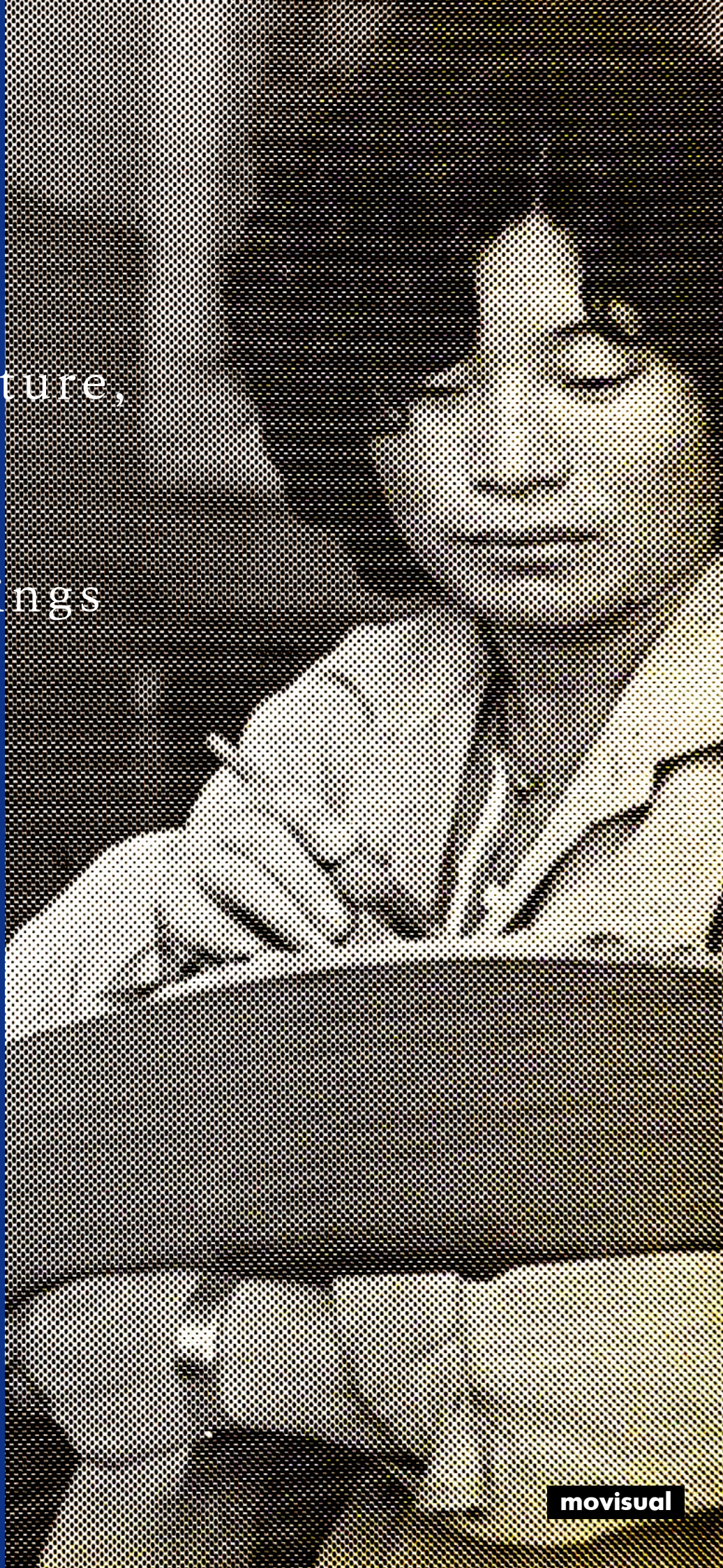
A LIFE

Life and nature, between those amazing things

A Collection of criticisms about
LEE Dong Keun



Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
ARTS COUNCIL KOREA
Artist Research Study Critique
movisual

Lee Dong-keun(b. 1951, Jeongeup)

Lee Dong-keun is considered the first-generation artist after the formation of Jeollabuk-do Painter Society in the 1970s and is one of the inaugural class students of the Art Education Department at Wonkwang University's College of Education. Influenced by the impressionist style of professor Park Nam-jae and professor Lee Ui-ju, he primarily focused on landscape painting based on natural observations. In the 1980s, he was indulged into hyperrealism and in 1985, he received a special award at the 4th Korea Art Grand Exhibition for his work <Still Life with White Cloth>. At the end of the 1980s, after a fateful encounter with the natural beauty of Jeju Island, he transitioned from realism to expressionism, dramatically capturing the rugged and capricious aspects of Jeju's nature through techniques such as brightness and color contrast. After returning to his hometown of Jeongeup, Lee Dong-keun has expanded his artistic horizons by breaking free from the confines of aesthetic forms and themes since 2008. He now focuses on life rather than landscapes, engaging in various artistic activities such as object installations, drawing performances, and collaborations with poets.



