

Lee Ufan Arles

Press Kit

2024

Created by artist Lee Ufan, who has grown attached to Arles since a 2013 exhibition in the Saint Laurent-Le Capitole chapel, this venue presents the artist's historical and recent works, but also offers a program of temporary exhibitions, cultural events and activities dedicated to all publics.

The works of Lee Ufan, a Korean painter, sculptor, poet and philosopher born in 1936, act as revelations. They draw our attention to materials, to emptiness, to the distance between two elements, to reflections and shadows: everything that we might not have seen at first glance, and that is yet part of the work of art. At the crossroads of three cultures (Korea, Japan, where he studied and lives, and France, where he also spends part of the year), Lee Ufan's work is universal.

His sculptures, which he calls *Relatum*, are the result of "encounters": for example, between a natural material (stone, linen, etc.), a man-made industrial material (sheets of steel, glass, etc.) and a space. They lead us to reflect not so much on what the artist has done, but more broadly on the relationship between man and nature.



Lee Ufan, *Relatum - Dissonance*, 2022 © Lee Ufan Arles

The Hôtel Vernon, a private mansion transformed by Tadao Ando

In the heart of the Hôtel Vernon, a private mansion built between the 16th and 18th centuries, halfway between the Arenas and the Place du Forum, 1350 m² on three floors reveal the works of the painter and minimalist sculptor, as well as a bookshop, a store, mediation and reception areas.

Initially a medieval house located in an Arlesian neighborhood of noblemen and lawyers, the building became a private mansion when Richard Duport acquired it in 1618. From the 17th to the 18th century, the house underwent numerous enlargements and decorative enrichments.

It was adorned with architectural elements representative of their respective periods, which can still be seen during the visit, such as the French ceilings and the vaults with round arches from the late Renaissance, or the facade with arched windows and the large door with mouldings and walnut woodwork, typical of 18th century architecture.

The building took the name of Hotel Duport-Vernon when Anne-Marguerite Duport, heiress of the owner of the place, married Guillaume de Ginestoux, Count of Vernon, in 1711.

Bernard and Louis Remacle, two illustrious mayors of Arles, also took up residence here in the 19th century. In 1925, the mansion was returned to the Dervieux family, antique dealers of Provençal furniture, who set up their store and restoration workshop on the first floor.

Since 2017, the premises are preparing to host the Lee Ufan Arles endowment fund to offer an exhibition space dedicated to the work of the artist Lee Ufan. The latter, a close friend of the architect Tadao Ando, is exchanging with him to transform the place into a refined artistic setting in harmony with the historically plural architecture of the Hotel Duport-Vernon.

In April 2022, Lee Ufan Arles opened its doors to the public, who could finally wander through the centuries and rooms of this elegant residence to discover and contemplate the artist's works.



Hotel Vernon © Lee Ufan Arles

Unique programming in the Espace MA

In 2023, Lee Ufan Arles inaugurated a new space called Espace MA — Japanese for “threshold”, “in-between”— dedicated to temporary exhibitions and cultural programs that resonates and maintains a dialog with the artist’s universe.

To launch its artistic program in 2023, Lee Ufan Arles invited art historian, critic and curator Philippe Dagen to imagine its first temporary exhibition in the Espace MA for the summer.

Philippe Dagen, who has been well acquainted with Lee Ufan’s work for many years, has brought together five visual artists working in France — Brigitte Aubignac, Ymane Chabi-Gara, Marc Desgrandchamps Tim Eitel and Djamel Tatah — who question and represent the human figure. The human figure is presented alone, not for formal reasons, but because this solitude refers to situations with a social and psychic significance that is particularly characteristic of our times: self-imposed confinement, the absence of others, melancholy, exclusion or mourning. The exhibition Figures Alone was on view in Lee Ufan Arles’ Espace MA from July 1 to September 24, 2023.

Lee Ufan Arles also offers a year-round program for adults, linked to the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions. Throughout the year, several activities for young people and families are organized to discover the world of Lee Ufan Arles. Lee Ufan Arles offers guided tours in French, English, German and Italian for institutional and private groups. Lee Ufan Arles also welcomes schools from kindergarten to higher education on a guided tour.

