

I'm human



Dansaekhwa book in english

South Korea's Dansaekhwa movement, often referred to as monochrome painting, is a collective term for various artworks showcased in South Korea starting from the mid-1970s. Despite not being an official artistic movement with a manifesto, critics and art historians group these disparate works together based on their shared commitment to intensely exploring the fundamental elements of mark, line, frame, surface, and space within painting. This led to debates about defining not only Dansaekhwa but also contemporary Korean art as a whole, especially during discussions in Korea regarding the history of Korean abstract art connected to but distinct from the rest of the world. Promoted internationally in Seoul, Tokyo, and Paris, Dansaekhwa became the face of contemporary Korean art and a cornerstone of contemporary Asian art. Key artists associated with this movement include Lee Ufan and Park Seo-Bo. Due to the diversity within Dansaekhwa, various terms such as dansaekpa, white painting, monochrome painting, and monoteone school have been used to describe these works, with some art historians advocating for more precise terms like monoteone painting or process to highlight the artists' use of one tone rather than a single color, or to emphasize physicality over color palette. Dansaekhwa's emergence as a distinct movement in the Korean art world is often credited to the Gwangju Museum of Art exhibition in 2000, which brought international attention to this genre. According to various sources, including a collection by the Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS) published in 2017, Dansaekhwa's global recognition can be traced back to this pivotal show. However, art historian Joan Kee prefers the romanization "Tansaekhwa" due to the continued use of the McCune-Reischauer system for English-language databases and archives dealing with Korean sources. Born during Japan's occupation of Korea, Dansaekhwa artists entered a period of turmoil marked by military conflicts (most notably the division of Korea and the Korean War) and authoritarian regimes in the 60s and 70s. Kee emphasizes that understanding this context is crucial for grasping the emphasis on objecthood in Dansaekhwa art, as well as the anxieties around loss of civil liberties postwar. Dansaekhwa's questions about form grappled with representation and agency under the Yushin Constitution, reflecting a concern for control and autonomy. Their focus on material also signifies awareness of Korea's rapid industrialization and architectural transformation, seen in Ha Chong Hyun's piercing canvases with wire. Ha's writings underscore the influence of urban architecture and mass production on Korean art in the 20th century. The turmoil of postwar Korea was mirrored in discussions about abstraction in the art world. Experimental artists sought institutional support for the changes occurring in the Korean art world, offering emerging artists a platform to showcase their work. Unlike other movements that organized collectives or manifestos to reshape the art world, Dansaekhwa artists did not band together. Instead, many had been part of the late 1950s-mid 1960s Art Informel movement in Korea and Park Seo-Bo linked the limited color palette in Dansaekhwa back to this time. After the Korean Art Informel movement, many of these artists did not participate in later avant-garde movements initiated by groups like the Young Artists Coalition (1967) and A.G. and S.T. Instead, Dansaekhwa artists distanced themselves from subsequent movements and stood apart, creating a unique artistic identity that has since garnered international attention and appreciation. Younger generations of artists in Korea, such as those in the Young Artists Coalition, A.G., and S.T., deviated from traditional painting practices to focus on installation and performance art. This departure was a response to the rejection of two-dimensional surfaces prevalent in Korean avant-garde movements during the 1960s and 1970s. Dansaekhwa artists, unlike their Informel counterparts, didn't subscribe to a "ism" or movement, instead exploring formal concerns that blurred boundaries between abstraction, figuration, painting, sculpture, tradition, modernity, and global/local perspectives. They focused on material experimentation, rejecting aesthetic divisions. Some artists who traveled abroad argued against distinguishing between Eastern and Western paintings, citing