

Lee Kun-Yong: Snail's Gallop

July 14 – August 18, 2023
540 West 25th Street
New York

Live performance of *Snail's Gallop* – Thursday, July 13 at 5:30 p.m. EDT



Lee Kun-Yong. Photography by ArtDrunk/Gary Yeh. Courtesy Pace Gallery.

New York - Pace is pleased to present an exhibition of work by Lee Kun-Yong at its 540 West 25th Street gallery in New York. This presentation, titled *Snail's Gallop* and on view from July 14 to August 19, will bring together large-scale paintings and a performance work by the artist, along with archival materials from his storied career. The show will mark Lee's first-ever solo exhibition in New York as well as his debut solo show at Pace's flagship gallery.

Lee, who joined Pace's program in 2022, rose to prominence as a leading figure of the Korean avant-garde movement during the 1970s, a period in which the country grappled with authoritarianism and restrictions on freedom of expression. He was a founding member of the artist group Space and Time, and he is widely regarded as a pioneer of performance art in Korea. Best known for his inventive and influential performances, Lee has cultivated a practice that also includes painting, sculpture, installation, and video—mediums that often complement his live interventions.

The artist's first solo presentation in New York will span two floors of Pace's gallery. On the second floor, Lee will show a selection of new large-scale paintings from his iconic *Bodyscape* series, which he began in 1976. For these works, Lee approaches canvases from nine distinct angles, creating records of his physical relationships to this two-dimensional medium. Lee's experimentations of this kind yield bold abstractions that document his body's movements. As with many of Lee's other works, *Bodyscape* explores the ways that performance can be immortalized through physical traces left in paint or other materials. The artist is known for sustaining his performances, like *Bodyscape*, over the course of many years of his career.

On Pace's seventh floor, Lee will stage a one-off performance of *Snail's Gallop*, which he debuted in 1979 at Namgye Gallery in Daejeon, Korea and later staged at the 15th Bienal de São Paulo that same year. Presented by Pace Live—the gallery's multidisciplinary platform for live art performances, musical acts, conversations, and other events—*Snail's Gallop* is an act of both creation and obliteration. In this work, the artist carefully and methodically traces his journey across a given space, drawing lines to mark his body's positions and movements. After Lee draws a line, he crosses it in a shuffling motion, erasing part of his mark in the process. At Pace, Lee will perform *Snail's Gallop* atop a 10 x 1.2-meter sized vinyl sheet, which will remain on view in the gallery for the duration of the exhibition. This work reflects a central element of Lee's performances—communication with the viewer. He continually explores this idea of exchange with each of the different audiences present for his performances of *Snail's Gallop*, extending the life of the work beyond its first enactment some 45 years ago.

Lee's live performance of *Snail's Gallop* will take place on Thursday, July 13 at 5:30 p.m. EDT, ahead of the opening reception for the artist's exhibition, which will run from 6–8 p.m. EDT that evening. Further details about the event will be revealed in the coming weeks.

Archival films and photographs from Lee's past performances will be exhibited alongside *Snail's Gallop* on Pace's seventh floor. For Lee, these photographs play an integral role in his practice—just as his Bodyscapes are immortalized through painting, his photographs are essentially relics of his performances. Original sketches will also be on view, and ephemera related to his exhibitions in the 1970s and 1980s will be displayed in a vitrine in this space.

Lee's new Bodyscape paintings featured in his solo exhibition with Pace in New York can be understood in conversation with the historical works he will present in the group exhibition *Only the Young: Experimental Art in Korea, 1960s–1970s*, which is co-organized by the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Following its run in Korea from May 26 to July 16, this landmark presentation will travel to the Guggenheim Museum in New York—where it will be on view from September 1 to January 7, 2024—and then to the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. *Only the Young: Experimental Art in Korea, 1960s–1970s* will be the first survey highlighting the Korean avant-garde movement to be presented in North America.

Lee Kun-Yong (b. 1942, Sariwon, Korea) is known for his performances that reimagine the ways that the body and its movements can be understood across time. The artist cultivated his highly experimental practice during the 1970s, when martial law and authoritarianism presented a major affront to civil rights and freedom of expression in South Korea. Lee earned a BFA from Hongik University in Seoul in 1967 and an MA in art education from Keimyung University in Daegu in 1982. He is considered a key figure of the Korean avant-garde, and he was a founding member of the artist group Space and Time. Among the notable group exhibitions he has participated in are the Paris Biennale in 1973; the Bienal de São Paulo in 1979; the Gwangju Biennale in 2000; and the Busan Biennale in 2014. One of the artist's most famous bodies of work is Bodyscape, in which he approaches his canvases from different angles and uses painting to record the motions of his body. Today, Lee continues to work on series he began in the early years of his career. Much of his ongoing performance work engages with the relationships between his body, his chosen artistic medium, and viewers of his work. The artist lives and works in Seoul.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program—comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

Today, Pace has eight locations worldwide, including a European foothold in London and Geneva, and two galleries in New York—its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace's long and pioneering history in California includes a gallery in Palo Alto, which was open from 2016 to 2022. Pace's engagement with Silicon Valley's technology industry has had a lasting impact on the gallery at a global level, accelerating its Initiatives connecting art and technology as well as its work with experiential artists. Pace consolidated its West Coast activity through its flagship in Los Angeles, which opened in 2022. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, as well as an office and viewing room in Beijing.






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