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ELLSWORTH KELLY

ELLSWORTH KELLY: A RETROSPECTIVE

Edited by Diane Waldman

G U G G E N H E I M M U S E U M

ELLSWORTH KELLY: A RETROSPECTIVE
Organized by Diane Waldman

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
October 18, 1996–January 15, 1997

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
February 16–May 18, 1997

Tate Gallery, London
June 12–September 7, 1997

Haus der Kunst, Munich
November 1997–January 1998

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ISBN 0-8109-6897-5 (hardcover)
ISBN 0-89207-177-x (softcover)

Guggenheim Museum Publications
1071 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10128

Hardcover edition distributed by
Harry N. Abrams, Inc.
100 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10011

Design by Matsumoto Incorporated, New York

Cover by Ellsworth Kelly

Printed in Germany by Cantz

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This exhibition is sponsored by

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Significant additional support has been provided by
The Riggio Family and Stephen and Nan Swid.

This project is supported in part by grants from the
National Endowment for the Arts and The Owen
Cheatham Foundation.

Sponsor's Statement

The rewards of art are for people who exert themselves for art—those who allow art to disturb, challenge, and stimulate them. For such people, art becomes a laboratory of life and creativity. This conviction has led Hugo Boss to embark on its partnership with the Guggenheim Museum, and to promote the work of emerging and established artists who bring a productive unrest into our lives.

As a sponsor, Hugo Boss also supports exemplary exhibitions devoted to major artists, who have earned their stature by pointing a way forward for Modern art.

This Ellsworth Kelly retrospective is a complete look at an American artist who began his career in postwar Paris; there, he engaged in a dialogue with European art, earlier as well as contemporary. Like all great artists, however, he has shown that traditions can be maintained only by breaking them. By developing an individual style of abstraction, Kelly has given American abstract art a new direction.

I am full of admiration and gratitude for the tireless and devoted work of Diane Waldman and her team of colleagues and international contributors. For this exhibition they have assembled more than one hundred paintings and sculptures and more than one hundred and fifty works on paper; and the catalogue that they have produced provides a thread to guide us through the labyrinth of a lifetime's work.

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Given that the course of twentieth-century art has been a tumultuous and increasingly unorthodox odyssey into new styles, materials, techniques, and sensibilities, it is rare for an artist to devote his career to exploring the potential of a singular approach to form, as Ellsworth Kelly has done. Ever since the late 1940s, when Kelly created his first pieces of abstract art, he has steadfastly adhered to the power of planar forms to communicate new and unexpected realities. From meticulous geometry, Kelly has coaxed a poetics of vision unhounded by convention or dogma. His contribution lies in advancing the disciplines of painting and sculpture not through the shock of the new but through the jolt of the already present. Insistent in their seamless veneer and narrative austerity, his paintings and sculptures are profoundly rewarding in what they have to teach us about looking. Kelly's achievements in the visual arts are based on an acute sense of the fusion of—and interplay among—form, color, space, and line, where subtlety is allied with the extraordinary and the monumental.

This retrospective is both a recognition of Kelly's past accomplishments and a tribute to the most current developments in his art. Whereas exhibitions of his work over the past several decades have addressed specific mediums (painting, sculpture, or works on paper) or time spans (such as his formative years in Paris), the Guggenheim's presentation is the first in twenty-three years to survey his entire career in all its manifestations. By providing the critical reference points and fundamental insights into Kelly's artistic vision and working methods, the exhibition—and the accompanying catalogue—reveal why his work has attained a prominent place within the canon of twentieth-century abstraction. Deputy Director and Senior Curator Diane Waldman, whose scholarship and acumen concerning Kelly's work are longstanding, is to be thanked for organizing this historic retrospective.

The availability of loans is crucial to the success of any large-scale exhibition, and this is especially true of such a far-reaching retrospective. Many individuals and institutions have entrusted us with their most prized pieces so that the public could have an opportunity to experience the full breadth of Kelly's oeuvre. Their generosity demonstrates the depth of the patronage that our institution has had the continuing good fortune to receive.

Support for this endeavor came in other indispensable forms as well. Our partnership with Hugo Boss AG consistently remains one of unwavering enthusiasm and commitment, thanks to the cooperation of Dr. Peter Littmann, Chairman and CEO, and Isabella Heudorf, Art Sponsorship. They have aided us considerably in our mission to present exhibitions of the most important artists of this century. We extend to them our profound thanks for their willingness to share their resources and to join forces with us in order to foster a greater understanding of Kelly's art. The years of scholarship and intensive work that went into realizing this project were also magnanimously supported by the Riggio Family and by Stephen and Nan Swid. We would also like to express our gratitude to the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., and to the Owen Cheatham Foundation for their continuing support of the museum's endeavors.

Not many artists are as willing to dedicate so much of their time and their studio resources to assist with the research, planning, and implementation of an exhibition and catalogue as Ellsworth Kelly has been. Those who have the pleasure of working with him cannot help being affected by his generosity, vitality, and, above all, his love of art. His humanity and talent will resonate throughout the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum while the works of art he has created fill the galleries of Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural masterpiece.

Thomas Krens
 Director
 The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Acknowledgments

Although I have known Ellsworth Kelly since 1968, have included his work in past exhibitions, and worked closely with him on the publication of *Ellsworth Kelly: Drawings, Collages, Prints* in 1971, it wasn't until this retrospective survey that I have had the opportunity to work with him on his total oeuvre to date. In his art, Kelly makes his unparalleled mastery of color, form, and scale seem simple, while making us aware of the human passion that animates every piece. Having enjoyed the vibrant observations and acute insights that he has shared with me in conversation over the years, it is a privilege for me to be able to present to audiences the full range of paintings, sculptures, and works on paper that he has created during nearly five decades of thoughtful, dedicated work. He has tirelessly given his support and energy to this project, and his good humor and generous spirit have made it a pleasure to collaborate with him.

I would like to extend my thanks to the many individuals who have given so freely of their time and expertise and who have thus contributed to the success of this exhibition and catalogue. I am deeply grateful to Jack Shear, for his exquisite photographs of Kelly and his surroundings, which are a great addition to the catalogue, and for sharing with me the wealth of his knowledge about Kelly's oeuvre. Kelly's studio assistants have also been enormously helpful. For their attention to the many details in the planning and implementation of this publication and the exhibition, I thank Wanda Hughes, Nick Walters, and Ian Berry. Peter Carlson and Ed Suman of Peter Carlson Enterprises have provided important information regarding the fabrication and installation of Kelly's sculptures, and Leslie Paisley, Conservator of Paper, Williamstown Art Conservation Center, aided in preparing Kelly's works on paper for this exhibition.

I am also thankful to have benefited from the involvement of Anthony d'Offay and Matthew Marks, who, with the support of their staffs, have provided important materials and information concerning Kelly's paintings, sculptures, and works on paper. The recollections of Irving Blum and Joseph Helman have been an exceptional resource.

It is a pleasure to work with writers who are passionate about their subject. For their thoughtful catalogue essays, I extend my thanks to Roberta Bernstein, Carter Ratcliff, Mark Rosenthal, and Clare Bell. Their insight and scholarship will further the understanding of Kelly's role in the development of abstraction in the twentieth century.

The entire staff of the Guggenheim Museum has been instrumental in the successful presentation of this exhibition. I am deeply indebted to Tracey Bashkoff, Curatorial Assistant, who coordinated every phase of the exhibition and catalogue. I am also grateful to Clare Bell, Assistant Curator, for her contribution to the project, and to Josette Lamoureux, Exhibition Assistant, for her help and for the thorough Exhibition History and Bibliography that she compiled.

I am most grateful to Kathy Hill, Registrar, for her expert handling of the details involving the transportation and insurance for these works. Carol Stringari, Conservator, meticulously supervised the care of the works. James Cullinane, Senior Exhibition Technician, researched and implemented the many complicated installation issues involved in this presentation. My thanks are due to all who participated in the many aspects of the installation and whose thoughtful advance preparation was invaluable: Jocelyn Groom, Assistant Exhibition Design Coordinator; Laura Garofalo and Jasmine Benyamin, Architectural Draftspersons; Ultan Guilfoyle, Director of Film and Television Production; Guillermo Ovalle, Assistant Registrar; Peter Read, Production Services Manager/Exhibition Design Coordinator; Adrienne Shulman, Lighting Designer; Dennis Vermeulen, Senior Exhibition Technician; and Scott Wixon, Manager of Art Services and Preparations. I thank the interns and volunteers who gave enthusiastically of their time: Sarah Bancroft, Joel Fisher, Emilia Garcia-Romeu, Isabel Greschat, Nicole Kassel, Elizabeth Koerner, Jennifer Lager, Sandra Rothenberg, and Gladys Perez Wilson.

I truly appreciate Anthony Calnek, Director of Publications, for his skillful supervision of and contributions to this monograph. My gratitude goes to Takaaki Matsumoto of Matsumoto, Inc. for his

sensitive design of the catalogue, and to his assistants, Amy Wilkins and Watchara Kantamala. I am also grateful to Elizabeth Levy, Managing Editor, for expertly overseeing the production of the catalogue. I am glad to have worked again with Stephen Robert Frankel, Project Editor, and I thank him for his discerning edits to my text. My thanks are also due to Edward Weisberger, Editor, and Carol Fitzgerald, Assistant Editor, for their many contributions to this project; to Keith Mayerson, for his assistance in the Publications Department; and to David Heald, Photographic Manager, Sally Ritts, Photography Associate, and Ellen Labenski, Photography Assistant, for their work on paintings in area collections.

The sponsors of this exhibition have been magnanimous; I am truly indebted to them for their participation. To Dr. Peter Littmann, Chairman and CEO, Hugo Boss, I extend my deep appreciation for his commitment to this presentation. I would especially like to thank Stephen and Nan Swid and Len and Louise Riggio for their extraordinarily generous support, friendship, and enthusiasm. I am grateful for the support of Celeste and Stephen Weisglass of the Owen Cheatham Foundation.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the many lenders who generously agreed to share their works with visitors to the exhibition. Their support has enabled us to present the full breadth of Kelly's accomplishments to the public.

Diane Waldman
Deputy Director and Senior Curator
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum



Essays

Ellsworth Kelly

by Diane Waldman



1. Ellsworth Kelly in Paris, 1948.

The work of an artist is the result of collective memory, a search for individual identity, and a process of discovery. Ellsworth Kelly's art was profoundly affected by his studies at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, beginning in 1946, especially by the paintings of Max Beckmann and by Byzantine and Romanesque art. From Boston, Kelly made infrequent trips to New York, where he saw the work of Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso at the Museum of Modern Art and of Vasily Kandinsky at the Museum of Non-Objective Painting (now the Guggenheim Museum). After World War II, when he took up residence in Paris in 1948 under the G.I. Bill of Rights, he became intrigued with the radical innovations of several other early twentieth-century artists, among them Henri Matisse and Jean (Hans) Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Because of his interest in French art, architecture, and history, Kelly spent much of his time at the Musée du Louvre, the Musée de l'Homme, and the Musée Guimet. He also visited the Romanesque churches in Tavant, Saint-Savin, and Poitiers, which he had previously seen only in reproductions.¹

When Kelly returned to the United States and settled in New York in 1954, abstract art meant something altogether different to him than it did to American abstract artists in the 1930s or to the new generation of abstractionists, the Abstract Expressionists. As an American in Paris, he was considered an outsider, and this feeling was reinforced by his interest in early European Modernism rather than in the movement championed by artists such as Hans Hartung and Pierre Soulages, a movement then in vogue in Paris and soon to be named Tachisme. Practitioners of Tachisme or Art Informel were the postwar French equivalent of New York-based Action Painters, more commonly known as Abstract Expressionists, among the most celebrated of whom are Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. Kelly did admire the work of certain contemporary European painters, such as Alberto Magnelli and Wols (born Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schulze), and was interested in Surrealism, particularly the drawings of Antonin Artaud. After six years in Paris, Kelly arrived in New York with a sensibility

shaped by his admiration for European culture. His work went in a different direction from that of the Abstract Expressionists, who, in their determination to forge a new American art, rejected the Renaissance tradition of depicting the world of appearances and replaced it with a world envisioned by the artist's imagination. Although, like Kelly, many of the Abstract Expressionists admired the early twentieth-century Modernists, they were primarily interested in action as an event that documented the painting process. Kelly's view of painting was more introspective and contemplative, and his method of working was very different from that of the Action Painters. He wanted painting to be intimate but also to make it part of the architecture of the environment in which it was placed. In a letter to John Cage of September 4, 1950, he wrote:

My collages are only ideas for things much larger—things to cover walls [see Study for “Color Wall Panels,” 1952, cat. no. 122]. In fact all the things I’ve done I would like to see much larger. I am not interested in painting as it has been accepted for so long—to hang on walls of houses as pictures. To hell with pictures—they should be the wall—even better—on the outside wall—of large buildings. Or stood up outside as billboards or a kind of modern “icon.” We must make our art like the Egyptians, the Chinese & the African and the Island primitives—with their relation to life. It should meet the eye—direct.²

Kelly combined his interests in ancient art and architecture with early twentieth-century Modernism to create a body of work that is a seamless blend of past and present, almost transcending time.

Kelly's emergence as a major figure in twentieth-century art is relatively recent and stems from a cumulative recognition of his many accomplishments as an artist over the last five decades. Three major factors in this long delay are the public's resistance to so-called pure abstraction; the absence, in the early years of his career, of any instant notoriety of the kind that has been so much a feature of art since the time of Marcel Duchamp; and the fact that he is still pursuing ideas that he first began to explore in the late 1940s. If the belated recognition of his art can be attributed in part to his lack of self-aggrandizement, it is also the result of his reflective temperament and thoughtful method of working, a process that in itself is almost completely antithetical to current practice. As a consequence, his work in its entirety remains largely unknown to the public. For example, only recently were the paintings, reliefs, and drawings of his Paris period (1948–54) presented in a major exhibition.³ Although Kelly's recognition in the public arena has been late compared to artists who have been identified with movements such as Abstract Expressionism and Pop art, his singularity has given him the space he needed to confront issues that were meaningful to his work, among them ideas related to the flat plane, shape, color, and line. The sum of these issues, and the distinctions he made between the flat plane of painting, drawing, and collage and the three-dimensional space of architecture, have combined to produce some of the most distinctive work of our time. It is based on the ancient belief in art as handmaiden to the intertwined worlds of reality and the spirit and on the early twentieth-century utopian ideal in art that stems from the deeply felt conviction that art can affect life.

By sidestepping identification with one particular movement, school, or group—for Kelly, more a matter of preference than design—he has often had his art linked with several of them, misinterpreted, and confused with the work of artists with which it has little in common. Early in the 1960s Kelly's work was categorized as Hard-edge painting,⁴ despite the fact that his concern was not primarily with edge. As he explained then, “I'm interested in the mass and color, the black and white—the edges happen because the forms get as quiet as they can be.”⁵ Soon after, his work was misconstrued as Op art, a short-lived mid-1960s movement of artists who experimented with color, line, and abstract patterns to create the illusion of movement and depth.⁶ It has also been mistakenly identified with Minimalism, a mid-1960s movement that postdates Kelly's own use of monochrome panel painting. Minimalism, like Pop art and Abstract Expressionism before it, was a convenient label applied by Barbara Rose (and then other critics), who used the term Minimal art beginning in 1965 to refer to



2. *Self-Portrait*, 1949.
Gouache on paper, 18 3/4 x 12 3/4 inches
(47.6 x 31.8 cm). Private collection.



3. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Virgin and Child*, ca. late 1330s–early 1340s.

Tempera on panel, 29 1/4 x 17 3/4 inches (75.5 x 45.3 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Charles Potter Kling Fund.



4. Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti), *Portrait of a Young Man*, ca. 1580.

Oil on canvas, 25 1/4 x 21 1/4 inches (64.5 x 55.3 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Mrs. W. Scott Fitz and Robert Treat Paine II.

works by Frank Stella, Anne Truitt, Richard Tuttle, and several other artists.⁷ By the late 1960s, though, the term was used most often to describe the work of Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Morris, who emphasized concepts rather than end products, rejected the precious object in favor of the context or environment for which a work was created, and used prefabricated industrial units in order to eliminate the appearance of the artist's hand. While Kelly's work may share certain characteristics with that of two painters associated with the movement, Robert Mangold and Robert Ryman, especially in their use of reductive form, distilled color, and painterly surface, many of his paintings and sculptures not only predate their work by more than ten years but are concerned with different ideas. Kelly's approach to his work is based on the creation of unique objects; each of his paintings or sculptures is different, even if it is part of a series. Despite these misleading classifications, Kelly's work has endured precisely because it is so singular in its vision, usually touching on mainstream thinking only when such ideas coincided with his own. It affirms neither a particular school nor doctrinaire Modernism; indeed, it constitutes an affirmation that art has no rules, no systems—only possibilities.

In this respect, Kelly's decisions, keyed as they are to the uniqueness of each individual painting, separate him from the artists to whom his work is most easily connected. Kelly himself feels most closely connected with two artists with whom he would appear least connected—Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein. Kelly shares their interest in the iconic and in the real world, though not their sense of irony. Like the more metaphysical painters of the New York School, such as Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko, he has been able to open up an area of art that cannot be determined solely by deductive reasoning, but one that is subject to the discipline of a highly developed intuition and visual acuity. Like Newman and Rothko, Kelly is committed to relying on this intuition when making decisions about the final placement of vertical and horizontal, curve and diagonal, the choice of color and its intensity, and the relationship of one color to its possible partner or partners. While it is true that Kelly does predetermine certain of his decisions—the shape of the canvas support, for example—these, too, are a matter of predilection rather than any doctrine and are subject to change. For Newman and Rothko, the blank canvas functioned as a void from which they brought images into being through near-mystical confrontations. But for Kelly, the spiritual nature of his art stems from the reality of the object and the response it evokes from the spectator. At the same time, Kelly, like Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, was intrigued by the “reality” that the canvas itself could convey in terms of pure painting. It is one of Kelly's fundamental contributions to Modern art to further advance this “reality” by proposing a new “reality” of color. The key to an understanding of his procedure can be seen in the large body of paintings, sculptures, drawings, and collages that he has produced from 1949 to the present.

Ellsworth Kelly was born in Newburgh, New York, on May 31, 1923, the second of three sons, to Allan Howe and Florence Githens Kelly. When Kelly was still a youngster, the family moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and in 1929, to Oradell, New Jersey. Kelly remembers that in Oradell his mother moved the family so often that she would have to remind both her husband and her sons which address they were to return to at the end of the day. Although his parents disapproved of his desire to be an artist, in 1939 his mother bought him an art book that had just been published, *World-Famous Paintings*, edited and with an essay by Rockwell Kent. Of the many European masterpieces reproduced in the book—Kelly was particularly taken with Venetian painter Giovanni Bellini's *The Doge Leonardo Loredan*, 1501–04, the newly restored *The Ambassadors Jean de Dinteville and Georges de Selve*, 1533, by Flemish artist Hans Holbein the Younger, and Paul Cézanne's *Chestnut Trees at the Jas de Bouffan*, 1885–86.⁸ Despite his parents' ambivalence about art, he continued to pursue it. At Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood, New Jersey, he was encouraged to study art and acting by his teachers, Evelyn Robbins and Helen Travolta; he was also active in the school's theater club, The Mask and Wig. His other chief interest was bird watching, a lifelong practice that he became interested in when he was



5. Artist/maker unknown, *Christ in Majesty with Symbols of the Four Evangelists*, 12th century. Fresco secco transferred to plaster and wood, 254 x 150 1/4 x 111 inches (645 x 382 x 282 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Maria Antoinette Evans Fund.



6. Matthias Grunewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, ca. 1510-15. Oil on panel, 115 x 211 1/4 inches (292 x 536 cm). Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar, France.

five, encouraged by his mother, and later his grandmother, Louisa (Rosenleibe) Kelly, as a way to get him to feel better during a childhood illness.⁹

In 1941-42, after Kelly graduated from high school, he studied with Maitland E. Graves and Eugen H. Petersen at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, and on January 1, 1943 was inducted into the United States Army. He was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey, and then to Camp Hale, Colorado, until his request to serve in the 603rd Engineers Camouflage Battalion, at Fort Meade, Maryland, was granted. Even the army was a source of Kelly's continuing art-history education. In 1944 the army published and, on request, gave to the soldiers *A Treasury of Art Masterpieces*, which he still treasures. Edited and with an Introduction by Thomas Craven, it included reproductions of masterpieces ranging from Giotto to Picasso.¹⁰ Kelly's unit was sent to England in June 1944; his tour of duty during the Allied invasion of Western Europe included Brittany, Normandy, and Luxembourg. In September his outfit was stationed for two weeks at Saint-Germain-en Laye, and Kelly visited Paris for the first time, though only briefly. While in the capital, he sketched its parks, churches, and other buildings but was unable to visit the city's museums, most of which were closed due to the war.

When World War II ended, Kelly returned to the United States and moved to Boston toward the end of 1945. He qualified under the G.I. Bill of Rights for tuition to attend the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, which he did from January 1946 to May 1948. During this period he lived at the Norfolk House Center in Roxbury, Massachusetts, teaching evening classes in art there in exchange for free room and board, and spent the summer of 1947 in Skowhegan, Maine, on a scholarship from the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, where he was given a studio in which to paint.

The teachers at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts gave classes based on classical principles of Old Master painting and drawing, and required Kelly and his fellow students to make copies of Old Master paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Such studies, especially the ones that Kelly did after Sieneese artist Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Virgin and Child*,¹¹ ca. late 1330s-early 1340s (fig. 3), and Venetian painter Tintoretto's *Portrait of a Young Man*, ca. 1580 (fig. 4), reinforced his appreciation for European painting. He also admired the museum's fresco of *Christ in Majesty* from the twelfth-century Catalan church of Santa Maria, in the town of Mur (fig. 5). He became versed in classical painting techniques, using gray as the ground and applying over it transparent layers of tinted color mixed with varnish. In addition, he was influenced by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, the museum's fellow for research in Indian, Persian, and Muhammadan art, and became interested in the artifacts of native cultures, attending, for example, an exhibition on the culture of North American Mound Builders at Harvard University's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.¹²

The school's classical approach was tempered somewhat by an interest in German Expressionism and the paintings of Beckmann. Kelly studied drawing with Ture Bengtz, who emphasized the contours of objects, and painting with Karl Zerbe, who introduced Kelly to the work of Beckmann. The school's faculty also invited Beckmann and other prominent artists to give lectures to the students. Beckmann came to the United States in 1947 when he accepted a teaching position in Saint Louis, at the School of Fine Arts, Washington University; and he visited Boston on March 13, 1948, to deliver a lecture (titled "Letters to a Woman Painter") at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. Kelly went to hear Beckmann and recalls that Beckmann's wife, Quappi, read the lecture to the students because he had difficulty speaking English.¹³ He remembers being disappointed that Beckmann paid more attention to the female students in his class than he did to Kelly and the other male students. Philip Guston also visited the class, and spoke of his great admiration for the work of Piero della Francesca.

Sluice Gates, 1947 (cat. no. 109), is one of Kelly's early drawings based on the random patterns produced by natural phenomena. The rapid succession of short, brusque markings conveys the effect of water as it flows over a dam. While still tentative in its positioning of forms in relationship to the page, it exemplifies Kelly's innate ability to evoke, through a series of marks, a variety of forms found in nature. Although *View of Roxbury*, 1948 (fig. 10), is a more straightforward rendition of the streets that

Kelly saw from his window, it, too, is a distillation of recognizable forms rendered in relationship to the plane of the paper.



7. *Romanesque Head*, 1949.
Gouache on paper, 16 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches
(41.9 x 30.8 cm). Private collection.



8. Façade of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame-la-Grande, Poitiers, France, 11th–12th centuries.

After three years in Boston, Kelly decided to live in Paris. He sought a milieu in which Modern art thrived in an old culture and thus chose Paris over New York. Kelly's return to Paris in October 1948 was made possible by a G.I. Bill of Rights monthly study allowance. He looked forward to living in the "City of Light," in a culture that communicated its people's wholehearted embrace of art and life through the city's architecture, museums, cafés, and *joie de vivre*—and to enjoying the anonymity of being a foreigner and the sense of freedom afforded him by his lack of familiarity with the French language and customs. Kelly was dissatisfied with the paintings that he had done in Boston and felt that living somewhere else might have a cathartic effect on his work. Soon after arriving in Paris, Kelly took a trip to Colmar to see Matthias Grünewald's multipanel *Isenheim Altarpiece*, ca. 1510–15 (fig. 6), a painting that as a student in Boston he had seen and admired in reproductions. In November, a month after his arrival, he enrolled at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. There he met and became good friends with Jack Youngerman, who had moved to Paris the year before and, like Kelly, was studying there through the G.I. Bill. Art, as Youngerman declared, was still the province of the French,¹⁴ and many American painters, including Kelly and himself, often felt excluded by their Parisian counterparts. Kelly and Youngerman formed a close friendship and developed their own coterie of friends. Included in this circle was a fellow American, Ralph Coburn—a friend of Kelly's from Boston who had worked at the Boris Mirski Gallery there (the first gallery to show Kelly's work)—and French actress Delphine Seyrig, who married Youngerman in 1950.

During this time, Kelly resumed his interest in Byzantine mosaics and painted several half-length portraits that combine the influences of Picasso (see fig. 7) and Romanesque and Byzantine art. He was a frequent visitor to the historical museums in Paris, spending time studying their collections of Greek and Egyptian art, and the art of China, Luristan, and the Cyclades. From these great collections of the art of the past, he began to find models on which to base his interest in combining realism and abstraction.

Kelly also visited the Musée National d'Art Moderne at the Palais de Tokyo, on the Avenue de New-York, where he saw and admired the work of Arp, Pierre Bonnard, Constantin Brancusi, Georges Braque, Robert Delaunay, Fernand Léger, and Picasso. Inspired by the work that he saw, he began to make a series of abstract paintings that he soon abandoned because he felt they were failures, primarily because the colors were dull. Instead, he turned his attention to the architectural details of buildings in and around Paris. In his search for the essential form or pattern in things, he regarded a great variety of objects as potentially useful to him, whether natural or man-made.

In the spring of 1949, Kelly traveled around central and western France visiting Romanesque churches and cathedrals. One of these, Notre-Dame-la-Grande in Poitiers (eleventh–twelfth centuries), has at the top of its façade a sculpture-filled niche in the shape of a mandorla (fig. 8), which he adapted in his painting *Mandorla*, 1949 (cat. no. 4). Here, Kelly expressed his interest in abstract form, but he continued to be intrigued by imagery. He completed representational drawings such as *Self-Portrait*, 1949 (fig. 2), in which a single form is centered, symmetrical, and frontal. Line drawings such as these are quick studies drawn in ink or pencil, with gouache or watercolor. Many of the drawings from this year were useful to him as notations of objects or shapes that interested him, and only later were some of them considered as the basis for a finished work. However representational, Kelly's drawings and paintings of 1949 indicate the beginnings of abstraction in his work, and, as a result, they have an experimental quality as he continued to combine what he recognized in nature with what he knew and admired in art. The ovoid form and the curve, shapes that are already evident in the seminal work of the Paris period, recur throughout his career, appearing as recently as 1988 in the bronze relief *Untitled (Mandorla)* (cat. no. 90). In *Mandorla* and other paintings of 1949, such as *Plant II* (cat. no. 1) and *Kilometer Marker* (cat. no. 3), there is a flattening of form, a deemphasis on volume, and a compression



9. Yves Tanguy, *Mama, Papa Is Wounded (Maman, papa est blessé)*, 1927.
Oil on canvas, 36 1/4 x 28 3/4 inches (92.1 x 73 cm).
The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Purchase.

of the image into a shallow space. *Plant II* was finished in mid-July and, according to Kelly, was the first occurrence of a biomorphic form in his work.¹⁵ While still savoring his forms' tangible relationships to forms found in the world, Kelly accomplished a sophisticated manipulation of his subjects through his accommodation of three-dimensional form to the two-dimensional plane of the painting. As he said about the drawings:

*I work from drawings and sometimes collage; the drawings always come first and then collage later because it's easier to think about color that way. I usually let them lie around for a long time. I have to get to really like them. And then when I do the painting I have to get to like that too. Sometimes I stay with the sketch, sometimes I follow the original idea exactly if the idea is solved. But most of the time there have to be adjustments during the time of the painting. Through the painting of it I find the color and I work the form with it and it adjusts itself.*¹⁶

Kelly's appreciation of the paintings, drawings, and collages of Matisse and Picasso enabled him to elaborate on the relationship between the figure and the space around it without sacrificing the true characteristics of the sitter. Even in such a Picassoesque work as the gouache *Self-Portrait* of 1949 (fig. 2), his features and form are clearly recognizable. In this and other drawings of the period it is clear that Kelly's fundamental interest was not only in depiction but in restructuring or redefining the figure in its relationship to the space that surrounds it. Here, Kelly relied on the symmetrical, hieratic placement of the figure, on the articulation of the form with the ground at the lower edge of the page, and on the generous use of black—for his hair and his shirt—as a way of synchronizing the three-dimensionality of the figure with the two-dimensionality of the picture plane. Matisse's influence is particularly evident in Kelly's *Double Self-Portrait*, 1949 (fig. 15), in which the evenhanded line, the symmetrical placement of the two figures, and, above all, the shape of the forms and the surrounding space recall that French artist's mastery of form and space.

Head with Beard, 1949 (fig. 13), a newspaper cutout, is the first of Kelly's collages to deal directly with the readymade. Kelly further emphasized the readymade when he began to work in relief, as in *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris*, 1949 (cat. no. 5), *Cutout in Wood*, 1950 (cat. no. 7), and *Relief with Blue*, 1950 (cat. no. 8).

Figurative forms, which dominated Kelly's early work in Paris, became the foundation on which his abstract forms are based. He continued to work directly from nature in his drawings of plants, fruit, and landscapes, without—as he described it—resorting to “invented” lines. For example, Kelly drew *Sneaker*, 1949 (fig. 16) from life, and made no attempt to alter the image on the page. The image was supplemented by the space in and around it, so that the field performed a more aggressive function than merely serving as background. Concomitant with Kelly's need to convey on paper the ineluctable felt “reality” that he found in nature was his recognition of nature's unpredictable but inescapable order. At this time he was not concerned with actuality per se, yet he was reluctant to devise a system or organization that he might impose on nature or to commit his art to pure abstraction.

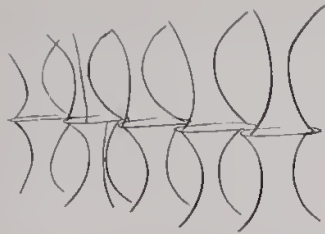
In the drawing *Seaweed*, 1949 (fig. 12), Kelly explored the form of the plant as a distinctive shape, utilizing the positive and negative space as equal components of the composition. Both the undulating shape on the left and its more austere companion shape on the right utilize the positive and negative space of the page as equal components of the composition. The decisiveness with which he could manipulate positive and negative shapes is especially striking when this drawing is compared with *Shuce Gates*. Kelly's ability to subvert the figure/ground relationship, which is so evident in this work, is one that he used to even greater advantage in *Stacked Tables*, 1949 (fig. 11), in which he delineated the space between the inverted table legs by a series of repeated ovoid “leaf” shapes. In *Kilometer Marker* the central form consists of half of a flattened yellow ovoid on top of a nearly square white rectangle, together forming what looks like a white-and-yellow lozenge or an archway in a gray wall. While this



10. *View of Roxbury*, 1948.

Pencil on paper, 17 x 22 1/4 inches (43.2 x 56.5 cm).

Private collection.



11. *Stacked Tables*, 1949.

Pencil on paper, 13 1/4 x 18 1/4 inches (33.3 x

46.4 cm). Private collection.



12. *Seaweed*, 1949.

Pencil on paper, 22 x 17 inches (55.9 x 43.2 cm).

Private collection.

arched shape is a representation of an actual roadside marker, it clearly suggests a doorway or an apse, with the white rectangle appearing to be a receding space illuminated by light, enclosed by the gray and yellow of its surrounding architecture. Kelly suggests this illusion of depth at the same time that he negates it by the way he has painted each element of the composition: short blunt strokes for the yellow shape, and flat uninflected paint for the white rectangle and for the gray area that surrounds both. The resulting composition is a series of interlocking two-dimensional forms that contain a hint of three-dimensionality. The white rectangle suggests the space of a doorway, but it is flat; and the yellow shape seems to be something real and, simultaneously, just a shape.

Among the earliest of the Parisian landscape drawings, the most unusual is undoubtedly *Tuileries Gardens*, 1949 (cat. no. 108). In Kelly's depiction, the topiary has assumed curiously surreal overtones. There is no intimation of background or place, even at its most nondescriptive, but there is a grouping of isolated objects that seem to suggest a landscape setting. This approach paralleled the dream landscapes of Yves Tanguy, for example, one of a number of Surrealists who sought a convincing visualization for the subconscious and developed a language based on imaginary landscapes, as in *Mama, Papa Is Wounded* (fig. 9). In many instances, the Surrealists' symbolic forms were so concrete that they became surrogates for reality rather than archetypes of the subconscious. Although the Surrealists often failed in their attempt to define myth in the language of art, they demonstrated a profound awareness of the potential uses of the subconscious, and they succeeded in proposing an alternative to the Cubist belief in a rational order in art drawn from the world around them. From the evidence of *Tuileries Gardens*, it is apparent that Kelly was attracted to Surrealist principles to a certain degree, as his later chance collages and automatic drawings would indicate. He did, however, reject many of their objectives. Instead of establishing a dialogue between dislocated objects, as he had in *Tuileries Gardens*, Kelly opted for the isolation of his forms in order to force from them a convincing dialogue between the demands of nature



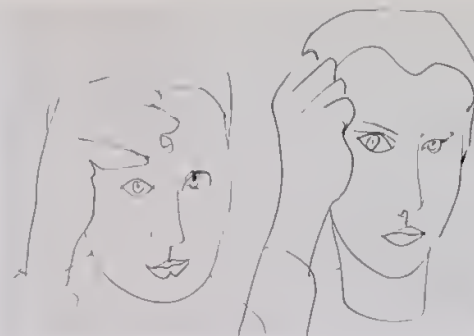
13. *Head with Beard*, 1949.

Newspaper cut-out on paper, 10 ¼ x 6 ¼ inches
(26 x 15.9 cm). Private collection.



14. *Self-Portrait*, 1949.

Ink on paper, 16 ½ x 12 ¼ inches
(41.9 x 30.8 cm). Private collection.



15. *Double Self-Portrait*, 1949.

Ink on paper, 10 ½ x 17 ¼ inches
(26.7 x 43.5 cm). Private collection.



16. *Sneaker*, 1949.

Ink on paper, 12 ¼ x 17 ¼ inches
(31.1 x 43.8 cm). Private collection.

and those of art. This decision is at least implicit in *Tuileries Gardens*, in which Kelly's lingering obsession with a form and its shadow (explored again later in such works as *White Plaque; Bridge Arch and Reflection*, 1951–55 (cat. no. 24), is most pronounced, with the shrubs and trees and their shadows outlined as objects and treated as cutout forms on a ground.

*I like to work from things that I see whether they're man-made or natural or a combination of the two. Once in a while I work directly from something I've seen, like a window, or a fragment of a piece of architecture, or someone's legs; or sometimes the space between things, or just how the shadows of an object would look. The things I'm interested in have always been there. The idea of the shadow of a natural object has existed, like the shadow of the pyramids, or a rock and its shadow; I'm not interested in the texture of the rock, or that it is a rock but in the mass of it, and its shadow.*¹⁷

Kelly's observance of natural and man-made forms was further realized in a drawing, *Study for "Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris"* (cat. no. 110), and *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris*, both 1949. The drawing is a literal copy of one of the museum's windows and expresses Kelly's interest in the rectangle, which he elaborated on in the painting by making it into a concrete object. The painting was conceived as a panel because Kelly felt that the architectural subject—the window—called for it. This work was produced in autumn 1949, one year after his arrival in Paris. His window paintings were initially the result of his interest in Romanesque architecture, yet some vestiges of the original forms were retained, because as Kelly has stated, "I did not want to 'invent' pictures, so my sources were in nature, which to me includes everything seen."¹⁸ Continuing the theme of the window paintings, the pencil-and-gouache *Awnings, Avenue Matignon*, 1950 (cat. no. 111), was derived from a series of awnings that Kelly saw and decided to capture as images as exactly as he could. Each blue-and-white



17. Jean Arp and Sophie Taeuber-Arp,
Duo-Collage, 1918.
Paper on cardboard, 32 1/4 x 24 1/4 inches
(82 x 62 cm). Staatliche Museen, Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Nationalgalerie Berlin.

rectangle is based on a window of the Avenue Matignon façade, with each blue awning shown as Kelly saw it. “The awnings had to be copied as they were seen. There was something magical about finding it just right.”¹⁹ This work is the first instance of Kelly exploring the idea of space between panels.

In his approach to making art, Kelly alternated between embracing elements of reality and utilizing chance to determine the basic composition. At the opening of *Hans Richter: Peintures et Rouleaux* at the Galerie des Deux-Iles, in January 1950, Kelly was introduced to Arp by French critic Michel Seuphor, and Arp invited Kelly, Youngerman, and Coburn to visit him at his studio in Meudon on February 17. During their visit, Arp spoke of the duo-collage that he and his future wife, Sophie Taeuber, produced in the years after they first met late in 1915 (fig. 17). In describing their earliest work together, Arp wrote of their use of chance and spontaneity:

*In 1915 Sophie Taeuber and I carried out our first works in the simplest forms, using painting, embroidery and pasted paper. These were probably the first manifestations of their kind, pictures that were their own reality, without meaning or cerebral intention. We rejected everything in the nature of a copy or a description, in order to give free flow to what was elemental and spontaneous.*²⁰

Arp credits Taeuber with the use of squares and rectangles arranged into a coherent geometry, and claims for himself the discovery of chance as a working method. In his studio one day, Arp noticed that a drawing he had torn up, which lay in scraps on his studio floor, conveyed to him an expressive power that the original had failed to do. As Arp relates it, he developed this process “‘according to the laws of chance.’ The ‘law of chance,’ which embraces all laws and is unfathomable like the first cause from which all life arises, can only be experienced through complete devotion to the unconscious. I maintained that anyone who followed this law was creating pure life.”²¹

Thereafter, Arp assembled his collages by tearing up paper and throwing the pieces on the floor; the configuration that occurred, resulting almost entirely from chance, assumed both a philosophical and a formal significance. Arp’s fascination with chance apparently stemmed from his appreciation of Zen Buddhism. The *I Ching*, the Chinese *Book of Changes*, is based on a belief in the significance of the chance aspects of events. Crucial to Arp was the fact that these collages were impersonal, left unaltered after he selected papers at random and threw them to the ground. However, a second phase was involved, both in these and in his related “automatic” drawings of the same period, in which Arp deliberately altered the chance configuration of his materials somewhat until they achieved a level of completion that satisfied him. In all instances, the process entailed two separate and distinct stages, the first one being of random or chance occurrence, and the second one of conscious formal resolution. This two-part procedure influenced Max Ernst’s Dada collages and also figured in the later development of Surrealism. In 1950 Kelly used the same procedure to initiate his own important series of chance collages and automatic drawings (see cat. no. 112 and fig. 21).

