

Lee Jin Woo



Untitled 2018, Hanji paper and wood charcoal 81 x 118 cm

Michel Soskine Inc. has the great pleasure to present, for the first time in Spain, the work of Korean artist Lee Jin Woo (Seoul 1959). He lives and works in Paris.

The reaction to Korea's colonialism of the '70s led to a generation of artists that broke with the immediate past: The *Dansaekhwa* group (in Korean 'monochrome painting') initiated an exploration of the physical limitations of materials and their ability to interact with the viewer, in addition a connection even into the spiritual roots, such as Taoism, Confucianism or Buddhism. Lee Jin Woo belongs to the following generation and shares formal parallels with this movement (matter, Hanji paper) but outside of the previous political context.

The work of Lee Jin Woo stems from an environment of physical and mental exhaustion. The carbon in the paintings is compacted in transparent layers of Hanji paper and dragged with force by a metallic brush through a strenuous and repetitive movement. On the surface it creates rough and steep reliefs referring to a possible interior landscape. It is this process of subtraction of charcoal and its spirit of alchemy that drives Lee Jin Woo's work into silence. A silence that transforms the "object" into abstraction. The intention of the Korean artist is to suppress all cognitive will to approach the inner 'I'.

As in the black paintings of Ad Reinhard, or in the Rothko Chapel in Houston, the eye must interact to depth of the work. A careful, prolonged and deep look is necessary to approach the spiritual.

Here the artist acts a bit like a "shaman" who, through intense physical labor, he negates a certain formal intention in order to channel his energy into the process of making art. His work is intuitive and open, always untitled, for Lee Jin Woo the artistic discipline is not a purpose in itself, but a channel of meditation where he develops his work in long periods of development, becoming a philosophy of life.

In this process of personal alchemy, Lee Jin Woo, conscious of the essence of the charcoal, used it to generate visual and mental landscapes that echo the origin and end of man's existence. The ambivalence between a contemplative dimension and a descriptive one, come together in his compositions.

Son of an architect, Lee Jin Woo has a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Sejong (Korea) in 1983 and has also the University of Paris VIII in 1986. He currently has his studio in Paris, travelled to Beijing and Seoul in recent years. His work is present in important collections around the world, with exhibitions in France, United Kingdom, South Korea, China and Japan.

Opening:

LEE JIN WOO

Wednesday, March 20 19 a 21,30h

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