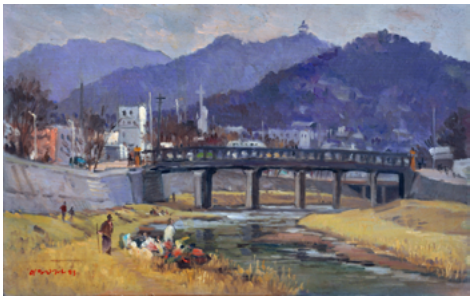
A LIFE
50×120cm, Acrylic and Korean ink drawing on print paper, 2020



Still Life with White Coth
145.5×112.1cm, oil on canvas, 1985



Red Mountain
24.1×33.4cm, oil on canvas, 1972



Jeonju Sream
33.4×53.0cm, oil on canvas, 1983

Early activities in the 1970s and 1980s
The era of hyperrealism in the 1980s
The transition to Naturalism in the early 1980s to the 1990s
Jeju period in the 1990s
The expansion of awareness in the 2000s



Mt. Halla
197.0×290.9cm, oil on canvas, 1998



A Life
72.7×60.6cm, oil on canvas, 2012



A Life_Forest of wings
(left)42.0×240.0×17.0cm,
(right)45.0×264.0×7.0cm, hoe, iron welding, 2020



A Life
150×2,150cm, oil on canvas, 2012

Praise for Drawing from Nature
“From landscape to nature, from nature to life”

JUNG Hyun(Art Critic)

Drawing from nature is an aesthetic approach that represents the Eastern culture’s mindset and attitude towards nature. The paintings of Lee Dong-keun are rooted in the philosophy of drawing from nature. During the mid-1970s to the 1980s, the Jeollabuk-do Painter Society was at a crossroads between tradition and modernity and Lee Dong-keun became deeply immersed in hyperrealism. During that time, hyperrealism was a kind of competition that took place in the interstices of the mainstream art world, driven by monochromatic art and folk art. However, from the mid-1980s onwards, Lee Don-keun shifted his focus towards landscapes, where he developed his own themes and artistic style. The 1990s marked a period when his consistent dedication to drawing from nature culminated in his life on Jeju Island. He became captivated by the primal yet emotive natural environment of Jeju. This resonance with nature led to the discovery of pure beauty within the unspoiled vitality of nature, embodying spontaneity, expressionism, and an unadulterated sense of beauty. The period when he stayed in Jeju became a catalyst for breaking away from conventional painting norms and delving into the essence of life rather than its superficial aspects. In this way, consistent observation and the power of drawing from nature became the driving force to venture into various forms beyond the conventional, such as sculptural installations, performances, collaborations, and more.

“Contemporary aspects of Lee Dong-keun’s painting from an ecological perspective”

JUNG Hyun(Art Critic)

In the early 2000s, Lee Dong-keun experienced a period of withdrawal. The era was driven by an ever-increasing desire for rapid progress. After returning to the familiar embrace of his homeland in the dynamic nature of Jeju, he began to deeply contemplate nature not as a mere landscape, but as a living entity at a slower pace. The climate crisis and ecological issues today are not only human concerns but shared global challenges that all life forms on earth must collectively address. Since 2008, Lee Dong-keun has been capturing his daily life and the world around him on canvas, free from the constraints of traditional forms. This turning point had already emerged during his time in Jeju, but it fully blossomed upon his return to his hometown. His work during this period transcends the boundaries of form and medium, transitioning seamlessly between microcosms and macrocosms while blending the artist’s memories and experiences. Particularly, motifs reminiscent of cells indicate an evolution of the artist’s perspective from anthropocentrism towards a life-centric microcosmic worldview.

