

Inhyeon Lee



An integral member of Seoul 80, the flagship avant-gardist collective of the Korean contemporary-art scene circa 1980, Lee Inhyeon is the embodiment of the artist as intellectual. Lee's first solo show in three years featured a dozen new works from the ongoing series he's been working on since 1993, all with the Foucauldian title *L'épistémè of Painting*.

A prototypical work by Lee is a color-field painting that sets dark Prussian blue against the natural beige of unprimed canvas. The brown/ blue monochrome tradition in Korea has been the emblem of serious and respected scholar-painters since the era of ink paintings. Artists of the prior generation, such as Lee Ufan and Yun Hyong-Keun, often indulged in the subtlety of tonal variations within a single hue; their works were regarded as spiritual and noble owing to their solemn outlook. While Lee's paintings are at the edge of such conventions of sublimity, they abound in devices showing him to be critical of any strictly modernist construction.

Characteristically, all of Lee's works are mounted on thick stretchers, about four inches in depth; thus, the paintings stand out against the wall, taking on the forceful presence of Minimalist objects. Just as Frank Stella made reference to the thickness of stretcher bars in his paintings and Jo Baer saw creative potential on the sides of her canvases, Lee is extremely sensitive to this depth of painting that completes its three-dimensionality. While coloring the front of the canvas in uniform Prussian blue, he creates gradations on its sides from deep to light blue, by letting the thinned paint gradually seep into the raw canvas. The view from the sides of Lee's paintings simulates the visualization of the cross section of a painting, alluding to the accumulated layers of painting's episteme. This pictorial emphasis on the volumetric axis of canvas calls attention to the painting's status as an object.

LEE & BAE

Critical of the enlarged role of brushstrokes in expressionistic paintings as well as their role in imagemaking and thus illusion, Lee minimizes the use of the brush in executing his paintings. Instead he uses paint-soaked cloth to wet the unprimed stretched canvas, letting the paint seep through the surface. To take this method further, he has used one painting to make another: tilting an edge of a still-drying painting like a squeegee, he presses it against the surface of an unprimed canvas and drags it along, leaving a streak of pigment on the new surface. The concept of making one painting with another approaches pure, self-referential metapainting.

Theoretically, Lee's canvases inhabit the territory between where Morris Louis left off and Donald Judd picked up: between the completely immaterial coloring of the raw canvas and the persistency of wall-hanging structures. While Louis adhered to the legacy of flat surface and Judd broke free from just that tradition by moving into actual space, Lee pushes the envelope of painting as inherently flat structure, simultaneously retaining the luscious beauty of the painterly surface. The result is a rare hybrid of visually pleasing critical object with exacting craftsmanship.

- Shinyoung Chung

LEE & BAE

Inhyeon Lee (b.1958, Gimje, Korea)

■ Educations

1992 DFA Tokyo National University, College of Fine Art, Tokyo, Japan
1986 MFA Tokyo National University, College of Fine Art, Tokyo, Japan
1980 BFA Seoul National University, College of Fine Art, Seoul, Korea

■ Selected Solo Exhibition

2022 L'épistémè of Painting - Lagrangian point, Gallery SoSo, Seoul, Korea
2015 L'épistémè of Painting, GAHOEDONG 60, Seoul, Korea
2012 L'épistémè of Painting, Gaain Gallery, Seoul, Korea
2006 Gaain Gallery, Seoul, Korea
2003 Gallery Roh, Seoul, Korea
2002 Kukje Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1998 L'épistémè of Painting, SAI Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1997 L'épistémè of Painting, IHN Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1995 Gaain Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1994 Gaain Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1993 Ryu International Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
L'épistémè of Painting, Gaain Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1992 Gallery Miyabi, Fukuoka, Japan
Space 11, Tokyo, Japan
1990 Hashimoto Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Fine Art Kunoki, Kagoshima, Japan
1986 Print on paper – untitled trompe-l'oeil, Kobayashi Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
1985 Tono Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Gallery PTNA, Tokyo, Japan

■ Selected Group Exhibition

2024 Not Drea, Soul, or Art, Art Project CO, Seoul, Korea
Art OnO 2024, SETEC, Seoul, Korea
DEFINE: Seoul 2024, S-Factory, Seoul, Korea
2023 Amazing Multiverse, The SoSo, Seoul, Korea
Jagangducheon, Gallery R, Seoul, Korea
Time Regarding, Length, Width & Depth, Woonjoong Gallery, Seongnam, Korea
衣錦尙絳, Hakgojae Gallery, Seoul, Korea
ART BUSAN 2023, BEXCO, Busan, Korea
2022 Instinct to Two, Gallery SoSo, Seoul, Korea
Fall into Silence, LEE & BAE, Busan, Korea
2021 When Kiwon Park Met Inhyeon Lee, CHA studio, Incheon, Korea
Colours of the imagination, Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
All our stories are incomplete..., Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
ART BUSAN 2021, BEXCO, Busan, Korea
2019 Three-Body Problem, Gallery Miru, Seoul, Korea

