

# GALERIE NÄCHST ST. STEPHAN ROSEMARIE SCHWARZWÄLDER

JONGSUK YOON

24 OCT 2024 – 18 JAN 2025

Han

Opening: Thursday, October 24, 2024, 7 p.m.

Introduction at 7.30 p.m. by Helena Pereña, Curator, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich

Jongsuk Yoon's third solo exhibition at the gallery bears the concise and cryptic title *Han*. If you ask the artist, who grew up in South Korea and has been living in Germany since the 1990s, what the title means, she will give you a vivid description of the environment that continues to have a formative impact on her to this day and that is the focus of this exhibition: the landscape of her home country of Korea.

According to Yoon, the Korean word *han* is difficult to translate. It has many different meanings: for example, *han* is the short form of an earlier name for Seoul, and it is also the name of the fourth largest river in the country, Hangang, or the Han River. Yoon's abstracted landscapes are products of her memory or imagination, or they are based on photographs. She composes these landscapes out of atmospheric, open color fields that she juxtaposes, superimposes, and joins together in a dynamic arrangement. Their color palette ranges from bright red, to delicate hues of blue, to rich yellow. On the other hand, Yoon employs gray and earth tones sparingly, but with great effect. Her varied application of paint evokes a certain sense of restlessness. The different types of brush strokes define the individual color fields, lending them volume and giving the picture spatial depth. Once in a while, Yoon accentuates certain areas with black lines. "The spontaneous, vibrant line reveals the pace at it was painted and lets you experience the feeling that evolved in the process," she says.

Yoon's approach to art is based on intuition. She says of her working method that "different emotions interact to form the entire picture." At the same time, she also relies on her profound knowledge of painting and art history. She combines traditions of landscape painting from Asia with elements of the Western canon, bringing them together to form fascinating pictorial worlds. Indications that these could be landscapes are confirmed through titles such as *san*, which means "mountain," or *gang*, which means "river." Or, for example, in the eight-meter-long panoramic picture *April Mai*, she depicts a spring landscape that covers almost the entire first room of the gallery.

In her picture *Hangang*, the river of the same name meanders like a white ribbon from the left lower edge of the painting to the center, flanked by red and purple fields. The Han River begins in North Korea and meets the Yellow Sea in South Korea. It therefore unites the two countries, which are separated by political decisions. The river symbolizes the unity of the country and the desire for reunification. *Han* can also be translated as "unity," meaning it also refers to the artist's life experiences as well as to the political situation that has defined her home country for decades – one that finds a symbolic expression in her depictions of nature and landscape. For Yoon, who still feels the consequences of this political situation even today, art is something "powerful and free" – something that holds the hope for change.

A comprehensive publication documenting the last ten years of Yoon's artistic oeuvre will be released in spring 2025 with texts by Adam Budak, Heike Eipeldauer, and Hans Ulrich Obrist. It will be published by Mousse Publishing.

**JONGSUK YOON**, born 1965 in Onyang, South Korea, lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany.

In 1996 she studied at the University of Fine Arts Münster, from 1997 to 2001 at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf and from 2004 to 2005 at Chelsea College of Art, MA, London. In 2019 Yoon received a residency at soart Millstättersee, Carinthia, Austria, and in 2020 a residency by Bildrecht in Vienna. In 2000 she was a scholarship holder of the DAAD Artist-in-Residence Programme, Berlin, Germany.

Exhibitions (selection): Kumgangsan (wall painting), mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, Austria (2024) (solo); House of Art of České Budějovice, České Budějovice, Czech Republic (2023) (solo); Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Design & Architecture, Hasselt, Belgium (2023); Ulsan Art Museum, Ulsan, South Korea (2023); Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover, Germany (2021) (solo); Nordiska Akvarellmuseet, Skärhamn, Sweden (2020) (solo); Akademie-Galerie, Düsseldorf, Germany (2019); Art Sonje Center, Seoul, South Korea (2018) (solo); Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Kleve, Germany (2017) (solo); Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2017); Kunsthalle Münster, Münster, Germany (2017); Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art, Ansan und Korea Foundation Gallery, Seoul, South Korea (2017).