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| Monochrome Movement [Tansaekhwa] |
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| Monochrome painting, otherwise known in Korea as *Tansaekwa*, was an art movement that emerged after the Korean War, lasting from the late 1960s through to the 1980s. It rose to prominence during an era of strict censorship and rapid industrialisation in the 1960s and the 1970s. The policies imposed by South Korea’s then-president Park Chung-hee restricted direct political messages, thus actuating the emergence of hidden themes in abstractions within the limitations administered by the state. The Monochrome movement’s pioneer, Park Seobo (1931--), worked both with abstract artists who were critical of the government and with the National Documentary Paintings Project, producing government-commissioned artworks that advocated nationalism. Through abstraction, Monochrome paintings can raise awareness without being overtly political, and still resonate Korean tradition without submitting to the confines of the artistic establishment of the time. The Monochrome movement did not only respond to political censorship, but also to the established standards of the Korean art world, eliminating notions of representation and the distance that sets the image apart from the canvas. |
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