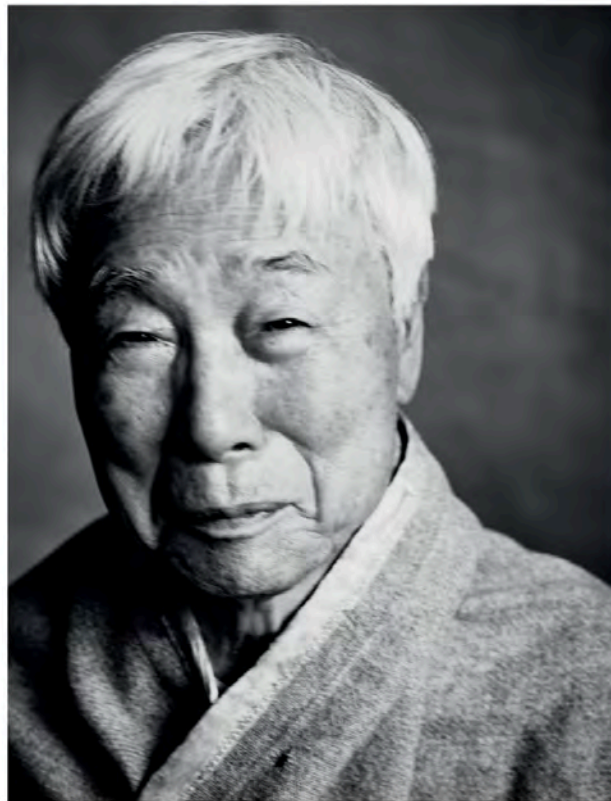




## Interview with Lee Ufan, the living legend of contemporary art

At almost 90, Lee Ufan is one of the most respected figures in the art world today. A painter, sculptor, theorist, and philosopher, he has been developing his very personal minimalist vocabulary since the 1960s. Simple components, chosen for their materiality (stones, sheet steel, iron bars, mirrors, paint pigment, etc.), are set in relation not only to each other but also to the space around them and to the viewer. The same goes for his paintings, whose emblematic touch consists of a flared square whose width is that of the brush he wielded with such extreme control and concentration. *Numéro art* met up with him in Paris, at his atelier, and afterwards at the studio of another great master, photographer Paolo Roversi, who took his portrait.

Interview by **Thibaut Wychowanok**, portraits by **Paolo Roversi**.



Lee Ufan photographed by Paolo Roversi for *Numéro art*.

## Lee Ufan: A major figure in contemporary art

**Lee Ufan** was born in 1936 in Korea, but it was in Japan, where he moved in 1956 to study philosophy, that he rose to prominence as an artist, becoming a central figure in the **Mono-ha** ("School of Things") movement. From the outset, Ufan viewed **painting** and **sculpture** as complementary practices. In the 1970s, his paintings explored the flow of time, repetition, and difference, in pursuit of infinity – in his practice, painting becomes an act of "*concentration, breathing deeply and steadily to allow the organic forces of thought, hand, brush, colour, canvas, air, and time to come together.*"

***"Ufan's work is above all an experience of space and tension revealed, between inside and out."* – Lee Ufan**

The canvases in his series *From Point* and *From Line*, for example, deploy rhythmic gestures, like breathing. In the 1980s, with his series *From Winds* and *With Winds*, **Lee Ufan** gave yet more space to the uncontrolled, while in the 2000s his *Correspondence* and *Dialogue* series radically reduced and concentrated the visible traces of his hand, the brushstrokes establishing a tension between themselves, with sometimes just one that entered into dialogue with the blank surface of the canvas. In his ***Relatum*** – the Latin for "relation" – series of sculptures, this interplay between space and related elements is yet further highlighted. Indeed, Lee Ufan's work is above all an experience of space and tension revealed, between inside and out.



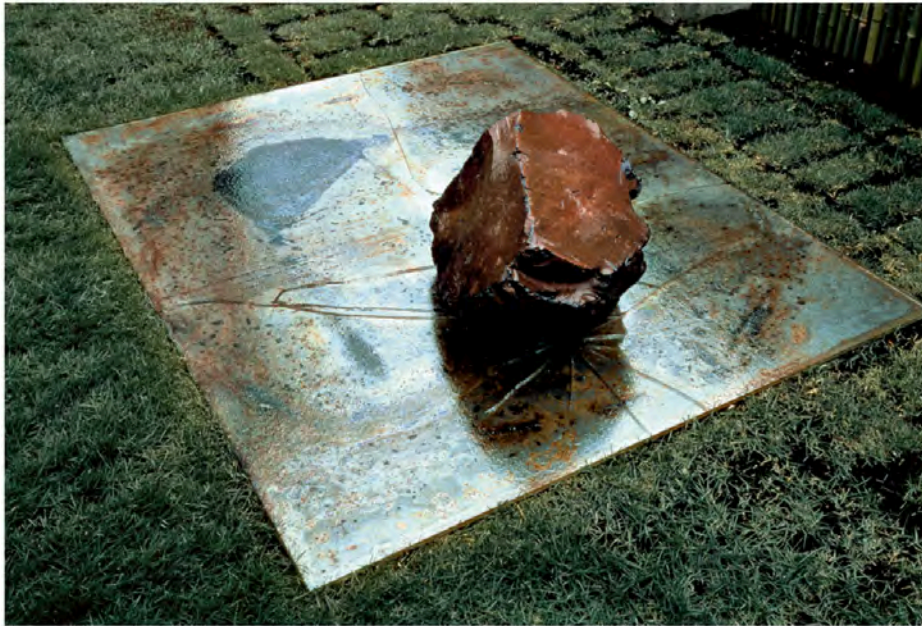
*With Winds* (1990), Lee Ufan. Oil and mineral pigments on canvas, 291 x 218 cm. The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

## Interview with artist Lee Ufan for Numéro art

**Numéro art:** Your work can be found in many museums, in the Pinault Collection's current hang, as well as at art fairs. But your museum on the island of Naoshima in Japan is perhaps the place where your work can best be understood. What does Naoshima represent for you? **Lee Ufan:** Naoshima is first and foremost the project of a great Japanese art collector, Soichiro Fukutake, who, in the late 1980s, had the visionary idea of transforming the abandoned land he had inherited on the island into a place dedicated entirely to art. He turned to Japanese architect **Tadao Ando** to build a complex of museums and hotels. The island was completely revitalized, and people from all over the world now go to see it. It's a rather mysterious phenomenon. Art there is in direct dialogue with nature. You really have to take your time.

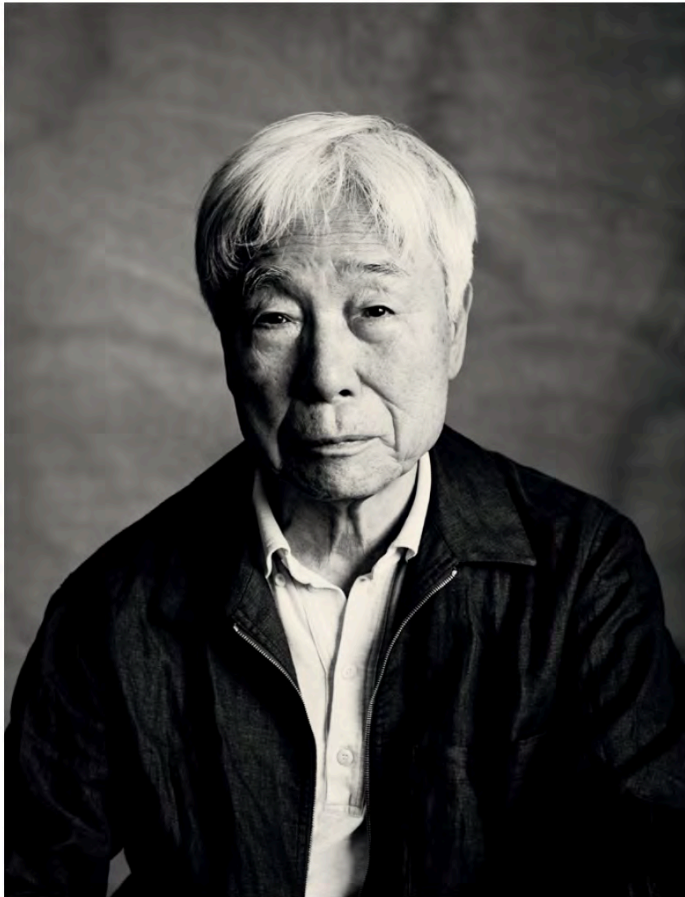
***"Human beings are animated by life, by the vital force of the living. This connects us to the cosmos at a far greater scale."* – Lee Ufan**

On Naoshima, contemporary art is an experience, an encounter with something unknown. Ando was pivotal in that. He's often reduced to his use of concrete, without seeing what he actually does with it. When building a concrete wall in a space, he seeks neither to freeze nor to enclose it. Rather, he creates tension in the space, making it somehow move. Which means that an empty space no one had noticed before suddenly becomes visible. Naturally it was with him that I created my museum in Naoshima.



*Relatum (formerly Phenomena and Perception B) [1968–69]. Steel, glass, and stone. Stone approximately 40 cm high. Private collection. View of the installation Outside Lee Ufan's studio, Kamakura, Japan (1982).*

**Could this way of engaging with space also apply to your own work? I'm thinking of the idea of tension created in a space – a canvas, a gallery – or the creation of tension between different objects, whether natural or industrial.** You've understood our approach perfectly. That's why, for me, the museum in **Naoshima** couldn't be just another museum. I wanted to create a space that, like a cave, had existed since the dawn of time. You enter it like entering a mother's womb. It's a space that invites meditation. But I believe your question also alludes to the nature of my work. The way I make art never involves sitting cogitating at a desk. I always start from the space, seeking a dialogue. I don't start from an object, nor is my goal to create one. Instead, I aim to bring forth a space and make it more conducive to dialogue. In Naoshima, this space evokes a cave. It invites a dialogue with oneself and with the universe. You enter it as if in resonance.

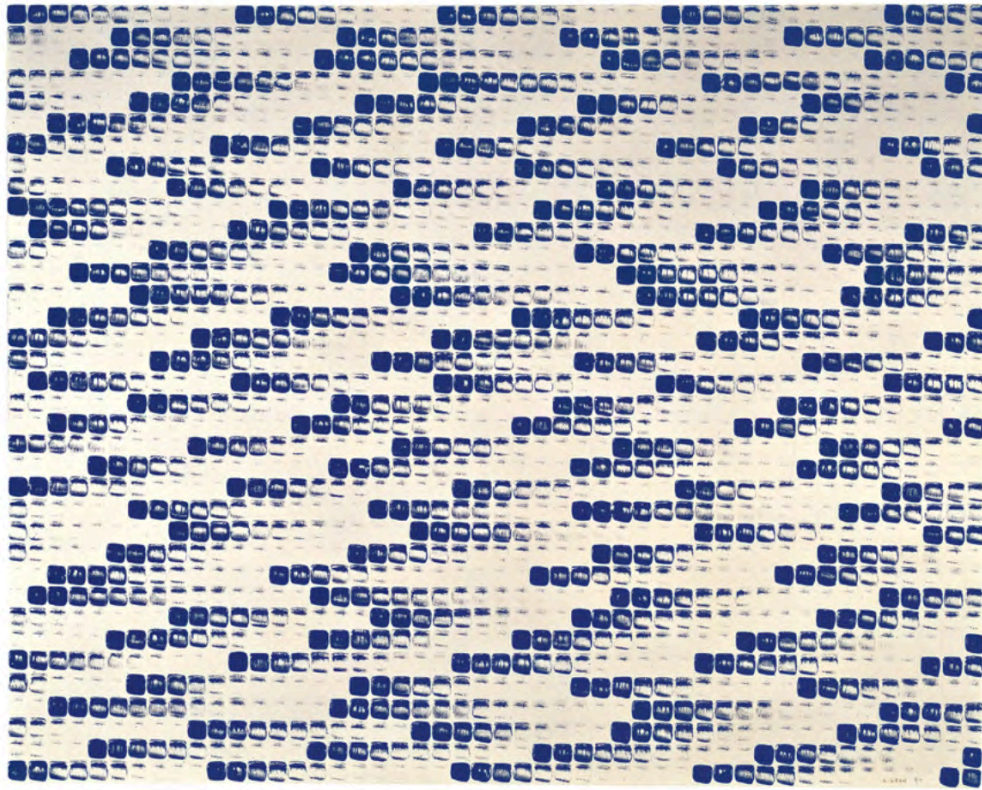


Lee Ufan photographed by Paolo Roversi for *Numéro art*. Set designer: Jean-Hugues de Chatillon. Photographer's assistant: Clara Belleville at We Are The Agent. Production: Studio Demi.

**Is there a place for beauty in your work? Does the concept interest you at all?** I studied philosophy in my youth, and read many books on aesthetics, so beauty is something I generally keep in mind. In contemporary art, the concept has been more or less rejected, particularly the Romantic ideal of beauty, which centred almost exclusively on the human being seen through the human gaze. **Barnett Newman**, for instance, preferred the term sublime [*The Sublime is Now*, 1948]. He sought to capture the sublime on canvas, to prove its existence. The idea is interesting, but I don't share his approach. Moreover, the sublime is a part of beauty. In truth, I can neither categorically deny the notion of beauty nor assert its importance. Beauty has been part of our daily lives since time immemorial.

***"The way I make art never involves sitting cogitating at a desk. I always start from the space, seeking a dialogue."*** – Lee Ufan

We want to be beautiful, we take pride in how we look. The sense of beauty is inseparable from being human. But if we go back to primitive times, the experience of beauty was tied to nature in all its vastness. Today, however, the rise of artificial intelligence and digital data reduces the possibility of such experiences. Human beings are animated by life, by the vital force of the living. This connects us to the cosmos at a far greater scale. In this context, humanity is a mere grain of sand. We cannot be at the centre. Such questions cannot be dismissed, and we should continue to ponder beauty not as an answer, but as an ongoing enquiry, a perpetual quest. That's my conviction.

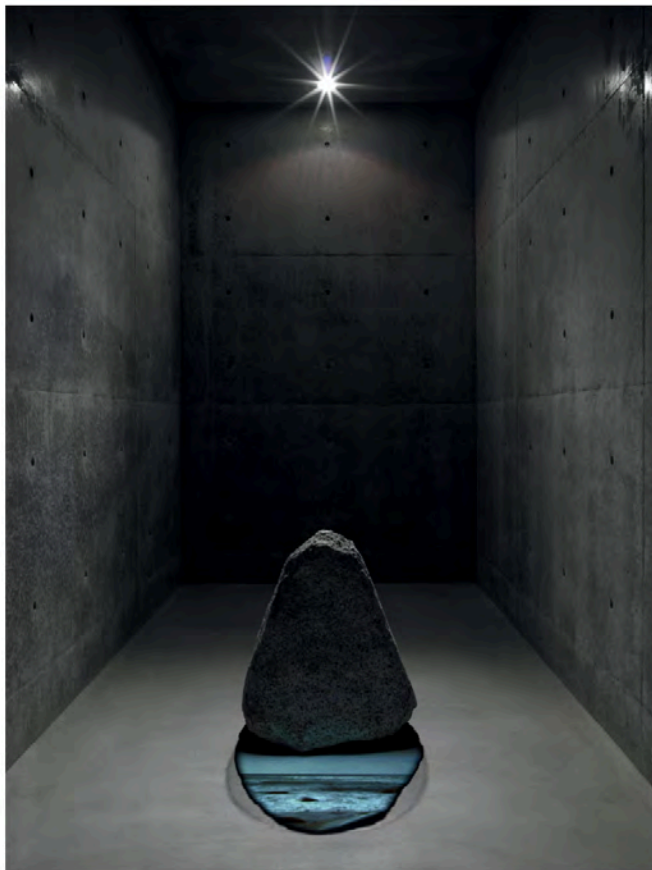


*From Point* (1977), Lee Ufan. Oil and mineral pigment on canvas, 182 × 227 cm. The National Museum of Art, Tokyo.

**You seem very critical of modernity's tendency to place humankind at the centre of the world.** Modernity can be interpreted in different ways. But adhering to it as an object constructed around our ego, the human ego, has, I believe, prevented us from understanding the essential relationship between inside and out. By focusing on the human ego, we no longer saw what surrounded us. But I think this approach was reduced to nothing after World War II. It's essential to create a dialogue between what's known and unknown.

***“We should continue to ponder beauty not as an answer, but as an ongoing enquiry, a perpetual quest. That's my conviction.” – Lee Ufan***

The incomprehensible nature of things is essential. That's why I told you I don't create my works sitting at a desk. A work of art cannot be a pure inner reflection of my mind. Art is made in a specific place, in dialogue with the exterior. It weaves things and spaces together with connections and associations. My body also plays a role in bringing things into being. I am present in the space when I create, which allows me to welcome everything that's there, and to create dialogues.



View of the Lee Ufan Museum in Naoshima, Japan. *Relatum – Shadow of Stone* (2010). Photo: Tadasu Yamamoto.

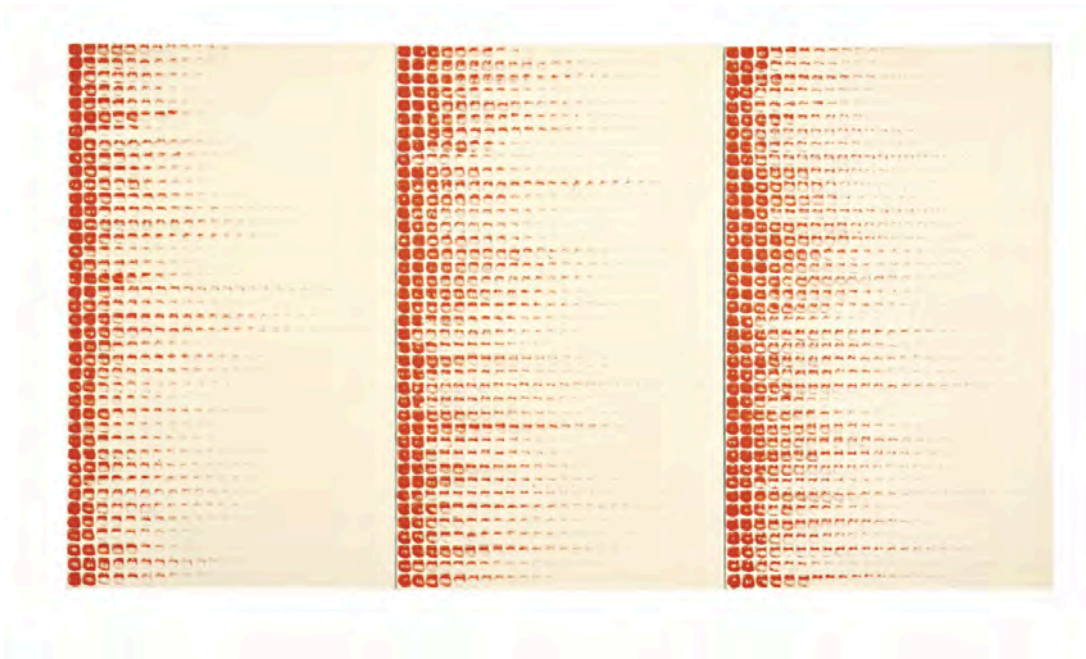
**How, for example, did your Relatum series come to be?** Naturally, I search for stones in quarries. But I'm not looking for beautiful stones. Some may inspire me, it's true, they say something to me. But that's quite rare. What's important is space. I choose each stone in relation to the space. A stone of a certain size will be paired with a metal plate of a certain size. This dialogue between industrial society and nature creates a resonance. That relationship is essential because it's what allows us to feel something stronger, something that was hitherto incomprehensible. And this only makes sense in a specific place.



View of the Lee Ufan Museum in Naoshima, Japan. *Relatum – Silence* (2010). Photo: Tadasu Yamamoto.

***"I always feel a mysterious force emanating from these stones. An absolute presence." – Lee Ufan***

I've been using stone in my work since the second half of the 1960s. My viewpoint has evolved, and yet something remains unchanged. Like when I visit Brittany or England and come across dolmens or menhirs – I always feel a mysterious force emanating from these stones. An absolute presence. It's not just a block of stone – it's something sublime, something beyond comprehension. These stones existed long before humanity. They are a fundamental, primordial material that humans have always needed to use, especially in art.



*From Point* (1975). Glue and mineral pigment on canvas. Three panels, 194 x 291 cm (overall dimensions). The National Museum of Art, Osaka. Photo: Nic Tenwiggenhorn, Düsseldorf/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

**And how do you make your paintings?** When I paint, sometimes I position my canvases on the wall, at others on the floor. They become a screen, a predetermined space. Something happens when I stand before the canvas and exert my full physical strength. Each of my gestures – a dot or a line made with the brush – is an opportunity to create a new vibration, new sensations.

INTERVIEW

## Lee Ufan by Melissa Bianca Amore

A conduit to a world beyond representation.

AUGUST 18, 2025



Installation view of Lee Ufan, *Relatum—to heaven road*, 2024. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Photo © Art Gallery of New South Wales, Felicity Jenkins. © Lee Ufan.

A medium is polysemic: it can be perceived as a body, a material, or an immaterial entity. Often anything but itself, a medium transforms through an encounter with otherness. In Korean-born, Japan-based philosopher and artist Lee Ufan's exhibition *Quiet Resonance*, every medium—whether the artist's body, stone, steel, line, or structure—becomes a conduit to a world beyond objectification and idea that returns viewers to pure emptiness. Featuring his *Response* (2022–24) paintings alongside a new *Relatum—to heaven road* (2024) sculpture made of stone and polished steel, *Quiet Resonance* is an examination into the mechanics of perception and the phenomenology of objects, and between memory and matter.

Lee combines both Western and Eastern philosophy, from German philosopher Martin Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* as the interconnectedness of all things to Japanese Nishida Kitarō's philosophy on *mu*, or nothingness. A key proponent of the 1960s Mono-ha (School of Things) movement, which emerged as a critique of Modernism, Lee shifted a focus from art as self-expression and representation to the spatial relationship between object and being as interconnecting responsive fields of resonance. Lee is a conductor revealing an unidentified world where the eternally mysterious resounds into acute vision and where a stone dreams, connecting viewers to a time older than the earth itself.

### **Melissa Bianca Amore**

In the 1960s, you shifted your focus from art as self-expression and representation toward the relationship between steel, stone, and body. In *The Art of Encounter* (2004), you say: "My kind of Minimalism is a method that requires the space around the work to be energized more than the work itself. The work is not a text made up of signs. I want it to be an energetic living body possessing variability and contradictions. The situation of one brushstroke, one stone or one steel plate must become a living organism brimming with energy in its relationship to otherness."

## Lee Ufan

I started painting in the 1960s when Modernism was undergoing a critique and ideas were breaking up with the cultural revolution in France and the hippie movement in the US. In Japan there was a rebellion against conventional knowledge. This is when I began reexamining notions of “I,” the self, and human-centered ideas by exhibiting a rock on glass or an empty, bare canvas. I didn’t want the art to represent myself but, rather, to rethink what the “self” means in relation to others and to move beyond the self and to offer a space where you can experience a relationship with the external world without hierarchy. The object should not dominate the other but resonate and connect to a higher level of world. And in this level of world, we observe the tension between interconnectedness and contradiction.

**“Artists shouldn’t express their own ideas but, just like a conductor, balance the relationship between internal and external, and what is made and not made.”**

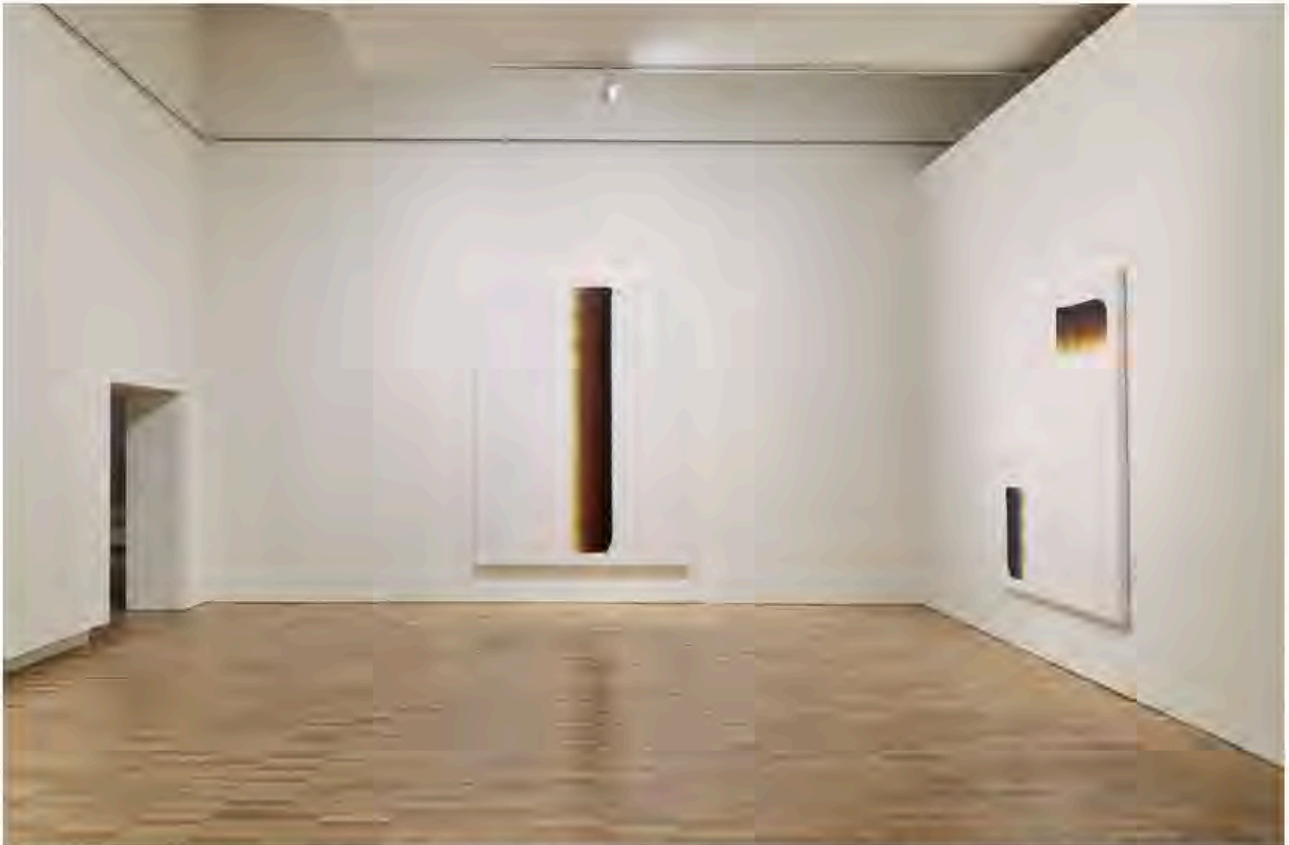
— Lee Ufan

## MBA

You have discussed the idea of structure as a living organism and body as a conductor transferring energy. Can you expand on the interconnectedness between body and structure in your works as a type of equal intermediary and reversal of authorship?

## LU

In the 1970s, the Mono-ha movement in Japan focused on the connectedness between nature and things such as stones, glass, or steel plates. *Mono* means “meta,” which is material. And to have a relationship with “meta,” I need to pull the outside inside to allow things to vibrate and resonate as an interconnected system. Artists shouldn’t express their own ideas but, just like a conductor, balance the relationship between internal and external, and what is made and not made. In an orchestra, a conductor emphasizes the relationship between the parts rather than dominates the music. As you indicated, the body plays a critical role but is finite and a living thing on its own. The body shouldn’t be governed by or represent an idea or concept. Just like structure, the body should act as a balancing mechanism and conduit between things. In Asia, the body is seen as spirit and heart, interconnecting the mind-thought with outside. Comparatively, the West sees body as a biological and physical form. As a medium, the body connects or separates thoughts to the exterior realm. So you need to go beyond yourself—to a higher consciousness and level of power—by using the body to reach another dimension of thought. Your body is larger than thought or idea and can reach beyond it.



Installation view of *Lee Ufan: Quiet Resonance*, 2024–25. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Photo © Art Gallery of New South Wales, Felicity Jenkins. © Lee Ufan.

## **MBA**

In your *Response* paintings, we experience this higher divination or dimension. Each brushstroke conceptually expresses the spatiality between sound and silence, and the infinity of emptiness or void. Here the significance of what's painted is just as pertinent as what is not painted. Conversely, in your *Relatum* (late 1960s–) sculptures, made of polished steel and stone, we encounter a different type of spatial infiniteness. It's interesting to think about how we experience the materiality of steel in your sculptures compared to an artist like Richard Serra. In your works, the weight of steel is perceived as a fluid, uninterrupted flow of time and motion rather than a solid volume.

## **LU**

Generally, when we think of painting, we examine what's painted but not what's not painted. In my works, that's not true. When you use a brush or another tool to paint a dot or point, that changes the whole ambience, and that point itself resonates between what's not painted and what's painted. The relationship to emptiness is just a concept, an idea, or emotion. We don't really know if emptiness actually exists. The idea of what's not painted and what is painted also relates to emptiness. Today too many things are being made, and I want to create less and cultivate a space in between the interior and exterior so it can bring the world above humanity. The world has to be intertwined with the concept as well, and when you combine this concept with the universe, you start to get a sense of vitality and see things beyond physical meaning, beyond the human. And to bring the concept beyond infinity into a higher dimension of knowledge.

I like that you referenced Serra. When we worked together at the same museum, we would discuss the nature of steel. Serra once commented that, "We both use steel, yet your steel appears weightless while my steel is heavy." For me, my steel looks light because my focus is not the steel itself but rather the relationship to the space between the stone and the steel. Serra, however, accentuates the steel itself, which is why it appears heavier.



Installation view of Lee Ufan, *Relatum—position*, 1968/2024. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Photo © Art Gallery of New South Wales, Felicity Jenkins. © Lee Ufan.

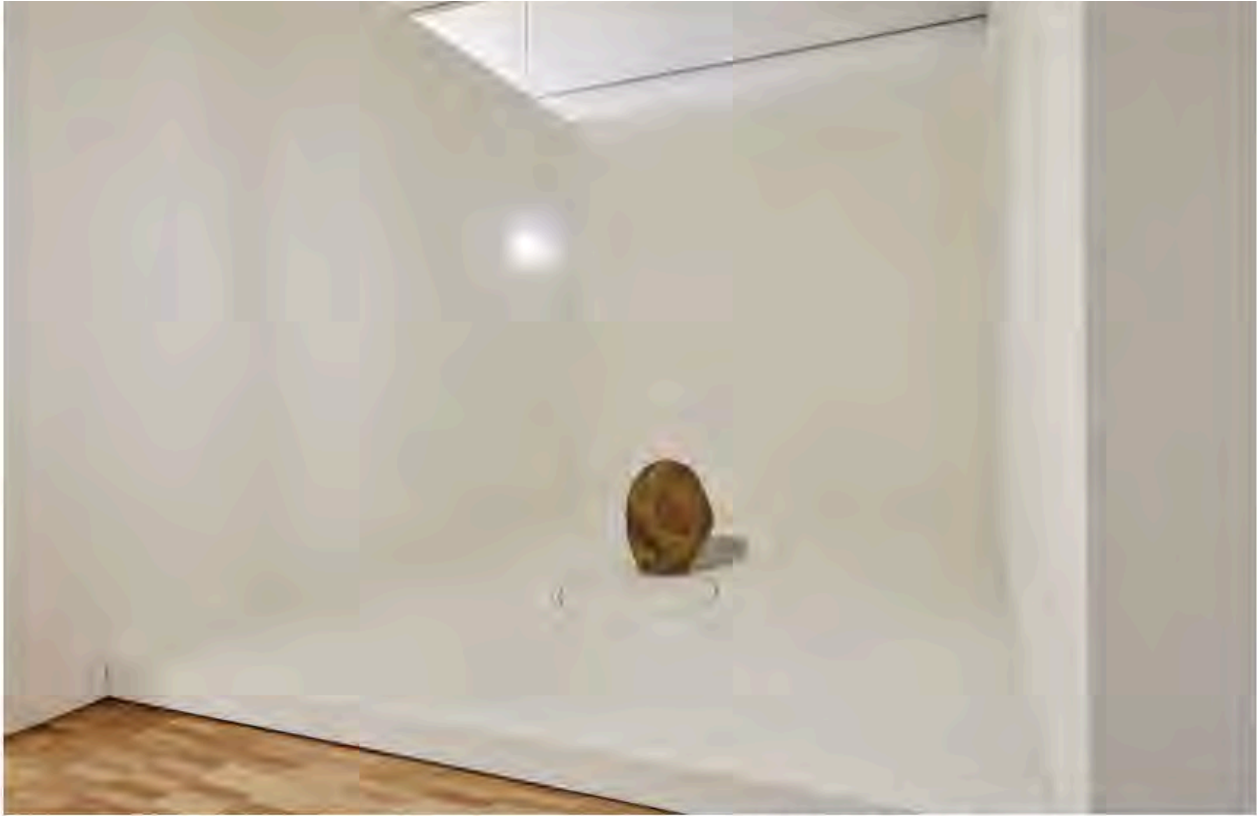
### **MBA**

In *The Art of Encounter*, you write that stones are a conduit carrying memory from different histories, languages, geologic time, and ancestral knowledge. You often borrow stones from the landscape to resituate them in the museum space. This process also links the outside inside. What is your relationship with stones as transmitting ancestral memory and connectivity to otherness?

### **LU**

Stone is a representation of nature and a site of memory. The Earth was created by assembling many rocks, which is why rocks are older than earth. Stone is an accumulation of billions of years of time. It's a mystery. We can scientifically analyze the composition of stone or rock, but when you're standing in front of a stone as a human being, you're actually before the unknown. From ancient times, people knew stones carry memory. If you look at the oldest stone artwork, they worshipped this rock, where a tomb or pyramid was built to preserve it. The stone has a greatness and power. People used that power to sculpt it in order to create something that's bigger than human. I see stone as a medium to reach beyond the universe or to God. During the Industrial Revolution, humanity began to

use stone only as a material, and this devalued the sacredness. I want to bring back the stone's innate power to communicate with the universe and open up to a world beyond.