2024 at Lee Ufan Arles

20 April - 19 May 2024

Henri Michaux, Fonds Noirs

Part of the Festival du Dessin

As part of the second edition of the Festival du Dessin, an exhibition presented to Lee Ufan Arles under the curatorship of Rainer Michael Manson will propose sixty pieces from the artist's archives and enriched by five loans from three collectors.

1 July to 1 September 2024

A Ténèbres, exhibition by Djabril Boukhenaïssi, winner of the first edition of the Art & Environment Prize created by Lee Ufan Arles & Maison Guerlain

Last winter, Djabril Boukhenaïssi made a creative residency at Lee Ufan Arles, questioning the impact of visual pollution in the disappearance of the night, a precious source of a collective imagination. The exhibition *À Ténèbres* presents a series of new paintings and engravings that revolve around a poetics of the contemporary night, inspired both by German literature, music and the experience of his residence in Arles.

Among all the possible ramifications of the ecological disaster caused by night lighting, Djabril Boukhenaïssi, for this project of residence, focused on the hypothesis that the disappearance of the night could lead to its disappearance as a poetic object. How to deploy a night poetics if one does not make oneself the intimate experience of a real night? What form would then take, in this case, a poetics of the contemporary night, that is, of a disappeared night?

Two works by the artist related to this theme of the disappearance of the night will also be featured in the collective exhibition "Van Gogh and the stars" presented by the Van Gogh Foundation on the occasion of its 10th anniversary, curated by Jean de Loisy and Bice Curiger, June 1 to September 8, 2024.

ABOUT LEE UFAN



Lee Ufan was born in 1936 in South Korea, where he studied poetry, painting and calligraphy, along with the thoughts of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, before leaving for Japan at the age of 20 in order to focus on western philosophy. After graduating from Nihon University in Tokyo, he started out in life as a philosopher and art critic, his thinking influenced by Nietzsche, Rilke, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. In 1968, Lee Ufan made the acquaintance of the artist Nobuo Sekine (1942-2019), to whose ideas and artistic practice he immediately lent his support. The following year, he was awarded the Art Critic's Prize sponsored by the Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha review, for an article intituled *From Inanimate Objects to Living Existence*.

Lee Ufan, Courtesy of Studio Lee Ufan © Claire Dorn

As a result, he became the theoretician and spokesman for Mono-ha ("The School of Things"), a Japanese avant-garde movement active from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s. The movement's works put manufactured materials presented in the form of objects alongside unaltered natural materials, in order to highlight possible relationships between the natural and the artificial. Like other movements active in Europe and the United States at the same time, Mono-ha participated in the profound reassessment of the fundamentals and even definition of art.

In 1971, Mono-ha's concept was presented at the Paris Biennale. Lee Ufan became a teacher at Tama Art University in Tokyo in 1973 and turned his attention to monochrome painting. He continued developing his practice and teaching (until 2007). Through his favourite themes – the relationships between things and the space that surrounds them, between full and empty, and the dialogue between natural and industrial, and between interior and exterior– Lee Ufan provides us with visual meditations embodying a very personal definition of contemporary art, detached from language and apprehended as an immediate sensory experience.

His work has been exhibited countless times across the world, at such institutions as the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, the Serpentine Gallery and the Pace Gallery in London, the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Olivier Debré Contemporary Creation Centre in Tours, the Château de Versailles, the Museum of Modern Art in Saint Etienne, Jeu de Paume National Gallery, the Kunstmuseum in Bonn, the Städel Museum in Frankfurt and the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul; as well as in the context of numerous artistic events, including the Biennales held in Venice (2007 and 2011), Gwangju (2000 and 2006), Shanghai (2000), Sydney (1976), São Paulo (1973) and Paris (1971). He was awarded the Praemium Imperiale for painting in 2001 and the UNESCO Prize in 2000.

In 2014, Lee Ufan was the guest artist at Louis XIV's Park and Palace at Versailles, and his work was presented at the Centre Pompidou-Metz in the context of the *Formes Simples* (2014) and *Japanorama. A New Look at Contemporary Creation* (2017) exhibitions, and *Inhabiting Time* (2019). In April 2022, the artist inaugurated the Lee Ufan Arles Foundation, housed in Hôtel Vernon, a 17th-century building located near the city's Roman arenas and redesigned by the architect Tadao Ando.

