

The ideal exhibition for the winter season

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Page 1 of 1



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The ongoing solo show of Kwon Young-woo (1926-2013), one of the artists who led the movement of *dan-saekjwa*, or Korean monochrome painting, at Kukje Gallery in central Seoul seems to be the perfect fit for the winter season.

His iconic works, which are panels covered with multiple layers of white *hanji*, or Korean traditional paper, elaborately torn or pierced for sculptural effect, are now on view on the second floor of the gallery's K2 Space. These works, created during the artist's Paris period (1978-1989), might

remind viewers of snow-covered fields, with footprints and other traces of movements remaining on them.

Colored hanji works made upon his return to Korea in 1989, which the gallery is unveiling to the public for the first time, are exhibited on the first floor. The works show the traces of roller brushes in black, dark browns, and yellows, which were created with gouache and *moek*, or traditional East Asian ink, combined in different ratios. They might remind viewers of the colors of bare trees in winter landscapes.

"The exhibition will provide an overview of development of the artist's formative language that uses tradition-

al East Asian materials in a modern way," Kwon Joo-rhee, a public relations official of Kukje Gallery, said.

The artist, who majored in East Asian painting at Seoul National University, began to distance himself from the main techniques of such art — brushstrokes in ink — in the early 1960s and started to utilize hanji as a sculptural medium. "Using his fingertips and handmade tools [...] he adopted repetitive actions of cutting, tearing, piercing, and pasting, embracing the variability, materiality, and tactility of paper, which lies at the core of his early oeuvre," the gallery said in a statement.

"Kwon's works were rooted in

Asian tradition, but in line with Western forms — namely post-war abstraction, recalling the 'papier collé (paper collage)' by Georges Braque and 'concetto spaziale (spatial concept)' of Lucio Fontana," the gallery added.

The artist was always experimenting. On the first floor of K2 space are not only the colored works but also works he created in the 2000s, which are geometric shapes cut out of thin hanji and glued onto wooden panels. "He explored the density of white by applying various layers of white," Kwon of Kukje Gallery explained.

The exhibition runs through Jan. 30, 2022. Admission is free.

moon.soyoung@joongang.co.kr

Works created by artist Kwon Young-woo in the 2000s are now on view on the first floor of Kukje Gallery's K2 Space in central Seoul.