In relief constructions such as *Constellation with Five White Forms and Two Black*, 1932 (fig. 18), Arp replaced the rectangular shapes that he employed in his chance collages of 1916–17 with biomorphic shapes—abstract imagery based on natural forms. He cut the reliefs out of wood and glued them together into witty and fanciful constructions, painting some of them but not others. Many were inspired by shapes that he had seen in nature.

While it is true that Kelly applied to his own collages many of the methods that Arp had developed, the syntax that each artist used was different in certain fundamental respects. Kelly was largely indifferent to the materials and textures that fascinated Arp, preferring instead to use either his own drawings or commercial color papers or magazine pages, which he cut up into squares and rearranged, usually as squares. Where Arp’s stylistic evolution progressed from the formal order of Cubist collage to the improvisation of chance, and from an irregular geometry to the use of organic forms, Kelly worked simultaneously with curves and rectangles, refusing to be confined by either a symmetrical or an



18. Jean Arp, *Constellation with Five White Forms and Two Black, Variation III*, 1932.
Oil on wood, 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
(60 x 75.2 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York 55.1437.

asymmetrical organization. He had no predetermined conditions or systems to which he felt bound, nor did he feel the need to invent any stylistic agenda. Nevertheless, at this time he seemed to focus on rectangles with obsessive concentration, after a brief period in which he had been toying with a number of other alternatives, among them a series of extended horizontals.

Although Kelly shared with Arp a predilection for chance, it was with the work of Sophie Taeuber-Arp that Kelly found himself in even greater sympathy.²² As a pioneer abstractionist, Taeuber (she did not marry Arp until 1921) had explored the possibilities of interlocking rectangles in numerous compositions, sometimes suggesting masonry or stonework. The underlying architectural organization of her work must have been of more than casual interest to Kelly, given his own passion for Romanesque churches and architectural detail. Taeuber was concerned with the spatial possibilities of color, its subtle manipulation to suggest planar depth, and its reinforcement by the use of line. By 1916, working in watercolor, she had already divided up the picture plane into squares and rectangles arranged strictly along vertical and horizontal axes. Arp often credited her with introducing him to many ideas about geometric abstraction some years before he knew of Piet Mondrian's and Theo van Doesburg's paintings. While both Arp and Taeuber used squares and rectangles in intimate juxtaposition, their intention was completely different from Kelly's. Their planar constructs, created by the interplay of colors and planes, implied an element of depth; this was of little interest to Kelly, who preferred to squeeze the space out of his images. In any one of his collages, Kelly used only the same-size squares or rectangles, and in so doing eliminated any vestigial reference to a figure/ground or hierarchical relationship. Rather than constricting his color, these identical modules allowed him to explore color independently of form.

Kelly's friend Coburn arrived in Paris in spring 1949. Together they visited galleries and museums and became interested in the Surrealists' practice of making drawings generated or governed by chance operations in order to emphasize the role of the unconscious in the creative process. Kelly and Coburn collaborated on making the Surrealist drawings of chance known as *cadavres exquis* ("exquisite corpses")—created by two or more people drawing in turn on a sheet of paper folded so that only one portion is visible at a time, thus keeping the others' contributions hidden until the entire page is complete—as well as drawings made with their eyes closed.

Musician and composer John Cage, like Arp a devotee of the *I Ching* and other operations of chance, was one of the many avant-garde artists that Kelly met in Paris in 1949. That year, Cage spent the month of June in Paris with Merce Cunningham, at the Hôtel de Bourgogne on the Ile Saint-Louis, where Kelly had a studio. Cage and Cunningham visited him in his studio and saw many of his relief constructions. Kelly dedicated one of his paintings, *White Relief*, 1950 (cat. no. 9), to Cage. After Cage and Cunningham left Paris to return to New York, Kelly began a correspondence with Cage that lasted until Kelly himself returned to the United States. In a letter to Cage dated September 4, 1950, Kelly referred to many of the works that he had completed since Cage's visit, and sent him photographs of several of his chance collages, wood reliefs—including *Window*, *Museum of Modern Art, Paris* and *White Relief*—and reliefs incorporating string.

On July 4, 1949, Kelly and Coburn took a trip to Brittany and stopped about halfway, in Le Mans, to see the stained-glass windows of the cathedral. It was in the cathedral square of Le Mans that Kelly drew *Stacked Tables*. When they arrived at the west coast of Brittany, they stayed on Belle-Ile for only a few days before Kelly decided to spend the summer there and returned to Paris to close up his room at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Coburn accompanied him back to Paris and the two visited Gertrude Stein's companion, Alice B. Toklas. Kelly was impressed by Picasso's collage *Student with Pipe*, March 1914 (fig. 19), which he saw in the Stein collection.²³ Picasso's collage is a composition of bold form and color featuring the head of a student, notable for Picasso's use of brown paper to define the shape of a beret, and for the bold outlines of the student's shoulders. Kelly and Coburn also saw exhibitions of recent work by Picasso, and exhibitions of Paul Gauguin, Kandinsky, and Matisse. Kelly returned to Belle-Ile in

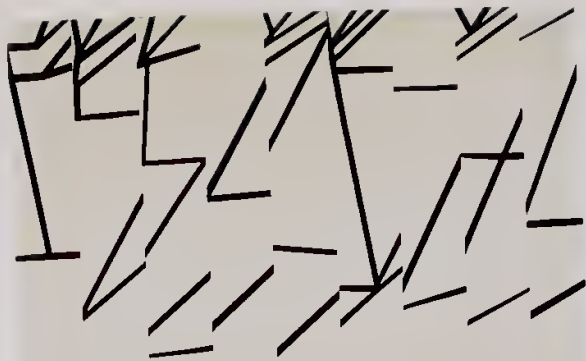


19. Pablo Picasso, *Student with Pipe*, March 1914.
Gesso, sand, pasted paper, oil, and charcoal on
canvas, 28 1/4 x 23 1/2 inches (73 x 58.7 cm).
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

August. During the summer and afterward, when Coburn went to the south of France, they corresponded, exchanging ideas about their work. In the dialogue that ensued, many of the concepts essential to Kelly's later work began to form. Although Kelly was interested in the Dada concept of chance and in Surrealist automatism, he never had any desire to dedicate himself to either movement. He simply wanted to use these ideas as a means of ridding himself of his preconceptions about art. While many Surrealist artists had adopted approaches that led to more finished work and moved beyond relying on operations of chance and random actions in making their art, Kelly did not abandon such practices. His Surrealist-inspired drawings from this period are as immediate and spontaneous as those produced by André Masson and Joan Miró in the late 1920s.

The random order that Kelly saw in nature is exemplified by photographs that he has taken intermittently since 1949. Many of these early photos were so small and poorly developed that they were discarded; others were retrieved, enlarged, and reprinted. In August 1950, while staying at the Villa La Combe, the home of Hermine Seyrig (the mother of Delphine Seyrig Youngerman) in the village of Meschers on the Atlantic coast south of Royon, he photographed a variety of subjects, including a beach cabana (cat. no. 158), a brick wall (cat. no. 160), and a shelled bunker (cat. no. 161). At the villa itself, he photographed the shadows cast by the play of light on the metal stairs leading up to his room and from a balcony (cat. no. 159)—images that captured his imagination either because they reminded him of his own work or because he felt that they might be useful in some as yet unknown fashion. Kelly's photographs and indeed most of his work to date demonstrate a palpable organic quality. Even his most abstract works, such as the severely geometric panels of 1950, stem from a humanism or naturalism that is a consequence of his evident need for using elements of reality as his point of departure. Each work is derived from a particular aspect of his environment, which he re-creates not by replicating it exactly but by capturing its essence through scale (few of his works from this period exceed human scale), shape, and color—whether the black and white of drawings, photographs, or some paintings, or the color of collages, other paintings, and sculpture. The result is so intensely focused that we can see it in terms of human passion rather than abstract fact.

Kelly set about capturing reflections cast by the play of sunlight on the Seine, the shadows of a railing on a flight of stairs, and the configuration of pipes on an outside wall, thus "finding in nature what I had been doing in collage."²⁴ In the collage *Study for "La Combe II,"* 1950 (fig. 20), the steps break up the straight lines of the railing's shadows into a fragmented version of the original. Kelly made three different studies, recording the changing shadows at 10 a.m., noon, and 2 p.m., and then made three paintings based on them. They are composed of nine juxtaposed vertical rectangles, each narrow rectangle featuring a network of thick red lines set at various angles against stark white. Each version distills the shadows, a transformation of natural phenomena into a pure color statement. *La Combe I*, 1950 (cat. no. 10), is a five-foot-long red-and-white painting, in which only the truncated lines indicate the transition from one narrow rectangle to the next. In *La Combe II*, 1950 (see p. 42), which Kelly executed as a hinged, nine-panel folding screen, the individual rectangular units are emphasized, as is the zigzag nature of the motif's original location—the La Combe stairway. In February 1951 Kelly completed *La Combe III*, and with it the series. (He sent *La Combe III* to an exhibition celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, thus gaining exposure in the United States while he was abroad.) The *La Combe* series is the first concrete evidence of his interest in abstraction and formalization: the paintings show almost no indication of their original source in nature. By hinging *La Combe II*'s panels together, Kelly created an approximate equivalent of the play of light and shadows rippling across the surface of the steps, through a process of visual "feedback," which has the effect of obscuring the work's character as a painting. The *La Combe* series's insistent image was the logical outcome in painting of his collage experiments, in which he found a means to loosen the dominance of the figure over the ground.



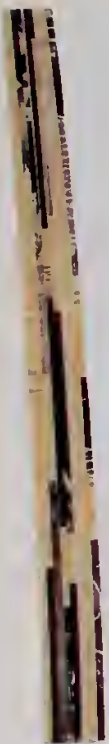
20. *Study for "La Combe II,"* 1950.
Collage on paper, 25 1/2 x 31 1/2 inches
(64.8 x 80 cm). Private collection.



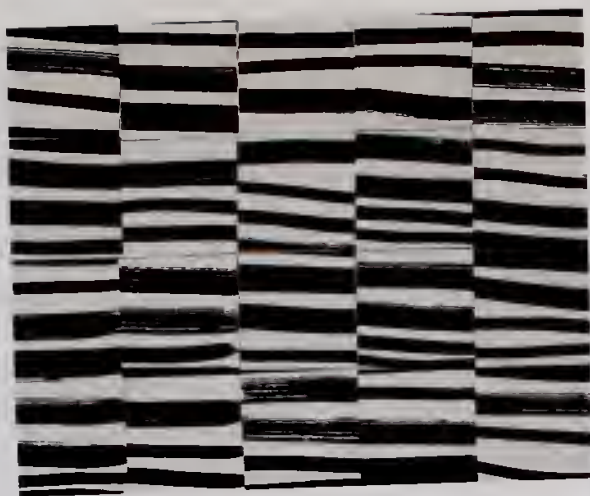
21. *Torn Drawing Rearranged by Chance,* 1950.
Ink and collage on paper, 25 1/2 x 19 1/2 inches
(64.8 x 49.8 cm). Private collection.

Kelly's collages are notable for their linear patterns, the introduction of solid areas of color, his use of chance in determining the composition, and the combination of fragmentation and all-over distribution to avoid a fixed center of interest. The collages from this period are important in their own right and were of great consequence to his later innovations, the color panel paintings for which he is perhaps best known (see cat. no. 48). In these works, Kelly substituted the random character of collage for the unity that he had originally sought in nature—the "leaves, grass, cracks in the wall, all the randomness of a million pieces and variations. This way of composing was endless and didn't need 'me'—they made themselves—it seemed nature worked for me using the laws of chance."²⁵ Kelly also created collages by cutting up pages from magazines (see fig. 22). That same year, following Arp's practice, he decided to make his "own accidents and tore up old drawings and arranged them without composing, gluing them just as they fell."²⁶ (*Torn Drawing Rearranged by Chance*, 1950, fig. 21, is an example.) These torn and cut collages, arranged in a loose grid composed of squarish segments, constitute a rearrangement of predetermined parts entirely without the artist's conscious intervention, other than his initial acts of tearing or cutting and dropping the pieces onto a tabletop or floor. The use of original drawings offered Kelly the opportunity to juxtapose diametrically opposed elements—the cut edge and the brushed mark, the mechanical and the personal—from which the different implications of the impulse and the activity offered a lively contrast not unlike his earlier articulation of curve against rectangle. Using chance to determine compositional arrangement, he created collages that became the means by which he effected his first major shift in direction away from what he had known in the United States. It was a shift, not from nature to abstraction, but from the holistic image to the gradual disintegration of the image into minute units that he then reassembled into another entity.

In taking this new direction, and trying out innumerable variations that developed from chance collage and automatic drawing, Kelly made another breakthrough, equal in importance to the *La Combe* series. Several chance collages of 1951 have a common profile: they feature an all-over pattern in which no one portion dominates, and are therefore especially resistant to a focal point; all of them employ a series of squares as the organizing factor. The open, predominantly linear configuration of *Brushstrokes Cut into 49 Squares and Arranged by Chance*, 1951 (fig. 24), was replaced by a much denser cluster of brushstrokes in *Study for "Cité": Brushstrokes Cut into 20 Squares and Arranged by Chance*, 1951 (fig. 23). In both works, Kelly was working with two fundamentally different compositional ideas: the separation of parts (as manifested by his continuing use of fragmentation) and the overall unity created by the arrangement of squares into a single rectangle, which is especially successful in *Study for "Cité."* *Cité*, 1951 (cat. no. 12), was first exhibited with the title *Le Rêve*. Kelly had glimpsed the work in a dream,²⁷ in which he was working on a scaffolding with a lot of children, making a mural featuring painted black bands. In a café the next morning, he jotted down the arrangement of elements on a receipt. He then made a drawing of the image, cut it into twenty squares, and—selecting them in random order—arranged them in four rows of five for *Study for "Cité."* Soon after that, he visited Meschers and had a cabinetmaker cut a series of twenty wood panels, each approximately fourteen inches square. He painted them to match the squares in *Study for "Cité"* and then had his artist friend Alain Naudé rearrange the panels into a different configuration. At first Kelly thought that he might rearrange the panels in various configurations indefinitely, but he ended up deciding on one permanent arrangement. *Meschers*, 1951 (cat. no. 13) developed in the same fashion, but Kelly painted each panel individually on a single canvas. *Meschers* was exhibited in October 1951 in a group show at Galerie Maeght, where it was seen and admired by Braque. Kelly, a longtime admirer of Braque's work, was pleased that the painting attracted the attention of such an eminent artist. He recalls that Braque told the director of the gallery that Kelly's painting helped him solve a problem he was facing in a painting that he was working on at that time, *L'Atelier IX*, 1952–53,²⁸ Kelly points out that the fragmentation of one of that painting's principal forms—a white bird (a motif that had appeared in other paintings in Braque's *Atelier* series)—into numerous smaller faceted forms within a tripartite grid may be the solution that was inspired by *Meschers*.²⁹



22. *Pages from a Magazine*, 1950.
Collage of printed matter on paper,
15 1/4 x 1 1/4 inches (39.7 x 3.2 cm).
Private collection.



23. *Study for "Cite": Brushstrokes Cut into 20
Squares and Arranged by Chance*, 1951.
Ink and collage on paper, 12 3/4 x 15 3/4 inches
(31.1 x 38.4 cm). Private collection.



24. *Brushstrokes Cut into 49 Squares and
Arranged by Chance*, 1951.
Ink and collage on paper, 13 3/4 x 14 inches
(34.9 x 35.6 cm). Private collection.

Kelly received very little money from his G.I. Bill study allowance. In Kelly's letter to Cage of September 4, 1950, he mentioned to Cage that he was running out of money and therefore would probably have to return to the United States. He wrote: "I would prefer to stay on here and work. How do you enjoy N.Y.—are you happy there? Here there is sense—in N.Y. I have doubts whether anything makes sense at all. You must write me. I will listen to your advice. I have great respect for you."¹⁰ Although Kelly's father occasionally sent him money, he realized that in order to stay in Paris he would have to get a job. He taught art to children at the American School in Paris from autumn 1950 to spring 1951, then worked as a custodian for several months, and resigned in October when he got a job creating textile designs for Abraham and Company, owned by Swiss manufacturer and collector Gustav Zumsteg (who had also seen and admired *Meschers*).¹¹ Kelly's designs (figs. 25 and 26) were used by such fashion designers as Pierre Balmain and Jacques Heim.

In spring 1951, Kelly, together with Youngerman, wrote a joint letter to Hilla Rebay, director of the Guggenheim Museum and an old friend of Arp, hoping to establish contact with her and eventually interest her in buying their work for the museum's collection. After their initial correspondence, they met her in Paris in 1951, and, although she never bought any of their work, she continued to meet with them over the next three years and occasionally gave each of them some money, either through the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation or privately.¹² Later that year, at the same time as he was making his chance collages, Kelly prepared a grant proposal for a book, "Line, Form and Color," which he submitted that autumn to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Kelly, required to give references with his grant application, listed the names of some art-world luminaries whom he knew (such as Arp, who wrote a letter of recommendation), and even some he had no personal connection to (such as Frank Lloyd Wright).¹³ As an Introduction to the project Kelly wrote: "This book will be an alphabet of pictorial elements without text, which shall aim at establishing a larger scale of painting, a closer contact between



25. Dress by Pierre Balmain, with fabric designed by Kelly; photo published in *L'Art et la Mode* (Paris), March 1952.

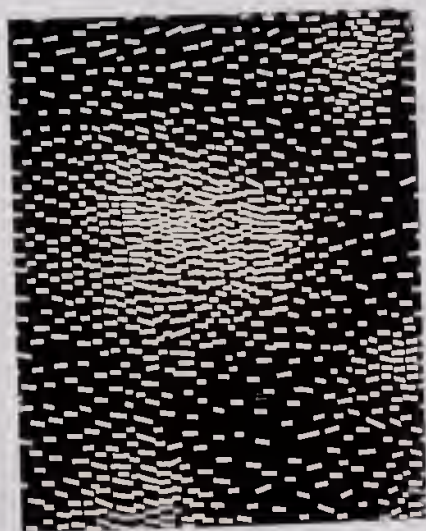
the artist and the wall, and a new spirit of art accompanying contemporary architecture."³⁴ The original group of forty-six ink drawings and collages (they now number forty) not only represented a summation of his earlier involvement with line, form, and color, but was a catalyst for his work of the late 1950s and the 1960s. Using the page and the edges of the paper as the constituent features of the work, the book began with the subject of "line," featuring works consisting of horizontal and vertical lines, the diagonal, the curve, the circle, and the grid (cat. nos. 119.1–119.40). "Form" was introduced by a mandorla, a triangle, a square, and a rectangle; and "color" was represented by a page each of red, yellow, blue, and green, and then combined with line and form, as in *Green Curves* (cat. no. 119.38).

In April 1952 he received notification from the John Simon Memorial Guggenheim Foundation that his book proposal had been turned down. He spent the summer of 1952 in Torcy, a village on the river Marne. Rebay visited him there in August, took him out to dinner, and gave him two hundred dollars to enable him to move the following month to a new studio in Paris, at 21, Cité des Fleurs. Unbeknownst to Kelly, she had been forced to resign as director of the Guggenheim Museum in March, and had recommended him for a Solomon R. Guggenheim Scholarship just before relinquishing her position, a gesture of support that was nullified by the turn of events.³⁵ That November he wrote to her:

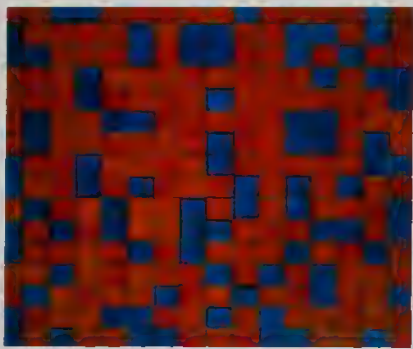
*I am unhappy to hear that you are no longer the Foundation's director. . . . I too am disappointed to hear that the scholarship has failed. But I know you have done all you could to help me & I thank you, knowing you are a real friend. Up to this time you have been one of the few who has shown any concern for my work.*³⁶

The "Line, Form and Color" book project, which is concerned with exploring reductive forms, produced in Kelly a renewed, if temporary, interest in the curve. He credits the development of the curve in this series with his later advances of the curved form into cutouts and reliefs, and ultimately into freestanding sculpture. The curve provided him with a compositional element that was sufficiently broad in scope, independent of the rectangle, and capable of being manipulated both as two-dimensional shape and as three-dimensional form. *Study for "White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection,"* 1951 (cat. no. 120), indicates that the final cutout was originally planned as an all-black construction. The form was based on the shape created by the arch of the Pont de la Tournelle (which crosses the Seine from the south bank of the Ile Saint-Louis to the Left Bank) and its reflection in the water. In New York in 1955, Kelly cut two truncated circles out of wood and joined them together at their bases with a narrow connecting piece; the shape of the painting thus looks like a squat figure 8. Although the area beneath the arch and its reflection on the water had appeared black in contrast to the light-catching surfaces of the bridge and its reflection, Kelly decided to leave the final version in its white underpainting stage. Like *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris*, the white wood cutout is a continuation of Kelly's practice of altering certain aspects of observed natural phenomena. Although Kelly was in many respects faithful to the basic appearance of the bridge arch, equating the object with its cast shadow, the alterations he made to it are startling. He drastically changed its color, to catch the light rather than diminish it, and the adjustments of contour and the use of the cutout make its transformation all the more complete. Kelly subsequently expanded some of the early wood cutouts into freestanding sculptures such as *Pony*, 1959 (cat. no. 35). His early reliefs, like his first sculptures, are few in number, but they have played a critical role in expanding the meaning of the painting as "object."

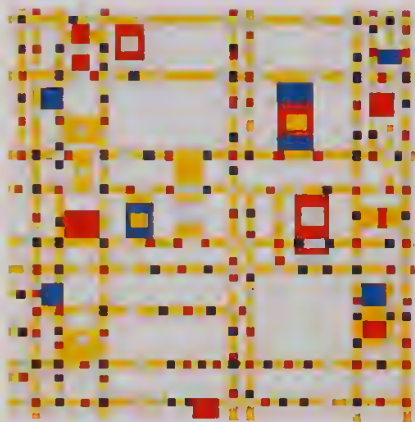
Kelly continued to work with chance collage into 1952, experimenting first with collages made out of hundreds of fragments, then reducing the number of elements to just a few. As he did so, his emphasis on color became more pronounced. The use of color squares represented a major commitment on his part to mass and color. Their extreme simplification to a few components enabled him to recognize their significance: as separate panels they could carry the color he had chosen while retaining their integrity as shape. Kelly's extensive use of collage during 1951–52 enabled him to quickly test some of his ideas and to experiment in a medium that allowed him the kind of freedom and improvisation that he could not



26. Silk fabric designed by Kelly for Abraham and Company, Zurich, 1951. Private collection.



27. Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Grid 8: Checkerboard with Dark Colors*, 1919.
Oil on canvas, 33 1/8 x 40 1/8 inches (84 x 102 cm).
Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague.



28. Piet Mondrian, *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, 1942-43.
Oil on canvas, 50 x 50 inches (127 x 127 cm).
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Given anonymously.

yet find in his painting. He was able to wrest from collage a surprising number of variations, many of which he soon used as studies for paintings, while others remained dormant until he pursued them again in later works. Kelly tested color arrangements and variations in black and white. He also experimented with horizontal stripe compositions that, although he never made them into paintings, prefigure subsequent developments in Color-field painting during the 1960s by artists such as Gene Davis, Morris Louis, and Kenneth Noland. Although Kelly could work out the general proportions and spatial arrangements of his forms with collage, the colors themselves were rather rudimentary. Because Kelly pasted up whatever colored papers he could find—which varied considerably from his Paris period to the work he did later in the United States—he had to determine the appropriateness of his colors and to make the final adjustments directly on the canvas. He discovered that scale was a vital factor in determining the outcome of his color relationships, and that the way two colors looked when juxtaposed in a small sketch or collage changed dramatically when he used them in a larger work. Since he worked with color intuitively, it was impossible to foresee the outcome of a painting solely by looking at the collage. In works such as *Study for "Seine,"* 1951 (cat. no. 115), Kelly's dependence on natural phenomena is once more evident, forming the basis for his pattern of light and dark. He organized the play of light reflections within a grid, which he filled in by progressing from the two sides to the center. The position of any one form was determined entirely by chance, allocated by pulling numbered pieces of paper out of a hat. Instead of coaxing the fragmented play of light on water into a variation on Pointillist methodology, Kelly decided to impose his own more arbitrary system, which dictated the outcome of his color collages, including the series *Spectrum Colors Arranged by Chance*, 1951 (see cat. nos. 116-18). In certain paintings, such as *Seine*, 1951 (cat. no. 14), and *Spectrum Colors Arranged by Chance*, 1951-53 (cat. no. 15), however, the formal requirements of the picture plane resulted in a certain loss of spontaneity, but the scale of the paintings and the intricate arrangement of black and white and the luminous color more than compensated for the informality of the chance collages.

Paintings such as *Colors for a Large Wall*, 1951 (cat. no. 16), have prompted comparisons to Mondrian's *Composition with Grid 8: Checkerboard with Dark Colors* (fig. 27) and *Composition with Grid 9: Checkerboard with Light Colors*, both 1919. Although Kelly had not seen these particular paintings at the time he painted canvases such as *Colors for a Large Wall* and other similar works, he was well aware of Mondrian's work. Whereas Mondrian's checkerboards are about the absolute and are rigorously regular in composition, even when his use of a balanced asymmetry is at its peak, canvases such as Kelly's *Colors for a Large Wall* retain the element of chance. The essential structure of Mondrian's work is the articulation of a series of vertical and horizontal black lines that define a limited but palpable space. With few exceptions, Mondrian created an irregular network of rectilinear shapes—defined by line—into which he placed his primary colors. Kelly's painting, although it seems regular, allows each color its own individuality. *Colors for a Large Wall*, which consists of sixty-four panels, is his first painting of multiple panels in which each panel consists of only one color. As Kelly has noted: "There is neither form nor ground in the painting. The painting is the form and the wall is the ground . . . a work midway between painting and sculpture."³⁷ According to Kelly, the asymmetrical distribution of colors was determined by chance and therefore cannot be construed as a debt to Mondrian. Indeed, in this respect, a much closer correspondence in both procedure and outcome would seem to exist with such works as Arp and Taeluer's *Duo-Collage*.

Kelly's practice of giving color its own concrete "reality" was largely his own invention. He wanted to avoid using a system like the one developed by Mondrian, whose rectilinear subdivision of space can be viewed as an extension of Cubism. For Mondrian, the Cubist armature was essential, even though he relinquished the black grid in his late works, such as *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, 1942-43 (fig. 28). But even in these works, Mondrian arranged his colors so as to retain at least the implicit vestiges of such a grid. He moved from a complex, fragmented image to a simplified one and, near the end of his career, back to a complex image again. Kelly shuns such complexity, eliminating a sense of three-dimensional



29. Henri Matisse, *Zulma*, 1950.
Gouache on paper, 94 x 52 1/2 inches (238.8 x
133 cm). Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

space from his work by using two devices: juxtaposing solid areas of color without benefit of either lines or white spaces (which in Mondrian seem to function as the equivalent of “passage”³⁸) and emphasizing the concrete nature of color by giving each color dominion over its own space.

Pioneer abstractionists such as Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich, and Mondrian regarded the role of color as a purely symbolic one, a mystical belief founded in Theosophy (a spiritual movement whose followers often explained spiritual concepts by using metaphors based on symbolic notions of form and color). By giving a particular meaning to each color, they created a new “reality.” Kelly endowed each color with a particular “reality” by giving it an independent existence on a single panel, although this was by no means his only priority. The regularity of his forms, rather than constricting his color, enabled him to free color from subservience to form. For Arp, the new “reality,” expressed by geometric means and by chance, eventually came to be allied with the human form, from which he derived a small vocabulary of organic shapes that he used in collage, painting, relief, and sculpture, formulating a “concrete” art. Arp applied the Cubists’ compression of space into a single plane to a series of reliefs, a practice that Kelly also adopted. But the particular distinction in Kelly’s work was his juxtaposition of individual monochrome panels in a single work. Kelly progressed from the representation of subjects in nature to arrangements of color by chance, which he extended to a deliberate selection of colors, and then finally to the gradual reduction of form and the enlargement of scale—the dual means by which he shaped his own vision.

In his twin concern for color and shape, it is plausible to read a relationship between Kelly’s work and that of Matisse, especially the French master’s late cutouts (see fig. 29). While one could also attribute to Matisse an influence on Kelly in terms of line and contour—as can be seen in Kelly’s drawings (see cat. nos. 132 and 133), in the type of hooked line that Matisse favored—Kelly’s innovations in color owe little to him. Unlike Matisse, Kelly treats color as an independent element in which representation no longer serves any overt role, and does not use color to *define* form but to itself *become* form. Kelly liberated color through chance, and his alignment or grouping of colors, often in pairs but occasionally in larger numbers, is nonhierarchical and serves no function other than its self-expression. In this respect, he is, as he has explained, primarily concerned with “naming” colors.³⁹

At the same time that Kelly was developing his color sequences, he was concerned with exploring the potential of black and white. In works such as *White Square* (cat. no. 22) and *Black Square* (cat. no. 23), both 1953, he emphasized each of the color units by identifying them with the rectangle. This was a rather radical departure for Kelly, as he had used black and white only in rare but important instances—for example, in *Plant II*, *Window I* (cat. no. 2), and *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris*, all 1949, and in *Window V* (cat. no. 6) and *November Painting* (cat. no. 11), both 1950, and in *Cité* and *Seme*, both 1951. In 1949, Kelly saw several exhibitions of black-and-white paintings by Picasso, work that was a significant factor in his decision to explore black and white as color.⁴⁰ Like other paintings from this period, *November Painting* was based on Kelly’s observation of a particular natural phenomenon: When he applied for the teaching job at the American School, he took a bus along the quai de Bercy and he noticed that the trees had lost almost all of their leaves. This became an idea for a painting for which he made a preliminary black-and-white drawing, which he discarded, and then a chance collage. Furthermore, with the exception of *White Relief*, 1950, and *White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection*, 1951–55, black and white appeared separately only in his proposed book, “Line, Form and Color,” 1951. That Kelly came to regard black and white in much the same way that he regarded other single-color panel paintings and sculpture is indicated by these paintings.

In 1952–53, before he returned to the United States, Kelly produced several key works. *Painting for a White Wall*, 1952 (cat. no. 18), prefigures later developments in Kelly’s art. Five vertical rectangular panels, each a monochrome of a different color (dark blue, pink, orange, white, and a lighter blue), are juxtaposed to form a row, related to one another by virtue of their common container—the rectangle—and the apparent relationships among the colors. The white and dark blue panels serve here as the



30. Kelly at Broad Street studio, New York, 1956.



31. Kelly at Coenties Slip studio, New York, 1961.



32. Coenties Slip, New York, 1958.

Left to right: Delphine Seyrig, Robert Indiana, Duncan Youngerman, Kelly, Jack Youngerman, and Agnes Martin.

means of separation between the colors pink, orange, and lighter blue and act as leverage on them. The hues, however, are adjusted so as to hold them to the same plane.

In working out his ideas about color, Kelly decided to experiment with different formulas. In *Red Yellow Blue White*, 1952 (cat. no. 17), Kelly stacked five squares of those four colors (with blue repeated twice) in each of five columns but varied their placement in each column of squares. In *Red Yellow Blue White and Black*, 1953 (cat. no. 19), he juxtaposed seven vertical rectangular panels to create a row of solid colors: blue, red, white, black, yellow, white, and blue. In collages such as *Nine Colors on White*, 1953 (cat. no. 124), though, Kelly was concerned with the relationship of the panels to the wall. The end result was the creation of a white field and shifting planes of color in a manner reminiscent of pioneer geometric abstraction, although by this time Kelly had for the most part moved away from those ideas.

At the age of twenty-eight, Kelly had sold only one painting, to Henri Seyrig (the father of Delphine), a noted archeologist. Late in winter 1954, Kelly was hospitalized for jaundice. Discouraged by his lack of recognition in Paris, by his eviction from his studio at Cité des Fleurs the previous autumn, and in need of money, Kelly decided to move to New York. He left Paris in July. On arriving in New York he went to visit Rauschenberg, at his studio on Fulton Street, and found the work that he saw there extremely interesting, including the red combine paintings from 1953–54 and an all-white painting that Rauschenberg had painted in 1951 and 1952. Kelly also visited Fred Mitchell, a painter whom he had first met in Paris and who was the first artist to settle in Coenties Slip, in Lower Manhattan. With Mitchell's help, Kelly found a studio nearby, at 109 Broad Street; and, to support himself, he took a night job at the United States Post Office. In 1955 art dealer David Herbert, who worked for Sidney Janis, visited Kelly at his Broad Street studio and, impressed by his work, recommended to Betty Parsons that she give him a show.

Kelly remained at Broad Street until July 1956, when he moved to a larger loft at 3–5 Coenties



33. Kelly at Hôtel des Artistes studio, New York, 1965.



34. Kelly's studio in Chatham, New York, 1973. Paintings on right wall: *White Curve V* (left) and *Black with White Triangle*, both 1973.

Slip. Early in 1957, Youngerman too settled at Coenties Slip, with his wife and young son, Duncan. (Parsons had visited Youngerman in Paris that summer and had persuaded him that it was time to leave Paris.) The two artists' friends and neighbors in Coenties Slip included Robert Indiana (who moved there in 1956), Agnes Martin and Lenore Tawney (1957), James Rosenquist (1960), and nearby on Pearl Street, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg (1952).⁴¹ Like Kelly, many of the artists settled in the area to distance themselves from the Abstract Expressionists, with whom they had little in common, and to be far from that group's activities, which centered around Tenth Street, the Club, and the Cedar Bar, in Greenwich Village. In Lower Manhattan they had their own places, including the Seaman's Church Institute, where many of them (including Kelly) would eat in the cafeteria and take showers.

Kelly was visited in the summer of 1954 at Broad Street by fellow artist Alexander Calder, whom he had first met in Paris in 1953. Calder was enthusiastic about Kelly's work and mentioned him to Museum of Modern Art director Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and to James Johnson Sweeney, who was then director of the Guggenheim Museum. Dorothy Miller, a Museum of Modern Art curator, visited Kelly in 1954, and in 1959 included him in her groundbreaking exhibition *Sixteen Americans*. In 1963, after seven years at Coenties Slip, Kelly moved into a studio at the Hôtel des Artistes, on Manhattan's Upper West Side, where he remained until he moved to upstate New York in 1970.

The paintings that Kelly produced after his arrival in New York were noticeably different from the works that he had made in Paris and mark the beginning of a new direction in his work. As Kelly said about his Paris work:

Black Square and White Square are the last paintings completed in Paris. The inspiration for these works were the panes of a glass enclosure used in winter around a café terrace. After measuring the squares of glass and their metal frames, I had an ébéniste [cabinetmaker] construct them in wood, and then



35. Ellsworth Kelly: *Paintings 1951–1956* at the Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, May 21–June 8, 1956. Left to right: *White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection*, 1951–55, *Red Curves*, 1955, *Two Yellows*, 1952, and *Black Ripe*, 1956.

*Painted them. Thus, my first important work in Paris begins with the Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris and ends with Black Square and White Square, an idea of space seen through glass as a monochrome.*⁴²

Kelly's exhibition at the Betty Parsons Gallery opened on May 21 and ran until June 8, 1956 (see fig. 35). Among the fifteen works in the show were several paintings that Kelly brought with him from Paris, including *Colors for a Large Wall*, *Train Landscape*, 1952–53 (cat. no. 21), *White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection* (which he had begun in Paris and completed in New York), *Bar*, 1955 (cat. no. 28), *Black Ripe*, 1955 (cat. no. 29), and *South Ferry*, 1956 (cat. no. 27). They ranged from small-scale to mural-size paintings, and featured biomorphic and geometric forms, black shapes surrounded by a white field, and single-color panels, on canvas or on wood panels. In this, his first exhibition in New York, the works that Kelly presented mapped out what turned out to be many of the major themes in his paintings over the course of the next four decades. Seen side by side, his Paris work and his New York work were clearly different. The Paris work was the end product of a young artist who had absorbed many influences, both old and new, whereas the New York work represented an ambitious new direction. His first New York paintings tended to be less confined by geometry and by the notion of the object in the real world as a subject for painting. Two reviewers of his exhibition at the Parsons Gallery noted his indebtedness to Arp, Malevich, and Mondrian, but they also singled out certain characteristics that made his art seem unique. Parker Tyler wrote:

*His spaces are essentially considered as whole, or parts of, walls, as though a white wall had shrunk to a pair of mutually eclipsing circles or developed an irregular black horizon that is not a mountain range but a metaphysical image. Large colored squares, tacked together on a great square wooden frame, seem a tiled floor raised to the upright austerity of a contemplated picture. . . . Kelly has boldly colonized territory that Mondrian's ghost might claim but that this young artist is capable of holding on his own.*⁴³

Barbara Butler, writing for *Arts Magazine*, noted that Kelly often featured a single color-form silhouetted against a white ground and that he deliberately de-emphasized texture and brushstroke. She further noted that "Kelly's work reflects precision and control; its directness—unlike that of today's 'action' painting—is the result of this refinement, rather than of a method of addressing the canvas. These paintings are concerned not with the last moment—the act of painting—but with the lasting moment of the image."⁴⁴

Many of the paintings that Kelly produced after his return to the United States consist of forms that are very simplified, enlarged in size, and usually curvilinear. In several paintings concerned primarily with form and color, Kelly seemed to abandon, at least temporarily, his interest in the relationship between the painting and the wall, and in the image perceived, objectified, and re-created. He also found his interest in black and white renewed, partly in reaction to his return to the United States.⁴⁵ As he had done in Paris in 1948, he began with a group of white paintings, which were succeeded by black-and-white works and subsequently by paintings in which he focused on color.

Kelly has been one of the few colorists capable of severely limiting his colors, either restricting his palette to one color, as in his single-color panels, or successfully combining one color with black or white. The only other artists who were as reductive in this respect were Newman, Ad Reinhardt, and Rothko, but the differences are more compelling than any similarity. These three first-generation New York School painters subdivided their canvases into fields of two or more colors instead of expanding color relationships by using more than one canvas panel, as Kelly has frequently done. Newman, who was less interested than Kelly in using color solely as form, wanted to create an expansive space within the perimeters of his canvases. To create this illusion, he employed irregular brushstrokes and used his "zip"—a stripe or narrow ribbon of color—to charge the surface of his canvas. Rothko stacked one color form on top of the other; and Reinhardt created an intricate network of interlocking red, blue, or black forms within the canvas's rectangle. Newman, Reinhardt, and Rothko used color in their paintings

to create a near-mystical experience. Kelly was not interested in the limitless expanse of the field within a single canvas but in extending the canvas, aligning color panels as separate modular units. By eliminating any suggestion of space within the canvas, and by suppressing his brushstroke, Kelly could have color suggest mass and be both figure and ground. His preoccupation with biomorphic form and the rectangular canvas container was memorable but short-lived, as his obsession with the shape of the canvas overcame any interest in the image within the field. Instead of regarding the canvas as a field of action, as the Abstract Expressionists did, Kelly wanted his work to function as an object that relates to the wall, to the room, to architecture.

