



"Ecriture(描法)No. 000729", 2000. Acrylic with Korean Hanji paper on canvas. 182 x 228 cm / 71 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 89 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches

## PARK SEO-BO "Ecriture"

Galerie Perrotin, New York

May 28 – July 3, 2015

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 28, 6-8pm

Galerie Perrotin, New York is pleased to present the second exhibition dedicated to Korean artist Park Seo-Bo, following his first solo show at Galerie Perrotin, Paris last November.

Born in 1931, Park Seo-Bo is a seminal figure in Korean contemporary art and one of the founding members of the Dansaekhwa monochrome movement, a synthesis between traditional Korean spirit and Western abstraction, which emerged in the early 1970s in post-war Korea and has gained international recognition since. An official collateral event in this year's 56th Venice Biennial, "Dansaekhwa", is currently held at the Palazzo Contarini-Polignac (until August 15) and on the occasion of the Year of Korea in France (2015-2016), a major exhibition dedicated to Korean artists in France - including Park Seo-Bo, will take place at the Cernuschi Museum in Paris: "From Lee Ungno to Lee Ufan: Korean Artists in France" (16 October 2015 - January 2016). Although the Korean monochrome movement has never been defined with a manifesto, the artists affiliated with Dansaekhwa, including Chung Chang-Sup and Lee Ufan, are commonly known for their use of a neutral palette (namely white, beige and black), their material emphasis of the pictorial components and fabrics, and their gestural and systematic engagement within the artworks in the making. As a matter of fact, in Park Seo-Bo's paintings, process and discipline prevail, whereas the French Art Informel scene originally inspired the artist's early aesthetics.

Indeed, back in 1961, Park Seo-Bo earned a UNESCO scholarship to study and ended up spending a whole year in Paris, where he furthered his knowledge of Art Informel, which arose in Europe parallel to the American Abstract Expressionism during World War II and became prevalent throughout the 1950s. As soon as 1957, Park Seo-Bo had already helped establish in Seoul the Hyun-Dae Artists Association around the principles of Art Informel, the gestural and abstract techniques of which, like those of Action Painting and Color Field in the United States, would enable young Korean artists to express their anguish in the immediate aftermath of the Korean War. The influence of Art Informel in the early works of Park Seo-Bo can be seen in his series "Primordialis" from the early 1960s, which is characterized by aggressive brushstrokes, dark hues and amorphous forms. Yet by the mid-1960s, the artist had already rejected the occidental manners that he had primarily adopted and started devoting his time to learning about oriental philosophy.

Park Seo-Bo's own pictorial tabula rasa, if you will, and subsequent spiritual introspection gave birth to the series of monochromes he calls "Ecriture", which means 'writing' in French and has become the generic title of all his artworks and exhibitions since 1967. For almost 50 years now, within a strict and reduced vocabulary - which he narrowed down to the repetition of simple patterns echoing throughout his paintings and the limited color palette of Dansaekhwa - Park Seo-Bo has never ceased to empty his monochromes from, if not the trace of his gestural commitment, self-expression or the emotional outpouring that a single impulsive stroke carried in his early days. In this regard, his pictorial endeavors do certainly share some striking similarities with the parallel evolution in France of "the painter of black", Pierre Soulages, who also started off his career as a leading figure of Art Informel.

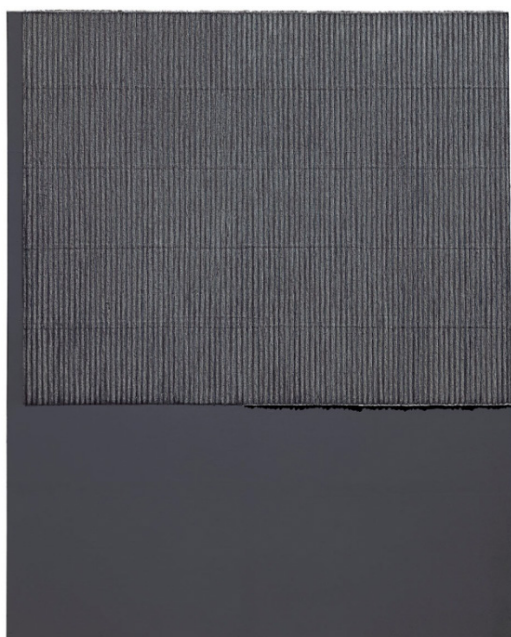
Park Seo-Bo's exhibition at Galerie Perrotin, New York presents a broad selection of paintings corresponding to different periods of "Ecriture", his lifelong and existential exploration of monochrome. Throughout the 1970s, the artist employed an original technique, which consisted of inscribing repetitive linear or arabesque patterns with a pencil onto the wet surface of oil paint, which had been previously applied to the canvas. In the process of making what he came to refer to as his "white drawings", which are reminiscent of the art of calligraphy, Park Seo-Bo learned to control and extend himself onto his canvas, so as to become one with his work. This epitomizes the fusion of mind and body, which is essential to Asian philosophy, as opposed to the Western Cartesian premise of a split.

