

Exhibition: *Unexpected Light: Works by Young Il Ahn*

On View: February 25–October 1, 2017

Location: Hammer Building, Level 2

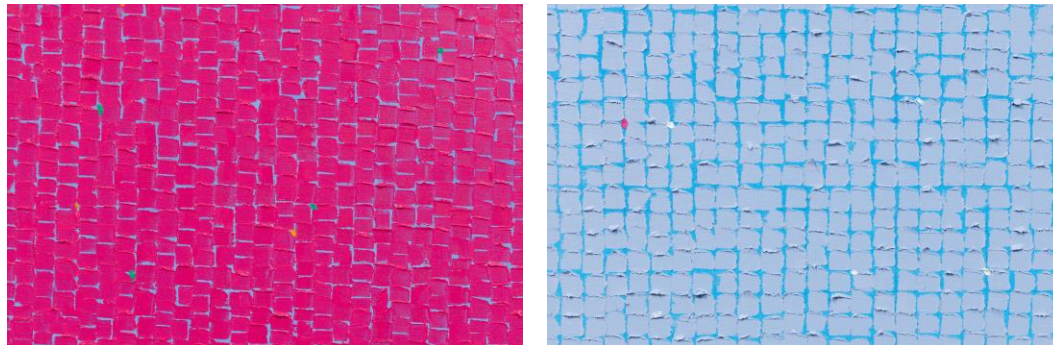


Image captions on page 2

(Los Angeles—February 10, 2017) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Unexpected Light: Works by Young Il Ahn*, the first solo exhibition of a Korean American artist at LACMA. Young Il Ahn has lived and worked in Los Angeles since 1966, and the city's landscape has profoundly affected his work. Curated by Virginia Moon, assistant curator of Korean art at LACMA, the exhibition features 10 large oil paintings from his *Water* series, including five new artworks. The *Water* series (1983–ongoing) takes inspiration from his experience of being lost on the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Santa Monica. In 1983, Ahn was aboard a small fishing boat when he was caught in a fog so dense that he could not see his hands in front of his face; suddenly, the fog cleared, revealing sunlight on the water all around him. This vision and experience would shape his practice for decades to come.

In each *Water* painting Ahn attempts to interpret the infinite ways in which light, water, and fog interact on the ocean. From a distance, the paintings appear static, each canvas a flat surface rendered in a single vibrant color. Up close, however, the paintings appear to be shimmering and mosaic-like. Small squares of thickly applied paint conform to an uneven grid but threaten to spill over their boundaries, casting shadows on the canvas and creating the impression of movement. Bright flecks of color interspersed throughout the paintings' surfaces lend a prismatic quality to the works, mimicking the refractive effect of light on water.

In February 2016, LACMA acquired Ahn's *Water SZLB15* (2015), a painting from the *Water* series and the first work by a Korean American artist to enter LACMA's collection.

About Young Il Ahn

Korean American artist Young Il Ahn was born in 1934 in Gaeseong, historically known as the capital of the Goryeo dynasty (912–1392) and geographically located in North Korea today. While acknowledged as a child prodigy, Ahn carried out his most prolific work in Los Angeles since his arrival in the U.S. in 1966. Since then, Ahn's works have consistently focused on his interest in the local surroundings rather than the country he left.

Credit: This installation was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography, in addition to representing Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection that includes more than 130,000 objects dating from antiquity to the present, encompassing the geographic world and nearly the entire history of art. Among the museum's strengths are its holdings of Asian art; Latin American art, ranging from masterpieces from the Ancient Americas to works by leading modern and contemporary artists; and Islamic art, of which LACMA hosts one of the most significant collections in the world. A museum of international stature as well as a vital part of Southern California, LACMA shares its vast collections through exhibitions, public programs, and research facilities that attract over one million visitors annually, in addition to serving millions through digital initiatives such as online collections, scholarly catalogues, and interactive engagement. LACMA is located in Hancock Park, 30 acres situated at the center of Los Angeles, which also contains the La Brea Tar Pits and Museum and the forthcoming Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. Situated halfway between the ocean and downtown, LACMA is at the heart of Los Angeles.

Location: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. lacma.org

Image captions:

(Left) Young-Il Ahn, *Water BLBP 16* (detail), 2016, oil on canvas, 64 × 52 in., courtesy of the artist and Susan Baik/Baik Art, © Young-Il Ahn, photo by Michael Underwood

(Right) Young-Il Ahn, *Water LLBG16* (detail), 2016, oil on canvas, 68 × 148 in., courtesy of the artist and Susan Baik/Baik Art, © Young-Il Ahn, photo by Michael Underwood

Press Contact: press@lacma.org or 323 857-6522

Connect with LACMA



@lacma