

Press Release

Kukje Gallery

Kwon Young-Woo

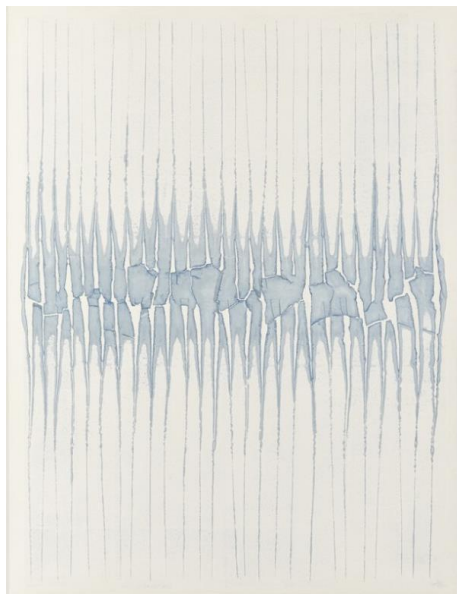
Kwon Young-Woo (1926-2013)

2015. 10. 30 - 12. 6

Kukje Gallery K1 & K3

Press Conference: 2015. 10. 30, 2 PM

www.kukjegallery.com



Kukje Gallery is pleased to announce the solo exhibition of Korean artist Kwon Young-Woo, a pioneer in the development of the monochromatic art movement *Dansaekhwa*. Well known both within Korea and internationally, Kwon Young-Woo's paintings investigate the limitations of two-dimensional surfaces and explore the relationship between traditional materials and abstract expression, functioning as a threshold between time and dimensional space.

On view from October 30 through December 6, the exhibition will include over thirty of Kwon Young-Woo's works on paper, dating from 1976 through 1996, with the majority from the 1980's.

One of the few artists associated with *Dansaekhwa* trained in the historic tradition of Chinese ink painting, Kwon's innovative practice bridged Korea's nascent avant-garde and the Western traditions of abstract expressionism and art informel. He did this while still experimenting with and refining traditional materials, especially *hanji* paper. Choosing to use paper both as a ground and as a sculptural medium, Kwon challenged its traditional role by employing his fingernails to scratch and tear the fibers, developing his own highly refined gestural vocabulary; he then glued the paper onto panels establishing a base for his compositions and transforming the flat surfaces into three-dimensional reliefs.

Having scarred the paper with these physical performances the artist then introduced ink as a dynamic medium to mark and trace his actions. Seeking to create a sense of harmony between medium and surface, Kwon took advantage of the ink's qualities, exploiting how it pools, blots and travels across the absorbent surfaces of paper and learning to control it in exquisite ways. In particular, Kwon developed an adept technique for channeling the ink by applying it to carefully torn and folded edges in the paper. Over his many decades of practice, Kwon Young-Woo developed a practice that captured a

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profound level of emotion in simple materials that have a long history in Korean culture. Joining his material mastery with chance and the mercurial movement of liquid ink, the artist was able to develop a unique practice and instantly recognizable style that contains tremendous power and elegance.

In concert with this exhibition, Kukje Gallery will present works by Kwon Young-Woo at Frieze Masters from October 14-18, 2015.

ABOUT KWON YOUNG-WOO

Born in 1926, Kwon Young-Woo was part of South Korea's first generation of modern artists, graduating from the first art school class at Seoul National University in 1957 alongside peers Park No-soo, Suh Se Ok, Chang Un-sang and Park Sae-won. Kwon Young-Woo held major exhibitions at Tokyo Biennale in 1965 and 12th São Paulo Biennial in 1973. Most recently, Kwon Young-Woo's work was exhibited in Kukje Gallery's celebrated presentation of *Dansaekhwa*, an official collateral event of the 56th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia, curated by Yongwoo Lee, founding director of the Gwangju Biennale. A longtime resident of France, Kwon Young-Woo's first Paris solo exhibition took place 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). Additionally, 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 held 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 Seoul in 2013.

ABOUT KUKJE GALLERY

Founded in the center of Seoul in 1982 by Hyun-Sook Lee, Kukje Gallery is widely celebrated as a leader in shaping Korea's cultural landscape. Over the past three decades, the gallery has introduced world-class artists to Korean audiences, including Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Eva Hesse, Roni Horn, Jenny Holzer, Anish Kapoor, and Bill Viola amongst many others. Kukje Gallery has also played a vital role in supporting the careers of some of the most significant Korean artists such as Gimhongsok, Ha Chong Hyun, Haegue Yang, Jae-Eun Choi, Kibong Rhee, Kimsooja, Kyungah Ham, Lee Ufan, Park Seobo, Yeesookyung, and Yeondoo Jung.

As part of Kukje's mission to promote Korean artists abroad, the gallery participates annually in premier art fairs such as Art Basel (Hong Kong, Miami Beach and Basel), The Armory Show, Frieze & Frieze Masters and FIAC. Additionally, Kukje Gallery has spearheaded a tradition of scholarship and educational programming in the region through publishing museum quality catalogs to accompany their exhibitions and, more recently, by building an auditorium underneath Kukje's newest gallery space, K3, which hosts weekly lectures and film screenings for the local community.

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In addition to the gallery's three exhibition spaces in Seoul, Kukje is also affiliated with Tina Kim Gallery in New York, which presents works by emerging Korean and international artists. The two galleries regularly collaborate on organizing exhibitions and also share booths at all major art fairs.