In the early 1980s, Park Seo-Bo began to experiment with Korean hanji, a traditional handmade paper made out of mulberry bark, which became his fabric of choice and the key to his unique technique. From this point forward, the artist would first and systematically pile onto his canvas layers of wet hanji, which had been previously saturated with watercolor paint, before proceeding to the meticulous molding of repetitive geometrical patterns with the pressure of his fingers or tools onto the textile thickness. In other words, the fabric itself would actually record the artist's repeated gestures. Since the 1990s, which Park Seo-Bo refers to as his "black and white" period, the patterns have become exclusively vertical furrows stretching from top to bottom all over his paintings, while the 2000s mark the progressive introduction of vivid colors into his monochromes, leaving behind the neutral hues of Dansaekhwa. His renewed palette is inspired by the colors he found in nature or the cityscape of Seoul, where he lives and works.

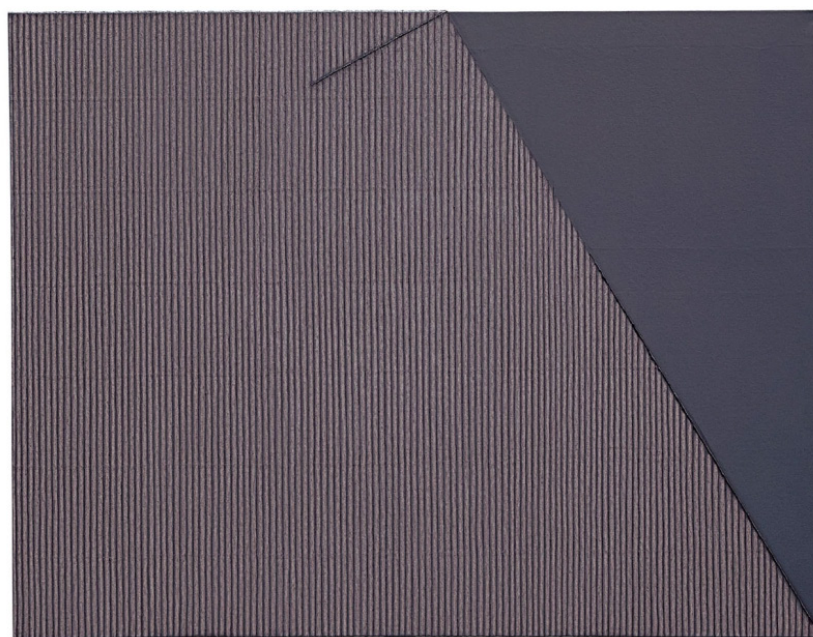
Park Seo-Bo's minimalistic aesthetics have often been formally compared to that of Western Minimalism. However, they differ greatly in intent, as the approach of the latter is purely conceptual. If both claim to clear art of self-expression in reaction to either Art Informel or Abstract Expressionism, Park Seo-Bo's repetition of geometrical patterns, which are handmade as opposed to modular and manufactured, is the actual means of his spiritual journey towards self-purification, the sine qua non of enlightenment. Park Seo-Bo makes art to empty his mind and his exceptional discipline – some of his works take up to a year to complete – is similar to the meditative routine of a Buddhist monk. Both aspire to a higher level of awareness beyond the limitations of the ego, which, accordingly, one must break free from.

Violaine Boutet de Monvel

Park Seo-Bo (b. in 1931, Yecheon, Korea) graduated from the Department of Western Painting of the College of Fine Arts of Hongik University, Seoul where he was later the Dean of the College of Fine Arts. Park's works are in the collection of major institutions over the world, including DIA Art Foundation in the United States; FNAC (Fonds National d'Art Contemporain) in France; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo and Fukuoka Art Museum in Japan; National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul Museum of Art, and Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Korea. Park has had multiple solo shows in significant institutions such as Daegu Art Museum (2012), Busan Museum of Art (2010) in Korea, Musée d'Art Moderne de Saint-Etienne Métropole (2006-2007) and National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea (1991). His works were included in group exhibitions in Carlo Bilotti Museum, Rome (2013), National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea (2012), Singapore Art Museum (2008-2009), Tate Gallery Liverpool (1992), the Venice Biennale (1988), and the Biennale de Paris (1963).



"Ecriture(描法)No. 980308" 1998  
Black ink, white clam and oyster shell powder  
and glue with Korean Hanji paper on canvas  
89 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 71 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches / 228 x 182 cm



"Ecriture(描法)No. 980717" 1998  
Black ink, white clam and oyster shell powder and glue with Korean Hanji paper on canvas  
78 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 102 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches / 200 x 260 cm

Park Seo-Bo was born in Yé-Cheon, Gyeong-Buk, Korea in 1931. He lives and works in Seoul, Korea.