Gauloise Blue with Red Curve, 1954 (cat. no. 125), is the first collage that Kelly made in New York, a postcard that he sent to Coburn as a memento of his stay in Paris. He took the piece of Gauloise blue paper from the cigarette pack, and the piece of red from a magazine; together with white, they formed the French tricolor. Kelly played off one curved shape against another, as he had been doing in his paintings from that period, here using red and blue to signify not only the French national colors—and their commercial use—but the relationship of one form and color to another.

In other postcard collages, such as *Four Blacks and Whites*, *Upper Manhattan*, 1957 (cat. no. 150), *Statue of Liberty*, 1957 (cat. no. 151), *Horizontal "A,"* 1957 (cat. no. 152), and *Coenties Slip*, 1957, Kelly continued his practice of combining abstract forms with representational ones to define the shapes within his field of imagery. As he had in his early Paris pictures, Kelly recorded in these works many of the most notable places of interest, especially those in Lower Manhattan. But instead of using each image just as it appeared (as in *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris*), he juxtaposed a series of letters or abstract images over magazine cutouts of his subjects. In *Statue of Liberty* and *Horizontal "A,"* subjects that he chose because they were of interest to him both personally and historically, Kelly utilized the images to contrast with his own hold forms. His use of images of Lower Manhattan while living and working in New York City is in keeping with his abiding interest in Parisian cultural history while living and working in Paris, which played a significant part in his search for identity. In Paris, though, the past coexists in harmony with the present, which serves as a repository for history, whereas in New York, history functions as a vehicle for change. In New York, the present is an arena for testing permanence and stability, and the past is in constant conflict with the present. Despite his recognition and acceptance of the past, living in *Coenties Slip* was an acknowledgment of the present, of life in New York, and of the active contemporary art world with which he was now involved. Kelly's postcard collages are the first expression of this change in culture, for they represent a more direct expression of his return to the United States than his more abstract paintings of the period.

Many of the collages indicate a fascination with the Dutch origins of Lower Manhattan, and its history as a port of entry for countless immigrants and as a refuge for artists who regarded space as both a necessity and a luxury. Kelly overlaid images expressing these themes with shapes that anticipate his later work in sculpture. The totemic form that Kelly collaged over a photographic image of the Statue of Liberty is a precursor to works such as *Curve IX*, 1974 (cat. no. 69), that form the basis of his sculpture of the last two decades. In other, later collages, such as *Cincinnati Riverfront Stadium*, 1980 (cat. no. 156), and *The Young Spartans*, 1984 (cat. no. 157), he chose images of landscape or the human body, using them to create strong visual contrasts to his own repertoire of forms. In *Horizontal Nude*, 1974 (cat. no. 154), a segment of the female anatomy, from the breast to the vagina, becomes part of the topography of the tropical island of Saint Martin in the Caribbean, which Kelly began to visit regularly in 1970, shortly after he had stopped summering in the Hamptons and moved from Manhattan to Spencertown, in upstate New York. Similarly, the shape of a nose (taken from a magazine photograph of Marilyn Monroe) becomes the body of a ship in *Nose/Sailboat*, 1974, while in *The Young Spartans* the images of naked young men (in a postcard of the 1860 painting of the same title by Edgar Degas) are complemented by a striking red-and-white abstract shape, which Kelly made by tearing a piece of red paper and folding it so that part of its white underside is visible. In keeping with his practice in earlier



36. *Water Lily*, 1968.

Pencil on paper, 29 x 23 inches (73.7 x 58.4 cm).

Private collection.




37. *Grass*, 1961.

Watercolor on paper, 28 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches


(72.4 x 57.2 cm). Private collection.

collages, Kelly extended a corner of this collage element beyond the perimeters of the postcard image. New to the most recent collages is a larger scale—not unlike the enlarged shape that he used in his paintings from the 1970s and 1980s—and a sense of abandonment and eroticism that is much more subliminal in his paintings and sculptures.

Kelly used many of the sketches that he worked on in his studio at Coenties Slip as the basis for paintings or sculptures at a later date. The sinuous line in the drawing *White Curve on White*, 1955 (cat. no. 126), which was based on careful observation, traced from a wire that fell across a white page, can be seen repeated as the left edge of the black shape in *Black Ripe*, 1955, and again as the bottom edge of the blue shape in *Bay*, 1959 (cat. no. 34). While reworking some of these ideas into paintings, Kelly began to think in terms of sculpture. The postcard collages of the mid-1950s also prefigure his interest in large-scale sculpture, which he did not begin to make until 1959. The mid-1950s, like the early Paris period, appear to have been a time of adjustment, assimilation, and advance. In his Coenties Slip paintings from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, the more exacting geometric forms that had characterized many of his Parisian paintings were replaced by irregular shapes that were either curved or angular. Unlike *Kilometer Marker* or the 1949 *Mandorla*, the curved forms in paintings such as *Black Ripe*, *Bay*, and *Block Island II*, 1960 (cat. no. 41), contain both active and quiescent shapes within the neutral field of the rectangle. But in canvases such as *Bar*, *South Ferry*, and *Rebound*, 1959 (cat. no. 38), the ground has either been diminished or become part of the field so that the shape is cut off by the edge of the picture support. In this way, Kelly could situate the form so that it incorporates the framing rectangle. The Coenties Slip paintings feature images that are much more dynamic than those in his Parisian work. This was undoubtedly his response to the active forms of the Abstract Expressionists. These new images coincided with Kelly's move to New York, and suggest a need to find his psychological "ground" in his new environment (a tendency that he shared with Indiana, Martin, Rosenquist, and Youngerman)—



38. *Curve, Radius: 91*, 1973.
Pencil on paper, 43 x 34 inches (109.2 x 86.4 cm).
Private collection.



39. *Allan Kelly, Sr.*, 1982.
Pencil on paper, 11 x 13 inches (27.9 x 34.9 cm).
Private collection.

especially as it was an environment in which he was acutely aware of his isolation from the then-dominant school of Abstract Expressionism. This stage in his development is in marked contrast to his desire for anonymity and freedom while working in Paris. In both instances, Kelly was the outsider, but as a young student in Paris the possibilities must have seemed endless. Now, however, as a mature painter who was anxious to make his mark in his native land, he had a new art world to conquer.

In addition to producing many drawings and collages conceived as studies for paintings and sculpture, Kelly also created numerous plant drawings and a few abstract or figurative drawings. In many ways a reconsideration of his first drawings of the 1940s, these are an extension of his concern for marking or shaping space with line alone. The drawings are quite explicit when they refer to subjects in nature, yet Kelly's fascination with the image is centered on its form and—in works where his primary concern is with a figure/ground relationship—the space around the form. Using a minimum of strokes, Kelly evokes the image of a plant and emphasizes his interest in the potential of line to define space. Brisk and sure of stroke, these drawings have none of the tentative placement of his late 1940s drawings. The images appear effortless in the ease with which they are drawn, and capture much of the directness expressed in his observation of the real world. In drawings such as *One Stroke*, 1962 (cat. no. 132), the continuous line forms both the demarcation of the space of the paper and the leaf that is its central figure.

Kelly's interest in shape and in the space in and around forms, which figure so prominently in his Boston and Parisian drawings, led to his interest in sculpture. In his drawings he manipulated images of three-dimensional plant forms into a compatible relationship with a flat surface. He reversed this process in his sculpture, turning painted planar forms into three-dimensional configurations. Drawings such as *Water Lily*, 1968 (fig. 36), feature the same full, flat forms as earlier sculptures such as *Pony*, 1959. Similarly, the images in some canvases are translated into their three-dimensional equivalent in planar sculptures, just as *Sumac*, 1959 (cat. no. 33), served as a basis for *Gate*, 1959 (cat. no. 39). Since he



40. *Large Leaf*, 1996.

Pencil on paper, 24 x 19 inches (61 x 48.3 cm).

Private collection.

preferred line to color in the majority of his drawings (probably because he wanted his images to be less naturalistic and thus more abstract), Kelly focused on the relationship between the subject and the space surrounding it. In most of the plant drawings, he draws our attention to the center of the page by bisecting the page vertically with a plant stem, as in *Grass*, 1961 (fig. 37), or horizontally, as in *One Stroke*. These drawings exemplify his use of natural forms to explore the formal possibilities of his subjects and the page. Rather than organizing the forms in a rigid geometric fashion, Kelly gracefully allowed each plant to retain its own individuality, without diminishing its potential as abstract form. The cluster of leaves in *Briar*, 1961 (cat. no. 146), traverse the diagonal length of the paper, while in *Lemon Branch*, 1964 (cat. no. 142), the negative space of the paper around the plant serves as a dramatic foil to the image. In another drawing, *Wild Grape*, 1961 (cat. no. 141), the foliage appears so luxuriant that it assumes an organic quality rivaling the plant that served as its model. Kelly has eliminated the vine and created an interlacing of leaves that mimics the pattern of growth without depicting it literally.

To maintain the continuity between image and page, Kelly generally used an even stroke with few gratuitous flourishes. This economy of line served to define shape without making the area around it subservient to the image. In *Wild Grape*, the plant leaves are arranged in a horizontal configuration that spreads across two large sheets of paper and interacts with the center, sides, and corners of the page. The space retains an autonomy of shape that it would not possess if Kelly was not as concerned with the integration of line and surface plane as he is. Because his line is uninflected and tightly controlled, giving expression to form but not eloquent in and of itself, his drawings are closer in spirit to Roy Lichtenstein's uninflected drawings than they are to Claes Oldenburg's much freer style of drawing.

Kelly has continued to make plant drawings to this day. Such drawings as *Wild Grape*, 1980 (cat. no. 143), *Datura*, 1982 (cat. no. 144), *Fig*, 1982 (cat. no. 145), *Sunflower*, 1983 (cat. no. 147), *Two Irises*, 1983 (cat. no. 148), *Siberian Iris*, 1989 (cat. no. 149), and *Large Leaf*, 1996 (fig. 40), are consistent with Kelly's earlier concerns with the individual character of the plant, its shape, and its relationship to the page. The latest drawings may be as descriptive as earlier ones, but they can also be more improvisational in nature, more lyrical in tone, and less exacting in their replication of form than most of the earlier ones. The identity of a plant as a form in nature is now less explicit than in his previous work, as in *Large Leaf*, where the reference to nature is overshadowed by the importance of form for its own sake.

From 1949 to the present Kelly has also drawn his self-portrait and portraits of friends and lovers and of strangers who fascinated him. Similar in style to the plant drawings, they are studies in anatomy and in form as it relates to the page. Memory plays little or no role in these works; rather, they are close observations of nature, of the particular character of the individual sitter. The majority of them have one thing in common: they are observed and delineated with an objectivity that carefully masks emotion. Kelly's early self-portraits reflect a variety of influences, especially the Romanesque and the Byzantine as well as the Modernists. Most of the other portraits most closely resemble the plant drawings in their spare use of line and minimal detail. Simplicity predominates in many of these works, and perhaps *Allan Kelly, Sr.*, 1982 (fig. 39)—a portrait of the artist's father on his deathbed—is the most spare.

While Kelly had often used many of his own works in pencil, gouache, and collage from the late 1940s to the 1960s as notations or working models for his paintings and sculptures (see cat. nos. 121, 123, and 130), his later working drawings from 1970 to the present are the utmost in simplicity, having more to do with shape and size than with color relationships. *Studies for "Yellow, Red and Blue Curves,"* 1971 (cat. no. 134), *Curve, Radius: 91"*, 1973 (fig. 38), and *Lines (4/4) Radius: 164"*, 1982 (cat. no. 140) are just several examples of the way in which Kelly has honed his concern for form, from his first tentative interest in the abstract form underlying natural phenomena to his interest in form for its own sake. The references to nature are ever-present, in the sense that they are the basis for all of his forms, but they no longer have the power to affect his decision-making the way they once did. Kelly's command of his forms now stems from form itself.

Kelly joined the Betty Parsons Gallery and showed there regularly from 1956 to 1963, the year he moved into the Hôtel des Artistes, at 1 West 67th Street on Manhattan's Upper West Side. In 1965 he had his first exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery (across the hall from Parsons) and continued to show there until 1971. In 1963, before he moved into his new studio, Kelly produced several works, one of which, *Red Blue Green* (cat. no. 42), features a red rectangle below a curved blue rectangular shape against a vibrant green ground. In *Blue on Blue*, 1963 (cat. no. 43), a painted aluminum relief, Kelly set the stage for his later panel paintings (in which one panel overlaps another), a series that he did not begin to exploit fully until the 1990s.³⁶ Its companion painting, *Orange Green*, 1964 (cat. no. 44), consists of a truncated orange egg-shaped form occupying the lower half of a green rectangle. During this period, Kelly also began joining panels together, as in *Black over White*, 1966 (cat. no. 50), and in two paintings entitled *Black White*, 1967 and 1968 (cat. nos. 51 and 55). In one of the latter two, a long black rectangle is placed above a long white rectangle, forming a larger rectangle; and in the other, a black triangle and a white triangle abut to form a square. In 1966 Kelly also created several notable sculptures, including the painted aluminum *White Angle* (cat. no. 47), which was exhibited later that year at Sidney Janis, as well as the two-panel canvas *Blue Red* (cat. no. 46), a painting-cum-sculpture in which the blue panel rests against the wall while the adjoining red panel sits below it on the floor.

In his studio at the Hôtel des Artistes, Kelly made paintings using what had become by now his regular format, a series of monochrome panels in a row on a wall—such as *Green Red Yellow Blue*, 1965 (cat. no. 45)—and experimented with new arrangements of color, as in *Blue Red*; and he also created paintings based on the concept of the spectrum, a phenomenon that had preoccupied many scientists and philosophers since the time of Aristotle. In 1665 Isaac Newton discovered that a spectrum of colors could be produced by focusing light from the sun through a prism, which bent the sun's rays and, because of the varying wavelength of the rays, created the optical phenomenon of a "rainbow" of colors, from red—through orange, yellow, green, and blue—to violet. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Zur Farbenlehre* (*Theory of Color*), published in 1810, and based less upon scientific principle than philosophic and mystical ruminations on the phenomena of color,³⁷ has been of great interest to Modern artists. In making his painting *Spectrum IV*, 1969 (fig. 41), Kelly used thirteen separate but contiguous panels, and reinforced the rectangle by keeping his colors so close in value, hue, and chroma that they would not shift optically within the planar surface of the canvases.

Another device that Kelly uses to balance his colors is to mix some of one color into a second panel and the color from the second into the first so that in a two-panel painting where, for example, one green panel abuts a blue panel, each color contains some of the other color pigment. A comparison of *Green Red Yellow Blue* with *Blue Green Yellow Orange Red*, 1966 (cat. no. 48), illustrates other solutions that he discovered while working with multiple color panels. In the first painting, the equal intensity of the primary-color panels—red, yellow, and blue—is balanced by a green panel; and in the second painting, the primary colors are balanced by the orange and green panels. In the earlier painting, Kelly uses green to balance the other colors, while in the later painting, green and orange challenge the primary colors. In *Green Red Yellow Blue*, this balance is complemented by a slight separation of the panels, whereas in *Blue Green Yellow Orange Red*, color provides the necessary equilibrium. Within the larger framework of the latter painting, Kelly has pushed his color to an even greater expansiveness and his forms to their optimum mobility.

Although Kelly worked with the curve into the 1960s, it is in his use of the neutral rectangle that he established the most successful equilibrium between form and color. The neutral rectangle, the single plane, the enlargement of scale, and the development of subtle color relationships are the most significant features of his mid-1960s panel paintings. Having explored the curve and the rectangle, Kelly turned to other shapes, among them the triangle, the trapezoid, and the parallelogram, all of which figured prominently in a group of paintings executed in 1968 and shown at the Sidney Janis Gallery that year. He painted several of them at his Manhattan studio, and others in a barn that he rented for the summer



41. *Spectrum IV*, 1969.

Oil on canvas; thirteen joined panels,

117 x 117 inches (297.2 x 297.2 cm) overall.

Collection of Irving Blum, New York.



42. Antoni Gaudí, tile work, Guell Park,

Barcelona, 1900–03.

in Bridgehampton, on eastern Long Island. *Green White* (cat. no. 53) is one of the most regular of the triangular canvases, with a configuration that creates a closed, completed form, suggesting balance and harmony. *Blue White* (cat. no. 56), which joins a long side of a small rectangle to the shortest side of an elongated triangle, is more dynamic; the juxtaposition of these two contrasting shapes creates an asymmetrical form that implies direction by the energy drawn to its corners. Here, Kelly returns to the draftsmanship that was so prevalent in his use of the curve, and draws attention to the attenuation of its proportions without bringing unnecessary attention to the edges. Kelly seems to relish the obviousness of the triangular form, but he subverts it by combining it with other shapes to form new configurations. Like his entire vocabulary of forms derived from nature, the drawing *Sneaker* is fundamentally a triangle, with the lace dividing the form into two parts. The triangular painting *Yellow Black*, 1968 (cat. no. 54), is divided in exactly the same way, an indication of Kelly's ongoing interest in breaking down form into separate but interdependent component units. Perhaps the most striking feature of his use of the triangle is the dialectical tension that he establishes between its shape and its solid color mass. With this new emphasis, form assumes the additional role of creating a sense of direction, while the balance of colors anchors the painting, maintaining its static, frontal function of giving physical appearance to matter. This marks a return to a characteristic of the earlier monolithic canvases that featured interior curved forms without a loss of exterior consistency. The initial emphasis on a linear perspective, which forces the eye to follow a converging diagonal, is ultimately countermanded by the evenly weighted colors, which force the exterior shape into prominence. However, in *Red Green*, 1968 (cat. no. 52), Kelly has joined two asymmetrical rhomboid shapes to create a work in which illusion plays a new role, creating an illusion of receding perspective. The even light, the nondirectional application of paint, and the color relationships of the paintings of this period serve to reinforce the flatness of the image. The nonspecific or modest angles of these forms, which avoid forty-five and ninety degrees, in opposition to the specific reality of the separate canvases, give these canvases an even greater complexity.

Kelly moved to Spencertown, New York, in March 1970. In the nearby town of Chatham he rented a theater that had been used in the production of stage sets. There he began, for the first time, to seize upon the opportunity that a large space would afford him. Unlike his studio at the Hôtel des Artistes, in which he occasionally made large-scale paintings, the Chatham space gave him the chance to work on a large scale both vertically and horizontally. Multiple-panel paintings such as *Green Red Yellow Blue* and *Blue Green Yellow Orange Red* are examples of the larger-scale paintings that he made in his studio at the Hôtel des Artistes. In the Chatham studio, the fact that the studio was previously used for theater backdrops encouraged him to take advantage of the space, and to create paintings that bear some reference to stage backdrops. This was not the first time that Kelly had been interested in theater; as noted earlier, his meeting with Cage and Cunningham in June 1949 was of great importance to him both professionally and personally. Also, that same year, 1949, Kelly saw the Renaud-Barrault troupe perform *Hamlet* at the Marigny theater in Paris, and was fascinated by Masson's sets, which consisted of black and gray curtains. Inspired by the space between the curtains, he made a sketch that he used as the basis for *Relief with Blue* in 1950.⁴⁸ Kelly also had an opportunity to design costumes and a curtain for choreographer Paul Taylor's dance *Tablet* in 1960, performed at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy.

In his Chatham studio, Kelly began to create a series of L-shaped paintings based on ideas that he had expressed to Cage twenty years earlier, and named the paintings after the town. In *Chatham IX: Black Green*, 1971 (cat. no. 64), for example, he placed a horizontal black panel over a green vertical panel to form an inverted L-shaped configuration. While paintings such as *Black with White Bar II*, 1971 (cat. no. 62), are related to the Chatham series, their T-shaped configuration sets them apart from the inverted L-shaped panels. *White Bar with Blue and Red*, 1971 (cat. no. 65), continues Kelly's fascination with multipanel paintings in which, like the *Chatham* series and the T-shaped *Black with White Bar II*, the wall becomes integral to the panels. *White Bar with Blue and Red* recalls the panel paintings that Kelly



43. Anne Weber wearing a dress designed by Kelly, Sanary, France, 1952.



44. *Untitled*, 1988, installed at Spencertown. Bronze, 120 x 72 x 1 inches (304.8 x 182.9 x 2.54 cm).

made in 1952 shortly after he went to see Le Corbusier's newly completed apartment house, *Unité d'Habitation* (Marseilles), 1947–52 (see p. 68). Of that building, Kelly said: "The wide slabs in primary colors on the balconies surprised me, but, I thought that Le Corbusier was using color in a decorative way. I wanted to use color . . . over an entire wall, but I didn't want it to be decorative."⁴⁹ Kelly's use of panel paintings, in the 1950s and the 1970s, was never meant to be decorative. In Le Corbusier's apartment house, the color panels were laid on top of the building's skin and added accents of color to an otherwise monolithic façade. Kelly's color panels were conceived with the wall in mind, and they became a function of the space of the canvas rather than a separate element.

The colors that Kelly used were often affected by location. In Chatham, Kelly's colors changed perceptibly, as they had when he left Paris for Sanary in 1950. In Paris, Kelly's palette consisted primarily of black and white, muted autumnal colors, or the pastel tints that one associates with the nuanced light of that city. In Sanary, he was inspired by the bright light of the south of France, as can be seen in *Red Yellow Blue White*. In this 1952 painting, Kelly used fabric that he had bought in Sanary. Although it was unusual for him to use dyed cotton, the concept of the readymade—which he had explored in his chance collages—continued to interest him. Since he had some leftover fabric, he decided to design a dress for his friend Anne Weber, a fellow student from his days in Boston at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. Like the vertical painting, this sleeveless dress (fig. 43) was divided into stacked color panels—black, white, red, and blue in descending order on the front, and white, red, black, and blue on the back.⁵⁰

In New York, Kelly began using more highly contrasting colors together in a single painting, such as the brilliant green and white of *Jersey*, 1958 (cat. no. 32), and the red and white of *Broadway*, 1958 (cat. no. 30). On Long Island, he responded to the more dramatic effects of light in such intense paintings as *Green White*, *Yellow Black*, and *Red White Blue* (cat. no. 57), all of which he painted in Bridgehampton in 1968. In another notable canvas from the early 1970s, *Black Yellow-Orange*, 1970 (cat. no. 60), Kelly surrounded a black rectangle with a yellow-orange band that frames three of the four sides of the painting. Here, rather than being divided into different-colored panels, the painting is a single canvas divided by areas of contrasting colors, and the effect is subtly different from that of his multipanel works. The yellow-orange border acts like a frame for the black rectangle, but because the larger black mass is recessive and the yellow-orange band is active, the two coexist on the same plane.

White Black, 1970 (cat. no. 59), consisting of a nearly square black rectangle over a white one, was the first pronounced vertical that Kelly did in his Chatham studio. In this painting, the dimensions of the two panels are identical. Kelly had painted several horizontal canvases in which the panels were equal in size and proportion, but he considers this vertical canvas unique in that it "sums up the vertical breakdown of horizontal stripes"—and that even though it is "stacked vertically" and is a "vertical painting," it still contains a horizontal line. For Kelly, this painting "sums up all other excursions on this subject and goes beyond it just a little."⁵¹ It is for him the definitive painting on this line of thought.

Inspired by the fanlight on the landing between the first and second floors of his Spencertown house, Kelly invented a new series of shaped canvases, such as *Blue Curve III*, 1972 (cat. no. 66), in which he recalls the curve of the window. The painting broke from the rectangle both in its exterior shape—an elongated horizontal diamond—and in its interior configuration, which juxtaposes a blue wedge with a convex curve and a white wedge with a concave curve. However, he made explicit reference to the rectangle in several exceptional paintings such as *Red Curve IV*, 1973 (cat. no. 71), in which he eliminated half of the rectangle to create a triangle, and within that form subdivided it even further into a red wedge with a convex curve nestled against a white shape with a concave curve. Kelly used the red curve again, in a more quiescent configuration, in *Black Curve VII*, 1976 (cat. no. 70), and yet again in 1996, in *Red Curves* (cat. no. 102), albeit in a form in which both sides of the shape are curves and the image is freestanding.

In the 1970s, stimulated by the landscape surrounding Spencertown, the Hudson River Valley, the Berkshires, and the Catskills, Kelly also began a new series of sculptures. They are unlike his reliefs of



45. Kelly's studio in Spencertown, 1986, with *Red Panel* (left) and *Black Panel*, both 1986.



46. *Houston Triptych*, 1986. Bronze. A: 122 x 96 inches (309.9 x 243.8 cm); B: 90 x 99 inches (228.6 x 251.5 cm); C: 101 x 113 inches (256.5 x 287 cm). Wall size: 162 x 648 inches (411.5 x 1,645.9 cm). The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Brown Foundation and Mr. and Mrs. M. S. Stude in honor of Mr. and Mrs. George R. Brown.

the late 1940s and early 1950s, which are small and self-contained, and made of rectangular or curvilinear forms, of wood, and usually painted white (see cat. nos. 7 and 9); and they are also unlike their larger counterpart, *White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection*, or his painted aluminum sculptures of the late 1950s and mid-1960s, such as *Pony*, *Gate*, and *White Angle*, in which shape, plane, and color are quintessential to the successful resolution of the work. Kelly's 1970s sculptures are flat planes of weathering steel placed directly on the ground, such as *Curve I*, 1973 (cat. no. 68), or vertical planes of steel or of polished aluminum, such as *Curve IX*, or works of bronze and wood. Kelly gave all of them a much more subtle shape than he had used in previous works. In sculptures from this period on, however, the size, shape, choice of material, and its thickness and patina—be it in weathering steel, as in *Curve I* (one inch thick), *Curve XXXII*, 1982 (one-and-one-quarter inches, cat. no. 83), or *Diagonal with Curve XIV*, 1982 (one-half inch, cat. no. 81); in bronze, as in *Untitled*, 1986 (three-quarters of an inch, cat. no. 87), *Untitled*, 1988 (one inch, cat. no. 88), or *Untitled (Mandorla)* (three-quarters of an inch); in birchwood, as in *Curve XXI*, 1978–80 (three-quarters of an inch, cat. no. 75), or in polished aluminum, as in *Curve IX* (three-quarters of an inch); or in stainless steel, as in *Untitled*, 1996 (one-and-one-half inches, cat. no. 106)—are as critical to the success of the works as were the colors and shapes of Kelly's earliest freestanding sculptures. (The aluminum sculptures were exhibited in 1975 at the Leo Castelli Gallery, where he first began to show in 1973. He also joined the BlumHelman Gallery in 1975.)

Kelly's public and private outdoor sculpture and commissions of the last two decades stem from the work that he made for his own property in Spencertown. In 1973 Kelly began to insert several of his quiescent shapes into an equally placid environment beginning with *Curve I*, a form made from weathering steel which he placed directly on the ground near his house. *Curve II*, 1973—like *Curve I*, designed to augment rather than confront its landscape environment—was installed in the garden surrounding Philip Johnson's house in New Canaan, Connecticut. Kelly created several other works for his own lawn, including *Stele II*, 1973, a gently curving vertical (somewhat like the central form in the painting *Kilometer Marker*), and *Untitled*, 1988 (fig. 44), a sculpture with a pinched waist (in that respect similar to *White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection*).

Kelly's first sculpture commission came in 1957, for the Transportation Building, Penn Center, Philadelphia. His sculpture there consisted of 104 panels of anodized aluminum arranged on a grid of bars and placed against the wall of the lobby. This sculpture, undoubtedly influenced by Le Corbusier, marks the first time that Kelly used metal.

In 1981 Kelly created *Curve XXII*, thirty-six feet tall, which is installed in Lincoln Park, Illinois; and in 1986, for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, he made *Houston Triptych* (fig. 46), a three-part bronze sculpture inspired by Matisse's *The Backs* (a series of bronzes done between 1908 and 1931, one set of which is in the museum's collection). In 1987 he was one of several artists commissioned by the city of Barcelona to erect sculpture in two of the city's newly rehabilitated plazas. Kelly first visited Barcelona in 1978 and discovered Antoni Gaudí's tile work (fig. 42). He was intrigued by Gaudí's fragmentation of form in his mosaic façades and believes that Gaudí was a precursor of Cubism.⁵² Kelly's contribution to the Barcelona project, a fifty-foot totem and a shorter wedge-shaped piece twenty-one feet high, in the General Moragues Plaza (fig. 47), and a second totem thirty-two feet high, in the Creueta del Coll, visually unite the two separate locations.

Perhaps the most moving work Kelly has done recently is *Memorial*, 1993 (fig. 48), commissioned by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. Placed in a triangular room, the work consists of two pieces installed opposite one another. A white fan shape is placed across from a vertical triptych of white rectangular panels. The triptych suggests a memorial to those who perished in the Holocaust, while the fan shape, placed higher on the wall than the three panels, suggests transcendence. Kelly's use of fiberglass results in a reflective and translucent surface that replaces the material density of his other work and creates a space for peaceful contemplation. These incandescent forms, instead of relating to the physicality of nature, suggest the ephemerality of life and the infinite world of the spirit.



47. *The Barcelona Sculpture at the General Moragues Plaza*, Barcelona, 1987. A: Stainless steel, 588 x 86 x 7 inches (1,493.5 x 218.4 x 17.8 cm); B: weathering steel, 260 x 277 x 7 inches (660.4 x 703.6 x 17.8 cm).



48. *Memorial*, 1993. Wood and fiberglass, one of four parts. 108 x 324 1/2 x 2 inches (275.6 x 824.2 x 5.1 cm). United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., Gift of Ruth and Albert Abramson and Family.

In 1979 Kelly decided to build a studio adjacent to his house in Spencertown, and it is in this studio that he made some of his most memorable paintings (fig. 45). *Black Curve VII*, *Dark Gray and White Panels*, 1977 (cat. no. 72), *Dark Gray Panel*, 1977 (cat. no. 74), and *Diagonal with Curve I*, 1978 (cat. no. 76), exemplify only a few of the ideas that he played out in his paintings during the late 1970s. In *Black Curve VII*, Kelly's superb sense of measure is evident in the way in which he bisects the canvas, stopping the black just short of the top right-hand corner of the canvas. The sweep of the black arc, which bisects the lower-left corner of the painting, creates a subtle dynamic that would otherwise be left to the curve alone. The magnificent way in which Kelly joins two extraordinary forms to create a new shape is especially evident in *Dark Gray and White Panels*. In this painting Kelly has mastered the balance of shape, color, and space with which he has been concerned since 1949.

Kelly's work from the 1980s is distinguished by his emphasis on the single panel, either in canvas, in wood, in weathering steel, or in bronze. He had worked in this manner earlier, in works such as *Green Angle*, 1970 (cat. no. 61), a painting-cum-sculpture in which he used a monochrome to define the shape of the canvas, a large chevron. In late 1970s monochrome works such as *Dark Gray Panel* and *Diagonal with Curve I*, Kelly set the stage for his 1980s works. *Orange Panel* (cat. no. 77) and *Dark Blue Panel* (cat. no. 80), both 1980, feature the trapezoid that figured so prominently in his paintings from 1968. In *Orange Panel* and *Dark Blue Panel*, however, the juxtaposition of the panels creates no illusionistic effects, largely because the surface plane is strictly controlled by color and evenly applied brushwork. In *Yellow Panel*, 1985 (cat. no. 84), Kelly reworked the fan shape, creating a new dynamic from the way in which he delineated the curve and the angle that define each form.

In 1986 Kelly made several notable paintings, among them *Red Curve* (cat. no. 85) and *Three Panels: Orange, Dark Gray, Green* (cat. no. 86). In *Red Curve*, he made striking use of the fan shape that he had employed earlier in canvases such as *Blue Curve III*, and eliminated the white arc that surmounted the blue form in *Blue Curve III*, thereby exaggerating its shape to the utmost extreme. In *Three Panels: Orange, Dark Gray, Green*, Kelly compressed his forms into triangular or trapezoidal forms, but splayed them out over the length of a wall. Both 1986 paintings are fanciful and playful, *Red Curve* by virtue of its shape, *Three Panels* by virtue of the panels' placement on the wall.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Kelly decided once again to reconfigure the idea of two panels, by playing with the dimensions of the two panels, as in *Yellow Black*, 1988 (cat. no. 91), in which a large yellow panel is anchored by a narrow black rectangle at its top left-hand corner. Kelly also joined a curved blue wedge to a purple rectangle, in *Purple Panel with Blue Curve*, 1989 (cat. no. 92), and he overlapped two canvases, as in *Orange Red Relief (For Delphine Seyrig)*, 1990 (cat. no. 93), an homage to a great friend and actor. In this relief, the foremost panel is placed at an angle to the panel behind it, giving an effect of simultaneous movement and stasis. Kelly creates a similar effect in *Blue Relief with Black*, 1993 (cat. no. 96), but here the more recessive colors and quiescent shapes create an altogether different mood. Both *Yellow Relief with Blue*, 1991 (cat. no. 94), and *Orange and Gray*, 1993 (cat. no. 97), are emboldened by a new play between the curve and the rectangle and the curve and the triangle. In these two paintings, Kelly reexplores the nature of the curve, and his choice of colors adds another dimension to his already extensive vocabulary of color, form, and space.

During this period, Kelly transformed earlier paintings into large-scale sculpture, as in *Untitled (Mandorla)*, or turned sculpture into paintings, as when he used the image of his weathering steel sculpture *Curve XXXII* to create the painting *Dark Blue Panel*, 1985. He also based a new sculpture, *Untitled*, 1987 (cat. no. 89), on his earlier sculpture *Pony* by bending it in two and by enlarging one segment and altering a segment of the curve with a straight edge. In addition, he continued to work in black and white and to make totems.

Most recently, Kelly has worked on another remarkable series of single-color panels: *Black Curves* (cat. no. 101), *Red Curves* (cat. no. 102), *Yellow Curve* (cat. no. 103), *Blue Curve* (cat. no. 105), and *Green Curve* (cat. no. 104), all 1996. In these paintings, he has again explored the seemingly endless

possibilities of the curve. The same is true for a new group of sculptures, in redwood, stainless steel, and bronze—all *Untitled*, all 1996 (cat. nos. 100, 106, and 107)—in which he reduces the curve to an attenuated form, simultaneously delicate and solid, so that color and form, shape and space remain mysterious and exhilarating.

Kelly's use of color, form, and space is part of a continuum that began in the early twentieth century with artists of the Russian avant-garde such as Malevich and with Dutch pioneer Mondrian and his colleagues in the De Stijl movement. These aspects of art have always been with us, in the most recognizable religious imagery of the Renaissance, where color played a symbolic role in painting and in the shape of a form and the space around it, as in the *Isenheim Altarpiece*. As Kelly has remarked, "My paintings are not depictions of the natural world."¹³ They are, however, drawn from the natural world and from art forms, and they capture the essence of light, color, and shape common to both art and life. Kelly's need to make color an independent entity and to align it with a specific shape and space may have set him apart from a particular group or movement, but it has not set him apart from the art and culture of the twentieth century nor from the age-old issues that animate art and give it its true meaning. It is Kelly's strength to objectify color and form and to distill its essence from the world of reality, drawing on human emotion, imagination, and spirit.

Notes

1. See Nathalie Brunet, "Chronology, 1943–1954," in Yve-Alain Bois, Jack Cowart, and Alfred Pacquement, *Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France, 1948–1954*, exh. cat. (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1992), p. 178.
2. Kelly to John Cage, Sept. 4, 1950, p. 3 of typed copy in archive of the artist.
3. For more information on the exhibition *Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France*, see entry under 1992 in "Solo Exhibitions" in the exhibition history in the present volume.
4. The term "hard-edged painting" was first used by critic Jules Langsner in 1959 to distinguish the work of West Coast artists such as John McLaughlin and Lorser Feitelson; see Langsner's "Four Abstract Classicists," in *Four Abstract Classicists*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum; San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art, 1959), p. 10. In 1959–60 critic Lawrence Alloway began using the term "Hard Edge" to describe the work of New York-based painters such as Al Held, Kelly, Kenneth Noland, and Jack Youngerman; see Alloway, Introduction to *Systemic Painting*, exh. cat. (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1966), p. 14.
5. Kelly, quoted in Henry Geldzahler, "Interview with Ellsworth Kelly," in *Paintings, Sculpture and Drawings by Ellsworth Kelly*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Washington Gallery of Modern Art; Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1963), unpaginated; reprinted in *Art International* 8, no. 1 (Feb. 15, 1964), pp. 47–48.
6. The term "Op art" (short for "optical art") was first used by sculptor George Rickey in conversation with Museum of Modern Art curators Peter Selz and William Seitz. In 1965 Seitz included several "Op art" painters—such as Kelly, Lawrence Prouss, and Bridget Riley—in his exhibition *The Responsive Eye*.
7. Critic Barbara Rose used the term "minimum" and delineated the concept of "Minimal art" in her essay "ABC Art," *Art in America* 53, no. 5 (October–November 1965). Rose cited the work of Stella, Larry Zox, Robert Hunt, Anne Truitt, Lyman Kipp, Jan Evans, and Richard Tuttle as examples.
8. Kelly, interview with the author, London, May 2, 1996.
9. Related to his bird watching, Kelly was also interested in the prints of John James Audubon. Many of Audubon's preliminary paintings, which Kelly saw in 1954 at the New-York Historical Society, contain collage elements. It is the appearance of relief in Audubon's paintings and prints that attracted Kelly to them.
10. *A Treasury of Art Masterpieces* (War Department Education manual EM 631), published by Simon and Schuster in 1944 for the United States Armed Forces Institute.
11. Kelly has noted that the juxtaposition of pink and orange in Lorenzetti's painting inspired him to use the same colors in *Painting for a White Wall*, 1952 (cat. no. 18). Kelly, interview with the author, London, May 2, 1996.
12. Kelly, interview with Tracey Bashkutt, New York, September 6, 1996.
13. For more extensive information on Beckmann's lecture, see Peter Selz, "The Years in America," in *Max Beckmann—Retrospective*, exh. cat. (Saint Louis: Saint Louis Art Museum; Munich: Prestel-Verlag Munich, 1984), pp. 159–71.
14. Jack Youngerman, in "Interview: Jack Youngerman Talks with Colette Robert," *Archives of American Art Journal* 17, no. 4 (1977), pp. 11, 12. See also Brunet, "Chronology," in Bois et al., *Kelly: Years in France*, p. 179.
15. Brunet, "Chronology," p. 181.
16. Geldzahler, "Interview with Kelly," unpaginated.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Kelly, interview with the author, Hotel des Artistes, New York, circa 1969–70.