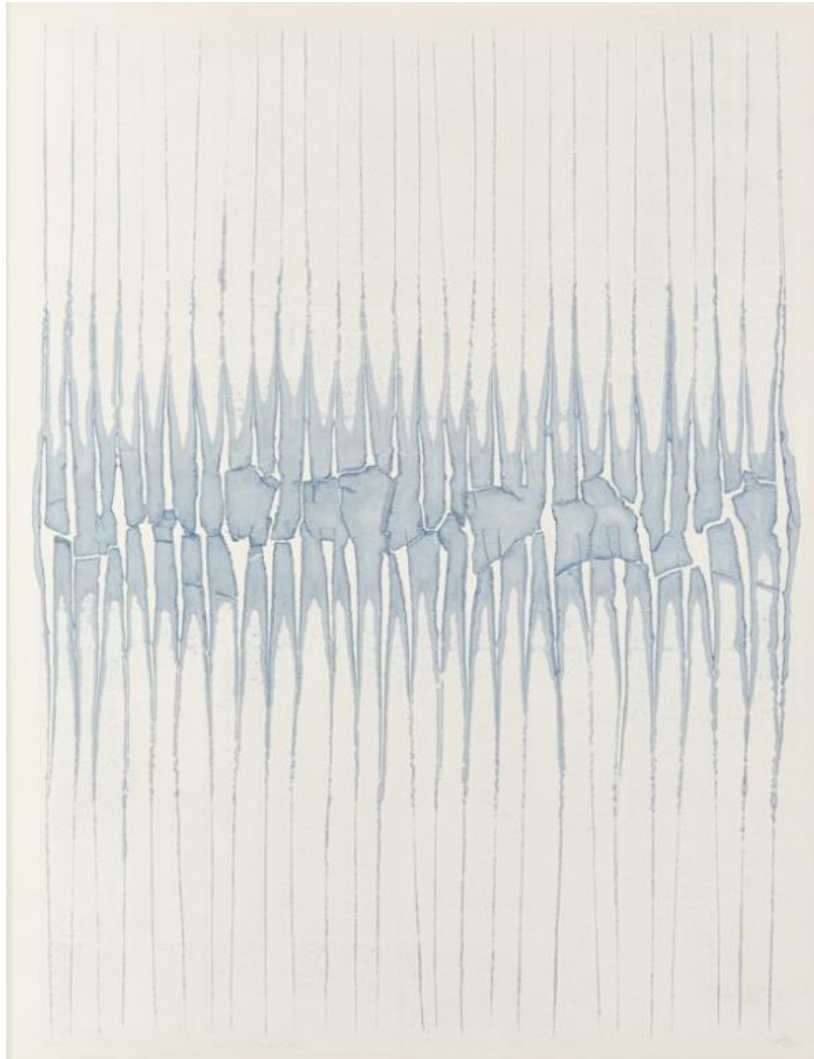
Image Credit: Kwon Young-Woo, *Untitled*, 1984, Gouache and Chinese ink on Korean Paper, 259 x 162 cm. Courtesy of the artist's estate and Kukje Gallery, Seoul. Photo Copyright © Sang-tae Kim.

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Untitled

1984

Gouache, Chinese ink on Korean Paper

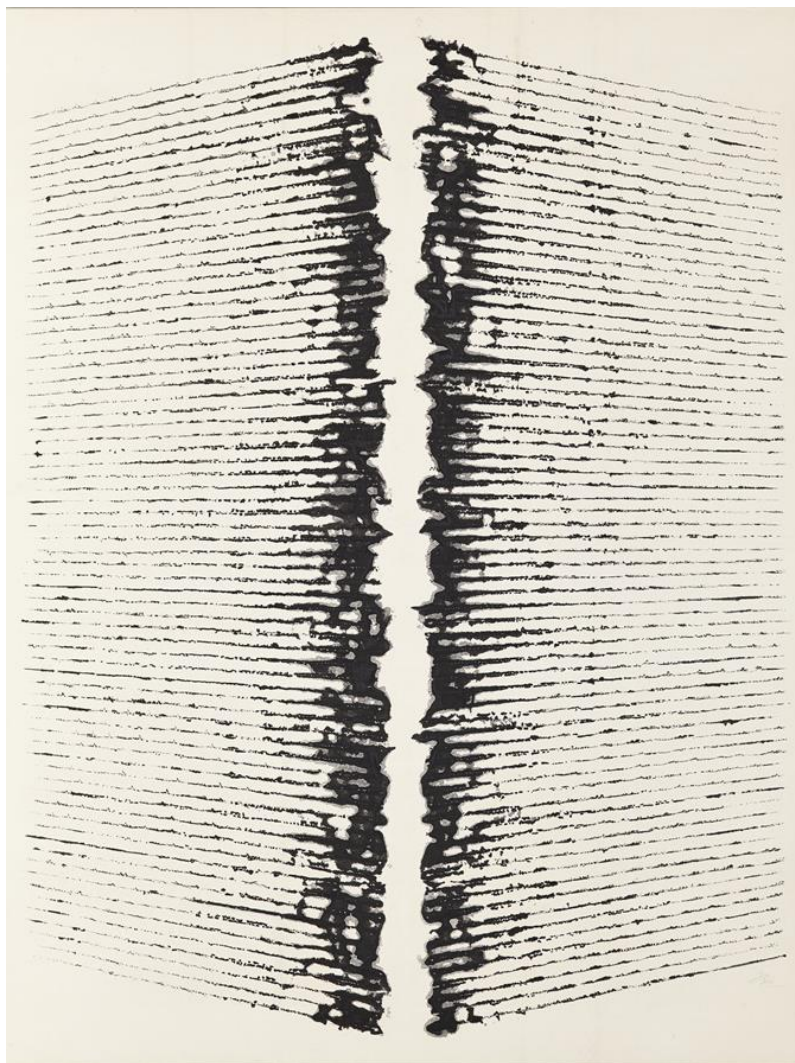
224 x 170 cm

Courtesy of the Artist's Estate

Image provided by Kukje Gallery

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224 x 170 cm

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