Installation view of Lee Ufan, *Relatum—the shadow of the stars*, 2014/2024. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Photo © Art Gallery of New South Wales, Felicity Jenkins. © Lee Ufan.

### **MBA**

I want to return to an early exhibition of yours in 1968 entitled *Tricks and Vision* at Tokyo Gallery, which was a pivotal moment when debates about the nature of representation were unfolding in Japan. It was a time when artists were beginning to experiment with optical tricks to examine the mechanics of seeing and the relationship between reality and illusion. At that time, your discussions with art critic Ishiko Junzō ignited further investigations into visual perception and phenomenology. It is also the time when you wrote your seminal text, *From Object to Being* (1969). As an anti-illusionist, can you discuss when you began including elements of optical illusion to examine a world beyond the perceptible?

### **LU**

I'm surprised that you brought up the *Tricks and Vision* exhibition, as it's very important to discuss. As I mentioned earlier, we needed to break through Modernism and challenge how reality was being represented. The illusion is not what you see or what's different. Sometimes I use a rubber ruler or a mirror to create an illusion or a vivid-colored ink on canvas so that your eyes go blind. But reality is not what you see as is. Reality is something vague, and you should not accept it as is. You need to wake up from the illusion of knowing the reality you see.

### **MBA**

So through the illusion we return back to pure awareness outside of representation.

**LU**

Yes, you're right.

Lee Ufan: Quiet Resonance *is on view at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, until September 7.*

*ArtReview*  
25 November 2025

## ArtReview

### Lee Ufan wins 2026 Wolfgang Hahn Prize

ArtReview News 25 November 2025 [artreview.com](https://artreview.com)



Photo: Claire Dorn. Courtesy the artist's studio

Lee Ufan has been awarded the 32nd Wolfgang Hahn Prize by the Society for Modern Art at the Museum Ludwig, Cologne. His work will be acquired by and exhibited at the Museum Ludwig in 2026.

The South Korean artist Lee Ufan is known for his broad-brush paintings influenced by the Dansaekhwa movement and his sculptural installations featuring round stones and iron plates. The artist came to prominence in the late 1960s as co-founder of the Japanese minimalist Mono-ha movement, which moved away from representation and focused on the exploration of materials.

‘Lee Ufan has spoken about how his experiences with several exhibitions in Germany in the 1970s brought his work to the world stage’, said Mami Kataoka, director of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo and this year’s guest juror. ‘Over the course of his sixty-year career, he has explored the essential meaning of existence in all relationships that transcend East and West – without following Western modernism or retreating into Eastern spiritual traditions.’

The Wolfgang Hahn Prize is awarded annually by the Society for Modern Art at the Museum Ludwig and aims to honour internationally recognised contemporary artists who are not yet as well known in Germany. Previous winners include [Evelyn Taocheng Wang \(2025\)](#), [Francis Alÿs \(2023\)](#), [Haegue Yang \(2018\)](#), [Kerry James Marshall \(2014\)](#), Pipilotti Rist (1999) and [Cindy Sherman \(1997\)](#).

The award ceremony will take place on [6 November 2026](#) at the Museum Ludwig. A presentation of the artist’s work will be on display at the museum from 7 November – 4 April.

ARTnews

11 April 2024

# ARTnews Est. 1902

## 10 Shows to See in Venice During the Biennale, From a Pierre Huyghe Blockbuster to Art About Palestine



Shahzia Sikander, *Segments of Desire Go Wandering Off*, 1998.  
©SHAHZIA SIKANDER/COLLECTION OF MARTIN AND REBECCA EISENBERG

Italy's Venice Biennale, the world's biggest art festival, would be big enough if it were limited to merely its main venues, the Arsenale and the Giardini. But the sprawling show has gradually expanded beyond these sites as other seek to get in on the action, piggybacking on the central show and accompanying national pavilions by staging their own exhibitions alongside it.

Enter the phenomenon known as the "collateral event," or a show that is technically mounted outside the confines of the Biennale but has been given the official stamp of approval by the Biennale's foundation. Most collateral events are, to be sure, pay-to-play affairs. They are underwritten by major galleries or foundations, typically, and are lent authority by branding themselves with the Biennale's logo.

For that reason, most collateral events are no more notable than the average gallery show. Yet every so often, one comes along that is worth seeing. And that's not to mention the institutional shows that are being staged by museums and foundations across the city.

Below, *ARTnews* has collected 10 shows to see during the Biennale.

## “Janus” at Palazzo Diedo



Work by Jim Shaw.

Photo : Photo Jeff McLane

Venice’s newest art space is the Palazzo Diedo, a site operated by collector Nicolas Berggruen that has the aspiration of becoming one of the city’s must-see venues. The lineup for its first exhibition, “Janus,” suggests that the space is already on its way to achieving that goal. Featured here will be 11 commissions by a range of celebrated artists, from well-known figures, like Sterling Ruby and Lee Ufan, to up-and-comers such as the London-based Rhea Dillon, who will show a new sculpture featuring a mahogany cross that is set to leak water onto the floor of the building. It’s one of the many ways that the artists will engage the history of the palazzo, an 18th-century structure that was once the property of an aristocratic family.

*Fondamenta Diedo, 30121; Closest vaporetto stop: S. Marcuola Casino*

*Galerie*  
16 April 2024

## Galerie

### 10 Must-See Exhibitions During the 2024 Venice Biennale

From Willem de Kooning at the Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia to Julie Mehretu at the Palazzo Grassi, these are the top shows to discover beyond the Biennale

BY PAUL LASTER

APRIL 16, 2024



**T**he 60th edition of the [International Art Exhibition](#), titled “Foreigners Everywhere,” is a testament to how artists have always travelled and moved about under various circumstances. Curated by Adriano Pedrosa, artistic director of the São Paulo Museum of Art, the exhibition features 331 artists and collectives living in and between 80 countries. While VIP and press previews are April 17-19, “Foreigners Everywhere” opens to the public on April 20 and runs through November 24, 2024.

Beyond the main group exhibition in the Arsenale and Central Pavilion and solo and group shows in the National Pavilions—located in the Giardini, Arsenale, and spread throughout palaces, decommissioned churches and event spaces in Venice—there are Collateral exhibitions and museum and gallery shows, which are part of the overall art world gathering in Venice and are equally worth seeing.

These are our picks for the top ten associated shows, which should be on every Biennale visitor's must-see list.



Jim Shaw painting a mural at Berggruen Arts & Culture, Palazzo Diedo.  
PHOTO: JEFF MCLANE

## 8. “Janus” at Palazzo Diedo

The inaugural exhibition at the Berggruen Arts & Culture, Palazzo Diedo, which is Venice's first major art space for more than a decade, “[Janus](#)” features site-specific commissions and temporary exhibitions by 11 internationally acclaimed artists: Urs Fischer, Piero Golia, Carsten Höller, Ibrahim Mahama, Mariko Mori, Sterling Ruby, Jim Shaw, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Aya Takano, Lee Ufan, and Liu Wei. Sited in an 18<sup>th</sup> century palace built for a family of prominent Venetian nobles, the work responds to the architecture and original features of the building, some taking inspiration from traditional crafts associated with Venice, but exploring themes such as colonial history, religion in mythology, queer thought, black representation, and the self.

*Through November 24*

## Pulse

### Lee Ufan's folding screen artwork up for auction



[Courtesy of Seoul Auction]

Seoul Auction announced on Tuesday that it will offer bids for minimum 5.4 billion won (\$3.9 million) worth of artworks on May 28, including “Untitled (Hexaptych Folding Screens)” by Lee Ufan. About 80 art pieces will be up for auction taking place at Seoul Auction Gangnam Center in southern Seoul at 4 p.m., including those of Kim Whanki, Yayoi Kusama, and Joel Mesler.

Lee's six-panel folding screen – 5.64 meters wide – is one of the highlights. The piece is characteristic of the artist's wind painting series during the 1980s and was exhibited at Japan's Ueda Gallery in 1986. It is estimated to be worth between 350 million and 600 million won.

By Kim Seul-gi and Han Yubin

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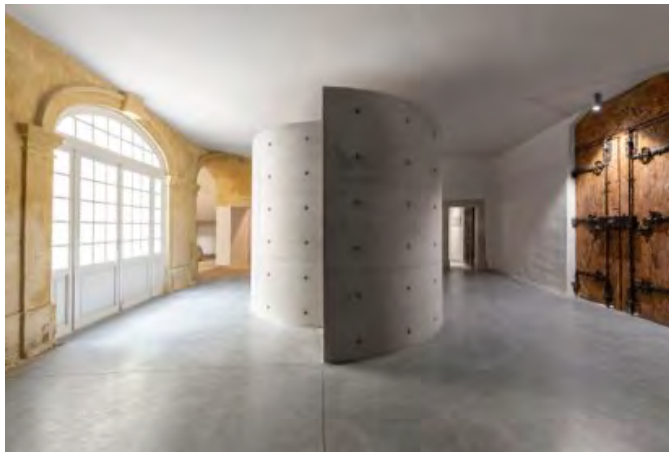
# LISSON GALLERY

*Wallpaper\**  
15 July 2024

## Wallpaper\*

### At Lee Ufan Arles, tension and calm guide relationships between space and art

Lee Ufan Arles opens in the south of France, a collaboration between the famed Korean artist and Japanese architect Tadao Ando



(Image credit: Lee Ufan Arles)

Lee Ufan Arles is a stunningly restored private mansion-turned-exhibition space situated in the heart of the Provençal medieval city. It's a part of France that is legendary for its relationship with photography and the arts, through the longstanding annual photography festival Rencontres Arles and more recently Maja Hoffman's sprawling, Frank Gehry-designed [LUMA Arles](#).

Designed by two friends, artist Lee Ufan and Japanese architect [Tadao Ando](#), the new space embraces the classic proportions of its location – the Hôtel Vernon, constructed between the 16th and 18th centuries – while creating an ideal venue to show Ufan's art, including a large temporary exhibition space. 'Space and site play an important role. Material matters because we just show action, not action for a certain purpose, but action itself, pure action,' the artist says.

Lee Ufan Arles: a new destination for art and architecture in the south of France  
Ufan is perhaps the most well-known Korean artist working today, famous for his conceptual sculpture and painting which has an instantly recognisable aesthetic born out of a combination of ideas from Eastern and Western cultures.



(Image credit: Lee Ufan Arles)

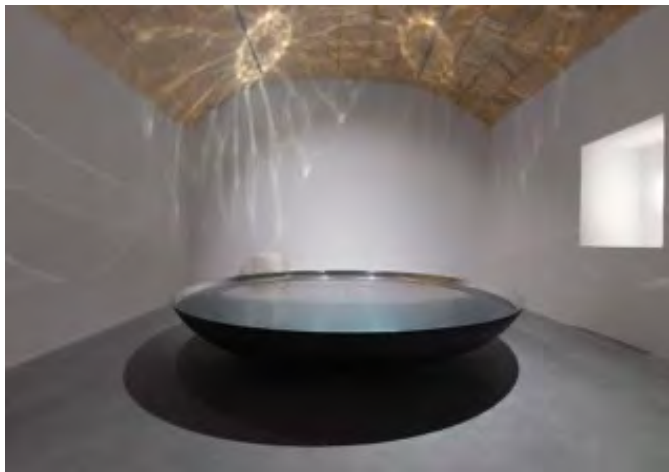
The building's design has a lightness of touch, although some additional rooms were created on the ground floor to improve visitor flow. This level features both painting and sculpture, including site-specific works and large-scale paintings from throughout Ufan's career.



(Image credit: Lee Ufan Arles)

The works explore the artist's development from being a founder member of the Mono-ha (The School of Things) [avant-garde Korean art](#) movement in the late 1960s to his status as a world-famous contemporary artist, harnessing elements of mathematics, minimalism and zen. The placement of each work in relation to the dynamics of a space is key to Ufan's practice and in his own space, he was able to design, with Ando, an ideal environment.

'I think floors and corners in spaces are very important. And this constitutes minimum conditions to exhibit my work. Each time I exhibit, the relationship changes between my artwork and the space, the site. Even I, as an artist, sometimes hesitate where to place things,' says Ufan. 'There is no exactness. There are no rules. The space and object relationship creates a tension.'



(Image credit: Lee Ufan Arles)

In working with the existing space using classic terracotta hexagonal tiles, exposed beams and whitewashed walls, the personality of the building is preserved. At the same time, there is also space for Ando's classic use of industrial concrete in a large installation at the entrance. This effectively highlights the art.



(Image credit: Lee Ufan Arles)

'Lee Ufan especially worked on the painting selection and the display order. He wanted [the paintings] to be hung in chronological order. He created tension by [having visitors pass] from small rooms to bigger rooms. He is also interested in investing in the walls or floors, as you can notice with the wall painting that can be appreciated, like a moment of rest, before [visitors discover] his latest series of large-scale paintings, Dialogue and Response,' says general coordinator at Lee Ufan Arles, Juliette Vignon.



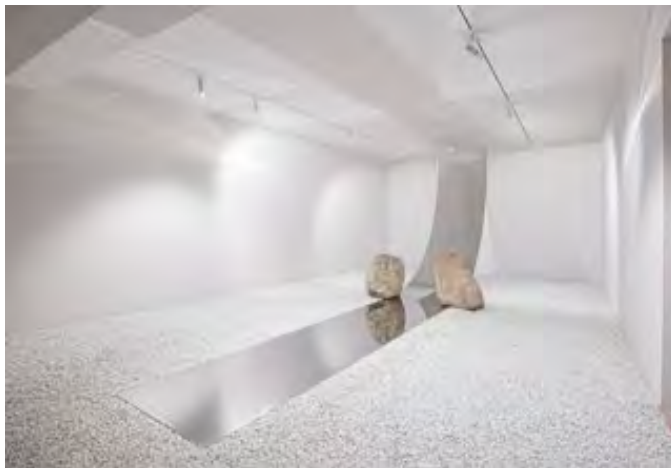
(Image credit: Lee Ufan Arles)

One of the major concerns of Ufan's practice is the relationship between objects and materials through space and aesthetics. He will place natural stone and iron in relation to one another to highlight their difference in appearance, but also to emphasise that one is made from the other. A large rock sits on a pan of broken glass, left at the moment of contact, and a room filled with the rippling reflection of an installation is built around a regular drip of water.



(Image credit: Lee Ufan Arles)

This concern with the natural world makes the collaborative Art & Environment prize awarded by Lee Ufan Arles and Maison Guerlain a logical fit. The inaugural winner, Djabril Boukhenissi, has just opened his exhibition 'À ténèbres' (To Darkness) on site. The show, which runs until 1 September 2024, highlights the loss of natural darkness in the face of light pollution, through painting and etching inspired by 18th-century German literature and the moth as written about by Virginia Woolf.



(Image credit: Lee Ufan Arles)

LISSON GALLERY

*Monopol*  
16th April 2022

# MONOPOL

Magazin für Kunst und Leben

Korean-Japanese artist  
**Lee Ufan gets new museum in Arles**



Photo: Julie Joubert/Lee Ufan Museum/dpa

The artwork "Relatum" by Japanese artist Lee Ufan in the newly opened Lee Ufan Museum in Arles



Photo: © Lee Ufan. Photography by Julie Joubert  
View of the new Lee Ufan Museum in Arles



Photo: Julie Joubert/Lee Ufan Museum/dpa  
Artwork "From point" by Japanese artist Lee Ufan at the newly opened Lee Ufan Museum in Arles

**The Korean-Japanese artist Lee Ufan is known for minimalist installations that invite you to pause. Now he is getting a new museum in Arles, France**

A museum on the Japanese art island of Naoshima has borne his name since 2010, and in 2015 the Busan Museum of Art in South Korea dedicated a separate building to him. Now another Lee Ufan museum is opening its doors in Arles . The 85-year-old South Korean is one of the most important contemporary artists. Lee Ufan, who lives and works between Paris and Tokyo, is also highly regarded in Germany. His third museum almost came into being in Berlin instead of Arles.

Lee Ufan chose the southern French city because of the numerous traces of the Romans, as he says. There is a special relationship between his art and the rich history of antiquity, says the painter and sculptor. He loves ruins. They are peaceful places that, however, evoke the past and at the same time allow us to meditate on what awaits us sooner or later.

Arles provides an overview of the artist's oeuvre, which is characterized by a minimalist aesthetic that combines Asian and European references. The first floor is dedicated to his "Relatum" sculptures, works in mostly natural materials that dialogue with the space, such as his huge steel bowl filled with water. The second floor presents his paintings, works in which the few brushstrokes are similar only at first glance.

The more than 1300 square meter museum is located in the historic town center. Architect Tadao Ando remodeled the 17th-century townhouse. The well-known Japanese also designed the museum in Japan for Lee Ufan. With its ancient remains, Arles is one of the most famous cities in Provence. Many of the ancient and Romanesque monuments are on the Unesco World Heritage List.

# LISSON GALLERY

*Judith Benhamou-Huet Reports*  
12 January 2022



The Lee Ufan experience in Arles: “Death transformed by nature lives on discreetly”



## Van Gogh



In 1888 Vincent Van Gogh brought his friend Paul Gauguin to Arles. He dreamed of creating a community there, a communion even, of artists captivated by the colours of the Camargue region. It was October when the two men ventured to the outskirts of the town to paint in an old Roman necropolis which was also once a Christian cemetery, the Alyscamps.

## A garden of ruins



It's a garden of ruins which is both the site of a bucolic walk and a place of eternal rest that has fallen into disuse. Each of the two men produced a painting that would make the place famous, with its red trees and majestic walkways. Fast-forward 133 years in the same month of October, and the trees have reddened in the same fashion and the ancient headstones are still aligned in the same places, when another artist entered this place.

## Spirituality



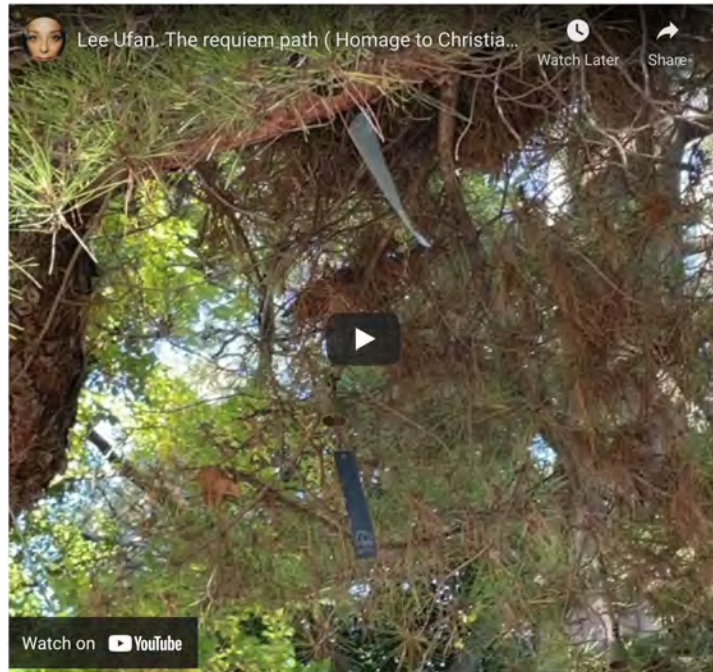
Lee Ufan (born in 1936), the Korean artist who has long been based between Japan and France, creates paintings and conceptual installations that are always imbued with spirituality.

## Versailles, Naoshima, Guggenheim



Prior to the Alysamps, he occupied the park at the Château de Versailles, and took over the whole of the Guggenheim spiral in New York, and a museum in his name on the island of Naoshima in Japan ([See the report here](#)). In 2019 a retrospective dedicated to him was staged at the Centre Pompidou Metz (See the report [here](#) and also [here](#) about his exhibition at Chateau La Coste near Aix en Provence) . In March 2022 he is also due to open in Arles, in a beautiful Provençal townhouse, a foundation for posterity.

## Christian Boltanski



At the Alysamps he has conceived fourteen artworks which together create a hugely poetic layout. Death is present everywhere, starting with a work in tribute to the French artist Christian Boltanski, who passed away recently. Like the latter did in one of his installations, Lee Ufan has arranged little bells that resonate in the trees when the mistral wind blows, like the memory of the souls of the deceased.

## Abstract altar

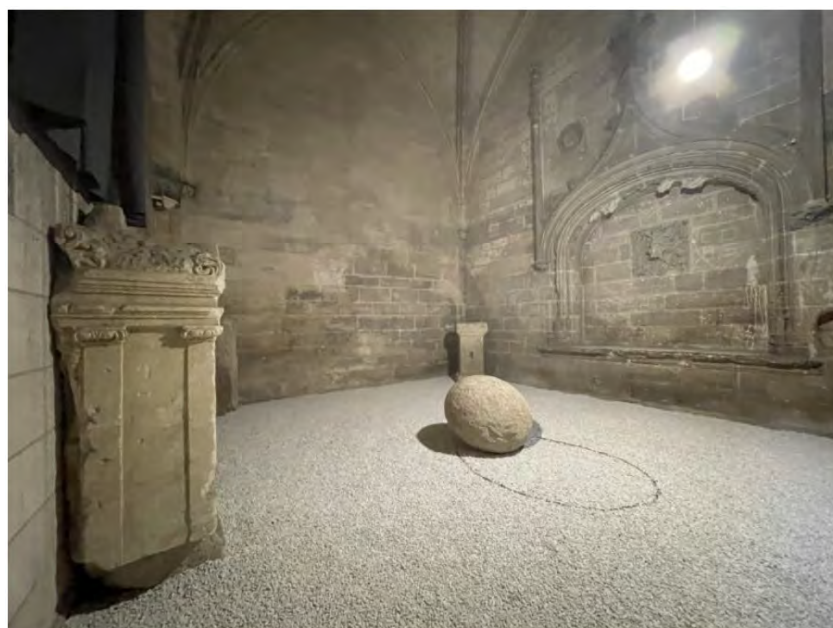


Lee Ufan's most beautiful work at the Alysamps can be found in the chapel, which dates from the Middle Ages. Here he establishes a dialogue in an abstract kind of altar with a huge round rock and a black monochrome canvas. "The rocks that we find in nature are generally very old. Stone is time. As for the painting, it's simultaneously visible and invisible. A kind of luminous black. This was a well known quest in art history for Rembrandt, Goya and even Soulages."

## Poetry by Lee Ufan



The Alysamps has also inspired poetry by the artist, who writes: "The murmur of the foliage in the trees, growing in the midst of these ruins, makes the heart beat harder. In this singular space filled with buildings that have almost crumbled, death breathes with near tranquillity. Death transformed by nature doesn't die, but lives on discreetly. Travellers forget themselves and engage with this infinite space. And they experience another dimension."



## Someone behind me



Lee Ufan also says: "It has been an experience that's truly out of the ordinary. There was a moment while I was alone in a chapel, when I felt someone behind me, a presence that made me feel very light."

He concludes: "Here, in amongst the ruins, I'd like visitors to feel this infinite space."



Until September 2022. [www.leeufanfoundation.org/arles](http://www.leeufanfoundation.org/arles)

# Numéro

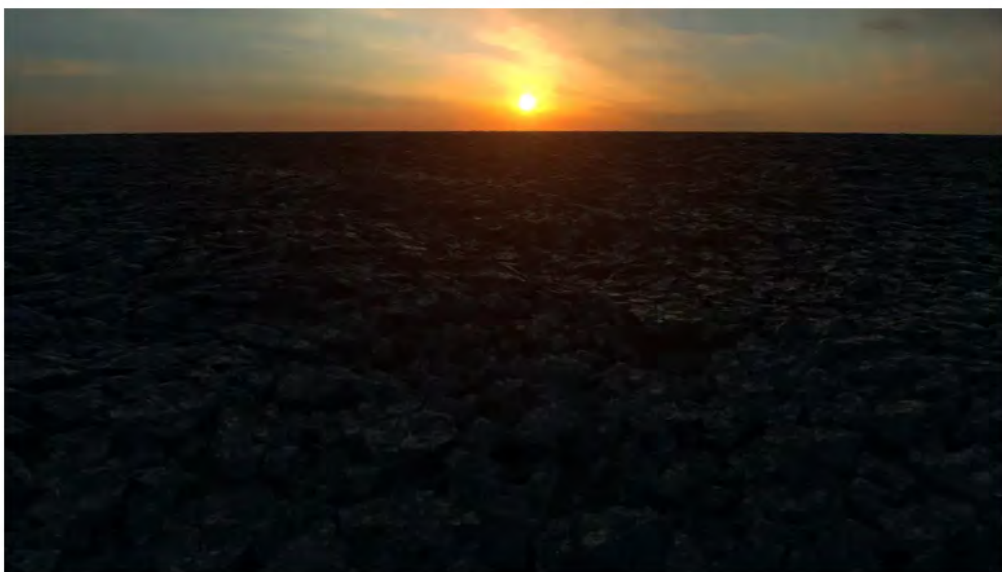


## 8 exhibitions not to be missed in April

APRIL 11, 2022

The retrospective of Arthur Jafa at LUMA Arles, Anita Molinero at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the opening of the Lee Ufan Arles Foundation or even the poetic dialogue of Roni Horn and Felix Gonzalez-Torres... Discover exhibitions not to be missed in April.

By [Matthew Jacquet](#).



Arthur Jafa, "AGHDRA" (2021). Digital video, color, sound 85 minutes

## 1. Arthur Jafa, Sky Hopinka, Rachel Rose... the new season of the LUMA-Arles foundation

Almost a year after the inauguration of its tower designed by architect Frank Gehry, LUMA Arles presents its new programme. The Maja Hoffmann Collection offers a new display of pieces by major contemporary artists, from Olafur Eliasson to Tacita Dean, as well as a short film by French artist Cyprien Gaillard and a film by American Rachel Rose. In the Parc des Ateliers, we discover a major retrospective of the African-American artist Arthur Jafa, bringing together several major videos and unpublished pieces produced for the occasion, as well as an exhibition of the filmmaker and visual artist Amerindian Sky Hopinka, whose production questions the relationship of indigenous populations to their territory, their language and their culture.

Arthur Jafa / Sky Hopinka / Cyprien Gaillard / Rachel Rose, from April 14 at the LUMA Arles foundation.



Anita Molinero, "The Pirate's Bride #1" (2012). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Christophe Gaillard © Anita Molinero, Adagp, Paris, 2022



Anita Molinero, "Untitled (Plots)" (2012). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Christophe Gaillard © Anita Molinero, Adagp, Paris, 2022

## 2. The extruded sculptures of Anita Molinero at the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris

Transforming waste into a work of art, Anita Molinero has made it her distinctive mark. Swollen plastic trash cans, children's huts sagging on themselves, twisted exhaust pipes and compressed construction studs... nothing seems to escape the 69-year-old French sculptor for whom the most banal or the ugliest can, by its infinity potential for transformation, generating new forms. Through some forty works divided into two chapters, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris is devoting a major retrospective to him, supplemented by monumental sculptures inside and outside the building as well as a film in 3D.

Anita Molinero, "Extrudia", until July 24 at the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris, Paris 16th.



Douglas Gordon, "Pillow" (2020). Kamel Mennour Gallery

### 3. Douglas Gordon meets Alberto Giacometti at the Giacometti Institute

In April 2020, Douglas Gordon was to open an exhibition at the Giacometti Institute and create a series of new pieces inspired by the work of the famous 20th century sculptor. Confinement obliges, the fatally postponed exhibition has been transformed into a one-year accompaniment of the Scotsman by the foundation, the fruit of which can now be discovered through sculptures and other unpublished works presented in dialogue with those of his elder, as well as a program of discussions organized inside and outside the walls of the institute.

Douglas Gordon, "The Morning After", from April 20 to June 12 at the Giacometti Institute, Paris 14th.



Nairy Baghramian, "Es ist ausser Haus" (2006). © Nairy Baghramian. Courtesy of the artist, Marian Goodman Gallery, kurimanzutto

#### 4. The intriguing volumes of Nairy Baghramian at the Carré d'art

Monoliths in pastel colors nested inside each other, fragments of translucent tubes mounted on steel circles, suspended wooden logs... The volumes imagined by Nairy Baghramian are rarely identifiable, but their abstract forms question the relationship of the visitor to the object. and invite him to rethink his experience of space. Driven by her vision of architecture, design and interior design, the – sometimes almost theatrical – practice of the Iranian artist based in Berlin plays on the points of tension and balance, often taking into account the place where she presents her work. In Nîmes, the Carré d'art is devoting his first personal exhibition to him in France.

Nairy Baghramian, "Parloir", from April 29 to September 18 at the Carré d'art, Nîmes.



Exhibition view "Felix Gonzalez-Torres - Roni Horn", Bourse de Commerce - Pinault Collection, Paris, 2022.

#### 5. The poetic dialogue between Roni Horn and Felix Gonzalez-Torres at the Bourse de commerce

Legends of contemporary art, Felix Gonzales-Torres and Roni Horn have redefined the exhibition medium as a fluid and moving experience, placing the viewer at its heart. Sharing militant and political themes, the two artists and friends gathered at the Bourse de Commerce for a dialogue between some of their major works. The curtain of red plastic beads, mirrors and garlands of light bulbs of the first, made a few years before his death from AIDS in 1996, respond to the bluish cylinders of the second as well as photographs and watercolors, which testify with poetry of a friendship and of one whose minimal forms bear witness with great finesse to a sincere commitment.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres - Roni Horn, from April 6 to September 26 at the Bourse de commerce - Pinault Collection, Paris 1er.



Lee Ufan, "Relatum - Existence" (2014) © Adagp, Paris 2018

#### 6. The opening of the Lee Ufan Arles Foundation

His installations, sculptures and refined canvases governed by the silent forces of nature and the precision of gesture have made Lee Ufan one of the most famous and appreciated Korean artists in France. A powerful link confirmed by the opening of an art center dedicated to the 85-year-old man in the heart of Arles, in an 18th century hotel refurbished by the architect Tadao Ando, where several dozen of his works will be permanently exhibited throughout the floors.

Lee Ufan Arles, opening April 15 at the Hotel Vernon, Arles.



"Impromptu Venus" © Anaïs Castaings, 2018.

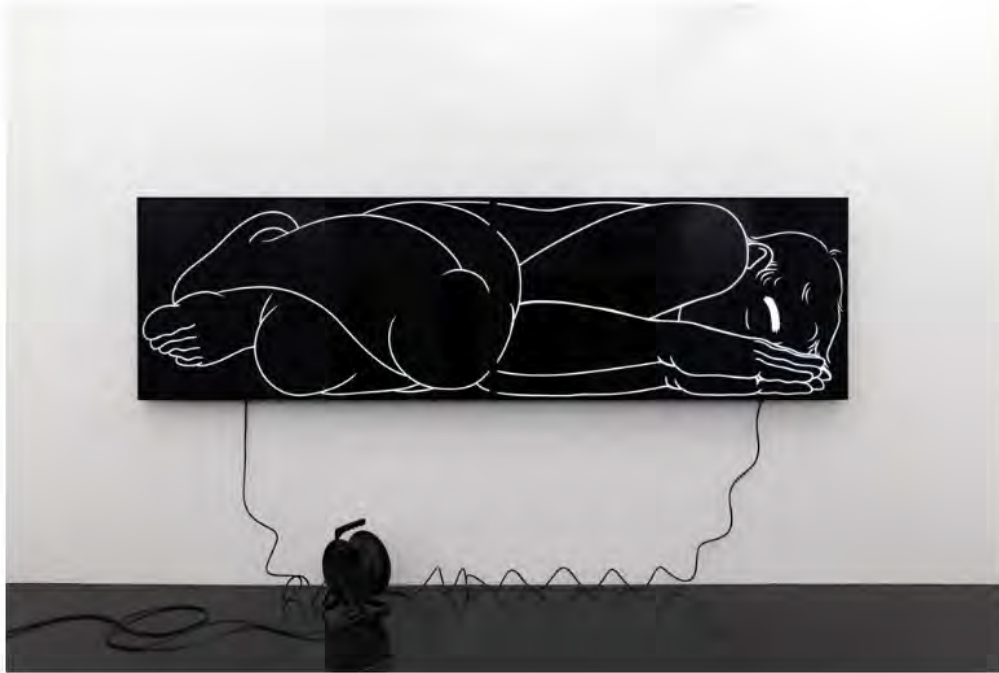


© Joan Gory Peel, Victoire Gonzalvez 2019-20.

## 7. The emerging art scene at La Villette

For four editions of its 100% L'Expo festival, the Grande Halle de la Villette has been putting the spotlight on emerging artists for almost a month. By presenting within its walls and in its park the works of dozens of young people freshly graduated from French art schools, the event offers a wide panorama of new contemporary creation. This year, the artists selected come from both the Beaux-arts de Paris and the Villa Arson in Nice, via La Fémis, the National School of Photography in Arles and the Kourtrajmé School of Cinema.

"100% L'EXPO", as part of the 100% Festival, from April 6 to 30 in the Grande halle and the Parc de la Villette, Paris 19th.



Özgür Kar, "a guy under the influence" (2020).

## 8. The festival that questions the limits of the visible at Jeu de Paume

If since 2004, the international reputation of the Jeu de Paume is mainly due to its exhibitions on photography, its history and its contemporary mutations, the Parisian institution located at the edge of the Tuileries Garden is renewing itself by inaugurating this spring its festival dedicated to the image. Entitled "Fata Morgana", in reference to the rare phenomenon of mirage and apparition provoked on the surface of the sea, the event explores for two months the limits of the visible through the material works, but also projections and performances of 26 artists, from Ann Veronica Janssens to Daniel Steegman Mangrané via Constance Nouvel. All were chosen together by curator Béatrice Gross, accompanied by visual artist Katinka Bock.

Fata Morgana, first edition of the Jeu de Paume festival, until May 22 at the Jeu de Paume, Paris 1er.

*Bilan*

12th April 2022

# Bilan

## Sculptor Lee Ufan opens his museum in Arles

For the Korean, it's a third personal museum. But why does everyone actually end up in the Provençal city these days?