19. Ibid.
20. Jean Arp, quoted in Herbert Read, *The Art of Jean Arp* (New York: Abrams, 1968), pp. 34, 38.
21. Ibid., pp. 38–39.
22. Kelly, interview with Tracey Bashkoff, Spencertown, November 1995. Kelly recalls that while he was in the Army in Colorado, he woke up one night and while looking at the dark, clear night sky, he had a realization about making art. He knew that he wanted to make art for himself, not as a job working for someone else. He said that it was a mystical experience, “an epiphany.” Years later, after he learned of Tauber-Arp’s work and was so taken by it, he found out that she died in February 1943. While he has never checked the accuracy of this [she died on Jan. 13, 1943], Kelly likes to think that Tauber-Arp’s death and his own realization about making art occurred on the same night and are linked.
23. See William Rubin, ed., *Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 174.
24. Kelly, interview with the author, Hôtel des Artistes, New York, circa 1969–70.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Brunet, “Chronology,” p. 190.
28. Ibid., p. 192.
29. Kelly, interview with the author, New York, September 5, 1996.
30. Kelly to Cage, p. 3.
31. Brunet, “Chronology,” p. 192.
32. Kelly, interview with the author, New York, September 5, 1996.
33. See Clare Bell, “At Play with Vision: Ellsworth Kelly’s ‘Line, Form and Color,’” in the present volume, p. 69 (note 19).
34. Kelly, application for John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation grant, 1951.
35. Kelly, interview with the author, New York, September 5, 1996; and Joan M. Lukach, *Hilla Rebay: In Search of the Spirit in Art* (New York: George Braziller, 1983), pp. 292 and 302. The scholarship that Rebay had tried to get for Kelly was part of a program to support two or three artists each year—the Solomon R. Guggenheim Scholarship Fund—established by Guggenheim in 1937 in the charter of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Artists selected by Rebay for the scholarship received a check for \$50 to \$150 every month for a year; the recipients of such financial support included Ilya Bolotowsky, Leon Palk Smith, and Jean Xerun. See Lukach, *Hilla Rebay*, pp. 143 and 151. (Note that this was a program of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, not to be confused with the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, which provides financial grants for specific projects.)
36. Kelly, interview with the author, New York, September 5, 1996; and Lukach, *Hilla Rebay*, p. 302.
37. Brunet, “Chronology,” p. 192.
38. The term “passage,” when referring to the works of Paul Cézanne and Pablo Picasso, describes the integration of surface and depth by merging one color into another.
39. Diane Waldman, *Ellsworth Kelly: Drawings, Collages, Prints* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1971), p. 24.
40. Brunet, “Chronology,” p. 184.
41. For a comprehensive discussion of the period, see Mildred Glimcher, “Coenties Slip,” in *Coenties Slip*, exh. cat. (New York: Pace Gallery, 1993), pp. 7–17, and Stephanie Barron, “Giving Art History the Slip,” *Art in America* 62, no. 2 (March/April 1974), pp. 80–84.
42. Brunet, “Chronology,” p. 194.
43. See P[arker] T[ylor], “Ellsworth Kelly,” *ARTnews* 55, no. 4 (summer 1956), p. 51.
44. See B[arbara] B[utler], “Ellsworth Kelly,” *Arts Magazine* 30, no. 4 (June 1956), p. 52.
45. Waldman, *Kelly: Drawings, Collages, Prints*, p. 25.
46. Kelly remembers that *Blue on Blue* was fabricated for him and that it was probably stored, since it wouldn’t fit into the studio at Coenties Slip and would not have made it up the stairs at the Hôtel des Artistes; Kelly, interview with the author, New York, March 18, 1996.
47. See Goethe, *Theory of Colours*, trans. and with notes by Charles Lock Eastlake (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1970).
48. Brunet, “Chronology,” p. 184.
49. Ibid., p. 192.
50. This dress is being re-created for the *Art/Fashion* exhibition in the *Biennale di Firenze*, September–December 1996.
51. Kelly, interview with Tracey Bashkoff, New York, March 18, 1996.
52. Kelly, interview with the author, New York, August 25, 1996.
53. Kelly, interview with the author, New York, May 30, 1996.

Ellsworth Kelly's Multipanel Paintings

by Roberta Bernstein

"I think that if you can turn off the mind and look only with the eyes, ultimately everything becomes abstract."¹

—Ellsworth Kelly, 1991



1. Ellsworth Kelly at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, Paris, 1949

By now the multipanel painting is a familiar entity used as a formal or narrative device by contemporary artists working in a variety of Postmodernist directions. These artists inherited an attitude toward the painting as object that has become a central feature of late twentieth-century art. This attitude was forged during the 1950s and 1960s by artists with roots in European Modernism but who brought an American brand of empiricism to their rethinking of the relationship of art and reality. Ellsworth Kelly was one of the first and most significant of these artists to do so. For Kelly, the use of joined panels allowed him to find a new way to free shape and color from representation and established his unwavering commitment to abstraction in his painting and sculpture. His 1949 painting *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris* (cat. no. 5), marks the beginning of his "not depicting so much as presenting a *literal* sense of space."² In this generative work, conceived and executed while living in Paris, Kelly used two canvas panels, one facing front, the other turned backward, to replicate the structure of a tall vertical window that he had observed while visiting the museum. Kelly sees *Window* and the reliefs that immediately followed (*Relief with Blue*, cat. no. 8, and *White Relief*, cat. no. 9, both 1950) as leading to the numerous multipanel paintings that dominate his work until he returned to the United States in 1954.³

Kelly's "panel pictures" (as he often refers to them) represent a radical break from both Renaissance illusionist painting and twentieth-century geometric abstraction. However, there are precedents for his panels in medieval and Renaissance polyptychs, especially Matthias Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*, a favorite work of Kelly's since his student years.⁴ The altarpiece format was used in the first half of the twentieth century by the German Expressionists, culminating in Max Beckmann's monumental triptychs, which Kelly also admired.⁵ But multiple panels were rarely used by the early Modernist abstractionists; the few exceptions, such as Aleksandr Rodchenko's *Pure Red Color*, *Pure Yellow Color*, and *Pure Blue Color* (collectively known as *The Last Painting*), 1921 (fig. 10), are relevant to understanding the history behind Kelly's art and the phenomenon of multipanel painting in general during the second half of the century.⁶



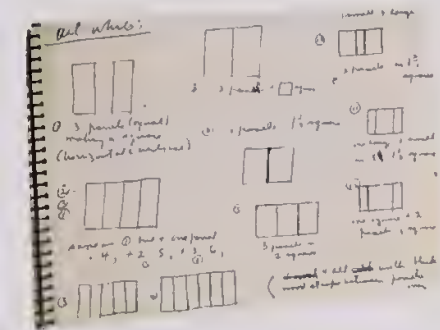
2. Robert Rauschenberg, *White Painting*, 1951.
Oil on canvas; seven panels, 72 x 18 inches
(182.9 x 45.7 cm) each; 72 x 126 inches (182.9 x
320 cm) overall. Collection of the artist, New York.

The first extensive use of multipanel painting in twentieth-century art occurs in the work of American artists from the generation that came of age in the decade after World War II. The most influential of these artists are Jasper Johns, Kelly, and Robert Rauschenberg, each of whom turned to multipanel painting during the early 1950s. In 1951 at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, Rauschenberg made his series of five *White Paintings*, in one, two, three, four, and seven panels (see fig. 2). These were followed by several multipanel *Black Paintings* during 1951–52. It is striking how similar Kelly's and Rauschenberg's early panel paintings are in their use of modular structure and monochrome surfaces, especially given that they were arrived at completely independently of each other on opposite sides of the Atlantic. During this time, Kelly even did sketches for all-white paintings of joined panels that resemble Rauschenberg's quite closely (fig. 3). A crucial difference between them, however, is that Kelly's panels function primarily as shapes, while Rauschenberg's serve mainly as surfaces onto which things are layered and attached. Even the *White Paintings* can be seen as a *tabula rasa* for Rauschenberg's subsequent assemblages using materials such as newsprint, photographs, fabric, rusted metal, and tires, and laden with pictorial and iconographical impact.⁹ Only slightly later than Kelly and Rauschenberg, Johns also adopted the multipanel format, beginning with his *Flag*, 1954–55, which consists of three joined canvases. Since then, Johns has continued to use multiple panels to provide concretely structured formats for his emblematic images and painterly surfaces.⁹ Although their work developed in different directions, Johns, Kelly, and Rauschenberg each used multiple-panel constructions to assert an anti-illusionist position for their art and to bring an objective realism to painting, which distinguished their work from the New York School Abstract Expressionists and from European Modernism and its postwar manifestations.⁹

Kelly's Paris Period

The adoption of multipanel painting by Kelly during his Paris period had to do to a large extent with his "firm resolve not to continue making easel painting."¹⁰ Referring to *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris*, Kelly has said, "From then on, painting as I had known it was finished for me. The new works were to be paintings/objects, unsigned, anonymous. Everywhere I looked, everything I saw became something to be made, and it had to be made exactly as it was, with nothing added. It was a new freedom: there was no longer the need to compose."¹¹ A photograph from 1949 (fig. 1) documents Kelly's immersion in the concept of the painting as object. It shows him in his hotel room in Paris with his breakthrough painting *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris* and three other works: a small study for that painting; *Cutout in Wood*, 1950 (cat. no. 7), hanging on the wall above the mantel; and his as yet unfinished *Strung Relief*, 1950. The paddle on the wall to his right, a Northwest Coast Haida Indian piece that Kelly had bought in Paris, is an example of the kind of objects he admired—anonymous objects with a sense of proportion and a concentration of detail that he strove to emulate in his own work.¹² The idea of the identity of the artwork as something that does not depict reality but rather coexists in the world with other things is integral to Kelly's thinking and led to a kind of abstraction based entirely on shape and color. This liberated painting for Kelly, enabling him to create artworks that are experienced for the impact of their form alone, as condensed fragments of vision.

Kelly's cutouts and reliefs from this period were inspired by perceptions of things, ranging from the ordinary to the sacred, whether sidewalk grillwork or Romanesque murals. Through their manner of construction and presentation, he transformed them into nonrepresentational "painting-objects," which reveal or hint at their real-world sources only through their titles.¹³ Architecture was a particularly important source for him during this formative stage. Many of Kelly's works from the early 1950s were inspired by patterns on building walls, such as arrangements of posters and windows or grids formed by stone blocks and tiles. Like *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris*, they are directly derived from observations of details and fragments that he sketched on the spot or later re-created from memory in drawings or collages. Many of these were never made into paintings; however, these studies allowed Kelly to generate a vocabulary of forms that proved crucial to the development of his multipanel monochrome paintings. An example is



3. Page 25 from Sketchbook #15, 1951–52.
Ink on paper.



4. *La Combe II*, 1950–51.

Oil on wood; folding screen of nine hinged panels,
39 x 46 inches (99.1 x 118.1 cm) overall, with
variable depth. Private collection.

Awnings, Avenue Matignon, 1950 (cat. no. 111), the source of which was seven windows Kelly saw on a Parisian *hôtel*, each with a blue shade raised to a different level.

The imagery in *La Combe I*, 1950 (cat. no. 10), derives from shadows cast by a handrail on the metal staircase up to the second-floor room he was staying in at Villa La Combe in Meschers, France (see cat. no. 159). Kelly did sketches of the shadows, recording the changes that occurred in the patterns as the sun's position changed, and then made paintings based on the sketches. *La Combe II*, 1950–51 (fig. 4), is a hinged folding screen consisting of nine narrow, rectangular wood panels, all the same size, the proportions of which he derived from the narrow rectangular stairs.¹⁴ As E. C. Goossen has written, “each step becomes, in the drawings and subsequent paintings, a panel that is brought together with the others on one plane, forming a complete and regular rectangle.”¹⁵ This work was an isolated example of Kelly's use of multiple panels in 1950, but it set the stage for two important developments: Kelly's process of cutting and rearranging strips, squares, and rectangles of paper in his collages (*La Combe II* was preceded by a collage made of nine strips of paper); and his use of repeated, modular elements that together comprise the whole.

Cité, 1951 (cat. no. 12), was the first of several grid paintings that Kelly made in 1951–52, all based on collages. In the case of *Cité*, Kelly painted black brushstrokes onto a sheet of white paper, the design based on a dream he had of young children (his grade-school art students) painting stripes on a building wall.¹⁶ He then ruled the paper off into a rectangular grid of twenty squares, cut it up, rearranged the pieces, and copied the design onto twenty wood panels.¹⁷ Through this procedure, Kelly contrasts the randomly placed stripes of varying thickness with the strictly modular format of the grid created by the edges where the separate panels meet. Kelly originally intended the panels to be rearrangeable but decided to maintain the piece in its original format, setting a precedent for his subsequent multipanel works.¹⁸ Three other grid paintings from the same year, *Talmont, Gironde*, and *Meschers*, (cat. no. 13), were also derived from collages made from cut-up drawings, but each was made on a single wood or canvas panel.¹⁹ Kelly did not adopt the grid as an *a priori* structural design; rather it was a format that grew out of observations documented in sketches beginning in 1948–49 with a pattern of colorful tiles observed on the stern of a barge moored in the Seine River.²⁰

Closely related to *Cité* is the black-and-white collage *Brushstrokes Cut into 49 Squares and Arranged by Chance*, 1951 (see p. 22, fig. 23). The title emphasizes Kelly's use of indeterminacy as a strategy by which he might free himself from traditional approaches to invention and composition. An important series of collages made from squares cut from colored papers also highlights the role of chance through their title: *Spectrum Colors Arranged According to Chance* (see cat. nos. 116–18). In the complex arrangements of these grids of up to sixteen hundred squares, Kelly used both predetermined systems and chance procedures in deciding where to place each color.²¹ When Kelly left Paris for an eight-month stay in Sanary in the south of France (from November 1951 to May 1952), he brought along a box of the colored squares left over from the *Spectrum* collages and used them for two more collages. One was a rectangular grid of six by seven units, which served as the study for the painting *Sanary*, 1952. Because there were not enough colored squares left to fill in the eight-by-eight-unit grid for the second collage, Kelly left twenty-eight of the spaces blank. He then decided to make *Colors for a Large Wall*, 1951 (cat. no. 16), consisting of sixty-four one-foot-square canvases, each painted in a single color or in white, and placed according to the position of each color in the collage. The painting's structure and the design of its parts are conveyed by the arrangement of panels only, and, in Kelly's words, “each color ends with its own panel.”²² From this point on, Kelly relies on the edges where panels meet—what Goossen calls “the factuality of the joints”²³—instead of handmade marks to give the paintings their particular form. Commenting on the importance of this breakthrough, Kelly said that “the ‘line’ or the ‘drawing’ leaves the surface of the canvas and becomes the ‘literal’ edge of the panels.”²⁴ The artist's presence is removed by the elimination of any mark or gesture, giving the work the anonymous quality that Kelly was seeking and allowing it to be experienced as an object in the world. This idea becomes central to Kelly's artistic



5. *Fête à Torcy*, 1952.
Oil on canvas and wood; two joined panels,
45 1/2 x 38 inches (115.6 x 96.5 cm) overall.
Private collection.



6. *Kite I*, 1952.
Oil on canvas; seven joined panels, 39 1/4 x
91 1/2 inches (99.7 x 232.4 cm) overall.
Private collection.

endeavor and leads to a succession of multipanel monochrome paintings that dominate the rest of his Paris period.

By using the word “wall” in the title of his largest and most important grid painting, Kelly affirmed the relationship of the painting to the wall as crucial to the direction his art would take from now on. (As early as 1950 he had titled a collage *Colors on a Wall*.) The wall literally becomes the painting’s “ground,” thereby integrally linking the artwork to its architectural setting.²⁵ Kelly later described his intention: “The canvas panels were painted solid colors with no incident, lines, marks, brushstrokes or depicted shapes; the joined panels became a form, and thereby, transferred the ground from the surface of the canvas to the wall. The result was a painting whose interest was not only in itself, but also in its relation to things outside it.”²⁶

In *Red Yellow Blue White*, 1952 (cat. no. 17), made of twenty-five dyed cotton panels, Kelly split the grid apart and incorporated sections of the wall *into* the painting by arranging the panels in five vertical rows with twenty-two-inch intervals of wall space between rows. Not only does the wall serve as a ground anchoring the painting in space, but each of the four intervals form rectangular shapes the sides of which are delineated by the vertical panels.²⁷ In the works that immediately followed, Kelly used rectangular or square units placed side by side, or stacked one on top of another, to present slabs of color that stand out as strong shapes against the wall on which they hang. In *Kite I* (fig. 6) and *Kite II*, both 1952, white canvases instead of wall space separate the color panels from each other.

Painting for a White Wall, 1952, (cat. no. 18), the first of his works in which Kelly used same-size monochrome canvases joined in a row, is his only other painting from this period to have the word “wall” in its title.²⁸ Kelly next explored variations on this format in a group of works using modular units aligned in groups of three to seven panels, with colors restricted to the primaries and black and white. He achieved complexity and variety in these works by adjusting size, proportion, and color. In *Red Yellow Blue White and Black*, 1953 (cat. no. 19), for example, the black panel is centered so that it both divides and joins the three panels to either side of it, while the white panels simultaneously separate colors and pair them off. The blue panels at either end close and unify the sequence.

Another important variation on multipanel painting that Kelly developed during his Paris period is a group of works consisting of horizontal rectangular panels joined vertically to form a larger rectangle, including *Fête à Torcy*, 1952 (fig. 5), and *Train Landscape*, 1952–53 (cat. no. 21). He worked out this idea during the early 1950s in numerous sketches and collages, several of which reveal the landscape reference inherent in this arrangement. One of these, with a rare personal aside in its double underlined title, *Blue Sky Needed*” (Kelly’s response to a long gray spell of Parisian weather), shows that specific visual perceptions continued to inform his choices of shapes and colors (fig. 9). The tripartite structure of *Train Landscape* evolved from collages in his 1951 “Line, Form and Color” (see cat. nos. 119.1–119.40), but the painting’s colors and specific proportions are based on sketches of the French countryside seen through a train window during a trip he took from Paris to Zurich. (In one sketch from this trip the three sections are labeled “sky,” “earth,” and “lettuce,” and in another, “lettuce,” “green,” and “earth.”)²⁹ By this time, however, Kelly had firmly established his idea of the autonomous “painting/object.” While perception remains crucial to the process of generating images, the final painting is intended to exist as a thing in itself, independent from its source, yet resonant with the vitality of things observed in nature.

By the time Kelly settled in New York in July 1954, he had already explored a wide range of possibilities for multipanel painting. The grids, which were so important during his Paris period, have not been repeated—to date—in his subsequent paintings. Other configurations, such as *Tiger*, 1953, a nearly square work consisting of five panels of different sizes joined together, are one-of-a-kind anomalies.³⁰ The arrangement of panels in horizontal groupings is the one that Kelly used most frequently through 1968, although he also continued to stack panels vertically and to develop new variations on the multipanel format. In the early 1950s, Kelly’s works were seen as an outgrowth of Modernist geometric abstraction, but for Kelly himself the differences between such abstraction and his own were more important. In these



7. *Méditerranée*, 1952.

Oil on wood; nine joined panels, 59 1/4 x 76 1/2 inches
(150.5 x 193.7 cm) overall. Private collection.



8. Pages 83–84 from Sketchbook #17, 1951–52.

Pencil and ink on paper.



9. Page 7 from Sketchbook #21, 1953.

Ink on paper.

early panel pictures, he rejected the arrangements of color and form found in the Neo-Plastic grids of Piet Mondrian and the compositions of the Russian Constructivists. While Rodchenko's triptych of primary color panels, *The Last Painting*, was meant to represent the end of painting, for Kelly the multipanel idea marked a beginning. It is clear that the Paris period has served as a touchstone for a repertoire of forms that Kelly could tap into from this point on.

Figure/Ground

During the decade between Kelly's return from Paris and a five-month stay there in 1965, he made relatively few multipanel paintings while developing his "figure/ground" paintings. In these he concentrated on taking abstract shapes that he had discovered through observation and refining them in compositions of two or three colors contrasted on a single canvas, as in *Red Blue Green*, 1963 (cat. no. 42). From time to time during this period, however, Kelly returned to the multiple-panel format, sometimes using ideas worked out previously in collages that he had made in Paris. For *White Plaque: Bridge and Arch Reflection*, 1951–55 (cat. no. 24), Kelly made two curved wood panels, which he arranged vertically with a narrow strip of wood in between, a composition based on his 1951 collage inspired by the reflection of an arch of the Pont de la Tournelle in the Seine River. (The collage was done in matte and glossy black paper to differentiate the twin shapes of the arch's shadow under the bridge and its dark reflection on the river's surface.)¹¹ The four canvas panels of *Gaza*, 1952–56 (cat. no. 25), stacked vertically, follow his 1952 collage based on the design and colors of an enamel sign that Kelly saw at a Paris bus stop.¹² *Two Blacks, White and Blue*, 1955 (cat. no. 26), one of Kelly's few narrow, vertical works, created by stacking four canvases, is based on sketches of tugboat smokestacks observed from the New York waterfront where he lived at the time.¹³ *Painting in Three Panels*, 1956, and *Painting in Five Panels*, 1956, are the only examples in which figure/ground panels of different sizes are grouped together to form a single work. They are the first works since *Red Yellow Blue White* to incorporate intervals of wall space, a device that Kelly then abandoned for ten years.¹⁴ In a few of his figure/ground canvases, Kelly divided the surface either vertically or horizontally by joining two canvases. These usually involve the pairing of similar (but not identical) forms that imply, but do not actually display, bilateral symmetry, as in *South Ferry*, 1956 (cat. no. 27), *Atlantic*, 1956, and *Black and White*, 1955–58.

One of his most important works from this period is *Orange Red Relief*, 1959 (cat. no. 37), consisting of two vertical rectangles of intense, saturated color joined side by side to make a larger square, with the edges where the panels meet accentuated by having the orange panel project slightly out from the red one (the stretcher being about one inch thicker). Kelly first carried out the idea of panels in relief in his 1952 painting *Méditerranée* (fig. 7), using nine wood rectangles arranged in a grid, three of which project out from the surface.¹⁵ In 1951–52 Kelly made numerous studies in his sketchbooks for relief paintings using two or more monochrome panels, with one jutting out in shallow relief or with a smaller panel placed on top of a larger one (see fig. 8). Soon after his arrival in New York, Kelly used the relief idea again, in *Yellow Relief*, 1955, a small monochrome painting of two joined canvases based on drawings done in France. This painting initiated the bipartite format that he used for *Orange Red Relief* and for another monochrome relief, *Blue Tablet*, 1962. There are relatively few relief paintings from the 1960s through the 1980s, which may be accounted for by Kelly's greater involvement with both freestanding and relief sculpture during those decades.¹⁶ Since 1990, however, he has used relief extensively in his paintings.

Serial and Shaped Canvases

Beginning in 1965 Kelly broke from the figure/ground style that had characterized his paintings during the past decade and returned to making—for a while, almost exclusively—multipanel paintings consisting of two or more monochrome canvases. They also became more strictly geometric and more removed from sources taken from observation than his earlier work. This phase of Kelly's art draws directly upon many of the ideas initiated during the early 1950s but demonstrates a new sense of scale and color that



10. Aleksandr Rodchenko, *The Last Painting* (*Pure Red Color, Pure Yellow Color, and Pure Blue Color*), 1921.

Oil on canvas, three panels, 24 1/2 x 20 1/2 inches (62.5 x 52.7 cm) each.

A. Rodchenko and V. Stepanova Archive, Moscow.



11. Installation of *Red Yellow Blue II*, 1965, and Piet Mondrian's *Trafalgar Square*, 1939–43, in the exhibition *Classic Modernism: Six Generations* at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, November 15–December 25, 1990.



12. *Red Yellow Blue I*, 1963.
Acrylic on canvas; three joined panels,
90 x 90 inches (231 x 231 cm) overall.
Fondation Maeght, St. Paul de Vence, France.

clearly distinguishes this body of work from the Paris panel paintings.” Explaining this development later, he said, “It was through the making of sculpture and cutting forms out of metal that I returned to making joined-panel works on canvas, in which the ground was eliminated.”³⁸

Among the first works of this phase of Kelly’s art are *Red Blue Green Yellow*, 1965, and *Blue Red*, 1966 (cat. no. 46), his only paintings using canvas panels joined at a fixed angle, with one panel attached to the wall and the other at right angles to it so that the color “literally spills onto the floor.”³⁹ Because of the degree to which they project into the space of the room, they are Kelly’s most radical painting-objects. Kelly decided, however, that the literal hending of forms was an idea more suitable to sculpture, and he made two freestanding painted aluminum pieces in the same format: *White Angle* (cat. no. 47) and *Blue White Angle*, both 1966. The paintings that follow the *Angle* series rely solely on the wall as ground, whereas sculpture becomes Kelly’s medium for presenting forms that literally project out from the wall or are freestanding.⁴⁰

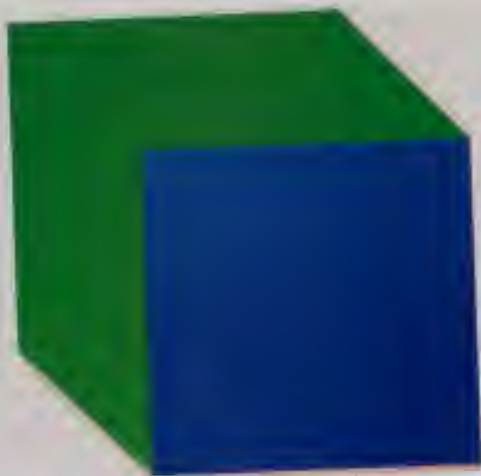
Green Red Yellow Blue, 1965 (cat. no. 45), and *Blue Green Yellow Orange Red*, 1966 (cat. no. 48), are characteristic of a large group of Kelly’s paintings from this period, all of which consist of either rectangular or square canvas panels in groupings of from two to thirteen units. These are all strictly modular works in which the panels within a given painting, whether joined or separated by intervals of wall, are always identical in size and shape. The straightforward structural formats of these paintings are reinforced by Kelly’s use of basic colors: the primaries (sometimes with orange and green), black and white, and the full spectrum.⁴¹ As “anti-compositional” as these paintings are, Kelly invests each with a structural rhythm and spatial tension that come from their carefully determined scale and proportions and the interactions of strong colors.

In an important series within this group, Kelly restricted his palette to red, yellow, and blue. His use of just the primary colors, dating to the Paris period, reflects his own tendency to choose classical



13. *Red Blue*, 1968.

Oil on canvas; two joined panels, 90 x 141 inches
(228.6 x 358.1 cm) overall.
Kunstmuseum Dusseldorf.



14. *Blue Green I*, 1968.

Oil on canvas; two joined panels, 91 x 91 inches
(231.1 x 231.1 cm) overall. The Oliver-Hoffman
Family Collection.



15. *Yellow with Red Triangle*, 1973.

Oil on canvas; two joined panels, 119 x
145 1/2 inches (302.3 x 369.6 cm) overall. Corcoran
Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Museum
purchase with aid of funds from the Richard King
Mellon Foundation.



16. Frank Stella, *Valparaiso Flesh and Green*, 1963.

Metallic paint on canvas, 77 1/2 x 133 1/2 inches
(196.9 x 339.1 cm). Collection of the artist.

colors that reinforce the anonymous look of his works. It also reveals his self-conscious engagement with a color scheme that by the mid-1960s had become so thoroughly identified with Modernist abstraction and so ubiquitous in recent painting that Barnett Newman titled a group of his paintings *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue*.⁴² Kelly initiated this series with a quasi-concentric motif made of three panels joined to form a larger square, *Red Yellow Blue I*, 1963 (fig. 12). By using separate canvases and adjusting advancing and receding color effects, Kelly counteracts the tendency to read the image as overlapping squares rather than as shapes on a flat surface. In *Red Yellow Blue II*, 1965 (fig. 11), Kelly eliminated any vestiges of a figure/ground reading by aligning three rectangular panels on a wall, separated by nine-inch intervals.⁴³ In the next two variations, *Red Yellow Blue III* and *IV*, 1966, the square panels are separated in one and joined in the other.⁴⁴

While Kelly's art from this period shares some of the formal devices and the monumental scale that characterized much avant-garde abstraction, his work was already set on a course that had been formed much earlier in an artistic and cultural context very different from New York in the 1960s. However, by the time Kelly resumed an intensive involvement with multipanel painting in 1965, it had become a commonly used device by Pop artists and abstractionists alike. Kelly was not concerned in his own work with the mass-media and narrative implications of multiple panels as used by such artists as Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, Cy Twombly, and Andy Warhol. He did, though, share with other abstract artists of the period, particularly those working in a reductivist or systemic mode, an interest in using multiple panels as a way to divide monochromatic surfaces and to identify the painting as a "structured object rather than an arena of expressionist gesture."⁴⁵ Artists who emerged in the mid-1960s, such as Jo Baer, Robert Mangold, Brice Marden, and Blinky Palermo, inherited the anti-illusionist position toward painting staked out by Johns, Kelly, Rauschenberg, and other artists during the 1950s and reinforced by the work of such influential painters as Kenneth Noland and Frank Stella. Since the 1960s, multipanel painting has been widely adopted



17. *Barn, Southampton, New York, 1968.*
Gelatin-silver print, 11 x 14 inches (27.9 x
35.6 cm). Private collection.



18. *Roof, Ghent, New York, 1972.*
Gelatin-silver print, 14 x
11 inches (35.6 x 27.9 cm).
Private collection.

internationally and remains a staple of much reductivist and geometric abstraction, as in the works of Marcia Haifif, Imi Knoebel, and Sean Scully.

Kelly's influence on this direction of postwar abstraction has been significant in his innovations regarding modularity, anonymity, and art-as-object. While his similarities with other artists who used multiple panels during this period are important to understanding his work and its historical role, it is the differences that illuminate his unique contribution. Most significant is the way that Kelly restricts himself to using shape and color with no interior forms or gestures.³⁶ He adjusts shape, scale, proportion, and color through what Mark Rosenthal calls "a kind of pictorial perfect pitch."³⁷ These decisions stem from Kelly's concern for the relationship of parts to the whole, so that parts retain their separateness and work together as a unified shape. An example of a painting that fits with the reductivist mode of the 1960s is *Black over White*, 1966 (cat. no. 50). In determining the forms, Kelly did not rely on predetermined systems or mathematical calculations: the format is nearly square but is actually taller than it is wide; the horizontal black panel on top takes up almost but not exactly a quarter of the field. As Goossen explains, the black panel "lowers like a heavy dark cloud . . . it takes all of the airy and spacious white to support it; in fact, Kelly has balanced the situation exactly with a typical tautness. Had there been proportionately more white or less black, the picture would have gone slack."³⁸

In 1968 Kelly started to explore variations in the shapes of his paintings. Until then, with a few important exceptions (see cat. nos. 6, 24, and 49), he had limited himself to squares and rectangles for his paintings. Although he explored other shapes in his figure/ground paintings—and used some of these depicted shapes as the basis for freestanding or relief sculptures beginning in 1958–59 (see cat. nos. 35, 39, and 43)—the shaped canvas did not dominate Kelly's painting until the late 1960s, as it did the work of many other geometric abstractionists of the 1960s. The formats Kelly began using in 1968 were mostly simple geometric forms such as trapezoids, rhomboids, and triangles consisting of two or more panels of contrasting colors. The different color combinations, as well as the variations in the way the larger shape is divided, made for an array of unique designs that stretched the possibilities of geometric abstraction and established a stylistic breakthrough for Kelly that he has been able to draw on ever since.

Even though Kelly's works of this period are all variations on combinations of geometric shapes, his works remain rooted in perception; some are inspired by specific observations. His first work to use a panel in the shape of a triangle, *Green White*, 1968 (cat. no. 53), is based on a scarf worn by a woman he saw while walking in Central Park. He even followed her until he could fix in his mind the proportions of green and white in the scarf's triangle.³⁹ Kelly then created other works in which he attached triangles to trapezoids to form larger triangles, exploring the shape's dynamic potential by varying the length of the sides and the orientation of the apex, as in *Yellow Black*, 1968 (cat. no. 54). In some, triangles are joined to form other shapes. The simplest of these is *Black White*, 1968 (cat. no. 55), in which two right-angled triangles of the same size are joined to form a square. In *Red Blue*, 1968 (fig. 13), two triangles are joined to form a rhomboid with its top and bottom edges slightly shorter than its sides. This work and others like it relate most closely to Stella's shaped canvases of the early 1960s, such as *Valparaiso Flesh and Green*, 1963 (fig. 16). Both artists were engaged with presenting what formalist critic Michael Fried called "literal" rather than "depicted" shapes.⁴⁰ However, there are important differences in concept and appearance between them, especially in Kelly's use of pure monochrome with no linear elements other than the panels' edges.

In some of these shaped paintings, such as *Red Yellow Blue V*, 1968, *Blue Green Yellow Orange Red*, 1968 (fig. 19), and *Red Green*, 1968 (cat. no. 52), Kelly exploits the visual tension between spatial illusionism and concrete shape. The perspectival effects created by the diagonal edges and the diminishing scale of the joined trapezoids is counteracted by the edges where the individual panels meet and by color relationships.⁴¹ In others, Kelly's shapes within shapes set up contradictory perceptions for the viewer, who can read them either as volumetric projections or as flattened, irregular forms, as in *Blue White*, 1968 (cat. no. 56), and *Blue Green I*, 1968 (fig. 14). In these, Kelly was testing the limits of what would hold as a flat surface, and, after a few variations, he abandoned this direction.



19. *Blue Green Yellow Orange Red*, 1968.
Oil on wood; five joined panels, 120 x
271 inches (304.8 x 688.3 cm) overall.
Boatmen's Bank, Saint Louis.



20. *Study for "Dark Gray and White
Rectangle I,"* 1977.
Collage on postcard, 4 x 6 inches
(10.2 x 15.2 cm). Private collection.



21. *Opening to a Cellar, Hudson,
New York*, 1977.
Gelatin-silver print, 11 x 14 inches (27.9 x
35.6 cm). Private collection.

Eccentric Shapes

In 1969 Kelly did only one multipanel painting but worked on collages for a series of panel paintings that break from the holistic structure of those immediately preceding them. At the same time, he started a series of *Curves* on single, shaped panels that he continued to work on during the early 1970s (see cat. nos. 66 and 71). *Black Square with Blue*, 1970 (cat. no. 58), is typical of the multipanel paintings from this phase—somewhat eccentric arrangements of rectilinear canvases of different sizes and proportions, which read as fragments of larger wholes, emphasizing the interplay between the paintings and their surroundings by actively incorporating the adjacent wall.⁵² Another change from his 1960s work is that Kelly tapped back into “the endless amount of variation of nature” as a source for his imagery.⁵³ He then turns again to finding images in architecture and landscape, isolating details that set off shape against shape and light against shadow. Photographs that Kelly had been taking since 1968 document his return to observing details of his environment as a more immediate touchstone for his pictorial vocabulary of squares, rectangles, triangles, and curves, as can be seen in *Barn, Southampton, New York*, 1968 (fig. 17), and *Curve Seen from a Highway, Austerlitz, New York*, 1970 (cat. no. 162).

Kelly named his 1971 *Chatham* series after the town near Spencertown in upstate New York, where he had moved the year before. The fourteen paintings in this series all conform to the same inverted “L” format: a vertical rectangle on the bottom joined to a horizontal one above, which overhangs it to the right. These grew out of the recent *Bar* paintings that Kelly was working on, using post-and-lintel structural formats that, like the *Chathams*, recall architectural details, as in *Black with White Bar II* (cat. no. 62) and *White Bar with Blue and Red* (cat. no. 65), both 1971. In each *Chatham* variation, Kelly altered the size and shape of the panels so that some are shorter or longer, squatter or thinner.⁵⁴ Color relationships as well as proportions affect the sense of visual “weight” of each element. In *Chatham II: Blue Red* (fig. 22), for example, the red vertical panel measures sixty-three by thirty-three inches and the blue horizontal panel, thirty-three by eighty-seven inches. *Chatham IX: Black Green* (cat. no. 64), is taller and wider, with its green vertical element sixty-nine by forty inches and its black horizontal forty by ninety-six. In some, Kelly stretches the limits of the stability of the structure’s cantilevered effect, as when “heavier” and longer shapes are supported by “lighter” shorter ones.⁵⁵ In working out these relationships of color and shape, Kelly continued his practice, dating back to his early Paris period, of making collages from colored papers. Then, in pencil drawings, he established the exact measurements for each variation in a series, a necessary step for ordering stretchers but also a way for him to refine the proportions using a process that is intuitive rather than mathematical or systemic.⁵⁶

Kelly derived the idea for his 1973–74 series of paintings of rectangles joined to triangles, such as *Yellow with Red Triangle*, 1973 (fig. 15), from his observation of the relationship of a dormer window to the steep roofline of a house seen from his studio, as he moved from the more stable alignment of forms of the *Chathams* and the *Bars* to more dynamic shapes utilizing the diagonal.⁵⁷ A related photograph, *Roof, Ghent, New York*, 1972 (fig. 18), shows the kind of fragments of vision that inspired Kelly’s shapes at the time. Kelly has said, “Photography is about seeing in three dimensions and trying to bring it into two dimensions in a way that recalls the third.”⁵⁸ This helps to explain Kelly’s penchant for joining forms observed in different spatial planes into flattened shapes that gives his works the visual tension they require to be successful.

