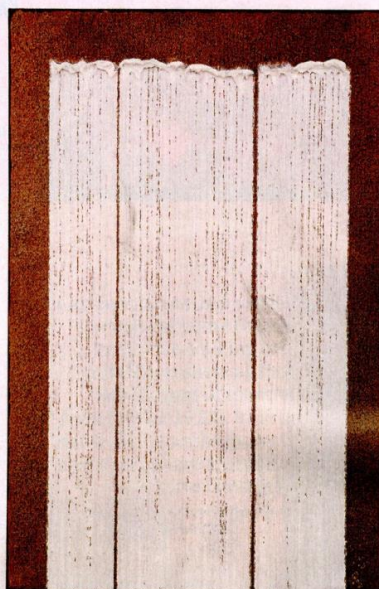
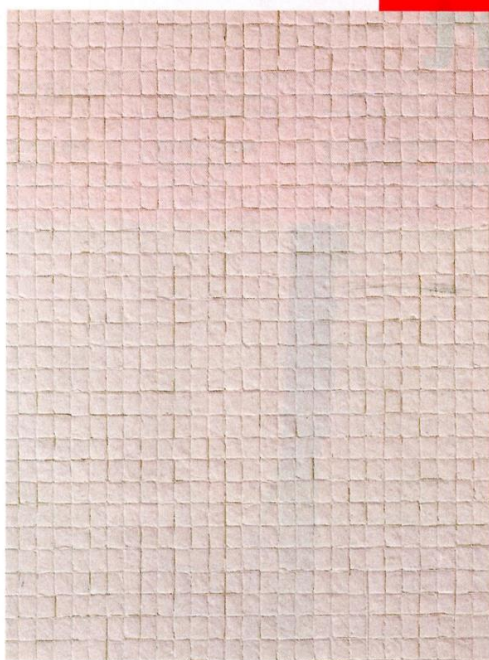


Time Out London: 'Chung Sang-Hwa and Chong-Hyun', by Eddy Frankel, June 6, 2017



Art

SHOWS OF THE WEEK



Chung Sang-Hwa and Ha Chong-Hyun ★★★★★/★★★★★

YOU NEED TO RELAX. Hell, I need to relax. We all do. London, Brexit, Trump – everything's just so teeth-grindingly tense. Chung Sang-Hwa and Ha Chong-Hyun don't need to relax, though. The Korean artists (both of whom are in their eighties and were founders of the Tansaekwa monochrome painting movement) are so laid back they're practically dead.

Since the 1960s, they've been making paintings of absolutely naff-all. Especially Chung Sang-Hwa. The seven works in his Lévy Gorvy show are just white rectangles. There are grids along all of them where the paint has been stripped away or the canvas has been folded, but other than that: nothing. And they're lovely. Really totally lovely.

For the artist, they're all about the process, the slow meticulous act of applying glue, paint and clay, then stripping it all back. Meditative acts of quiet resistance. They become the same thing for the viewer. They're like gridded maths paper, or

WHAT IS IT...
Two shows of ultra-minimalist monochrome Korean painting.

WHY GO...
Life a frenetic mess? Art might just be the answer.

→ Chung Sang-Hwa at Lévy Gorvy, @ Oxford Circus. Until Jul 21. Free. Ha Chong-Hyun at Almine Rech, @ Bond St. Until Jul 29. Free.

mosaicked tiles. Looking at them is like staring at the wall in your bathroom for a really long time. Except here it's not a sign of impending mental breakdown, it's a sign that you're really into Korean minimalist painting.

Ha Chong-hyun's works are comparatively chaotic. Endless little strips of single colour lines dribble down each bare canvas in his Almine Rech show. He's all about texture. These are simple, quiet, monochromatic works, but it's like he's amazed at every single brush-wide line of paint he blobs on. He seems lost in the details, staggered by the shiny gloopiness of the paint, the indentations of his brush, the way it slides down the canvas. They're nice paintings, but they somehow feel a bit too finicky.

Both of these artists are radicals, experimenters. It may look like a lot of fuss about nothing, but just let the work wash over you: let it calm you the hell down. You need it. We all do. ■
Eddy Frankel

CHUNG SANG-HWA PHOTO BY STEPHEN WHITE. COURTESY LÉVY GORVY. HA CHONG-HYUN. CONUNQUON 15.5.16. © 2015. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND ALMINE RECH.

DISCOVER!