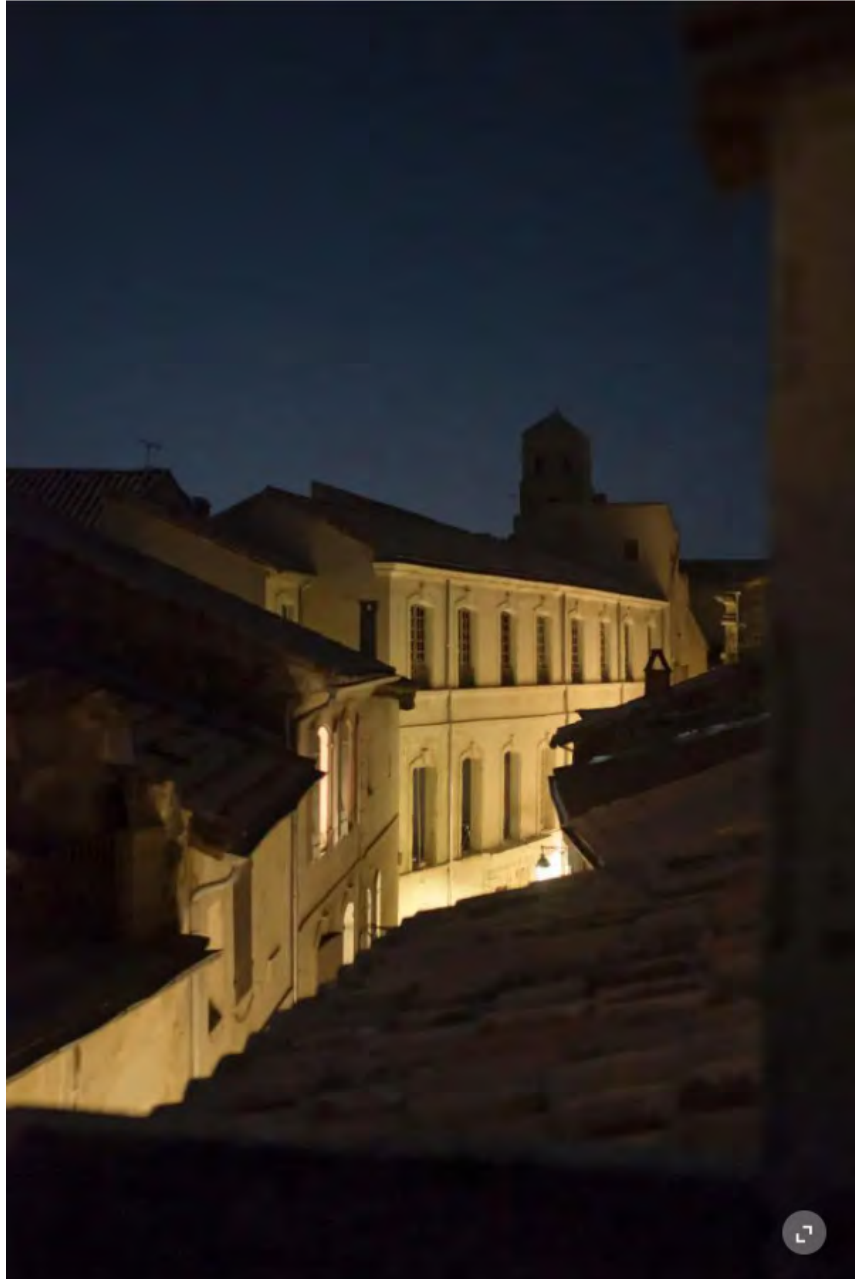


Lee Ufan. Philosopher and artist.  
Palazzo Grassi.

Of course you know Lee Ufan. Or do I still need to remind you who it is? When in doubt, I opt for the second solution. Lee is certainly today the most famous Korean sculptor in the world. Born in 1936, when his country was occupied by the Japanese, he nevertheless joined the Japanese archipelago in 1956. A rare case when we know the traditional hatred separating the nationals of the two countries. This brilliant intellectual wanted to continue his studies there. The man thus worked on philosophy, poetry, painting or calligraphy. He then became an art critic, of the rather pointed kind. The Korean did not move on to the visual arts until later, placing himself at the forefront of Mono-ha, a genre reconciling nature and human creation.

### **Invited to Versailles in 2014**

Lee Ufan founded his own museum on the island of Naoshima in 2010. A place designed by Tadao Ando, the favorite architect of François Pinault. Five years later, he created another location in Busan, South Korea's second city. The thing was apparently not enough for the octogenarian, invited to exhibit in the park of the Palace of Versailles in 2014. He will therefore open on Thursday April 14 a third center dedicated to his creation. It will be in the Hotel Vernon in Arles, next to the Vincent Van Gogh Foundation. One more foundation in Arles, you might say! Promoted city of art, the small town seems to collect them. And it's not over... After the LUMA or the Manuel Riviera-Ortiz, there will be yet another one in the former Hôtel Saint-Trophime. They finish giving a touch of artificiality to the city deserted by tourists in winter. Arles thus becomes a sort of enormous (Provençal) above-ground tomato. In any case, far too many foundations are opening today, generally devoted to contemporary art, in the south of France. They arouse a kind of weariness.



The Hotel Vernon, now transformed.  
Lee Ufan Foundation, Arles 2022.

How did Lee Ufan actually get here? Very simple. The artist, who is very fond of France (in 2002 he donated his large collection of old Korean works to the Guimet Museum in Paris), was to publish a monograph on his work in 2012. It was published by Actes Sud, from which first direct contact. In 2013, he exhibited at Saint-Laurent-le-Capitole, an old chapel once transformed into a cinema. A building located very close to the Hotel Vernon, which he had to completely restore and restructure. The construction will last several years. He finally came to a head. This will be Lee's third museum. It remains to be seen whether his name will prove catchy enough to attract an audience beyond the inauguration.

# LISSON GALLERY

*Architectural Digest France*  
15th April 2022

# AD

## ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST



### The Lee Ufan center opens its doors in Arles

Located in the old town of Arles, the new Lee Ufan center is the third exhibition space created by the artist after the Lee Ufan Museum in Naoshima opened in 2010 and the Espace Lee Ufan at the Busan Museum of Art inaugurated in 2015..

By Athena Rivas

A center on three floors dedicated to creation. It is in the heart of the Hotel Vernon, in Arles, that the South Korean artist Lee Ufan has decided to create his new exhibition space, which opens its doors this Friday, April 15. Within the Lee Ufan Arles, the artist will present his works and also wishes to support and sponsor artistic and cultural activities.

On the ground floor of the building, designed by the architect Tadao Ando, visitors can stroll among the sculptures and installations from the *Relatum collection*, all made with natural and industrial materials. Their positioning in space and the relationship that exists between these works is the very center of their creation. On the first floor, the artist has chosen to exhibit his paintings. The second level will be dedicated to temporary exhibitions and events.



The Lee Ufan center in Arles. © ADAGP 2022 Lee Ufan. Photo. Archives Kamel Mennour Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris



Lee Ufan, *Relatum* 1969/2022. © ADAGP 2022 Lee Ufan. Photo. Kamel Mennour Archives. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris



Lee Ufan, *From line* 1980. © ADAGP 2022 Lee Ufan. Photo. Kamel Mennour Archives. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris

The reception, changing rooms and shop of the Lee Ufan center were fitted out by designer Constance Guisset. The clean lines and the subtle balance of stainless steel and wood pay homage to the building of the Hotel Vernon and make it possible to make the link between this historic place and the works of Lee Ufan.

Lee Ufan Arles, 5, rue de Vernon, 13200 Arles, [www.leeufan-arles.org](http://www.leeufan-arles.org)



The centre's shop and reception were designed by Constance Guisset.



Constance Guisset used stainless steel and wood to enhance the place.

# ARTnews

## Legendary Korean Artist Lee Ufan Sets Up a Dazzling New Museum for His Art in Southern France

BY SARAH BELMONT  May 11, 2022 9:00am



Installation view of Lee Ufan *Arles*, 2022.

©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

Since the late 19th-century when Impressionists, most notably Vincent van Gogh, flocked there, **Arles** has long fascinated artists and the art world by extension. More recently, cultural spaces have begun to open in this southeastern French city, starting with the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles in 2010 and more recently collector Maja Hoffmann's **Frank Gehry-designed LUMA Arles**, which opened last summer.

And now there is the **Lee Ufan Arles**, a new cultural venue by the acclaimed Korean artist, Lee Ufan, that opened its doors on April 15 at the heart of the Roman city. (The new venue is an extension of the New York-based Lee Ufan Foundation.) The path to complete this project has not been an easy one for Lee, who had to create an endowment fund that was supported by his friends: Michel Enrici, the former director of the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, as well as his publishers at the Arles-based Actes Sud, Jean-Paul Capitani and Françoise Nyssen.

A lion share of the fund went toward investing in the space's new home. Situated in the Hôtel Vernon, a 16th-century private mansion that was once the home of the Dervieux family, a long line of antique dealers, the building has, of course, been retrofitted under the aegis of Pritzker Prize winner Tadao Ando, Lee's go-to architect. "Ando's inspiration and mine resonate," the artist said in a recent interview conducted in French. The architect behind mega-collector François Pinault's recently opened Parisian private museum Bourse de Commerce, Ando is also responsible for the Lee Ufan Museum on the Japanese island of Naoshima (2010) and the Space Lee Ufan at the Busan Museum of Art (2015) in South Korea.

A leading proponent of the 1960s Japanese Mono-ha movement, which explored the properties of industrial and natural materials, Lee is best-known for confronting steel plates, rubber sheets, and glass panes with stone, wood, or water even, in their physical forms to create effortlessly poetic sculptures, many of which are central to the new Arles space.

It is not so surprising that, after leaving his mark on Asia, Lee would relocate part of his New York foundation to France. The 86-year-old artist, who is represented by French gallerist Kamel Mennour, among others, has been exhibited all around France for years, and he maintains a studio in Paris's Montmartre district, where van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, Renoir, and Picasso all lived at some point before him.



Exterior of the Lee Ufan Arles, 2022.  
©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR;  
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS



Installation view of Lee Ufan Arles, 2022.  
©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

The real question is why Arles? This is where his 2013 show “Dissonance,” which led to the publication by Actes Sud of his first monograph in French, took place, before showings at the Château de Versailles (2014) and the Centre Pompidou Metz (2019) made him a big hit throughout France. “I am especially charmed by the city’s perfume where time fades away amidst the treasures of Roman culture,” he said.

The artist was also recently asked to partake in the celebrations of Arles’ 40 years as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Running through September, the resulting outdoor display features 13 works scattered across the 4th-century Alyscamps necropolis, a site imbued with spirituality. “Since we are in Arles, I tried to express a dimension that transcends space-time,” he said.



Installation view of Lee Ufan Arles, 2022, showing *Ciel sous terre* (*Sky under earth*).

©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

At Lee Ufan Arles, the four-story, 14,500-square-foot *hôtel particulier* consists of nearly 25 rooms, the very first being a luminous shop and ticket office rolled in one, followed by an elegant library, which may be turned into a tearoom in the future, both courtesy of award-winning French designer Constance Guisset.

In the first gallery, which once likely served as the guest entrance for the Dervieux family, stands at the center a monumental concrete cylinder that is a narrow snail-shaped labyrinth meant to be entered. Inside lies a floor projection of white clouds slowly moving through the air. “Like van Gogh before him, Lee Ufan was very much inspired by the Arlesian sky,” said Jean-Marie Gallais, curator of the 2019 Lee Ufan show at the Centre Pompidou Metz, who has also written wall text for the Arles space.

Lee confirmed, “The moments of my morning walks gazing at the sky along the quays of the Rhone make me feel happy.” He’s titled this brand new work, an architectural collaboration with Ando, *Ciel sous terre* (*Sky under earth*).



Installation view of Lee Ufan Arles, 2022, showing *Chemin vers Arles (Road to Arles)*.

©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

As with previous projects, Lee has paid special attention to site-specific installations throughout the mansion's grounds. *Chemin vers Arles (Road to Arles)* beautifully presents a curved mirror slab set upon the gravel. Just as the mirror begins its curve upward to the ceiling, Lee has placed between two large boulders. And older pieces have been reactivated, too. *The Stage* (originally conceived in late '60s), in the second gallery, is a case in point. Visitors are once again invited to step into a circle of light shielded by a large steel wall next to a massive rock.

A little further are two examples from Lee's "Relatum" series (*Relatum 1969/2022* and *Relatum – Gravité*), which synthesize the artist's earliest experiments with Mono-ha. Between these two works is a Roman bust discovered in the early stage of construction, about 2.5 feet underground, exactly where Lee had already planned to install *Ciel sous terre*. "It is ironic, when you think about it, that the only place that needed to be dug would display a video representation of the sky", Gallais, the curator, said. Now a long-term loan from the Musée de l'Arles antique, the relic has its own window case in the middle of a short hallway leading to an ascending staircase, which Lee had painted in white, and a new elevator.



Installation view of the lower level of the Lee Ufan Arles, 2022.

©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

Going down to the space's lower level, which is accessible only by appointment, are not one, but three site-specific creations. Two works from the "Dialogue" series, swaths of gradations of colors—one in oranges, another in blues—coming from exceptionally broad brushstrokes, have been painted on the floor. Lee compares them to "archeological findings" for the public to chance upon. The orange-dominated one is perpendicular; the blue-heaven one is parallel to a white wall where the artist has handwritten a poem called "The Bottom": "At the bottom of Arles there is a story, / at the bottom of this story there is an image, / and at the bottom of this image there is the unknown."

Back above ground, the approach on the second floor (the first floor according to the French system) is mainly chronological, starting with his 1970s series "From Line," with stripes painted in one gesture until the exhaustion of paint, to the 2000s "Dialogues" series, the latest pieces of which include wavy lines that convey deeper vibrations. The display includes drawings from the 1980s, some surprisingly less minimalist than others.



Installation view of Lee Ufan Arles, 2022.

©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

One level up is a forthcoming "hybrid" multipurpose space, for meetings, conferences, receptions, and concerts, as well as exhibitions of artists who are not Lee Ufan. (He would like to include works from his personal collection in the permanent display, "but nothing has been considered in detail yet," he said.)

This area is the only place in the building where the original moldings and authentic chimneys have been kept visible, as if to make people feel more at home. As a matter of fact, the artist said he sees the Lee Ufan Arles as a "place to live" rather than an exhibition hall, adding that "understanding the intelligence or the meaning of this space is not required to share the breath and sensations that life provides us while strolling among the paintings and sculptures."

*Hypebeast Art*  
11th May 2022

## HypeArt



Installation view of Lee Ufan Arles, 2022.

©adagp, Lee Ufan. Photo: Archives Kamel Mennour. Courtesy Of The Artist And Kamel Mennour, Paris.

TEXT BY  
Shawn Ghassemirani

### Lee Ufan Unveiled a New Museum in the South of France

A 16-century mansion reconverted to highlight his legendary imprint, along with serving as an exhibition space for emerging artists.

Arles is a Southern French city that is home to a gamut of artistic treasures. From a well-preserved [Roman](#) coliseum to medieval street corners that inspired the dynamic compositions of [Vincent Van Gogh](#). The historic city is home to a new museum specially opened by the South Korean artist, sculptor and philosopher, [Lee Ufan](#).

Globally recognized for his minimalist paintings and sculptures that contemplate the relationship between artwork, viewer and space, the new institution is an extension of the New York-based [Lee Ufan Foundation](#). With a studio in Paris' Montmartre district, the additional outpost in the South of France felt like a natural fit for an artist who has exhibited around the country for years.

Housed at Hôtel Vernon, a 16th-century private mansion that was once the home of the Dervieux family, Ufan has reworked with award-winning architect [Tadao Ando](#), who in 2010

designed the Lee Ufan museum on the Japanese island of Naoshima. The Arles space has been repurposed to accentuate Ufan's minimalist practice, such as *Chemin vers Arles (Road to Arles)*, a new work that features a long curved mirror juxtaposed against two boulders and a rigid gravel floor. The installation was [inspired](#) by Ufan's "morning walks gazing at the sky along the quays of the Rhone."

The multi-floor space includes a lower level that is only available via appointment. There you'll find two works from Ufan's emblematic "Dialogues" series, which depicts a gradient that is made up of oil and crushed stone pigments. For a room that can almost be equated to a cellar, the artwork interestingly alludes to the gradient formations found across the skies above.

More than just a museum dedicated solely to his own oeuvre, the second floor of the Lee Ufan Arles will serve as a cultural and exhibition space for a range of artistic disciplines. Please visit the institution's [website](#) to inquire into tickets and more information.

In case you missed it, [Ugo Rondinone meditates on space and time at Kukje Gallery](#).

**Lee Ufan Arles**

5 Rue de Vernon,  
13200 Arles, France

# LISSON GALLERY

*Artnet News*  
12 May 2022

**artnet**<sup>®</sup>news

## Museums

### Minimalist Artist Lee Ufan Opens His Own Art Center in Arles—His Third After Solo Spaces in Japan and Korea

The new location is in a 17th-century mansion in the city's historic quarter, converted by the artist's friend and architect of choice, Tadao Ando.

**Jo Lawson-Tancred**, May 12, 2022



Lee Ufan Arles, Hôtel Vernon, Arles, 2022. © Lee Ufan, ADAGP, Paris, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris.

The Minimalist artist Lee Ufan has opened a new space to show his work in Arles in the south of France. The art center is located at Hôtel Vernon, a large, 17th-century mansion in the city's historic quarter that has been converted by Lee's friend and architect of choice, Tadao Ando.

The mansion will house a permanent collection of Lee's work, with ten sculptures from his series "Relatum" installed across the ground floor, where there is also a library and shop. Some 30 paintings hang on the second floor and three site-specific installations at the lower level are open to visitors by appointment only. There are temporary exhibition spaces for other artists on the third floor, as well as rooms for receptions and conferences.



Lee Ufan Arles, Hôtel Vernon, Arles, 2022. Photo: © Lee Ufan, ADAGP, Paris, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris.

Arles has long been a region that has inspired artists, among them Van Gogh and Gauguin. Lee's own interest in the area stems from its ancient past. Towards the end of 2021, the artist staged "Requiem", a special exhibition celebrating the 40 years since Arles was named a UNESCO World Heritage site. Inspired by the picturesque ruins of Alyscamps, a large Roman necropolis, he presented 13 new works in conversation with the surviving sarcophagi.

And in the new art center, visitors will be able to see an ancient portrait bust believed to be of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius, which was discovered in a wall during the building's restoration



Lee Ufan Arles, Hôtel Vernon, Arles, 2022. Photo: © Lee Ufan, ADAGP, Paris, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris.

Lee, who was born in Korea in 1936, currently lives and works in Paris, New York and Japan. He is best known as the founder of the Japanese avant-garde group *Mono-ha*, or “School of Things,” which emerged in the 1960s. The group explored natural and industrial materials and their relationship with the surrounding space.

Lee has previously established a personal museum in Naoshima in 2010, also designed by Ando, and the Lee Ufan Space at the Busan Museum of Art in 2015. To fund the Arles space, he set up an endowment fund supported by many of his friends, including Michel Enrici, the former director of France's Maeght Foundation.



Lee Ufan Arles, Hôtel Vernon, Arles, 2022. Photo: © Lee Ufan, ADAGP, Paris, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris.



## Weekly News Roundup: May 13, 2022

BY THE EDITORS



Installation view of LEE UFAN's works within Lee Ufan Arles, 2022. Photo by Julie Joubert. Copyright and courtesy the artist. Image via Facebook.

### **New Lee Ufan Museum Opens in Southern France**

Veteran Korean artist [Lee Ufan](#) has opened a new museum, an extension of the artist's New York-based foundation, in Arles, a city in southern France. The museum is located in a 16th-century mansion, Hôtel Vernon, which for a long period belonged to the Dervieux family of antique dealers, and has been renovated by the award-winning architect Tadao Ando for Lee's works. Ando has previously designed the Lee Ufan Museum on the Japanese island of Naoshima (2010) and the Space Lee Ufan at the Busan Museum of Art (2015) in South Korea. The project is supported by an endowment fund launched by Lee himself, with donors including his friends Michel Enrici, the former director of the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, as well as his publishers at the Arles-based Actes Sud, Jean-Paul Capitani, and Françoise Nyssen.

# LISSON GALLERY

*The Financial Times*  
23 May 2022



## Artist Lee Ufan: ‘I wanted to start a conversation between the living and the dead’

The Korean painter and sculptor has opened a foundation in Arles, where he has placed work in its vast Roman necropolis



Installation view of 'Requiem' at the Alyscamps, Arles © Claire Dorn

In the Alyscamps, the Roman necropolis in the southern French city of Arles, a delicate tinkling fills the air when the wind blows, both eerie and sweet. It comes from the branches of an ancient pine tree, hung with dozens of bells by the Korean artist Lee Ufan. It is, he explains, a homage to the French artist Christian Boltanski, who died in July last year.

“He was my friend,” says Lee simply. “He was very interested in shamans, especially from Latin America, and bells were important to him. I’ve wanted to use them [in my work] since the 1970s, so I see this as a kind of offering.” If Boltanski’s own work dug deep into human suffering, here Lee evokes his friend’s spirit — a floating, fleeting human presence — with gentle sonic elegance in this village of the dead.

Lee Ufan has quite a presence in Arles this summer. The homage to Boltanski is just one part of an outdoor exhibition of 14 sculptural pieces carefully sited in the Alyscamps that runs until September, while in April a permanent foundation opened in the 17th-century Hôtel Vernon. This *hôtel particulier* in the city's historic centre until recently housed a family antiques business. Now the ground and first floor are home to more than 50 of Lee's works, including series of paintings and significant installations. The second floor will be given over to artists invited to create contemporary shows.



Lee Ufan at the Alyscamps © Claire Dorn

Lee, 85, has led a globetrotting life. Born in Korea in 1936, he left for Japan aged 20, where he completed a university education in literature and philosophy. He emerged from the Mono-ha movement, a Japanese/Korean school dating from the late 1960s which explored the properties of materials rather than representational art, and has built an international reputation on his perfectly constructed paintings in which single brushstrokes travel down the canvas. His sculptures are composed of basic materials used in their most minimal form — rubber, metal, leather, rock. In his installations, the natural meets the man-made.

He has bases in New York and Tokyo and his own museums in Naoshima in Japan and Busan in South Korea. But France seems to have most taken him to heart. He has kept a studio in Montmartre since the mid-1990s, and this loyalty was rewarded with a major exhibition at Versailles in 2014, where he framed the palace's grand facade with a slender steel arch and interrupted Le Nôtre's tightly controlled gardens with natural boulders and shiny sheets of steel. In 2019 he was given a full-blown retrospective at the Pompidou in Metz.

Originally, Lee had set his sights on New York as the home for his official foundation. "I saw that all the artists working with the same gallery as me in Manhattan also had one there," he says through his interpreter, referring to his stablemates at Pace, the American mega-gallery. "But I started to worry. New York is a very aggressive environment, and it occurred to me that Europe, where there is more history, might be more appropriate." So he set off to the South of France, accompanied by the master architect Tadao Ando and with help from others set up an endowment before securing the exceptional Hôtel Vernon.



From Lee Ufan's 'Relatum' series at the Hôtel Vernon, Arles © Julie Joubert



Lee Ufan wants colour 'for richness, for gorgeousness' © Julie Joubert

Lee and Ando are long-term friends and collaborators. In 2010, they worked together on the Naoshima museum. "Our two sets of ideas completely combined there," says Lee. "It wasn't about an architect making a building and an artist coming in after and adding the artworks." Instead, spaces emerged from the needs of the works they contain. Conditions at the heritage-heavy Hôtel Vernon are clearly quite different. "Of course, in a building of this age there are laws and restrictions," says Lee. "I asked him to make the minimum changes in order to show my work."

Though Ando has acted with caution, the history of the Hôtel Vernon is only strongly sustained at its entrance, where a fabulously weathered wooden door gives on to a spacious foyer whose stone arch leads to a handsome stone staircase. Otherwise, the architect's hand is felt in a series of tightly compressed spaces on the ground floor. In these rooms, the phenomenological nature of Lee's work — a basin of water reflecting light; a sheet of glass shattered by a single large stone — is intense. In the foyer itself, Ando has created a circular concrete cell, containing in its floor a video recording of the ever-changing Japanese sky.



The bells are Lee Ufan's tribute to his late friend Christian Boltanski © Claire Dorn

On the first floor, the progress of Lee's painting career is told from the early monochrome *From Point* and *From Line* pieces, where a short dash or longer stroke emerges from a single definitive starting spot, to his current, more colour-saturated works. "For a long time, I only used simple colour," says Lee. "But now my stroke is bigger and I sometimes need to have colour for richness, for gorgeousness." He pauses. "Maybe it's because I'm getting old and have a strange desire to be young. Or maybe it's because I want to provide those who look with a strong feeling that will go straight to your heart."

In the basement, or cave, which retains the chilled stillness for which it would have been valued in the past, Lee has painted directly on to the floor as part of a work called "Response — Excavated I". The paintings each look like a huge single brushstroke of graduated colour but take many days and layers to complete and create an imprimatur of occupation in the very foundations of the house. "I wanted to make it feel like an archeological site," he says, "like something that had been excavated."

It is perhaps a commentary on this city where history and archaeology are everywhere, from the Roman amphitheatre to the Romanesque churches and the Alyscamps. The necropolis dates back to the fourth century and its paths are lined with crumbling 10th- and 11th-century sarcophagi and small dilapidated medieval chapels, frequently overcome by nature.

"I was speechless when I first visited the Alyscamps, I felt only strangeness and dread," says Lee. "Then I realised that nowadays we extract the idea of death from our lives, even though without it, life is just thin, uninteresting. I wanted to start a conversation between the living and the dead."



From Lee Ufan's 'Relatum' series © Julie Joubert



Installation view of 'Requiem' © Claire Dorn

His 14 interventions, under the title *Requiem*, include a slender dynamic strip of polished steel, secured by two standing stones, which absorbs the surrounding landscape; a soundtrack of sombre bells that fills an empty chapel; and a chapel floor covered in crushed and dangerous-looking slate, as though the roof has crashed in. It is up to the viewer to bring the meaning, but the message seems meditative and clear: about the relationships between the natural and the man-made, the living and the dead. "I'd like visitors to feel the infinite space," says Lee, "to breathe the same air as history has done."

*'Requiem'* runs to September 30, [leeufan-arles.org](http://leeufan-arles.org). The foundation is open Tuesday-Sunday

## IL GIORNALE DELL'ARTE

### Lee Ufan opens his third museum in France

The European headquarters of the Korean artist in a seventeenth-century palace in Arles restored by Tadao Ando



*One of the spaces of the Lee Ufan Arles*

LUANA DE MICCO | May 30, 2022 | Arles

At the Hôtel Vernon, a seventeenth-century building in the picturesque streets of the historic center, not far from the famous ancient arenas, the Lee Ufan Arles, the third exhibition venue for the South Korean artist's works, opened on April 15, after the Lee Ufan Museum on the Japanese island of Naoshima, opened in 2010, and the Espace Lee Ufan of the Busan Museum of Art in Seoul, in 2015. Unsurprisingly, Lee Ufan's first foundation in Europe is in France, where the artist has forged strong ties since the 1971 Paris Biennale and in which he became known to the general public with the exhibition at Versailles in 2014 and with the retrospective of 2019 at the Pompidou-Metz.

The first meeting between Lee Ufan and Arles dates back to 2013, when the city dedicated the monographic "Dissidance" to him in the Saint-Laurent-Le Capitole Chapel. Arles is increasingly becoming a major cultural hub in France, with the annual international photography festival, Les Rencontres, and the opening last June of the Fondation Luma, in the grandiose building of Frank O. Gehry.

The opening of the new headquarters of the Lee Ufan foundation has suffered many delays and the inauguration, initially announced for the summer of 2020, has been postponed. The Hôtel Vernon was entirely restored by the Japanese architect Tadao Ando, who already designed the Naoshima museum. Among other things, during the construction site, the ancient bust of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius, successor of Hadrian and a native of Arles, was found, which is now part of the route.



*One of the spaces of the Lee Ufan Arles*

In a space of 1,500 square meters on three floors, a selection of sculptures, installations and paintings by the minimalist artist, born in 1936, main theorist of Mono-ha ("School of Things"), an avant-garde movement that established itself in Japan among the finest, is exhibited. 1960s and early 1970s, often associated with Arte Povera for the choice of raw materials from nature and recycled industrial elements, such as tubes and sheets, glass, paper, wood. On the ground floor are about thirty sculptures from the «Relatum» series, begun in 1972, an example of this encounter between nature and industry, fragile and solid, transparent and opaque. The artist hardly intervenes on the materials, while the position in space is primordial.

On the first floor about thirty paintings are exhibited, according to a chronological path. The third floor is dedicated to temporary exhibitions. " *Lee Ufan Arles' ambition is to become an exhibition center for discovering the artist's works, but also a place of life to support various artistic and cultural activities* ", they declare from the museum. Also in Arles, 13 new works created ad hoc by Lee Ufan are the protagonists of the "Requiem" exhibition (until 29 September in the Alyscamps necropolis), curated by Alfred Pacquement, former director of the Musée d'art moderne at the Pompidou Center.

# 发现ADDISCOVERY

艺术、设计、建筑、时尚、生活

## 李禹焕在阿尔勒

在法国东南部，被艺术和历史双重浸润的阿尔勒像凡·高笔下的印象派画作，自19世纪末以来，一直是艺术家的心之向往。如今这里又增添了一处惊喜的存在：由日本建筑师安藤忠雄翻新改造的艺术家李禹焕全新永久展览空间——李禹焕阿尔勒中心 (Lee Ufan Arles)，现已正式向公众开放。它隐身于阿尔勒中心地带的弗农酒店 (Hotel Vernon) 内，这是一座16—18世纪的宅邸，曾经是Dervieux家族的私人府邸，周边是众多古董商的所在地。艺术家李禹焕说：“我对这座城市的特殊氛围异常着迷，在这里，能感受到时间在罗马文明的瑰宝中慢慢流逝。”在阿尔勒，李禹焕与安藤忠雄一起尝试表达多维度的时空关系，在这座厚重的老建筑里，让艺术与历史遗迹、建筑空间和人期而遇，和谐奏鸣，响彻在时空之外。(故事接以下两页)





艺术家李禹煊和建筑师安藤忠雄以最小的干预在这座诞生于16-18世纪的历史建筑里创造了一个超越时空的永久展览空间。建筑是发酵器，人是连接枢纽，艺术作品是触控，书写着独特的关系哲学。



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建筑展览空间改造  
安藤忠雄建筑研究所  
www.tadao-ando.com

李禹煊阿尔勒中心是艺术家继直岛李禹煊美术馆、釜山艺术博物馆李禹煊空间(Space Lee Ufan)落成后的第三个展览空间。该空间既是一个展览场域，又是一个多功能空间，占据了弗农酒店(Hotel Vernon)的三层楼，共25个房间。他说：“我想以最小的干预来尊重那段历史。”所以他请来自己的建筑师好友安藤忠雄。“我和安藤忠雄有着创作灵感上的共鸣，我们可以将艺术博物馆定义为展览空间，但更希望它首先是一个有生活影子的地方。”安藤忠雄尊重这座老建筑的旧有面貌，保留了老宅邸的原始材料特质，在建筑空间的固有比例中，用简洁的线条以及石、木、混凝土的微妙平衡向弗农酒店的老建筑致敬，并在这个历史悠久的地方与李禹煊的作品之间建立起一种精神连接与隔时空的对话。

推开风化的老木门，映入眼帘的首层空间入口处安放着重安藤忠雄与李禹煊合作的作品，灵感来自阿尔勒的天空。安藤忠雄标志性的混凝土墙面直抵屋顶，经过一小段螺旋形构造的通道，藏在尽头地板上的天空投影像是一个关于自然的谜题。白云在空中缓慢移动，让人不时想到某一处疗愈的天空。李禹煊说：“早上沿着罗纳河码头散步时，每每凝视天空，我都会感到快乐。”

李禹煊阿尔勒中心展出了包括雕塑、装置及约30件精选绘画作品。于李禹煊而言，雕塑并不是一个独立自主的实体，而只是相对于外部世界的存在。石头、钢板、玻璃、棉纸、木材、绳索、皮革、油彩、石蜡和水等材料在空间里构成了一种相遇，一种与世界、自然、建筑和空间的关系。他几乎不对作品材料采取任何艺术介入的行为，终极意义都将回归于人的感知。人就像回音壁，连接着不同的空间和作品，最终与作品完成了一种参与性创造的仪式感。“站在我的作品面前，观众只需调动感官，用心体会。作品即创造相遇。”

中心首层呈现了10件《被关系者》(Relatum)系列雕塑。每件作品都仅由一块或几块浅色圆形石头和长方形钢板组成，在李禹煊的装置作品中，空间既是未被触碰的，又是被占用的，介于“为”与“无为”之间。其中石头与钢板是对笔触与画布之间关系的另类描摹。在中心的第二层，艺术家按时序呈现具有递进关系的单笔涂抹绘画系列。在李禹煊于1991年开始创作的《对应》(Correspondence)系列绘画中，他将油画颜料与碎石混合，绘于白色表面之上。画面仅由一两笔灰蓝色构成。第三层用于临时展览及举办活动。

此前他在阿尔勒各处的罗马式墓地推出的个展——“安魂曲(Requiem)”呈现了制造与非制造、周围环境的物质和非物质元素之间的持续共存形式。这在阿尔勒的历史文化氛围里激发了另一种艺术哲学思维。作为前卫艺术流派“物派(Mono-ha)”最重要的理论家和实践者之一的李禹煊旨在摒弃西方的具象表现概念，聚焦物质与感知之间的关系，不主张表达或干预。无论雕塑、绘画还是装置，他都以极简风格，将绘画与未经绘画、被占用与未被占用空间的关系建造了自己的艺术实践城堡。AD





对页左图 李禹焕 1936年出生于韩国庆南，画家、雕塑家、作家、哲学家，前卫艺术流派“物派”最重要的理论家和实践者之一。右图 由艺术家李禹焕携手日本建筑师安藤忠雄一起创作的名为*Ciel sous terre*的装置作品，灵感源自阿尔勒的天空，巨大的圆柱形“安藤式”混凝土墙与地面的天空影像让人梦回由安藤忠雄设计的日本直岛李禹焕美术馆。

