

Kim Lim: Water Rests, Stone Speaks

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UCCA Dune

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From October 26, 2025, to April 6, 2026, UCCA Dune presents “Kim Lim: Water Rests, Stone Speaks,” an exhibition of the late British-Singaporean artist of Chinese descent who worked primarily in sculpture and printmaking. This exhibition traces Lim’s explorations of form, rhythm, and light with sculptures, prints, and archival materials spanning three decades. Set against UCCA Dune’s interplay of sea, sand, and natural light, Lim’s meditative, minimalist forms transcend cultural and formal boundaries while revealing the expressive potential of materials: how stone might suggest the flow of water, how carved or printed surfaces capture the flicker of light, and how abstraction can convey subtle rhythms of life and form.

Beidaihe, CHINA— From October 26, 2025, to April 6, 2026, UCCA Dune presents “Kim Lim: Water Rests, Stone Speaks,” the first institutional solo exhibition in mainland China by the late British-Singaporean artist of Chinese heritage. This exhibition offers a profound exploration of Kim Lim’s (1936-1997) sculptural and print works spanning three decades, tracing her lifelong pursuit of rhythm and light in spatial relationships and material essence. Bringing together key works, including five prints from her “Dunhuang Series,” alongside archival photographs from her travels, the exhibition illuminates Lim’s elegant, minimalist investigations into the universal characteristics of form and space, as shaped by her experiences within Eastern and Western cultural contexts. This exhibition is curated by UCCA Curator Neil Zhang.

The exhibition title, “Water Rests, Stone Speaks,” derives from a Chinese idiom that may be more directly translated as “to rest by water and rinse with stones.” Traditionally associated with the figure of the recluse, the phrase evokes a life of independence and communion with nature. Reinterpreted here, it reflects both Lim’s artistic stance and the sensibility of her works—where the static appears to move, and the silent speaks in rhythms of shadow and form. The extraordinary seascape and natural light of UCCA Dune provide a setting uniquely attuned to Lim’s practice. Her works presented resonate with the surrounding landscape, dissolving boundaries between sculpture and site.

The earliest works on view, including *Muse* (1959) and *Kiss* (1959), reveal the foundations of Lim’s artistic vocabulary. Carved respectively in wood and stone, these pieces mark her initial

explorations into how material form could evoke rhythm and intimacy without recourse to figuration. While *Muse* reflects her sensitivity to the tactile qualities of wood, *Kiss*—inspired by Constantin Brancusi’s sculpture of the same name—demonstrates her early fascination with reduction and balance. In these early carvings, the essence of her later practice is already apparent: a deep engagement with the relationships between weight and lightness, stillness and flow, structure and the organic.

Lim continued to refine this dialogue between medium and gesture throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Working fluidly between sculpture and printmaking, she regarded both practices as parallel modes of inquiry rather than distinct disciplines. The exhibition features excerpts from Lim’s notes that articulates this relationship: “the two activities—making sculpture and printmaking—are of equal importance to me.” Her “Ladder Series” (1972-1974) reflects this interchange, translating motifs from her sculptural language into prints that function not as preparatory sketches but as autonomous visual compositions.

Throughout her career, Lim’s extensive travels across Europe, East Asia, and Southeast Asia—as well as her layered identity as a Singapore-born, long London-based artist—deeply nurtured her visual language. One of the most resonant moments of this exhibition is five prints from her “Dunhuang Series” (1986-1988), shown alongside archival photographs during her travels in China around the same period. The interplay between carved form, spiritual space, and desert expanse that Lim encountered in Dunhuang would have a lasting influence on her practice. Together, these prints and photographs trace how her travels became a catalyst for artistic evolution, and reveal how Lim absorbed Asian visual traditions into expression within a broader constellation of cultural influences.

“Water Rests, Stone Speaks” highlights an artist whose practice transcended cultural boundaries. Through works that trace Lim’s lifelong exploration of rhythm, light, and the material essence of form, this exhibition reflects how her vision of abstraction continues to shape contemporary understandings of materiality and personal experience. By situating her work in dialogue with UCCA Dune and its extraordinary natural light and seascape, the exhibition underscores her status as an artist whose practice was both transnational and deeply personal. In this elemental context, her works dissolve the boundaries between material and environment, allowing viewers to experience her abstraction as a living dialogue between matter, movement, and perception.

Support and Sponsorship

This exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Estate of Kim Lim (London). Exclusive wall solutions support is provided by Dulux, and Genelec contributed exclusive audio equipment and technical support. UCCA also thanks the members of UCCA Foundation Council, International Circle, and Young Associates, as well as Lead Partner Aranya, Lead Art Book Partner DIOR, Lead Imaging Partner vivo, Presenting Partner Bloomberg, and Supporting Partners AIA, Barco, Dulux, Genelec, SKP Beijing, and Stey.

Public Programs

During the exhibition period, UCCA will collaborate with LAZYPRINT printmaking studio to host a hands-on printmaking experience, inviting participants to discover how Kim Lim explored spaces with hand-carved plates and printing, and how she expressed the quiet depth of nature and rhythm through simple forms and colors.

About the Artist

Kim Lim (1936-1997) arrived in London aged 17 to study at St. Martin's School of Fine Art, later studying printmaking and sculpture at the Slade School of Fine Art. Two major exhibitions of her work in 2024 include "Kim Lim: The Space Between. A Retrospective" at the National Gallery Singapore, and "Daiga Grantina. Notes on Kim Lim" at the Kunstmuseum Appenzell, the artist's first museum show in Europe. Other recent solo and group exhibitions include presentations at The Hepworth Wakefield, Manchester (2023-4); Turner Contemporary, Margate (2024); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2022); Barbican Art Gallery, London (2022); Tate Britain, London (2021); STPI Gallery, Singapore (2018); and Camden Arts Centre, London (1999). Kim Lim was also included in the 2023 editions of the Taipei Biennial and the Gwangju Biennale. Her works are held in significant collections including the National Gallery Singapore; Arts Council Collection, UK; Tate Collection, UK; and M+, Hong Kong.

About UCCA

UCCA Center for Contemporary Art is China's premier museum of modern and contemporary art. Committed to the belief that art can deepen lives and transcend boundaries, UCCA presents a wide range of exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives across four architecturally and programmatically distinct locations. Owned by a group of committed patrons, it is funded by donations, sponsorship, ticketing, and proceeds from the commercial activities of UCCA Lab. UCCA has presented more than 200 exhibitions and welcomed more than ten million visitors since its founding in Beijing in 2007 as the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art.



About UCCA Dune

UCCA Dune is an art museum buried under a sand dune by the Bohai Sea in Beidaihe, 300 kilometers east of Beijing. Designed by OPEN Architecture, its galleries unfold over a series of cave-like spaces. Some are naturally lit from above, while others open out onto the beach. UCCA Dune presents rotating exhibitions in dialogue with its unique site and space, with a particular focus on emerging Chinese and global talents. Opened in 2018, UCCA Dune is supported by UCCA strategic partner Aranya, the seaside cultural and lifestyle community where it is located.

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