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Arts

'Dansaekhwa' artist Ha Chong-hyun holds exhibition in New York

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Ha Chong-hyun / Courtesy of Tina Kim Gallery

"Dansaekhwa" artist Ha Chong-hyun, 86, is exhibiting his latest works showcasing his "relationship with color" at Tina Kim Gallery in New York through June 30.

Ha is one of the leading members of the "Dansaekhwa" or monochrome painting movement in Korea, which began in the 1970s.

Born in 1935, Ha studied painting at Hongik University, graduating in 1959. Later, he served as the dean of the Fine Arts College at his alma mater from 1990 to 1994. From 2001 to 2006, Ha was the director of the Seoul Museum of Art.

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Ha is best known for his "Conjunction" series established in the 1970s, which changed the definition of painting. He uses a painting method called "baeapbeop," a unique way of pushing oil paint from the back of the hemp canvas through the coarse weave, instead of painting on the canvas.

Ha's works are well-received internationally and this is his third show at the New York-based gallery.

This exhibit showcases Ha's polychromatic works from the last decade when the artist took a step away from his signature monochromatic, earth-toned "Conjunction" series.

Ha's use of a more diverse range of colors originates from his earlier practice back in the 1960s when he led the Korean Avant-Garde Association, also known as A.G.

"An artist should constantly grapple with color. And I thought I would be able to finally complete the puzzle of my art world when I fill in the missing color," the artist once said.

In his latest "Conjunction" series on view in New York, Ha applies brush strokes on the painting pushed from the back, emphasizing the gradation of colors mixed with white.

"As evident in each new Conjunction series, the works have evolved richer and more diverse in their shades and forms. Still, each work reflects consistent formal qualities through Ha's vigorous self-reference and profound contemplation on new challenges intertwined," the gallery said in a statement.

Also on display are selected works from Ha's "Post-Conjunction" series that began in 2011, which also shows how the 86-year-old artist continues to renew himself.

Two of Ha's works were sold in the range of \$200,000 to \$300,000 at Frieze New York, an art fair that opened again about 14 months after the world went into COVID-19 lockdown.

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