本页上图 观者可以自由穿梭在雕塑和空间中，以天然石头和不锈钢杆为主材创作于2004—2021年的雕塑系列(“被关系者”) (*Relatum*) 既是作品，亦是开启另一个时空联结的钥匙。下图 以天然石材和钢板为创作材质的雕塑系列(“被关系者”) (*Relatum*) 就像一个舞台，将核心交于观者自己体验内心的世界。

interior

LISSON GALLERY

ELLEDECO

August Issue 2022

[家|居|廊]  
DECORATION

ART 艺术

“这本是一个用于居住的地方……如今漫步于画作和雕塑之间，毋需分享生活的呼吸和感觉，就能理解这个空间的智慧或意义。”——李禹焕

# 艺者的共鸣 THE ECHO BETWEEN ARTISTS

摄影 Julie Joubert, Claire Dorn 文 Swann 编辑 Kevin Ma 马子涛 图片提供 Lee Ufan, Lison Gallery, Lee Ufan Arias Foundation. 视觉中国



阿尔勒，这一位于法国东南部的罗曼古城，自Vincent van Gogh（文森特·凡·高）描摹星空以来，就一直受到艺术家的偏爱。去年夏天，著名建筑师Frank Gehry设计的The Tower艺术中心再次将世人目光聚焦于这里。今年4月，李禹焕阿尔勒中心（Lee Ufan Arles）也在此开幕。

Lee Ufan Arles 李禹焕阿尔勒中心  
地址：15 Rue Vernon 13200 Arles, France

韩国艺术家李禹焕是一位著名的画家、雕塑家、作家和哲学家，同时是先锋艺术流派“物派(Mono-ha)”最重要的理论家和实践者之一。李禹焕阿尔勒中心坐落在始建于16世纪的弗农酒店（Hotel Vernon），这座4层楼高、拥有25个房间的酒店曾是古董商德维欧家族（the Dervieux）的宅邸。改造由设计过日本直岛李禹焕博物馆（2010年）的建筑师安藤忠雄主持，李禹焕称两人的“艺术灵感产生了共鸣”，安藤忠雄则称李禹焕的作品“批判了西方美术，是重视东方哲学思考的当代艺术实践”。

在此之前，李禹焕曾在法国多次推出大型展览项目，包括2013年在阿尔勒的“失衡（Dissonance）”展览、2014年在凡尔赛宫的“强烈与沉默（Intense and Silent）”装置艺术系列、2019年在梅斯蓬皮杜艺术中心的“栖居时间（Inhabiting Time）”，以及2021年在阿尔勒城中各处罗马式墓地推出的个展“安魂曲（Requiem）”等。李禹焕所引领的“物派”旨在摒弃西方的具象表现概念，聚焦于物质、环境、人与感知之间的关系场域，追求“余白的艺术”和“寂静的回响”等先锋理念。在他看来，“最高级的表达并不是从无物中创造事物，而更像是轻叩既存之物，从而呈现出这个世界更加鲜活的一面。”

在访客入口中心矗立着一个巨大的混凝土圆柱体，这实际上是个狭窄的迷宫，里面有一层“白色的云”在空中缓慢地移动。“和之前的凡·高一样，李禹焕的灵感来自阿尔勒的天空。”该空间的文本撰写者Jean-Marie Gallais分享道。李禹焕将这件装置看作是安藤忠雄建筑的合作，命名为“Sky under Earth（Ciel sous terre）”。建筑首层呈现了十件来自“被关系者（Relatum）”系列雕塑，其中一尊罗马半身像是在施工初期发现的；在建筑二层，他按时序呈现了具有递进关系的单色绘画系列，从20世纪70年代的“从线（From Line）”系列开始，直到2000年代的“对话”系列；第三层则将用于临时展览及举办活动，这个区域是建筑中唯一保留空间原始装饰和烟囱的地方，似乎是为了让观者更有亲近感。此外，在只有预约才能进入的地下一层，蓝色和橙色的渐变作品被喻为偶然的“考古发现”，李禹焕在旁边的墙上题写了一首名为《背面》的诗：“在阿尔勒的背后有一个故事，在这个故事的背后有一个图像，在这个图像的背后有一种未知。”<sup>①</sup>



Lee Ufan  
李禹焕 艺术家

Tadao Ando  
安藤忠雄 建筑师

1. 由两条不锈钢圆柱体与两块天然原石组成的作品“Dissonance”，来自李禹焕从1960年代开始创作的“被关系者（Relatum）”系列。  
2. 展览空间中，呈现李禹焕由1970年代开始创作的“从线（From Line）”绘画系列作品。对页：空间一层，混凝土圆柱体实为李禹焕与安藤忠雄联合创作的一件名为“Sky under Earth（Ciel sous terre）”的装置作品，外形与后者标志性的建筑元素相呼应。



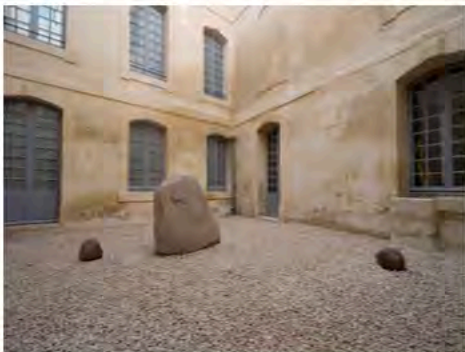
# 李禹焕 阿尔勒中心

李禹焕 (Lee Ufan) 在法国阿尔勒的全新永久展览空间现已正式向公众开放。此全新的展览中心由日本建筑师安藤忠雄设计，位于阿尔勒中心地带的一座十六至十八世纪宅邸——弗农酒店 (Hotel Vernon)。

作为一名画家、雕塑家、作家、哲学家，李禹焕同时也是前卫艺术流派“物派” (Mono-ha) 最重要的理论家和实践者之一。李禹焕阿尔勒中心展出了雕塑、装置，及约三十件精选绘画。展览空间首层呈现了十件来自《被关系者》(Relatum) 系列的雕塑，用不同材料的结合及其产生的联系是这些作品的核心概念。在中心的第二层，艺术家按时序呈现具有递进关系的绘画系列，参观者可领略艺术家单笔涂抹

绘画的发展，而第三层则用于临时展览及举办活动。

李禹焕阿尔勒  
中心装置现场，  
法国，2022，  
©Lee Ufan 图片  
由艺术家惠允，  
摄影师Julie Joubert



# LISSON GALLERY

*Judith Benhamou-Huet Reports*  
12 January 2022



The Lee Ufan experience in Arles: “Death transformed by nature lives on discreetly”



## Van Gogh



In 1888 Vincent Van Gogh brought his friend Paul Gauguin to Arles. He dreamed of creating a community there, a communion even, of artists captivated by the colours of the Camargue region. It was October when the two men ventured to the outskirts of the town to paint in an old Roman necropolis which was also once a Christian cemetery, the Alyscamps.

## A garden of ruins



It's a garden of ruins which is both the site of a bucolic walk and a place of eternal rest that has fallen into disuse. Each of the two men produced a painting that would make the place famous, with its red trees and majestic walkways. Fast-forward 133 years in the same month of October, and the trees have reddened in the same fashion and the ancient headstones are still aligned in the same places, when another artist entered this place.

## Spirituality



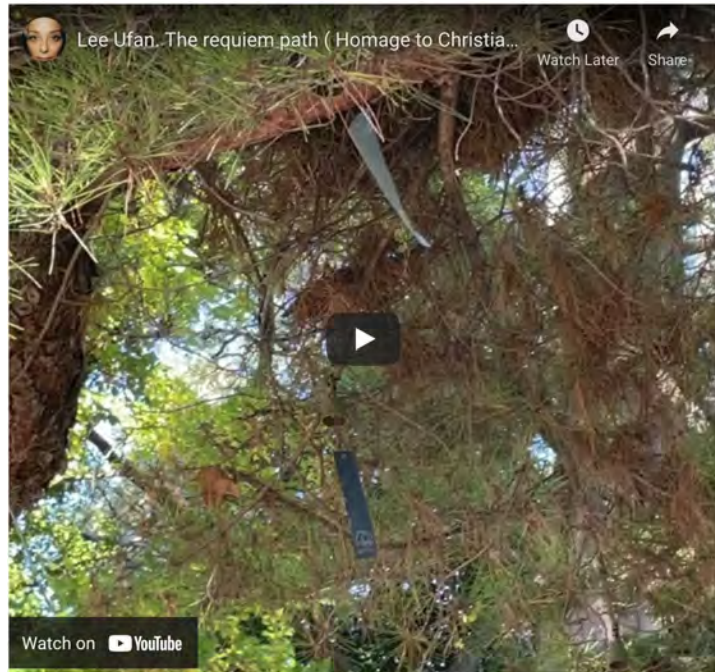
Lee Ufan (born in 1936), the Korean artist who has long been based between Japan and France, creates paintings and conceptual installations that are always imbued with spirituality.

## Versailles, Naoshima, Guggenheim



Prior to the Alysamps, he occupied the park at the Château de Versailles, and took over the whole of the Guggenheim spiral in New York, and a museum in his name on the island of Naoshima in Japan ([See the report here](#)). In 2019 a retrospective dedicated to him was staged at the Centre Pompidou Metz (See the report [here](#) and also [here](#) about his exhibition at Chateau La Coste near Aix en Provence) . In March 2022 he is also due to open in Arles, in a beautiful Provençal townhouse, a foundation for posterity.

## Christian Boltanski



At the Alysamps he has conceived fourteen artworks which together create a hugely poetic layout. Death is present everywhere, starting with a work in tribute to the French artist Christian Boltanski, who passed away recently. Like the latter did in one of his installations, Lee Ufan has arranged little bells that resonate in the trees when the mistral wind blows, like the memory of the souls of the deceased.

## Abstract altar

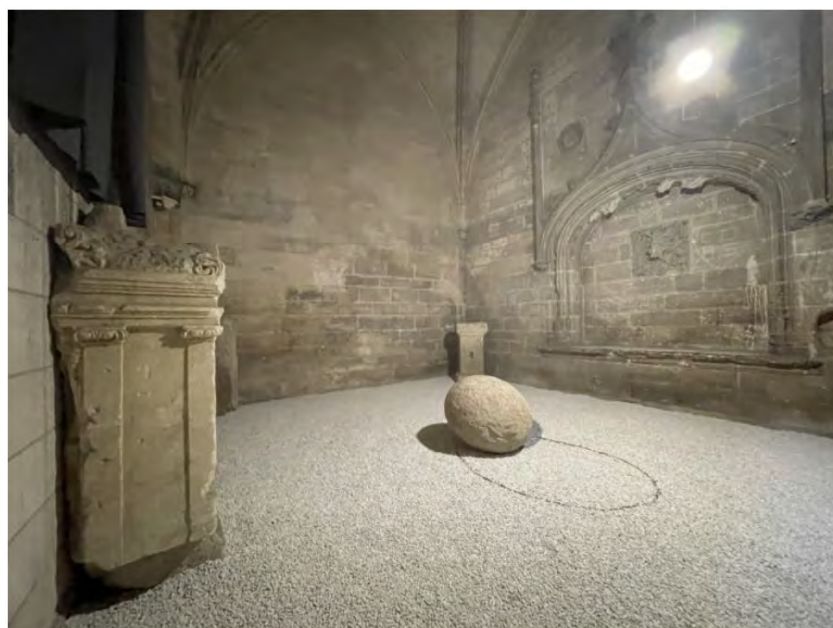


Lee Ufan's most beautiful work at the Alysamps can be found in the chapel, which dates from the Middle Ages. Here he establishes a dialogue in an abstract kind of altar with a huge round rock and a black monochrome canvas. "The rocks that we find in nature are generally very old. Stone is time. As for the painting, it's simultaneously visible and invisible. A kind of luminous black. This was a well known quest in art history for Rembrandt, Goya and even Soulages."

## Poetry by Lee Ufan



The Alysamps has also inspired poetry by the artist, who writes: "The murmur of the foliage in the trees, growing in the midst of these ruins, makes the heart beat harder. In this singular space filled with buildings that have almost crumbled, death breathes with near tranquillity. Death transformed by nature doesn't die, but lives on discreetly. Travellers forget themselves and engage with this infinite space. And they experience another dimension."



## Someone behind me



Lee Ufan also says: "It has been an experience that's truly out of the ordinary. There was a moment while I was alone in a chapel, when I felt someone behind me, a presence that made me feel very light."

He concludes: "Here, in amongst the ruins, I'd like visitors to feel this infinite space."



Until September 2022. [www.leeufanfoundation.org/arles](http://www.leeufanfoundation.org/arles)



# Numéro

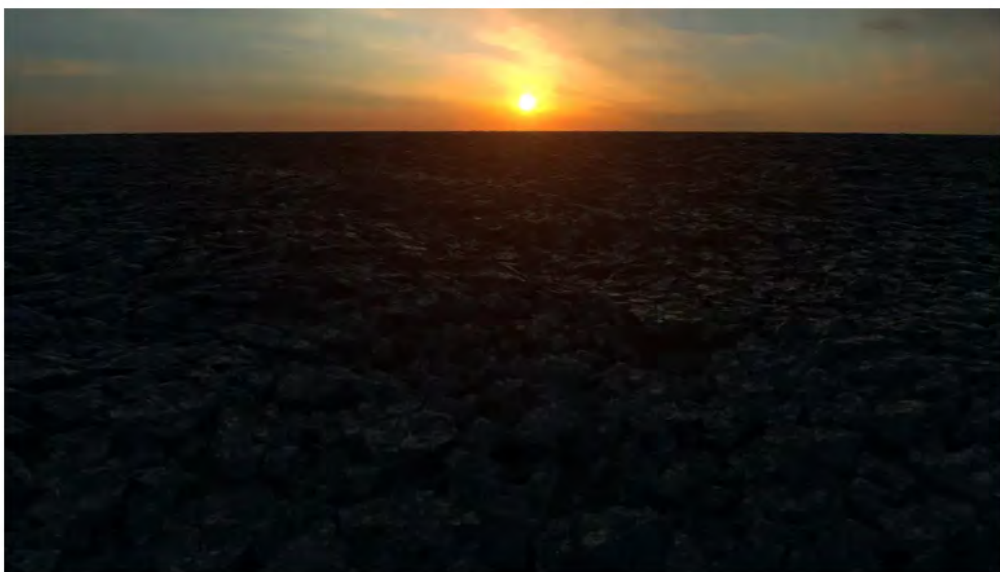


## 8 exhibitions not to be missed in April

APRIL 11, 2022

The retrospective of Arthur Jafa at LUMA Arles, Anita Molinero at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the opening of the Lee Ufan Arles Foundation or even the poetic dialogue of Roni Horn and Felix Gonzalez-Torres... Discover exhibitions not to be missed in April.

By [Matthew Jacquet](#).



Arthur Jafa, "AGHDRA" (2021). Digital video, color, sound 85 minutes

## 1. Arthur Jafa, Sky Hopinka, Rachel Rose... the new season of the LUMA-Arles foundation

Almost a year after the inauguration of its tower designed by architect Frank Gehry, LUMA Arles presents its new programme. The Maja Hoffmann Collection offers a new display of pieces by major contemporary artists, from Olafur Eliasson to Tacita Dean, as well as a short film by French artist Cyprien Gaillard and a film by American Rachel Rose. In the Parc des Ateliers, we discover a major retrospective of the African-American artist Arthur Jafa, bringing together several major videos and unpublished pieces produced for the occasion, as well as an exhibition of the filmmaker and visual artist Amerindian Sky Hopinka, whose production questions the relationship of indigenous populations to their territory, their language and their culture.

Arthur Jafa / Sky Hopinka / Cyprien Gaillard / Rachel Rose, from April 14 at the LUMA Arles foundation.



Anita Molinero, "The Pirate's Bride #1" (2012). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Christophe Gaillard © Anita Molinero, Adagp, Paris, 2022



Anita Molinero, "Untitled (Plots)" (2012). Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Christophe Gaillard © Anita Molinero, Adagp, Paris, 2022

## 2. The extruded sculptures of Anita Molinero at the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris

Transforming waste into a work of art, Anita Molinero has made it her distinctive mark. Swollen plastic trash cans, children's huts sagging on themselves, twisted exhaust pipes and compressed construction studs... nothing seems to escape the 69-year-old French sculptor for whom the most banal or the ugliest can, by its infinity potential for transformation, generating new forms. Through some forty works divided into two chapters, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris is devoting a major retrospective to him, supplemented by monumental sculptures inside and outside the building as well as a film in 3D.

Anita Molinero, "Extrudia", until July 24 at the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris, Paris 16th.



Douglas Gordon, "Pillow" (2020). Kamel Mennour Gallery

### 3. Douglas Gordon meets Alberto Giacometti at the Giacometti Institute

In April 2020, Douglas Gordon was to open an exhibition at the Giacometti Institute and create a series of new pieces inspired by the work of the famous 20th century sculptor. Confinement obliges, the fatally postponed exhibition has been transformed into a one-year accompaniment of the Scotsman by the foundation, the fruit of which can now be discovered through sculptures and other unpublished works presented in dialogue with those of his elder, as well as a program of discussions organized inside and outside the walls of the institute.

Douglas Gordon, "The Morning After", from April 20 to June 12 at the Giacometti Institute, Paris 14th.



Nairy Baghramian, "Es ist ausser Haus" (2006). © Nairy Baghramian. Courtesy of the artist, Marian Goodman Gallery, kurimanzutto

#### 4. The intriguing volumes of Nairy Baghramian at the Carré d'art

Monoliths in pastel colors nested inside each other, fragments of translucent tubes mounted on steel circles, suspended wooden logs... The volumes imagined by Nairy Baghramian are rarely identifiable, but their abstract forms question the relationship of the visitor to the object. and invite him to rethink his experience of space. Driven by her vision of architecture, design and interior design, the – sometimes almost theatrical – practice of the Iranian artist based in Berlin plays on the points of tension and balance, often taking into account the place where she presents her work. In Nîmes, the Carré d'art is devoting his first personal exhibition to him in France.

Nairy Baghramian, "Parloir", from April 29 to September 18 at the Carré d'art, Nîmes.



Exhibition view "Felix Gonzalez-Torres - Roni Horn", Bourse de Commerce - Pinault Collection, Paris, 2022.

#### 5. The poetic dialogue between Roni Horn and Felix Gonzalez-Torres at the Bourse de commerce

Legends of contemporary art, Felix Gonzales-Torres and Roni Horn have redefined the exhibition medium as a fluid and moving experience, placing the viewer at its heart. Sharing militant and political themes, the two artists and friends gathered at the Bourse de Commerce for a dialogue between some of their major works. The curtain of red plastic beads, mirrors and garlands of light bulbs of the first, made a few years before his death from AIDS in 1996, respond to the bluish cylinders of the second as well as photographs and watercolors, which testify with poetry of a friendship and of one whose minimal forms bear witness with great finesse to a sincere commitment.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres - Roni Horn, from April 6 to September 26 at the Bourse de commerce - Pinault Collection, Paris 1er.



Lee Ufan, "Relatum - Existence" (2014) © Adagp, Paris 2018

#### 6. The opening of the Lee Ufan Arles Foundation

His installations, sculptures and refined canvases governed by the silent forces of nature and the precision of gesture have made Lee Ufan one of the most famous and appreciated Korean artists in France. A powerful link confirmed by the opening of an art center dedicated to the 85-year-old man in the heart of Arles, in an 18th century hotel refurbished by the architect Tadao Ando, where several dozen of his works will be permanently exhibited throughout the floors.

Lee Ufan Arles, opening April 15 at the Hotel Vernon, Arles.



"Impromptu Venus" © Anaïs Castaings, 2018.

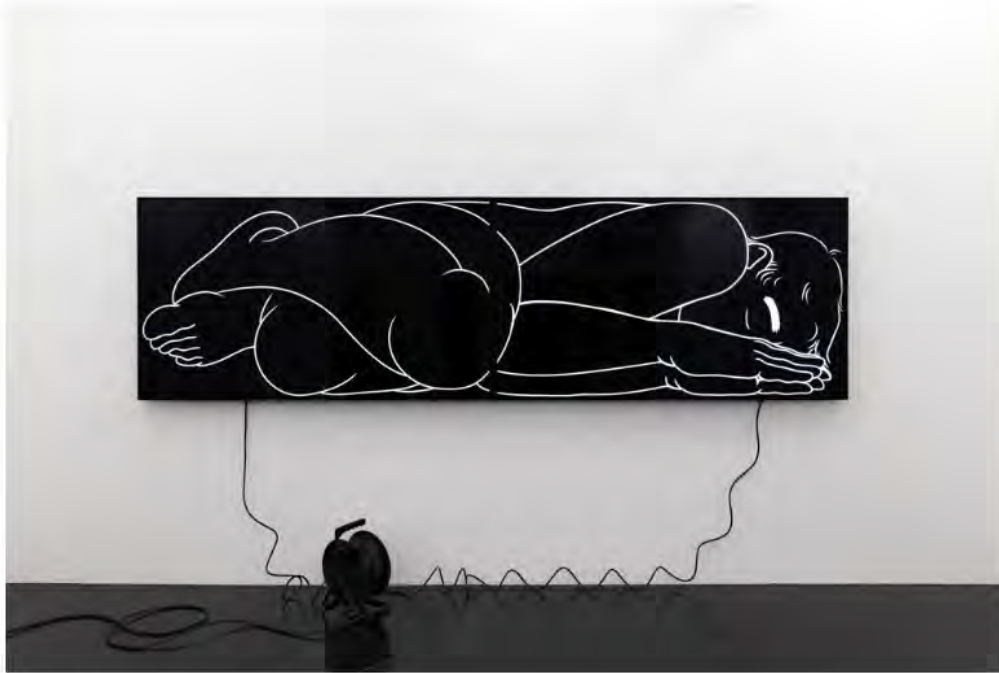


© Joan Gory Peel, Victoire Gonzalvez 2019-20.

## 7. The emerging art scene at La Villette

For four editions of its 100% L'Expo festival, the Grande Halle de la Villette has been putting the spotlight on emerging artists for almost a month. By presenting within its walls and in its park the works of dozens of young people freshly graduated from French art schools, the event offers a wide panorama of new contemporary creation. This year, the artists selected come from both the Beaux-arts de Paris and the Villa Arson in Nice, via La Fémis, the National School of Photography in Arles and the Kourtrajmé School of Cinema.

"100% L'EXPO", as part of the 100% Festival, from April 6 to 30 in the Grande halle and the Parc de la Villette, Paris 19th.



Özgür Kar, "a guy under the influence" (2020).

## 8. The festival that questions the limits of the visible at Jeu de Paume

If since 2004, the international reputation of the Jeu de Paume is mainly due to its exhibitions on photography, its history and its contemporary mutations, the Parisian institution located at the edge of the Tuileries Garden is renewing itself by inaugurating this spring its festival dedicated to the image. Entitled "Fata Morgana", in reference to the rare phenomenon of mirage and apparition provoked on the surface of the sea, the event explores for two months the limits of the visible through the material works, but also projections and performances of 26 artists, from Ann Veronica Janssens to Daniel Steegman Mangrané via Constance Nouvel. All were chosen together by curator Béatrice Gross, accompanied by visual artist Katinka Bock.

Fata Morgana, first edition of the Jeu de Paume festival, until May 22 at the Jeu de Paume, Paris 1er.

*Bilan*

12th April 2022

# Bilan

## Sculptor Lee Ufan opens his museum in Arles

For the Korean, it's a third personal museum. But why does everyone actually end up in the Provençal city these days?

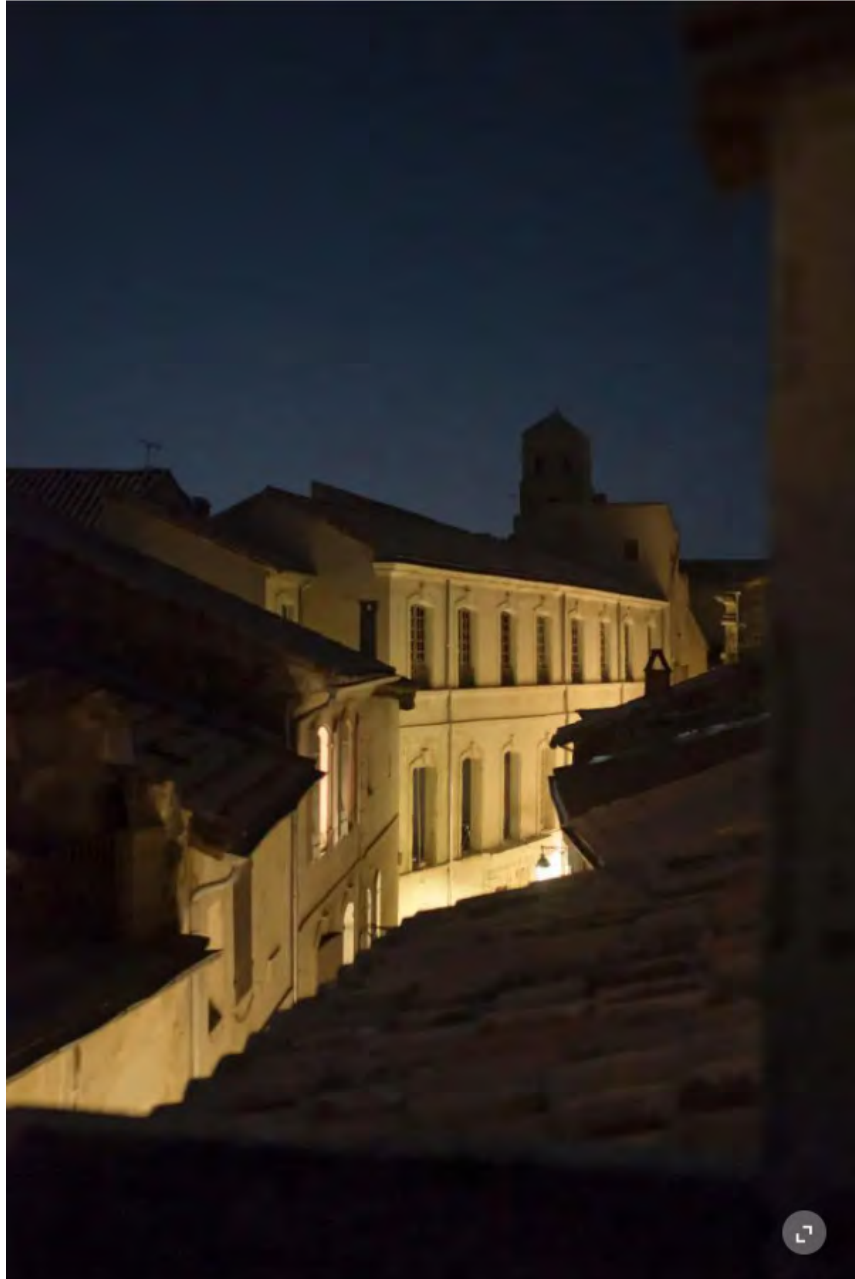


Lee Ufan. Philosopher and artist.  
Palazzo Grassi.

Of course you know Lee Ufan. Or do I still need to remind you who it is? When in doubt, I opt for the second solution. Lee is certainly today the most famous Korean sculptor in the world. Born in 1936, when his country was occupied by the Japanese, he nevertheless joined the Japanese archipelago in 1956. A rare case when we know the traditional hatred separating the nationals of the two countries. This brilliant intellectual wanted to continue his studies there. The man thus worked on philosophy, poetry, painting or calligraphy. He then became an art critic, of the rather pointed kind. The Korean did not move on to the visual arts until later, placing himself at the forefront of Mono-ha, a genre reconciling nature and human creation.

### **Invited to Versailles in 2014**

Lee Ufan founded his own museum on the island of Naoshima in 2010. A place designed by Tadao Ando, the favorite architect of François Pinault. Five years later, he created another location in Busan, South Korea's second city. The thing was apparently not enough for the octogenarian, invited to exhibit in the park of the Palace of Versailles in 2014. He will therefore open on Thursday April 14 a third center dedicated to his creation. It will be in the Hotel Vernon in Arles, next to the Vincent Van Gogh Foundation. One more foundation in Arles, you might say! Promoted city of art, the small town seems to collect them. And it's not over... After the LUMA or the Manuel Riviera-Ortiz, there will be yet another one in the former Hôtel Saint-Trophime. They finish giving a touch of artificiality to the city deserted by tourists in winter. Arles thus becomes a sort of enormous (Provençal) above-ground tomato. In any case, far too many foundations are opening today, generally devoted to contemporary art, in the south of France. They arouse a kind of weariness.



The Hotel Vernon, now transformed.  
Lee Ufan Foundation, Arles 2022.

How did Lee Ufan actually get here? Very simple. The artist, who is very fond of France (in 2002 he donated his large collection of old Korean works to the Guimet Museum in Paris), was to publish a monograph on his work in 2012. It was published by Actes Sud, from which first direct contact. In 2013, he exhibited at Saint-Laurent-le-Capitole, an old chapel once transformed into a cinema. A building located very close to the Hotel Vernon, which he had to completely restore and restructure. The construction will last several years. He finally came to a head. This will be Lee's third museum. It remains to be seen whether his name will prove catchy enough to attract an audience beyond the inauguration.

# LISSON GALLERY

*Architectural Digest France*  
15th April 2022

# AD

## ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST



### The Lee Ufan center opens its doors in Arles

Located in the old town of Arles, the new Lee Ufan center is the third exhibition space created by the artist after the Lee Ufan Museum in Naoshima opened in 2010 and the Espace Lee Ufan at the Busan Museum of Art inaugurated in 2015..

By Athena Rivas

A center on three floors dedicated to creation. It is in the heart of the Hotel Vernon, in Arles, that the South Korean artist Lee Ufan has decided to create his new exhibition space, which opens its doors this Friday, April 15. Within the Lee Ufan Arles, the artist will present his works and also wishes to support and sponsor artistic and cultural activities.

On the ground floor of the building, designed by the architect Tadao Ando, visitors can stroll among the sculptures and installations from the *Relatum collection*, all made with natural and industrial materials. Their positioning in space and the relationship that exists between these works is the very center of their creation. On the first floor, the artist has chosen to exhibit his paintings. The second level will be dedicated to temporary exhibitions and events.



The Lee Ufan center in Arles. © ADAGP 2022 Lee Ufan. Photo. Archives Kamel Mennour Courtesy the artist and kamel mennour, Paris



Lee Ufan, *Relatum* 1969/2022. © ADAGP 2022 Lee Ufan. Photo. Kamel Mennour Archives. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris



Lee Ufan, *From line* 1980. © ADAGP 2022 Lee Ufan. Photo. Kamel Mennour Archives. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris

The reception, changing rooms and shop of the Lee Ufan center were fitted out by designer Constance Guisset. The clean lines and the subtle balance of stainless steel and wood pay homage to the building of the Hotel Vernon and make it possible to make the link between this historic place and the works of Lee Ufan.

Lee Ufan Arles, 5, rue de Vernon, 13200 Arles, [www.leeufan-arles.org](http://www.leeufan-arles.org)



The centre's shop and reception were designed by Constance Guisset.



Constance Guisset used stainless steel and wood to enhance the place.

LISSON GALLERY

*Monopol*  
16th April 2022

# MONOPOL

Magazin für Kunst und Leben

Korean-Japanese artist  
**Lee Ufan gets new museum in Arles**



Photo: Julie Joubert/Lee Ufan Museum/dpa

The artwork "Relatum" by Japanese artist Lee Ufan in the newly opened Lee Ufan Museum in Arles



Photo: © Lee Ufan. Photography by Julie Joubert  
View of the new Lee Ufan Museum in Arles



Photo: Julie Joubert/Lee Ufan Museum/dpa  
Artwork "From point" by Japanese artist Lee Ufan at the newly opened Lee Ufan Museum in Arles

**The Korean-Japanese artist Lee Ufan is known for minimalist installations that invite you to pause. Now he is getting a new museum in Arles, France**

A museum on the Japanese art island of Naoshima has borne his name since 2010, and in 2015 the Busan Museum of Art in South Korea dedicated a separate building to him. Now another Lee Ufan museum is opening its doors in Arles . The 85-year-old South Korean is one of the most important contemporary artists. Lee Ufan, who lives and works between Paris and Tokyo, is also highly regarded in Germany. His third museum almost came into being in Berlin instead of Arles.

Lee Ufan chose the southern French city because of the numerous traces of the Romans, as he says. There is a special relationship between his art and the rich history of antiquity, says the painter and sculptor. He loves ruins. They are peaceful places that, however, evoke the past and at the same time allow us to meditate on what awaits us sooner or later.

Arles provides an overview of the artist's oeuvre, which is characterized by a minimalist aesthetic that combines Asian and European references. The first floor is dedicated to his "Relatum" sculptures, works in mostly natural materials that dialogue with the space, such as his huge steel bowl filled with water. The second floor presents his paintings, works in which the few brushstrokes are similar only at first glance.

The more than 1300 square meter museum is located in the historic town center. Architect Tadao Ando remodeled the 17th-century townhouse. The well-known Japanese also designed the museum in Japan for Lee Ufan. With its ancient remains, Arles is one of the most famous cities in Provence. Many of the ancient and Romanesque monuments are on the Unesco World Heritage List.

# ARTnews

## Legendary Korean Artist Lee Ufan Sets Up a Dazzling New Museum for His Art in Southern France

BY SARAH BELMONT  May 11, 2022 9:00am



Installation view of Lee Ufan *Arles*, 2022.

©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

Since the late 19th-century when Impressionists, most notably Vincent van Gogh, flocked there, **Arles** has long fascinated artists and the art world by extension. More recently, cultural spaces have begun to open in this southeastern French city, starting with the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles in 2010 and more recently collector Maja Hoffmann's **Frank Gehry-designed LUMA Arles**, which opened last summer.

And now there is the **Lee Ufan Arles**, a new cultural venue by the acclaimed Korean artist, Lee Ufan, that opened its doors on April 15 at the heart of the Roman city. (The new venue is an extension of the New York-based Lee Ufan Foundation.) The path to complete this project has not been an easy one for Lee, who had to create an endowment fund that was supported by his friends: Michel Enrici, the former director of the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, as well as his publishers at the Arles-based Actes Sud, Jean-Paul Capitani and Françoise Nyssen.

