

11 July 2023

ArtReview

“Cho Yong-Ik, painter of meditative abstraction, 1934 - 2023”

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Cho Yong-Ik, painter of meditative abstraction, 1934 – 2023

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Cho Yong-Ik. Courtesy Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong



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Cho Yong-Ik, who was associated with the Dansaekhwa school of Korean art, has died. The style, which loosely defined a group of artists who came to prominence in the 1970s, was typified by its expressionistic abstraction, meditative spirit and muted monochromatic palette. Cho however broke the mould by allowing elements of colour into his work. Throughout the decade he produced, *Scratch*, a number acrylic paintings in which a series of blocky marks were made repetitively in a grid across the canvas – the background a washy bright red or turquoise to cream and murky brown. Critics compared the pattern to a tally, perhaps marking of the passing of time.



Cho Yong-Ik, *74-820*, 1974, acrylic on canvas 145 x 112 cm. Courtesy Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong

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From the 1980s Cho left the grid behind, but maintained the uniform monochrome backgrounds in the series *Wave* and *Bamboo*, now however enlivened with a few sweeping brushstrokes in a barely differentiated hue.

Born in Bucheon, Cho studied at Seoul National University in the mid 1960s. He went on to take part in various local group exhibitions before being invited to show at Expo 67 in Montreal and the São Paulo Bienal, both in 1967. In 1974 he had his first solo show at Shinsegae Gallery, Seoul, then exhibiting at the 3rd Triennale-India in New Delhi the same year. He showed regularly since and in 2016 had three solo shows, at Olivier Malingue Gallery, London; Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong; and a retrospective at the Sungkok Art Museum, Seoul.