superficial differences. Early Dansaekhwa artists experimented with various materials due to resource scarcity in postwar Korea and rising oil prices. Despite limited access to information on international art during the 1960s and 1970s, Korean artists began contemplating their connection to a global art world and how they could shape it. The early 1970s saw a series of exhibitions that marked a shift away from experimental sculpture and installation towards painting characterized by an "absence of image." Oh Kwang-su identified these exhibitions as part of the Dansaekhwa trend, which peaked with the "Ecole de Seoul" exhibitions at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art starting in 1975. The Tokyo Gallery exhibition in 1975 was a significant milestone for Dansaekhwa, but some art historians argue that it was preceded by the 1972 "White" show at Myeongdong Gallery. Park Seo-Bo and Kwon Young-woo's solo exhibitions from 1973 to 1974 are also seen as crucial in shaping the movement. The Myeongdong Gallery played a key role in promoting Dansaekhwa, thanks to Lee Ufan's efforts as an intermediary between Korea and Japan. Park Seo-Bo is credited with mediating between institutions and artists, allocating resources from one to the other. His position at the International Division of the Korea Fine Art Association enabled him to organize large-scale exhibitions that kickstarted the careers of emerging experimental artists. Dansaekhwa artists' increasing popularity led by their exhibitions abroad prompted Nakahara to state that anti-chromatic art had become a movement in Korea. Many Dansaekhwa artists regularly showed their work outside of Korea and spent time abroad, including Lee Ufan in Japan and Kim Tschang-yeul in Paris. Their international success contributed to the growing global popularity of Dansaekhwa. By the 1980s, Dansaekhwa became synonymous with Korean modern art, leading some artists to take on leadership roles in art associations and universities, while others avoided government censorship. The movement's uniqueness as a distinctly Korean style led to its cooptation by the state as a soft power tool, prompting criticism from Korean writers and artists. The state's promotion of Dansaekhwa in the 1970s and 1980s sparked debates about how to define Korean modern art in relation to the global art world. This placed Dansaekhwa in discursive opposition to the Minjung art movement, prompting younger artists to create their own collectives and movements. Curator Alexandra Munroe argues that Dansaekhwa's simultaneous appearance with other conceptualist and Postminimalist movements globally helped Korean contemporary art transcend its peripheral status in the Euro-American art world. Dansaekhwa is seen as a distinct form of modernism that draws inspiration from Korean culture but differs from Western and Japanese art movements. The movement's unique aesthetic qualities, such as its focus on spirituality, materiality, and performativity, have contributed to its growing popularity in the global art world. The recent surge of interest in Dansaekhwa has led to exhibitions featuring works by second-generation artists and efforts to document its history. Critics like Seo Seongrok identify key figures from the 1994 "Monochromes after the Monochromes" exhibition, such as Choi Insun, Park Youngha, Kim Tschoonsu, and others, who revitalized and expanded on their predecessors' work. Late Dansaekhwa artists include Koh Sankeum, Noh Sankyoon, Moon Beom, Cheon Kwangyep, Nam Tchunmo, Jang Seungtaik, Lee Kang-So, Kim Tae-Ho, Kim Taeksang, Park Kiwon, Ahn Jungsook, Lee Bae, and Lee Inheyon. Scholars and curators have been working to construct a history for Dansaekhwa since the early 2000s. Art historian Chung Moojeong highlights "The Age of Philosophy and Aesthetics" exhibition at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in 2002 as an important milestone, along with Oh Kwang-su's essay on Korean monochrome and its identity. Some have sought to redefine the movement's conceptual frameworks, calling for a reevaluation of outdated concepts like "the indifference of nature" and the importance of white color in Korean culture. Critic Kim Chan-dong advocates for diversifying viewpoints and constructing new perspectives to stimulate further discourse on Dansaekhwa. Dansaekhwa: A Method of Breaking Free from Aesthetic Parameters In 2013, the University of Minnesota Press published Joan Kee's book "Contemporary Korean Art: Tansaekhwa and the Urgency of Method", marking the first English-language academic book on Dansaekhwa. Kee employs formalist readings to show how Dansaekhwa artists engaged with the outside world, challenging traditional aesthetic parameters. Tansaekhwa was not about technique, meaning, or material manipulation but rather about breaking down the painting process to bring together different materials and properties. This approach potentially opened up a new narrative of painting that departed from reified systems of order and belief. The Korea Arts Management Service published a compilation in 2017, which included primary documents spanning 1960s to 2010s. However, there was difficulty in determining which artists should be included and the terminology used. Notable women artists like Chin Ohesun, Lee Hyangmi, and Shim Okjoo were exhibited with Dansaekhwa artists in the 1970s, while others like Lee Chungji, Yoon Miran, and Lee Myungmi appeared in the 1980s. Some artists have pushed against being associated with Dansaekhwa, stating that categorization misunderstands their work and its characteristics. Despite this, Dansaekhwa is characterized by a distinct attention to three-dimensionality and physicality in the artistic process. Dansaekhwa artists have been pushing boundaries by emphasizing process over technique and intention. Lee Ufan's gestures captured on canvas reflect his movement in relation to performance, while others like Kwon Young-woo and Park Seo-Bo stress the importance of creating without a predetermined concept or method. This emphasis on physicality is manifest in their use of material, rejecting flat surfaces for experiments that give new forms to objecthood. Artists have found ways to manipulate material, adding dimensionality through techniques such as repeated layers of paint on mulberry, exposing canvas surfaces by twisting them, and even reshaping the structural integrity of paper. Some, like Ha Chong Hyun, push paint through canvases, while others use hands or tools to rip through paper. While some works may appear simple or effortless, close looking reveals the deliberateness behind each mark. Lee Ufan's brushstrokes, for example, contain pauses and strokes that reflect a carefully constructed composition. Similarly, Yun Hyong-keun's work seems rustic and simple but is actually the result of complex mental and physical processes. Dansaekhwa artists emphasize repetition and uniformity of color as a means to rich expression and change. Suh Seung-Won and Choi Myoung Young describe their work as "monotony," arguing that this monotony opens up possibilities for change. Others, like Kwon Young-woo and Chung Chang-sup, use traditional materials like hanji and ink on canvas, rejecting strict dichotomies between tradition and modernity. In conclusion, Dansaekhwa artists have been exploring new ways to create, emphasizing process over technique and intention, and pushing the boundaries of material manipulation. Their works often appear simple but reveal a complexity that requires close looking, reflecting their commitment to experimentation and innovation. Dansaekhwa artwork challenged traditional categorization, falling between modern oil painting and traditional ink painting techniques. The movement's focus on canvas as a part of the image itself, resisting sharp edges, and working through surfaces created confusion among early critics. Some simplified Dansaekhwa to its use of white color, drawing comparisons to Korean ceramics and resonances with Zen Buddhism. Critics like Lee Yil drew connections between contemporary abstract Korean artists and monochrome painters abroad but distinguished them based on their views of color as a psychological or materialized space. The concept of the void had a longer history in Asian aesthetics, emphasized by critics like Lee Gu-yeol. Tokyo-based American art critic Joseph Love praised Dansaekhwa for its focus on process over outcome and maintained identity while defying convention, highlighting the importance of texture in these pieces. Others, however, critiqued Dansaekhwa's semiotic failures and growing popularity as a shallow trend for contemporary artists to conform to. Despite challenges, critics reaffirmed Dansaekhwa's superiority and longevity compared to movements like Minjung art. Even into the 1990s, writing on Dansaekhwa faced difficulties in determining its contours due to visual and stylistic differences between artists like Lee Ufan and those associated with Dansaekhwa. Dansaekhwa's position in relation to international art movements was examined by Morgan, who argued that while the artists may have been aware of minimalism in New York, their approach differed fundamentally.