

Versailles stages Lee U-fan's artworks

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The Versailles has been inviting contemporary artists to display their works throughout the renowned palace and its garden since 2008 and high-profile figures such as Jeff Koons and Takashi Murakami exhibited their works and reinterpreted the history from a modern viewpoint.

This year, Korean artist Lee U-fan

became the seventh — and first Korean — artist to adorn the palace from June 17 to Nov. 2.

"Behind their very restricted formal vocabulary, true diversity will emerge; some configurations will be completely new to his work," Alfred Pacquement, curator of the Versailles exhibit, said in a statement.

The 78-year-old artist prepared 10 newly-commissioned sculptures and installations for the palace famed for

its luxury and glamour — one inside the building and nine in the garden.

Lee said he did not want to create an object, but to open up the space to speak out its own story for this exhibi-

tion at the 67,000 square meter wide palace. "I thought over and over about what I could do in this perfectly artificial space. I had to overcome the perfection," he said.

Most of his works — titled "Relatum" to emphasize its relation to the outside world — are composed of rocks and steel sheets. The rock represents the nature, while the metal sym-

bolizes the industrialized society. "I think these two are what the civilization is all about," the artist said.

"Relatum — the Arch of Versailles" is installed facing the famous artificial canal of the Versailles designed by French architect Andre Le Notre (1613-1700). A rough natural rock sits next to the big arch-shaped steel sheet and the reflection of Lee's sculpture refreshes the view of the garden and sky.

He placed a slew of steel sheets on a oblong lawn ("Relatum — Wavelength Space") as if embodying a breeze blowing to the artificial canal; and dug up a square pit to put in a rock and metal sheet ("Relatum — The Tomb, Homage to Andre Le Notre") as an homage to the genius architect who designed the immaculate garden.

"I don't want the visitors to obsess over my name or the title of my works. I just want them to feel something strange is here, amid the complex world of mass consumption and fast pace," Lee said.

Born in Haman, South Gyeongsang Province, in 1936, Lee studied painting at the College of Fine Arts at Seoul National University for two months before moving to Japan. He set the basics of the Mono-ha, or School of Things, in Japan in the 1970s using simple objects such as rocks and metal plates based on conceptual art.

He is also known for his "dansackhwa," or monochrome paintings, and one of the most expensive Korean artists. His 1979 painting "From Point" was sold at 1.67 billion won (about \$1.6 million) at Christie's Hong Kong last month.

For more information about the exhibit, visit www.chateauversailles-spectacles.fr.



Minimalist painter and sculptor Lee U-fan is this summer's guest artist at Versailles Palace. In the background is the artist's work "Arch de Versailles."

Yonhap

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