A lion share of the fund went toward investing in the space's new home. Situated in the Hôtel Vernon, a 16th-century private mansion that was once the home of the Dervieux family, a long line of antique dealers, the building has, of course, been retrofitted under the aegis of Pritzker Prize winner Tadao Ando, Lee's go-to architect. "Ando's inspiration and mine resonate," the artist said in a recent interview conducted in French. The architect behind mega-collector François Pinault's recently opened Parisian private museum Bourse de Commerce, Ando is also responsible for the Lee Ufan Museum on the Japanese island of Naoshima (2010) and the Space Lee Ufan at the Busan Museum of Art (2015) in South Korea.

A leading proponent of the 1960s Japanese Mono-ha movement, which explored the properties of industrial and natural materials, Lee is best-known for confronting steel plates, rubber sheets, and glass panes with stone, wood, or water even, in their physical forms to create effortlessly poetic sculptures, many of which are central to the new Arles space.

It is not so surprising that, after leaving his mark on Asia, Lee would relocate part of his New York foundation to France. The 86-year-old artist, who is represented by French gallerist Kamel Mennour, among others, has been exhibited all around France for years, and he maintains a studio in Paris's Montmartre district, where van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, Renoir, and Picasso all lived at some point before him.



Exterior of the Lee Ufan Arles, 2022.  
©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR;  
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS



Installation view of Lee Ufan Arles, 2022.  
©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

The real question is why Arles? This is where his 2013 show “Dissonance,” which led to the publication by Actes Sud of his first monograph in French, took place, before showings at the Château de Versailles (2014) and the Centre Pompidou Metz (2019) made him a big hit throughout France. “I am especially charmed by the city’s perfume where time fades away amidst the treasures of Roman culture,” he said.

The artist was also recently asked to partake in the celebrations of Arles’ 40 years as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Running through September, the resulting outdoor display features 13 works scattered across the 4th-century Alyscamps necropolis, a site imbued with spirituality. “Since we are in Arles, I tried to express a dimension that transcends space-time,” he said.



Installation view of Lee Ufan Arles, 2022, showing *Ciel sous terre* (*Sky under earth*).

©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

At Lee Ufan Arles, the four-story, 14,500-square-foot *hôtel particulier* consists of nearly 25 rooms, the very first being a luminous shop and ticket office rolled in one, followed by an elegant library, which may be turned into a tearoom in the future, both courtesy of award-winning French designer Constance Guisset.

In the first gallery, which once likely served as the guest entrance for the Dervieux family, stands at the center a monumental concrete cylinder that is a narrow snail-shaped labyrinth meant to be entered. Inside lies a floor projection of white clouds slowly moving through the air. “Like van Gogh before him, Lee Ufan was very much inspired by the Arlesian sky,” said Jean-Marie Gallais, curator of the 2019 Lee Ufan show at the Centre Pompidou Metz, who has also written wall text for the Arles space.

Lee confirmed, “The moments of my morning walks gazing at the sky along the quays of the Rhone make me feel happy.” He’s titled this brand new work, an architectural collaboration with Ando, *Ciel sous terre* (*Sky under earth*).



Installation view of Lee Ufan Arles, 2022, showing *Chemin vers Arles (Road to Arles)*.

©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

As with previous projects, Lee has paid special attention to site-specific installations throughout the mansion's grounds. *Chemin vers Arles (Road to Arles)* beautifully presents a curved mirror slab set upon the gravel. Just as the mirror begins its curve upward to the ceiling, Lee has placed between two large boulders. And older pieces have been reactivated, too. *The Stage* (originally conceived in late '60s), in the second gallery, is a case in point. Visitors are once again invited to step into a circle of light shielded by a large steel wall next to a massive rock.

A little further are two examples from Lee's "Relatum" series (*Relatum 1969/2022* and *Relatum – Gravité*), which synthesize the artist's earliest experiments with Mono-ha. Between these two works is a Roman bust discovered in the early stage of construction, about 2.5 feet underground, exactly where Lee had already planned to install *Ciel sous terre*. "It is ironic, when you think about it, that the only place that needed to be dug would display a video representation of the sky", Gallais, the curator, said. Now a long-term loan from the Musée de l'Arles antique, the relic has its own window case in the middle of a short hallway leading to an ascending staircase, which Lee had painted in white, and a new elevator.



Installation view of the lower level of the Lee Ufan Arles, 2022.

©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

Going down to the space's lower level, which is accessible only by appointment, are not one, but three site-specific creations. Two works from the "Dialogue" series, swaths of gradations of colors—one in oranges, another in blues—coming from exceptionally broad brushstrokes, have been painted on the floor. Lee compares them to "archeological findings" for the public to chance upon. The orange-dominated one is perpendicular; the blue-heaven one is parallel to a white wall where the artist has handwritten a poem called "The Bottom": "At the bottom of Arles there is a story, / at the bottom of this story there is an image, / and at the bottom of this image there is the unknown."

Back above ground, the approach on the second floor (the first floor according to the French system) is mainly chronological, starting with his 1970s series "From Line," with stripes painted in one gesture until the exhaustion of paint, to the 2000s "Dialogues" series, the latest pieces of which include wavy lines that convey deeper vibrations. The display includes drawings from the 1980s, some surprisingly less minimalist than others.



Installation view of Lee Ufan Arles, 2022.

©ADAGP, LEE UFAN; PHOTO: ARCHIVES KAMEL MENNOUR; COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

One level up is a forthcoming "hybrid" multipurpose space, for meetings, conferences, receptions, and concerts, as well as exhibitions of artists who are not Lee Ufan. (He would like to include works from his personal collection in the permanent display, "but nothing has been considered in detail yet," he said.)

This area is the only place in the building where the original moldings and authentic chimneys have been kept visible, as if to make people feel more at home. As a matter of fact, the artist said he sees the Lee Ufan Arles as a "place to live" rather than an exhibition hall, adding that "understanding the intelligence or the meaning of this space is not required to share the breath and sensations that life provides us while strolling among the paintings and sculptures."

*Hypebeast Art*  
11th May 2022

## HypeArt



Installation view of Lee Ufan Arles, 2022.

©adagp, Lee Ufan. Photo: Archives Kamel Mennour. Courtesy Of The Artist And Kamel Mennour, Paris.

TEXT BY  
Shawn Ghassemitari

### Lee Ufan Unveiled a New Museum in the South of France

A 16-century mansion reconverted to highlight his legendary imprint, along with serving as an exhibition space for emerging artists.

Arles is a Southern French city that is home to a gamut of artistic treasures. From a well-preserved [Roman](#) coliseum to medieval street corners that inspired the dynamic compositions of [Vincent Van Gogh](#). The historic city is home to a new museum specially opened by the South Korean artist, sculptor and philosopher, [Lee Ufan](#).

Globally recognized for his minimalist paintings and sculptures that contemplate the relationship between artwork, viewer and space, the new institution is an extension of the New York-based [Lee Ufan Foundation](#). With a studio in Paris' Montmartre district, the additional outpost in the South of France felt like a natural fit for an artist who has exhibited around the country for years.

Housed at Hôtel Vernon, a 16th-century private mansion that was once the home of the Dervieux family, Ufan has reworked with award-winning architect [Tadao Ando](#), who in 2010

designed the Lee Ufan museum on the Japanese island of Naoshima. The Arles space has been repurposed to accentuate Ufan's minimalist practice, such as *Chemin vers Arles (Road to Arles)*, a new work that features a long curved mirror juxtaposed against two boulders and a rigid gravel floor. The installation was [inspired](#) by Ufan's "morning walks gazing at the sky along the quays of the Rhone."

The multi-floor space includes a lower level that is only available via appointment. There you'll find two works from Ufan's emblematic "Dialogues" series, which depicts a gradient that is made up of oil and crushed stone pigments. For a room that can almost be equated to a cellar, the artwork interestingly alludes to the gradient formations found across the skies above.

More than just a museum dedicated solely to his own oeuvre, the second floor of the Lee Ufan Arles will serve as a cultural and exhibition space for a range of artistic disciplines. Please visit the institution's [website](#) to inquire into tickets and more information.

In case you missed it, [Ugo Rondinone meditates on space and time at Kukje Gallery](#).

**Lee Ufan Arles**

5 Rue de Vernon,  
13200 Arles, France

# LISSON GALLERY

*Artnet News*  
12 May 2022

**artnet**<sup>®</sup> news

## Museums

### Minimalist Artist Lee Ufan Opens His Own Art Center in Arles—His Third After Solo Spaces in Japan and Korea

The new location is in a 17th-century mansion in the city's historic quarter, converted by the artist's friend and architect of choice, Tadao Ando.

**Jo Lawson-Tancred**, May 12, 2022



Lee Ufan Arles, Hôtel Vernon, Arles, 2022. © Lee Ufan, ADAGP, Paris, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris.

The Minimalist artist Lee Ufan has opened a new space to show his work in Arles in the south of France. The art center is located at Hôtel Vernon, a large, 17th-century mansion in the city's historic quarter that has been converted by Lee's friend and architect of choice, Tadao Ando.

The mansion will house a permanent collection of Lee's work, with ten sculptures from his series "Relatum" installed across the ground floor, where there is also a library and shop. Some 30 paintings hang on the second floor and three site-specific installations at the lower level are open to visitors by appointment only. There are temporary exhibition spaces for other artists on the third floor, as well as rooms for receptions and conferences.



Lee Ufan Arles, Hôtel Vernon, Arles, 2022. Photo: © Lee Ufan, ADAGP, Paris, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris.

Arles has long been a region that has inspired artists, among them Van Gogh and Gauguin. Lee's own interest in the area stems from its ancient past. Towards the end of 2021, the artist staged "Requiem", a special exhibition celebrating the 40 years since Arles was named a UNESCO World Heritage site. Inspired by the picturesque ruins of Alyscamps, a large Roman necropolis, he presented 13 new works in conversation with the surviving sarcophagi.

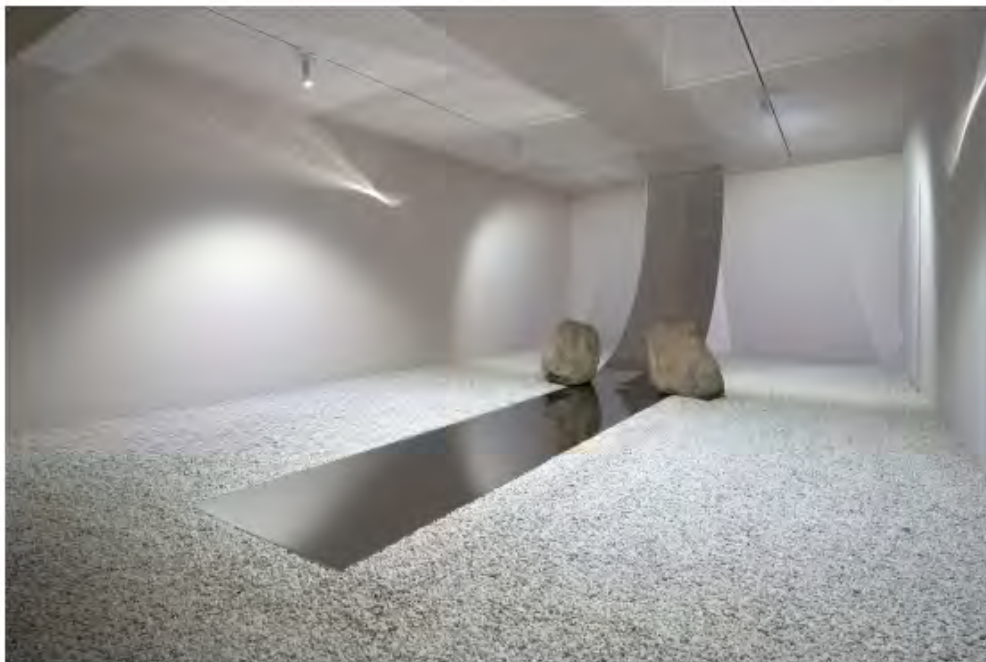
And in the new art center, visitors will be able to see an ancient portrait bust believed to be of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius, which was discovered in a wall during the building's restoration



Lee Ufan Arles, Hôtel Vernon, Arles, 2022. Photo: © Lee Ufan, ADAGP, Paris, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris.

Lee, who was born in Korea in 1936, currently lives and works in Paris, New York and Japan. He is best known as the founder of the Japanese avant-garde group *Mono-ha*, or “School of Things,” which emerged in the 1960s. The group explored natural and industrial materials and their relationship with the surrounding space.

Lee has previously established a personal museum in Naoshima in 2010, also designed by Ando, and the Lee Ufan Space at the Busan Museum of Art in 2015. To fund the Arles space, he set up an endowment fund supported by many of his friends, including Michel Enrici, the former director of France's Maeght Foundation.



Lee Ufan Arles, Hôtel Vernon, Arles, 2022. Photo: © Lee Ufan, ADAGP, Paris, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Kamel Mennour, Paris.



## Weekly News Roundup: May 13, 2022

BY THE EDITORS



Installation view of LEE UFAN's works within Lee Ufan Arles, 2022. Photo by Julie Joubert. Copyright and courtesy the artist. Image via Facebook.

### **New Lee Ufan Museum Opens in Southern France**

Veteran Korean artist [Lee Ufan](#) has opened a new museum, an extension of the artist's New York-based foundation, in Arles, a city in southern France. The museum is located in a 16th-century mansion, Hôtel Vernon, which for a long period belonged to the Dervieux family of antique dealers, and has been renovated by the award-winning architect Tadao Ando for Lee's works. Ando has previously designed the Lee Ufan Museum on the Japanese island of Naoshima (2010) and the Space Lee Ufan at the Busan Museum of Art (2015) in South Korea. The project is supported by an endowment fund launched by Lee himself, with donors including his friends Michel Enrici, the former director of the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, as well as his publishers at the Arles-based Actes Sud, Jean-Paul Capitani, and Françoise Nyssen.

# LISSON GALLERY

*The Financial Times*  
23 May 2022



## Artist Lee Ufan: ‘I wanted to start a conversation between the living and the dead’

The Korean painter and sculptor has opened a foundation in Arles, where he has placed work in its vast Roman necropolis



Installation view of 'Requiem' at the Alyscamps, Arles © Claire Dorn

In the Alyscamps, the Roman necropolis in the southern French city of Arles, a delicate tinkling fills the air when the wind blows, both eerie and sweet. It comes from the branches of an ancient pine tree, hung with dozens of bells by the Korean artist Lee Ufan. It is, he explains, a homage to the French artist Christian Boltanski, who died in July last year.

“He was my friend,” says Lee simply. “He was very interested in shamans, especially from Latin America, and bells were important to him. I’ve wanted to use them [in my work] since the 1970s, so I see this as a kind of offering.” If Boltanski’s own work dug deep into human suffering, here Lee evokes his friend’s spirit — a floating, fleeting human presence — with gentle sonic elegance in this village of the dead.

Lee Ufan has quite a presence in Arles this summer. The homage to Boltanski is just one part of an outdoor exhibition of 14 sculptural pieces carefully sited in the Alyscamps that runs until September, while in April a permanent foundation opened in the 17th-century Hôtel Vernon. This *hôtel particulier* in the city's historic centre until recently housed a family antiques business. Now the ground and first floor are home to more than 50 of Lee's works, including series of paintings and significant installations. The second floor will be given over to artists invited to create contemporary shows.



Lee Ufan at the Alyscamps © Claire Dorn

Lee, 85, has led a globetrotting life. Born in Korea in 1936, he left for Japan aged 20, where he completed a university education in literature and philosophy. He emerged from the Mono-ha movement, a Japanese/Korean school dating from the late 1960s which explored the properties of materials rather than representational art, and has built an international reputation on his perfectly constructed paintings in which single brushstrokes travel down the canvas. His sculptures are composed of basic materials used in their most minimal form — rubber, metal, leather, rock. In his installations, the natural meets the man-made.

He has bases in New York and Tokyo and his own museums in Naoshima in Japan and Busan in South Korea. But France seems to have most taken him to heart. He has kept a studio in Montmartre since the mid-1990s, and this loyalty was rewarded with a major exhibition at Versailles in 2014, where he framed the palace's grand facade with a slender steel arch and interrupted Le Nôtre's tightly controlled gardens with natural boulders and shiny sheets of steel. In 2019 he was given a full-blown retrospective at the Pompidou in Metz.

Originally, Lee had set his sights on New York as the home for his official foundation. "I saw that all the artists working with the same gallery as me in Manhattan also had one there," he says through his interpreter, referring to his stablemates at Pace, the American mega-gallery. "But I started to worry. New York is a very aggressive environment, and it occurred to me that Europe, where there is more history, might be more appropriate." So he set off to the South of France, accompanied by the master architect Tadao Ando and with help from others set up an endowment before securing the exceptional Hôtel Vernon.



From Lee Ufan's 'Relatum' series at the Hôtel Vernon, Arles © Julie Joubert



Lee Ufan wants colour 'for richness, for gorgeousness' © Julie Joubert

Lee and Ando are long-term friends and collaborators. In 2010, they worked together on the Naoshima museum. "Our two sets of ideas completely combined there," says Lee. "It wasn't about an architect making a building and an artist coming in after and adding the artworks." Instead, spaces emerged from the needs of the works they contain. Conditions at the heritage-heavy Hôtel Vernon are clearly quite different. "Of course, in a building of this age there are laws and restrictions," says Lee. "I asked him to make the minimum changes in order to show my work."

Though Ando has acted with caution, the history of the Hôtel Vernon is only strongly sustained at its entrance, where a fabulously weathered wooden door gives on to a spacious foyer whose stone arch leads to a handsome stone staircase. Otherwise, the architect's hand is felt in a series of tightly compressed spaces on the ground floor. In these rooms, the phenomenological nature of Lee's work — a basin of water reflecting light; a sheet of glass shattered by a single large stone — is intense. In the foyer itself, Ando has created a circular concrete cell, containing in its floor a video recording of the ever-changing Japanese sky.



The bells are Lee Ufan's tribute to his late friend Christian Boltanski © Claire Dorn

On the first floor, the progress of Lee's painting career is told from the early monochrome *From Point* and *From Line* pieces, where a short dash or longer stroke emerges from a single definitive starting spot, to his current, more colour-saturated works. "For a long time, I only used simple colour," says Lee. "But now my stroke is bigger and I sometimes need to have colour for richness, for gorgeousness." He pauses. "Maybe it's because I'm getting old and have a strange desire to be young. Or maybe it's because I want to provide those who look with a strong feeling that will go straight to your heart."

In the basement, or cave, which retains the chilled stillness for which it would have been valued in the past, Lee has painted directly on to the floor as part of a work called "Response — Excavated I". The paintings each look like a huge single brushstroke of graduated colour but take many days and layers to complete and create an imprimatur of occupation in the very foundations of the house. "I wanted to make it feel like an archeological site," he says, "like something that had been excavated."

It is perhaps a commentary on this city where history and archaeology are everywhere, from the Roman amphitheatre to the Romanesque churches and the Alysamps. The necropolis dates back to the fourth century and its paths are lined with crumbling 10th- and 11th-century sarcophagi and small dilapidated medieval chapels, frequently overcome by nature.

"I was speechless when I first visited the Alysamps, I felt only strangeness and dread," says Lee. "Then I realised that nowadays we extract the idea of death from our lives, even though without it, life is just thin, uninteresting. I wanted to start a conversation between the living and the dead."



From Lee Ufan's 'Relatum' series © Julie Joubert



Installation view of 'Requiem' © Claire Dorn

His 14 interventions, under the title *Requiem*, include a slender dynamic strip of polished steel, secured by two standing stones, which absorbs the surrounding landscape; a soundtrack of sombre bells that fills an empty chapel; and a chapel floor covered in crushed and dangerous-looking slate, as though the roof has crashed in. It is up to the viewer to bring the meaning, but the message seems meditative and clear: about the relationships between the natural and the man-made, the living and the dead. "I'd like visitors to feel the infinite space," says Lee, "to breathe the same air as history has done."

*'Requiem'* runs to September 30, [leeufan-arles.org](http://leeufan-arles.org). The foundation is open Tuesday-Sunday

## IL GIORNALE DELL'ARTE

### Lee Ufan opens his third museum in France

The European headquarters of the Korean artist in a seventeenth-century palace in Arles restored by Tadao Ando



*One of the spaces of the Lee Ufan Arles*

LUANA DE MICCO | May 30, 2022 | Arles

At the Hôtel Vernon, a seventeenth-century building in the picturesque streets of the historic center, not far from the famous ancient arenas, the Lee Ufan Arles, the third exhibition venue for the South Korean artist's works, opened on April 15, after the Lee Ufan Museum on the Japanese island of Naoshima, opened in 2010, and the Espace Lee Ufan of the Busan Museum of Art in Seoul, in 2015. Unsurprisingly, Lee Ufan's first foundation in Europe is in France, where the artist has forged strong ties since the 1971 Paris Biennale and in which he became known to the general public with the exhibition at Versailles in 2014 and with the retrospective of 2019 at the Pompidou-Metz.

The first meeting between Lee Ufan and Arles dates back to 2013, when the city dedicated the monographic "Dissidance" to him in the Saint-Laurent-Le Capitole Chapel. Arles is increasingly becoming a major cultural hub in France, with the annual international photography festival, Les Rencontres, and the opening last June of the Fondation Luma, in the grandiose building of Frank O. Gehry.

The opening of the new headquarters of the Lee Ufan foundation has suffered many delays and the inauguration, initially announced for the summer of 2020, has been postponed. The Hôtel Vernon was entirely restored by the Japanese architect Tadao Ando, who already designed the Naoshima museum. Among other things, during the construction site, the ancient bust of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius, successor of Hadrian and a native of Arles, was found, which is now part of the route.



*One of the spaces of the Lee Ufan Arles*

In a space of 1,500 square meters on three floors, a selection of sculptures, installations and paintings by the minimalist artist, born in 1936, main theorist of Mono-ha ("School of Things"), an avant-garde movement that established itself in Japan among the finest, is exhibited. 1960s and early 1970s, often associated with Arte Povera for the choice of raw materials from nature and recycled industrial elements, such as tubes and sheets, glass, paper, wood. On the ground floor are about thirty sculptures from the «Relatum» series, begun in 1972, an example of this encounter between nature and industry, fragile and solid, transparent and opaque. The artist hardly intervenes on the materials, while the position in space is primordial.

On the first floor about thirty paintings are exhibited, according to a chronological path. The third floor is dedicated to temporary exhibitions. " *Lee Ufan Arles' ambition is to become an exhibition center for discovering the artist's works, but also a place of life to support various artistic and cultural activities* ", they declare from the museum. Also in Arles, 13 new works created ad hoc by Lee Ufan are the protagonists of the "Requiem" exhibition (until 29 September in the Alyscamps necropolis), curated by Alfred Pacquement, former director of the Musée d'art moderne at the Pompidou Center.

*W Magazine*  
26 July 2023



CULTURE

## An Art Lover's Guide to Arles

Everything to know about visiting the French city, which becomes a cultural cornucopia come summertime.

by **Arthur Lubow**  
July 26, 2023

Forget the Roman amphitheater built in 90 A.D., or the Yellow House, where in 1888 Vincent Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin devolved into roommates from hell. Arles in the summer turns into a mecca for contemporary art, especially photography—and its glorious past recedes into a backdrop for the ferment of the present.

For over half a century, the summer festival known as the Rencontres d'Arles has showcased photography, old and new, in churches and galleries throughout the town. Running this season until September 24, the Rencontres—in one of its numerous sites, the Archbishop's Palace—is offering a retrospective of the late American artist Saul Leiter, a pioneer of color photography. Across town, an exhibition of three series by Gregory Crewdson, best known for the pictures he stages with an elaborate film crew, includes his seldom-seen early work, "Fireflies" (1996), in which the eponymous insects twinkle in black-and-white.

But when you are truly seeking Zen-like meditative calm, walk over to the Lee Ufan Foundation, now in its second year. It was founded (and entirely funded) by the eminent South Korean artist, 86, who renovated a historic three-story townhouse in the center of the city in collaboration with his friend, architect Tadao Ando. Together, they filled the building with site-specific works, such as a large basin of water into which a bead of waters drops every 20 seconds from the vaulted sixteenth-century ceiling, and a stainless steel “road” in another room that scoops upward from a floor covered with marble gravel and is grounded on either side by a large stone.



Inside the Lee Ufan Foundation in Arles.  
Courtesy of Lee Ufan Arles



Lee Ufan, *Relatum, Way to Arles* © Lee Ufan Arles.  
Courtesy of Lee Ufan Foundation

In addition to the founder's own paintings, spanning from the '60s to today, the Lee Ufan Foundation this summer inaugurated a program of annual exhibitions of other artists whose work resonates with Ufan's. The five artists in the show, "Figures Alone," are all figurative painters: Brigitte Aubignac, Ymane Chabi-Gara, Marc Desgrandchamps, Tim Eitel and Djamel Tatah.

Ufan, who has lived part-time in Paris for the last 30 years (with principal residences in Busan, South Korea and Naoshima, Japan), is said to have chosen Arles as the home for this museum because he was attracted to the city's stones, ruins, and light (all of which makes complete sense). However, beyond that, for an artist whose pieces beckon a viewer to engage in a personal encounter, Arles is an ideal location. Without the bustle of a big city, it is a place that asks you to slow down, to look and to feel—in short, to fully experience a work of art.

# 发现ADDISCOVERY

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## 李禹焕在阿尔勒

在法国东南部，被艺术和历史双重浸润的阿尔勒像凡·高笔下的印象派画作，自19世纪末以来，一直是艺术家的心之向往。如今这里又增添了一处惊喜的存在：由日本建筑师安藤忠雄翻新改造的艺术家李禹焕全新永久展览空间——李禹焕阿尔勒中心 (Lee Ufan Arles)，现已正式向公众开放。它隐身于阿尔勒中心地带的弗农酒店 (Hotel Vernon) 内，这是一座16—18世纪的宅邸，曾经是Dervieux家族的私人府邸，周边是众多古董商的所在地。艺术家李禹焕说：“我对这座城市的特殊氛围异常着迷，在这里，能感受到时间在罗马文明的瑰宝中慢慢流逝。”在阿尔勒，李禹焕与安藤忠雄一起尝试表达多维度的时空关系，在这座厚重的老建筑里，让艺术与历史遗迹、建筑空间和人期而遇，和谐奏鸣，响彻在时空之外。(故事接以下两页)





艺术家李禹焕和建筑师安藤忠雄以最小的干预在这座诞生于16-18世纪的历史建筑里创造了一个超越时空的永久展览空间。建筑是发酵器，人是连接枢纽，艺术作品是触控，书写着独特的关系哲学。



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李禹焕阿尔勒中心是艺术家继直岛李禹焕美术馆、釜山艺术博物馆李禹焕空间(Space Lee Ufan)落成后的第三个展览空间。该空间既是一个展览场域，又是一个多功能空间，占据了弗农酒店(Hotel Vernon)的三层楼，共25个房间。他说：“我想以最小的干预来尊重那段历史。”所以他请来自己的建筑师好友安藤忠雄。“我和安藤忠雄有着创作灵感上的共鸣，我们可以将艺术博物馆定义为展览空间，但更希望它首先是一个有生活影子的地方。”安藤忠雄尊重这座老建筑的旧有面貌，保留了老宅邸的原始材料特质，在建筑空间的固有比例中，用简洁的线条以及石、木、混凝土的微妙平衡向弗农酒店的老建筑致敬，并在这个历史悠久的地方与李禹焕的作品之间建立起一种精神连接与隔时空的对话。

推开风化的老木门，映入眼帘的首层空间入口处安放着重安藤忠雄与李禹焕合作的名为*Ciel sous terre*的作品，灵感来自阿尔勒的天空。安藤忠雄标志性的混凝土墙面直抵屋顶，经过一小段螺旋形构造的通道，藏在尽头地板上的天空投影像是一个关于自然的谜题。白云在空中缓慢移动，让人不时想到某一处疗愈的天空。李禹焕说：“早上沿着罗纳河码头散步时，每每凝视天空，我都会感到快乐。”

李禹焕阿尔勒中心展出了包括雕塑、装置及约30件精选绘画作品。于李禹焕而言，雕塑并不是一个独立自主的实体，而只是相对于外部世界的存在。石头、钢板、玻璃、棉纸、木材、绳索、皮革、油彩、石蜡和水等材料在空间里构成了一种相遇，一种与世界、自然、建筑和空间的关系。他几乎不对作品材料采取任何艺术介入的行为，终极意义都将回归于人的感知。人就像回音壁，连接着不同的空间和作品，最终与作品完成了一种参与性创造的仪式感。“站在我的作品面前，观众只需调动感官，用心体会。作品即创造相遇。”

中心首层呈现了10件《被关系者》(*Relatum*)系列雕塑。每件作品都仅由一块或几块浅色圆形石头和长方形钢板组成，在李禹焕的装置作品中，空间既是未被触碰的，又是被占用的，介于“为”与“无为”之间。其中石头与钢板是对笔触与画布之间关系的另类描摹。在中心的第二层，艺术家按时序呈现具有递进关系的单笔涂抹绘画系列。在李禹焕于1991年开始创作的《对应》(*Correspondence*)系列绘画中，他将油画颜料与碎石混合，绘于白色表面之上。画面仅由一两笔灰蓝色构成。第三层用于临时展览及举办活动。

此前他在阿尔勒各处的罗马式墓地推出的个展——“安魂曲(*Requiem*)”呈现了制造与非制造、周围环境的物质和非物质元素之间的持续共存形式。这在阿尔勒的历史文化氛围里激发了另一种艺术哲学思维。作为前卫艺术流派“物派(*Mono-ha*)”最重要的理论家和实践者之一的李禹焕旨在摒弃西方的具象表现概念，聚焦物质与感知之间的关系，不主张表达或干预。无论雕塑、绘画还是装置，他都以极简风格，将绘画与未经绘画、被占用与未被占用空间的关系建造了自己的艺术实践城堡。AD





对页左图 李禹焕 1936年出生于韩国庆南，画家、雕塑家、作家、哲学家、前卫艺术流派“物派”最重要的理论家和实践者之一。右图 由艺术家李禹焕携手日本建筑师安藤忠雄一起创作的名为*Ciel sous terre*的装置作品，灵感源自阿尔勒的天空，巨大的圆柱形“安藤式”混凝土墙与地面的天空影像让人梦回由安藤忠雄设计的日本直岛李禹焕美术馆。

本页上图 观者可以自由穿梭在雕塑和空间中，以天然石头和不锈钢杆为主材创作于2004—2021年的雕塑系列(“被关系者”) (*Relatum*) 既是作品，亦是开启另一个时空联结的钥匙。下图 以天然石材和钢板为创作材质的雕塑系列(“被关系者”) (*Relatum*) 就像一个舞台，将核心交于观者自己体验内心的世界。

interior

LISSON GALLERY

ELLEDECO

August Issue 2022

[家|居|廊]  
DECORATION

ART 艺术

“这本是一个用于居住的地方……如今漫步于画作和雕塑之间，毋需分享生活的呼吸和感觉，就能理解这个空间的智慧或意义。”——李禹焕

艺者的共鸣  
THE ECHO  
BETWEEN ARTISTS

摄影 Julie Joubert, Claire Dorn 文 Swann 编辑 Kevin Ma 马子涛 图片提供 Lee Ufan, Lisson Gallery, Lee Ufan Arias Foundation. 视觉中国



阿尔勒，这一位于法国东南部的罗曼古城，自Vincent van Gogh（文森特·凡·高）描摹星空以来，就一直受到艺术家的偏爱。去年夏天，著名建筑师Frank Gehry设计的The Tower艺术中心再次将世人目光聚焦于这里。今年4月，李禹焕阿尔勒中心（Lee Ufan Arles）也在此开幕。

Lee Ufan Arles 李禹焕阿尔勒中心  
地址：15 Rue Vernon 13200 Arles, France

韩国艺术家李禹焕是一位著名的画家、雕塑家、作家和哲学家，同时是先锋艺术流派“物派(Mono-ha)”最重要的理论家和实践者之一。李禹焕阿尔勒中心坐落在始建于16世纪的弗农酒店（Hotel Vernon），这座4层楼高、拥有25个房间的酒店曾是古董商德维欧家族（the Dervieux）的宅邸。改造由设计过日本直岛李禹焕博物馆（2010年）的建筑师安藤忠雄主持，李禹焕称两人的“艺术灵感产生了共鸣”，安藤忠雄则称李禹焕的作品“批判了西方美术，是重视东方哲学思考的当代艺术实践”。

在此之前，李禹焕曾在法国多次推出大型展览项目，包括2013年在阿尔勒的“失衡（Dissonance）”展览、2014年在凡尔赛宫的“强烈与沉默（Intense and Silent）”装置艺术系列、2019年在梅斯蓬皮杜艺术中心的“栖居时间（Inhabiting Time）”，以及2021年在阿尔勒城中各处罗马式墓地推出的个展“安魂曲（Requiem）”等。李禹焕所引领的“物派”旨在摒弃西方的具象表现概念，聚焦于物质、环境、人与感知之间的关系场域，追求“余白的艺术”和“寂静的回响”等先锋理念。在他看来，“最高级的表达并不是从无物中创造事物，而更像是轻叩既存之物，从而呈现出这个世界更加鲜活的一面。”

在访客入口中心矗立着一个巨大的混凝土圆柱体，这实际上是个狭窄的迷宫，里面有一层“白色的云”在空中缓慢地移动。“和之前的凡·高一样，李禹焕的灵感来自阿尔勒的天空。”该空间的文本撰写者Jean-Marie Gallais分享道。李禹焕将这件装置看作是安藤忠雄建筑的合作，命名为“Sky under Earth（Ciel sous terre）”。建筑首层呈现了十件来自“被关系者（Relatum）”系列雕塑，其中一尊罗马半身像是在施工初期发现的；在建筑二层，他按时序呈现了具有递进关系的单色绘画系列，从20世纪70年代的“从线（From Line）”系列开始，直到2000年代的“对话”系列；第三层则将用于临时展览及举办活动，这个区域是建筑中唯一保留空间原始装饰和烟囱的地方，似乎是为了让观者更有亲近感。此外，在只有预约才能进入的地下一层，蓝色和橙色的渐变作品被喻为偶然的“考古发现”，李禹焕在旁边的墙上题写了一首名为《背面》的诗：“在阿尔勒的背后有一个故事，在这个故事的背后有一个图像，在这个图像的背后有一种未知。”<sup>①</sup>



Lee Ufan  
李禹焕 艺术家

Tadao Ando  
安藤忠雄 建筑师

1. 由两条不锈钢圆柱体与两块天然原石组成的作品“Dissonance”，来自李禹焕从1960年代开始创作的“被关系者（Relatum）”系列。  
2. 展览空间中，呈现李禹焕由1970年代开始创作的“从线（From Line）”绘画系列作品。对页：空间一层，混凝土圆柱体实为李禹焕与安藤忠雄联合创作的一件名为“Sky under Earth（Ciel sous terre）”的装置作品，外形与后者标志性的建筑元素相呼应。



# 李禹焕 阿尔勒中心

李禹焕 (Lee Ufan) 在法国阿尔勒的全新永久展览空间现已正式向公众开放。此全新的展览中心由日本建筑师安藤忠雄设计，位于阿尔勒中心地带的一座十六至十八世纪宅邸——弗农酒店 (Hotel Vernon)。

作为一名画家、雕塑家、作家、哲学家，李禹焕同时也是前卫艺术流派“物派” (Mono-ha) 最重要的理论家和实践者之一。李禹焕阿尔勒中心展出了雕塑、装置，及约三十件精选绘画。展览空间首层呈现了十件来自《被关系者》(Relatum) 系列的雕塑，用不同材料的结合及其产生的联系是这些作品的核心概念。在中心的第二层，艺术家按时序呈现具有递进关系的绘画系列，参观者可领略艺术家单笔涂抹

绘画的发展，而第三层则用于临时展览及举办活动。

李禹焕阿尔勒  
中心装置现场，  
法国，2022，  
©Lee Ufan 图片  
由艺术家惠允，  
摄影师Julie Joubert



*The Korea Times*  
January 2021

## The Korea Times

### Not-to-miss art exhibitions in 2021

#### **Healing becomes major topic this year**

By Kwon Mee-yoo

Most creative industries are suffering unprecedented consequences caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the art world is no exception. Major thematic exhibitions this year will center on thoughts about the post-COVID-19 era or are designed to provide consolation for people suffering from the pandemic.

