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ASIAN ART NEWS

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 5 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2015



LUI SHOU-KWAN LEGACY



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KOREA

Investigating Limits

Kukje Gallery will present a solo exhibition of Korean artist Kwon Young-Woo (1926–2013), a pioneer in the development of the monochromatic art movement *Dansaekhwa*. Kwon's paintings investigate the limitations of two-dimensional surfaces and explore the relationship between traditional materials and abstract expression, functioning as a threshold between time and dimensional space. On view from October 30 through December 6, 2015, the exhibition includes over 30 of Kwon's works on paper, from 1976 to 1996, with the majority from the 1980s.

One of the few artists associated with *Dansaekhwa* trained in the tradition of Chinese ink painting, Kwon's innovative practice bridged

Korea's nascent avant-garde and the Western traditions of abstract expressionism and Art Informel. He did this while experimenting with and refining traditional materials, especially *hanji* paper. Choosing to use paper both as a ground and as a sculptural medium, Kwon challenged its traditional role by employing his fingernails to scratch and tear the fibers; he then glued the paper onto panels, establishing a base for his compositions and transforming the flat surfaces into three-dimensional reliefs.

Having scarred the paper with these physical performances, the artist then introduced ink as a dynamic medium to mark and trace his actions. Seeking to create a sense of harmony between the medium and the surface, Kwon took advantage of ink's qualities, exploiting how it pools,

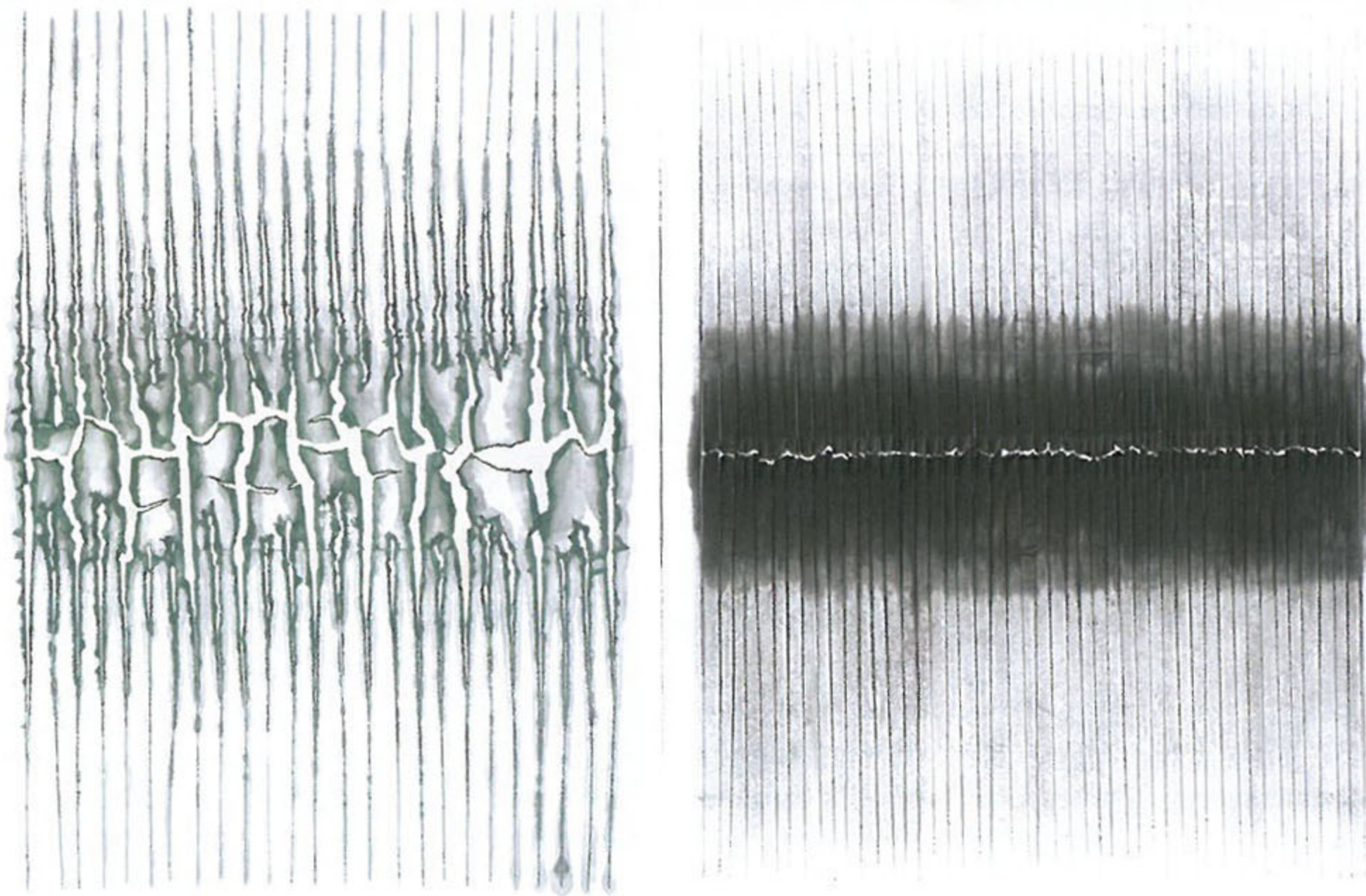
blots, and travels across the absorbent surfaces of paper and learning to control it in exquisite ways. In particular, Kwon developed an adept technique for channeling ink by applying it to carefully torn and folded edges of the paper. Over the decades, Kwon developed a practice that captured a profound level of emotion in simple materials that have a long history in Korean culture. Joining his material mastery with chance and the mercurial movement of liquid ink, the artist was able to develop both a unique practice and an instantly recognizable style that contains tremendous power and elegance.

Kwon Young-Woo was part of South Korea's first generation of modern artists, graduating from the first art school class at Seoul National University in 1957 and along-

side peers Park No-soo, Suh Se Ok, Chang Un-sang, and Park Sae-won. He held major exhibitions at the *Tokyo Biennale* in 1965 and the *12th São Paulo Biennial* in 1973. Most recently, Kwon's work was exhibited in Kukje Gallery's presentation of *Dansaekhwa*, an official collateral event of the *56th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia*, curated by Yongwoo Lee, founding director of the *Gwangju Biennale*.

A longtime resident of France, Kwon's first Paris solo exhibition was in 1976 at Jacques Massol Gallery. Other exhibitions included *International Contemporary Art* held in concert with the 1988 Seoul Olympics, and his major retrospective at Ho-Am Art Museum, Seoul, in 1990. Kwon received the Artist Award twice from the Korean Minister of Culture for his works *Fantasy of the Seashore* (1958) and *Road to an Island* (1959). Additionally, he was honored as the 1998 Korean Artist of the Year and awarded the Silver Crown Medal of the Order of Cultural Merit (2001).

Kukje Gallery is located at 54 Samcheong-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul. Tel: (82-2) 735 8449. Website: www.kukje-gallery.com.



Above left: Kwon Young-Woo, *Untitled*, 1984, gouache, Chinese ink on Korean paper, 165 x 116 cm. **Above right:** Kwon Young-Woo, *Untitled*, 1984, gouache, Chinese ink on Korean paper, 162 x 130 cm. Photographs by Sang-tae Kim. Courtesy of the Artist's estate and Kukje Gallery. Images provided by Kukje Gallery.