

**LEE BAE**  
**Korean artist**

LEE BAE is one of the greatest Korean international artists. He is known for his black monochrome paintings. In 2011, he was named Artist of the Year 1995-2010 by the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, South Korea. On December 10, 2013, he received an award from the National Association of Art Critics of South Korea.

The artist

Lee Bae is born in Chung-Do, South Korea, in 1956. At a very young age he learned calligraphy. He obtained his BFA, Painting, College of Fine Arts, Hongik University in 1979 and his MFA, Painting, College of Fine Arts, Hongik University in 1985. In 1990 he arrived in Paris where he met Lee Ufan whom he admires and will become his assistant. He is also interested in Simon Hantai and Pierre Soulages. He lives and works in Paris.

Artwork

Lee Bae's work is part of a Korean artistic movement, called "Dansaekhwa", a monochrome stylistic trend that started in the early 1970s, after years of war in Korea. The whole meaning of Dansaekhwa is that the artists associated with it have refused to choose a subject, preferring to construct their images from scratch and discover them as they have been revealed.

Lee Bae's pictorial and abstract universe focuses on material. He creates an essential balance between the deep black of the charcoal for its abstract forms and the milky white color obtained from the resin and smooth successive layers of acrylic paint. They are mental images that the artist puts on the canvas to give them life. He creates abstract forms without narrative aspect and gives his painting energy, purity and spirituality.

Arrived in France, the artist sought an inexpensive material to express himself. He discovers charcoal and it's a revelation for him. The charcoal reminded him of his origins, the world of China ink, calligraphy and the deep anchoring of this material in the Korean tradition. In 2000/2001, Lee Bae had the idea to mix acrylic with charcoal. Over time, his cream acrylic paint has evolved to white. Previously Lee Bae had already made "relief paintings", using small pieces of raw charcoal, cut, sanded and fixed on the canvas. His work around charcoal also extends to sculptures such as his installation of blocks of coals tied together, presented at the Guimet Museum in 2015.