

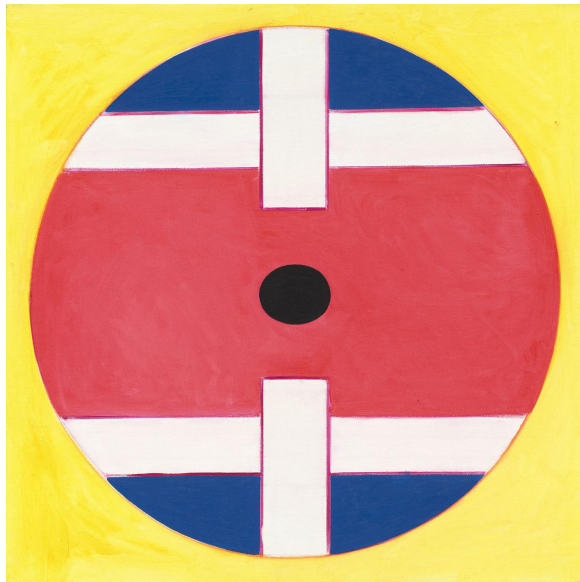
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ho Kan: Geometric Calligraphy

398 West Street, New York, NY 10014

October 2, 2021 – December 16, 2021

Opening reception: Saturday, October 2 | 6-8 PM



Ho Kan, *Abstract 2015-059*, 2015. Oil on canvas.
Courtesy of the artist, Chini Gallery, and Eli Klein Gallery © Ho Kan

New York, NY, September 1st, 2021 - Eli Klein Gallery is honored to present “Geometric Calligraphy” - Taiwanese abstraction master Ho Kan’s first ever solo exhibition in the United States. Ho is regarded as one of the most prominent figures in Taiwan’s history of art whose influence spans over five decades. This exhibition surveys 38 works in abstraction across a variety of disciplines including oil on canvas, charcoal on paper, ink on rice paper and silkscreen print. The works on display which were done from 2006 and 2019 exemplify Ho Kan’s unique lexicon of treating geometric abstraction (commonly referred to as ‘cold abstraction’) with the warmth of calligraphy and Eastern thoughts.

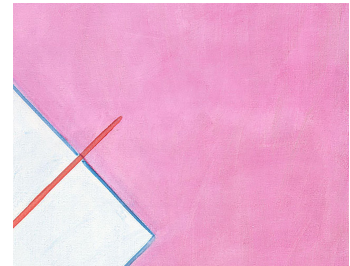
Ho Kan was a founding member of the pivotal “Ton Fan Art Group,” where he was instrumental in the development of modern art in Taiwan. Ho was born in Nanjing, China in 1932, and graduated from Taipei Teacher’s School Department of Art in 1953. He then studied extensively in Milan, during which time he established his unique approach towards geometric abstraction in which Eastern calligraphy and seal-carving are poetically integrated. He started from the most simple but universal elements of \square , \triangle , and \circ to create his own lexicon in the

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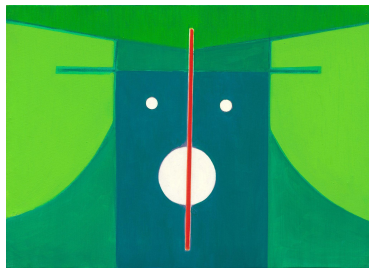
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arrangement of image and shape -- embedding Eastern philosophy in the Western framework of abstraction, resulting in a forward-looking and universal aesthetic.

Minimalism and geometric abstraction were responses in formulating our aesthetics in accordance with standardized production in the post-industrial era. This perspective is designed to be appreciated without a focal point or center of gravity; any color fields are to be treated as plains of absolute unity and formality. Within these contexts, the “human factors” became mere imperfections and were clearly de-focused. Ho Kan, on the other hand, reintroduces the “human factor” into his geometric abstractions in which all color fields seem different and “imperfect”. This style developed naturally from his deep roots in calligraphy and Chinese traditional paintings where “ink encompasses all the five colors” (墨分五色) when black is progressively washed down. Regardless of the tint, Ho’s color fields carry a hand-made warmth that is inviting and inclusive, separating him from his Western counterparts in geometric abstractions. Not limited to color fields, these key characteristics are clearly detectable in his approach towards lines and color-separators as well.



“Action through inaction” has always been one of Ho Kan’s favorite Taoist concepts. The execution of “inaction” and not “over-doing” is exhibited in Ho Kan’s symmetry-breaking slanted lines. In *Abstract 2013-005* (2013), *Abstract 2017-037* (2017) and many other works on view, a slanted line is inserted with emphasis to unbalance the images - like an initiation or a trigger. Nonetheless, this seemingly intrusive line doesn’t overthrow the entire structure. It perfectly exemplifies Ho Kan’s stance on how human maneuvers can organically co-exist with our natural and social environment.



