple* (New York Center for Media Art), *Whitney Biennial Seoul* (National Museum of Contemporary Art Korea), *Flowers of May* (Gwangju Museum of Art), *Nam June Paik Retrospective* (National Museum of Contemporary Art), and *Dansaekhwa* (Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice) amongst many others. Yongwoo Lee was a professor of aesthetics and critical theory at Korea University and has lectured at several universities across the United States and Europe. He holds a Ph.D in art history from Oxford University. He has published numerous books including *Information and Reality*, *Nam June Paik* and *The Origins of Video Art*.

Boghossian Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Brussels, Belgium, founded in 1992 by Robert Boghossian and his two sons Jean and Albert. In 2006 the Foundation acquired the Villa Empain and converted it into a center of art and dialogue focused on bridging the cultures of the East and the West. The Villa Empain opened its doors to the public in 2010 and has since hosted celebrated exhibitions, conferences, international meetings and other activities devoted to this mission. The Foundation also finances social, educational, artistic and environmental projects.

Palazzo Contarini-Polignac

Overlooking the Grand Canal between the Academy Bridge and Palazzo Barbarigo the Palazzo Contarini-Polignac is a superlative example of early Renaissance architecture. Designed by Italian architect Giovanni Buora, its iconic marble facade evokes Tuscan classicism and its interiors have hosted celebrated artistic salons throughout the 20th century.

Chung Chang-Sup (1927-2011)



Wandering
1965
Oil on canvas
198 x 116.5cm
Photography by Sang-tae Kim
The Rachofsky Collection

The unique works of Chung Chang-Sup have been called “unpainted paintings” in which he molds traditional Korean paper known as *Tak* after soaking it in water. Pigments are not added to the paper pulp and the muted tones that manifest in the works are based on the length of time the paper is soaked in water before being applied with handmade glue to the canvas support. Chung's work reflects his Taoist belief that the creative artist balances material and nature in a unified act of making. Long considered synonymous with Korean culture, *Tak* paper is made out of mulberry bark and embodies the simplicity and rugged beauty prized by tradition.

Chung Chang-Sup's work was recently included in the seminal exhibition *Korean Abstract Painting_10 Perspectives* at Seoul Museum of Art (2012) and *Tell Me Tell Me: Australian and Korean Art 1976-2011* at National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea and Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2011), and *Korean Abstract paintings: 1958-2008* at Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul (2008). He was the subject of a major retrospective exhibition at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea in 2010 and is included in *Sharjah Biennial 12: the past, the present, the possible* (2015). Chung Chang Sup died in 2011.

Chung Sang-Hwa (1932-)



Untitled 73-7

1973

Acrylic on canvas

165 x 115cm

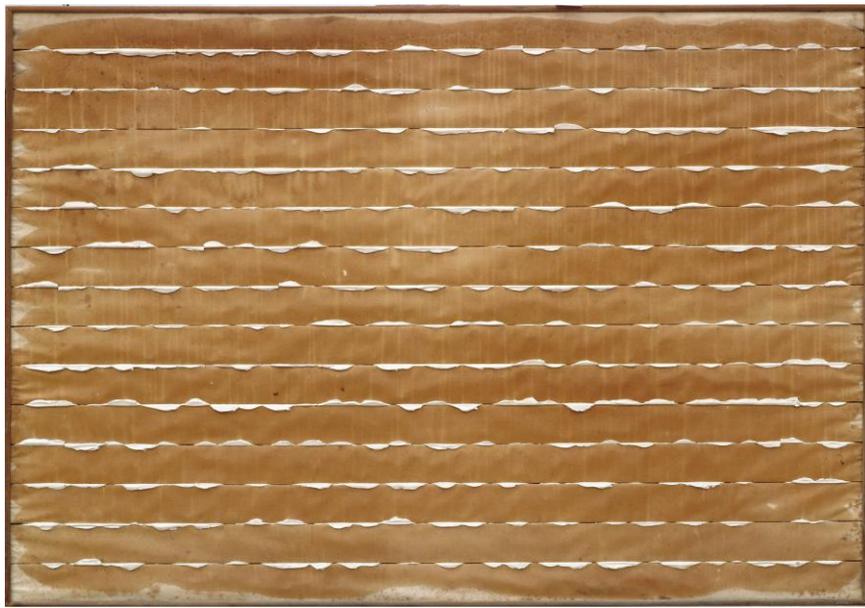
Photography by Sang-tae Kim

Pending Acquisition, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution

Repetition and process are central themes in the art of Chung Sang-Hwa whose beautiful works elicit powerful feelings of calm. Chung's work is a result of a laborious technique that allows for a profound unity between the artist and the artwork. His process is as follows: the artist composes a base layer with zinc primer on canvas, he then folds the dry canvas at regular intervals and removes the fragments of paint from the cracked lines, subsequently filling those voids with acrylic paint. Chung's sensitive application of paint filling the fine cracks imbues them with emotional resonance and the hairline fissures resemble skin, evoking our body's ability to heal and renew itself.