During the next five years, Kelly restricted himself almost exclusively to black, white, and gray, and introduced shapes that deviate from regular geometry, while continuing to explore variations of pairs of panels connected along a diagonal edge. Elizabeth Baker summarized the quality of the eccentric shapes Kelly used in these works as follows: “No form is quite definable, no angle is quite what it seems. Within a group of works, each one has its own bafflements, and does not elucidate the next.”⁵⁹ Again, photographs are instructive in showing the kinds of perceptions that inspired Kelly’s imagery, particularly contrasts of light and shadow and of mass and space, as in the photographs *Opening to a Cellar, Hudson, New York*, 1977 (fig. 21), and *Hangar Doorway, Saint Barts*, 1977 (cat. no. 164). Diane Upright has asserted that it



22. *Chatham II: Blue Red*, 1971
Oil on canvas; two joined panels, 96 x 87 1/8 inches
(243.8 x 222.3 cm) overall. Collection of Robert F.
and Anna Marie Shapiro.

is Kelly's photographs of shadows that "reveal his ability to objectify the insubstantial, to transform the shapes of spaces and shadows into compelling forms without sacrificing their spatial ambiguities."⁶⁰ Patterson Sims and Emily Pulitzer, in their catalogue on Kelly's sculpture, explained the change in Kelly's use of photography in the 1970s: "Whereas for the Paris subjects [Kelly] used photography to document them after the fact, he now turns to photography to record and fragment his observations. Kelly finds in photography an ability to isolate shapes and capture the memory of their feeling and mood. For him, it has become a tool with which to affirm the crucial function of observation in his art."⁶¹

Postcard collages, such as *Philipsburg*, 1974 (cat. no. 155), also serve as souvenirs of experience and provide clues about the kinds of visual details that inform his art. *Dark Gray and White Rectangle I*, 1978, is based on a postcard collage showing two shapes, one black and one white, framed by a Saint Martin seascape of surf crashing against rocks (see fig. 20). Scale is an important factor in the painting's impact (it is more than ten-and-one-half feet across), and the postcard is a device that Kelly has used since the late 1950s to project a monumental sense of scale for his imagery.⁶² The shape of the dark gray trapezoid and the way it is joined along a diagonal edge to a white rectangle suggest the relationship of the gray cellar door to the black shape of the open doorway in Kelly's 1977 photograph. This painting and others from this period imply the three-dimensionality of a slight bending where the two panels join; however, through refining details of shape and proportion, Kelly was able to create a unified, planar surface that contradicts this slight effect of illusionism. In related diptychs, including *Dark Gray and White Panels*, 1978 (cat. no. 72), Kelly likewise used irregular panels that "have neither vertical nor horizontal edges, so that they undermine our innate desire for balance."⁶³ Each canvas is a four-sided figure with no sides of equal length, none parallel, and corner angles of variable degrees. In these works, the larger form reads as a skewed diamond, while the smaller one is close to the shape created by the shadow in the photograph Kelly took of the Saint Bart's hangar doorway.⁶⁴

Curves and Angles

As Kelly continued to devise variations on multipanel painting during the late 1970s and early 1980s, two other important directions emerged, opening up options that Kelly has continued to develop to the present. One is his engagement with freestanding and wall sculptures, beginning in 1973 with a series of *Curves* in steel, aluminum, and wood (see cat. nos. 68, 69, 75, 82, and 83). The other is Kelly's adoption of single-panel monochrome paintings in 1976—panels of three, four, or six sides (see cat. nos. 74, 80, and 85). Kelly did two triptychs that are directly related to his concurrent work with single, shaped canvas panels: *Three Panels: Orange, Dark Gray, Green*, 1986 (cat. no. 86), and *Three Gray Panels*, 1987. By grouping the variously shaped panels in a single work, Kelly could exploit the juxtapositionings of curves and angles by playing off straight edges with concave and convex curved ones, as he had done earlier in his figure/ground paintings and sculptures, and create dynamically activated wall intervals.⁶⁵

Among Kelly's most important works of the past decade are three groups of two-panel configurations, done between 1988 and 1990. In all of these, what at first look like serial combinations of pure geometric shapes turn out to be slightly dissimilar pairings of irregular forms. The paintings in Kelly's 1988 *Diamonds and Rectangles* series derive their impact from what Robert Storr described as "the exquisite instability of form" caused by the unexpected, if subtle, asymmetries and irregularities found in each variation.⁶⁶ Each of the eighteen panels varies in proportion and area from the others and are all aligned slightly differently. In *Yellow Black*, 1988 (cat. no. 91), Kelly placed a small, narrow, black rectangle almost midway along the upper-left diagonal edge of a larger yellow diamond, creating the conflicting sensations that the rectangular bar is simultaneously fixed in place and slipping out of position. Six of the nine variations in this group have the same placement of elements, but Kelly switched the position in the other three, moving the smaller rectangle to different sides of the diamond. As with his groupings of like configurations since the *Chatham* series, modularity is posited and then subverted, so that the uniqueness of each piece is determined intuitively by its effectiveness as an independent image rather than by the logic of a preconceived design.



23. Installation view of *Green Panel with Orange Curve* and *Black Panel with White Curve I*, both 1989, in the exhibition *Ellsworth Kelly: Curves/Rectangles* at BlumHelman Gallery, New York, November 7–December 9, 1989.



24. *Blue Curve with White Panel*, 1989.
Oil on canvas; two joined panels, 91 × 142 inches
(231.8 × 360.7 cm) overall. Private collection.

Kelly's next two series, *Panels with Curves*, 1989, and *Curves with Panels*, 1989–90, are the first in which he joined curved panels with straight-edged ones. These series further developed the idea of combining a more dynamic, three-sided form with a more stable, four-sided one that appeared earlier in Kelly's triangle/rectangle combinations, such as *Yellow with Red Triangle*. The 1989 *Panels with Curves* group is made up of four configurations in which the elements vary more extremely than in the *Diamonds and Rectangles* paintings. In three of the variations, pie-shaped wedges are placed along the edges of squares or rectangles, as in *Purple Panel with Blue Curve* (cat. no. 92) and *Green Panel with Orange Curve* (fig. no. 23). In the fourth, a rectangle is combined with a shape new to Kelly's panel paintings: a solid arc made of one straight and one curved edge, as in *Black Panel with White Curve I* (fig. 23). Each of the four variations in this group comes in two versions, one in two colors, the other in black and white, enabling Kelly to explore the eccentric dynamic of these diptychs in terms of pure tonality as well as of color.⁶⁷ In the four two-color variations of the 1989–90 *Curves with Panels* series, a large fanlike wedge (in black, blue, red, or green) is the predominant form to which a smaller white rectangular bar is attached, as in *Blue Curve with White Panel*, 1989 (fig. 24). The panels meet along a diagonal, as in the *Diamonds and Rectangles* series, rather than along the vertical, as in the *Panels with Curves* series.

These diptychs represent a continuation of Kelly's long-standing interest in presenting shape and color as "figure" against the "ground" of the wall. In 1990 Kelly started to make canvas reliefs using combinations of rectangles, triangles, wedges, and arcs in which the relationship of figure and ground becomes more complicated as one panel is superimposed on another. In these paintings, the depth of the relief is always shallow in relation to the scale of the piece. Kelly's stretchers are between one and one-and-one-quarter inches thick, and, therefore, his relief paintings never project into space like the work of Elizabeth Murray, Stella, and many other artists who use deep stretchers or create surfaces that protrude substantially out from the wall.⁶⁸

Like the diptychs immediately preceding them, these reliefs utilize the "pull of visual gravity"⁶⁹ to create dynamic interactions of shape and color and canvas and wall. The first of these is *Orange Red Relief (For Delphine Seyrig)*, 1990 (cat. no. 93), harking back to the relief done three decades earlier, *Orange Red Relief*, 1959, using the same color scheme. The dynamism that Kelly has brought to his panel pictures is evident by comparing the earlier and later reliefs. The earlier one, using two rectangles joined together, one raised slightly in front of the other, has a more classical, stable sense of form that characterizes Kelly's multipanel paintings through the mid-1960s. In the later one, the orange rectangle is superimposed onto the red one and is presented as a skewed diamond that appears to rotate and slide in front of the vertical panel. This alignment creates a shifting perception of shapes that can alternate between seeing the red form as a partly hidden rectangle (the complete proportions of which can only be determined when the piece is viewed from the side) and as an eccentric five-sided polygon.

As a result of the layering of one panel on top of another, the forms in Kelly's reliefs appear to press into or penetrate one another. (In his other multipanel paintings, shapes are joined only along straight edges to avoid a puzzlelike locking of shapes.) The two elements of *Blue Relief with Black*, 1993 (cat. no. 96)—a blue wedge superimposed on a black rectangle—can be read as three-sided shapes that meet at adjoining curved edges, creating an effect of abutting concave and convex shapes. In *White Relief with Green*, 1994 (fig. 25), this effect has been achieved by hiding one of the green panel's straight sides under the white panel positioned on top of it. The wedge and arc shapes can also be seen as the folded edge of a green semicircle, exposing its white reverse side, a form that simultaneously suggests both disjunction and continuity.⁷⁰ In many of these recent reliefs, including *Yellow Relief with Blue*, 1991 (cat. no. 94), the underpanel is smaller than the one above it. As Yve-Alain Bois has pointed out, "This instantly cancels any negative reading: a ground cannot be smaller than the figure it contains."⁷¹ Such undermining of the expected rules of design allows Kelly to wrest a rich variety of relationships from his self-restricted vocabulary of forms without sacrificing visual ambiguity and tension.

Looking back nearly half a century to Kelly's first panel painting, *Window, Museum of Modern Art*,



25. *White Relief with Green*, 1994.
Oil on canvas; two joined panels.
120 x 60 inches (304.8 x 152.4 cm) overall.
Collection of Mimi and Peter Haas.



26. Objects in Ellsworth Kelly's collection:
Saddle-back bannerstone, Clark County,
Illinois, ca. 2000–3000 B.C., granite;
br, Liangzhu Culture, ca. 3000 B.C., jade.

Paris, we see that he has not wavered from certain fundamental ideas, even while generating a tremendously diverse body of work. From the beginning, his use of multiple panels has been first and foremost a way to give his paintings a concrete sense of structure that enables him to make objects in which “the shape finds its own space and always demands freedom and separateness.”⁷² Kelly’s artworks are inspired by a broad range of experiences, from the most ordinary to the most awe-inspiring fragments of vision. Although it demonstrates his delight in form, his art, like the Haida Indian paddle and other objects he collects, whether Native American granite bannerstones or Chinese jade ritual objects (fig. 26), is not formalist; instead, it arises out of his belief in form’s sensory and spiritual power. For Kelly, abstraction involves “the struggle to free form from depiction and materiality.”⁷³ His art results from an intense and dynamic engagement with visual perception as an enlightening and transformative experience. “As we move, looking at hundreds of different things,” Kelly has explained, “we see many different kinds of shapes. Roofs, walls, ceilings are all rectangles, but we don’t see them that way. In reality they’re very elusive forms. The way the view through rungs of a chair changes when you move even the slightest bit—I want to capture some of that mystery in my work. In my paintings I’m not inventing; my ideas come from constantly investigating how things look.”⁷⁴

Notes

This essay is a substantial revision and expansion of an essay, “Ellsworth Kelly: Multipanelled Paintings,” first published in *Special Ellsworth Kelly*, special issue of *Artforum*, no. 24 (spring 1992). I want to thank Ellsworth Kelly for his generosity in offering information during our many conversations. Information or quotations otherwise undocumented in this essay are from these recent conversations, held between February and July 1996.

1. Paul Taylor, “Ellsworth Kelly: Interview,” *Special Ellsworth Kelly*, p. 154; originally published in *Interview* (May 1991).
2. Kelly, “Unpublished Notes for a Chronology” (1991), p. 3 (hereafter referred to as “Notes”). See also Nathalie Brunet, “Chronology, 1943–1954,” in Yve-Alain Bois, Jack Cowart, and Alfred Pacquement, *Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France, 1948–1954*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1992), p. 184.
3. Brunet, “Chronology,” p. 184. See also Angelica Zander Rudenstine, *Modern Painting, Drawing & Sculpture Collected by Emily and Joseph Pulitzer, Jr.*, exh. cat. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Art Museum, 1988), pp. 19–20.
4. Kelly’s early interest in Grünewald’s altarpiece is well documented. E. C. Goossen, in *Ellsworth Kelly*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973), p. 16, in mentioning the list of artworks to see in Europe that Kelly brought with him to Paris in 1948, wrote, “One of the highest priorities on the list was Matthias Grünewald’s *Isenheim Altarpiece*, on which he had written a school essay, and almost immediately he made a pilgrimage to Colmar.” Goossen, on pp. 45–46, discussed the relationship of the *Isenheim Altarpiece* to Kelly’s panel paintings and its possible connection to “Sketchbook #17: Project for a Folding Painting” (1952), which shows a study for a polyptych with four monochrome panels that are black and white when closed and red, yellow, and blue when open.
5. Goossen, in *Kelly*, p. 16, documented Kelly’s initial interest in Max Beckmann while he was a student at the Boston Museum School (1946–48) and discussed the possible influence of Beckmann’s triptych *Departure*, 1932–33, on Kelly’s later panel pictures. Recently Kelly said that while he knew and admired Beckmann’s triptychs when he was a student, he remembers being more impressed by Beckmann’s use of color and line than by his multipanel formats.
6. Another early Modernist polyptych is Theo van Doesburg’s *Composition XVIII*, 1920, in three separate panels, which is mentioned by Yve-Alain Bois in “Ellsworth Kelly in France: Anti-Composition in Its Many Guises,” in Bois et al., *Kelly: Years in France*, p. 35 (n. 56) (hereafter referred to as “Anti-Composition”). In a recent conversation with the author, Kelly said that his first knowledge of Rodchenko’s triptych was around the time of the planning of the 1988 exhibition *Rot Gelb Blau: Die Primärfarben in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts*, held in Switzerland and Germany, when the exhibition’s curator, Bernhard Burgi, showed him a black-and-white reproduction in a magazine.
7. John Cage called Robert Rauschenberg’s *White Paintings* “airports for light, shadows, and particles,” in his essay “On Rauschenberg, Artist, and His Work,” in Cage, *Silence* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1967), p. 102. Cage, who became an important influence on Rauschenberg after Rauschenberg met him in 1951 in New York, had met Kelly earlier during a visit to Paris in 1949. Kelly sent Cage photographs of his recent reliefs in a letter the next year, and Kelly and Cage continued their correspondence until Kelly’s return to the United States in 1954. While there is no evidence that Rauschenberg and Kelly knew of each other’s work, Cage, as a conduit of ideas and attitudes about art, provides a possible link between the two artists during the early 1950s.
8. Bois, in “Anti-Composition,” p. 22, compares Kelly to Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns in terms of the concept of the transfer, and points out that Johns’s emblems and Rauschenberg’s imprints, unlike Kelly’s abstractions, are immediately recognizable.
9. Owen Drolet, in “Ellsworth Kelly: Toward Another Laocoon,” *Flash Art* (January–February 1996), p. 70, used the term “empirical factuality” to describe Kelly as a quintessentially American artist, even while he lived in France from 1948 to 1954. Drolet compared this empirical stance of American artists to the European tendency to “philosophic abstraction and generalization.” Among postwar Europeans and American Abstract Expressionists, there are other artists who have used multipanel painting, but not the kind of extensive use of this device made by Johns, Kelly, and Rauschenberg. Among these are Francis Bacon, whose 1944 triptych, *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*,

- like the work of the German Expressionists, was influenced by the traditional altarpiece format with its religious associations. In 1953 Bacon made a triptych, *Three Studies of the Human Head*, which was inspired by the time-lapse photography of Eadweard Muybridge. Bacon did not resume the extensive use of multiple panels until his 1962 *Three Studies for a Crucifixion*. Of the American Abstract Expressionists, only Ad Reinhardt made significant, though limited, use of multiple panels in the 1950s. As early as 1952 he used modular panels in some of his monochromatic geometric abstractions, and in 1955 he titled a work *Black Triptych*, alluding to the altarpiece idea. Kelly did not know Reinhardt's work when he made his first multipanel paintings, but he did see an article about Reinhardt's 1953 exhibition at the Betty Parsons Gallery, in the December 1953 issue of *ARTnews*, which in part influenced Kelly's decision to return to the United States. See Brunet, "Chronology," p. 194.
10. Kelly, "Notes," p. 2.
 11. Kelly, quoted in John Coplans, *Ellsworth Kelly* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1971), p. 28.
 12. In 1949, Kelly made a drawing after a late-nineteenth-century Haida Indian copper plaque from the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia, which he saw in the Musée de l'Homme, Paris.
 13. Two examples are *White Relief*, with its hexagonal relief elements taken from a Japanese stencil, and *Relief with Blue*, 1950, based on Kelly's perceptions of a stage set for a theatrical production with a painted sky backdrop and the stage framed by parted curtains. Bois, in "Anti-Composition," p. 11, stated that *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris* was originally titled *Black and White Relief* and still had that title when Kelly showed the painting to Alfred H. Barr, Jr. at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in the 1950s; on p. 14, Bois said it was titled *Construction: Relief en blanc, gris et noir*; Bois speculated on Kelly's reasons for not wanting to reveal the sources of his Paris pictures until much later in the 1960s.
 14. *La Courbe II* was included in the exhibition *The Folding Image: Screens by Western Artists of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, exh. cat. by Michael Komanecky and Virginia Fabbri Butera with an Introduction by Janet W. Adams (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Art Gallery; Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1984). Screens by well-known early Modernists such as Vanessa Bell, Thomas Hart Benton, Paul Klee, Man Ray, Franz Marc, and Yves Tanguy were also included. While Kelly did not know these earlier screens, they should be considered as precedents for his own use of this structural format.
 15. Goossen, *Kelly*, p. 35; see also Bois, "Anti-Composition," pp. 21–22.
 16. The next morning, Kelly made a small sketch of the image from his dream. The title comes from the name of the place where he was staying the night he had the dream, the Cite Universitaire. In his initial sketch, however, the design is a grid, a square of four by four units. For the painting, Kelly used a rectangle of four by five units and changed the orientation of the stripes that were tilted at various angles in the sketch to read as more uniformly horizontal in the painting. See Coplans, *Kelly*, pp. 36 and 38, for Kelly's recounting of the dream, and Brunet, "Chronology," p. 189, for a reproduction of the original sketch for *Cite*.
 17. Goossen, *Kelly*, p. 38.
 18. Bois, "Anti-Composition," p. 25.
 19. Bois, in *ibid.*, p. 25, speculated that it was the pointlessness of the permutation idea that led Kelly to abandon the polyptych in the next three grids. In a recent conversation, Kelly mentioned the importance of the practical considerations of the painting being broken down into smaller units for the ease of transporting *Cite* from Meschers to Paris (he carried the panels back with him in a box). Jack Cowart, in "Method and Motif: Ellsworth Kelly's 'Chance' Grids and His Development of Color Panel Paintings, 1948–1951," in Bois et al., *Kelly: Years of France*, p. 44, mentioned that Kelly suggested the same concerns regarding shipping the eight-by-eight-foot painting *Colors for a Large Wall*, painted later that year in Sanary.
 20. Goossen, in *Kelly*, p. 19, mentioned an abstract painting that Kelly made in 1949 based on a checkerboard design that he had observed on the end of a barge, a painting that he then destroyed because he could not yet accept complete abstraction. Both Bois and Cowart, in their essays in *Kelly: Years of France*, discussed sources for Kelly's grids and reproduced sketches and collages, including *Sketch from Old Tiles*, 1949, *Sidewalk Grid/Studies*, 1949, *Bathroom Tiles*, 1951, and *Grid I dies* from "Line, Form and Color," 1951 (cat. nos. 119.1–119.40).
 21. For an extensive discussion of Kelly's use of chance at this time, see Bois, "Anti-Composition," pp. 25–26. See Goossen, *Kelly*, pp. 30–32, and Cowart, "Method and Motif," pp. 42–43, for a thorough discussion of the *Spectrum* collages and their origins in Kelly's observations of patterns of light and shadow reflected on the surface of the Seine River (see *Study for "Seine"*, 1951, cat. no. 115). Of the seven titled *Spectrum Colors Arranged According to Chance*, only one (number V, cat. no. 117) was made into a painting, later in 1953.
 22. Kelly, quoted in Taylor, "Kelly: Interview," p. 155.
 23. Goossen, *Kelly*, p. 88.
 24. Kelly, "Notes," p. 8. Since this time, Kelly has used neither hand-painted nor hand-drawn lines or marks in his works, other than in drawings and prints of plants and figures. In single-panel paintings with two or more colors, lines are formed where the edges of shapes meet.
 25. Kelly's numerous studies of architectural walls are crucial to his conception of panel paintings. The 1950 collage *Colors on a Wall* is based on a pencil drawing titled *Wall with Pipes*, 1950; see Diane Waldman, *Ellsworth Kelly: Drawings, Collages, Prints* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1971), plates 37 and 38. Bois, in "Anti-Composition," p. 27, made an analogy between the structure of *Colors for a Large Wall* and the actual construction of building walls; he wrote of Kelly's panel paintings, "The artist puts down one stone after the other, like the medieval mason who built the walls of the Romanesque churches that fascinated Kelly so much at the time." See also Michael Pante, "Things to Cover Walls: Ellsworth Kelly's Paris Paintings and the Tradition of Mural Decoration," *American Art* 9, no. 1 (spring 1995), pp. 36–53.
 26. Kelly, in *Ellsworth Kelly: Painted Aluminum Wall Sculpture: Weathering Steel Wall Sculpture*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Margo Leavin Gallery; New York: Leo Castelli Gallery, 1984), unpaginated.

27. See Bois, "Anti-Composition," pp. 27–28.
28. This work is based on a 1952 four-color collage, *Study for "Paratag for a White Wall."* In making the painting, Kelly added the blue panel at the right. The same year, Kelly made a collage for a work he did not execute, *Study for "Five Color Panels for a White Wall,"* consisting of narrow vertical and horizontal rectangles of varying sizes. Kelly used the word "wall" in titles of only a few works that he made after his Paris period: a large oil painting, *Wall*, 1958, based on the collage *Preliminary Study for "Wall,"* 1955, and a small painting *Wall*, 1956; and a pencil-and-collage *Wall*, 1976. The word "wall" in these titles was a double entendre referring both to Wall Street in Lower Manhattan and the importance of the wall as ground for his paintings. In 1978 Kelly titled a painting *Color Panels for a Large Wall*. This painting—derived from a study from his Paris period—consists of eighteen different color panels (the most panels in a single work to date since his Paris period grid paintings), each forty-eight by sixty-eight-and-one-half inches, placed at intervals on a wall eighteen feet high and 130 feet long.
29. Trevor J. Fairbrother, *Ellsworth Kelly: Seven Paintings (1952–55/1987)*, exh. cat. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1987), unpaginated.
30. Kelly made many collages that are variations of *Tiger* near the end of his Paris period, but to date has not pursued the idea further in paintings. Only a few paintings resemble this earlier format, including *Blue Green Black*, 1980, consisting of three rectangular panels joined together to make a square. Although Kelly did not use the grid again after he returned from France, it became a ubiquitous format during the 1960s and was adopted by Agnes Martin (a close friend of Kelly's when they both lived at Coenties Slip during the late 1950s through the early 1960s) as her signature motif.
31. See Goossen, *Kelly*, p. 50, and Patterson Sims and Emily Raub Pulitzer, *Ellsworth Kelly: Sculpture*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1982), p. 56.
32. Ann Hindry, "Conversation with Ellsworth Kelly," *Special Ellsworth Kelly*, pp. 34 and 36.
33. Fairbrother, *Kelly: Seven Paintings*, unpaginated. Kelly confirmed the connection of *Two Blacks, White and Blue* to sketches of tugboat smokestacks in a recent conversation with the author. In that conversation, Kelly said that when he returned to the United States, he initially thought that he would carry on with the idea of the multipanel pictures, but he moved into the figure/ground work in part to disassociate himself from European geometric abstraction and its American derivatives.
34. Goossen, in *Kelly*, p. 79, wrote that Kelly's use of canvases of different sizes together in one work was in part inspired by seeing a Jean Miró exhibition at which he was impressed at how works of different sizes backed together. On pp. 61–62, Goossen mentioned that when *Paratag as Three Panels* was exhibited in *Young America 1957* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, it was the most radical entry and was seen by some as Kelly's attempt to include more than one work. This reinforces how innovative multipanel painting still was at this point, before the device became more commonplace in the 1960s.
35. The three projecting panels in *Mediterranée* are raised from the surface by smaller pieces of wood that are in turn attached to panels set flush with the other six rectangles.
36. In 1958–59 Kelly accelerated his interest in relief and freestanding sculpture. The term "relief" was first used by Kelly for his early Paris works. After 1954, he used the term for works consisting of canvas panels with one projecting in front of the other and for works in painted and unpainted wood that he had made between 1958 and 1960. Kelly made his first freestanding sculptures, *Gabi* (cat. no. 39) and *Poivy* (cat. no. 35), in 1959, using painted aluminum. The distinction between Kelly's use of canvas panels for paintings and wood, aluminum, steel, or bronze for sculpture becomes important when he takes on sculpture as an activity that he sees as both different from and related to his activity as a painter. Sims and Pulitzer, in *Kelly: Sculpture*, p. 13, pointed out that the width of Kelly's sculptural materials rarely exceeds that of his stretched canvases.
37. Studies and paintings that Kelly made in the year before he left Paris, using the primary colors and the structure of repeated squares or rectangles, provided the foundation for Kelly's later series of large panel paintings in the mid-1960s. See the collage *Four Color Panels*, 1953 (cat. no. 123). In a recent conversation, Kelly stated that he sees his 1960s panel paintings as very different from the Paris period pictures, citing the smaller scale and his use of white and black with colors in the early panel paintings. He feels that in the 1960s paintings he attained the mural scale that he was seeking for his painting and the sense of color that he believes is required to sustain paintings of that scale.
38. Kelly, quoted in *Kelly: Painted Aluminas*, unpaginated.
39. Kelly, quoted in Roberta Bernstein, "Ellsworth Kelly: At Right Angles," in *Ellsworth Kelly: At Right Angles, 1964–1966*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Margo Leavin Gallery, 1991), p. 7.
40. Since 1990, Kelly has made four floor paintings, including the 1990 *Yellow Curve* installed at Portikus, Frankfurt. To date, these have been temporary installations done for specific sites.
41. Kelly painted *Spectrum I*, 1953, while he was in Paris, using a single panel with fourteen colors. In 1967 Kelly made three more *Spectrum* paintings, each consisting of thirteen pinned panels, their number determined by the twelve colors of the spectrum and one extra yellow. Two are long horizontal rectangles, and one is a square; in 1970 Kelly made two additional *Spectrum* paintings, consisting of thirteen panels separated by several inches of wall space.
42. Newman's four paintings of this title date from 1966 to 1970. Newman's color-field abstractions and Kelly's panel paintings have many interesting points of comparison. The difference most relevant to the topic of this essay is that Newman used single canvases even for his largest paintings. The divisions in the field are created by his hand-painted zips, as opposed to Kelly's use of the juncture or wall space between panels to create lines or intervals. Although both aimed to achieve a spiritual sensation through form and color, Kelly's work is meant to rivet the viewer on the immediacy—the here and now—of perceptual experience, while Newman's color fields transport the viewer to a transcendent experience of the sublime. See Thomas B. Hess, *Burton Newman*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1971), pp. 132–34.

43. According to Kelly, the size of the intervals in a given work may vary slightly from one installation to another depending on the specifics of each site.
44. Kelly made a second series of paintings using primary colors, each consisting of three horizontal panels joined to make a larger vertical rectangle, reviving another format that he had first used during his Paris period. *Blue Yellow Red I* and *II* are from 1966; *III* is from 1971 (cat. no. 63); and *IV* is from 1972. *Blue Yellow Red V*, 1954/1987, is based on one of the last collages that Kelly made in Paris. See Mark Rosenthal, "Ellsworth Kelly," in *The Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection: 1945-1995*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1996), p. 94, for a discussion of this series.
45. Michael Auping, *Abstraction Geometry Painting: Selected Geometric Abstract Painting in America since 1945*, exh. cat. (New York: Harry N. Abrams; Buffalo: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 1989), p. 76.
46. When asked in 1992 about the relationship of his work to that of Mangold and Marden, Kelly said: "In their statements, both Mangold and Marden are heirs to Rothko and Newman. Of course there are superficial similarities. Mangold works on shapes, but there's always linear involvement on the surface. To me, he's still depicting a line on the ground. As for Marden, he worked with Rauschenberg, and was very connected to Jasper Johns. His panel works were primarily concerned with painterly surface." See Hindry, "Conversation with Kelly," pp. 36-37.
47. Rosenthal, "Kelly," p. 94.
48. Goossen, *Kelly*, p. 74.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
50. Michael Fried, "Shape as Form: Frank Stella's New Paintings," in Henry Geldzahler, *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970), p. 403; originally published in *Artforum* 5, no. 3 (November 1966).
51. See John Elderfield, "Color and Area: New Paintings by Ellsworth Kelly," *Artforum* 10, no. 3 (November 1971), pp. 45-49. Elderfield thoroughly analyzed the use of color in Kelly's panel paintings from about 1970. Among the issues he discussed is the way Kelly uses color panels "to defy, or at least accommodate, the otherwise blatant spatial illusionism." Goossen, in *Kelly*, pp. 80-88, discussed Kelly's use of color to counteract illusionism and the effect of bending, which he described as a "kinesthetic projection, not an illusion."
52. Goossen, in *Kelly*, p. 92, wrote, "There is a tendency for the eye to make an imaginary completion, but it is hard to hold this fictional perimeter for long, because the colors and shapes themselves are so insistently discrete."
53. In a recent conversation with the author, Kelly said that even in works he made during the late 1960s, which look more straightforwardly geometric, several examples were directly inspired by observation, such as *Green White*, 1968.
54. *Chatham VI* (114 x 102 inches) is the tallest and thinnest of the series and *Chatham VII* (84 x 76 inches) is the squattest.
55. Rosenthal, "Kelly," p. 100.
56. While I was researching this essay, Kelly showed me studies for his *Chatham* series and for other multipanel paintings that confirm his ongoing use of collage and pencil drawings to plan his paintings.
57. Bernstein, "Kelly: Multipanelled Paintings," p. 90. Kelly did ink and pencil studies for triangle/rectangle panel paintings as early as 1970. See Sims and Pulitzer, *Kelly: Sculpture*, p. 93.
58. Kelly, quoted in Charles Hagen, "The Shape of Seeing: Ellsworth Kelly's Photographs," *Aperture*, no. 125 (fall 1991), p. 45.
59. Elizabeth C. Baker, *Ellsworth Kelly: Recent Paintings and Sculptures*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), pp. 7-8.
60. Diane Upright, "The Measure of Mystery: Ellsworth Kelly's Works on Paper," in *Ellsworth Kelly: Works on Paper*, exh. cat. (New York: Harry N. Abrams; Fort Worth: Fort Worth Museum of Art, 1987), p. 29.
61. Sims and Pulitzer, *Kelly: Sculpture*, p. 25.
62. In a recent conversation with the author, Kelly discussed the role of gauging a sense of scale through postcard collages. The postcard collages reinforce the idea of the relationship of his paintings and sculptures to the space around them, and their function as a thing existing in space rather than as a window through which to view something.
63. Robert Salomonstall Mattison, *Masterworks in the Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Collection* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1995), p. 148. On pp. 148-49, Mattison discussed *Dark Gray and White Panels I* in detail, including the exact measurements of its sides and angles. See also Rosenthal, "Kelly," pp. 101-03.
64. Characteristically for Kelly, his photographs follow imagery that has already appeared in his other works. Shapes closely resembling those in the 1977 photograph *Hangar Doorway, Saint Barts* had been used by him in black-and-white paintings on single panels that he had made the year before. In a rare instance of a painting modeled after a photograph, Kelly used *Hangar Doorway, Saint Barts* as the basis for *Black White*, 1988, a painting in two panels. But Kelly had to alter and adjust the forms in the process of transforming the three-dimensional scene in the photograph into flattened shapes.
65. Kelly said that the idea to paint the first of these came because he liked the way the three single color panels looked together when they were originally exhibited. He then painted *Three Gray Panels*. There is a related three-panel bronze wall-relief sculpture, *Untitled*, 1986. Earlier in 1982, Kelly made a freestanding aluminum sculpture in three parts. See Sims and Pulitzer, *Kelly: Sculpture*, pp. 168-69.
66. Robert Storr, "Kelly Now," in *Ellsworth Kelly*, exh. cat. (New York: BlumHelman Gallery, 1988), unpaginated.
67. See Barbara Rose, "Ellsworth Kelly's New Paintings: The Search for a Reasonable Order," in *Ellsworth Kelly: Curves/Rectangles*, exh. cat. (New York: BlumHelman, 1989). In 1992 Kelly made a series of single shaped panels also titled *Panels with Curves*.
68. A somewhat more pronounced relief is created by Kelly's practice of hanging his pictures so that the stretchers are raised slightly off the wall. The only thicker stretchers Kelly used were in his earliest relief paintings, and these were about two inches deep. In *White over Blue*,

1967, one of the two canvas panels projects eighteen inches in front of the other; however, the piece itself is more than twenty-eight feet long.

69. Yve-Alain Bois, "The Summons," in *Spencertown: Recent Paintings by Ellsworth Kelly*, exh. cat. (London: Anthony d'Offay; New York: Matthew Marks, 1994), p. 47.
70. Bois, in *ibid.*, p. 46, discussed the fold as denoting "both discontinuity and reflexivity—the capacity to alter a form radically while keeping it whole." He related this folded form to Kelly's freestanding sculpture using folded shapes, specifically *Pony*, 1959, and a more recent one, *Gaul*, 1993. A precedent within Kelly's own work for his recent panel paintings with arcs is his painted aluminum sculpture *White Curves II*, 1978, made of two arcs with the smaller one appearing to be folded back and over the larger one (untolded, the form would be read as a full circle). In his sculptures, Kelly allows for greater projection from the wall than he does in his paintings. In *White Curves II*, the entire relief is set six inches off the wall and the smaller section projects eight inches off the larger one. See Sims and Pulitzer, *Kelly: Sculpture*, p. 136.
71. Bois, "The Summons," p. 47.
72. Kelly, in *Kelly: Painted Aluminum*, unpaginated.
73. Kelly, *Fragmentation and the Single Form*, exh. brochure (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1990), unpaginated.
74. Hagen, "Shape of Seeing," p. 45.

Ellsworth Kelly's *Curves*

by Carter Ratcliff



1. Ellsworth Kelly and *Relief with Blue*, 1950, in Paris.

During the 1990s, Ellsworth Kelly made a series of three-sided canvases. In each of them, two straight sides meet to form a wide angle. Opening upward, this angle is closed by the third, curving edge. With his usual directness, Kelly calls these paintings *Curves*. For convenience, one could describe them as fan-shaped, although their arcs are too wide and too flat to present the familiar outline of a fan. These canvases have vividly idiosyncratic outlines, which, for all their sheer, formal interest, must vie for attention with their colors. Even Kelly's darkest blues and greens have a self-assured luminosity.

In his earliest works, from 1949–50, whites predominate, relieved only by black and an occasional, grayish blue. Then, as the 1950s began, Kelly invented a method of filling gridded canvases with random color-patterns. Although each of these canvases contains vivid patches of red, orange, and yellow, their impact is softened by the milder colors, plus black and white, that Kelly included in the mix. The idea of randomness brought a full range of color into his art, and sometimes it seems that even the most sensuous hues in his early grids are pretexts for experiment. Thus, matters of concept and method can distract the viewer from the chromatic riches of a painting such as *Spectrum Colors Arranged by Chance*, 1951–53 (cat. no. 15).

Traces of the Kelly grid remain in *Gaza*, 1952–56 (cat. no. 25), which is divided into four stacked rectangles of gradually decreasing height (going from bottom to top); the three largest are yellow, and the smallest, uppermost one is red. By varying the size of the rectangles, Kelly invests the painting with a solidly proportional architecture. Yet the structural subtleties of *Gaza* are easily lost in its blaze of yellow—or yellows, for there are two different hues, one of them the result of mixing a bit of the top panel's red with the yellow in the panel just below it. The warmer yellow shimmers, as one would expect. Surprisingly, the cooler one feels just as lush to the eye, as it spreads over the wide expanse of the lower panel.

The warmth of a cool yellow runs counter to expectations created by centuries of pictorial tradition in the West. Kelly often baffles us this way. Rather than linger over our puzzlement, we usually

let the glow of his colors fill our vision. By the end of the 1950s, Kelly's canvases could be relied upon to immerse the eye in immediate, unreflective pleasure. *City Island*, 1958 (cat. no. 31), is another blast of dazzling yellow, and there is vitality in the yellow's asymmetrical shape. With delight, one feels an inevitable conjunction of color and shape, and delight of this kind seems sufficient. While other artists grapple with issues, Kelly provides the eye with opportunities to luxuriate.

Early on, he had raised the issue of chance. During the 1960s, he made use of seriality, one of that decade's preoccupations. Nonetheless, it is routinely assumed that viewers respond to his imagery or not, according to taste. His art addresses sensibility, and is thus beyond argument. Undeniably, Kelly is an artist of refined taste, and his command of pictorial nuance is as confident on the scale of the big, New York painting as it is in a modest-size ink drawing. It is true, as well, that extreme visual refinement is difficult to discuss. Yet the strengths of Kelly's art are not entirely unaccountable, for his means are those that the Modernist tradition has made familiar.

In addition to the interplay of order and hazard, Kelly also engages other, equally crucial oppositions: abstraction and figuration, flatness and depth, object and image, color and shape. Among the most important of these is Kelly's command of the relations between figure and ground, an opposition that he brought into sharp focus with his first paintings and then redefined by the calm, deliberate evolution of his later work. This redefinition arrives at a triumphant clarity in the *Curves*, which Kelly began to make in the 1980s. Two particularly strong ones—*Green Curve* (cat. no. 104) and *Blue Curve* (cat. no. 105), both 1996—are among the concluding works of this exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum.

Curves appeared early in Kelly's art. A wide arc tops the vertical shape in *Kilometer Marker*, 1949 (cat. no. 3), and a pair of curves, not identical but complementary, reach down to the lower corners of *Relief with Blue*, 1950 (cat. no. 8). As Kelly has explained many times, the forms of *Relief with Blue* originated in a sketch he made at a production of *Hamlet* at the Théâtre Marigny in Paris, which he saw during the late 1940s. The relief element, with its curved inner edges, alludes to the shape of a half open curtain. Behind it appear the edge of the stage and the space beyond the footlights—again, not pictured but evoked. From the start, Kelly eliminated observed detail from an image until it hovered at the point of complete detachment from the external world. Yet, in his hands, this is not a process of generalization. His paintings and sculptures, even when they seem to refer to nothing beyond themselves, have the singularity of specific things—shadows, fragments of architecture, or large, unnameable objects.

An air of refined empiricism hovers around Kelly's art. Still, it is misleading to think of him as a figurative artist disguised as an abstractionist. He is less attentive to appearances than to the harmonies and clarities he detects in the process of seeing. Often, he dispenses with a starting point in the realm of visible things and begins a series of paintings with a shape invented from scratch. Kelly has learned to make Kellyesque shapes without any cues from the angular silhouette of a building or the sweep of a landscape.

Although the paintings and relief sculptures that introduced him to the art world were notable for their self-sufficiency, his later works are still more imperturbably themselves, and their calm intensifies the sensual impact of their colors. Never theatrical, always exquisite, Kelly's reds and yellows and greens allow us simply to bask in their chromatic splendor. Absorbed by this pleasure, we might conclude that a Kelly canvas is absorbed in itself. This would be to mistake unflappable confidence for inward-turning narcissism. A painting such as *Yellow Curve*, 1996 (cat. no. 103), faces outward, toward us, not to deliver a message but to display an exemplary quality: independence.

From the time of *Relief with Blue* until the mid-1960s, when he painted *Orange Green*, 1964 (cat. no. 44), Kelly proceeded in the traditional manner: by sending a line curving over a surface, he defined a figure against a ground. As familiar—as unquestionably natural—as this tradition may seem, it permits ambiguities. At first glance, it seems obvious that *Orange Green* shows us a portion of an



2. *Blue-Violet Curve I*, *Black Curve X*,
Orange Curve I, and *Red Curve V*, all 1982,
in Kelly's Spencertown studio, 1982.

orange oval on a green background. At second glance, questions arise. Are we to read the orange patch as flat, unrolled across the canvas, or should we see it as a voluptuously rounded form? Flat or volumetric, does it hover against a flat wall of green or is it immersed in green space? However we answer these questions, it seems clear that orange is the figure and that green is its habitat. Eventually, though, this certainty fades, as it occurs to the eye, subliminally, and then to the mind, consciously, that the quasi-triangle of green in the lower right-hand corner of this canvas could itself be a figure, solid and discrete. So could the large area of green above the orange. But if the green regions are figures, then the orange is the ground. Or perhaps this is a painting with three figures, one of them orange and the other two green. And then there are still other ways of reading *Orange Green*, not one of them persuasive enough to render the others irrelevant. For all the clarity of its line and color, this canvas is an exercise in ambiguity.

