



ABOVE: **Park Seo-Bo**, Photo © An Ji-Sup, Courtesy the Artist

RIGHT: **Minjung Kim**, Photo © Gregoire Gardette, Courtesy Gallery Catherine ISSERT



PARK SEO-BO

MINJUNG KIM

LANGEN FOUNDATION

SEPTEMBER 29, 2019 – MARCH 29, 2020

Raketenstation Hombroich 1 | 41472 Neuss

Curated by Christiane Maria Schneider

The Langen Foundation is pleased to present the first solo exhibitions in Germany by **Park Seo-Bo** (b. 1931) and **Minjung Kim** (b. 1962). Regarded as highly influential figures in Korean contemporary art, both artists initiate a dialogue between the traditions of Asian culture and Western art.

The exhibition takes place throughout the Tadao Ando–designed museum and includes 70 works that give a broad overview of both artists' practice. In the tradition of the Langen family's extraordinary collection of Asian art, a bridge is offered, not only between East and West but also connecting tradition and modernity in a salient way.

Minjung Kim's abstract, collaged works are created using layers of Hanji – a traditional Korean paper made from the inner bark of mulberry trees. Her refined minimalist language is in keeping with *Dansaekhwa*, also known as the Korean monochrome movement, which was spearheaded by Park Seo-Bo in the 1970s. While making visual parallels with Western modernist abstraction, especially Minimalism, *Dansaekhwa* remained firmly rooted in Korean cultural traditions.

Park Seo-Bo belongs to a generation profoundly affected by the Korean War (1950–53) which resulted in the country's division into North and South. He began to experiment with Western abstraction, particularly with *Art Informel*, which he encountered during a stay in Paris in 1961. Shortly after, he started working with a more introspective method with origins in Taoist and Buddhist philosophy as well as in the Korean tradition of calligraphy.

Park Seo-Bo is best known for his *Écriture* series conceived in the late 1960s. *Écriture*, French for the act of writing, sees Park Seo-Bo bring together two central methods of working and highlights his spiritual approach to ideas of time, space and material. The delicate repetition of pencil strokes reflects the traditional significance of Asian calligraphy whilst establishing a proximity to Western *Abstract Expressionism*.

In 1983, Park Seo-Bo introduced Hanji into his works. Dampening it and applying it to the canvas in layers, he used various tools to create a sculptural surface. This evolution, together with the introduction of colour, enabled him to extend even further his practice while continuing his quest for emptiness through reduction.

Minjung Kim studied at Hongik University Seoul at the same time that Park Seo-Bo was Dean. In 1991, she continued her studies at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan. She has since lived in Italy and France.

Whilst in Europe, Minjung Kim was inspired by modern European artists such as Constantin Brancusi, Brice Marden and Carl André, and her use of collage was equally influenced by 20th-century Western Art. Nonetheless, Minjung Kim continued to work with Hanji, burning the paper with candle flames or incense sticks before assembling it into collages. “By using fire, I could feel the energy of nature but also control it,” says the artist. The destructive aspect of fire thus transforms it into a creative act. Hanji, as a product of mulberry bark, is in turn part of the natural cycle of life and significant for the artist both spiritually and physically.

Minjung Kim has described her work as a “visualization of Zen and Tao”; a unique, meditative process whereby she remains silent and of even breath when executing each mark. This technique lends itself to *Dansaekhwa* and results in highly rhythmical, abstract surfaces.

The exhibition was supported by **White Cube**, London.

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