

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ha Chong-hyun

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

September 10–October 22, 2022

Opening reception: Saturday, September 10, 5–7pm

Los Angeles, CA, September 6, 2022—Blum & Poe is pleased to present a solo exhibition of paintings by Ha Chong-hyun. This is Ha's fourth solo show with the gallery, and his second solo presentation in Los Angeles.

This exhibition takes a retrospective look at Ha Chong-hyun's pioneering practice and is the first to present *Conjunction 20-200* (2020), a monumental installation of eight towering canvases—each of which Ha painted with one of the signature techniques that he developed during the past five decades. The compositions in this massive polyptych are placed in dialogue with twelve paintings dating from 1972 to 2015.

Conjunction 20-200 stands atop rolls of raw hemp that unfurl onto the floor, interwoven with barbed wire. For Ha, this arrangement evokes the earth and refers to his earliest series of multimedia works, made between 1969 and 1973 when he was a member of the artist collective AG (Avant-Garde Association). During this period, he created site-specific installations out of atypical materials—including plaster, timber, newspaper, and, most notably, a series of burlap supports embedded with barbed wire. Both materials were at once mundane yet politically charged features of the urban landscape in the aftermath of the Korean War (1950–53): burlap sacks were used to transport food aid from the United States, while barbed wire fences ring the country's military bases and divide the Korean peninsula to this day. Ha's appropriation of these materials broke with the two-dimensional conventions of painting while evoking the authoritarian atmosphere of the postwar era.

In 1974, Ha began his ongoing Conjunction series, which explores the material fusion of paint and canvas through his original *bae-ap-bub* (back-pressure) method, in which he presses viscous oil paint through the reverse of the coarsely woven cloth so it permeates the fabric and protrudes through the surface. Thereafter he variously brushes, smears, scrapes, and even scorches the paint in pursuit of an abstract composition that exposes the essence of its component materials. This experimental approach to painting as method rather than representation situated Ha as part of a movement that later came to be known as Dansaekhwa, which included peers such as Chung Sang-hwa, Kwon Young-woo, Lee Ufan, Park Seobo, and Yun Hyong-keun. Working in a reductionist aesthetic, these artists variously pushed paint, soaked canvas, dragged pencils, ripped paper, and otherwise manipulated materials in ways that transgressed the distinctions separating ink painting from oil, painting from sculpture, and object from viewer. Six decades on, Ha continues to find new ways to expand the vernacular of his Conjunction paintings.

This solo exhibition at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles follows a retrospective at Palazzetto Tito (Istituzione Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa), a Collateral Event of the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia curated by Sunjung Kim, Artistic Director of Art Sonje Center, Seoul, South Korea.

Ha Chong-hyun was born in Sancheong, South Korea in 1935, and currently lives and works in Seoul, South Korea. He has had numerous solo exhibitions in South Korea, including a retrospective at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, South Korea (2012) and at the Gyeongnam Art Museum, Changwon, South Korea (2004). His work has also been featured in numerous landmark surveys, most

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recently: *Korean Abstract Art: Kim Whanki and Dansaekhwa*, Powerlong Museum, Shanghai, China (2018–19); *Rhythm in Monochrome: Korean Abstract Painting* at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2017); *When Process Becomes Form: Dansaekhwa and Korean Abstraction*, Villa Empain – Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, Belgium (2016); and *Dansaekhwa*, Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice, Italy (2015). Previously, Ha was featured in the survey *From All Sides: Tansaekhwa on Abstraction*, held at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, CA in 2014 and curated by Joan Kee, Associate Professor of History of Art at the University of Michigan. Subsequently, he was included in Blum & Poe's *Dansaekhwa and Minimalism*, which traveled from Los Angeles to New York in 2016—the first exhibition to compare and contrast Korean monochromatic painting with American Minimalism.

His paintings are in the collections of leading institutions such as the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan; Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, Japan; Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea; M+, Hong Kong, China; Miyagi Museum of Art, Sendai, Japan; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Museum of Modern Art, Toyama, Japan; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, South Korea; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; and the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan.

About Blum & Poe

Blum & Poe was founded by Tim Blum and Jeff Poe in Santa Monica in September of 1994 as a space to show local and international contemporary art in all media. Blum's extensive experience in the Japanese art world combined with Poe's keen knowledge of emerging artists in Los Angeles resulted in an international program of influential artists. Throughout a twenty-seven-year history, Blum & Poe has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art by championing artists at all stages of their careers—cultivating the lineages that run between emerging and established practices and working with artist estates to generate new discourse surrounding historical work. Currently, Blum & Poe represents fifty artists and nine estates from sixteen countries worldwide.

In 2003 the gallery moved to a larger space in Culver City, and in 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated its current 22,000-square-foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard. In this location the gallery has since staged museum-caliber surveys, examining the historical work of such movements as the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of 1980s and '90s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); and a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020). To produce these exhibitions, Blum & Poe has worked with celebrated curators such as Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake.

In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects in new contexts. These expansions tie into the gallery's wide-reaching program that includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. Blum & Poe's publishing division democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books. In 2020, the gallery launched Blum & Poe Broadcasts, an online platform showcasing artists' projects in conjunction with physical installations or as standalone digital endeavors.

Across the three global locations, Blum & Poe prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, Blum & Poe was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery

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is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. Blum & Poe is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in their physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

Press Inquiries

Nicoletta Beyer
Communications and Editorial Director, Los Angeles
nicoletta@blumandpoe.com

Christie Hayden
Communications and Social Media Editor, Los Angeles
christie@blumandpoe.com

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