

Dia:



Press release
4 March 2026

Dia Art Foundation Announces a Major Presentation of Work by Lee Ufan at SMAC Venice, a Collateral Event of the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia



Lee Ufan, *Relatum* (formerly *Iron Field*), 1969/2019. Installation view, Dia Beacon, New York. © Lee Ufan/Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. Photo: Bill Jacobson Studio, New York

4 March 2026, New York and Venice—Today, Dia Art Foundation announced a major solo presentation of work by Lee Ufan at SMAC Venice (San Marco Art Centre), an official Collateral Event of the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. Curated by Jessica Morgan, Dia’s Nathalie de Gunzburg Director, the landmark exhibition will open on May 9, 2026.

Developed in close partnership with the artist, the exhibition traces the evolution of his iconic visual language with works ranging from new and historical paintings to large-scale installations and a new site-specific commission. The display is staged across eight of SMAC Venice’s galleries at the Procuratie in Piazza San Marco, bringing together a striking selection of works from over seven decades. Holistically, the presentation is designed to reflect both Lee’s long-standing dialogue with

architectural space and his continued commitment to creating environments that prompt reflection and heightened awareness.

Lee, one of the foremost figures of the Japanese Mono-ha (School of Things) as well as a key contributor to the Korean Dansaekhwa (Monochromatic Paintings) movements, has long explored the possibilities of embodying and representing space and time through painterly gestures on canvas.

As Morgan has said, “I am delighted to bring the exhibition *Lee Ufan* to Venice in celebration of the artist’s 90th birthday. Dia has enjoyed a deep, enduring relationship with Lee, and it is fitting that this year we will present two ambitious projects at Dia Beacon and at SMAC Venice. The impact and importance of Lee’s work cannot be overstated, and the pivotal artworks presented illuminate the philosophical and the material through lines—gesture, interval, balance, and spatial tension—that have defined his decades-long practice.”

SMAC Venice founders Anna Bursaux, David Gramazio, David Hrankovic said: “We are honored to collaborate with Dia Art Foundation and Lee Ufan on this project in Venice, marking the most significant presentation of the artist’s work in Italy to date. Curated by Dia’s director and developed in close dialogue with the artist, key works from across Lee’s oeuvre will be displayed alongside a new site-specific installation. The exhibition exemplifies SMAC Venice’s mission to provide a platform for meaningful institutional collaboration and for presenting artists of lasting international significance.”

Concurrently with the Venice presentation, Dia Beacon in Beacon, New York, will unveil a new display of Lee’s paintings and sculptures. Together, these two exhibitions celebrate the artist’s 90th birthday, underscoring his extraordinary contribution across disciplines and geographies.

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Exhibition details

Lee Ufan

SMAC Venice (San Marco Art Centre)

Open daily (closed Tuesdays)

10 am–6 pm

Procuratie, Piazza San Marco, 105

Venice 30124

smacvenice.org

About Lee Ufan

Lee Ufan was born in Gyeongsangnam-do, Korea, in 1936, while the country was under Japanese occupation. In 1956, following training in traditional ink-brush techniques at Seoul National University High School, he moved to Tokyo, where he studied philosophy at Nihon University. In 1967, he had his first solo show at Sato Gallery, Tokyo, and, in 1968, his work was included in *Contemporary Korean Painting* at Tokyo Museum of Modern Art. In 1969, Lee staged an ephemeral happening and made contingent structures for the *9th Contemporary Art Exhibition of Japan* at Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art, which signaled a departure from his earlier optical, discrete paintings. This show brought together Japanese artists identified with Mono-ha (School of Things). Throughout the 1970s, the artist participated in several exhibitions that juxtaposed North American, East Asian, and European artists to highlight their shared concern with material, process, and site. A dedicated teacher and prolific cultural critic, Lee published 17 books. In recent years, acclaim for his work has brought him exhibitions worldwide. In 2010, the Lee Ufan Museum, designed by Tadao Ando, opened in Naoshima, Japan. Increasingly distilled and monumental, the artist's sculptures continue to combine natural and industrial materials, in keeping with his relational philosophy. Lee lives in Kamakura, Japan, and Paris.

About Dia Art Foundation

Taking its name from the Greek word meaning “through,” Dia was established in 1974 with the mission to serve as a conduit for artists to realize ambitious new projects, unmediated by overt interpretation and uncurbed by the limitations of more traditional museums and galleries. Dia's programming fosters contemplative and sustained consideration of a single artist's body of work, and its collection is distinguished by the deep and long-standing relationships that the nonprofit has cultivated with artists whose work came to prominence particularly in the 1960s and '70s.

In addition to Dia Beacon, Dia Bridgehampton, and Dia Chelsea, Dia maintains and operates a constellation of commissions, long-term installations, and site-specific projects, notably focused on Land art, nationally and internationally. These include:

- Walter De Maria's *The New York Earth Room* (1977) and *The Broken Kilometer* (1979), Max Neuhaus's *Times Square* (1977), and Joseph Beuys's *7000 Eichen* (*7000 Oaks*, inaugurated in 1982 and ongoing), all in New York
- De Maria's *The Lightning Field* (1977), in western New Mexico
- Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970), in the Great Salt Lake, Utah
- Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* (1973–76), in the Great Basin Desert, Utah
- De Maria's *The Vertical Earth Kilometer* (1977), in Kassel, Germany
- Cameron Rowland's *Depreciation* (2018)



About SMAC Venice

SMAC Venice (San Marco Art Centre) opened in Piazza San Marco, Venice, in May 2025. Every year SMAC Venice presents a dynamic and vibrant program of exceptional exhibitions across art, design, fashion, and film, offering opportunities for discovery for specialists and the general public alike.

Situated in one of the most iconic locations in the world, SMAC Venice is located on Piazza San Marco inside the Procuratie, which was recently restored by Pritzker Architecture Prize-winning architect David Chipperfield, reimagining it as a hub of social inclusion and culture. SMAC Venice's location has been made possible due to a landmark agreement with Generali, the owner of the Procuratie. On the third floor there is The Home of the Human Safety Net, with the interactive exhibition *A World of Potential*.

Across its 16 galleries, SMAC Venice's program sheds light on the unexpected, challenges conventions, and poses rigorous questions. Through research, dialogue, and experimentation, SMAC Venice critically examines contemporary visual culture and its relation to history, science, philosophy, and society. SMAC Venice is a spontaneous and experimental organization that tests traditional models of art institutions and exhibition making. It welcomes collaboration, providing institutions, artists, and creative practitioners with a platform in Venice.

SMAC Venice's founding is rooted in the belief that the arts are more important than ever to the human experience, opening new possibilities for coexistence and allowing cities and communities to thrive.