

LÉVY GORVY

LÉVY GORVY TO PRESENT FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION OF KOREAN ARTIST CHUNG SANG-HWA IN LONDON

Chung Sang-Hwa: Seven Paintings

UPDATE: Extended through 17 August 2017

24 May – 21 July 2017

Lévy Gorvy
22 Old Bond Street, London W1S 4PY

Opening Reception: 23 May, 6 – 8 pm



Chung Sang-Hwa in his studio, Gyeonggido, 2016.
Photo by Choi Youngjun © Chung Sang-Hwa,
courtesy Gallery Hyundai, Seoul

Lévy Gorvy is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new paintings by renowned Korean artist **Chung Sang-Hwa** (b. 1932). Featuring seven recent white monochrome paintings by the artist, this represents the first solo exhibition of Chung's work in London. The gallery previously held the inaugural exhibition of Chung's paintings in New York in the summer of 2016.

The works included in *Seven Paintings* demonstrate Chung's career-long engagement with repetition, ritual, and process, highlighting the infinite complexity and nuance available in the white monochrome format. Eliminating decisions of scale (each canvas is 130 x 97 cm) and coloration, Chung instead foregrounds his meditative painting method. The result is a suite of subtly evocative works with intricate variations in surface and texture.

A leading figure of the Korean Tansaekhwa, or 'monochrome painting' group, Chung is recognized for the innovative painting method he developed in the early 1970s, which the critic Kwang Suh Oh describes as 'taking off/removing' and 're-painting.' In this highly meticulous process, the artist first coats the canvas with a mixture of glue, water, and kaolin clay, and then scores gridlines on its reverse. After the mixture has dried, he ritualistically and intuitively folds the canvas,

and then strips the hardened material from the surface in narrow bands. Afterwards, he fills the segments of bare canvas with acrylic paint. Chung repeats this process in succession to create multilayered, complex surfaces.

Chung's works have grown more intricate over the course of his career, as the artist continues to explore variations of the grid pattern. The paintings featured at Lévy Gorvy embody a temporal stratification, a multiplicity of processes that convey the experience of time through artistic gesture. Art historian Lóránd Hegyi writes that Chung's work initiates a 'metaphorical archeology' within the viewer—an internal excavation of the artist's process that leads to self-realization. In a manner unparalleled in modern East Asian art, his work calls into question the idea of painting as pure surface and introduces a poetic, phenomenological aspect at the center of the viewing experience.

The group of artists Chung is associated with, Tansaekhwa, emerged in Korea in the mid-1960s, and includes Chung, Park Seo-Bo, and Lee Ufan, among others. Dating from Korea's emergence as an autonomous global and cultural power in the wake of the nation's emancipation from Japanese rule in 1945 and the devastation of the Korean War

LG

LEVY GORVY 22 OLD BOND STREET LONDON W1S 4PY

WWW.LEVYGORVY.COM +44 (0)203 696 5910

LEVY GORVY LTD REGISTERED IN ENGLAND NO. 10527365 VAT REGISTRATION NO. 259 9368 40

LÉVY GORVY

from 1950 to 1953, Tansaekhwa is indicative of the new position of historical and international primacy that the country assumed in the postwar years. During this time of independence, Korean artists entered into cultural exchange with various prominent art movements, including Abstract Expressionism in the United States, *Art informel* in France, and Gutai in Japan. Following an initial period of influence from these movements, characterized by Korean *informel*, Tansaekhwa developed as a distinctly modern phenomenon, a blending of tradition and innovation exemplary of Korea's new presence on the world stage. Although it has ties to Minimalism, Tansaekhwa is distinct from the Western tradition of abstraction because of its engagement with such Eastern philosophies as Taoism, Neo-Confucianism, and Buddhism. Tansaekhwa was not a formally organized group, and did not have an artistic manifesto or clearly delineated objectives, instead functioning as a loose association of artists.



Chung Sang-Hwa, *Untitled 2015-9-10* (detail), 2015, acrylic and kaolin on canvas, 51 ¼ x 38 1/8 inches (130.3 x 97 cm). Photo: Stephen White, Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy

Chung developed his signature process while living in Kobe, Japan in the early 1970s, and simultaneously pursued a different style of painting, which is closely related to assemblage and features brightly-colored geometric shapes over untouched canvases. The latter evinces his engagement with the Japanese Gutai movement, bolstered by a close friendship with Jirō Yoshihara, the group's leader. Living in Paris, Kobe, and Seoul for extended periods of time throughout the last three decades of the twentieth century, Chung enacted a genuinely cosmopolitan practice.

In conjunction with the 2016 New York exhibition, Lévy Gorvy published a catalogue featuring a newly commissioned essay on Chung's work by art historian Tim Griffin, an original poem by Yuko Otomo written in

response to the temporal encounter with Chung's painting, and a comprehensive chronology situating Chung's life and work within the context of postwar art and culture.

About the Artist

Chung Sang-Hwa was born in Yeongdeok, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Korea in 1932. Graduating from the oil painting department of the Seoul National University in 1956, Chung first worked in the then-prevalent style of Korean *informel*. In 1967, he moved to Paris, at that time considered by the Korean artistic community as the center of the international art world. In 1969, he moved to Kobe, Japan, where his distinctive process of the repeated application and removal of paint from the canvas was conceived and refined. In 1977, he returned to Paris and finally settled in Seoul in 1992. There, he established his studio in Gyeonggi Province, where he continues to live and work today. Chung's work has been extensively exhibited in Korea and internationally since the late 1960s. Exhibition venues include the Poznań Biennale, Poland; the Metropolitan Museum of International Art, Osaka; and the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul. His works can be found in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Abu Dhabi; the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne, France; the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul; the Seoul Museum of Art; the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; the Shizuoka Prefectural Museum of Art,

LG

LEVY GORVY 22 OLD BOND STREET LONDON W1S 4PY

WWW.LEVYGORVY.COM +44 (0)203 696 5910

LEVY GORVY LTD REGISTERED IN ENGLAND NO. 10527365 VAT REGISTRATION NO. 259 9368 40

LÉVY GORVY

Yada Shizuoka City; and the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka. Notable exhibitions of Chung's work in recent years include the solo exhibition *Painting Archeology* at the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne in 2011; *From All Sides: Tansaekhwa on Abstraction* at Blum & Poe Gallery, Los Angeles in 2014; and *Dansaekhwa* at the Palazzo Contarini-Polignac, Venice in 2015.

###

For additional information please contact:

Sam Talbot

SUTTON

sam@suttonpr.com

Catharina van Beuningen

SUTTON

catie@suttonpr.com