[45] Others have sought to clarify the connection between politics and Dansaekhwa. Kwon Young-jin criticized Dansaekhwa for their silence and passivity during the Park regime, as well as their role in stifling experimental art that could address the political realities of the time.[46] The years 2014-2019 saw a surge in critical and commercial interest in Dansaekhwa due to various survey shows. Some notable exhibitions include: "Overcoming the Modern - Dansaekhwa: The Korean Monochrome Movement," Alexander Gray and Associates, New York (February 19 - March 29, 2014) "The Art of Dansaekhwa," Kukje Gallery, Seoul (August 28 - October 19, 2014) "From All Sides: Tansaekhwa on Abstraction," Blum & Poe, Los Angeles (September 13 - November 8, 2014) "Korean Abstract Painting," Gallery Hyundai, Seoul (March 25 - April 22, 2015) "Dansaekhwa," a collateral exhibition of the 56th Venice Biennale, Palazzo Contarini Polignac, Venice, Italy (May 8 - August 15, 2015) Solo exhibitions by individual artists also drew attention during this period. Some notable examples include: Yun Hyong-keun, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul (August 4 - February 6, 2018) Yun Hyong-keun, PKM Gallery, Seoul (April 15 - May 17, 2015) Chung Sang-Hwa, Gallery Hyundai, Seoul (July 1 - 30, 2014) Park Seo-Bo, Galerie Perrotin in Paris (November 6 - December 20, 2014) The renewed interest in Dansaekhwa was sparked by a series of exhibitions that took place from 2014 to 2019. List of exhibitions and publications related to Dansaekhwa movement: - White Cube, London, January 2016 - Blum & Poe, New York, May 2016 - Cho Yong-ik at Sungkok Art Museum, Seoul (February 26 - April 24, 2016) Major publications include: Dansaekhwa: Korean Monochrome Painting by Morley, Simon (Third Text, 2013) Contemporary Korean Art: Tansaekha and the Urgency of Method by Kee, Joan (University of Minnesota Press, 2013) Overcoming the Modern: Dansaekhwa, The Korean Monochrome Movement. Texts by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath (Alexander Gray Associates, 2014) The Art of Dansaekhwa. Seoul: Kukje Gallery, 2014 From All Sides: Tansaekhwa on Abstraction. Los Angeles: Blum & Poe, 2015 Dansaekhwa. Texts by Youngwoo Lee (Kukje Gallery, 2015) It's Time To Stop Ignoring South Korean Abstract Art. The Nation, 2015 Dansaekhwa 1960s-2010s: Primary Documents on Korean Abstract Painting. Seoul: Korea Arts Management Service, 2017 The Translucence of the Transhistorical: the Case of Korean Dansaekhwa by Morley, Simon (World Art, 2017) Dansaekhwa: Aesthetics of Korean Abstract Painting in Korean Art from 1953: Collision, Innovation, Interaction (London: Phaidon, 2020), Skin & Surface. Frieze, February 15, 2020 Joan Kee's book "Contemporary Korean Art: Tansaekhwa and the Urgency of Method" explores the significance of Tansaekhwa movement in Korean art since the 1960s. Tansaekhwa is a style characterized by simplicity, bold geometric forms and use of monochromatic colors. According to Kee, Tansaekhwa represents a shift away from traditional Korean motifs towards abstraction. The movement gained popularity in the 1970s, with key figures such as Ha Chonghyun, Park SeoBo, and Lee Ufan contributing to its development. Kee's book includes essays by various artists, including Hikosaka Naoyoshi, Shim Moon-seup, Suga Kishio, and Takamatsu Jirō, who discuss the significance of color in contemporary painting. The book also features primary documents from the 1960s to the 2010s, providing a comprehensive overview of the Tansaekhwa movement. Other artists, such as Oh Kwang-su and Lee Ufan, are represented through interviews and excerpts from their works. These contributions provide insight into the development of Korean contemporary art and its ongoing relevance today. The publication includes essays on the intensification and diffusion of Dansaekhwa since the 1960s and 2010s. Dansaekhwa, a form of Korean abstract painting, has its roots in the 1960s. The movement is characterized by monochromatic paintings that explore the concept of white. Nakahara Yusuke's essay "Five Korean Artists: Five Kinds of White" (1975) played a significant role in shaping the discourse surrounding Dansaekhwa and the 'white