Chung Sang-Hwa is well known not only in Korea but also in France and Japan. His recent group exhibitions include *Qi is Full*, the inaugural exhibition of the Daegu Art Museum, Korea (2011), *A Look at Contemporary Art*, Artsonje Museum, Gyeongju, Korea (2009), and *Voyage Sentimental*, Mediations Biennale, Poznan, Poland (2008), and *Korean Monochromism: Methods, Ideas and Spirits*, Busan Museum of Art (1998). Chung had a major retrospective at Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint-Étienne Métropole in 2011.

Ha Chong-Hyun (1935-)



Conjunction

1974

Oil on paper

120 x 175cm

Photography by Sang-tae Kim

Collection of Leeum, Samsung museum of Art

Ha Chong-Hyun works with plain, woven hemp into which he pushes thick paint from the obverse side of the canvas. Ha's interest in the simple muted tones of hemp stem from his work in the 1970s when he bravely explored non-traditional materials including plaster, newspaper, barbed wire, and the burlap that was used to transport food aid from the U.S. following the Korean War. Ha's use of oil paint synthesized the traditions of both the East and the West. His technique of pushing paint through the canvas from behind remains a powerful gesture, all the more because of the formal beauty and subtle gesture captured using this approach.

Ha Chong-Hyun has lived and worked in Seoul since graduating from Hongik University in 1959. Awarded an honorary doctorate degree, he served as the Dean of the Fine Arts College from 1990 to 1994. From 2001 to 2006 Ha was the Director of the Seoul Museum of Art. Ha has exhibited both nationally and internationally at venues such as Gyeongnam Art Museum, Changwon, Korea (2004) and Mudima Foundation of Contemporary Art, Milan, Italy (2003). He was the subject of a major retrospective exhibition at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea in 2012.

KIM Whanki (1913-1974)



17-IV-71 #201

1971

Oil on cotton

254 x 202cm

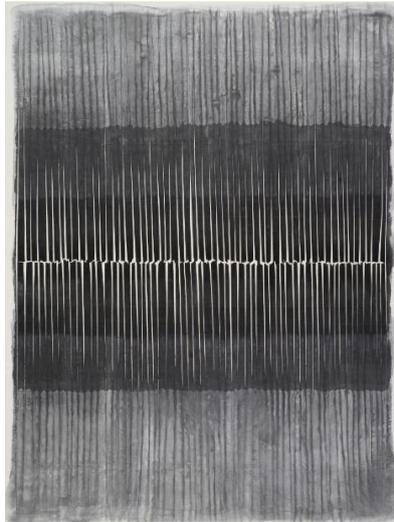
(Where, in What Form, Shall We Meet Again Series)

©Whanki Foundation-Whanki Museum

KIM Whanki studied in Japan as a youth and spent most of his life working and living outside of Korea. As a painter belonging to the first generation of Korean artists devoted to abstraction, KIM Whanki developed a refined style of painting based on Korean lyricism, gaining recognition internationally as well as in Seoul. By the late 1930s Whanki had become a leading figure in the modern art scene in Korea, based on his promotion of abstraction, and by the 1950s he had cultivated a rich visual language with which to depict natural motifs of mountains, rivers, and the moon. He was most productive during his years in Paris, from 1956 to 1959. He later spent time in New York, and in 1963 he received an Honorary Award at the 7th São Paulo Biennial. His works from the 1950s demonstrate a decidedly Korean sensibility communicated in a highly controlled manner. Later, during the late 1960s, his practice shifted to focus on expressing a more universal, nuanced world of inner mind coupled with formal elements such as points, lines, and planes.

Whanki's works can be found in acclaimed collections around the world, including the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Albright Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul, and the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul. KIM Whanki died in 1974. The Whanki Museum was established in 1992 in Seoul, as a place to exhibit his major works and continue his legacy.

Kwon Young-Woo (1926-2013)



Untitled

1984

Gouache, Chinese ink on Korean paper

224 x 170cm

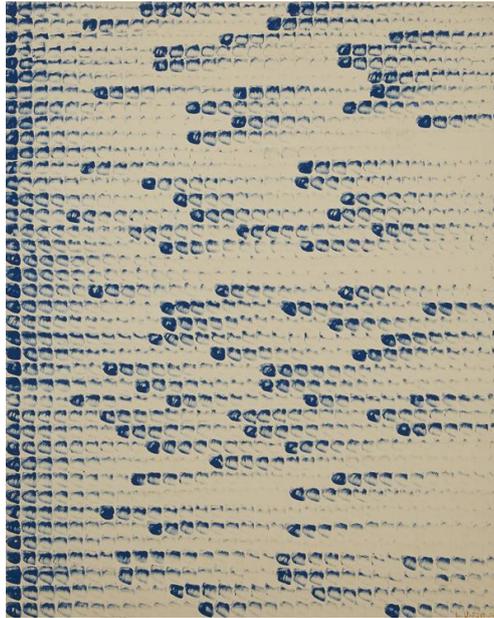
Photography by Sang-tae Kim

Courtesy of the artist and Kukje Gallery

Celebrated as a groundbreaking artist, Kwon Young-Woo invested his chosen medium of paper with profound emotion. His works explore the relationship between traditional materials and abstract expression and he is considered a pioneer in the development of Dansaekhwa. In his early career, Kwon worked with both ink and paper seeking to create pure harmony between the two. But by the early 1960s he had begun working solely with paper, challenging its traditional definition as a flat ground. Using his fingernails to scratch and tear thin sheets, the artist would then stack and glue the paper in multiple laminated layers, creating dynamic three-dimensional relief sculptures. Kwon also took advantage of the absorbency of the paper by applying ink onto the torn edges of his compositions.

