

Kwon Young-woo
Blum & Poe, New York
June 1 — July 1, 2016
Opening Reception: Wednesday, June 1, 6-8pm

Blum & Poe is pleased to present a survey of work by Kwon Young-woo (1926–2013), one of the founding figures of Dansaekhwa, the monochrome painting movement that redefined Korean art starting in the mid-1960s. This is Kwon's first solo exhibition with the gallery and his first solo presentation in New York.

Seeking a new alternative to the ink painting traditions that dominated Korea in the 1960s, Kwon initially dispensed with the use of ink and began to scratch at the surface of the *hanji* paper, creating all-over compositions of rips that emphasized the primacy of the ground. During the 1970s and early 1980s he expanded his repertoire, perforating the paper from behind and tearing it into more ragged strips. Despite the implied aggression in these gestures, the works are serenely calm and meditative. Eventually Kwon reintroduced the use of color, pouring gouache and ink with absolute precision into and around the cuts to further accentuate his mark making.

A decade older than Lee Ufan and the other artists associated with Dansaekhwa, Kwon's practice was fundamental to the development of the movement. Though the term literally translates as "monochrome painting," it is better understood in terms of the processes the artists employed. Various ripping paper, dragging pencils, pushing paint, and soaking canvas, the artists manipulated the materials of painting in ways that questioned the terms by which the medium was known. Promoted in Seoul, Tokyo, and Paris, Dansaekhwa quickly became the globally recognized face of contemporary Korean art.

Leading up to the opening of the exhibition, Dominique Lévy, Greene Naftali, Gallery Hyundai, and Blum & Poe will cohost a panel discussion on Dansaekhwa with artist Chung Sang-Hwa and Alexandra Munroe, Samsung Senior Curator, Asian Arts, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. The conversation will begin at 6:30pm on Tuesday, May 31, at Dominique Lévy Gallery. Seating is limited, please RSVP to rsvpny@blumandpoe.com.

Previously, Kwon was featured in the survey *From All Sides: Tansaekhwa on Abstraction*, held at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles in 2014, and curated by Joan Kee, Associate Professor of History of Art at the University of Michigan. He was also included in the traveling exhibition of 2016, *Dansaekhwa and Minimalism*, held at Blum & Poe, Los Angeles and New York—the first overview of Korean monochromatic painting with American Minimalism.

Kwon Young-woo was born in Liwon, Korea, in 1926. He graduated with a BFA in painting from Seoul National University in 1951 and received his MFA in 1957. He spent a decade living in Paris in the 1980s, and has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions in Korea, France, Canada and the United States. The Seoul Museum of Art held a major retrospective in 2007. His work has also been celebrated in important surveys such as *When Process Becomes Form: Dansaekhwa and Korean Abstraction*, Villa Empain – Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, Belgium (2016); *Dansaekhwa*, Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice, Italy (2015); *Dansaekhwa: Korean Monochrome Painting*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Gwacheon (2012); and *Korean Contemporary Art of the 1970s*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art, which traveled to Tochigi Municipal Museum of Art, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Osaka, Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, Sapporo, Fukuoka

City Museum, Fukuoka (1983). Kwon was one of the five artists featured in the landmark show *Five Kinds of White*, held at Tokyo Gallery in 1975. Prior to that, his work was included in the São Paulo Art Biennial (1973), and the Tokyo Biennale (1965).