aesthetic' of the 1970s. Lee Ufan, a prominent artist associated with the movement, emphasized the importance of the tactile quality of paintings. Alexandra Munroe's essay "The Ethics of Abstraction" (2014) discussed how Dansaekhwa gained popularity in the West as an example of abstract art. Nakahara Yusuke also contributed to the primary documents on Korean abstract painting with his work "Facets of Modern Korean Art" (1977). Lee Phil's "Introduction: The Maturing Phase of Dansaekhwa" (2017) highlighted the growth and maturity of the movement over the years. Sam Bardaouil and Tim Fellrath wrote about the significance of Dansaekhwa in the context of abstract art, while Seo Seongrok explored the concept of monochromes within the movement. Yoon Jin Sup's "Landscape of the Mind" (2017) delved into the psychological aspects of Dansaekhwa, and Chung Moojeong introduced research related to Korean Dansaekhwa. Kim Bok-young discussed the social history behind Korean monochrome painting in the 1970s-1980s. These essays collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolution and significance of Dansaekhwa within the realm of modern and contemporary art. Kim Chan-dong, "New Perspectives and Problems on the Discourse of Dansaekhwa," originally published in Misulsegye Vol. 374, examines Dansaekhwa 1960s 2010s: Primary Documents on Korean Abstract Painting. (Seoul: Korea Arts Management Service, 2017), 266-273. Yun Nanjie, "The Multicolored Context of Monochrome Painting: A Gender Perspective," in Dansaekhwa 1960s 2010s: Primary Documents on Korean Abstract Painting, explores Dansaekhwa 1960s 2010s: Primary Documents on Korean Abstract Painting. ^ Lee Ufan and Oh Kwang-su are also quoted in the publication "Encountering the Absolute through Point and Line: A conversation between Lee Ufan and Oh Kwang-su," in Dansaekhwa 1960s 2010s: Primary Documents on Korean Abstract Painting, edited by Koo Jin-Kyung, Yoon Jin Sup, Lee Phil, and Chung Moojeong. Park Seo-Bo's "From My Notebook of Fragmentary Thoughts" is also included in the publication On All Sides: Tansaekhwa on Abstraction, exh cat., (Los Angeles: Blum & Poe, 2014), 140. Lee Dong-Seok writes about Korean Dansaekhwa: Ideas and Spirits, which was originally published in The Philosophy and Spirit of Korean Dansaekhwa, exh. cat. (Busan: Busan Museum of Art, 1998). In the realm of contemporary Korean art, a plethora of monochromatic masterpieces have emerged since the 1970s. These Dansaekhwa paintings, characterized by their simple yet elegant compositions, have been extensively documented in various publications. Dansaekhwa artists such as Lee Yil and Kwon Young-Woo have been at the forefront of this movement, pushing the boundaries of Korean modernism through their innovative use of monochrome hues. As highlighted in "Revisiting Monochrome Art of the 1970s," these pioneers sought to strip away complexities and revert to the essence of art. Critics like Bang Geun-taek have also delved into the significance of Dansaekhwa, analyzing its impact on Korean contemporary art as a whole. The movement's influence can be seen in various exhibitions and publications, including "Dansaekhwa 1960s-2010s: Primary Documents on Korean Abstract Painting." Recently, the Dansaekhwa movement has gained international recognition, with articles such as "Korea's Monochrome Painting Movement Is Having a New York Moment" shedding light on its significance. This renewed interest is evident in publications like "Dansaekhwa 1960s-2010s," which features extensive documentation of the movement. Furthermore, monochromatic paintings from this era continue to be celebrated in exhibitions and books, solidifying their place within the realm of Korean contemporary art. A notable example is the book "Dansaekhwa 1960s-2010s: Primary Documents on Korean Abstract Painting," which offers an in-depth exploration of these pioneering artists. In book format, "Dansaekhwa 1960s-2010s" presents a comprehensive collection of monochromatic masterpieces, with detailed descriptions and insightful analysis. This exclusive publication provides a unique perspective on the Dansaekhwa movement's significance and impact on Korean art history. Dansaekhwa is an artistic approach that originated from the experiences of the first generation of Korean modernism. This substantial catalogue features notable artists such as Chung Chang-Sup, Chung Sang-Hwa, Ha Chong-Hyun, KIM Whanki, Kwon Young-Woo, Lee Ufan and Park Seo-Bo.