Kelly is considered a quintessentially American painter. The grand dimensions of his canvases, their bright, uninflected colors and confident forms, their air of confidence—all these traits are typical of American art in the 1960s, when Kelly emerged as a major figure. He also counts as a Modernist, which means that he has affinities with European tradition. However, this link with the Old World is difficult to see. Even during his Paris years, Kelly's images had an American clarity and candor. Yet they were never simple, never unequivocal. Kelly has always cultivated ambiguity, and this quality is what establishes his connections to the upper levels of European Modernism.

The stylistic gulf separating a Cubist still life of 1912 from a painting such as *Orange Green* is so vast that we might miss their shared concern: to remind the eye of its knack for subtlety, and thus guide the experience of seeing to self-awareness. Cubism's tangled, labyrinthine look makes its devotion to complexity obvious. Kelly's images are sharply defined, sometimes even plain. That they can be as ambiguous in their way as a Cubist still life is an irony available only to a hard-edged style. Looking past the simplicities of a Kelly painting, one's eyes enter a region lush with interpretative possibility and linger there, examining the various options with a pleasure difficult to separate from that of immersion in the sheer brilliance of Kelly's colors.

Kelly could have spent the rest of his career elaborating figure/ground ambiguities, which are, after all, basic to his medium. Instead, he redefined the relations between figure and ground, in paintings, reliefs, and sculptures during the first half of the 1960s. In *Yellow Piece*, 1966 (cat. no. 49), we see the process of redefinition brought to completion. More than six feet by six feet in size, this painting could be described as almost square—or formerly square. Two of its opposing corners are right angles. The other two corners have been smoothed away, leaving curves in their places. One can easily enough imagine the missing corners restored.

In fact, it is easy to suppose that, for all pictorial intents and purposes, the rectilinear corners are still in place there, permitting one to read *Yellow Piece* as a figure that almost but not quite fills up a ground of the standard, rectangular kind. Where we see curves, corners are implied, and thus the usual relationship between figure and ground persists. Yet facts defeat implications. Turning this painting into sheer figure, the curves of *Yellow Piece* release it from the traditional figure/ground relationship. *Yellow Piece* contains no ground. A figure filling the entire canvas, its ground is the wall.

Throughout his career, Kelly has circled back on himself, posing old questions in new ways. To his eye, pictorial devices are inexhaustible, and so, even after releasing figures from grounds, he continued to refine the interplay between the two. In the early 1970s, he launched the *Black Curves*, a series of triangular canvases. In each, a curved line runs alongside one of the edges, forming a border between a large area of black and two slivers of white. One's eyes perceive the largest form as the figure and the smaller ones as fragments of ground, although, as usual, Kelly's elegance permits a smooth reversal of this reading.

The same finesse draws *Red Curve IV*, 1973 (cat. no. 71), into an isosceles triangle lying on one side, with an arced line connecting the two acute-angled corners and dividing the surface into zones of



3. *Red Curved Panel*, 1994, in Kelly's Spencertown studio, 1994

red and white. When the white portions of images such as these fell away, the monochrome *Curves* emerged. By a new path, Kelly had arrived at a destination reached earlier with works such as *Yellow Piece*—the painting that is all figure, and thus converts the wall into its ground.

In 1983 Kelly published a statement about the need, first, to clarify “angles, curves, edges,” and then to adjust these linear elements to “color and tonality.” With the adjustment complete, a painting displays its “freedom and separateness.”¹¹ It may be that none of Kelly’s works are any freer, any more fully endowed with “separateness,” than the rest, yet the big, one-color *Curves* display these qualities with particular force. If these canvases were arguments, independence would be their leading point. However, an objection occurs. What, if anything, makes Kelly’s monochrome *Curves* more independent than monochrome canvases by other painters? Isn’t every one-color canvas a figure, separate and free and thereby able to convert the wall to its ground? Not, I think, if it appears within a four-sided, right-angled frame—the traditional enclosure that Kelly began to set aside with paintings such as *White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection*, 1951–55 (cat. no. 24).

Closed off from the space of the room, the rectangular canvas posits a space of its own. In monochrome painting, much that we expect to see within the frame does not appear—the image is, in a way, a blank—and yet the full range of pictorial possibility is implicit. Horizons could be defined. Figures could emerge from the ground, especially in Brice Marden’s monochromes from the 1960s, which seem to have absorbed any number of forms—and colors—into the dense greens and grays of their surfaces. A monochrome canvas is laden with implications by the very fact of being framed.

For years, Robert Ryman covered the rectangular surfaces of his paintings with white paints of various kinds, each of them laid on in a distinctive manner. For every kind of paint, Ryman devised a specific texture, then spread it from edge to edge. Recently, he has permitted certain anomalous areas to appear and to remain. These produce, in concise form, figure/ground relations and serve to recall how adamantly he avoided them for most of his career. Yet even the most evenly brushed of Ryman’s white canvases are haunted by the memory of figure and ground. The whiteness blots out the possibility, even as the frame itself calls out for it, and this ghost of the figure/ground relationship—the product of the painter’s first mark on a blank canvas—seems to hover near every four-sided monochrome canvas.

By preserving the traditional frame, monochrome painters maintain the familiar difference between ordinary space and the imaginary space of the picture. Unenclosed by the usual rectangle, Kelly’s monochromes do not establish an impermeable barrier between pictorial space and the space of the gallery. Instead of resting within their own borders, they sweep across the wall, achieving “separateness” from the room but also engaging it. For these *Curves* are figures. Without the wall, they would have no ground. Kelly’s monochrome canvases enter real space, as do the works of Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Sol LeWitt, and other Minimalists. If we are not careful, this similarity will persuade us to group Kelly with them. As he says, “I’ve had to fight the Minimalist label a bit.”¹²

For Judd and others who properly hear that label, pictorial effects were unacceptable. Suggestions of depth, hints of perspective, evocations of atmosphere—all these were faults inherited from painting, errors to be expunged so that art could progress. The need, according to the Minimalists, was for art that declared the literal truth about itself. In the early 1960s, when Minimalism was new and Frank Stella was still among its proponents, he put the ideal in a phrase: “What you see is what you see.”¹³ To achieve this state of self-evidentiary obviousness, the work of art sought to eliminate any sense of distance between itself and the place where it was seen. It refused to open onto another, imaginary space, nor would it make even faint allusions to qualities of light. An object counted as Minimalist only if it submitted, as a set of material facts, to whatever lighting the gallery offered. Hiding nothing, avoiding complexity, the Minimalist object strove to be in complete accord with the space in which it appeared.

Thus, the Minimalists built sculptures from the same components that gallery interiors are constructed of: flat planes, straight lines, right angles, uninflected colors. Boxes and gridwork

proliferated. Morris acknowledged that Minimalist objects—his own gray cubes, in particular—could be dull, yet he refused to consider their dullness a fault. Attention, he argued in 1966, should not focus on the artist's work but on the way "the better new work takes relationships out of the work and makes them a function of space, light, and the viewer's field of vision."⁴ In its early days, Minimalism proposed a protocol of seeing.

A properly spare object would immediately shift our perceptions into a literalist key. Alerted to the facts of form and materials that the object presented as sheerly factual, no more and no less, we would then come alive to all the facts that shape our immediate environment and would have a Minimalist experience not only of art but of our surroundings. We would perceive the world purged of the illusions and allusions, the errors and delusions, that art has traditionally encouraged. This was the Minimalist hope. Although he is in some ways a literalist, Kelly does not share this hope, for he does not share the Minimalist wish to suppress illusions of depth and other pictorial effects. He finds pleasure in these effects, and he trusts his audience not to be led astray by them.

Three decades after the Minimalists appeared, it is difficult to see why Kelly was ever mistaken for one of them—difficult but not impossible. For his canvases enter the Minimalist habit when they move out of pictorial space into real space, to commandeer the wall as their ground. Yet Kelly's paintings, whether *Curves* or *Panels*, do not make this maneuver in a Minimalist spirit. LeWitt's lattices, like Judd's and Morris's boxes, rework the premises of the architecture that contains them. In fact, Minimalism could be understood as a commentary, in abstract form, on building in the International Style. The focus of Kelly's art is not so constricted. The flat arcs of his larger *Curves* have the sweep of wings or the horizon. Entering the space of the gallery in the frankest, most literal manner, Kelly's shaped canvases fill that space with allusions that it can never contain. This is a thoroughly un-Minimalist procedure. For all the literal immediacy of the *Curves* and *Panels*, these canvases open onto depths filled with imaginary light. Kelly the literalist is also a pictorialist, a painter in command of his medium's traditional resources.

Calmly symmetrical, *Blue Curve* lies flat against the wall. An asymmetrical *Curve* could be seen as a lunge into depth, a form piercing the wall's surface. This reading implies a point of view from which we would confront the canvas straight on. From that unattainable vantage, this powerfully skewed shape would look as calm, as securely balanced on its point, as *Blue Curve*. Many of the four-sided *Panels* are similarly ambiguous. As irregular as they look to us, they might well appear to be squared-away, perfectly symmetrical, if we could see them from the right standpoint in imaginary space.

Three Panels: Orange, Dark Gray, Green, 1986 (cat. no. 86), presents this possibility in triplicate. With each *Panel* tilted out of symmetry in its own, idiosyncratic way, the work is ungraspably complex. Moreover, the orange, the gray, and the green imply three different atmospheres, times of day, imaginary worlds. There is no end to these complexities, yet even when they are tripled, as in *Three Panels*, Kelly's forms remain crisp and clear enough to be mistaken for the work of a Minimalist.

Speculating on the symmetry implicit in Kelly's asymmetries, we begin to see anonymous stretches of gallery wall as elements of his art. What was architectural becomes pictorial, if only for a moment. Like his sculptures, his monochrome canvases give an aesthetic charge to everything in their vicinity. Minimalist sculptures do the same, but the charge is different—literalist, not pictorial. Kelly's art mediates between the literal and the pictorial, teaching each to inflect the other. Insinuating the complexities of abstract art into ordinary space, Kelly redraws boundaries or simply erases them. He redefines all his mediums—painting, relief, sculpture—and the elegance of this redefinition shows his Modernist impulses at their strongest and most subtle.

Kelly carries on a tradition that began in the previous century, when Edouard Manet and others began to emphasize the doubleness, the ambiguity, inherent in every touch of paint. The painter's mark is an element in a picture and also a thing in itself—potentially an object. To bring out that potential, while preserving the premises of pictorial art, Modernist painting evolved from representation to abstraction.

This evolution can be described as a series of progressive steps, yet it has never been easy to fit Kelly's art into an account of that sort.

Not only does he circle back on earlier concerns, making new abstractions by renewing the old—he refuses to choose between abstraction and figuration. Throughout his career, he has made pictures of plants and portraits of friends. He has produced collages and photographs. Kelly does not advance by discarding his past, nor has he established a strict hierarchy of values. Playing the abstract off the figurative, mediating between literal flatness and illusions of depth, object and image, real space and pictorial space, he gives equal weight to both terms of each opposition—and persuades them, in his best works, to blend.

There are no absolutes in Kelly's art, no unshakable premises, no conclusions that one must accept unquestioningly, without amendment. To return to canvases such as *Blue Curve* for a moment—their serenity is no less contingent than the grand unease of an asymmetrical canvas. Kelly does not posit symmetry as the given from which unbalanced form evolves. In his art, symmetry could be seen as a departure from asymmetry, a variation like any other.

Undermining hierarchies, Kelly renders each of his forms as independent—and as dependent—as every other. When an artist attributes absolute value to one of his forms, that form stands, metaphorically, for absolute authority in life—or, if you prefer, politics. Kelly is not an authoritarian. Guided by no overarching program, inviting us to see his works as particular responses to specific situations, he offers metaphors for resistance to authority. The point lies not in a moral lesson but in the experience, the perception, of certain ideals transposed to painting with astonishing vividness.

When a shaped panel turns a wall, any wall, into a ground, that architectural plane becomes as contingent as the painting itself. In this pictorialized atmosphere, the artist's remarks about the "freedom and separateness" of his forms acquire a large significance. The figure is the self, and the ground is the world; the former inflects the latter, yet refuses to let itself be locked in. As I see it, Kelly's art offers an allegory of an idealized state: individual independence, a personal autonomy engaged with the world but disinclined to capitulate to any of the forces encountered there.

Notes

1. Kelly, statement (1983), in *Ellsworth Kelly: Painted Aluminum Wall Sculpture; Weathering Steel Wall Sculpture*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Margo Leavin Gallery; New York: Leo Castelli Gallery, 1984), unpaginated.
2. Kelly, interview with the author, December 16, 1991.
3. Frank Stella, quoted in Bruce Glaser, "Questions to Stella and Judd" (1966), in Gregory Battcock, ed., *Minimalism* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), p. 158.
4. Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part 2" (1966), in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1993), p. 15.

Experiencing Presence

by Mark Rosenthal



1. Archaic North American birdstones from the artist's collection.

The self-contained, abstract paintings of Ellsworth Kelly demand a rapt gaze. Approached this way, each work—beyond the sum of its physical attributes—exudes an ineluctable presence, an aura of something palpable. A look at Kelly's history, practices, and interests suggests the artist's desire to court and encourage such a response.

During the early phase of his career, in Paris from 1948 to 1954, Kelly formulated many of the central premises that would shape his subsequent thinking and work. Partaking of the aesthetics of early abstraction, he was deeply interested in the subject of the spiritual in art. While noting that this quality was present in "all the art man has made," he was especially cognizant of the often large scale and anonymous authorship of spiritual art made by craftsmen during earlier periods.¹ In this regard, Kelly greatly admired Cistercian, Romanesque, and Gothic architecture, medieval stained-glass windows, Egyptian pyramids, and Sung vases. He sensed that the people who made these works were filled with a religious feeling, which they conveyed in virtually every detail of their craftsmanship.² To emulate this elusive process became Kelly's ambition: to imbue art with his own expressiveness, his own spirituality, not through the depiction of a narrative but through color and form only. Because he was uninterested in the specific dogmas of earlier cultures, however, Kelly needed to cultivate his "own spiritual fire" with which to sustain his art.³ As his art evolved, he was to find the preponderance of his inspiration in nature, so that its phenomena became the source of his spirituality.

Looking at immediate predecessors during his Paris years, Kelly spoke of the distinction between Pablo Picasso's and Piet Mondrian's art. Each possessed an equivalent degree of spirituality, he said,⁴ but as opposed to the highly personal and outwardly expressive approach of Picasso, Mondrian exemplified a restrained, "impersonal style"⁵ that was nonetheless spiritual too. Kelly was very much attracted to what he thought of as Mondrian's anonymous style, feeling that the same approach suited his character, and sought to achieve his own version of it. He found further support when he visited Constantin

Brancusi in 1950: "For me, his art was an affirmation: it strengthened my intention to make an art that is spiritual in content."⁶ Similarly, he struggled to "get that spirit just into [abstract] form,"⁷ the accomplishment of which became central to his art.

Beginning about 1965, following a long-standing interest, Kelly began collecting anonymously wrought, stone objects from archaic cultures. Describing the appeal of these iconic-seeming, singular forms, he claims that they have an "aura of shape."⁸ Similarly, Kelly concerns himself with creating an abstract form that projects an intangible yet eloquent and undeniable presence. The object must have a bearing, a condition of being present and notable, concrete and magical all at once.

Kelly says, "I collect things that I see myself in,"⁹ and it is probably the cultural source of these stones with which he feels the closest affinity. He has a strong dislike for much that is conventional and anecdotal in daily life, instead preferring archaic civilizations that "communicate in a different way." One way is through the vehicle of mysterious objects that possess "symbolic not practical use."¹⁰ Here again, there is the suggestion that a spiritual or religious impetus inspired the anonymous makers of these stones.

How does Kelly himself arrive at a similar effect? Certainly a burning "spiritual fire" is useful, for the application of design principles in the making of his abstract works is not enough. Each of Kelly's paintings usually has an idiosyncratic, often deceptive, form that renders it quite individualistic. Initial impressions regarding proportions, dimensions, contours, shapes, and colors are soon replaced by recognitions that the pictures are more subtle than they at first appear. For instance, one rarely finds a simple square, rectangle, circle or monochrome, or if present, it is multiplied, conjoined with a dissimilar or irregular form, hand drawn, or invested with a wildly alluring color. Through these strategies, an object gains a living quality or personality; it can, Kelly said, "exist forever in the present."¹¹

In his striving for presence, Kelly early in his career sought to imbue his paintings with an objectlike existence: "Instead of making a picture that was an interpretation of a thing seen, or a picture of invented content, I found an object and 'presented' it itself alone. . . . The new works were to be objects, unsigned, anonymous."¹² With developments that started in the early 1950s and became a concentrated endeavor from the mid-1960s, Kelly achieved this effect more dramatically by employing the shaped canvas as a kind of unique "body" for a mass of color, and by emphasizing the relationship of the canvas to the wall on which it resides. He explained that painting finds "its own space and always demands its freedom and separateness."¹³ Although this description has a certain grandiose and perhaps anthropomorphic suggestion, Kelly almost never suggests a specifically personal or human connotation for his masses of color. The poetry in his art, and the content such as it is pertinent, is simply bound up within the form of each work.

Kelly's objectlike works are replete with a certain "voluptuousness";¹⁴ this favorite word of his helps convey the degree to which his paintings, unlike conventionally flat, pictorial ones, are meant to assume a natural and living existence within the space of the viewer. Because sensuality and even hedonism are crucial to Kelly's art and thought, color symbolism is precluded; instead, the visceral aspects of color are his primary interest. According to him, such qualities offer a potential spirit of *joie de vivre*, further countering the endemic banality of everyday life.¹⁵ While these concerns "don't enter into art discussions anymore,"¹⁶ Kelly wants "my art to be moving" and to have feeling.¹⁷ He tells a story that one summer day in 1959, at his studio on Coenties Slip in Lower Manhattan, he found himself profoundly moved by the brilliant red of a newly completed painting. Kelly then created a circular space with stepladders against which he leaned a group of red paintings in the center of the room, beneath a skylight, in the noontime sun. Already mostly unclothed due to the heat, he removed the rest of his clothing. Then, in the space formed by the canvases, he improvised an uninhibited dance.¹⁸ Besides turning himself into the figure in his own red version of Henri Matisse's *Dance I*, 1909 (Museum of Modern Art, New York), Kelly reveals several fundamental aspects of his work through this anecdote: the inspiration that moves him to such an overflowing of feeling emerges from the sheer sensuality of a formal element—red—and there is a virtually pagan component to his spiritual fervor.



2. Kelly at Coenties Slip studio, New York, 1958.



3. *Diagonal with Curve III*, 1978.

Oil on canvas, 135 x 99 inches (342.9 x 251.5 cm)

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of the Friends of
the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Kelly's place among his contemporaries has always been difficult to assign. Although a member of the generation of Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, and Cy Twombly, he shares very little with those individuals artistically. Lawrence Alloway termed Kelly one of the "hard-edge" painters;¹⁹ although not entirely unjust, the designation rankled Kelly because of its emphasis on edge rather than mass,²⁰ and is, at any rate, an oversimplification of the character of his art. Sometimes identified with the formalist type of thinking epitomized by Clement Greenberg, Kelly in fact possesses little of its aspiration for the newest, purely pictorial innovation. In the same vein, Kelly is far more romantic about his work than Frank Stella's famous truism—"what you see is what you see"—would permit. Because of the apparent simplicity of his art, Kelly is often called a precursor of Minimalist manifestations, but—as is evident from his love of alluring color and idiosyncratic form—in no way does he exhibit a similar, overly geometric, pragmatic, deadpan approach. In terms of Kelly's own thinking at least, he might best be related to the Abstract Expressionists of the New York School. While he did not know their work to any significant extent during his years in Paris, he shared their wish to express a transcendent experience through an abstract language seen on a large scale; moreover, the paintings of Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko often hint at a presence too. However, Kelly's voluptuous and at once impersonal style is at odds with the high degree of individual expressiveness of the New Yorkers. Also, Kelly's *joie de vivre* and veneration of the sensuous qualities of nature is rarely seen in the usually more moody and urban-oriented paintings of the Abstract Expressionists.

Kelly's art, like that of other artists of the twentieth-century abstractionist movement, demonstrates that there can be a *there* there, that a presence can be created on a picture plane—an effect that might compete with the spirituality inherent in the work of anonymous craftsmen or in historical depictions of a divinity. In contemplating a painting by Kelly, what is required of the viewer is an aesthetic gaze, that is, eyes willing to look upon the artwork and be moved by its mere description. Kelly has observed that everything has presence, that all spatial arrangements are pregnant with a kind of life substance.²¹ It remains for us to share his vision and experience the presence in the objects he crafts.

Notes

1. Kelly in his 1951 application for a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, artist's archives.
2. Discussed in *ibid.*; Kelly, "Notes from 1969," in *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings and Sculptures 1963-1979*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1979), p. 30; and Kelly, interview with the author, December 29, 1995.
3. Kelly, interview with the author, December 29, 1995.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Kelly, *Fragmentation and the Single Form*, exh. brochure (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1990), unpaginated.
7. Kelly, interview with the author, December 29, 1995.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Kelly, interview with the author, August 25, 1995.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Kelly, "Notes from 1969," p. 32.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
13. Kelly, statement, in *Ellsworth Kelly*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Margo Leavin Gallery; New York: Leo Castelli Gallery, 1984), unpaginated.
14. Kelly, interview with the author, December 29, 1995.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Kelly, interview with the author, August 25, 1995.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.* The paintings that inspired this moment may have included *Broadway*, 1958 (cat. no. 30), *Sunac*, 1959 (cat. no. 33), or *Orange Red Relief*, 1959 (cat. no. 37).
19. Lawrence Alloway, *Systemic Painting*, exh. cat. (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1966), p. 14.
20. Henry Geldzahler, "Interview with Ellsworth Kelly," *Art International* 8, no. 1 (Feb. 15, 1964), p. 47; originally published in *Paintings, Sculpture and Drawings by Ellsworth Kelly*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Washington Gallery of Modern Art; Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1963), unpaginated.
21. Kelly, interview with the author, December 29, 1995.

At Play with Vision: Ellsworth Kelly's "Line, Form and Color"

by Clare Bell



1. *Dots in a Row*, 1951.

Ink on paper, 7 1/2 x 8 inches (19.1 x 20.3 cm).

Private collection.

It started with an ink dot on a single piece of paper; next came a series of random dots scattered over another page, then a horizontal row of panned dots traversing a third sheet (fig. 1). But it would be the unbroken horizontal line on a fourth piece of paper (fig. 3; cat. no. 119.1) that, to Ellsworth Kelly, constituted the true beginning of his book project "Line, Form and Color" (cat. nos. 119.1–119.40). In a letter from Paris dated May 28, 1951, Kelly wrote to his friend Ralph Coburn describing the project: "I am planning a book, perhaps a magazine, with no writing whatsoever, just (linoleum) prints."¹ That summer, Kelly created a series of forty-six works,² each seven-and-one-half by eight inches, encompassing ink on paper, collage, and single pieces of commercially colored paper mounted on supports. He reserved two-and-one-half inches on the left side of each plate for the binding he had in mind. Later that year, he submitted an application to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in New York for the money to publish them. On the application form, Kelly wrote, "I will create a book which shall be an alphabet of plastic pictorial elements, and which shall aim at establishing a new scale of painting, a closer contact between the artist and the wall, and a new spirit of painting to accompany modern architecture."³

The book, according to the artist, was conceived as a way to distinguish himself from other applicants, most of whom sought painting grants. However, "Line, Form and Color" is much more than an ambitious proposal by a young artist in serious need of funds. Completed at a critical time in Kelly's career, it represented his first in-depth exploration of abstract idioms and anticipated the very shapes, color relationships, and uses of line that define Kelly's more mature paintings and sculptures, and his highly contemplative, inventive engagement with form and architecture. Moreover, the project signaled a leap into a unique new model of abstraction. It would be the artist's first attempt at reconciling the contradictions inherent to abstract art and would, in turn, forge new territories for it.

Kelly developed "Line, Form and Color" during his years in France, yet it owed its genesis as much to his experiences as a student in Boston as it did to his formative Paris period. Kelly had enrolled at the



2. Max Beckmann, *Self-Portrait in Tuxedo* (*Selbstbildnis im Smoking*), 1927. Oil on canvas, 54 1/2 x 37 3/4 inches (139.5 x 95.5 cm). Harvard University Art Museum, Busch-Reisinger Museum, Association Fund.

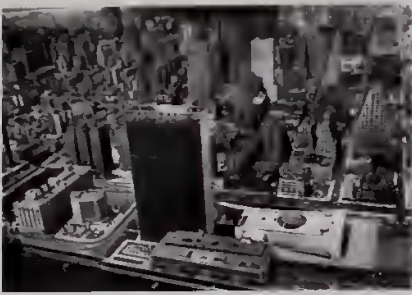
School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston on January 13, 1946, using funds from the G.I. Bill of Rights.⁴ His decision to go to Boston was prompted by an article he had read in the October 1944 issue of *Esquire* magazine, about Karl Zerbe, a so-called “Boston Expressionist” who was teaching at the school.⁵ Zerbe’s paintings combined the emotive gestures of Expressionism with the detached attitude of *Neue Sachlichkeit*,⁶ two trends that defined the German avant-garde during the 1920s and 1930s. Kelly recalled morning classes with Zerbe in which he painted from the nude, and afternoon drawing classes with Ture Bengtz, also from the nude. He also took courses in design and history, which he later credited as helping him with his painting.⁷

Like most young artists, Kelly experimented with many styles. His work from this period reveals an eclectic approach focused on figuration. Because his classes were located within the Museum of Fine Arts,⁸ Kelly had ample opportunity to savor the frescoes of the apse from Santa Maria de Mur in Catalonia and other examples of Romanesque and Byzantine art, which would have a profound impact on his choice of motifs and deployment of scale. Moreover, it was in Boston that he became immersed in German Expressionism. Of lasting significance for Kelly was the work of Max Beckmann, who, at Zerbe’s invitation, came to visit the school in March 1948. Kelly’s use of line during his student years can be traced to Beckmann’s weighty dark outlines, which entomb his contorted figures, whether of German society or of himself. Kelly particularly admired Beckmann’s *Self-Portrait in Tuxedo*, 1927 (fig. 2), one of the first major examples of modern German painting to be bought by a museum in the Boston area.⁹ Line in Beckmann’s work functions as an emotive jolt animating the flesh of his bourgeois caricatures. The German artist’s emphasis on line for narrative purposes certainly could have inspired Kelly to explore its potential as a subject in “Line, Form and Color.” The seven opening plates of the book (cat. nos. 119.1–119.7) focus solely on the effect of line on the space around it. Beginning with the lone horizontal vector, Kelly then created another plate using a similarly drawn vertical (cat. no. 119.2). With one simple stroke, Kelly introduced the complexities that incite and confound perceptions of space. While each line is the tangible subject, the differences between them are inconsequential. What is important is the impact they exert as active agents of the composition. This relatively modest notion was brought into sharper focus in later works, such as *Orange Red Relief*, 1959 (cat. no. 37), in which the central overlapping vertical seam can be read as both the subject of the work and the chief physical instrument of its spatial dynamic. For the next three plates in “Line, Form and Color” (cat. nos. 119.3–119.5), Kelly focused on serial imagery, a subject that would occupy him increasingly in later years. In one plate, he drew a series of tightly rendered vertical strands (cat. no. 119.3). Despite the artist’s exacting straight lines, the pinched distance between each vector destabilizes the plane, causing the entire composition to oscillate. This page, in particular, anticipates Kelly’s later *Spectrum* canvases. He made the drawing at the same time he translated the ripple effects of water that he observed on the surface of the Seine into a full-scale drawing (cat. no. 115) and then a painting (cat. no. 14). In the next plate (cat. no. 119.4), he used a horizontal and a vertical line again, this time together, crossing them to create simultaneous fields of equal value. This would later lead him to explore the effects of joining same-size horizontal and vertical panels in works such as *Chatham IX: Black Green*, 1971 (cat. no. 64), where the resulting form functions as an independent object on the wall, unencumbered by the illusion of pictorial ground. Line segued into object even more in his book when he introduced the grid (cat. no. 119.5). Like all of Kelly’s motifs, the grid, which would years later identify him as a precursor to 1960s Minimalism, is based on perceived occurrences. Among its sources are the topographical “grids” he observed in cultivated fields in northern France.¹⁰ Kelly’s gridded lines also partition the picture plane into isolated sectors. For him, the shape of each autonomous cube was more consequential than the individual lines that formed them. By pushing line to its extreme—in his grid, line is conceived at its most distilled—Kelly, like Beckmann, sought to suffuse it with a metaphysical and expressive force.

During Kelly’s years in Boston, the long-brewing impasse between those who advocated an art seemingly devoid of content and those who believed just as strongly in a content-based art reached a

3. *Horizontal Line*, 1951.

Ink on paper, 7 1/2 x 8 inches (19.1 x 20.3 cm). Private collection.



4. United Nations Building, New York City.



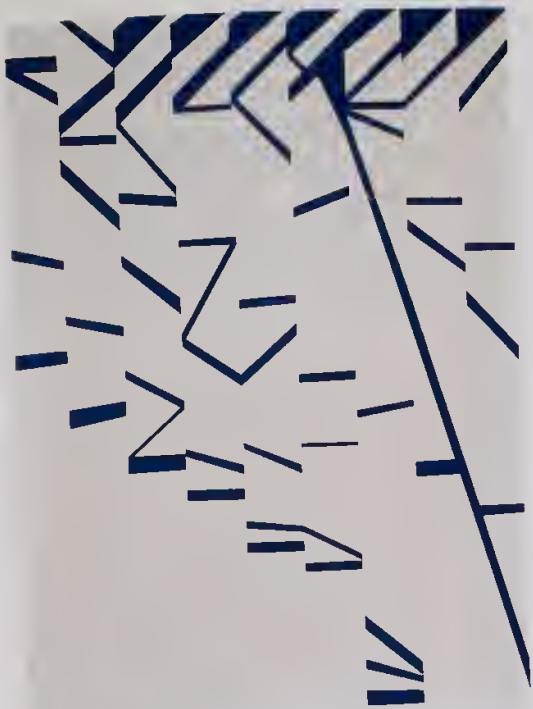
5. View of the half-finished Unite d'Habitation, Marseille, France, designed by Le Corbusier.

climax. These differences were exemplified by the rift between the Museum of Modern Art in New York (founded in 1929) and the Boston Institute of Modern Art (a branch of the museum, established in 1936). Under the tutelage of its director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., New York's MoMA championed the work of the French school. However, James Sachs Plaut, the Boston Institute's director, focused on figurative art, especially from northern Europe. Among the first exhibitions that Plaut initiated was one devoted to German contemporary artists, in 1939. An exhibition devoted to French painter Georges Rouault, whose work was far more aligned with German Expressionism than with the French School, followed in 1940. At this time, Barr published a pamphlet, *What Is Modern Painting?*, in which he identified abstraction as the apex of twentieth-century artistic efforts. Arguing that "*how* they paint can be separated from *what* they paint," Barr concluded that the Expressionists' "colors and shapes and lines have a life of their own which can survive without any subject at all."¹¹ Taking umbrage with Barr's beliefs and MoMA's embrace of Surrealist automatism and other Modernist tendencies, Plaut began a campaign to sever the institute's ties with MoMA. Striving to expose the "cult of bewilderment" and archaic sensibilities that he felt gripped the term "modern," Plaut issued a written declaration in 1948, the final year of Kelly's studies in Boston, announcing that his institution's name would be changed to the Institute of Contemporary Art. "This apparently harmless, one-word change," writes Serge Guilbaut, "sparked, not only in Boston but in the whole country, a critical upheaval that would shake up the American art world for several years."¹²

According to the manifesto, "Modern art failed to speak clearly. . . . It describes a style which is taken for granted; it has had time to run its course and, in the pattern of all historic styles, has become both dated and academic."¹³ Ten thousand copies of the manifesto, dated February 17, 1948, were printed and distributed internationally. The proclamation touched off a firestorm of criticism. For many artists, the pronouncement reeked of institutional control and, inevitably, of censorship. Given its timing, the manifesto was, in their view, reminiscent of Hitler's systematic suppression of avant-garde practices during the rise of National Socialism. David Aronson, Hyman Bloom, Jack Levine, H. W. Janson, Karl Knaths, Lawrence Kupferman, and Zerbe were so offended by what they felt was "the injurious meddling of The Institute in the affairs of creative artists" that they held a meeting in Boston on March 25, 1948 to call for its retraction.¹⁴

While not directly involved in these debates over aesthetics, Kelly certainly could not avoid the paradox of trying to reconcile his immersion in German Expressionism with his proclivity toward School of Paris artists such as Pablo Picasso and Fernand Léger. Instead, he incorporated aspects of both in his art at that time and sought a new channel to painting by thinking beyond the traditional scope of the frame. Kelly vividly recalls Herbert Read visiting the school and delivering a lecture in which he declared that easel painting was no longer a viable option: art and architecture must instead join together. Read's sermon made a lasting impact on Kelly, so much so that he echoed those very sentiments in the statement he wrote to accompany "Line, Form and Color." He claimed to seek "a closer contact between the artist and the wall. . . . Creative painting today means easel painting, 'the original oil painting,' sold through galleries to private collectors, and to museums, to be hung on walls. This painting has no relation to the architectural wall; it is an expression of the artist's separate personality. I believe that artists should work directly with the architect, building as the architect builds."¹⁵

It is not surprising that Kelly would seize on the power of architecture to communicate his ideas. Building experienced an inevitable boom following the war. Among the most ambitious plans set into motion after 1945 was a complex of offices located on seventeen acres along New York's East River designed to house the newly formed United Nations (fig. 4). Led by American architect Wallace K. Harrison, ten international architects were commissioned to study the schemes for construction and to develop them.¹⁶ The first to do so was renowned French architect Le Corbusier [Charles Edouard Jeanneret], who arrived in New York on January 25, 1947 to participate in the planning for the Secretariat, General Assemblies, and General Agencies buildings. Although Le Corbusier left the project before construction began—due to political clashes with the international committee—the finished edifices (completed 1950–52) ended up



6. *La Combe III*, 1951.
Oil on canvas, 63 1/2 x 44 1/2 inches
(161.3 x 113 cm). Private collection.

looking very much like his early sketches. The magnitude of the building project and the issues it raised about the type of artwork that could measure up to the new modern architecture were clearly on Kelly's mind in 1951 when he wrote in his proposal: "In America there is no painting to accompany contemporary architecture. Recently, at New York City's Museum of Modern Art there, was a 'Symposium: Art with Architecture,' headed by Philip Johnson. They were unable to solve their dilemma: 'what kind of art should be used with the new United Nations building?'"¹⁷

Le Corbusier's ideas coincided with the rapid urbanization taking place in the postwar climate. He had been advocating the use of reinforced concrete since the 1920s as a way of achieving an independent structure—a building in which the structure and the façade are independent of one another, permitting the elimination of load-bearing walls in favor of what he referred to as a "free plan": "Reinforced concrete in the house brings about the free plan! The floors no longer superimpose rooms of the same size. They are free. A great economy of constructed volume, a rigorous use of each centimeter. A great financial economy. The easy rationalism of the new plan!"¹⁸ Recessed columns, strip windows, and concave roofs were among the basic elements that Le Corbusier conceived for the wave of homes and offices needed to accommodate the burgeoning middle classes. His *Unité d'Habitation*, an eighteen-story-high building designed for Marseilles, was one such colossal concrete structure. Begun in 1947 and completed in October 1952, it includes 337 domiciles corresponding to different residential needs, a shopping arcade, hotel and pool, kindergarten, and communal rooftop. On the façade, Le Corbusier used different polychrome panels between each balcony. In 1952, Kelly traveled to Marseilles to see the building while it was still under construction (fig. 5). Le Corbusier's ideas of economy expressed through his "free plan" recall Kelly's own quest to liberate form from composition by relying on the power of primary parts within a whole. Thus, "Line, Form and Color" can be understood as a progression and consolidation of modular elements similar to the way an architect such as Le Corbusier conceived his columns, windows, and roofs as independent cellular structures that could be inserted into the overall concrete frame. To this day, Kelly regards the sequence of plates from "Line, Form and Color" as, for the most part, unfixed and interchangeable. Realignment and fluidity—key aspects of Kelly's later work—are foreshadowed in "Line, Form and Color." By dispensing with notions of hierarchy, Kelly was not only able to free his shapes from the easel but could think about painting as architecture's equal.

Kelly's schooling in Boston was instrumental in shaping his predilection for fragmentation as well as his use of color and certain motifs. It was also during his time in Boston that Kelly began to formulate his approach to subject matter grounded in empirical vision. These remain decisive elements of his oeuvre today. Kelly's years in Boston also reaffirmed his admiration for the monuments of past civilizations and his attraction to European art. But, ultimately disillusioned with the limited scope of work being done in Boston, Kelly decided to relocate to Paris, which he had visited in September 1944, when his battalion was stationed in nearby Saint-Germain-en-Laye, for several weeks. Living in Paris, he would have access to the cultural antiquities and shrines he admired and could meet the city's preeminent modern artists. Kelly was certainly not the only American to return to the city after the war. "The American student colony in Paris is a social phenomenon," wrote James Baldwin following his own sojourn there during the 1950s, "so amorphous as to at once demand and defy generality." Profiling the typical expatriate, Baldwin seized on the "student painter," whose motivations for coming in the first place, he stated, were vague at best. What drove these students' desire to be there was not study, or admiration for the French, according to Baldwin. As a result, "the American student lives here . . . in a kind of social limbo."¹⁹

Soon after arriving in Paris in October 1948, Kelly began classes at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, where he met and became close friends with Jack Youngerman, another American studying there on the G.I. Bill, who had emigrated to Paris the year before. By spring 1950, Kelly's government funds were nearly depleted. That summer, Jürg Spiller, a Swiss painter whom he befriended in Paris, suggested that Kelly and Youngerman apply for Guggenheim grants. Spiller, who was much older than they, was part of a circle that included Jean Arp, Francis Picabia, and Georges Vantongerloo. Spiller also knew Hilla Rebay,



7. *Curve*, 1951.

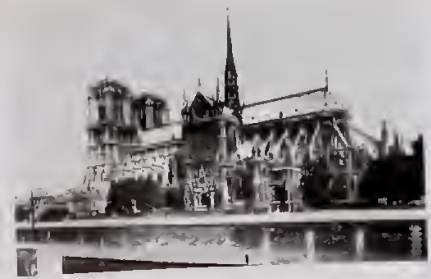
Ink on paper, 7 1/2 x 8 inches (19.1 x 20.3 cm).