Kwon Young-Woo held major exhibitions at the 1965 Tokyo Biennale and in 1973 at the 12th São Paulo Biennial. A long time resident of France, his first Paris solo exhibition was at Jacques Massol Gallery in 1976. Other exhibitions include *International Contemporary Art* held in concert with the 1988 Seoul Olympics, and his major retrospective at Ho-Am Art Museum, Seoul in 1990. Kwon received the Artist Award twice from the Korean Minister of Culture for his works *Fantasy of the Seashore* (1958) and *Road to an Island* (1959). He was honored as the 1998 Korean Artist of the Year and awarded the Silver Crown Medal of the Order of Cultural Merit (2001). His works are in many important permanent collections including the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul, Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul, and the British Museum in London. Kwon Young-woo died in 2013.

Lee Ufan (1936-)



From Point

1974

Oil on canvas

160 × 130cm

Photography by Sang-tae Kim

Courtesy of Kukje Gallery

Lee Ufan is an artist and philosopher. He has written the seminal text defining the art movement Mono-ha in addition to writing many other critical texts. Having moved to Japan in 1956, he traveled extensively between the two countries becoming a vital conduit between what was happening in both places and playing a pivotal role in introducing Dansaekhwa to a more international audience. His series *From Line* and *From Point*, begun in the early 1970s, connected him to many of the ideas in Dansaekhwa. In these well-known works Lee explored themes of gesture and the connection between mark making and the medium of paint itself. This interest was grounded in the tradition of calligraphy, which involved a discipline of repeatedly drawing single lines, and frames the artist's profound investigation of the act of painting.

Lee Ufan was a professor at Tama Art University, Tokyo from 1973 through 2007. Lee's work has been exhibited in many solo and group shows in major museums internationally including The Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium, Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan, Palazzo Grassi, Italy, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In 2011 his retrospective *Lee Ufan: Marking Infinity* was organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, and in 2014 he was the focus of a major sculpture exhibition held at the Château de Versailles in Paris.

Park Seo-Bo (1931-)



Ecriture(描法)No. 89-79-82-83

1983

Pencil and oil on hemp cloth

194.5 x 300cm

Photography by Yun Sang-Jin

Courtesy of the artist and Kukje Gallery

Park Seo-Bo's exquisite works reflect five decades of exploring the role of the artist as a channel through which energy manifests itself in form. One of the most influential artists in modern Korean history, Park uses traditional Korean paper and employs simple but dramatic gestures that allude to a rudimentary language. Framing many of the fundamental concepts of Dansaekhwa, Park has pursued his philosophy of the artist as a conduit. This profound belief in the artist's ability to merge with the medium reflects Park's practice of illustrating the patterns of energy that make up consciousness, evoking what he refers to as body rhythm.

Park Seo-Bo is widely celebrated as an influential professor at Hongik University, Seoul, where he was later the Dean of the College of Fine Arts. Park has exhibited in multiple solo shows in significant institutions such as Daegue Museum of art, Daegue, Korea (2012), Busan Museum of Art, Busan, Korea (2010), Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint-Étienne Métropole (2006-2007), and the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea (1991). His work was included in *Beginning of New Era*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea (2009), and *Working with Nature: Traditional Thought in Contemporary Art from Korea* at Tate Gallery Liverpool in 1992.



Group Photo (From left): Ha Chong-Hyun, Lee Ufan, Park Seo-Bo, Yongwoo Lee(curator)
Photographer Keith Park
Image provided by Kukje Gallery



Park Seo-Bo (1931-)
Ecriture(描法)No. 89-79-82-83
1983
Pencil and Oil on Hemp cloth.
194.5 x 300cm
Courtesy of the artist and Kukje Gallery



Lee Ufan (1936-)
From Point
1974
Oil on canvas
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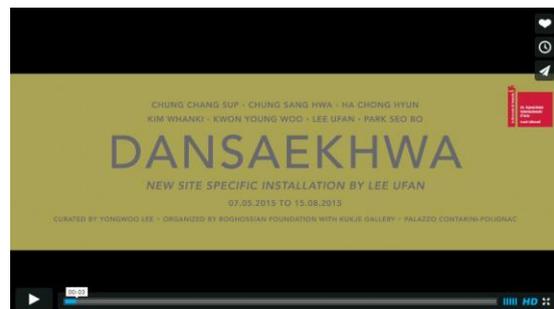
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Promotional Video



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