Hakgojae Gallery in central Seoul kicked off the year with new exhibition "38°C," which refers to the temperature at which someone will be restricted from public spaces in the COVID-19 era. It features works from its collection including Anish Kapoor, Tim Eitel and Lee Woo-sung.

The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA) is also preparing for a thematic exhibit on the pandemic. Titled "Pandemic – Catastrophes and Cure," the international exhibition aims to look at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individual and social levels and provide contemplation on the post-pandemic era through contemporary artworks from May to August. Participating artists include Andrea Zittel, Eija Liisa Ahtila and Moojin Brothers.

Other major exhibitions at the state-run museum include "Eco Art: Time of the Earth" at its Gwacheon branch from September to November. Promoting Korean art to the international community, the exhibit centers on artworks expressing ecological perspectives, moving beyond human-centered attitudes.

"Peace Art: ON" at MMCA Seoul, opening in September, will look back on the history of the downtown museum, which was formerly the site of the Jongchinbu building, or the Office of Royal Genealogy, during the 1392-1910 Joseon Kingdom.

The MMCA will also shed light on diverse genres of art such as performance art and animation and explore the relationship between literature and art.

The Busan Museum of Art will hold the "Beautiful" (working title) exhibition in April to provide consolation and healing through art as a temporary escape from the stresses of life amid the pandemic.

At the museum's Space Lee Ufan, dedicated to the renowned Korean artist, the third exhibit in the "Lee Ufan and His Friends" series featuring French sculptor Christian Boltanski will be held in October.

# LISSON GALLERY

*Ocula*  
June/July 2021

## OCULA



CURATED SELECTION

### Romina Polley: Collecting Conceptual Art

**C**ologne-based Romina Polley is a German lawyer who still harbours a tingle of regret over her decision to forgo studying art in favour of competition law.

Her method of compensation has been to immerse herself in building a collection of contemporary art. Polley welcomes the tension between these two worlds she inhabits, and her choices of artworks here reflect a diverse taste, encompassing conceptual, political, and humorous work.

On her passion for Land Art pioneers [Richard Long](#) and [Hamish Fulton](#), Polley mentions that it is the 'peaceful and meditative quality that appeals, particularly during this time'. She goes on to reveal how she discovered Land Art through the work of [Walter De Maria](#) during a visit to Dia Beacon when she lived in New York.

Perhaps her time spent in the U.S.A. also drew her to the work of Chilean-born artist [Alfredo Jaar](#), who examines the battleground of cultural identity politics in the U.S.A. from the perception of an outsider, albeit one who has now lived in New York for many years.

Work by [Mary Heilmann](#) reveals Polley's fondness for colour and a lightness of touch, while Frances Stark and [Jonathan Monk](#) are clearly admired for their humour. 'I love Jonathan Monk's work, especially how he makes fun of the commercial aspect of the art world, and I always remember his parody and comic tone. [Lisson Gallery](#), who represent Monk, is also my favourite gallery in London'.

Korean artist [Lee Ufan](#) is another choice, particularly for the 'meditative sensibility and pursuit of excellence' present in his work—qualities she similarly admires in the work of [On Kawara](#).

Polley's intellectual curiosity coupled with an engaging sense of humour have clearly led her to discover artists far beyond obvious market trends and to form a collection that elucidates her deep understanding of conceptual art in its varying forms.

Main image: Courtesy Romina Polley.

*Art Critique*  
5 November 2021

## ART CRITIQUE

### Lee Ufan s'installe à Arles



Copyright Claire Dorn.

Publié le 5 novembre 2021 à 10 h 07 min

Double actualité française pour l'artiste sud-coréen Lee Ufan. Reconnu dans le monde entier, on lui doit une œuvre orientalisée portée sur la nature des matériaux et la phénoménologie moderne. Sculpteur, peintre et graveur âgé de 85 ans, c'est à Arles que l'on retrouve ses derniers travaux actuellement. Jusqu'à la fin du mois de septembre 2022, il présente en effet l'exposition *Requiem* à la nécropole des Alyscamps. Un événement qui se tient dans le cadre du quarantenaire de l'inscription du patrimoine romain et roman de la ville sur la liste du patrimoine mondial de l'Unesco. L'artiste a donc conçu tout un parcours composé de 13 œuvres totalement inédites et qui ont été pensées pour entamer un dialogue avec la fameuse nécropole antique. Ainsi, à côté des sarcophages qui impressionnent chaque année plusieurs milliers de touristes, on peut voir des relatum créés expressément par Lee Uphan, soit des ensembles de sculptures qui entrent ici en relation avec la nature et l'architecture environnantes.

En parallèle, Lee Ufan s'apprête à ouvrir un nouveau musée à son nom, après celui de Naoshima au Japon et l'espace Lee Ufan du Busan Museum of Art. Il ouvrira ses portes au printemps prochain, en plein cœur de l'Hôtel Vernon situé dans le vieux Arles. Un espace de 1 350 m<sup>2</sup> sur trois niveaux, dans lesquels l'artiste minimaliste pourra présenter sculptures et peintures, mais aussi tout un espace dédié à la méditation. Un lieu aménagé par l'architecte Tadao Ando qui avait déjà officié sur le premier musée Lee Ufan. Le plus francophile des artistes sud-coréens !

Japan Forward  
15 October 2020



CULTURE

## STARS at the Mori Art Museum: Five Contemporary Art Superstars Share their Views on a Post-Corona World

Ayako Kurosawa October 15, 2020 12:09 pm

[\(Click here to read this article in Japanese.\)](#)

and Takashi Murakami, Ayako Kurosawa, coronavirus, COVID-19, Editor's Pick, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Lee Ufan, mori art museum, Mori Tower, Roppongi Hills, six contemporary artists, STARS exhibit, Tatsuo Miyajima, Yayoi Kusama, Yoshitomo Nara

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The lineup of six superstars in the world of contemporary art in the Mori Art Museum's "STARS" exhibition (Roppongi, Tokyo) has attracted much attention. The artists are Yayoi Kusama (91), Lee Ufan (84), Hiroshi Sugimoto (72), Tatsuo Miyajima (63), Yoshitomo Nara (60), and Takashi Murakami (58).

Five of the six artists, excepting the elderly Yayoi Kusama, gathered at the museum in late July for a press conference on the day prior to the exhibit's opening. The internationally-active artists discussed the turmoil of the pandemic and the nature of art in the age of COVID-19.

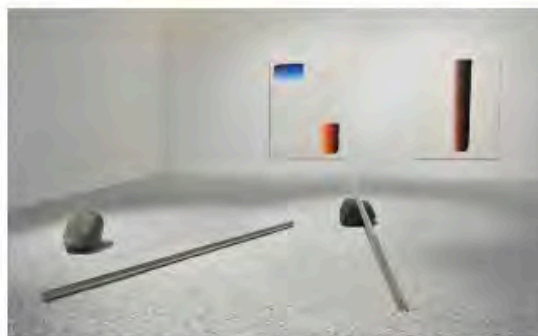


*Yayoi Kusama: Pink Boat(1992) (Courtesy of Mori Art Museum)*

It is as if the stars have aligned to bring about this unparalleled exhibition of six art legends, originally planned for the same year as the Olympics. "We planned to introduce artists that people coming from all over the world most wanted to see," said Museum Director, Mami Kataoka.

On display are both early works that garnered high praise internationally, as well as more recent works of all six artists. Following the respective trajectories of each artist's career gives viewers a look at both the history of Japanese contemporary art as well as an idea of where it stands today. For anyone in Japan interested in learning more about contemporary art, this exhibit is a great starting point.

The pandemic resulted in postponement of the Olympics, and the opening of the exhibition was also delayed three months in conjunction with Japan's state of emergency. At the press conference, the artists shared their experiences during the stay-at-home period and their views on the post-Corona world, with an astuteness so typical of artists.



*Lee Ufan Installation view (Courtesy of Mori Art Museum)*

## Lee Ufan's 'Warning from Mother Nature'

"COVID-19 is a very frightful thing, but it's also both a warning and a reminder," remarked Lee Ufan.

Lee's art typifies the "Mono-ha" movement that has been revisited globally in recent years. As the harmful effects of Japan's period of high economic growth and mass production began to manifest themselves, Lee pursued works based on the idea of "refraining from producing". He frequently used natural objects (like stones and trees) to develop sculptures and installations that embodied an awareness of the reciprocal relationships of things.

"At the time in Europe, these works were criticized as being nothing more than Buddhism or Japonism and were not well received, but I continued to focus on 'creating and not creating', and slowly got some recognition," Lee recollects.



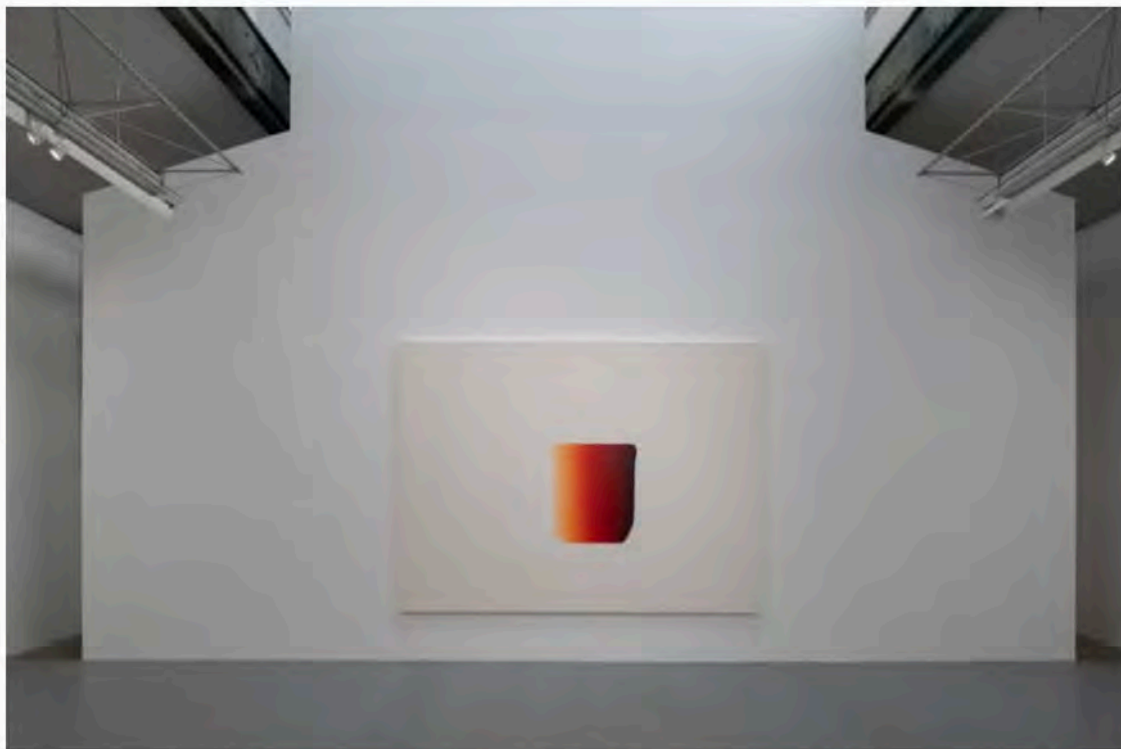
Lee Ufan: Relatum (1969/1982) (Courtesy of Mori Art Museum)



Lee Ufan Installation view (Courtesy of Mori Art Museum)

Lee explained that the key to overcoming the COVID-19 disaster lies in the balance between "creating and not creating". To illustrate his point, he added:

*I'm sure you all know that as a result of the global halt in development and production over the last few months, our environment has been improved. This could be our last chance to do something, and as artists, it is our obligation to make art that suggests something to our society. It is my intention to set aside myself, focus my efforts and call attention to the relationship between nature and human beings.*



Installation view of "paintings" (2020) by Lee Ufan at SCAI The Bathhouse, Tokyo | PHOTO BY NOBUTADA OMOTE, COURTESY THE ARTISTS AND SCAI THE BATHHOUSE

ART

## Lee Ufan: The same but different

BY JOHN L. TRAN

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Lee Ufan's new paintings look very different depending on where you are standing. From a distance, when you can take in several of the large canvases at the same time, abstract shapes seem to emphatically announce themselves as existing; however, they are also pointedly ambiguous as to what they are. Shading is used to hint at three-dimensionality in some, resulting in what look like cylinders, or rotund pots, at a distance. If you move in closer, though, this painterly illusion disassembles into featureless gradients of colors or patchworks of overlaid brushstrokes.

Though the SCAI the Bathhouse exhibition is populated with paintings of similar shapes, each of them proclaims, in a different way, that it is not what you thought it was. One seems to be composed of broad brushstrokes that go left to right, but in fact is painted with multiple downward strokes. It also appears to have a limited brown palette, but on closer inspection there are barely visible speckles of bright red and blue around the edges of the central

motif, where a dry brush seems to have caught the surface of the textured watercolor paper. These out-of-place flecks of vivid color are reminiscent of chromatic aberration in photography.

At numerous levels, Lee prompts us to remember the treachery of images. In order to appreciate this, however, the paintings, all of which are entitled “Dialogue,” demand that you spend time with them; delicate hairline brushstrokes and tiny splatters of paint communicate and promote intense concentration. Monochrome works from earlier in Lee’s career, which often featured repeated single strokes, do not play with visual feints in the same way.

As well as the dialogue between the artist and materials and world at large, there is the dialogue between the different works in the space — “The part where nothing is painted makes the viewer aware of space, turning the entire exhibition space into a work of art, not just the part that was painted,” as the gallery’s description puts it. Then, of course, there is the dialogue between the work and us, the viewers. More on that later.

Another dialogue is worth considering: the one between Lee’s current work, and those of his earlier self as manifested in the ideals of Mono-ha, the mid-1960s-’70s avant-garde movement of which Lee was a co-founder. Two key concepts were: first to critique the idea of the permanent art object as a product of the artist’s self-expression, and second that art should be a matter of revealing the “world as it is,” rather than have meaning being imposed on it.

An occupational hazard of Lee’s still-growing reputation as an internationally celebrated artist, with outcomes such as a permanent Lee Ufan Museum at the Benesse Art Site on Naoshima in Kagawa Prefecture, is the increasing likelihood that the artist’s fame will overshadow the work as a medium of encounter. (The idea of art as an encounter between notional dichotomies such as ‘self’ and ‘other,’ ‘civilization’ and ‘nature,’ has been explored at length by Lee in writing and art practice.)

Not that Lee is under any obligation to keep to ideas he proposed half a century ago, or that he is unilaterally responsible for his global reputation, but alongside a contemplation of “being-in-the-world,” there can also be thoughts about “being-in-the-art-world,” and acknowledgment of how our perception of the artist may affect what the work can communicate.



Lee Ufan's 'Dialogue' (2018) | PHOTO BY JOHN L. TRAN, COURTESY OF SCAI THE BATHHOUSE

In a 2015 interview in art collector's magazine *Apollo*, Lee mentions his fondness for Heraclitus and the idea that "you cannot step into the same river twice and that everything is ever moving, always changing." However, seeing Lee's work during the COVID-19 crisis, which has temporarily closed nearly all the major art venues in Tokyo, feels like stepping out of the constant flow of exhibition scheduling that aims to attract as many visitors as possible by either showing the familiar, or promoting the next big thing.

For one thing, there is the subdued intensity of the work itself, with its mesmeric effect of holding our attention in the present moment. But also it feels like Lee's paintings are both familiar and being pump-primed to be the next big thing at the same time. Though the circumstances are in no way positive, the odd calm of Tokyo on the edge of pandemic disaster suits the frenzy and discombobulation cached in Lee's work, as does the medium-sized space of SCAI the Bathhouse. Sooner or later there's going to be a big Lee Ufan retrospective in Tokyo and that will be a very different dialogue to what the works can offer in an exhibition of this scale.

WSJ.MAGAZINE | FEATURE

## Lee Ufan's Quietly Groundbreaking Five-Decade Career

The artist Lee Ufan has pushed the boundaries of painting and sculpture. Now a flurry of major solo exhibitions honor the man of steel



A SINGULAR VISION Artist Lee Ufan at Dia:Beacon in Beacon, New York, next to his work *Relatum* (formerly *Iron Field*), 1969/2019. PHOTO: ADRIAN GAUT FOR WSJ. MAGAZINE

*By Robert Sullivan*

July 22, 2019 8:33 am ET

On a chilly spring morning, Lee Ufan is climbing up and around a quarry on the eastern end of Long Island looking for boulders. The site is a village-size pit of sand and soil, ringed with piles of white stones of varying sizes. Lee, a sculptor, painter and philosopher, has traveled from Manhattan by car. He arrived ready to work, dressed in black jeans, a dark blue jacket and a corduroy shirt of autumnal gold. He is trim and fit—about 5 foot 8 with shaggy silver hair—and he moves quickly through the landscape. He doesn't speak much, mostly keeping to hand gestures. From time to time, he refers to his drawings, sketches of future sculptures. Later, he motions toward a boulder and says, "This is good."

Lee, 83, is well aware that boulder hunting might seem odd to people unfamiliar with his work. How would he explain himself if someone asked what he was doing? The Korean-born, Japanese-based artist replies in Korean through a translator: "You can only laugh! The question that naturally follows is, 'Well, what kind of rocks are you looking for?' I would say it's a gradual process of finding the right ones, and a lot of things go into this

process.... There are the concepts that I am thinking of and then there is...the space where I intend to use the rocks.”

Down in the mine, in East Quogue, Lee occasionally asks for assistance from others. Today, the group includes Pace Gallery vice president Joseph Baptista and Anne Reeve, an associate curator at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. This September, the Hirshhorn will open an exhibition featuring Lee’s paintings and an installation of 10 newly commissioned sculptures from his *Relatum* series. The exhibit will be the largest site-specific outdoor sculpture project Lee has ever undertaken in the U.S., as well as his first exhibition in Washington, D.C., and it will also mark a first for the museum—it has never before offered the entirety of its 4.3-acre outdoor plaza to a single artist.

“This one,” Lee says in English, pointing again. Baptista marks the boulder with tape, at which point it falls under the care of Aidan Boland, a front-end loader operator at the mine and, after Lee, the person most intimate with its topography. He wraps the rock in a yellow nylon construction sling and then, using an excavator, lifts it into a dump truck. Having started out somewhere in New England about 20,000 years ago, then dragged through ice across what is today Long Island Sound, this particular stone is bound for the high ground in the old marsh that is now Washington, D.C.

Lee has been an artist since the late 1950s, and he is widely recognized as a founder and chief spokesman for the Japanese avant-garde group known as Mono-ha, often translated as “the School of Things.” As a sculptor, he constructs what can be called environments using a combination of natural materials—boulders or stones or wood that he finds out in the world—and completely man-made pieces, like forged steel. As a painter, he is known for works of almost maximal minimalism: for instance, a series of large canvases, each painted over the course of several weeks, each consisting of one or two intentionally confined brush strokes. He paints with a long broom-like brush, holding his breath for the duration of the brush’s movement. Think of him as the pen-like instrument that draws out an earthquake’s tremors on a seismograph; each of his concise brush strokes reports on the vibrations of the world.

Lee’s concept for a work always precedes the action. “His studio is a very serene and uncluttered space where he’s probably only thinking about one painting at a time,” says Hirshhorn director Melissa Chiu. “The moment at which he decides to paint or selects the rock, that’s the one brief moment of making, but it’s all the thinking that went into it before that trains and prepares him for the act.” If, with his paintings, Lee is recording an encounter with the world, then with his sculptures, he is orchestrating one for the viewer. He is not sculpting in the classical sense—there is no chisel or mold. He is pointedly not sculpting.



Relatum, 1974/2019 (front), and Relatum (formerly System), 1969 (back). PHOTO: COURTESY OF DIA ART FOUNDATION © ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK/ADAGP, PARIS

In many ways, Lee has always resisted categorization. Although he is now revered in Japan, he was, as a Korean-born artist, initially an outsider in the country's cultural scene, caught between the colony and its colonizers. He was attacked in 1978 for being, in the words of one critic, "nothing more than an aspect of Western ways of thinking."

"I do not exist in Japan," he said at the time, "and if I go to Korea I cannot confirm a definite reality."

In the West, meanwhile, he was characterized as almost stereotypically Asian, critics confusing his passion for French phenomenology with Zen Buddhism. But 40 years later, any reluctance to accept Lee's work, especially in the U.S., is turning. "It's really in recent years that people have been able to appreciate his vision," Chiu says.

In May, the Dia Art Foundation honored Lee with a gala at its location in Beacon, New York; the organization concurrently opened its own exhibit, which features five of the artist's works, four purchased by Dia over the past two years, and one on loan. Days before the gala, Lee had flown to New York from Shanghai to install his sculptures—or reinstall them. These works, created in the late '60s and early '70s, were realized anew in Dia's old factory site. In a sense, they functioned like plays newly produced by a theater company, the local cast in this case including boulders from his favorite region on Long Island and small water-smoothed stones collected downhill from Dia on the banks of the Hudson River. Lee is the forever-curious director.

One particular piece—it was originally titled *Iron Field*, though now, like all his sculptures, is called *Relatum*, a term from geometry denoting the relationship between things—required 5,500 pounds of sand and 23,600 thin metal strands, each hand-cut the week of the gala. After the sand was spread out on the floor, the metal strands were arranged like reeds or shoots of sedge. All Dia hands were called in, though Lee finished the job himself, tossing the final strands into what looks like a metallic marsh. Jessica Morgan, Dia's director, was taken by the way the viewer feels drawn by the piece itself, as if it were not magnetic but tidal. When asked about it, Lee references a Paul Valéry poem about the nature of the beach: "That sea forever starting and restarting." "I think of it in terms of the beach signifying change," Lee explains.

**Lee was born** in what is now South Korea in 1936. His father was a journalist, and his family resisted the Japanese who had ruled Korea as a colony beginning in 1910. Growing up, Lee noticed his grandfather's limp, the result of a knife wound inflicted by a policeman during the March First Movement, the 1919 uprising of Koreans against Japanese rule. Lee's father insisted that he attend primary school, against his grandfather's wishes, where he was forced to speak Japanese and to use a Japanese name, as Japanese demands on its colony grew more severe during World War II. Once enrolled, he studied painting, calligraphy and poetry—a traditional Korean education at the time.

Lee grew up in the southern province of Gyeongsangnam-do, and his first sense memories are of the outdoors. "There was a small stream that was very, very pure and unpolluted," he recalls. "I would swim in it with my friends. I would sometimes just lie on a bed of rocks to look up at the sky. I feel like the experience of rocks was always within me. Even before I learned how to read or write or gained knowledge through books." He'd rather not talk about the Korean War, but briefly recounts an incident that took place on a bridge when he was a teenager—a plane firing, people running and the fear that people behind him did not make it to safety. "That sometimes comes in my dreams to this day," he says, and when he speaks, his hands cover his face. "It's just an experience I try not to dwell on."



ROCK STAR “I feel like the experience of rocks was always within me,” Lee says, recalling a childhood spent playing with river rocks. PHOTO: ADRIAN GAUT FOR WSJ. MAGAZINE

He enrolled at Seoul National University in South Korea in 1956. But two months later he visited an uncle in Japan and stayed on, studying philosophy at Nihon University in the hopes of becoming a writer, while selling paintings to make money. He was as interested in politics as art, supporting Korean reunification and writing about the military coup in South Korea in 1961 for newspapers and magazines. By 1968, he had been swept up in the avant-garde movement that was in part a reaction to U.S. militarism in Vietnam and to rampant postwar industrialism and consumerism. There were student protests against the renewal in 1970 of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the United States, as well as continuing unrest over not just the U.S.’s use of nuclear weapons in Japan, but the existence of nuclear weapons at all.

As a founder of Mono-ha, Lee worked with artists focused on “not making.” The artists used found objects to comment on the paralyzing effects of technology. A 1968 piece by the late Nobuo Sekine was a watershed moment in the movement. Sekine’s *Phase—Mother Earth*, at Suma Rikyo Park in Kobe, Japan, was a 9-foot-deep, 7-foot-wide hole dug in the ground, the extracted soil stored alongside, its dimensions matching the hole. It was an object that drew attention to its source as well as to its own demise: Replace the plug and the piece was gone. The world was rearranged to affect your experience of the world. For Lee, Sekine’s directness seemed to speak beyond politics.



Relatum, 1974/2011. PHOTO: COURTESY OF DIA ART FOUNDATION © ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK/ADAGP, PARIS

Journalists deemed these artists troublemakers, targeting the anti-colonial Lee in particular. “They would say, ‘These artists don’t know how to paint or sculpt, these artists are just throwing things around,’ ” Lee recalls. He bristled at the name, but as time has passed, he has become more comfortable with Mono-ha, given the expansiveness of the Japanese word for *thing*, which refers not merely to a single object but to substance in general, as distinct from mind and spirit. Rather than the School of Things, it is the school of all things. It is a school that ponders the very substance of things, the materials of the world, pulsing, as they are to Lee, with information and life history.

This is the key to understanding Lee, for whom there is no such thing as an inanimate object. Imagine seeing a field or a city or a room the way a TV meteorologist sees the nation, with high and low pressure systems, with visible winds and colorful storms. “You know Westerners think it is an object, a single object,” Lee says of the word *mono*. “But in Korean and Japanese and maybe in Chinese, the word is not object, but all objects. It’s matter.” For Lee, being in the world means always being in communication, whether you’re speaking or being silent—a communication between people and people, between people and the world.

In those early years, Lee’s work was political, or so he sees it today. “One time I exhibited a canvas on the floor, and it had nothing drawn on it,” he says. “I refused to draw on it—in a sense, using violence.” In other words, he resisted what was expected of him, not a slight move in the art world then or now. If Lee was irritating to the Japanese for his anti-colonialist views, he was gradually welcomed more and more in Europe, invited to the Paris Biennale of 1971. He eventually made a home in Paris, in addition to Japan, where his European success moved the Japanese to appreciate him more.

He showed steadily in Europe and Asia through the ’80s and ’90s, honing his quiet sculptural practice while headlines in the art world focused on work by the likes of Julian Schnabel and Jeff Koons—art that, in one way or another, drew attention to itself. Lee’s first show with Pace Gallery was held in New York in 2008. In 2010, a museum of his work designed by renowned architect Tadao Ando opened on the Japanese island of Naoshima. He was the subject of a major retrospective at New York’s Guggenheim Museum in 2011, and in 2014 the Château de Versailles welcomed the artist to exhibit in its gardens; most recently, he opened a show at Centre Pompidou-Metz, in Metz, France, which is on view through September.

**Back on Long Island**, boulder hunting stretched well into the afternoon, though eventually Lee took a break for lunch at Topping Rose House in Bridgehampton. Until he did, it wasn’t clear that he would let up on his work. Does he ever relax? “I would say rest for me is when everything goes well,” Lee says. “I may put down my brush, go for a cup of coffee, maybe half a day to a spa...but it is impossible for me to imagine going on a vacation.” When not in Paris or on the road, he lives six months of the year in Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture, just south of Tokyo, with his wife. (They have three daughters.)

After lunch, when the party pulls into Marders, the old Bridgehampton nursery, which stores Lee’s boulders, the artist bounds out of the car, as if animated by his rocks—a little over a dozen—arranged in rows, some from past East Coast exhibits, the new ones preparing for their trip to the Hirshhorn. In an essay from the late 1980s titled “What Can Be Seen in a Moment,” Lee wrote: “The fact of being able to feel or see the world is in itself

mysterious, but there are moments when things and their surroundings suddenly open up..." The meeting with his rocks felt like one such moment for Lee: The stones activate his senses, remind him that we live in a world that is in communication with us, and vice versa.

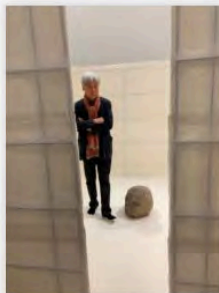
The next day, at Pace's 57th Street gallery in Manhattan, he talks about the ways that encountering a boulder are akin to encountering the unknown: "They have this energy that's very chaotic. It really reminds me of something transcendent, something of the universe. I feel like these rocks really contain multitudes of information and history. And so yes, some of them I come back to like an old friend."

# LISSON GALLERY

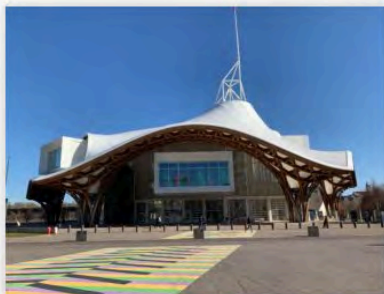
Judith Benhamou Huet

07 April 2019

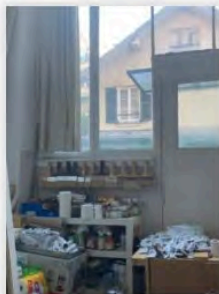
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-Huet reports



Lee Ufan



Lee Ufan



In Lee Ufan studio

## Lee Ufan: the disturbance gives rise to the artwork. At the Centre Pompidou-Metz

### A certain tension

A slight imbalance. Some kind of disturbance... Great artists don't create unforgettable works by envisaging perfection so much as by establishing anomalies.

Along with the exceptional jazz pianist Thelonious Monk, who wore large rings on all his fingers to create discordant sounds, just look at the still lifes of Cézanne: table askew, apples off-kilter, complete lack of symmetry... This deliberate pursuit of imperfection in a sophisticated image is what will stir feelings in the viewer. The Korean artist Lee Ufan (born in 1936) has lived in Japan since he was 20 years old, and these days he also spends a lot of his time in Paris.

He is part of a long lineage of artists who, each in their own way, create some kind of disturbance. All of his work, which is abstract, consists of creating a certain tension that addresses subjects like mankind, time, beauty, repetition, the search for harmony, images containing other images...

### Korea and Japan

I asked myself and I asked him whether his obsession with tension expressed through art has its roots in his personal history: the fact that as a Korean he's totally embraced the culture of a country – Lee Ufan speaks Japanese perfectly – viewed by a number of his compatriots as a former invader.

As he explains: "It's not that simple. You have to look at the global Asian situation," but he also adds later on: "I don't deny it, but it isn't something deliberate."





Lee Ufan



Lee Ufan



Lee Ufan



Lee Ufan

## At Centre Pompidou Metz

Lee Ufan's universe is born out of a set of principles that he applies in painting and sculpture using a vocabulary that we encounter in the beautiful exhibition dedicated to him at the Centre Pompidou in Metz. It's been fairly well organized by the curator, Jean-Marie Gallais, so that each room has its own concept.

### Shigeru Ban

In his studio, Lee Ufan reveals his objective for this exhibition which, if it isn't a retrospective, sums up his universe well. He claims to practice an art that is stoical and pure. He also explains how he interacted with the very distinctive architecture of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, designed by the Japanese architect Shigeru Ban



### Contrasts of material

Lee Ufan takes, for example, materials which he arranges in such a way as to reveal contrasts. He places a steel sheet in opposition with an enormous rock. The first material is the pure product of contemporary human technology. The second, collected from the mountain and serving as a symbol of nature, has been moulded by the weather since time immemorial. The rock is placed on the steel sheet, and that's it. Sometimes he positions a rock on a gravel floor and illuminates it.

### Fake shadow

The mischievous Lee Ufan even designs a fake shadow for the large stone on the floor. He's also created a gigantic ball of cotton that seems to be in dialogue with a large stone. He explains how "the cotton is soft, supple, gentle, floating: it doesn't follow the trend of current civilization."

### Calligraphy

When he was a child in Korea, Lee took lessons in calligraphy. This training has left him with a good sense for the right gesture. Some of his works were made using the broad touch of a large paintbrush on the canvas. He reworks the gesture several times over the same area and the accumulations of paint create gradients, as well as accumulations of material, which resemble landscapes.