Private collection.

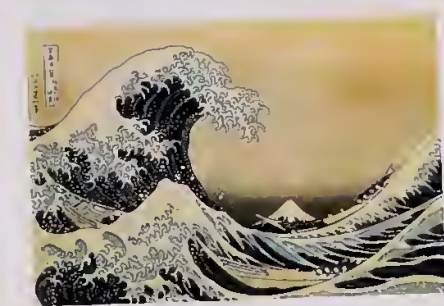
who was director of Solomon R. Guggenheim's Museum of Non-Objective Painting in New York at the time. Kelly enlisted Arp and Vantongerloo as references on his application, as well as Michel Seuphor, an art historian, champion of De Stijl, and founding member of Cercle et Carré. In 1950, Seuphor had introduced him to Arp; and through Spiller, Kelly met Belgian artist Vantongerloo, a leading member of De Stijl. Five other names completed his grant package: John Cage, Edgar Kauffman, Henri-Pierre Roché, Youngerman's father-in-law Henri Seyrig, and Frank Lloyd Wright.²⁰ He sent twenty-six photographs of his drawings and paintings along with the application.²¹ The proposal was stamped received at the foundation in New York on November 18, 1951. Later that month, Kelly arranged to have his oil painting *La Combe III*, March 1951 (fig. 6), sent to the attention of the committee, composed of Charles E. Burchfield, Oronzio Maldarelli, Franklin Watkins, Mahonri Young, and Carl Zigrosser.²² The canvas had been featured that April in his first solo exhibition at Galerie Arnaud in Paris, then sent to Boston for inclusion that June in an exhibition celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. On December 6, 1951, writing from his room at the Hôtel de Bourgogne at 31, rue Saint Louis-en-l'Île to Henry Allen Moe (then secretary general of the foundation), Kelly explained, "I am having a recent painting sent to you from Boston, from the Boris Mirski Art Gallery." He further noted, "I am submitting the painting advisedly however and wish to explain that I am not applying for a painting fellowship but a fellowship enabling me to execute the project I have already outlined to you. This painting will, however, help to clarify the spirit with which the project will be carried out."²³ Despite his efforts, Kelly received word from the foundation in a general form letter sent to applicants, dated April 2, 1952, that the fellowship he had applied for was denied.²⁴

While enrolled at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Kelly spent his days at the Musée du Louvre, the Musée de l'Homme, and the Musée National des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, as well as the Byzantine Institute, which boasted an impressive collection of mosaics and manuscripts. One could surmise that Kelly's interest in calibrated arches, a subject developed in "Line, Form and Color," stems from the flying hutchresses of the Cathedral of Notre Dame (fig. 8), of which there is an inescapable view from the Ile Saint-Louis, where he lived, or, for that matter, from his visits to the Guimet, where he could see the pronounced curves and quasi-abstract shapes in the epic prints by Japanese master Katsushika Hokusai (fig. 9) or a twelfth/thirteenth-century bronze bow and arrow from the Khmer Empire (fig. 10). According to Kelly, the specific origin of his mandorla shape, a version of which occurs in "Line, Form and Color" (cat. no. 119.11), was the recessed eclipse in the stonework of Notre-Dame-la-Grande in Poitiers, France.²⁵ Despite any apparent visual correspondence—whether acknowledged by Kelly or merely surmised—his forms are never meant to refer directly to their sources. Rather, they are reassessments of perceptual dynamics, not entirely without narrative; but with no immutably fixed meaning.

One of the earliest examples of Kelly's arcs can be traced to *Curve*, a plate from "Line, Form and Color" (fig. 7; cat. no. 119.8). A deeply bowed curve, it is one of the most voluptuous shapes of Kelly's oeuvre. In this work, line appears to genuflect to form. The curve was an essential element in his Paris work, as can be seen in such canvases as *Kilometer Marker* (cat. no. 3) and *Mandorla* (cat. no. 4), both 1949. But its use in early reliefs such as *Relief with Blue*, 1950 (cat. no. 8), would eventually lead him to one of his most critical breakthroughs, that of the shaped canvas. After he moved to New York, the curve once again became a significant, if not defining, factor of his painting, and revealed his preoccupation at the time with organic forms. Beginning in 1954, he began a series of canvases featuring large, swollen forms, with undulating edges (see, for example, cat. no. 29). He rendered their contours even more elusively than that of the pliant curve from his hook, which was one of the first instances to disclose the artist's proclivity toward capturing not only the nuances of nature but its splendid precision. In later years, Kelly's surging motifs gave way to the more precise arcs of his expansive fan-shaped paintings (see, for example, cat. nos. 85 and 99). Given the artist's use of fragmentation, it is tempting to read *Curve*, as merely an enlarged section of the concisely drawn circles that followed in the book (cat. nos. 119.9 and 119.10). On closer examination, however, it is clear that its contours do not conform



8. Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, France.



9. Katsushika Hokusai, *Storm on the Open Sea off Kanagawa*, n.d., from the series *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*. Woodblock print, 9 7/8 x 14 1/2 inches (25 x 37 cm). Musée National des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, Paris.



10. Artist unknown, *Bow and Arrow*, Khmer Empire, 12th–13th centuries. Bronze and iron, bow: 30 3/8 inches long (78.5 cm); arrow: 15 1/4 inches long (40 cm). Musée National des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, Paris.

to theirs. These often subtly rendered differences are paramount in Kelly's work, since each nuance of form, every calibrated proportion, opens up new vistas for observation.

During his stay in Paris, Kelly also sought out other artists. Through Spiller he became acquainted with Alberto Magnelli and Picabia. He visited Constantin Brancusi in his studio and later met American artist Alexander Calder. About meeting Vantongerloo in 1950, Kelly later remarked, "He made me understand that *his* kind of paintings had to have reasons. I was glad that mine didn't."²⁶ One of the most fruitful and lasting relationships he established at that time was with young American composer/performer/artist John Cage; the two met by chance one day in June 1949 at Kelly's residence, the Hôtel de Bourgogne, where Cage and Merce Cunningham also happened to be staying. In addition, Kelly frequented jazz clubs along the rue de Lappe, near the Bastille, or in the Latin Quarter on the rue de la Huchette. Seldom, according to Kelly, did he read a newspaper during his years there and for the most part, he remembers Paris as being a "closed society."

Several years before he arrived in the city, the European Recovery Plan (ERP)—an American aid program that became known as the Marshall Plan by 1948—had swung into action. It was designed to resuscitate European autonomy and to obstruct the Communists' agenda.²⁷ Many Americans living abroad, including Kelly, found employment under the auspices of this program. During the summer and autumn of 1951, when Kelly worked nights as a custodian in the Paris headquarters of the Marshall Plan on rue Florentine, he had ample time to work on collages that involved cutting up drawings and allowing chance to dictate their initial configuration. Sophie Taeuber's geometric compositions from 1915, which Arp had shown him, were a primary influence on Kelly, but it was Arp who inspired the younger artist to experiment with chance as a creative method.

Arp, like many other artists of his generation, became involved with Dada and then with Surrealism, two of the chief artistic crusades of the twentieth century. The anti-art activities of Dada—everything from improvisational events, noise poems, manifestos, and periodicals, to some of the most outlandish and ingenious artworks of this century—manifested themselves in Zurich beginning in 1916 and later spread to the cosmopolitan centers of Barcelona, New York, Paris, Berlin, and Cologne throughout the early 1920s. Haphazardness, play, and the found object were the driving elements of Dada's practice. Surrealism, christened by André Breton in 1924, quickly attracted a large number of followers, who cavorted on the fringes of bourgeois society throughout the 1930s. Engaged with the sardonic and unexpected recesses of the human subconscious, the Surrealists transposed the concealed world of the mind into a visual spectacle for the eyes. Dadaists, and later the Surrealists, espoused the practice of automatism, a product of the unconscious—an act of spontaneous creativity that left an enduring mark on the subsequent generation of American Abstract Expressionists. Its influence, however, was just as inescapable for Kelly, who subscribed to no group.²⁸ Of all those associated with Dada and Surrealism, it was Arp, and especially his wife, Taeuber-Arp (they married in 1921), whom Kelly fully acknowledged as playing a vital role in the early stages of his art.²⁹

In summer 1949, Kelly and Coburn, newly arrived from Boston, began to experiment with spontaneous drawings. Kelly saw chance collages by Arp at his studio in February 1950. Two prominent examples of chance collages are plates in "Line, Form and Color": *Black, Brown, White* (cat. no. 119.35) and *Pink and Orange*³⁰ (fig. no. 11; cat. no. 119.36). In both, Kelly departed from the rigid geometry established in the preceding plates and experimented with asymmetrical forms. And where Arp chose to recompose his cutout or torn paper scraps within the composition after allowing accident to play its part,³¹ so too did Kelly. And yet, as Diane Waldman observes, there were notable differences between the two. Kelly rarely brought his collages to the level of organization that Arp did; and unlike Arp, who employed a variety of different paper scraps, sometimes cutting them into biomorphic shapes, Kelly most often used his own drawings or store-bought paper, which he cut into squares.³² Kelly made plain that he was not interested in the act of ordering: "None of my pictures are arrangements; they are divisions of a whole," he noted, "though the colors are arranged. My intention has been to divide the space and not to



11. *Pink and Orange*, 1951.

Collage on paper, 7 1/2 x 8 inches (19.1 x 20.3 cm).

Private collection.



13. *Green*, 1951.

Collage on paper, 7 1/2 x 8 inches (19.1 x 20.3 cm).

Private collection.



12. Marcel Duchamp, *Tu m' (You-Me)*, 1918.

Oil and pencil on canvas, with bottle brush, three safety pins, and a bolt, 27 1/4 x 123 inches (69.8 x 313 cm). Yale University Art Gallery.

New Haven, Connecticut, Gift from the Estate of Katherine S. Dreier.

arrange the forms. I am not interested in composing.”¹⁵ Although he may have chosen not to delve too deeply into the gamesmanship of Dada, some plates from “Line, Form and Color” do show evidence of their derivation from the collage technique and display the sense of randomness that many of the Dadaists and Surrealists brought to their efforts. Kelly’s decision to use, for each of six plates, a single sheet of commercial colored paper to constitute an entire page in the book—for *Green* (fig. no. 13; cat. no. 119.24) and five others (cat. nos. 119.19–119.23)—recalls the practice of using found commercial objects to make artworks, first by Marcel Duchamp and others associated with Dada, and later by the Surrealists. The colored paper swatches Kelly glued next to one or several others on a page bring to mind the colored paint samples Duchamp laid over one another in his 1918 work *Tu m' (You-Me)* (fig. 12).¹⁶ Kelly’s method also invites comparisons to Picabia, an artist with whom Kelly was familiar and whose later work he admired. While not directly related to Picabia’s canvases of floating spheres, such as *Lâcheté de la barbarie subtile*, 1949 (fig. 15), several works from Kelly’s book project utilize similar motifs based on the workings of the eye (fig. 14).

Optical devices and themes, and the phenomena of light and movement, were explored by many artists associated with the Dada and Surrealist movements, including Duchamp, Picabia, and Man Ray. For example, Duchamp’s rotary disc (fig. 16), made in collaboration with Man Ray, was designed to open up new dimensions in art through the production of simple optical illusions. Beginning in late 1948, Kelly became interested in observing natural phenomena, and started to sketch and photograph the shadows on stairs, bridges, and gnarled tree branches (see, for example, cat. no. 159). *La Combe III* was part of a series of works completed in the winter of 1950–51 based on shadows cast by a stairwell that he sketched and photographed the previous summer at Seyrig’s villa, La Combe, in Meschers (see cat. no. 159). The inked lines, grids, and bands in “Line, Form and Color” can thus be understood as light patterns reconstituted and emptied of all modulations (cat. nos. 119.1–119.7; 119.17–119.18).

By simulating the effects of light as line, Kelly created a new way of indexing the "real." Once this basic premise was established, he was able to employ serial imagery, planar forms, chance, and achromatic and chromatic saturations with the same effects. "Line, Form and Color" functions as a language pared down to key modes of vision. The implications of his project are reflected in Jean Baudrillard's sentiments: "The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models—and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance."

Since the Renaissance, artists and philosophers have been interested in exploring the properties of vision. In *Della Pittura* (1436), Leone Battista Alberti was the first to cite the convergence of light and color in reflected rays. In the fifteenth century, Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) approached painting as a science using light primarily as a way to represent bodily mass and structure. Leonardo wrote, "That picture is the most praiseworthy which most closely resembles the thing to be imitated."¹⁶ In 1665, Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) published his treatise entitled *Optiks*, in which he identified the spectrum—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet—by observing that light rays from the sun could be bent to varying degrees by a prism. Later, Thomas Young (1773–1829) simplified matters by arguing that three colors alone—red, green, and blue/violet—should be considered primary. In *Farbenlehre* (*Theory of Colors*), published in 1810, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) moved beyond the discipline of science and contemplated color in more subjective terms, posing light in terms of impressions that yield individual color sensations. However, for Kelly, the experience of color derives wholly from subjective perception, as opposed to objective measures such as wavelength or luminosity. From a very early stage, Kelly was open to colors that exist outside the spectrum, such as pink, along with various tonalities of green and yellow (see, for example, cat. nos. 20 and 21). For the majority of his paintings and sculptures, he rarely determined the color (or colors) he would use before he had chosen his forms.¹⁷ In Kelly's book, where line mutated into form, form eventually reached its apogee in color. At this juncture, plates from the book seem more like objects than two-dimensional blueprints. His readymade squares, in black, white, red, yellow, blue, and green (cat. nos. 119.19–119.24), became the building blocks for later plates in which two or three colors are stacked horizontally. Several color combinations that Kelly put forth in "Line, Form and Color" became the foundation for later paintings. Beyond establishing this palette of elemental colors, Kelly also used shapes in blue-green, light blue, brown, and gray paper in the book, recalling some of the muted colors in his paintings from preceding years. Intrigued by the properties of black and white and their binary opposition, Kelly also created a series of plates that relate closely with one another. These plates include a solid black circle, mandorla, square, or triangle positioned on a white ground, or a dynamic juxtaposition of opposites where, for instance, black plays off against a similar white void or a white line cuts through a black field (cat. nos. 119.10–119.18). The experience of mass and volume changes significantly depending on whether black appears on top of white, or white bisects black.

As in all of Kelly's work, the selection of colors was deliberate. *Pink and Orange* is one of the earliest examples of juxtaposed colors with close tonalities, a technique that Kelly repeated in his collage series *Spectrum Colors Arranged by Chance* (see cat. nos. 116–18) and works such as *Orange Red Relief*. Color and form work in tandem in Kelly's work, so one does not dominate the other as in traditional representational practice. His decision to focus on a vocabulary of specific colors in "Line, Form and Color" as opposed to an ever-shifting variety of shades and tonalities, allowed him to concentrate awareness on the acute anomalies of vision rather than on fantasy or illusionism. However, it was never Kelly's intention to abandon the brush for more neutral application methods such as rollers or sprayers. Painting remained paramount to Kelly's practice, and his decision to send *La Combe III* to the Guggenheim jury to represent his grant proposal confirmed his desire to advance its course through traditional means of execution. "Line, Form and Color" did not advocate new materials for Modern art; rather, it represents a rebellion against the pictorial conceits of the Renaissance and all the succeeding

14. *Random Dots*, 1951.

Ink on paper, 7 1/2 x 8 inches (19.1 x 20.3 cm).

Private collection.



15. Francis Picabia, *Lâcheté de la barbarie subtile*,

1949. Oil on paper, 30 x 20 1/2 inches (76 x 52 cm).

Collection of Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne.



16. Marcel Duchamp (with Man Ray), *Rotative Plaque Verre (Optique de Précision) (Rotary Glass Plates [Precision Optics])*, 1920. Motorized optical device: five painted glass plates, wood and metal braces, turning on a metal axis, electrically operated. 4 7/8 x 7 1/2 inches (120.6 x 184.1 cm). Collection of Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, Gift of the Société Anonyme, 1941.

artists whose goal it was to faithfully depict the visible world. Kelly was not interested in [re]presenting the natural world. Instead, he attempted to apprehend its dynamic by unifying memory and, like the Dadaists and Surrealists he admired, was determined to evoke the unforeseen.

Kelly's emphasis on seeing, his reliance on intuition, and his practice of seizing on the integral elements of subtly observed realities are among the chief contributions that he has made to the legacy of abstract art. What made his approach all the more uncommon was his ability to fuse the uninhibited forms of Dada and Surrealism with the rigidly structured canon of geometric art. In so doing, he shattered the myths of absolute vision that had once defined planar abstraction and instead launched a wholly unique form of abstraction that celebrates the uncanny and the already present, or what Elizabeth C. Baker once referred to as "the infinite strangeness of the real."³⁸

Geometric abstraction gained momentum in the early part of the twentieth century. Among its leading proponents were Russian artist Kazimir Malevich and Dutch artist Piet Mondrian. Malevich was the originator of Suprematism, an aesthetic theory dated to 1913 based on the production of planar relationships and spatial sensations to convey a sense of shared reality and purity of feeling. In 1917, Mondrian, with Vantongerloo and his fellow De Stijl artists, developed an art of reductive elements and restrained line in order to foster the ideal unity and harmony of the visual world. Despite the respect given the work of these abstractionists, the Surrealists achieved a daunting influence soon after they came on the scene. Surrealism was not without its dissenters, however. In 1929, in an attempt to reclaim the prestige of abstract art, Dutch-born critic Seuphor and Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres-García organized a group of artists under the banner *Cercle et Carré*. Its members would eventually include Arp,³⁹ Willi Baumeister, Martin Gropius, Vasily Kandinsky, László Moholy-Nagy, Mondrian, Kurt Schwitters, Tauber-Arp, and Vantongerloo, among others. Unable to arouse the attention of the Parisian public or the press, the group was short-lived. It was quickly succeeded in 1931 by the faction *Abstraction-Création*, led by Jean Hélion, Auguste Herbin, and Vantongerloo. Building on the impetus of *Cercle et Carré*, their goal, simply stated, was to create a global appreciation of abstract art "following the period of silence and inhibition resulting from surrealist insolence."⁴⁰ Eleven years prior to Kelly's "Line, Form and Color," Herbin perfected his own plastic alphabet adhering to a type of abstraction based on plane geometry and what he understood to be "qualitative" principles—namely, the functions of color and shape as opposed to "quantitative" properties of weight, matter, three-dimensional proportions, linear perspective, and so on.⁴¹ Linking color to two-dimensional shape, Herbin utilized spheres, semicircles, triangles, quadrangles, squares, rectangles, and diamonds to counter the idea of depicting the everyday world, seeking instead to communicate imagined new realities (fig. 17). The integrity of the two-dimensional support still remained paramount to Herbin's focus, a conviction that Kelly's alphabet did not share. By relinquishing the object, Herbin's intention was to accentuate the properties of color, volume, and light, creating in them ideal entities that would, in essence, safeguard the uniformity of the whole. This belief in structure was reiterated by Arp as well as many others involved with nonrepresentational idioms at the time.

Abstract art enjoyed considerable attention in Europe during Kelly's years there. In 1946, the first *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles* was held, established by *Abstraction-Création*. Among those involved with its organization was Roché, a distinguished writer, whose name later appeared as a reference on Kelly's fellowship application. Roché knew Brancusi, Robert Delaunay, and Duchamp. At Roché's urging, Rebay also became involved with the activities of the *Salon*. For the next ten years, the *Salon* afforded venues to many artists; and in June of 1950, as well as the following summer, Kelly was invited to participate in the fifth and sixth *Salons*. Despite the number of exhibitions devoted to nonobjective art in Paris, there remained discord and disagreements among the ranks over the nature of abstract art. Writing to Rebay in a letter dated February 3, 1949, Herbin declared, "Here in Paris we continually discuss the precise meaning of the words 'abstract art'—'non-figurative art'—'non-objective art' and others as well. Our opponents take various different points of view; it will never end!"⁴² While Kelly took advantage of the



17. Auguste Herbin, *Ile (Island)*, 1953.
Oil on canvas, 59 x 47 1/4 inches (159.9 x 120 cm).
Collection of Galerie Denise René, Paris.

opportunity to exhibit with the group, his intention was to shatter the cohesion of the traditional figure/ground relationship, a pillar of easel painting that these artists continued to hold dear.

And so, by 1951, Kelly was making waves in an effort to carve out his own place within the canon of abstract art. Along with Youngerman and Tunisian artist George Koskas, he instigated a plan to have works by younger artists shown in the cellar of Jean-Robert Arnaud's and John Franklin Koenig's bookshop at 34, rue du Four, which would come to be called Galerie Arnaud. Thirty-one works by Kelly went on view at the gallery beginning in April 1951, including his folding screen, *La Combe II*, which he had completed in February 1951, and *La Combe III*. A cooperative space, the gallery was intended as a vehicle to show works by emerging artists and was conceived as a way to "break the monopoly of Réalités Nouvelles."⁴³ Rebay, also wary about—and at times angered over—the selections made by Abstraction-Création, would eventually prove to be a strong supporter and confidant of Kelly during his years in Paris.

Both Kelly and Youngerman jointly wrote to Rebay in the spring of 1951 and met her for the first time that May. Over the next three years, Kelly and Youngerman enjoyed Rebay's encouragement, generosity, and circle of compatriots. While she never bought a single work from either of them, she would often treat them to an elaborate meal and gave Kelly two hundred dollars to move into a new studio in 1952. According to Joan Lukach, Rebay recommended that Kelly receive a Solomon R. Guggenheim Scholarship; however, because the recommendation was made just prior to her resignation from the museum in March 1952, the scholarship never came to pass.⁴⁴ As the first director and prime visionary of Guggenheim's Museum of Non-Objective Painting, Rebay was instrumental in introducing the work of Kandinsky, Rudolf Bauer, and other early twentieth-century practitioners of nonobjectivity to America. In a 1942 article published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* glorifying the tenets of non-objectivity, Rebay wrote, "Non-objective painting represents no object or subject known to us on earth. It is simply a beautiful organization of colors and forms to be enjoyed for beauty's sake and arranged in rhythmic order."⁴⁵ No form, if it was abstracted from nature, fit into Rebay's rigid conception of nonobjectivity. While Kelly's work may have seemed stylistically aligned with Rebay's ensemble of artists, it also highlighted the limitations they placed on active vision, and thus raised critical contradictions as to the very definition of nonobjective art.

Summarizing the Parisian art scene during those years from 1947 to 1951, Guilbaut commented, "It soon became clear that in the French art world the unity and the very identity of the School of Paris were gone. In their place was developing a large mosaic of movements, of styles, of tendencies, all fairly clearly defined along political lines."⁴⁶ Despite its stranglehold on artistic invention, Paris was not immune to the burgeoning advancement of yet another denomination of abstraction, which manifested itself first in the United States as Abstract Expressionism and thereafter in Europe as Tachisme; gestural brushwork and drips are the hallmarks of the former, while the latter is defined by staining or spotting of the canvas. Epitomized by such painters as Philip Guston (whom Kelly remembers speaking at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts when he was in Boston), Adolph Gottlieb, Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, and sculptor David Smith, the New York School began to gain currency as the new stylistic heir apparent. In April 1947, prior to Kelly's arrival in Paris, Galerie Maeght (at 13, rue de Téhéran) exhibited works by Gottlieb, Robert Motherwell, William Baziotès, Romare Bearden, Byron Browne, and Carl Holty. In January 1949, Hans Hofmann also had a show of his works there.⁴⁷ The same year Kelly embarked on "Line, Form and Color," Michel Tapié organized *Véhémences confrontées*, which took place from March 8 through 31, 1951 at Galerie Nina Dausset on the rue du Dragon. On display were works by de Kooning and Pollock together with Action painters Jean-Paul Riopelle, Camille Bryen, Wols [Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schulze], Hans Hartung, Georges Mathieu, and others. In June, in a special issue of *Art d'aujourd'hui* devoted to American art, Kelly's work was discussed and *La Combe I*, 1950, was reproduced. The magazine included reproductions of works by such painters as de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, Gottlieb, Hofmann, Franz Kline, Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Pollock, Reinhardt, and Rothko. The following winter, from February 26 through March 15, 1952,

Galerie de France mounted *Regards sur la peinture américaine*, a show featuring the works of many of these artists; and later that March, Studio Facchetti devoted its space to work by Pollock.⁴⁸ It was in this fractured art scene—characterized by Surrealism's overwhelming influence, Abstraction-Création's condemnation of representational practice, and the increasing attention paid to gestural abstraction—that Kelly's "Line, Form and Color" came to fruition. And so again in Paris, as he was in Boston, though not overtly involved in or even cognizant of the events taking place around him, Kelly was implicitly enmeshed in the changing mores of the aesthetic and political sensibilities clouding the local art world.

From the onset, Kelly's work polarized the critics. Once he arrived in Paris, he began to feel that, due to his work's clear and open qualities, it was considered too American by Parisian audiences, conforming neither to the program of European geometric art nor to Tachisme. Yet the reaction to his second solo exhibition in New York, at the Betty Parsons Gallery in September 1957, yielded just the opposite response. Stuart Preston, reviewing the Parsons show in *The New York Times*, characterized the work as "geometrical non-objective paintings," and while he acknowledged Kelly's painting as "an act of individual esthetic distinction," Preston could not help but mention its "ties with modern art in the largest sense."⁴⁹ In 1959, after another exhibition of his paintings at Parsons, Dore Ashton, certainly not alone in linking Kelly's work to the pictorial logic found in Mondrian's canvases, wrote, "Kelly is one of the few painters who have been able to carry out Mondrian's program of neutrality in the special sense Mondrian meant it."⁵⁰ Resemblances in surface style alone contributed to this misinterpretation. Mondrian forged a discipline of painting based in utopian prototypes and calculated arrangements. Kelly's work has never been about absolutes, but about reconstructing nature from personal memories. In his canvases, Mondrian attempted to synthesize a total environment within the picture plane by using a gridlike armature to anchor his color squares, whereas Kelly's art is based on extracting and isolating details from nature. Wrested from their frames, Kelly's lines, forms, and colors shed their contours and edges and assume their own space within the world. Indeed, the inclination to sum up the European influences on Kelly's work continued for many years. In 1960, Lawrence Alloway, a critic for the London periodical *Architectural Design*, commented on the problem of Kelly's work "being mistaken for a revival of geometric abstract art, and left at that."⁵¹ Yet, Kelly's debt to his native artistic heritage did not go unnoticed by the critics. William Rubin, writing for *ARTnews* in 1963, described Kelly's work as "a peculiarly American combination of the hedonistic and the puritanical."⁵² And even John Coplans, in his monograph devoted to Kelly, went so far as to refer to him as "an American pragmatist."⁵³ Self-consciously aware of his own background, Kelly, himself, conceded years later, "I don't really understand anything but America and sometimes I feel it a limitation."⁵⁴

The confluence of the type of abstraction epitomized by European Modernism aimed at transcending the discernible world with American art's emphasis on vision, clarity, and seriality was central to Kelly's practice; it is within those gaps that a work such as "Line, Form and Color" can be understood. It is possible to turn to Baldwin, once again, for some insight into Kelly's synthesis of these two at times disparate cultures. Baldwin claimed that the search for one's identity was the prototypical American experience in Europe. "From the vantage point of Europe," Baldwin asserted, "he discovers his own country. And this is a discovery which not only brings to an end alienation of the American from himself, but which also makes clear to him, for the first time, the extent of his involvement in the life of Europe."⁵⁵ Tired of the School of Paris, his interest in Picasso tempered by the need to move beyond Europe's influence, Kelly, who was quite ill, decided to leave Paris. As far as finding a more convivial reception for his work in the United States, Kelly found such inspiration in an article on Ad Reinhardt in the December 1953 issue of *ARTnews*, which he found in a French bookstore in spring 1954. Reinhardt's show at Betty Parsons was given an enthusiastic reception by critic Thomas B. Hess, who described "the uniqueness of [Reinhardt's] paintings and their relationship only to nothing—except perceptual existence."⁵⁶ Kelly saw in this review the possibility of his work being warmly received in the United States. And so, in July 1954, Kelly moved to New York.



18. *Green Curves*, 1951.

Collage on paper, 7 1/2 x 8 inches (19.1 x 20.3 cm).

Private collection.

Kelly's relationship to his American precursors was bound to the inescapable pull of the industrial scene. Even his first studio in New York, at 3–5 Coenties Slip, Manhattan's southernmost harbor area, evoked the nostalgia of early commerce that once defined America's cities. Kelly's desire to build rather than depict is tied to the feats of engineering that also inspired the American Precisionists. These artists, whose work emerged in the aftermath of World War I, were transfixed by the expanse of enterprise sweeping the United States. For many of these artists, European Modernism formed the backbone of their work. As a result, much of their painting vacillated between degrees of abstraction. Nonetheless, their focus was rooted in the urban environment. It has been argued that Kelly's early photographs—of barns, bridges, smokestacks, and so on—relate to the concise, flattened renditions of highways, factories, ports, skyscrapers, and cityscapes captured by the American Precisionists, an artists' group established in 1916–17 that included Ralston Crawford, Charles Demuth, Arthur Dove, Georgia O'Keeffe, Morton Schamberg, and Charles Sheeler.⁵⁷ Photography was also an integral part of their working method as well as an independent art form. Certainly, as an art student in Boston, Kelly would have known about their endeavors. Another American artist with whom Kelly's work, although not intentionally, sustained similarities was Italian-born artist Joseph Stella. Stella worked with control and accident in his collages and, like Kelly, shared an interest in the beauty and peculiarity of plants. Each introduced recognizable elements into his oeuvre; and, like Stella, Kelly has always maintained an abiding interest in portraiture. The spectral colors, sense of stilled motion, vacancy, and mystery that pervaded the work of each of these artists suggests the feeling of spirituality that Kelly strove to bring to his own work.

Just as there is a certain tenacity expressed by the idiosyncratic formal elements in the work of these American artists, and in the machine-driven forms of an artist such as Picabia, there is a tenacity in Kelly's penned lines and archetypes from "Line, Form and Color." Unlike the Precisionists, however, Kelly's style is not based on hard edges but on deviations of perception. Several plates from his book summon the irregular and split forms that Kelly brought to his art on returning to the United States in 1954 (see, for example, cat. nos. 34 and 38). *Green Curves* (fig. 18; cat. no. 119.38) demonstrated Kelly's ability to generate a forceful dynamic within a void. Almost touching, the green semicircles generate a magnetic tension between themselves and electrify the narrow white expanse they buttress. The collage anticipated Kelly's move toward sculpture, which he began in earnest in 1959. Like *Green Curves*, *Pony* (cat. no. 35), the earliest of Kelly's painted aluminum sculptures, was based on divided, torqued shapes resting on their edges, which creates an unsteady yet lyrical sense of contact with the floor. As with *Green Curves*, Kelly's sculptures toyed within the recesses between shape and ground, since his flattened forms were no longer dependent on a flat surface. *White on White* (fig. 19; cat. no. 119.39) and *Black on Black* (cat. no. 119.40) feature the same semicircular motifs as *Green Curves* and call attention to Kelly's preoccupation with serial motifs. The collages also reflect Kelly's interest in relief, a hybrid or mingling of painting and sculpture, which, more than any other medium, enabled Kelly to propel his work to the status of object. These pieces, the last two plates from the book, constitute the culmination of his aspirations to create monumental painting by fully utilizing the unlimited breadth of abstract forms.

The ideology of scale was critical to Kelly and distinguished him from his European counterparts. Several paragraphs from his proposal for "Line, Form and Color" link the notion of spirituality to scale. In his grant proposal, Kelly wrote, "Spiritual art in the past has had an immense scale, covering entire walls of buildings."⁵⁸ Scale functioned not only as a bridge to new spatial readings of abstraction but as a vehicle for harnessing his experiences in Europe to the reaffirmation of his identity as an American artist. "Line, Form and Color" represents the beginning of Kelly's quest to create an art form synonymous to modern architecture in both America and Europe. It is a critical index serving as a guide to Kelly's language of abstraction and to the ideas and forces that contributed to his art during the postwar years. Although the book was never published, Kelly continually returned to its vocabulary to advance his ideas. "My work," he recently said, "has that feeling of really wanting to own space."⁵⁹ In its pioneering and imaginative spirit, "Line, Form and Color" set the stage for Kelly's future accomplishments in this vein.

19. *White on White*, 1951.

Collage on paper, 7 1/2 x 8 inches (19.1 x 20.3 cm).

Private collection.

Notes

1. Ellsworth Kelly, letter to Ralph Coburn, May 28, 1951; in the artist's archives.
2. Kelly has said that, of the forty-six prints, he would not include the three dot drawings in the book but would instead begin it with the horizontal line; these three have not been included in the exhibition. Three other plates are also not in the exhibition: "S" *Curve, Gray and White; White, Blacks and Grays*. (The latter two clearly show that Kelly had experimented with gradations of gray in abstract works early on—after using gray in some representational works even earlier, in Boston; however, gray did not become a significant aspect of his work until the mid-1970s.) Because the book was never published, he has never determined a final order for the plates. Kelly, interview with the author, Spencertown, New York, January 9, 1996. (In the notes that follow, all information provided to the author by Kelly is from this interview, unless otherwise noted.)
3. Kelly, from his application for a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial grant, unpaginated. This quotation is from the front page of the original application form; all other quotations from his application statement are from a slightly revised version drafted by Kelly many years later (though dated November 1951).
4. In 1946, the school boasted an all-time record of student enrollment due to veterans such as Kelly studying under the G.I. Bill. See Walter Muir Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts Boston: A Centennial History*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 496.
5. See Harry Salpeter, "Artist in Search of a Medium," *Esquire* 22 (October 1944), p. 77.
6. The term was coined in 1923 by Gustav F. Hartlaub, director of the Kunsthalle in Mannheim, Germany. It was first used to describe the work of Max Beckmann, Otto Dix, and George Grosz.
7. See "Ellsworth Kelly," *Museum School News* (Boston) 14, no. 1 (spring 1996), p. 2.
8. In March 1944, the school relocated to spaces at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston when its building at 230 Fenway was converted for use as a naval dispensary. The main classrooms were scattered among the Japanese galleries (closed for the duration of the war) and three ground-floor picture galleries in the Evans Memorial Wing. In June 1946, the Navy vacated the premises, but classes continued to be held for another year at the museum. For an in-depth account of the school during World War II and its relationship to the Museum of Fine Arts, see Whitehill, *Museum*, pp. 493–96.
9. The work entered the Germanic Museum of Harvard University in April 1941. In 1950, the name of the museum was changed to the Busch-Reisinger Museum.
10. See Jack Cowart, "Method and Motif: Ellsworth Kelly's "Chance" Grids and His Development of Color Panel Paintings, 1948–1951," in Yve-Alain Bois, Jack Cowart, and Alfred Pacquement, *Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France, 1948–1954*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1992), p. 37.
11. Reinhold Heller, "The Expressionist Challenge: James Plaut and the Institute of Contemporary Art," in *Disseint: The Issue of Modern Art in Boston*, exh. cat. (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1985), p. 28.
12. Serge Guilbaut, "The Frightening Freedom of the Brush: The Boston Institute of Contemporary Art and Modern Art," in *ibid.*, p. 58.
13. Nelson W. Aldrich and James S. Plaut, "'Modern Art' and the American Public: A Statement by the Institute of Contemporary Art, Formerly the Institute of Modern Art," manifesto reprinted in *ibid.*, pp. 52–53.
14. Guilbaut, in *ibid.*, p. 67.
15. Kelly, from his revised version of his application statement for "Line, Form and Color," unpaginated (see n. 3, above).
16. They included: N. D. Bassov, from the former Soviet Union; Ernest Cormier, from Canada; Liang Seu-Cheng, from China; Le Corbusier, from France; Oscar Niemayer, from Brazil; G. A. Soilleux, from Australia; Gaston Brontaut, from Belgium; Sven Markelius, from Sweden; Howard Robertson, from the United Kingdom; and Julio Vilamajo, from Uruguay.
17. Kelly, from his revised version of his application statement for "Line, Form and Color," unpaginated (see n. 3, above).
18. Le Corbusier, quoted in "Les Cinq Points d'une architecture nouvelle/The Five Points of a New Architecture/Die fünf Punkte zu einer neuen Architektur," in Boesiger/Girsberger, *Le Corbusier 1910–60*, English trans. by William B. Gleckman, German trans. by Elsa Girsberger (Zurich: Editions Girsberger, 1960), p. 44.
19. James Baldwin, "A Question of Identity," in *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston: Beacon, 1983), pp. 124–37. Originally published in 1955.
20. Kelly had not even met Wright, but "thought he would like the work, although he was sure Wright had not done anything about it." Hilla Rebay had worked with Wright for many years on plans for the museum to house Guggenheim's collection. Kelly became friendly with Rebay in 1951. His relationship with her may have prompted Kelly to have been so bold as to put Wright down as a reference.
21. The submission of the photographs is mentioned in a letter to Kelly dated April 17, 1969, from Stephen I. Schlesinger, then assistant secretary at the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation; in the artist's archives. However, there is no record, either at the foundation or in the artist's archives, of exactly what the photographs represented. Kelly recalls that they were of paintings and studies for paintings.
22. G. Thomas Tanselle, vice president of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, in a letter to the author dated November 10, 1995.
23. Kelly, letter to Henry Allen Moe, December 6, 1951; in the artist's archives.
24. Kelly learned that the proposal was turned down in a letter dated April 2, 1952, signed by James E. Mathias, then associate secretary. The jury made their final decisions March 28–30, 1952. Those that did receive grants that year included Saul Baizerman, Wilfred Roloff Beny, Morris Atkinson Blackburn, Stuart Davis, Worden Day, Antonio Frasconi, Ynez Johnston, Misch Kohn, Eugene Mondt Powell, and Janet Turner.
25. Kelly, quoted in John Coplans, *Ellsworth Kelly* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1971), p. 20.
26. Kelly, quoted in E. C. Goossen, *Ellsworth Kelly*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973), p. 29.
27. Americans living in Europe during this period—the beginning of the Cold War—felt threatened by the real possibility of the Soviet Union invading western Europe to further consolidate their sphere of influence beyond the borders set after World War II. When the conflict in Korea began on June 25, 1950 following the invasion of South Korea by North Korea, Kelly and Youngerman were on their way to Meschers for the summer with Kelly having put his paintings in storage. Before departing Kelly remembered hearing that veterans could be summoned to the American Embassy, where

- they would be issued rifles in the event that the Russians crossed into France. Once in Meschers, Kelly was concerned that he might not be able to get back to Paris to retrieve his works, and pondered the possibility that he might have to get back to the United States via Spain. Of course, no such invasion took place, and in July 1953 a truce was reached whereby the U.S. agreed to withdraw its troops, leaving the Communists in control.
28. Both Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp displayed work in New York beginning in 1916. The first wave of Surrealism in the U.S. came in the form of an exhibition entitled *Newer Super-Realism*, held at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, from November 15 to December 5, 1931. Organized by Everett Austin, it included works by Giorgio de Chirico, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, André Masson, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, and others. From January 9 to 29, 1932, the Julien Levy Gallery in New York held an exhibition entitled *Surrealism*, featuring works by these artists, along with American Joseph Cornell's first collages. One of the largest exhibitions to showcase these artists' works in the U.S. was *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, an exhibition organized by Alfred H. Barr, Jr. at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, shown from December 9, 1936 to January 17, 1937.
 29. See Diane Waldman, *Ellsworth Kelly: Drawings, Collages, Prints* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1971), p. 18.
 30. Kelly showed Jean Arp his book, and, according to Kelly, Arp was especially interested in how he arrived at *Pink and Orange*; Kelly, interview with the author, August 8, 1996.
 31. See Diane Waldman, *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992), p. 133.
 32. See Waldman, *Kelly: Drawings*, p. 18.
 33. Kelly, quoted in *Cuplans, Kelly*, p. 25.
 34. See Yve-Alain Bois, "Ellsworth Kelly in France: Anti-Composition in Its Many Guises," trans. Gregory Sims, in Bois et al., *Kelly: Years in France*, pp. 9–36. In his essay, Bois explores Kelly's relationship to Duchamp and the ready-made via Kelly's friendship with John Cage, and concludes that he was not interested in trying to emulate Duchamp but rather was attracted to the notion of the *spontanéisme*.
 35. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacrum*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), p. 3.
 36. Leonardo da Vinci, excerpted in Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969; 2nd ed., 1971), p. 162.
 37. See Ann Hundry, "Conversation avec Ellsworth Kelly/Conversation with Ellsworth Kelly," in Hundry, ed., *Special Ellsworth Kelly*, special issue of *Artstudio*, no. 24 (spring 1992), p. 26.
 38. Elizabeth C. Baker, *Ellsworth Kelly: Recent Paintings and Sculptures*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), p. 8.
 39. Writing about the obvious conflict regarding Arp's association with Surrealism, Michel Seuphor explained that "we found him to be quite favorable to the idea of forming a group of artists with 'constructive' tendencies. Our undisguised anti-Surrealist stance did not worry him in the least." See Seuphor, "Excerpts from 'Pour Faire le Point' by Michel Seuphor from *Cercle et Carre*," trans. M. G. Hiam, in *Cercle & Carre: Thoughts for the 1930s. Paintings, Sculpture, Architecture, Theatre*, exh. cat. (New York: Rachel Adler Gallery, 1990), unpaginated.
 40. *Ibid.*
 41. Auguste Herbin, quoted in *L'Art non figuratif non objectif* (Paris: Editions Lydia Cunitz, 1949); extracts reprinted in Herbin, *The Plastic Alphabet*, exh. cat., trans. Charlotta Kotek, Nicole Challamel Buck, and Robert I. Buck, Jr. (New York: Galerie Denise René, 1973), unpaginated.
 42. Herbin, quoted in Joan M. Lukach, *Hilla Rebay: In Search of the Spirit in Art* (New York: Braziller, 1983), p. 261.
 43. Nathalie Brunet, "Chronology, 1943–1954," trans. Thomas Repensek, in Bois et al., *Kelly: Years in France*, p. 189.
 44. Lukach, *Hilla Rebay*, p. 302. Regarding the Solomon R. Guggenheim scholarship, see Waldman's essay "Ellsworth Kelly" in the present volume, pp. 23 and 33 (n. 35).
 45. Hilla Rebay, "Non-objective Art," *Southern Literary Messenger* (December 1942), pp. 473–75; excerpts reprinted in Lukach, *Hilla Rebay*, p. 144.
 46. Serge Guilbaut, "Postwar Painting Games: The Rough and the Slick," in Guilbaut, ed., *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal 1945–1964* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: M.I.T. Press, 1990), p. 33.
 47. According to Kelly, at that time he was unaware of the work being created by the New York School artists. Because he did not start going to Galerie Maeght until 1951, he did not see the Hofmann exhibition.
 48. Bois argues that the reproductions of these artists' works in the June magazine were so minuscule that it was nearly impossible for Kelly to comprehend their actual scale. He also notes that Kelly was in Sanary during the time of both the exhibition at Galerie de France and the Pallock exhibition at Tacchetti and therefore would not have seen either. See Bois et al., *Kelly: Years in France*, p. 32 (n. 10).
 49. Stuart Preston, "Galleries Offer Diverse Fate," *New York Times*, September 29, 1957, p. XI7.
 50. Dore Ashton, "Arts," *Arts & Architecture* (Los Angeles) 76, no. 12 (December 1959), p. 7.
 51. Lawrence Alloway, "On the Edge," *Architectural Design* (London) 30, no. 4 (April 1960), p. 164.
 52. William Rubin, "Ellsworth Kelly: The Big Furni," *ARTnews* 62, no. 7 (November 1963), p. 35.
 53. *Cuplans, Kelly*, p. 16.
 54. Kelly, quoted in Henry Geldzahler, "Interview with Ellsworth Kelly," in *Paintings, Sculpture and Drawings by Ellsworth Kelly*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Washington Gallery of Modern Art, 1963), unpaginated.
 55. Baldwin, "A Question of Identity," p. 137.
 56. Thomas B. Hess, "Reinhardt: The Position and Perils of Purity," *ARTnews* 52, no. 3 (December 1953), p. 26.
 57. Phyllis Tuchman, "Ellsworth Kelly's Photographs," *Art in America* 62, no. 1 (January–February 1974), p. 55.
 58. Kelly, from his revised version of his application statement for "Line, Form and Color," unpaginated (see n. 3, above).
 59. Kelly, quoted in Robin Embast, "Ellsworth Kelly: Everything Becomes Abstract," *ARTnews* 91, no. 10 (December 1992), p. 103.



