

Chung Sang-hwa & Shin Sung-hy

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles

November 3, 2018-January 12, 2019

Opening reception: Saturday, November 3, 4-6pm

Blum & Poe is pleased to present an exhibition of Chung Sang-hwa and Shin Sung-hy, two influential artists in the history of Korean painting since the 1960s. This is the first major presentation in Los Angeles to focus on either artists' work.

Chung Sang-hwa's early paintings from the 1960s were made in the style of Art Informel, then prevalent in the Korean art scene and a local movement in its own right. This exhibition presents several very rare examples from this period—colorful compositions with gestural mark-making that engage the negative space of the exposed canvas—a prelude of work to come in future decades. In contrast to these works in the exhibition, a suite of monochromatic grid paintings hangs nearby, examples from a body of work now renowned and iconic of Chung's oeuvre. Between 1967 and 1992, Chung lived in Paris and Kobe, where he developed this aesthetically minimal and process-focused practice. After applying multiple layers of acrylic to the canvas, the artist draws a grid on the reverse and alternately rolls, compresses, and scores the canvas in order to crack the painted façade, thereafter using a knife to further chip away at the surface. Chung then fills in areas with different types of paint, the varying speeds of drying causing further cracks to emerge. This exhibition will also feature the artist's *Frottage* works, drawings made by rubbing graphite onto paper laid over his completed paintings. With its technique rooted in labor and repetitive gesture, Chung's work is central to the history of the Dansaekhwa movement that emerged in the midst of Korea's postwar material deprivations and its authoritarian political system. Although the term literally means "monochrome painting," it is defined by the methods employed as much as its reductionist aesthetics.

Shin Sung-hy's practice questions the two-dimensionality of painting and the viewer's perception of the painted surface. Between the mid-1970s and early 1980s he made paintings on jute that appear to be hyper-realistic depictions of jute itself, augmenting and disrupted one's perception of the weave in the painting's actual support. Thereafter, the artist developed a technique called *nouage* ("knotting") by coarsely painting the canvas on both sides, interpreting the plane as a three-dimensional object. The artist would rip the material into thin strips, denying and dismantling the painted surface—causing the images within to "die." Weaving and knotting those pieces together, he reconfigured the materials into new paintings, many of which consist of a monochromatic expanse of white in contrast to the knotted morass of color. This exhibition features both bodies of work, from the flatly photorealistic early paintings to the physically wrought canvases of the 1990s and 2000s.

Chung Sang-hwa (b. 1932, Yeongdeok, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Korea) currently lives and works in Gyeonggi Province. He has had numerous solo exhibitions in Korea and internationally, most recently *Painting Archeology* at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Saint-Étienne Métropole, France in 2011. Previously, the artist 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. In 2016 he was included in *Dansaekhwa and Minimalism*,

which traveled from Blum & Poe in Los Angeles to New York—the first exhibition to compare and contrast Korean monochromatic painting with American Minimalism. His work has also been included in landmark surveys such as *When Process Becomes Form: Dansaekhwa and Korean Abstraction*, Villa Empain – Boghossian Foundation, Brussels (2016), and *Dansaekhwa*, Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice (2015). His paintings are in the collections of leading institutions such as the Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Saint-Étienne Métropole, France; Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul; Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul; National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; and the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan.

Shin Sung-hy (b. 1948; d. 2009) was educated at Hongik University, Seoul. He has had many solo exhibitions in Korea, most recently at the Danwon Art Museum, Ansan, Korea in 2015. The artist's work is regularly included in major survey exhibitions, such as *Contemplative, Space, Artist Note*, Whanki Museum, Seoul (2017); *Power of Gyeonggido*, Gyeonggi Museum of Art, Yongin, Korea (2010); and *Age of Philosophy and Aesthetics*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea (2003); *Korean Contemporary Art*, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Japan (2002); *Korean Contemporary Painting*, Kasama Nichido Museum, Ibaraki, Japan (1992); the *4th India Triennial*, New Delhi, India (1977); and the *13th São Paulo Biennial*, São Paulo, Brazil (1975). Shin's works are represented in public collections including the Busan Museum of Art, Busan, Korea; Daegu Art Museum, Daegu, Korea; Ho-Am Art Museum, Seoul; National Foundation for Contemporary Art, France; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul; and the Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul among others.