### Fragments of myself

The artist explains: "these are all fragments of myself. I think visitors will feel first disturbance, followed by a certain peace". A wave of sound is also played in some of the rooms. It was created by the composer Ryuichi Sakamoto to invite "a new form of attention".

An entire universe.

Until 30 September.

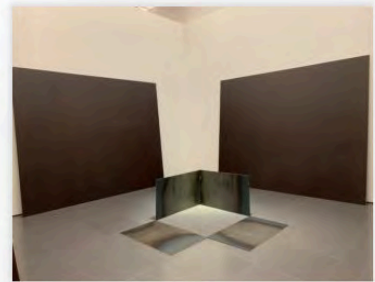
[www.centrepompidou-metz.fr](http://www.centrepompidou-metz.fr)



Lee Ufan



Lee Ufan



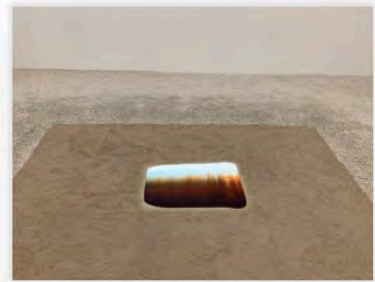
Lee Ufan



Lee Ufan



Lee Ufan



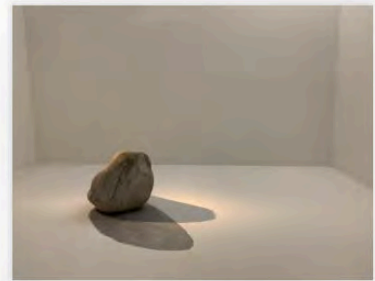
Lee Ufan



Lee Ufan



Lee Ufan



Lee Ufan

ArtReview Asia  
Spring 2019

## ArtReview Asia

*Minimalism: Space. Light. Object.*

National Gallery Singapore 16 November – 14 April  
ArtScience Museum Singapore 16 November – 14 April

By the time I left this enormous, double-venue exhibition featuring over 150 works, I no longer had the faintest clue as to what 'Minimalism' means. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Art can be at its most powerful when it unsettles rather than affirms. Particularly in the context of the current fetish for retelling art's histories and reexamining old tales from different points of view, a trend of which this – billed as the first survey of minimalist art to be staged in Southeast Asia, and the first exhibition on the subject to incorporate art from the region under the Minimalism brand – is self-consciously a part.

The exhibition at the National Gallery (where around 120 works are housed) begins traditionally enough, with some of the precursors to the heyday of New York Minimalism during the 1960s, albeit paintings (variations on the theme of black, largely from the late 1950s) by Barnett Newman, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko and Frank Stella are grouped together in the opening corridor of the show in such a cramped way that the ultimate sensation is that the curators simply wanted to dispense with art-historical givens as quickly as possible. Further in we come across works by the stars of the gang – Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt and Robert Morris – but by then the territory has been expanded, both geographically and temporally. We start to encounter works by Tang Da Wu, Lee Seung-taek, Lee Ufan (and a section on Mono-ha), Roberto Chabet, Rasheed Araeen, Ai Weiwei, Anish Kapoor, Richard Long, Mona Hatoum and Olafur Eliasson. Some, such as three works from Haegue Yang's *Sol LeWitt Upside Down* series (2017), made up of white mass-produced Venetian blinds and riffing off LeWitt's concerns with linearity, seriality and modularity, make self-conscious reference to precedents from the Western canon. (Although the fact that the South Korean's works are supported by walls or ceilings, rather than freestanding as are LeWitt's structures, and hung upside down might be seen as an oblique insistence on some form of contextual difference.) Others, such

as self-taught Myanmar artist Po Po's *Red Cube* (1986), come from somewhere else altogether.

The work comprises a red oil painting that might, given its tonal variations, suggest two faces of a cube, the one face with a hole in it, hung at an angle above a pile of gneiss rocks. It's informed by an interest in subverting the traditional viewing of paintings as portrait or landscape as well as Zen and Theravada Buddhism (Buddhist monks are known to retire to the jungle and build stone pagodas to focus the attention). In the catalogue that accompanies the exhibition, the artist asserts that he had never even heard of Minimalism when he created the work (until late 1988 the country was relatively isolated). At moments like this (and there are several), you wonder whether the New York version of Minimalism needed to be addressed at all. But other works in the exhibition build on and complicate such ambiguities.

A selection from Simryn Gill's photographic series *My Own Private Angkor* (2007–09) documents a compound of abandoned houses, built during the 1980s, in Port Dickson on Malaysia's west coast. Each image features rectangular panes of glass, bright when the sun shines on or through them, dark when it does not, that have been removed from their window settings so that they could be stripped of their valuable aluminium frames. Apparently without value, they are carefully rested against walls or balconies. To a degree, the panes of glass and their bare architectural setting offer a formal echo of the opening hang of Newmans and Reinhardts, but the situation Gill documents is found, rather than constructed (albeit the photographs are), and speaks to the passage of time, economics, recycling and ruination in an equatorial context: the kind of factors that Minimalism of the hardcore 1960s variety would see as external to the artwork. While the exhibition might be arguing for Minimalism as a global movement, Gill's work insists that regional specificity has a role to play. If New York Minimalism was about pulling down the blinds on anything external to the work of art, this kind of Minimalism is open to the world.

Within the context of both parts of the exhibition, but in the display in the ArtScience museum in particular, that notion is further pursued by the staging of Minimalism as something grounded in Asian spirituality and religion. The Rig Veda is quoted in wall texts, the teachings of the Buddha more openly evoked. Again, the fact that such philosophies have a much deeper history than Minimalism itself somewhat begs the question of why Minimalism (rather than, say, Asian mysticism, which also had an influence on many minimalists in the US and Europe) provides the framework for the show. More successful is a direct attempt to document the historic contribution of women artists (among them Simone Forti, Mary Miss, Carmen Herrera) into the expanded narrative of what is largely a male preserve. As is an expansive mini-exhibition of sound-works: an important reminder that Minimalism, as displayed here, was operative across disciplines (dance and performance are included in the National Gallery) as well as across time and space.

There's a sense, given the expanded chronology, geography and substance of the works in both institutions, that this show fits into a wider theme of destabilising the past (in terms of its accepted narratives and geography) in order better to understand our unstable present. On the other hand, its sheer inclusivity can at times mean that Minimalism seems to mean nothing because it seems to mean everything. To the extent that you wonder if all this 'blockbuster exhibition' really demonstrates is Minimalism's brand value. No more so than in an iteration of Martin Creed's *Work no. 1343* (2012) installed in the National Gallery café. The work incorporates a mishmash of furniture, utensils and receptacles ('visitors are invited to contribute their own wares to the artwork as long as they are in good condition') within the framework of the existing refectory. On the menu: a Pu'er Mousse Cake inspired by Ai Weiwei's *Ton of Tea* (2008) and the Infinity Drink – 'an invigorating blend of ginger flower, lemon, mint and soda'. *Mark Rappolt*

Facing page, top Po Po, *Red Cube*, 1986,

oil on canvas, paper collage and gneiss, 218 × 154 × 50 cm.

© Hla Oo and Po Po. Courtesy the artist and Yavuz Gallery, Singapore

Facing page, bottom Olafur Eliasson, *Room for one colour*, 1997

(installation view, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 2015), monochromatic light, dimensions variable. Photo: Anders Sune Berg. © the artist. Courtesy the artist;

Neugerriemschneider, Berlin; and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York & Los Angeles

*Le Figaro*  
1 March 2019

## Lee Ufan: «Mes œuvres aident à regarder le temps autrement»

Par Valérie Duponchelle | Mis à jour le 01/03/2019 à 16:59 / Publié le 01/03/2019 à 15:53



**INTERVIEW** - En douze chapitres, l'artiste coréen recompose sa vie au Centre Pompidou-Metz. Il donne les clefs de sa philosophie qui prend forme sous vos yeux.

Voici au Centre Pompidou-Metz, sous le chapiteau de son ami l'architecte Shigeru Ban, dans la mélodie sombre qu'a composée pour lui le musicien Ryuichi Sakamoto (*Furyo*, *Le Dernier Empereur*, *The Revenant*), l'univers étrangement paisible de Lee Ufan. Cet artiste né à Busan (Corée) en 1936, a émigré au Japon dès 1956, y a étudié la philosophie et rêvé d'écriture. Il est devenu l'un des porte-parole du mouvement du Mono-ha («l'école des choses») et une figure de la scène japonaise (à ce titre dans **l'exposition «Fukami», l'été dernier à Paris**). En douze salles, il pose ici une pierre, une tige de métal, là un nuage de coton, une large touche de pigments ou un rose aveuglant sur la toile, dresse une salle de papier que traverse la lumière... On y perd aussitôt hâte, réflexes, habitudes.

**LE FIGARO.** - Pourquoi cette irruption du blanc après la plongée dans le noir au CCC-OD de Tours à l'été 2017?

**Lee UFAN.** - C'est en moi. Le président du Centre Pompidou et le commissaire ont étudié mes œuvres et m'ont proposé ce thème. Je suis alors retourné en arrière. Le blanc est arrivé. Depuis toujours, le blanc représente ce que je n'ai pas touché. Ce contact entre ce qui est fait et pas fait est une rencontre entre mon monde intérieur et le monde extérieur. Je ne sais pas si dans le blanc, il y a de l'innocence. Ce n'est pas l'inaccompli du monde arabe où le blanc représente le divin, le sacré. Pour moi, le blanc précède l'idée de couleur, renvoie à ce qui n'est pas fabriqué. C'est donc la rencontre du monde avant la couleur et du monde fait par l'homme.

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**«Dans le monde, tout va trop vite. En regardant une pierre qui ne bouge pas à nos yeux, nous changeons en silence de notion du temps»**

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**Est-ce aussi quelque chose resté intact en vous après une vie d'artiste?**

J'ai dû réfléchir à comment composer ce retour en arrière. Ce que j'ai ressenti en regardant ces fragments de ma carrière, c'est que j'ai créé des expressions vivantes. À chaque fois, j'ai pris des contradictions et je n'ai pas cherché à les résoudre. Je les ai juste présentées telles quelles. Pour moi, une œuvre doit avoir une énergie. Je suis allé dans ce sens-là pour que mes œuvres aient et dégagent une énergie. Dans toutes mes œuvres, la tension existe. C'est un moyen de faire

ressentir cette énergie au spectateur. Le coton est léger comme un nuage, fragile, difficile à manier, ambigu, très peu utilisé car vulnérable. Alors que notre monde actuel cherche toujours du solide, du dur, du précis. Mettre le coton en correspondance avec le métal ou la pierre, c'est créer cette tension, cette résistance. Cela permet au public d'avoir une imagination inhabituelle, d'être stimulé et d'entrer en respiration avec les œuvres.

**Cherchez-vous à sortir le public de la notion habituelle du temps?**

De sortir du temps, non. Plutôt de le regarder différemment. J'utilise la pierre, concentration du temps très lointain. Dans le monde, tout va trop vite. En regardant une pierre qui ne bouge pas à nos yeux, nous changeons en silence de notion du temps. Travailler sur le temps est une caractéristique de mes œuvres. Dans *From Point*, 1976, il y a une succession de points bleus que j'ai peints une première fois, qui ont disparu, que j'ai fait réapparaître. C'est une expression visuelle, mais aussi l'expression infime de milliers et milliers d'années.

**D'où vient ce rapport au temps? Êtes-vous né comme cela? Est-ce d'avoir vécu la guerre, d'avoir quitté la Corée pour le Japon, d'avoir étudié la philosophie, d'être asiatique?**

Tout ça! (Il sourit). J'ai grandi à la campagne, j'ai étudié la philosophie à la ville, du coup je n'ai pas de port d'attache. J'ai fini par avoir une notion du temps qui me dépasse, de quelque chose de trop grand que je ne peux calculer. J'ai voulu créer des contradictions dans mes œuvres. Elles confrontent des vitesses très différentes, voire opposées. Elles sont éphémères, comme les sculptures, les peintures, comme tout ce que fait l'homme. L'art permet à l'homme de réfléchir ainsi à l'infini, à l'immortalité. On veut regarder le temps d'une manière précise, mais il est beaucoup plus complexe, chaotique.

## **Votre art veut-il mettre à distance la violence du monde?**

Tout au début de mon travail, je faisais des œuvres violentes mais poétiques. Je cherchais déjà une ambivalence. J'accrochais une toile pas du tout peinte, j'utilisais des élastiques pour tordre la notion de l'espace, je mettais des roses fluos au mur pour que l'on ne voie pas l'objet nettement, je cassais les plaques de verre avec des pierres. Si l'on regarde la violence autrement, on peut la relier de façon inattendue à l'ordre. **Richard Serra** dit que dans mes œuvres «cohabitent la violence et l'amour». Je suis tout à fait d'accord.

*«Lee Ufan, habiter le temps», au Centre Pompidou-Metz (57), jusqu'au 30 septembre, commissariat Jean-Marie Gallais.*

L I S S O N   G A L L E R Y

*Hyperallergic*  
4 October 2018

# HYPERALLERGIC

## The Quiet Chaos in Lee Ufan's New Paintings

A master of meditative minimalism, the Korean artist's new paintings are more frenetically energized than ever before.



Zachary Small   October 4, 2018



Lee Ufan, "Dialogue" (2017), acrylic on canvas, 89-1/2" x 71-1/2" (Image courtesy Pace Gallery, © 2018 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris)

Painter Lee Ufan coats an aesthetic of applied philosophy onto his highly conceptual, abstract paintings. That's probably obvious to anyone who's seen the master of meditative minimalism's work, which easily encompasses the metaphysics of everyone from Socrates to Plato, Buddha to Confucius, Descartes to Hegel. The artist's new work, most of which is debuting for the first time at Pace Gallery, is something of a departure for Lee. Here, the artist paradoxically imbues his patent stoicism with an underlying, frenetic energy. It suggests chaos, bubbling to the surface of an otherwise calm canvas.



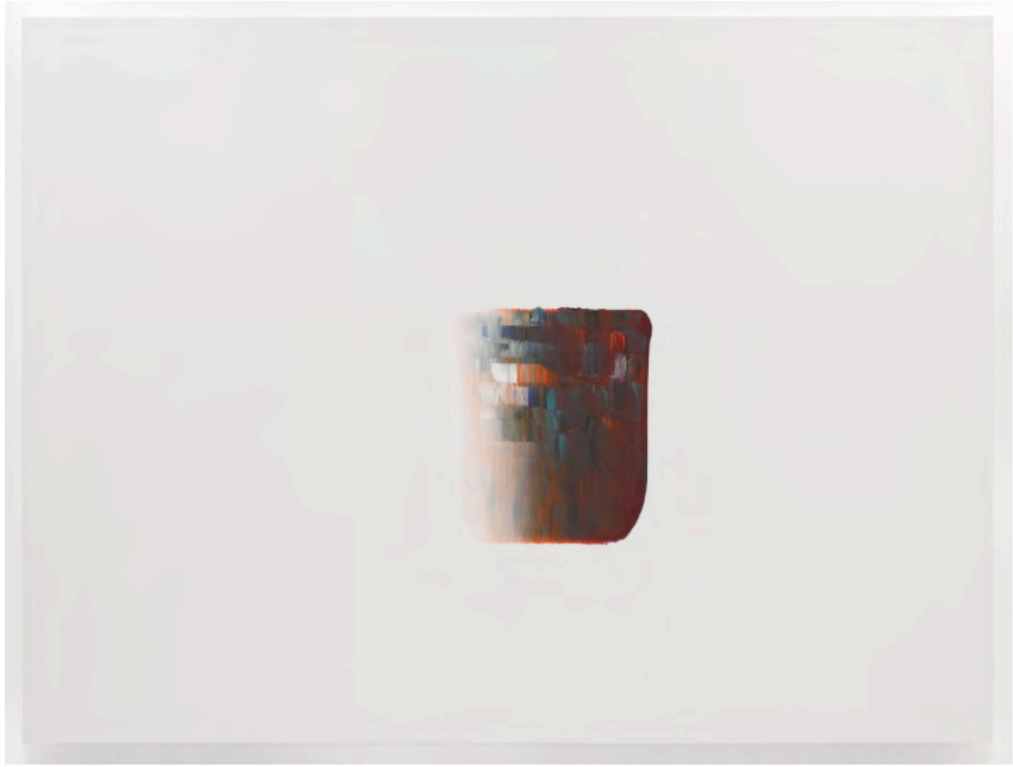
Installation view of Lee Ufan's exhibition (photo by the author for Hyperallergic)

As a Korean student of philosophy and aesthetics at Tokyo's Nihon University in the late-fifties and early-sixties, Lee began his artistic career from an anti-authoritarian, anti-colonialist angle. He applied Asian metaphysics to the dialects of European minimalist and Art Povera practices. (He even indexed some elements of the Land art movement into his "Relatum" [1968–present] stone sculptures.) Almost a decade older than his peers, Lee became a pioneer of Mono-Ha (School of Things), a Japanese movement that grew out of these political-philosophical epistemes and the tumultuous postwar period.

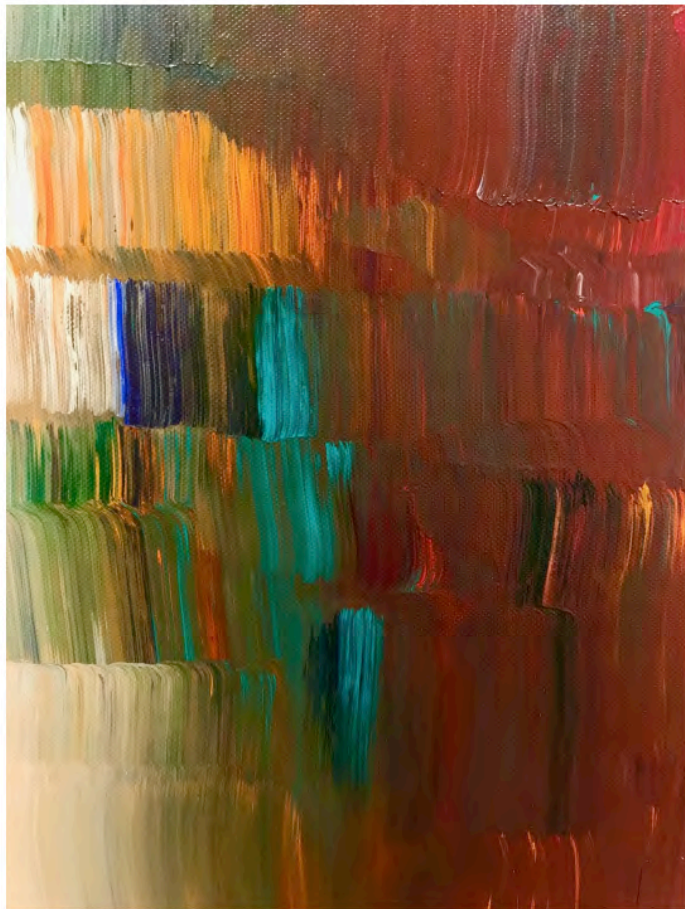


Installation view of Lee Ufan exhibition (photo by the author for Hyperallergic)

Choosing to focus on the relationships between materials and perceptions — particularly that of industrial and nature objects — Mono-Ha gained attention in the 1970s as a fresh approach to abstraction. Lee’s work, in particular, gravitated toward the connection between the artwork and the artist’s interior world. This is best exemplified in his ongoing series, “Dialogue,” which he has been creating for nearly a decade. Each brushstroke in this series is said to relate to the artist’s breath, and although small, each work is said to have taken the artist up to a month to complete. Look closely and you will see why: Lee’s paintings are composed of a range of pigments loaded onto a wide brush that allows for large strokes with a range of hues. The artist’s patience is a virtue, layering innumerable different shades of the same color until his finished product has the appearance of seamlessly transitioning from dark to light. The surrounding blank canvas helps blur these colors into relief, touching on notions of color theory and phenomenology that naturally manipulate the eye’s ability to perceive distinct brushstrokes.



Lee Ufan, "Dialogue" (2016), acrylic on canvas, 86" x 9' 6-3/4" (image courtesy Pace Gallery, photo by Mark Waldhauser, © 2018 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris)



Detail of Lee Ufan, "Dialogue" (2016), (photo by the author for Hyperallergic)

Previously, Lee has described his practice as the vibration of mental energy onto the canvas. "A work of art is a site where places of making and not making, painting and not painting, are linked so that they reverberate with each other," quotes the Pace Gallery's press release. This feels especially true in the artist's new work, which seems to record the hairline fractures of an unstable political world in a polychromatic flurry of exchanges. For an artist like Lee, the presence of so many colors feels revolutionary, opening his genre of minimalist art to a new treatise on planned chaos.



Lee Ufan, "Dialogue" (2018), acrylic on canvas, 89-3/8" x 71-5/8" (image courtesy Pace Gallery, photo by Mark Waldhauser, © 2018 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris)



Detail view of Lee Ufan, "Dialogue" (2018), (photo by the author for Hyperallergic)

That's not to say that Lee succumbs to the offhand improvisation of some abstract expressionists or Japan's antecedent Gutai movement. Even the paint drops across a few of his canvases look meticulously planned with little residual splatter surrounding their impacts. Still, the seething tension implicit in Lee's work is remarkable — a truly arresting visual sight that begs one to ask how the artist will continue to slowly evolve the "Dialogue" series.

*Lee Ufan continues through October 13 at [Pace Gallery](#) (510 West 25th Street, Chelsea, Manhattan).*

# LISSON GALLERY

Mousse

9 September 2016

<http://moussemagazine.it/lee-ufan-chateau-la-coste-2016/>



## Lee Ufan at Château La Coste, Le Puy Ste Réparate

September 9~2016



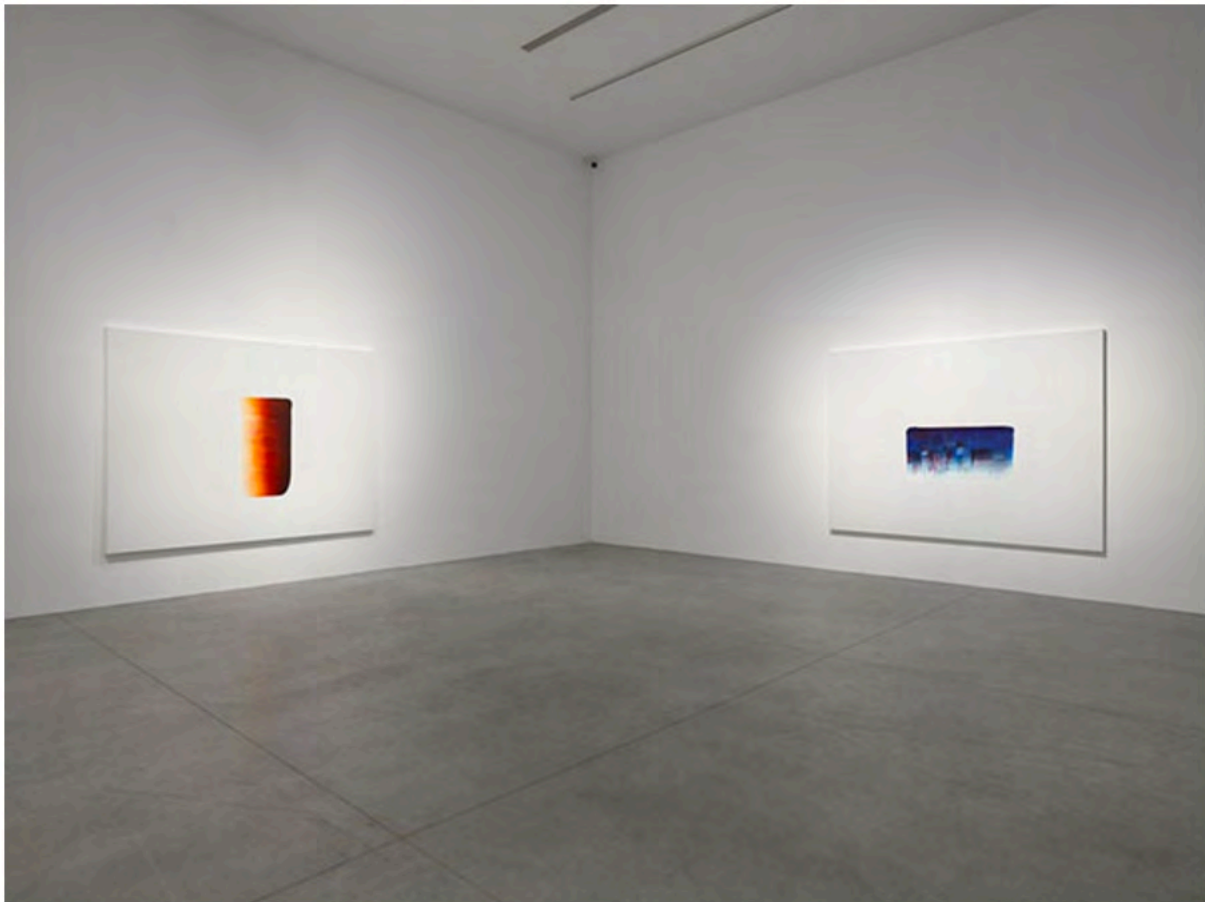
“I do not want to make immortal works that boast of the power of man. That is because I am interested in the fate of painting. The surface of my paintings will probably fade before ten thousand years pass, and the canvas will unravel... Nature always and everywhere tries to bring the works of man back to earth. There is great beauty in the fierce conflict between the forces that try to bring things into existence and the forces that try to nullify them... I want to make paintings with a tenuous balance where both sides of this game are visible.”  
—Lee Ufan, *The Art of Encounter*, 2004

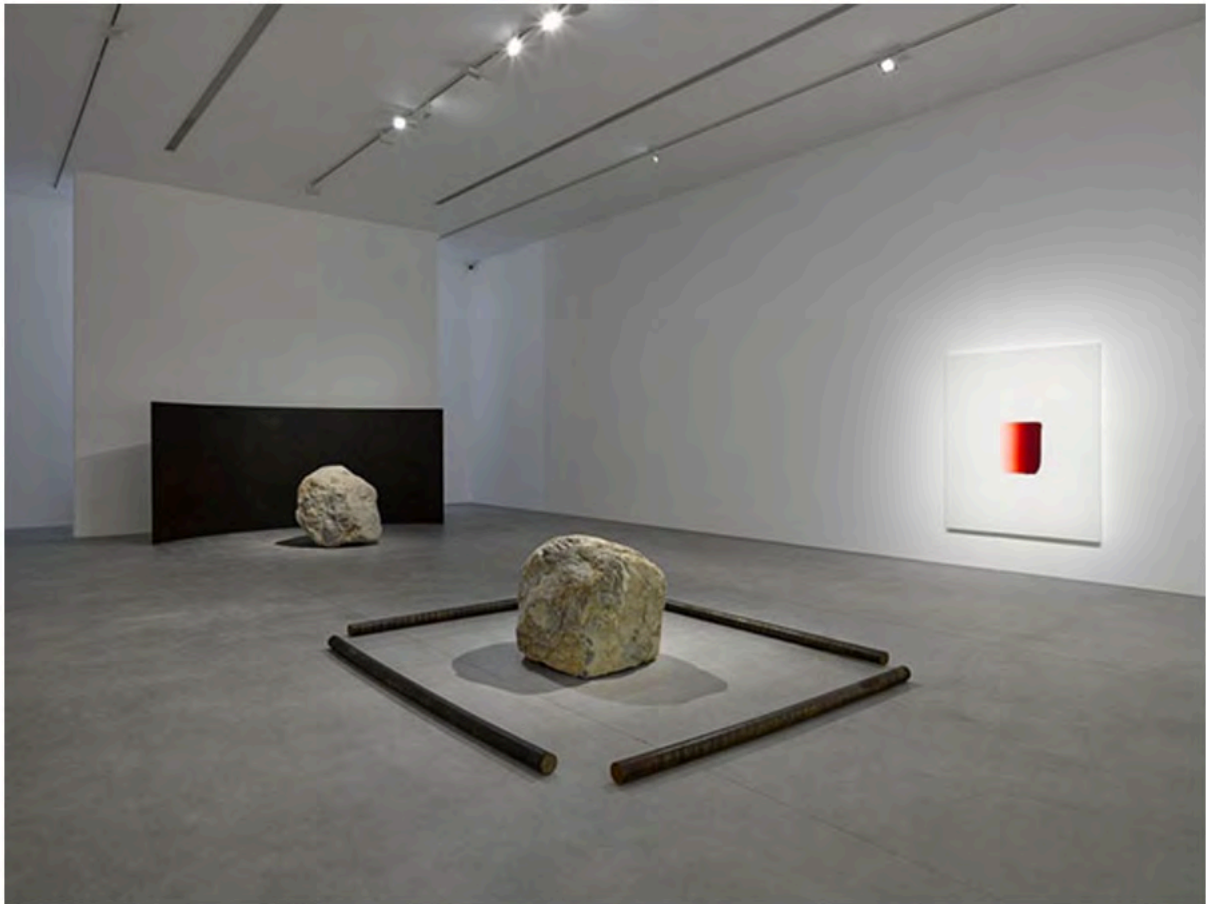
Château La Coste, in collaboration with Lisson Gallery and kamel mennour, is delighted to present an exhibition of new and recent work by Lee Ufan. Housed within a custom-built gallery space designed by French architect Jean Michel Wilmotte, this is the second exhibition in Château La Coste's art programme, which launched in 2015 with a solo show by Sean Scully. Based in Le Puy-Sainte-Réparate, a few kilometres away from Aix-en-Provence in France, Château La Coste is home to a number of site-specific commissions by artists including Louise Bourgeois, Andy Goldsworthy, Tatsuo Miyajima, Richard Serra and Lee Ufan, placed alongside 125 hectares of vineyards and Villa La Coste, a new luxury hotel that will open to the public in summer 2016.

Lee Ufan's solo exhibition at Château La Coste, the artist's first in France following his presentation at the Palace of Versailles in 2014, is in many ways an extension of *House of Air*, a permanent commission unveiled at the château in 2014. Located within an intimate, chapel-like space, where the walls served as a canvas to which Lee applied his distinctive brush strokes, the work is marked by a large stone near the entrance to the building. The finely crushed stone that Lee mixes with his paints physically connects his two-dimensional works with his three-dimensional sculptures. In contrast to the artist's carefully wrought paintings, the sculptures consist of objects to which, pointedly, no artistic action has been applied, offering instead a space for the contemplation of non-productivity and a rare moment of silent, solo interaction with a work of art. Ultimately, whether at a monumental or domestic scale, it is Lee's hope that his work might "lead people's eyes to emptiness and turn their eyes to silence."

The house itself, designed specifically by Lee, offers visitors both a physical refuge and a place of reflection; a site of meditation and a pause for thought, where the views of the surrounding hills are framed by rows of vines. The immersion of Lee Ufan's work within the landscape is a powerful illustration of his inner beliefs in the role of art and its ultimate evolution and dissolution into air – a theme further explored in Lee's solo exhibition at Château La Coste through new paintings and sculptures.

at Château La Coste, Le Puy Ste Réparate  
until 24 September 2016





Lee Ufan installation views at Château La Coste, Le Puy Ste Réparate, 2016  
Courtesy: Lisson Gallery and Château La Coste. Photo: Jack Hems

# Solitary Soul

Lee Ufan's contemplative work includes minimalist paintings and sculptural interventions. The itinerant artist talks to *Apollo* about philosophy, stones, and why he prefers being on his own

By Martin Gayford

For over 40 years I have been a kind of *déraciné*, says Lee Ufan (b. 1936), 'and I'm really still continuing on a pilgrimage around the world.' We are sitting in the artist's Paris studio on a brilliant early autumn day. A few minutes away is rue Victor Massé, where Degas lived in his later years, and a short walk uphill towards Montmartre is rue Lepic, where Vincent van Gogh shared an apartment with his brother Theo. This is the heart of painters' Paris, and Lee is now, I suppose, a member of the *École de Paris*, the eclectic group of artists from far and wide who once made the city their home. Certainly, he is an eminent member of what you might call the *École du Monde*: that is, the global art world. He has exhibited in New York, London – where recent solo shows include Lisson Gallery and Pace Gallery – and at the Venice Biennale, and the Palace of Versailles has been surrounded by his works. On the Japanese island of Naoshima, there is a museum dedicated to his art.

Lee's journey here began 79 years ago in Haman County, South Korea, where he was born in 1936. When he appears at the door of his work room to greet me and my interpreter, Kyoko, however, that date is hard to believe. His face is unlined and he looks, moves, and sounds like a much younger man. Although he has an assistant, who lets us in at the main door, you get the impression that his work is a solitary affair. As soon as we arrive, a pot of green tea is made for us, and it is Lee himself who makes it. For such a famous artist, his work place is surprisingly modest: a smallish room in an old building, with big canvases stacked around the walls. Only one of these is turned outwards, so the paint surface is visible – a work in progress. It seems to consist of a single, large brushstroke; a rounded, tapering oblong of pigment in the centre. This coloured area, however, is not solid, but delicately shaded from dense pink to pale. And it is the result not of one brushstroke, but many. 'Do you see this picture?', he asks (via Kyoko, since his English is limited and my Japanese and Korean nonexistent). 'It seems very simple, but I start work on it at nine o'clock in the morn-

ing and carry on until three or four in the afternoon. And not only for one day; I repeat the same process for three, four, five times. If even then it doesn't please me I start it again. After all these years, it is very difficult for me to say when a particular work of art is finished. Even Leonardo da Vinci struggled to finish the *Mona Lisa*; it is very difficult for artists to put down their brushes.'

When he paints, the canvas is laid on the floor while he lies on a wooden board, set up like a bridge, above it. Since childhood, he has preferred to work like this, with the picture horizontal on the ground. 'One reason is because in that way I can really feel I am inside the canvas. I throw myself into it, so as to concentrate.' Absolute concentration is essential to what Lee does (Fig. 1). One of his most celebrated series of works, *From Line*, dating from the 1970s and early '80s, consists of single strokes, amazingly long and even, descending from the top to the bottom of a white or yellow canvas (Fig. 4). This looks, in painting terms, like a high-wire act: one slip and everything would be spoilt. Though subtly different, each mark has to be essentially the same – perpendicular, utterly confident. It is, you might say, painting as performance. He prefers to use a sporting analogy: 'Artists train themselves in the same way as athletes do. Let's take tennis as an example. When you play you are facing your opponent, so you have always to think about how the adversary is going to respond to you. My painting is a game, with the canvas as my opponent. There is a tension between myself and the canvas, and the brushstroke is the product of that tension. So I am not entirely in control.'