Artist's Privious History

1951 Born in Jeongeup, Jeollabuk-do, Korea.

1969 At the age of 18 (3rd grade at Iksan High School), he won the first 《Jeollabuk-do Art Exhibition》 with his work 〈As Autumn Leaves Fall〉.

1970 Admission to Wonkwang University's College of Education, Department of Art Education, 1st class.

1979 Received the Minister of Culture and Public Information Award and 《the 11th Jeollabuk-do Art Exhibition》 Gold prize for 〈Backyard of Grand-ma's House〉

1980 Received the Mokwoo Association Chairman's Award for the work 〈Antique Style〉 at 《the 17th Mokwoo Association Art Exhibition》 (National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art).

1981 Won grand prize for 〈Wood-line〉 in the Western painting section of 《the 3rd Silla Art Awards》.

1982 『Lee Dong-keun Art Collection, Wongwnag publishing, Sep.5.1982』 published and 《1st Solo Exhibition》 held.

1984 Graduated from Wonkwang University Graduate School(MFA), Department of Painting Dissertation: 〈Chungok Go Hui-dong's life and works〉

1985 Awarded a special prize for his work 〈Still Life with White Cloth〉 at 《athe 4th Korea Art Exhibition》.

1988 Professor of Western Painting, Department of Fine Arts, College of Humanities, Jeju National University (1988-1994).

2001 Installation of 〈Sori Love〉 stage curtain at Moakdang, Korea Sori Culture Center, very large scale (2,100×1,300cm). While visiting Japan to collaborate with an overseas company called Maruso Co., Ltd., I began to think deeply about Korean things.

《Lee Dong-keun Gallery》 opened (July 1, 2001) and 《8th solo exhibition》 〈Nature and Life〉 (July 1~15. 2001) held (Lee Dong-keun Gallery, Jeonju)

2003 Winner of 《the 7th Jeonbuk Art Awards》 in the art section. Sketching trip to South Africa.

2006 Move to 'Seondol' studio in nature, located at the foot of Chilbosan Mountain in Jeongeup, Jeollabuk-do(Feb.15.2006).

2013 Held 《the 12th solo exhibition》 titled 〈Pastoral Lyrical Landscape Embracing Life〉 (Oct.23.~29.2013, Insa Art Center, Seoul).

2018 《The 14th Lee Dong-keun solo exhibition》 held at 'Gallery VU' in Montreal, Canada.

2019 《The 27th Mokjeong Cultural Award》 Awarded in the art category for contribution to the promotion of local culture and arts and mission to sustain the spirit of art.

2020 《The 15th solo exhibition (2020.11.6~12.5)》 titled 〈A Life〉 is held at the Jeonju Museum of Contemporary Art.

2022 ARKO Arts Council Korea 2022-2023 Artist Research Study Critique Selected representative artist for 〈A LIFE〉.



In 1969, during the third year at Wongwang High School, the artist's presence in the art room. In the same year, as a high school student, won an award at the 1st Jeollabuk-do Art Exhibition with the work 'Like Falling Autumn Leaves.



The exterior of the 'Seokjeong Art Studio,' which served as the artist's workspace in the 1980s.



Image of the certificate that won the gold medal at 《Le Salon SAF: Société des Artistes Français (Grand Palais Museum, Paris)》



The cover image of "<LEE Dong Keun Art Collection>, Wonkwangsa, 1982.9.5," the artist's first solo exhibition and accompanying art book from 1982



The 1982 article from Jeonbuk Ilbo, written by Reporter Lee Young-mo,
<Emphasizing Purity over Boasting Talent, Striving to Create Meaningful Art>, September10, 1982



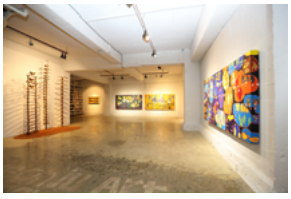
Cover image of the catalog for the 30th anniversary Mokwoohoe art exhibition in 1988



Artist Lee Dong-keun drawing landscapes outdoors in the 1980s



In 2001, the process of creating the large-scale stage curtain installation artwork <Sound Love> for the Korean Sound Culture Center, Moak Hall.



In 2020, the solo exhibition <A Life (2020.11.6.~12.5, Curated by Lee Kangsan)> held at Jeonju Contemporary Art Museum: Exhibition view

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ARKO LEE Dong-keun Artist Research and Criticism <A LIFE>

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