



Brushstroke-51, 2020. Charcoal ink on paper | 紙上木炭墨水. Framed | 有框 : 135 x 167 x 4.5 cm | 53 1/8 x 65 3/4 x 1 3/4 inch. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin | 圖片提供 : 藝術家與貝浩登

LEE BAE *Paradigm of Charcoal*

August 7 - September 11, 2021

Perrotin Hong Kong is pleased to present *Paradigm of Charcoal*, a solo exhibition from Korean artist Lee Bae, based in Paris, France, and Cheongdo, South Korea. It is Lee Bae's fourth solo exhibition with the gallery to visualize his decades-long affinity for employing charcoal as the artistic material and celebrate his experimental and contemporary approach to monochrome.

Lee has been employing charcoal rather than paint in his artistic practice since his move to Paris at the end of 1989, and this ubiquitous material that is deep-rooted in Korean culture allows him to reconnect with his heritage. In Korean folk culture, charcoal is believed to possess the power to keep out evil forces and is sometimes offered as a deity gift in household rituals; in a practical perspective, charcoal is used during house construction as an effective dehumidifier. It is in this vein that Lee rediscovered peace and continued to create works of art using a material that symbolized his early days living in Paris and his motherland.

As members of a dynamic art movement born in South Korea in the 1970s, the Dansaekhwa pioneers avoid referencing Western realism, breaking away from Japanese imperialism, and primarily creating meditative monochrome paintings. Behind Dansaekhwa is a pursuit of spirituality and transcendence that requires strict discipline that one can similarly find in Buddhist practices. Compared to the conventional Western thinking of the body-mind split, Korean monochrome painting deeply involves intense physicality during the creative process and

李培 《炭之範式》

2021年8月7日至9月11日

貝浩登（香港）榮幸呈獻《炭之範式》，是次為於法國巴黎和南韓清道郡居住和工作的韓國藝術家李培在畫廊舉行的第四個個展。展覽將視覺化李氏幾十年來運用木炭為創作媒材的鍾愛，以及頌揚他在單色創作上充滿實驗性的當代手法。

李培至從1989年末搬到巴黎工作便以木炭而非油漆創作。木炭雖然是一種普遍的材料，卻是韓國文化中的其一精髓；因此，李氏即使身在異鄉仍可通過木炭與自身的文化傳統重新連結。在韓國民間文化中，人們相信木炭持有驅趕邪氣的能力，亦會在家庭儀式中用作饋贈神靈的禮物；在實際用途上，在房屋建造的過程中也會用木炭作為高效的除濕劑。故此，木炭不但象徵了李氏於韓國家鄉和早期在巴黎生活的日子，藝術家更能在創作過程中重新尋回平靜的心態。

「單色畫」運動於南韓1970年代誕生，而當中的大師們避免指涉西方現實主義，摒棄日本帝國主義的思想以及主要創作帶有禪意的單色畫作品。創作單色畫是一種對靈性和超越的追求，當中所要求的嚴格紀律媲美佛教中的修行實踐。與西方傳統的心身二分法相比，韓國單色畫的創作過程中涉及強烈的物理性，並強調自我和物質統一的重要性。這想法不只反映了亞洲哲學的元素，也同時深遠影響後單色畫藝術家，而李培也無不例外。若果回顧李氏的教育背景，他曾師隨單色畫運動大師朴栖甫，更因為國際知名的單色畫先驅李禹煥的指示而毅然搬往巴黎鍛鍊技藝。另外，就如其他曾經在美國和歐洲進修の後單色畫藝術家般，李氏的作品不單視藝術為自我沈思的實踐，更是一個呈現藝術家的意識的工具，這反映出與第一代藝術

emphasizes the importance of the oneness of self and materiality. Such not only represents a great deal of Asian philosophy but also influences post-Dansaekhwa artists, and Lee Bae is also no exception. In education, Lee not only studied under Park Seo-Bo, one of the great founders of the Dansaekhwa movement but also moved to Paris to hone his artistic skills at the behest of his mentor Lee Ufan, another pioneer and internationally recognized Dansaekhwa master. Besides, just as many other post-Dansaekhwa artists who have studied in the United States and Europe, Lee does not only regard art as a praxis of self-contemplation; but also as an agent to represent the artist's consciousness, revealing a different stream of thoughts compare to the first-generation artists. Lee's peculiar use of charcoal in his body of works demonstrates how second-generation artists deepen the groundbreaking nature of Dansaekhwa by experimenting with idiosyncratic materials and media.