In one way, as Lee describes it, what he does sounds very much like performance art. 'The body is crucial, our body does not belong just to us. It creates a relationship with the world. And this relationship is the most interesting thing of all.' His way of working, with the canvas on the floor so the artist is immersed within it, sounds rather like Jackson Pollock's method. The results have more of the elegant austerity of Barnett Newman: one of the works dating to 1980 in his *From Line* series, comprises a single

vertical stroke. In a way, this looks like Lee's version of Newman's celebrated 'zip', but unlike the American master's paintings, his is not a piece of clean geometry. Lee's stroke is visibly the result of an action. You can see how the paint is denser and darker at the top, becoming fainter as the line continues and the pigment runs out. It is a trace in time.

Lee, however, does not accept this – or any – connection to other painters, eastern or western. 'It may be true that some of my paintings look similar to the paintings of certain artists, although they are not really related. I admit that in the beginning of my career, I was a bit stimulated by Pollock or Newman. On the other hand, there are people who tend to associate my paintings with traditional Asian painting because I was born in Asia. However, my paintings are just Lee Ufan's paintings.' He adds: 'I have always asked myself about how a painting comes into existence.' It is indeed an interesting and elusive question. His remark reminds me of a recent comment made by a very different artist, David Hockney: 'How would you know what a picture means? How would I know what my pictures mean?'

Lee and Hockney are near contemporaries. He was part of an international generation of artists who reconfigured the boundaries of art in the 1960s and '70s. This incorporated not only art as action, but also, in the west, such movements as conceptual art, land art, *arte povera*, and minimalism. Lee was a leading member of a parallel group in Japan, which was given the name Mono-ha, or 'School of Things'. Works from this school certainly have a family resemblance to their occidental avant-garde counterparts. The work that first attracted Lee to Mono-ha was *Phase – Mother Earth* (1968) by Sekine Nobuo. This outdoor sculpture consists of a deep hole in the ground of a park in Kobe, beside which is a perfect cylinder formed from the soil extracted from that hole – so, you might say, an exercise in minimalist land art. After he saw this, Lee wrote an essay about it, entitled *Beyond Being and Nothingness – A Thesis on Sekine Nobuo*. Subsequently, he became not only one of the leading artists of Mono-ha, but also its theoretician. It is not coincidental that Lee's piece on Sekine Nobuo makes reference to Jean-Paul Sartre's essay *L'Être et le néant*. He had started out as much a writer and philosopher as an artist.

As a boy, Lee learned to paint, but with no intention of becoming a professional artist. 'At that time in Korea, and also in Japan, there was a tradition, especially in old fashioned families, in which boys were given personal education at home. This included painting, calligraphy and the reading of Chinese classics. But this was part of the general culture of a civilised man. By doing calligraphy, you learnt how to write, by drawing and reading literature we gained our culture.' Lee's route into the art world was an indirect one. 'When I was a high-school student I was interested in literature; I really wanted to be a poet or a novelist. But my marks at school were not good enough for me to get into university to study literature.'

A school master encouraged him to apply to do art instead, since he was very good at painting. He began a course at the College of Fine Arts at Seoul National University, but after a couple of months his father asked him to travel to Japan to take some medicine to his uncle, who was unwell. Once there, this uncle suggested that he stay and study literature and philosophy at a Japanese university, which he did, thus beginning his life as a wanderer. Though he insists philosophy has no direct relationship to his art, he retains an enthusiasm for a number of philosophers, both eastern and western, among them the Taoist sage, Lao Tzu, and the pre-Socratic Greek thinker, Heraclitus.

'I love Heraclitus!' he exclaims, when I mention the latter, 'Especially his sayings that you cannot step into the same river twice and that everything is ever moving, always changing. I totally agree – the idea of everything being in flux really attracts me.' He does not accept the suggestion that his study of philosophy has affected his painting and sculpture. 'In my everyday life, I use logical ways of thinking that I learnt. So in some sense it has been useful; but having said that, I don't want to turn philosophy into art. Philosophy is based on reflection, thinking. Art is an action, based on our emotion or perception.'

On the other hand, there is a distinctly metaphysical, even cosmological aspect to his work. This emerges when we turn to the subject of stones, which feature very frequently in his sculptural installations. Lee is meticulous in the choice of these. He outlined his requirements to curator Alfred Pacquement, when discussing his extraordinary series of works which were shown in the grounds of Versailles in 2014. He wanted his stones, Lee explains, 'to be massive, hard, characterless, with a squat shape.' 'I need stones that have been polished by earth and water, wind and rain over a long period; they should not evoke any particular image, they must have a force of abstraction.' At Versailles his installations included a monumental but simple steel arch framing the facade of the palace, anchored on each side by a natural boulder, with a metal mirror beneath (Fig. 2). This managed to be at once minimal, grand, eastern and western – in conversation with, but quite different to the baroque classicism of Versailles' architecture and the formal fountains, parterres, topiary, and hedges designed by Le Nôtre. Its title was *Relatum – The Arch of Versailles*. Other works were placed around the site, each with titles beginning with *Relatum* ('Refer') – as all his sculptures have begun since the late 1960s (Figs. 3 & 5). For the last five years, most of these works comprise steel plates in juxtaposition with rocks that look as large and smooth as they did when the artist first found them.


There have been plenty of stones in the art of the last half century, but they are not used by other artists in quite the same manner as Lee. Richard Long's stones, for example, arranged in lines and circles, speak of place, as suggested by their titles: *Norfolk Flint Circle*, for example, or *Georgia Granite Circle*. They are concerned with the differing geology and topography the artist encounters in his walks across the world. Lee, in contrast, is preoccupied

by time. 'Stones are the oldest thing we ever encounter in our world. There is an unimaginably long time inside them: a kind of concentration of several hundred million years. And within a stone there are elements we can use to forge a metal such as steel.' He goes on: 'I really value what does need to be made, the uncreated, the *not* made. My aim is to make the not-manmade *speak*. I really want you to hear the voice of these things: to put the manmade and non-manmade in juxtaposition. This combination is fundamental for me.'

There is a meditative quality in Lee's art, a depth to its apparent simplicities. His installations are confrontations between human culture and nature, the present moment and eternity. In the museum dedicated to his work on Naoshima, the small island in the Inland Sea of Japan known for its displays of contemporary art, there is a room containing four works painted directly onto the walls. The idea is that you remove your shoes on entering, then just sit on the floor and contemplate. This museum is a close collaboration between Lee Ufan and the architect Tadao Ando (Fig. 6). When the idea was first suggested, however, by Soichiro Fukutake, the billionaire who has funded and masterminded Naoshima's transformation into a sort of modern art lover's shangri-la, Lee was not enthusiastic. 'Frankly speaking, at the beginning I was not at all interested in creating a museum of my work. When Mr Fukutake contacted me, I just replied "Let me see."' It was Tadao Ando who talked him into it, arguing that it would be an ideal way to realise various projects. 'What I really wanted to make was a space like a cave. Something that would be like entering and leaving a tomb, or a human body. The final result is not a space conceived by an architect, with the artwork installed in it afterwards. Not at all. Ando couldn't have done it on his

own, nor could I. Our two sets of ideas were juxtaposed to create what you see. Fortunately, Ando is an old friend of mine, so there were no quarrels or disagreements. Our discussions went mysteriously smoothly.'

On the day I visited Naoshima, I had just been to Kyoto, where I had seen the 'dry' gardens of the Zen monasteries. The most celebrated of these, the Ryōan-ji, consists of 15 natural stones in a field of immaculately raked white gravel. Was there a connection – I couldn't help asking – between this and his own work? Again, he rejected the association, just as he had with Jackson Pollock and Barnett Newman's abstraction. 'No connection at all. Although you know I was born in Asia so even if I say "No, not at all in a direct way", maybe the atmosphere or the zeitgeist impregnated this feeling for stones into me. But as far as my work is concerned, it's totally distinct. It is the result of my questioning how artists should express themselves in a contemporary world – nothing to do with Zen gardens.'

In an idiosyncratic way Lee Ufan is a truly global figure. Is there anywhere, I ask, among the various places where he has lived and worked, that he feels more at home? 'At the very beginning I had difficulty because I didn't speak certain languages or felt isolated, but now I don't distinguish between good places and bad. Everywhere is similar – and anyway, I love to be alone.' 

**Martin Gayford's latest book is *Rendez-vous with Art* (Thames & Hudson), written with Philippe de Montebello.**

**For more information on the Lee Ufan Museum in Naoshima, visit [www.benesse-artsite.jp](http://www.benesse-artsite.jp).**



I. *Dialogue*, 2014, Lee Ufan, oil on canvas,  
218 x 291 x 6cm



**'My painting  
is a game, with  
the canvas as  
my opponent'**

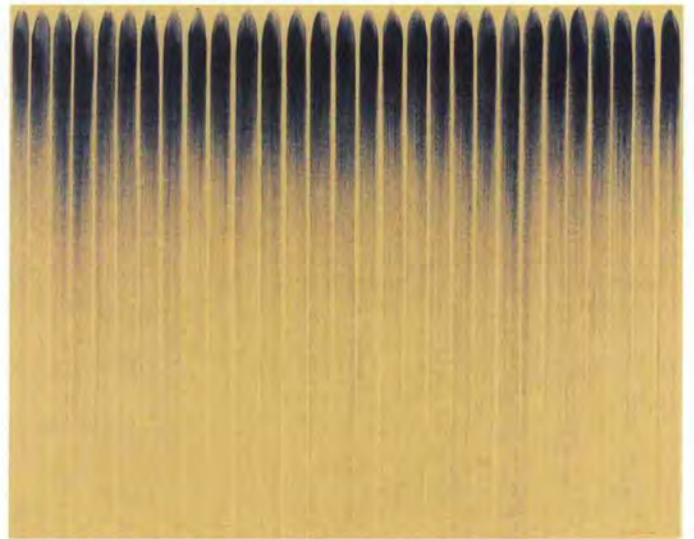


2. *Relatum – The Arch of Versailles*, installation view from the 2014 exhibition 'Lee Ufan Versailles' at the Chateau de Versailles

3. *Relatum – Le Baton du Géant*, installation view from the 2014 exhibition 'Lee Ufan Versailles' at the Chateau de Versailles



4. *From Line*, 1982, Lee Ufan, glue and mineral pigment on canvas, 112.4 x 145.4cm



5. *Relatum – Rest*, 2013, Lee Ufan, gravel, glass, steel, and stone, various dimensions



6. Lee Ufan's works are permanently installed in the gardens of the Lee Ufan Museum, Naoshima, designed by Tadao Ando



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with Lee Ufan

Pepper, piracy  
and porcelain

Time to clear out  
museum stores?

## Loan Star State

A great Islamic art collection comes to Texas



LISSON GALLERY

Art in America, online  
30<sup>th</sup> June 2014

# Art in America



# Lee Ufan Rocks Versailles

Only in France, perhaps, could a Sunday outing entail an exercise in visual philosophy—one combining formal rigor with a whiff of historical decadence. But that's exactly what's on offer now at the royal palace of Versailles outside Paris. There Lee Ufan, the Korean-born cofounder and theorist of Japan's late-1960s and early-'70s Mono-ha (School of Things) movement, has temporarily installed 10 new sculptures from his long-running "Relatum" series (through Nov. 2). The enigmatic works—nine of them sited in the chateau's immense formal gardens—feature Lee's signature counterbalancing of stone, steel and other materials.

*Shadow of the Stars*, for example, comprises a segmented fence of upright steel plates surrounding a circle of crushed-marble gravel and seven boulders arranged like the heavenly bodies of a constellation. *The Giant's Club*, a long steel rod leaning across an enormous stone, serves as a metaphor for the standoff between wild nature and the human impulse to impose order.

Conversely, a pervasive, almost Romantic natural sympathy is suggested by *Wind Blades*, a sequence of wavelike metal plates laid out sequentially on the central lawn to recall the wind-on-the-grass ripples that Lee, 78, observed on one of his numerous preparatory visits to Versailles. (The artist has for many years kept a studio in Paris.)

In *The Tomb: Homage to André Le Nôtre*, a severe rectangular pit containing a boulder confronts the phantasmagoric Baths of Apollo fountain, with its three mythical figure groups set in an artificial grotto. The landscape architect Le Nôtre (1613-1700) is famed for transforming, at the behest of Louis XIV, some 16,000 acres of swampland into Versailles's rigorously geometric gardens and park, only occasionally punctuated by such frothy statuary outbreaks.

Lee's *The Arch of Versailles*, very much in Le Nôtre's spirit, is a simple, vaulting steel arc some 100 feet high and wide, that—depending on one's angle of view—reframes the palace, the long central lawn and/or the sky itself. Seemingly held in bent tension by two bracketing rocks, it was inspired, Lee says, by a rainbow that he saw as a young man while living in Japan.

This project's sole interior piece—erected in an ornate, two-story palace atrium—harks back materially (though on a grander scale) to work Lee made around 1970. A freestanding wall covered with a fluffy coat of white long-strand cotton, topped by a boulder and immersed at its base in more cloudlike billows of cotton, it simultaneously evokes the surging form of Rodin's monument to

Such binary relationships have long been at the heart of Lee's art. Born in Korea in 1936, he grew up in the remote countryside under the contrasting influences of a grandfather who was a farmer, a father who was an international journalist and a mother who lived as a provincial housewife while maintaining a personal elegance and a love of the classics. At the age of 20, Lee, whose first intellectual passions were literature and philosophy, went to study in Tokyo.

At the time, animosity ran deep between Japan, which took a culturally superior stance toward its neighbor, and Korea, still resentful over 35 years of Japanese occupation (1910-45). Emerging as an artist and essayist steeped in Eastern thought but equally responsive to Heidegger and other Western thinkers, Lee was often in a state of cultural suspension—too foreign to be included in many Japanese shows, too transnational to be considered a truly Korean artist back home.

While fully aware of Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism, Arte Povera and Land art in the West, the artist resolutely committed himself to an Eastern artistic practice based on contemplation, restraint and thoughtful pacing. For him, the control of breath, brush, energy and formal rhythm are intimately interrelated.

Over the years, Lee also turned lingering cultural dichotomies to his advantage, creating a body of abstract work reflecting, in both painting and sculpture, a quiet rapport between manmade and natural materials, form and emptiness, visual velocity and stasis. He became not only a leader of Mono-ha but, thereafter, a globally exhibited independent artist. Most recently, he has enjoyed international blue-chip gallery representation (Blum & Poe, Pace, Kamel Mennour), the 2010 establishment of a private museum designed by Tadao Ando on the island of Naoshima, Japan, and a 2011 retrospective at New York's Guggenheim Museum.

All of this makes Lee a particularly intriguing choice for the Versailles commission. Several predecessors in the annual project have produced works in keeping with the ornate frivolity of the palace's interior (Jeff Koons, 2008; Takashi Murakami, 2010; Joana Vasconcelos, 2012), while last year Giuseppe Penone (chosen by Alfred Pacquement, director of the Centre Pompidou, who also selected Lee) presented blasted, split, misshapen trees representing a darker subtext of Le Nôtre's vision: the fierce imposition of human will on a disorderly world.

Lee, however, seeks to disclose a transcendent order that he believes is already there. The Cartesian *cogito* ("I think; therefore, I am"), which lies at the heart of the French rationalist tradition, is linked in his artwork and writings to the isolate, all-discovering meditation of the Eastern sage.

# On Reflection

After the opening last year of the Lee Ufan Museum – a collaboration with the architect Tadao Ando on Naoshima Island, Japan – and ahead of his largest retrospective to date, at New York's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, **Lee Ufan** talks to *Melissa Chiu* about his five decades as an artist, writer and philosopher



*Belshazz – a stone*  
1995  
Stone and brick  
Stone plate: 30x30x40 cm  
Stone: 4.1x 1.2m  
Installation: 6.4x 9.0m  
Lee Ufan Museum  
Naoshima, Japan



Lee Ufan photographed at his studio in Kamakura, Japan, 2009

*I didn't go to Japan by choice. My work was not well, so I went to visit his there and he told me I should stay and study at I did.*

Since the late 1960s, Korean-born artist Lee Ufan – who lives and works in Paris, France, and Kamakura, Japan – has been an influential painter, sculptor, writer, art critic, teacher and philosopher. He was a key figure in the Mono-ha movement (from the two Japanese words *mono*, meaning thing, and *ha*, school) in the late 1960s and early '70s in Japan, where he moved in 1956. Originating from Mono-ha's interest in highlighting the relationships between artistic elements and the spaces around them, Ufan's sculptures are created from simple juxtapositions of natural and industrial materials, while his paintings and watercolours involve quiet confrontations between pigment and surface. Parallel to his sustained artistic process, he has continued to write critical essays and short texts about subjects ranging from philosophy and art to cooking, flower arranging and poetry. Before the opening of his first US retrospective, at the Guggenheim Museum in New York this summer, art historian Melissa Chiu spoke to Lee Ufan about his life and work.

**MELISSA CHIU** You've been a seminal figure for international art, particularly the development of Modernism in East Asia. Although you were born in Korea and lived there until you were 20, your work as an artist and critic is perhaps better known in Japan, largely because of the role you played with the Mono-ha movement of the late 1960s and '70s. What do you think led to the development of Mono-ha in Japan?

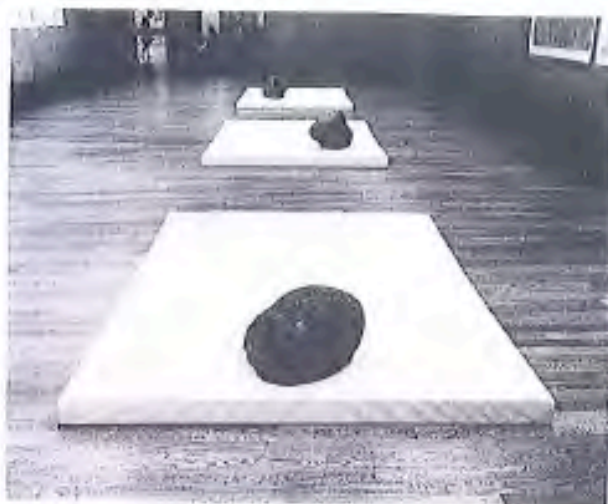
**LEE UFAN (VIA TRANSLATOR SUMINO TAKEDA)** The Mono-ha movement began around 1967 and lasted until about '74. At the time, there were major social changes occurring in the US – the hippie movement, for example – as well as Earthworks and Minimalism in art. In Italy there was

Arte Povera and in the UK, Anti-Form. Modernism was being criticized and new values were being explored. In France there was the May '68 revolution, and in Japan the Anpo movement arose as a resistance toward the Japanese-US Security Treaty. The existing structures were being turned upside-down, and this had an impact on literature, art and music. Modernism in these contexts was about expressing what one was about, but the Mono-ha movement was not about identity. It had to do with what to make and what not to make, and the clash of the two. The art work we created was criticized for its lack of skill. We used manufactured materials, such as glass, sheet metal or electricity, combined with natural materials, such as dirt, rocks and water. I use the Japanese word *chotokunin* to describe it, which means unresolved, incomplete or not polished. So you're neither here nor there; it's the meeting of the two – oneself and one's interaction with these materials, both industrial and natural.

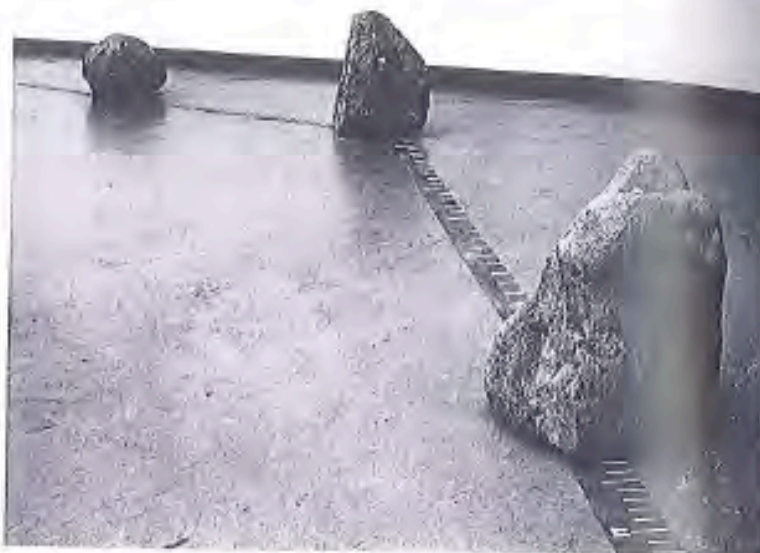
**MC** In an essay you wrote, you described Mono-ha as a movement that 'disturbed ordinary perceptions and preconceived ideas about what is real or not real'. That brings to my mind an approach towards materials that was probably very new in Japan, and certainly internationally, at that time. Can you talk a little bit more about this approach to materials, which I think is the essence of the Mono-ha movement?

**LUF** Right before Mono-ha emerged there was a breakdown in the identity of Japanese artists. Rather than using things and space as materials for realizing their ideas, artists tried to bring out the mutual relationships of their materials and the spaces surrounding them. Step-by-step they became more conscious of the media they were using.

**Mono-ha was not about new ideas; rather, it looked at what to do with this broken identity in Japan in the postwar period.**



**Relatos**  
1971  
Canvas and stones  
Installation view  
Tokyo Metropolitan Art  
Museum  
*The Mono-ha awareness  
was not about identity.  
It had to do with what  
to make and what not to  
make, and the clash of  
the two.*



**Relatos**  
1969  
Stones  
Installation view  
National Museum of  
Modern Art, Kyoto  
*There are many such objects  
- there's a small amount  
of sculpture, a little bit of  
painting. Culture should not  
be about making the great  
national product.*



**Relatos**  
1970  
Stones, cushions and lights  
Installation view  
Pinar Gallery, Tokyo  
*There are things about Japan  
that I both love and dread. I  
grew up in a home that was  
very multilingual. We had a lot  
of artworks and furniture, so  
I have a certain nostalgia for  
the things that were around me  
as I was growing up.*

6 In accounts of Japanese art, Mono-ha always comes on the heels of the Gutai movement that emerged in the late 1950s, and whose manifesto pressed their interest in the beauty of destruction, ruins or decay. What relationship, if any, did Mono-ha have to Gutai?

PF There is no direct relationship: Gutai was more orientated toward experimentation, whereas Mono-ha was a protest against Modernism. Gutai gave us the courage to experiment, but within the context of the breakdown of identity, Gutai had nothing to teach.

2 But if Gutai had less to teach, then why do you think - in the West at least - it has received a lot more critical attention than Mono-ha? Does it have something to do with the performative nature of Gutai?

PF That's a very good point. There are links between Gutai and Mono-ha when it comes to performance. I don't mean to deny Gutai's relevance.

It was driven by new ideas, and doing things that were dynamic and attractive. The Gutai group was a community, and they worked with other groups, such as the Zero Group. They were better funded and had the support of influential critics. Mono-ha wasn't recognized by the critics - our recognition came from Europe. It was not about new ideas; rather, it looked at what to do with this broken identity in Japan in the postwar period. And so Mono-ha began with a very clear concept in that respect. Compared with Gutai, we had far less financing, and there were fewer people involved. It was not a group that would pull its forces together to do something dynamic. It was very different in nature, and that's reflective of the times. It consisted of individuals who did their own thing, and in fact, if we did get together at all, we had arguments and fights. That's the way it was.

**MC** Much of my work as an art historian and curator, especially in the past few years, has been to look at art history with a global emphasis. Mono-ha, like Gutai, was not a movement that existed in a vacuum, but rather one that was linked to other movements across the world. How connected did you feel to other art movements that were going on outside of Japan?

**LUF** In 1967 or '68 Japan was not very open. It was a period of economic growth in the country, but there was still poverty, and therefore it was not an information-rich society. It was difficult to get information. Outside of the art world, there was a movement against neo-colonialism. The Anpo movement reacted against American imperialism. Because the information wasn't so readily available, we often misunderstood what was going on in the rest of the world. It wasn't until I went to Europe for the first time for the Paris Biennale in 1971 that I was able to get more information and find out about what was going on both in the US and Europe.

**MC** Your writings have played such an important role, not just within Mono-ha, but also throughout your career. Why did you choose to take on this role of writer and artist, or critic and artist?

**LUF** When I moved to Japan from Korea, I was a foreigner, an outsider. No critics supported my work. Out of desperation, I wrote about myself. I gave

lectures and did whatever was necessary. That's one reason. The second reason was that I had studied philosophy, so I was theoretical in my thinking, and when I began working with other people with similar thoughts there were no critics to support this larger group, and so I had to explain what it all meant – it really was an act of desperation. Somehow these essays piled up, and resulted in a number of books. Amongst my friends in Mono-ha, there was a need for these texts. I still don't believe myself to be an art critic, but writing does help me clarify my ideas. There may not be a tight correlation between what I write and my work, but it gives me better context, which I believe makes my art work that much richer.

**MC** You've lived outside of your home country, Korea, for much of your life, both in Japan and in now in Paris. Can you tell me about your experiences of living abroad?

**LUF** I ended up in Japan by sheer chance. My uncle was not well, so I went to visit him there and he told me I should stay and study, so I did. But I met with discrimination there. They called me *Chosenjin*, which is a derogatory term for a Korean. Because I was not Japanese, and because my art and ideas had to do with the breakdown of the status quo, people believed that I was a bad influence on Japanese culture. The Japanese felt that it was not a role for an outsider. I was told that if I fought with critics I would certainly



**Dialogues**  
2010  
Oil and mineral pigment on canvas  
9.2 x 1.8 cm

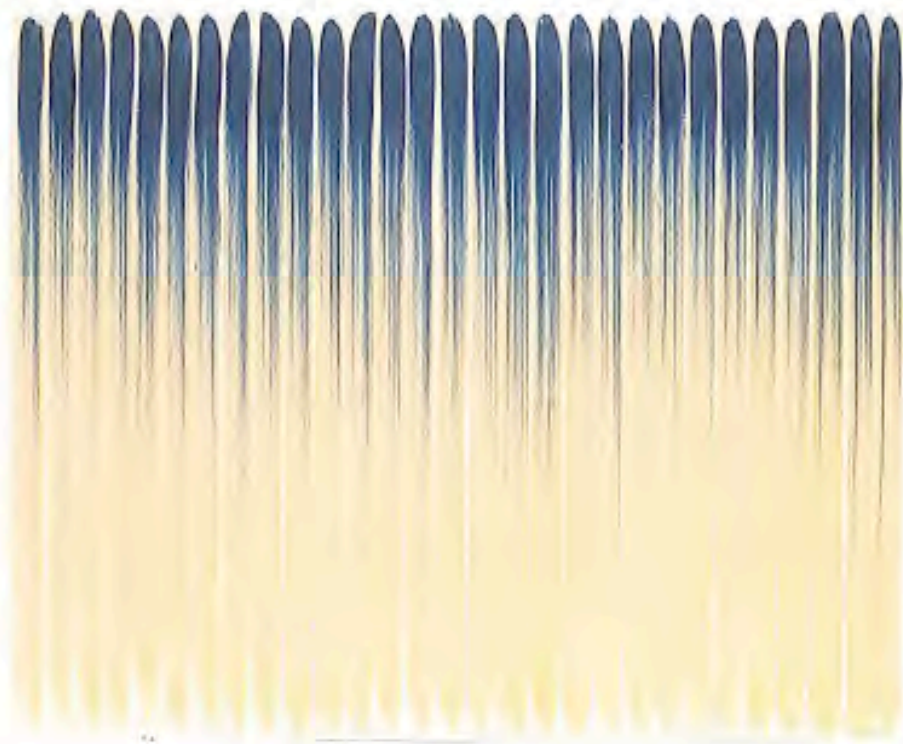
*There were similar looking art works that occurred in Europe and America. Interesting things occurred in Japan because of the lack of information, and we were groping in the dark with local concepts.*



**Lee Ufan painting in his studio in Kamakura, Japan**  
2010

*I only spent three or four months a year in Japan. I spent the remaining time in Europe, and, more recently, in America.*

Writing helps me clarify my ideas. It gives me a better context, which makes my art work that much richer.



*From Line*  
1994  
Oil on canvas  
1.8x2.5 m  
The first in a series around  
Europe for 40 years, and –  
fortunately or unfortunately –  
I've never had a  
retrospective in Japan.

be thrown out, so I had to be careful. When I had the opportunity to be part of the Paris Biennale, I met artists from outside of Japan and realized that I could be more active in Europe, and in fact, I originally gained a following in Germany. I had shows there, and was provided with a place to live, but I never ended up living there because I was considered *Oriental*, a derogatory word. So again I was criticized, and there I was, alone once more. I have never had any support from a country or a nation. I feel like I've had to fight by myself, to this day. But being lonely I think has given me inspiration and courage. I have a lot of friends in these countries now, so it doesn't seem so important anymore whether I'm 'Oriental' or 'Asian'.

**MC** You've had a long-standing interest in Korean antiquities, and you were generous enough to donate a number of them to the Musée Guimet in Paris. When we spoke a number of years ago, after the exhibition of your donated works, you said that living in Paris helped you understand that it was good for Korean culture artefacts to be displayed outside of the country, so that people could learn more about the history and traditions of Korea.

**LUF** There are things about Korea that I both love and detest. I grew up in a home that was very traditional. We had a lot of art works and furniture, so I have a certain nostalgia for the things that were around me as I was growing up. At that time, they weren't recognized as being important as art objects. I began to collect them in the 1960s and '70s. At the time these things were practically free and readily available. So even with very little money, I was able to collect them. I really wanted this collection to go to a place where many people would see it. The Musée Guimet is an Asian museum, and I thought that was a good place for them. Paradoxically,

when I made the donation, the Korean newspapers criticized me because they believed that these items were taken from Korea, where they should belong; they thought I was selling out my country.

**MC** When I last visited your studio in Kamakura in Japan, about 50 kilometres southwest of Tokyo, I was struck by what a beautiful, serene environment you've created there. Can you describe your daily practice?

**LUF** I only spend three or four months a year in Japan; I spend the remaining time in Europe, and, more recently, in America. I also go to Korea a few times a year. When I return to Japan from these short stays, I want it to be a time for me to sort things out in my mind, to have some quiet time, but that can't always be. Whether I'm in Paris, Germany or New York, my lifestyle is not so different. I wake up in the morning, I go for a walk, I might get some bread, I check my schedule. I may not make drawings while I'm on the road *per se*, but I do explore ideas. At home, I try to make art every day. It's important to keep my hands working so that I can continue to work in an uninterrupted manner. I think psychologically it's good for me to always take that action toward making work.

**MC** You described some of the complexities of being an Asian artist in Europe. I'm aware that in recent years though, you and your work have been increasingly recognized outside of Asia. I saw your exhibition at the Musée d'art Moderne de Saint-Etienne Métropole in 2005, and it's now the eve of the opening of your retrospective 'Marking Infinity' at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Can you tell us a little bit more of what we might expect at the Guggenheim exhibition? Are there some key themes or issues that you felt very pertinent for audiences here in America to recognize?

**LUF** I've been wandering around Europe for 40 years, and – fortunately or unfortunately, as the situation may be – I've never had a retrospective in Japan, though I've had opportunities to have gallery shows. This is my biggest retrospective to date. My work has to do with myself, but also with my relationship to the other. It has to do with making, but not making. My work may seem simplistic – there's a small amount of sculpture, a little bit of painting. Culture should not be about raising the gross national product. I am critical of corporations and the endless types of manufacturing and production that occur, and humans wanting to aggressively realize whatever it is that comes to their minds. It's okay to lower the GNP and think about nature. If we had done that, perhaps the Fukushima nuclear reactor accident would never have occurred. It's important to think about holding back and stopping to think, to be quiet, and to think of ourselves as part of the universe. Humans shouldn't be at the centre of it. And we should be more reflective about who we are and what we do.

**MC** Do you have a message that you would like to convey to those who may or may not know your work?

**LUF** I would like people to see in my work a statement about what's happened with the earthquake, the tsunami and the nuclear reactor. It's not that I can help in the recovery effort, but I want to say that what occurred in Japan recently should never happen again. My work is simple, but there is energy and power that one feels through my sculpture and paintings, and it's physicality that I'm dealing with. In this day of computers, it's

about information and the processing of information, but that alone is not enough. People are part of nature, and there are environmental issues we need to consider. I would like Americans and Europeans to set their eyes toward this aspect of physicality. By physicality I don't mean just the body itself, but with the body and the relationship between the space and air and so forth. In my exhibition, whether you like it or not, one should feel the air and the vibration within. I want there to be a feeling of healing, and I hope that people will receive some hints of that, through seeing my work. ●

*Dr. Melissa Chiu is Museum Director and Vice President, Global Art Programs at Asia Society in New York, USA. She has organized nearly 30 exhibitions of artists from across Asia; her books include Breakout: Chinese Art Outside China (2007), Chinese Contemporary Art: 7 Things You Should Know (2008), Asian Art Now (Mouacelli Press, 2010, co-authored with Benjamin Genocchio) and the anthology Contemporary Art in Asia: A Critical Reader (MIT Press, 2011, co-edited with Benjamin Genocchio).*

*Lee Ufan's first US retrospective, 'Marking Infinity', opens at the Guggenheim Museum in New York on 24 June and runs until 28 September. A solo exhibition of his recent paintings and sculptures is on view at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Austria, until 18 June; his work can also be seen in the exhibition 'The World Belongs to You' at the Palazzo Grassi in Venice, Italy, until 31 December. A selection of English translations of his writings from 1967 until 2007 are compiled in the book The Art of Encounter, which was published by Liaison Gallery in 2007.*



**Broken-Point, Line, Plane**  
2010

Concrete, iron and stone

Installation view

Lee Ufan Museum, Naoshima, Japan

*I would like people to see in my work a statement about what's happened with the earthquake, the tsunami and the nuclear reactor. I want to say that what occurred in Japan recently should never happen again.*