

TINA KIM GALLERY

Art Basel Paris | Premise

October 24-26, 2025

For the Premise sector of Art Basel Paris, Tina Kim Gallery presents a solo booth dedicated to Lee ShinJa, tracing the extraordinary evolution of the Seoul-based artist's career from the late 1950s to the 2000s.

Born in Uljin, Korea in 1930, Lee is recognized for her instrumental role in establishing fiber art as a legitimate and respected medium in her home country. After graduating from Seoul National University in 1955—a time when decorative textiles were limited to traditional embroidery and often dismissed as women's domestic work—Lee broke from convention by embracing geometric abstraction and integrating craft methods with innovations in color, composition, and dimensionality. Her tapestries and other textile works from this early period featured simple shapes and patterns in bold colors, and she often played with scale through elongated, vertical compositions. Using weaving techniques like knotting, looping, and twisting yarn to add texture, Lee transformed her works into sculptural objects, challenging the boundaries of pictorial tapestry.

In the 1980s, Lee's practice shifted towards more painterly effects, blending colored threads to evoke the interplay of light and shadow. These monumental, atmospheric works are inspired by the landscape of her hometown, surrounded by the sea and the mountains. By the mid-1990s and into the 2000s, Lee returned to geometric compositions, emphasizing linear forms and often dividing the picture plane into distinct sections. Metal rods wrapped in colored thread float above the surface of these works, introducing linear elements that frame and intersect with planes of color.

On view will be a selection of works spanning more than five decades of Lee's practice, from early experimentations through to her late-career works from the early 2000s. Together, the works highlight the artist's mastery of material, form, and color, charting new directions for fiber art with each stage of her creative development.

Lee's influence extends beyond her artistic practice; she has held both teaching and leadership roles at Duksung Women's University, served on committees for annual exhibitions and biennials in Korea, and mentored younger artists through her own exhibition space, Gallery Wooduk. In 2023, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea held a retrospective titled *Threadscapes*. This year, the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in California opened *Lee ShinJa: Drawing with Thread*—the artist's first survey exhibition in a North American museum—on view through February 1, 2026.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

TINA KIM GALLERY

Tina Kim Gallery is widely recognized for its unique programming that emphasizes international contemporary artists, historical overviews, and independent curatorial projects. The gallery has built a platform for emerging and established artists by working closely with over twenty artists and Estates, including Pacita Abad, Ghada Amer, Tania Pérez Córdova, Mire Lee, and Lee ShinJa, among others. Our expanding program of Asian-American and Asian diasporic artists, including Maia Ruth Lee, Minoru Niizuma, and Wook-Kyung Choi, evince the gallery's commitment to pushing the conversation beyond national frameworks. Founded in 2001, the gallery opened the doors to its ground-floor Chelsea exhibition space in 2014. The gallery was instrumental in introducing Korean Dansaekhwa artists such as Park Seo-Bo, Ha Chong-Hyun, and Kim Tschang-Yeul to an international audience, establishing public and institutional awareness of this critically influential group of Asian Post-War artists. The gallery partners regularly with prominent curators, scholars, and writers to produce exhibitions and publications of rigor and critical resonance.

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