One will first be mesmerized by a powerful and energetic work from Lee's *Untitled* series when walking into Perrotin Hong Kong's gallery space. The large, organic splash of black ink on canvas becomes the musical notes of a grand prelude that enchants viewers to delve into the artist's charcoal-infused world. Turning left to the first gallery room, viewers will see Lee Bae's minimal yet iconic *Brushstroke* series showcasing against the dark grey walls. In this body of work, Lee employs charcoal in the form of ink painting, reinterprets classical practices of Korean calligraphy, and represents such a timeless genre in a contemporary and elegant approach. Lee employs the residue of powdered charcoal as ink; in quiet contemplation, he paints in one gestural stroke, or several, on the paper. Besides painting in black, which represents solidity and materiality, he also masterfully leaves a great deal of white space in the work that signifies emptiness, visualizing the equilibrium and cycles of life in front of our eyes. The 'void' that Lee incorporates in the paintings is one of the essences in Korean art. Such stylistic choice not only "...encompasses Asian values that contrast with the logocentrism and materialism of Western philosophy", but also "...signifies a world, which is empty and yet filled with elegance and compels viewers to see the horizon of life anew...", just as Lee Joon, Deputy Director of Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art mentioned in 2007¹. This explains why viewers project the spiritual hologram of self-perception and self-realization when they gaze into the artist's ink paintings as if the pulsating brushstrokes put them into a trance. To further explore Lee Bae's *Brushstroke* from a spiritual perspective, the ancient Taoist philosopher, Laozi (Lao Tzu) once said the following in *Tao Te Ching* (a fundamental text for both philosophical and religious Taoism which translates roughly to "the way of integrity") that resonates with the ink paintings: "Know the White, but cleave to the Black." Even if one is under the light and possesses prestige and power, one should humble themselves and remind there is no end to self-improvement and self-actualization. Through his precise use of blackness and whiteness, Lee leaves his loci of energy, or *qi*, on his ink paintings; and presents his worldview through the seamless and rhythmic brushstrokes.

Viewers will then be dazzled by Lee's iconic series, *Issu du feu*, which in English means 'from fire', when they walk further into the other side of the gallery space. In this exhibition room, Lee demonstrates his commitment to traverse the constrictions of artistic genres, which presents a distinct form of sculptural painting. In this series, the artist takes a labor-intensive approach: He first cuts hundreds of iridescent charcoal pieces that are produced in his kiln in Cheongdo, composes them onto the canvas, and then grinds the surfaces exhaustively. When displayed under various angles of lights, the work reflects an infinite spectrum of blackness, just as Lee often describes – blackness is the totality of all colors. It is as if Lee names this series as such not just because charcoal is produced through combustion but also as his act of strenuous polishing on the material allows the works to radiate sublime luminescence.

Juxtaposing the *Issu du feu* works are two monumental, charcoal-surfaced



Untitled, 2018. Acrylic medium charcoal ink on canvas | 布面丙烯、木炭墨水. 162 x 130 cm | 63 3/4 x 51 3/16 inch. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin | 圖片提供：藝術家與貝浩登

家截然不同的思流。李氏在創作中運用木炭的獨特手法顯現了第二代藝術家深化單色畫運動試驗具有特性的媒材的特質的決心。

觀眾步入貝浩登（香港）的畫廊空間會先被李氏賦有能量的《無題》系列震撼人心，那大型和充滿活力的黑色潑墨彷彿如壯麗的前奏曲中的音符，為觀眾揭開藝術家所創造的木炭世界的序幕。轉身往左方步入第一個畫廊展覽廳，觀眾便能觀賞李培展出在深灰色牆身的簡約卻標誌性的《筆觸》系列。李氏在這個系列中以水墨畫的形式運用木炭媒材，重新演繹並以當代和優雅手法呈現經典永恆的韓國書法。李氏利用殘餘的木炭粉末作為水墨材料，在靜謐一刻於紙上畫出充滿動態的一或數筆。除了以象徵固態和物質性的黑色繪畫，李氏也熟練地在作品中遺下大量象徵「空性」的留白，於觀眾眼前顯現生命中的平衡和循環。李氏在繪畫中所引入的「真空」是韓國藝術的其中一個要素。就如三星美術館Leeum的副總監李俊在2007年曾提到：「這創作風格不只包含了與西方哲學中的邏各斯中心主義和唯物主義有差異的亞洲文化價值，也是象徵著一個廣大而又充滿典雅的世界，迫使觀眾重新審視人生的視野。」¹ 這解釋了為何觀眾凝視李氏的水墨畫之時，脈動的筆觸彷彿使他們進入恍惚狀態，並投射出自我感知和自我體現的「靈性全息圖」。若果從靈性角度深入探索李培的《筆觸》系列，古代道教哲學家老子在《道德經》中曾提及的想法與藝術家的水墨畫產生共鳴：「知其白，守其黑，為天下式。」縱然處於鎂光燈之下並擁有威望和權勢，人也需要謙卑，並提醒自我完善和自我實現的追求並無止境。透過對「黑」與「白」的細緻運用，李氏在他的水墨畫上遺留能量或簡稱「氣」的軌跡，並通過無縫而充滿節奏感的筆觸呈現他的世界觀。

觀眾走進畫廊空間的另一側時會被李氏的標誌性系列《浴火重生》（法文「Issu du feu」意即「來自火」）所驚艷。在這個展廳中，李氏呈現一種擁有獨特形態的雕塑繪畫，展現了他跨越藝術流派的束縛之決心。在這個系列中，藝術家採用了一種密集勞動的創作方式：他首先切割數百件在其清道郡的窯燒製而成、燦爛奪目的木炭片，將它們組合在畫中，然後徹底地打磨木炭表面。這些作品在不同燈光角度下展示時均反射無限的黑色光譜，正如李氏常描繪那般：黑色是所有顏色的總和。李氏命名此系列時所考量的不只是木炭是

1. Lee Joon, "Void: Mapping the Invisible in Korean Art" from exhibition catalogue *Void in Korean Art* (Seoul: Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, 2007).