#### SOLO SHOWS (Selection)

- 2014 "Ecriture" Galerie Perrotin, Paris, France  
2012 Gallery Shilla, Daegu Korea; Daegu Art Museum, Daegu, Korea  
2010-2011 "Park, Seo-Bo, a Forerunner of Korean Avant-garde: Record His 60 years", Busan Museum of Art, Busan, Korea; Kukje Gallery, Seoul, Korea  
2008 "Empty the mind", Gallery Arario New York, USA  
2007 "PARK, SEO-BO Today Playing with Color", Gyeonggido Museum of Art, Ansan, Korea; Gallery Arario, Beijing, China  
2006-2007 Cabinet des Dessins, Musée d'art Moderne, Saint-Etienne Métropole, Saint-Etienne, France  
2002 Ace Gallery Los Angeles, USA; Remba Gallery, Los Angeles, USA; Jo Hyun Gallery, Busan, Korea; Gallery Sejul, Seoul, Korea; Gallery Hyundai, Seoul, Korea  
1997 Ace Gallery Los Angeles, USA; Remba Gallery, Los Angeles, USA; Park Ryu Sook Gallery, Seoul, Korea; Ci-Gong Gallery, Daegu, Korea  
1991 "PARK, SEO-BO's Painting: Its Forty Years", The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea  
1981 Hyundai Gallery, Seoul, Korea  
1978 Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; Tong-In Gallery, Seoul, Korea  
1973 Muramatsu Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; Myungdong Gallery, Seoul, Korea  
1962 National Central Library Gallery, Seoul, Korea

#### GROUP SHOWS (Selection)

- 2015-2016 "Dansaekhwa", Palazzo Contarini-Polignac, Venice, Italy (6 May - 15 August, 2015); "From Lee Ungno to Lee Ufan: Korean Artists in France", Musée Cernuschi, Paris, France (16 October 2015 - January 2016)  
2014 "From all Sides : TANSÆKHWA on Abstraction" Blum and Poe, Los Angeles, USA; The Art of DANSÆKHWA, Kukje Gallery, Seoul; Overcoming the Modern "Dansaekhwa: The Korean Monochrome Movement", Alexander Gray Associates, New York, USA  
2013 "White & White - Dialogue between Korea and Italy", Museo Carlo Bilotti, Rome, Italy  
2012 "DANSÆKHWA: Korean Monochrome Painting", National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea; Jeonbok Museum of Art, Wanju, Korea  
2011-2012 "DANSÆKJO Paintings.1", GongGan Purple, Heiri Paju, Korea  
2010-2011 "Soul of Line", Ungno Lee Museum, Daejeon, Korea;  
2009 "The Color of Nature- Monochrome Art in Korea", Well Side Gallery, Shanghai, China  
2008-2009 "Transcendence: Modernity and Beyond in Korean Art", Singapore Art Museum, Singapore  
2008 "Korean Abstract Art: 1958-2008", Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea  
2007 "Elastic Taboos-Within the Korean World of Contemporary Art", Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria  
2005 "Tradition und Zeitgeist – Koreanische Gegenwarts Kunst", Galerie Hellhof & Galerie Hana, Kronberg Germany; Das Koreanische Monochrom –Park, Seo-Bo/ Lee "Ufan/ Kim, Guirin/ Yun, Hyong-Keun", Galerie Dorothea Van der Koelen Mainz, Mainz, Germany  
2004 "Monochrome Paintings of Korea, Past and Present", Seoul Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea  
2002-2003 "Korean Contemporary Art from the 1970's to mid-1980's: Age of Philosophy and Aesthetics", National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea  
2001 "Korean Contemporary Art from mid-1960s to mid-1970: A Decade of Transition and Dynamics", National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea  
2000 "An Aspect of Korean Contemporary Art in the 1950s to the 1960s", National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea  
1999 "Les Peintres du silence", Musée des Arts Asiatiques, Nice, France  
1998 "Les Peintres du silence - La Corée d'aujourd'hui", Musée Château des ducs de Wurtemberg, Montbéliard, France  
1992 "Working with Nature: Traditional Thought in Contemporary Art from Korea", Tate Gallery Liverpool, Liverpool, UK  
1991 "Contemporary Korean Painting", Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Belgrade  
1988 The 43rd La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy  
1986 "SEOUL-PARIS", Seoul Press Center Gallery & Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Seoul, Korea & Paris, France  
1981 "Korean Drawing Now", The Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA  
1978 Secondes Rencontres Internationales d'Art Contemporain, Galeries Nationales du Grand Paris, Paris, France  
1977, 1969 The 1st & 8th Cagnes International Painting Festival, Cagnes-sur-Mer, France  
1975 "Korea : Five Artists Five Hinsek", White, Tokyo Gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
1975, 1965 The 8th & 13rd Biennale de São Paulo, Brazil  
1972-1971 "Korean Contemporary Painting Exhibition", Paris, France & West Germany  
1972-1969 "Korean Contemporary Painting Exhibition", India, Afganistan, Nepal  
1963 The 3rd Biennale de Paris, Paris, France  
"4 Young Korean Artists Exhibition", Galerie Lambert, Paris, France  
1962 The First Saigon International Biennale Exhibition, Saigon, Vietnam  
1961 Jeunes Peintres du Monde (Held by National Committee of I.A.A France), Paris, France