

# WHITE CUBE

## Mason's Yard

Press Release

Minjung Kim

*The Memory of Process*

Organised by Katharine Kostyál

26 January – 10 March 2018

Preview: Thursday 25 January 2018, 6–8pm

White Cube is pleased to present a survey exhibition of works by Korean artist Minjung Kim (b. 1962) at Mason's Yard.

The exhibition, the first comprehensive presentation of her works in the UK, includes several series of paintings which convey her exploration of abstraction, serial process and a refined, minimalist language.

Traditionally trained in Korean watercolour painting and calligraphy from the age of nine, Kim is one of the few female artists to emerge as a natural heir to the Dansaekhwa group (Korean minimal painting), having studied under one of the **movement's masters, Park Seo-Bo**, at Hongik University, Seoul.

Following a change in her personal circumstances, Kim moved from Korea to Milan in the early 1990s and studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera. Although she has lived and worked in Italy and France ever since, Kim continues to use Hanji within her work - a material deeply rooted within historic Korean culture and favoured by the Danseakhwa artists. Made with a labour intensive process from the inner bark of the paper mulberry tree, Hanji has a tactile surface reminiscent of skin.

In Kim's work, Hanji is often marked by burning, using an incense stick or a candle, and then superimposed **in a meditative collage technique**. **'Burning came about from my exploration of lines' she has said, 'I could feel the power of nature in using fire, but also a different sense of control.'**<sup>1</sup>

Kim's unique process, whereby she remains silent and holds her breath when executing each mark, results in paintings with rhythmical abstract surfaces. In several works in the exhibition, dynamic abstract compositions and bold perspectives suggest architectural motifs. In *Raggi* (2005), thin strips of Hanji paper is applied in diagonal layers to converge into a vortex-like series of receding rectangles, evoking the vertiginous effect of looking down a deep stairwell. Characterised by their intense conceptual focus, her canvases suggest a catharsis, harnessing the energy residing in repetitive mark making.

References to traditional Korean landscape painting are evident in **Kim's Mountain series** (2008/2009/2011). The artist creates tonal scales on Hanji through manipulating the ink into undulating waves through varying densities and shapes. This notion of control and calligraphy is fundamental to her work. **'I have to wait for the right moment to draw the lines in ink' she has said, 'sometimes it takes days and weeks to find the right state of mind. My breathing needs to be absolutely under control.'**

Also on display in the exhibition are works from the *Pieno di Vuoto* series (2008) which

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<sup>1</sup> p. 13, *Traces*, OCI Museum of Art catalogue

loosely translates from Italian as 'full of emptiness'. Within these works, Kim burns holes in circular pieces of brightly coloured Hanji paper and overlaps each form on the surface. The multiple layers create, conversely, a sense of fullness and achieve what Kim has described as **the 'essence of chaos'**.

Minjung Kim opens at **White Cube Mason's Yard** on 26 January 2018 and continues until 10 March 2018.

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Notes to Editors:

- Minjung Kim was born in Gwangju in 1962 and lives and works in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France and New York, USA. Following her studies at Hong Ik University in Seoul, she moved to Milan in 1991 where she trained at Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera. She has exhibited internationally including solo shows at Musée des Arts asiatiques, Nice (2017); Hermès Foundation, Singapore (2017); OCI Museum of Art, Seoul (2015); Palazzo Caboto, Venice (2015); Oko, New York (2014); Studio d'Arte Raffaelli, Trento, Italy (2014) and MACRO, Rome (2012). She participated in the Gwangju Biennale (2004). Her work is included in numerous international public collections including the British Museum, London; Musée des Arts asiatiques, Nice; Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, New York; Asia Society, New York; Fondazione Palazzo Bricherasio, Turin and UniCredit Art Collection, Italy.
- Admission to White Cube is free. **White Cube Mason's Yard is open Tuesday–Saturday 10am–6pm.**
- Address: 25–26 **Mason's Yard, St. James's, London SW1Y 6BU, United Kingdom** +44 (0)20 7930 5373 [whitecube.com](http://whitecube.com)
- **White Cube's exhibition programme extends across its three gallery spaces: Bermondsey in South London, Mason's Yard in St. James's, London and Hong Kong Central district.** Since its inception in 1993, the gallery has exhibited the work of **many of the world's most highly acclaimed contemporary artists.**
- Join the conversation with White Cube: #MinjungKim
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