1. 李俊：〈真空：映射韓國藝術中的隱形之物〉，《韓國藝術的真空》展覽目錄（首爾：三星美術館Leeum，2007年）。

Landscape paintings. Similarly, Lee experiments with materiality and adopt groundbreaking methods to present picturesque manifestations. He first creates a layer of matt, black charcoal shards, breaks it to attain a naturalistic outline, and arranges it on a white-colored canvas. To reveal the beauty of charcoal in a compact form, Lee also textures the black color surface with rough sandpaper. While the charcoal shards represent a heavy, light-absorbing space, it organically dissolves into the white-colored negative space. Colliding such dualisms is not to see life and nature in binaries, but to realize the concept of co-existence, which if one does not cast a shadow, one is not under the light.

When sentient beings perish from the material reality they transform into charcoal after decaying, becoming an essential energy source for the succeeding generations. Lee Bae's series of works narrate such teachings of charcoal and envisages the metamorphosis of life through the forms of sculptures and paintings, guiding the viewers to his world of tranquil blackness.

Cusson Cheng
Curator and art critic



Landscape F20, 2003. Charcoal on canvas | 布面木炭. 162 x 130 cm | 63 3/4 x 51 3/16 inch. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin | 圖片提供：藝術家與貝浩登

About Lee Bae

Lee Bae was born in Cheongdo, South Korea in 1956. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at museums and institutions worldwide, including Wilmette Foundation, Venice, Italy; Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul de Venice, France; Paradise Art Space, Incheon, South Korea; Musée des Beaux-Arts, Vannes, France; and Musée Guimet, Paris, France; and Phi Foundation, Montreal, Canada. Lee's work is included in public collections, notably the National Museum of Contemporary Art (MMCA), Gwacheon, South Korea; Seoul Museum of Art (SEMA), Seoul, South Korea; Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea; Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul de Vence, France; Musée Guimet, Paris, France; Musée Cernuschi, Paris, France; Privada Allegro Foundation, Madrid, Spain; and Baruj Foundation, Barcelona, Spain.

More information >>>

透過燃燒過程而成，也因為他以激烈方式拋光媒材而使作品綻放壯麗光芒而名。

兩幅大型、擁有木炭表面的《景觀》作品與《浴火重生》作品在展廳裡並列，形成強烈對比。同樣地，李氏進行物質性的試驗，採用開創性的手法呈現如畫般的表現形式。他先挪用木炭碎塊製作啞黑色的木炭層，隨後將它打碎從而塑造一個自然的輪廓，最後則排列在白色畫布上。為了展現木炭緊密結實的形態的美學，李氏還會運用粗糙的沙紙在黑色表面進行打磨，凸顯獨特紋理。一方面，木炭碎塊象徵了具有重量和吸光的空間，另一方面則自然地融入了白色的負空間。藝術家將二元並置並非認為生命和自然充滿對立，而是實現共存的概念：人站在陽光下，自然會在地面上投射了陰影。

當有情眾生離開物質世界時，它們消亡腐朽後會轉化為木炭，從此成為後人必不可少的能源。李培的一系列作品透過木炭媒材闡述了以上教義，並透過雕塑和繪畫設想生命的蛻變，引導觀眾走進他靜謐的黑色世界。

鄭家醇
策展人及藝評人



Landscape F21, 2003. Charcoal on canvas | 布面木炭. 162 x 130 cm | 63 3/4 x 51 3/16 inch. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin | 圖片提供：藝術家與貝浩登

關於李培

李培（本名李英培）1956年於南韓清道郡出生。他曾在世界各地的美術館和機構中的個人展覽中展出作品，包括Wilmette Foundation，意大利威尼斯；瑪格基金會博物館，法國聖保羅德旺斯；Paradise Art Space，南韓仁川；法國瓦訥美術館；吉美國立亞洲藝術博物館，法國巴黎；和Phi Foundation，加拿大蒙特利爾。李氏的作品被納入各個公共收藏，包括國立當代美術館（MMCA），南韓果川；首爾美術館（SEMA），南韓首爾；三星美術館Leeum，南韓首爾；瑪格基金會博物館，法國聖保羅德旺斯；吉美國立亞洲藝術博物館，法國巴黎；賽努奇博物館，法國巴黎；Privada Allegro Foundation，西班牙馬德里；和Baruj Foundation，西班牙巴塞羅那。

更多資料 >>>