

To members of the press

Exhibition Announcement

Lee Ufan

15th Anniversary of the National Art Center, Tokyo

It is with great pleasure that we present a major retrospective by Lee Ufan (born in 1936), a contemporary artist who has received a great deal of attention internationally as a prominent member of the Japan-based Mono-ha group from August 10 (Wed.), 2022 at The National Art Center, Tokyo (Roppongi, Tokyo). The exhibition commemorates the facility's 15th anniversary.



Lee Ufan installing *Relatum - The Shadow of the Stars*, Angoulême, France, 2021 Photo©Lee Ufan

Born in Gyeongsangnam-do, Korea, Lee attended Seoul National University and moved to Japan in 1956. He subsequently studied philosophy at Nihon University in Tokyo, eagerly absorbing a wide range of thought and literature from the East and the West. In the '60s, Lee developed an interest in contemporary art, and began devoted himself to making his own works toward end of the decade.

Attempting to overcome the uncertainty of vision, Lee combined natural and artificial materials in a temperate manner, spearheading a movement that came to be called Mono-ha (lit. "School of Things"). Moreover, Lee evolved a worldview based on the notion that all things are interrelated not only in his visual art but in also in his writings. The profound ideas Lee expressed an essay called "From Objects to Being," which was awarded the Bijutsu Shuppan-sha Art Criticism Prize in 1969, became the theoretical pillar for Mono-ha.

Lee's works liberate art from the world of images, subjects, and meaning, and raise questions about the relationship between things, and things and people. This proves that the entire world exists synchronically and is mutually related. Oddly enough, the threat of the novel coronavirus has forced us to change our anthropocentric worldview. Lee's highly revelatory thought and practice provides us with insights about how we might escape this unprecedented crisis.

In recent years, Lee has become increasingly active abroad, holding solo exhibitions at some of the world's most renowned museums including the Guggenheim (New York, USA, 2011) and Centre Pompidou-Metz (Metz, France, 2019). Meanwhile in Japan, the Lee Ufan Museum, designed by the architect Ando Tadao, opened on the island of Naoshima in Kagawa Prefecture in 2010. However, Lee's last major solo exhibition at a domestic museum was *Lee Ufan: The Art of Margins*, held in 2005 at the Yokohama Museum of Art.

In light of this situation, the present exhibition will be the artist's first major retrospective to be held in Tokyo. The exhibition assembles Lee's most important works, including everything from his earliest pre-Mono-ha pieces, which considered the problem of vision, the *Relatum* series, which changed the concept of sculpture, and his highly spiritual paintings, which produce a tranquil rhythm. In addition to showcasing Lee's past works, enabling us to trace the trajectory of his creation practice, the exhibition is also scheduled to include his latest ground-breaking efforts.

■ Exhibition Overview

- Exhibition Title: Lee Ufan
15th Anniversary of the National Art Center, Tokyo
- Date: August 10 (Wed.) – November 7 (Mon.), 2022 *Closed on Tuesdays
- Opening Hours: 10:00-18:00 *10:00-20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays
(Last admission 30 minutes before closing)
- Venue: The National Art Center, Tokyo, Special Exhibition Gallery 1E
- Organized by: The National Art Center, Tokyo; The Asahi Shimbun
- With the cooperation of: SCAI THE BATHHOUSE
- Inquiries: +81-(0)47-316-2772 (Hello Dial)
- Website: <https://www.nact.jp/english/exhibitions/2022/leeufan/>

* The exhibition will later travel to the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, where it will be held from early December 2022 to February 2023.

Media Inquiries

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