LEE & BAE

- 2018 THE BLUE, Seongbuk Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
- 2017 Rhythm in Monochrome - Korean Abstract Painting ,Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery,
Tokyo, Japan
- 2016 Questioning Sustainability, Museum of Art Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea
- 2015 From Trace to Artwork, Museum of Art Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea
Korea's Dansaekhwa and antique, BEXCO, Busan, Korea
- 2014 Grayish-blue-powdered Celadon and Contemporary Art, Kyungwoon Museum,
Seoul, Korea
Over No Limit, Gallery SoSo, Paju, Korea
Love Minus Zero, Gallery SoSo, Paju, Korea
- 2013 Dam Hwa, Institute of Contemporary Art Singapore, La Salle College of Art,
Singapore
Gaain Gallery Permanent Collection, Gaain Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Gwangju Art-Vision, Gwangju Biennale Exhibitoin Hall, Gwangju, Korea
Colour & Sensibility, Ilwoo Space, Seoul, Korea
- 2012 Dansaekhwa: Korean Monochrome Painting, National Museum of Contemporary Art,
Seoul, Korea
- 2011 ASIAN International Art Exhibition Seoul Art Center, Seoul/Jeonbuk Museum of Art,
Seoul, Korea
Everything is Repeated, Kosa Space, JH Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Instinctively, Gallery SoSo, Korea
- 2008 Colour & Space, Mokkumto Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 2007 Korean-Chinese Contemporary Art, Seongnam Art Center Museum, Korea
Hommage 100, Korea Art Center, Pusan, Korea
Percept Scape-Concept Scape, Gallery Lux, Seoul, Korea
- 2006 Daehangno - Mentor and Protégé, Mokkeumto Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 2005 Selected Contemporary Printmakers, Woorim Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Hallo Gutenberg!., Raphael 12, Frankfurt, Germany
Echo beyond Time, Ewha Womans University Museum, Seoul, Korea
Cool & Warm, Sungkok Art Museum, Seoul, Korea
- 2004 from NORTH, Hankeesook Gallery, Daegu, Korea
Korean Contemporary Paintings: Past & Now, Seoul Municipal Museum,
Seoul, Korea
- 2003 21C Korean Contemporary Art-Expectating Horizon, Gallery Sun, Seoul, Korea
the 18th Asian International Art Exhibition, Heritage Museum, Hong Kong
- 2002 After the Grid, Busan Metropolitan Art Museum, Busan, Korea
About Abstraction, Sungkok Art Museum, Seoul, Korea
- 2001 The Reinstatement of Painting, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea
Park Hong-chun.Lee Inhyeo, Gallery SAGAN, Seoul, Korea
- 2000 Gwangju Biennale 2000, Gwangju Municipal Museum, Gwangju, Korea
Beauty & Order, Ro Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 1999 Painting with 3 dimensions value, YEH Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Beyond Landscape, ArtSonje Museum, Kyungju, Korea
Thus Flows Time, Space 11, Tokyo, Japan

LEE & BAE

- 1998 Frame, Kumho Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
1998 Version, CAIS Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Defrost, Sonje Museum of Contemporary Art, Kyungju, Korea
Brushed : Non-brushed, SAI Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1997 The 12th Asian International Art Exhibition, Centro de Actividades Turisticas, Macau
Thus Flows Time, Space 11, Tokyo, Japan
DOTS, Keumho Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
1996 Ecole de Se'oul, Kwanhoon Gallery, Seoul, Korea
The Heuristic Horizon, Moran Gallery, Seoul, Korea
inter-TEXTUALITY, Kashiwagi Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
Behind the Surface, Kukje Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1995 SEOUL80-TEXTUALITY, SPEED, Gaain Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Aphorism, Gallery Indeco, Seoul, Korea
1994 SEOUL80-ABOUT WATER (Gallery Shilla, Daegu, Korea
Art Session '94 Asahikawa, Asahikawa Museum, Hokkaid, Japan
1993 Logos & Pathos Exhibition, Kwanhoon Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Exposition/Out-Position, Hongin Gallery, Daejeon, Korea
SEOUL80-TEN YEARS AFTER, Gallery Seohwa, Seoul, Korea
1992 The Present of HANGA, Gallery IKEDABIJUTSU, Tokyo, Japan
PROOF 1992, Gallery IKEDABIJUTSU, Tokyo, Japan
1988 NEW WAVE OF JAPAN, Kagoshima, Fukuoka, Tokyo, Japan
1984 Ethics of Expression, Cozy Space, Tokyo, Japan
1983 Three Korean Artists in L.A., Artcore Gallery, Los Angeles, USA
36 Printmakers Show, Total Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1982 Seoul Contemporary Art Festival, Fine Art Center, Seoul, Korea
Commonsense, Sensitivity or Symptom, Kwanhoon Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Artist Today, Fine Art Center, Seoul, Korea
1981 SEOUL80-OBJECTHOOD, SPACE Gallery, Seoul, Korea
SEOUL80-WORK BY SCREEN, Dongdeok Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Salon de Jeune PEINTRE/EXPRESSION, Grand Palais, Paris, France
SEOUL80-REPORT ON MASTER'S, SPACE Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1980 SEOUL80-WORK WITH PHOTO, SPACE Gallery, Seoul, Korea
1979 INDEPENDENTS Exhibition, National Museum of Modern Art, Korea

■ Public Collections

National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea
Seoul Municipal Museum, Korea
Busan Metropolitan Art Museum, Korea
Artsonje Museum, Korea
Artsonje Center, Korea
Seoul National University, Korea
IL MIN Cultural Center, Korea
Hyundai Group, Korea
Samsung Medical Center, Seoul, Korea

LEE & BAE

Meritz Securities, Korea

Geojae Hotel, Korea

Paradise City, Korea

British Museum, UK

Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

Seoul National University Hoam Center, Korea

SPACE Gallery

■ Awards

The 1st SPACE International Prints Biennale, Award of Excellence

The 10th Seoul International Print Biennale, Grand Prix