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Ha Chong Hyun

Ha Chonghyun is one of the leading figures of Tansaekhwa, otherwise known as the Korean Monochrome Movement.

The Tansaekhwa artists variously pushed paint, soaked canvas, dragged pencils, ripped paper, and otherwise manipulated the materials of painting in ways that prompted critics to describe their actions as "methods" rather than artworks. Tansaekhwa became one of the most important and successful artistic movements of 20th-century Korea. Promoted in Seoul, Tokyo, and Paris, Tansaekhwa grew to be the international face of contemporary Korean art and a cornerstone of contemporary Asian art.

Since the beginning of the 1970s, Ha has consistently explored the materiality of paint and the nature of canvas as more than a mere support. The artist uses a palette knife to push thick oil paint from behind the coarsely woven canvas so that it seeps through to the surface. He then brushes or smears the protruding paint, creating compositions that range from decisive sweeps to hazy, mist-like fields. As the artist described it, "The act of pushing, or the gesture of pressing has no relation at all to the act of drawing, which takes place on the canvas surface." Ha seeks to "minimize fabrication" and to "eliminate the unnecessary." In some cases, after pushing the paint through, Ha propped the canvas upright and physically struck the face of the canvas to cause paint to dribble down the surface, pulled by gravity and its own weight.

Ha Chonghyun was born in Sancheong, Korea, in 1935, and currently lives and works in Seoul. He graduated from the Department of Painting, Hongik University, Seoul, in 1959. Since then, he has had numerous solo exhibitions in Korea, including at the Gyeongnam Art Museum, Changwon and the Chosunilbo Museum of Art, Seoul. In 2012, the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, held a major retrospective. His work has also been included in landmark surveys, such as *Dansaekhwa: Korean Monochrome Painting*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, 2012; *The Spectrum of Contemporary Korean Art*, Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, 2011; *Korean Abstract Art 1958–2008*, Seoul Museum of Art, 2008; the 45th Biennale di Venezia, Italy, 1993; *Hiroshima*, Hiroshima City Museum of Modern Art, Hiroshima, Japan, 1989; *Contemporary Asian Arts*, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan, 1980; the 13th Biennale de São Paulo, 1977; the 1st Seoul Biennale, 1974; and the 2nd and 7th Biennales de Paris, 1965 and 1971.