Whereas Eastern styles of abstraction have historically been overshadowed by Western masters grouped by “schools” and “isms,” Ho Kan’s calligraphic approach towards geometric abstraction carries such warmth, highlighting the human factors in our increasingly rigid and mechanical world.

A digital catalog with an essay by John Seed accompanies this exhibition.

Inquiries:

Eli Klein Gallery

Phil Cai, phil@galleryek.com | +1 212-255-4388

About Ho Kan

Ho Kan was a founding member of the pivotal “Ton Fan Art Group,” where he was instrumental to the development of modern art in Taiwan. Ho was born in Nanjing, China in 1932, and graduated from Taipei Teacher’s School Department of Art in 1953. He then studied extensively in Milan, during which time he established his unique approach towards geometric abstraction where Eastern calligraphy and seal carving is poetically integrated. He started from the most simple but universal elements of □, △, and ○ to create his own lexicon in the arrangement of image and shape -- embedding eastern philosophy in the western framework of abstraction, resulting in a forward-looking and universal aesthetic. Ho Kan remains a central figure in Taiwan's history of abstraction.

Ho Kan’s institutional solo exhibitions include: Where the Mind Goes, the Heart Follows: Paintings by Ho Kan, Yancheng Cultural Center, Kaohsiung, Taiwan (2020); Reverberations•HO KAN, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan (2016); Age 80•Ho Kan’s Drawing Exhibition, Da Xiang Artspace, Taichung, Taiwan (2012); Universal Eternity – Ho Kan Solo Exhibition, Tsing Hua University Art Center, Hsinchu, Providence University Art Center, Taichung, Cheng Kung University Art Center, Tainan, Taiwan (2011); Ho Kan Solo Exhibition, Da Xiang Art space, Taichung, Taiwan(2010); Ho Kan’s Poetics of Space, Dimensions Art Center, Taipei, Taiwan (2005); Oriental Constructivism, Dimensions Art Center, Taipei, Taiwan (2001); Solo Exhibition, Taiwan Museum of Art, Taichung, Taiwan (1994); Solo Exhibition, Casa Veneta - Museo di Muggia, Trieste, Italy (1992); Solo Exhibition, Comune di Tavarnelle Val di Pesa, Florence, Italy (1986); Solo Exhibition, Comune di Macerata Pinacoteca e Musei Comunali Amici dell’Arte, Macerata, Italy (1979); Solo Exhibition, Istituto Italo Cinese, Milan (1973); and Solo Exhibition, Abbazia dei Padri Benedettini, Final Pia, Italy (1973).

Ho Kan’s work has been featured in renowned institutions worldwide including Selection of NTMoFA’s Collection, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan (2020); Magistrate Residence Living Centre Inaugural Exhibition, Magistrate Residence Living Centre, Tainan, Taiwan (2020); 1960 - The Origin of Taiwan’s Modern Art, Asia Art Center, Taipei (2016); Milano, Breathing, Taipei, Pro-partner Foundation, Taipei, Taiwan (2014); Formless Form – Taiwanese Abstract Art, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangdong, China (2013); Formless Form – Taiwanese Abstract Art, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan (2012); Exploring the Wasteland – The Eight Highwaymen of the East, Da Xiang Art Space, Taichung, Taiwan (2012); Surrealists in Taiwan, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan (2008); Between Modern and Postmodern: Master Chun-Shen Li and Modern Art in Taiwan, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan (2004); Arti Visive, Circolo Culturale Bertolt-Brecht, Milan (2001); Li Chun-Shan and his Pupils exhibition, Dimensions Art Center, Taipei, Taiwan (1999); The Momentum of the Ton-Fan marked in Shanghai, Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, China (1999); The Memo of Ton-Fan, Dimensions Art Center, Taipei (1997); A Retrospective Exhibition of Contemporary Chinese Art, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan (1986); Masterpieces by Overseas Chinese Artists, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan (1984); The Chinese Response, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong (1982); 25th anniversary joint exhibition of Ton Fan and Fifth Moon, Taiwan Provincial Museum, Taipei, Taiwan (1981); Premio incontro d’arte a Bossico, Palazzo del Comune, Bergamo Bossico, Italy (1974); Group Exhibition, Museo Internazionale d’Arte Contemporanea, Florence, Italy (1967); Museu de Arte Brasileira da Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado, São Paulo, Brazil (1966); and Museo Leverkusen - Chinesische Künstler der Gegenwart, Leverkusen, Germany (1963).

Ho Kan’s work has been collected by museums including Taipei Fine Art Museum, Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, among others. Ho Kan was awarded the 5th Lee Chun-Shan Foundation Modern Art Achievement Award, the 1st Prize of Giuseppe Mori, and the International Art Prize of Development.

Ho Kan currently lives and works in Taipei, Taiwan.