ALMINE RECH

Ha Chong-Hyun
Light Into Color

Jun 22 — Sep 1, 2025 | Château La Coste, Le Puy-Sainte-Réparade, France

We are delighted to announce a major solo exhibition by Ha Chong-Hyun, one of Korea's most celebrated artists and a leading figure of Dansaekhwa, the monochrome painting movement that emerged in post-war Korea in the early 1970s. Ha is best known for his "Conjunction" paintings, through which he honed his signature technique of pushing paint from the back of burlap fabric—used specifically as a material reminiscent of the "ruins of war"—through to the front of the artwork, in direct opposition to Western painting traditions. Ha and his Dansaekhwa peers sought to push the limits of painting, turning to physically laborious studio processes as acts of quiet resistance during a period of political censorship and economic upheaval in Korea. His lifelong dedication to experimenting with materials and technique has made him a pivotal figure in advancing Korean contemporary art on the international stage.

With the "Conjunction" series now over fifty years in the making, Ha continues to experiment with technique, developing processes such as holding a flame near his canvases and allowing the smoke to saturate the wet paint to create subtle effects of light and shadow. He has also introduced vivid colors such as red, blue, and vermillion into his palette. Provence's famed landscape has inspired painters to experiment with color and light throughout the history of art. This year, as the region celebrates the enduring legacy of Cézanne, we invite viewers to examine Ha's meditative work within this tradition and in interplay with the expansive views and natural light of the Renzo Piano Pavilion gallery.

"The light and air of southern France are more than mere natural elements—they are a quiet force that has long awakened the senses of artists, shaping their vision and craft. Walking through this landscape, I have seen how light carves into color, how forms dissolve and reemerge with the wind. As a professor, I returned here with my students each year, not just to observe, but to experience how art and place intertwine, how time leaves its quiet imprints.

My practice of 'conjunction' is not simply about assembling materials but about tracing the echoes of time, allowing surfaces to breathe with history. At Château La Coste, I hope my works will not only exist within the space but become part of its rhythm, engaging with its air, light, and memory. What we see is fleeting, but meaning unfolds in layers, revealing itself over time. This exhibition is a crossing point—where my lifelong inquiry meets the quiet persistence of this land." — Ha Chong-Hyun

Ha participated in the Paris Biennale in 1965 and 1971 and the São Paulo Biennale in 1967 and 1977, and represented Korea at the Venice Biennale in 1993. His work has since been exhibited and collected by leading institutions around the world, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Art Institute of Chicago; M+ in Hong Kong; the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul; and the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA) in Korea, among many others