Major recent venues:

2022

Lee Ufan retrospective, the National Art Center, Tokyo and Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, Japan

Lee Ufan Arles opening, Arles, France

2021

Requiem, Les Alyscamps, Arles, France

2019

Lee Ufan: Open Dimension, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

Dia Beacon, NY, USA

Lee Ufan. Inhabiting time, Centre Pompidou Metz, France

2018

Serpentine Galleries, London, United Kingdom

2017

Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré, Tours, France

Couvent de La Tourette, Éveux, France

2016

Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia

Château La Coste, Le Puy-Sainte-Réparate, France

Manufacture nationale de Sèvres, France

Castello di Ama, Siena, Italy

2014

Château de Versailles, France

2013

Le Capitole, "Les Rencontres d'Arles", Arles, France

Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris, France

2011

Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA

Art & Environment Prize – Lee Ufan Arles x Maison Guerlain

In June 2023, to celebrate the first anniversary of the creation of its art centre, Lee Ufan Arles announced the news that it is partnering with Maison Guerlain to create the Art & Environment Prize, which will be awarded each year to a project placing the fertile and multiple relationships between artistic creation and the environment at the heart of its concerns and boasting an international scope. This collaboration began with initial support at the beginning of the programme of temporary exhibitions in the Espace MA in Summer 2023 with the "Figures Seules" (Solo Figures) exhibition organised by academic and art critic Philippe Dagen.

The Art & Environment Prize is rooted in the complementary philosophies that drive Lee Ufan's work and Guerlain's commitments, offering a space for reflection based on dialogue, creation and openness to the world. By rewarding the winners with a residency and an exhibition at Lee Ufan Arles, the Art & Environment Prize looks to showcase the work of an artist, increasingly their visibility through the joint support of its two founding entities.

Sharing the same sensibilities in terms of support and passing on artistic expertise, along with the same commitment to art and the environment, Lee Ufan Arles and Guerlain wish to encourage the production of unmistakably altruistic and responsible works of art, opening up new dialogues with nature.

The Art & Environment Prize

Philosophy

Each year, the Art & Environment Prize will honour work with a universal scope whose philosophical depth echoes that of Lee Ufan and whose connection to the environment resonates with the values championed by Guerlain. For Lee Ufan Arles and Guerlain, it is a matter of developing a creative space fostering conceptual, semantic and aesthetic bridges between the work of young artists and that of Lee Ufan. The Prize will therefore be receptive to strong conceptual projects offering a new vision of our relationship to modernity, along with work that falls within a long timeframe and is in relationship with nature, the environment and materials.

Participation criteria

This first Art & Environment Prize is open to all artists, irrespective of artistic discipline, with no age limit or required qualifications, worldwide.

The Jury

The Prize jury is chaired by Lee Ufan and made up of members of the two entities, along with guest figures and patrons of the event on a one-off basis.

Residency and exhibition

Having won the contemporary art prize, the winner enjoys a six- to eight-week support programme with Lee Ufan Arles and a unique production space at the heart of the Arles region. This “space-time” allow them to carry out their artistic project as well as encounter people and institutions relevant to its implementation: meeting artists, professionals from the art world and players on the ground who could resonate with their work, as well as the public. Guerlain and Lee Ufan Arles aim to support the winner in their process, facilitating a host of contacts with artists, curators and local and international stakeholders.

The Residency is followed by an exhibition presenting the artist’s work during the summer period in Lee Ufan Arles’ Espace MA. This event gives the opportunity for the winner to present their project to a local and international audience, offering them guaranteed visibility; a real springboard for their career. Finally, the Prize fosters unprecedented opportunities for the winner to collaborate with Guerlain.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Lee Ufan Arles

Hôtel Vernon, 5 Rue Vernon 13200 Arles, France

From July to September:

Open daily from 10 am to 7 pm

The rest of the year:

Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am to 6 pm

Tel. +33 9 78 07 83 26

contact@leeufan-arles.org

billetterie@leeufan-arles.org

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION CONTACT

l'art en plus

Virginie Burnet / Marion Gardair

m.gardair@lartenplus.com

Tel. +33 1 45 53 62 74