Painting and Sculpture



1. *Plant II*, 1949

Oil on wood

16 7/8 x 12 1/4 inches (41.9 x 32.7 cm)

Private collection



2. *Window I*, 1949

Oil on wood

25 1/2 x 21 inches (64.8 x 53.3 cm)

Private collection



3. *Kilometer Marker*, 1949

Oil on wood

21 1/2 x 18 inches (54.6 x 45.7 cm)

Private collection



4. *Mandorla*, 1949

Oil on canvas

28 1/2 x 19 1/2 inches (73 x 50.2 cm)

Private collection



5. *Window*, Museum of Modern Art, Paris, 1949

Oil on wood and canvas

Two joined panels, 50 1/2 x 19 1/2 x 1/2 inches (128.3 x 49.5 x 1.9 cm) overall

Private collection



6. *Window V*, 1950

Oil on wood

27 1/2 x 7 1/4 x 1/2 inches (69.9 x 18.4 x 1.3 cm)

Private collection



7. *Cutout in Wood*, 1950

Gesso on wood

15 x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{1}{4}$ inches (38.1 x 15.9 x 2.2 cm)

Private collection



8. *Relief with Blue*, 1950

Oil on wood

44 7/8 x 17 1/2 x 1 1/4 inches (114 x 44.5 x 3.2 cm)

Private collection

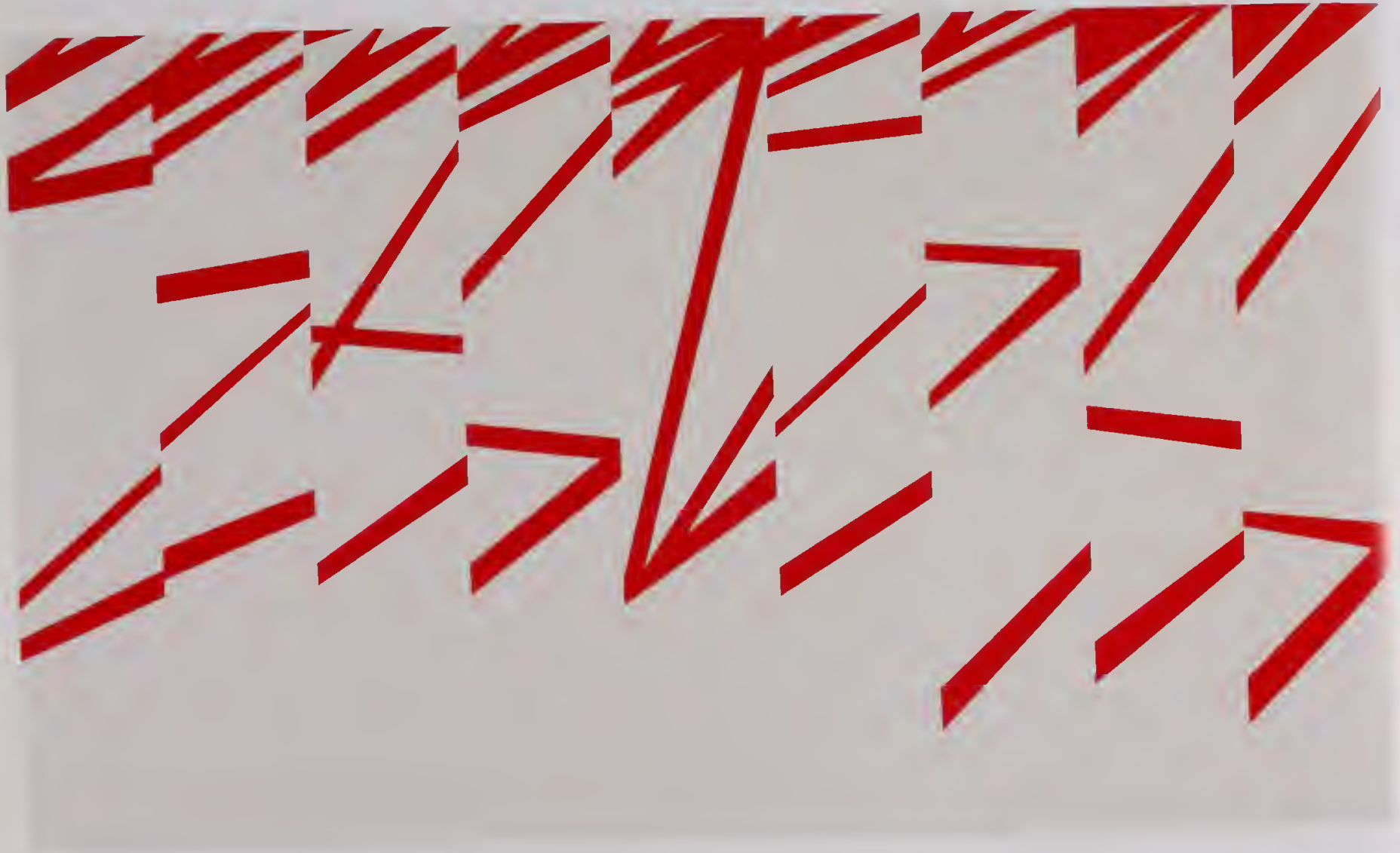
9. *White Relief*, 1950

Oil on wood

39 1/4 x 27 1/2 x 1 1/2 inches (100 x 70.2 x 3.2 cm)

Private collection



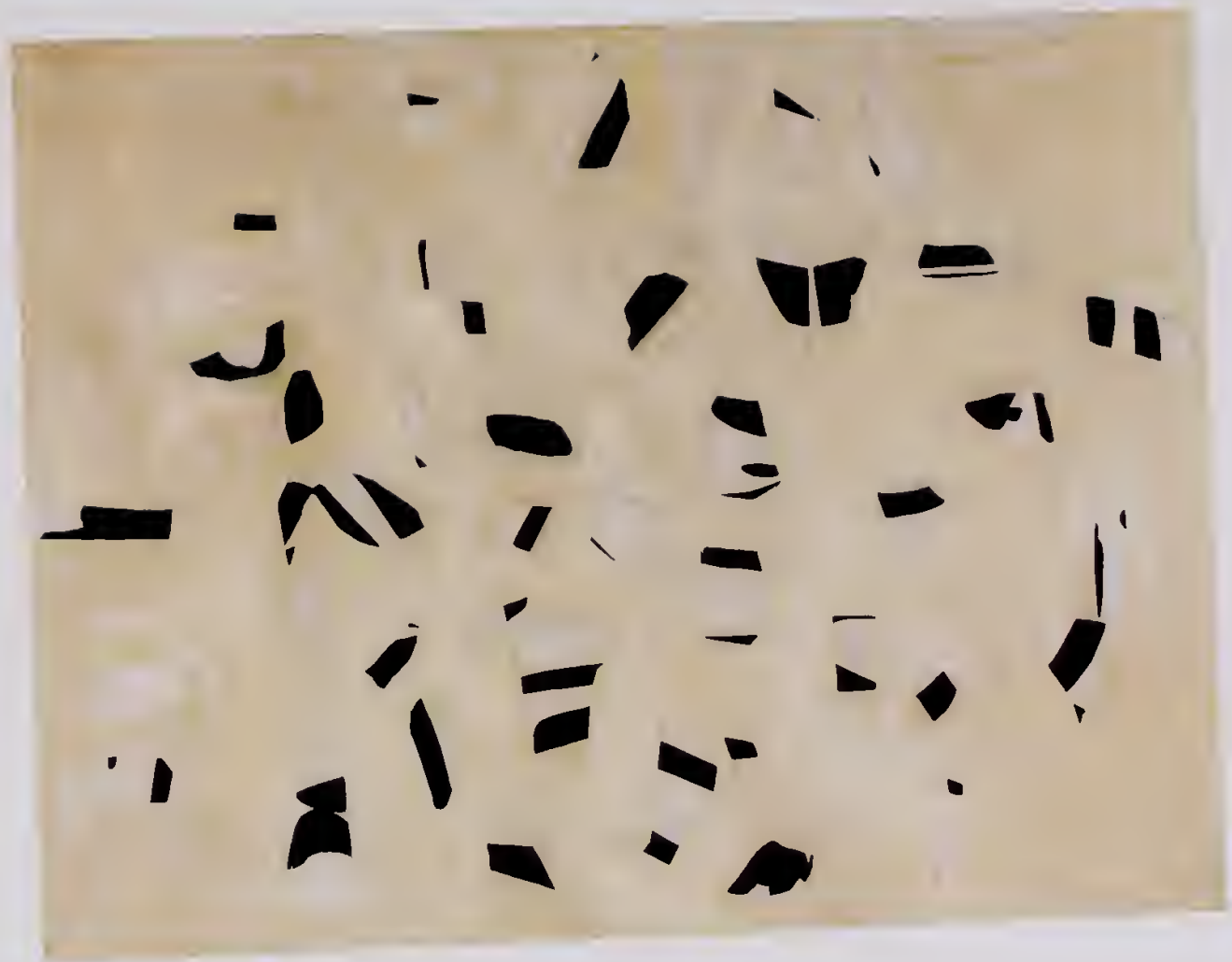


10. *La Combe I*, 1950

Oil on canvas

38 x 63 1/4 inches (96.5 x 161.3 cm)

Private collection



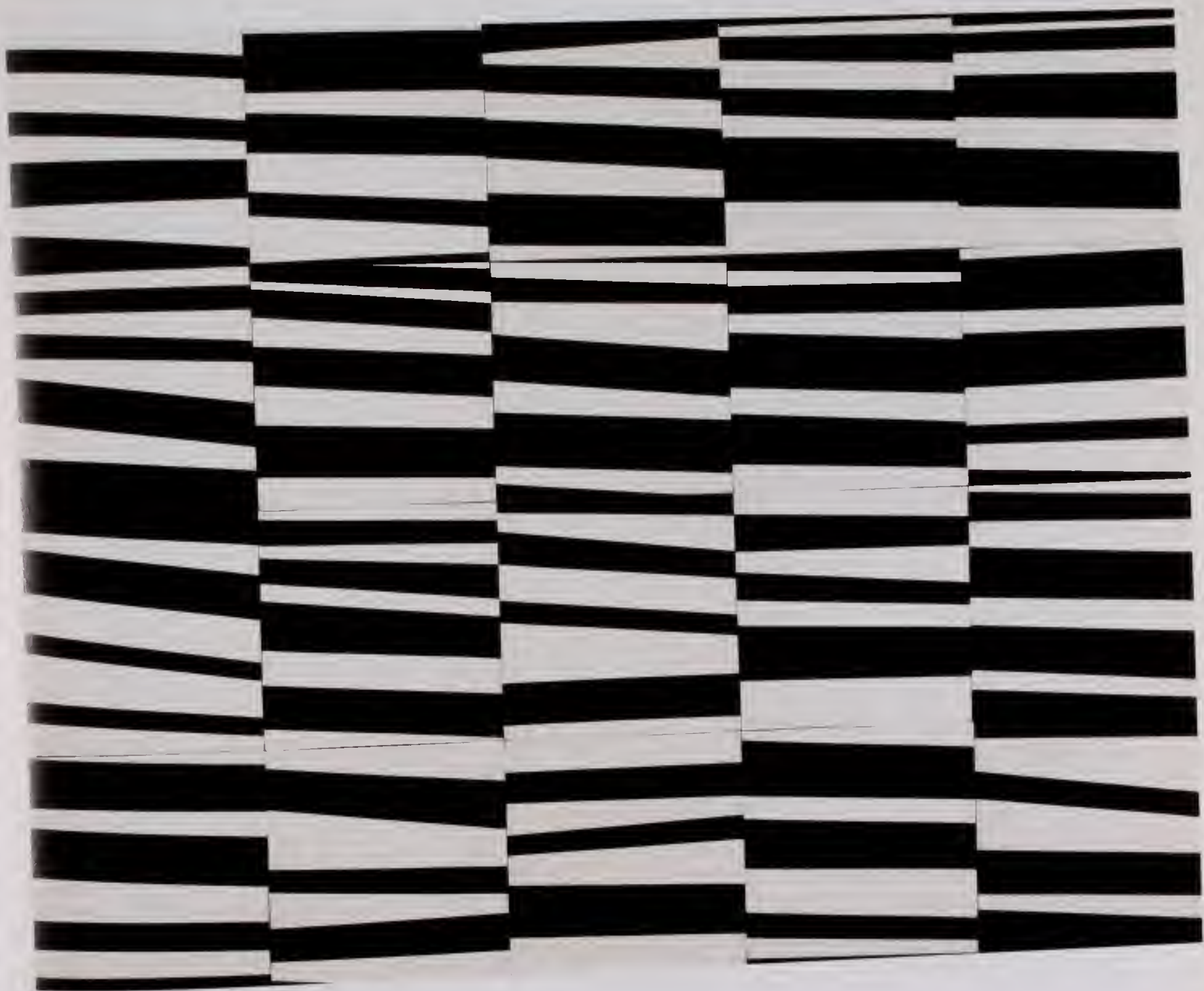
11. *November Painting*, 1950
Oil on wood
25½ x 34 inches (64.8 x 86.4 cm)
Private collection

12. *Cité*, 1951

Oil on wood

Twenty joined panels, 56 1/4 x 70 1/2 inches (142.9 x 179.1 cm) overall

Private collection

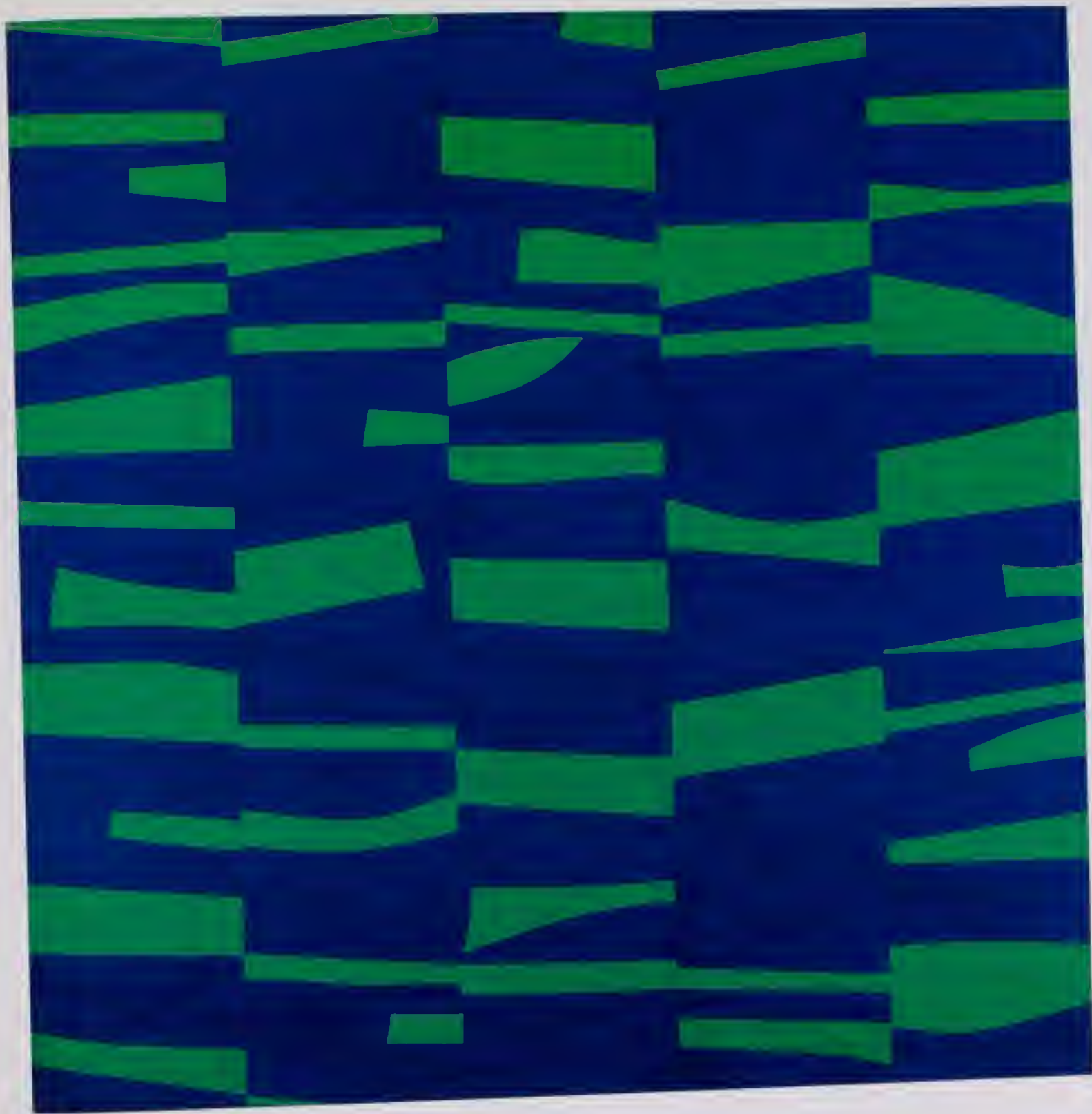


13. *Meschers*, 1951

Oil on canvas

59 x 59 inches (149.9 x 149.9 cm)

Private collection

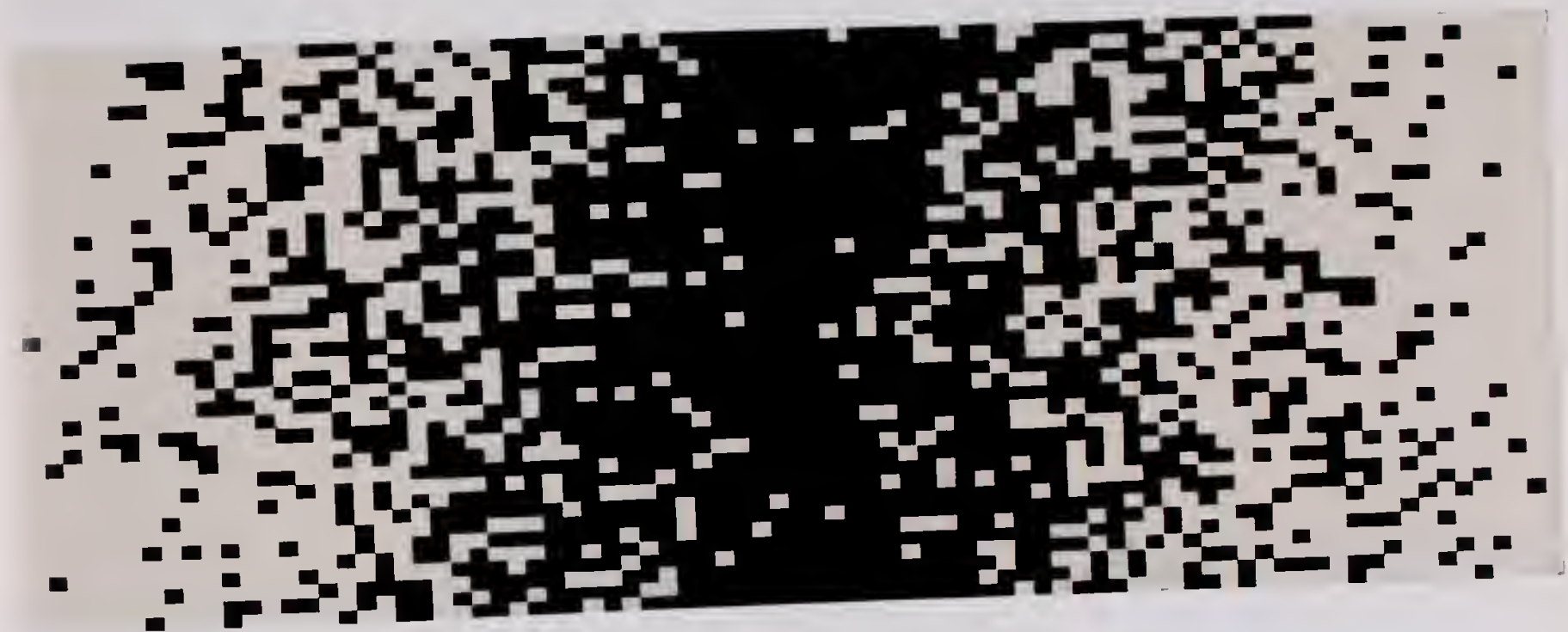


14. *Seine*, 1951

Oil on wood

16 1/2 x 45 1/4 inches (41.9 x 114.9 cm)

Private collection

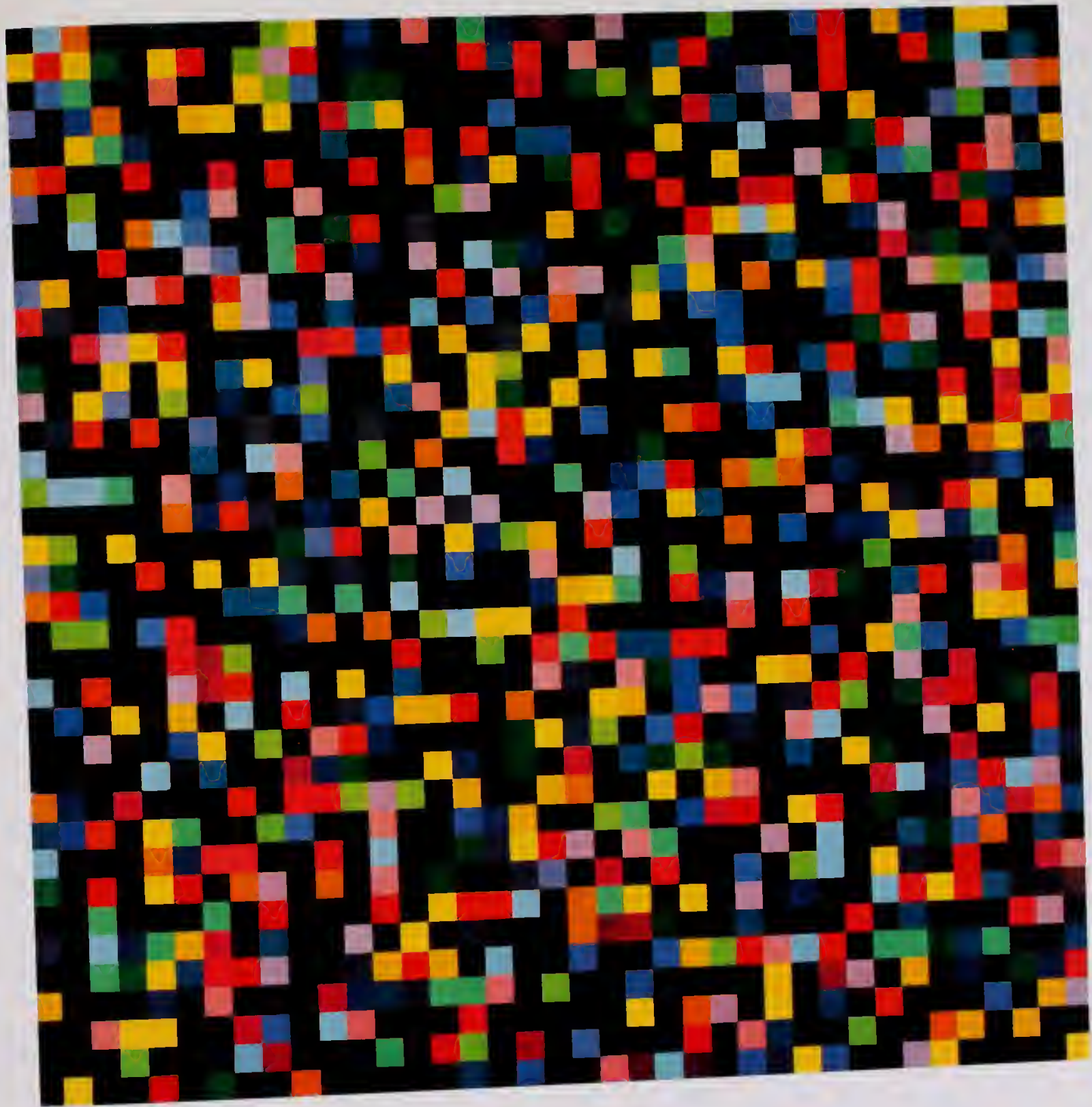


15. *Spectrum Colors Arranged by Chance*, 1951-53

Oil on wood

60 x 60 inches (152.4 x 152.4 cm)

Private collection

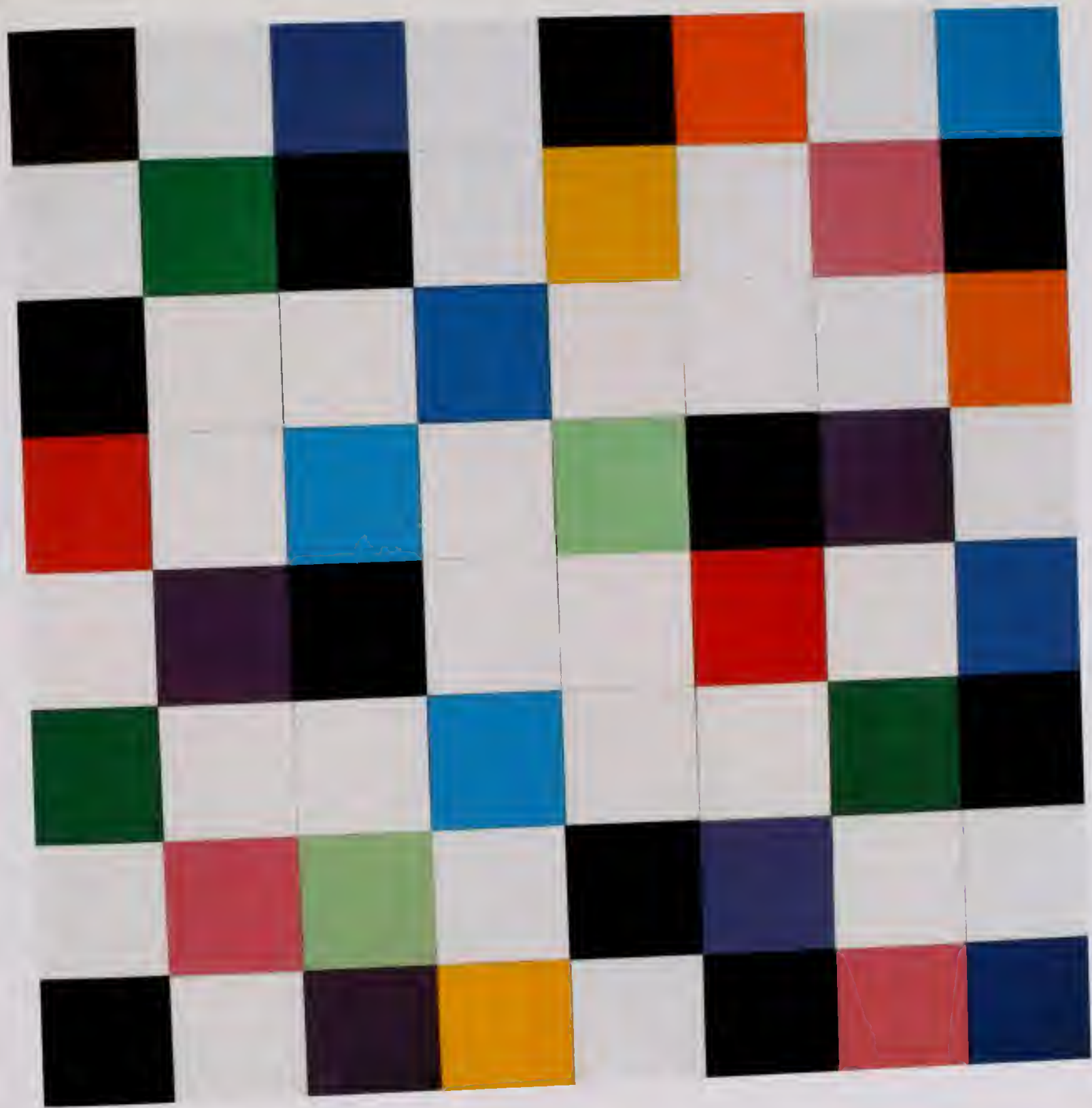


16. *Colors for a Large Wall*, 1951

Oil on canvas

Sixty-four joined panels, 96 x 96 inches (243.8 x 243.8 cm) overall

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of the artist, 1969





17. *Red Yellow Blue White*, 1952

Dyed cotton

Twenty-five panels in five parts separated by 22-inch intervals,
each panel 12 x 12 inches (30.5 x 30.5 cm); 60 x 148 inches
(152.4 x 375.9 cm) overall

Private collection





18. *Painting for a White Wall*, 1952

Oil on canvas

Five joined panels, 23 1/2 x 71 1/2 inches (59,7 x 181 cm) overall

Private collection





20. *Tableau Vert*, 1952

Oil on wood

29 1/2 x 39 1/2 inches (74.3 x 99.7 cm)

Private collection

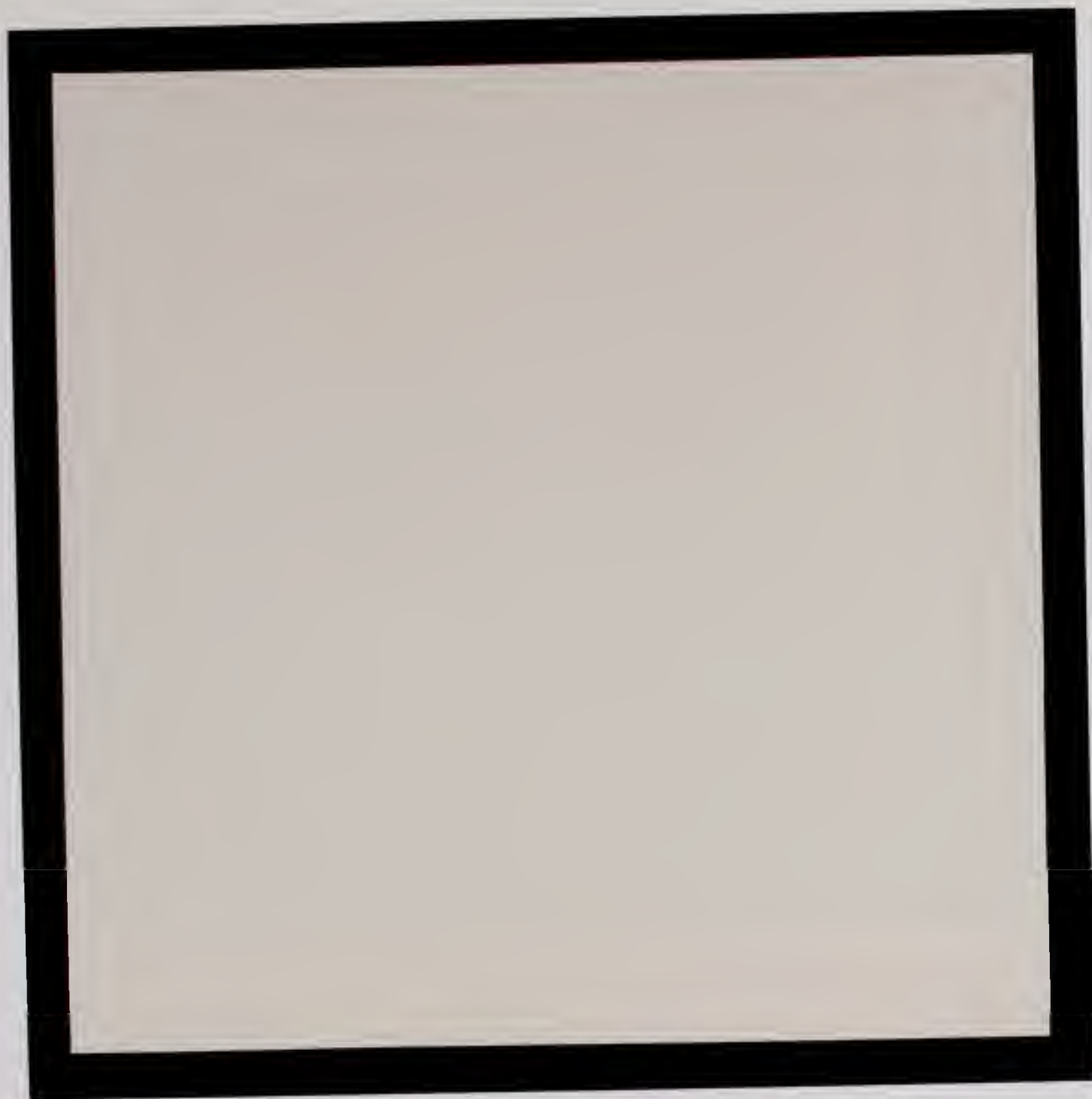


21. *Tram Landscape*, 1952-53

Oil on canvas

Three joined panels, 44 x 44 inches (111.8 x 111.8 cm) overall

Private collection



22. *White Square*, 1953

Oil on wood

43 3/4 x 43 3/4 inches (109.9 x 109.9 cm)

Private collection



23. *Black Square*, 1953

Oil on wood

43 7/8 x 43 7/8 inches (109.9 x 109.9 cm)

Private collection

24. *White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection*, 1951–55

Oil on wood

Two panels separated by a wood strip, 64 x 48 x 1/2 inches (162.6 x 121.9 x 1.3 cm) overall

Private collection



25. *Gaza*, 1952-56

Oil on canvas

Four joined panels, 90 x 79 inches (228.6 x 200.7 cm) overall

Private collection

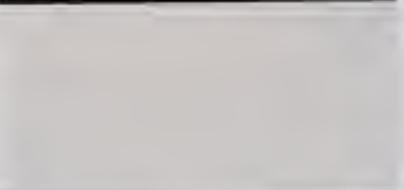


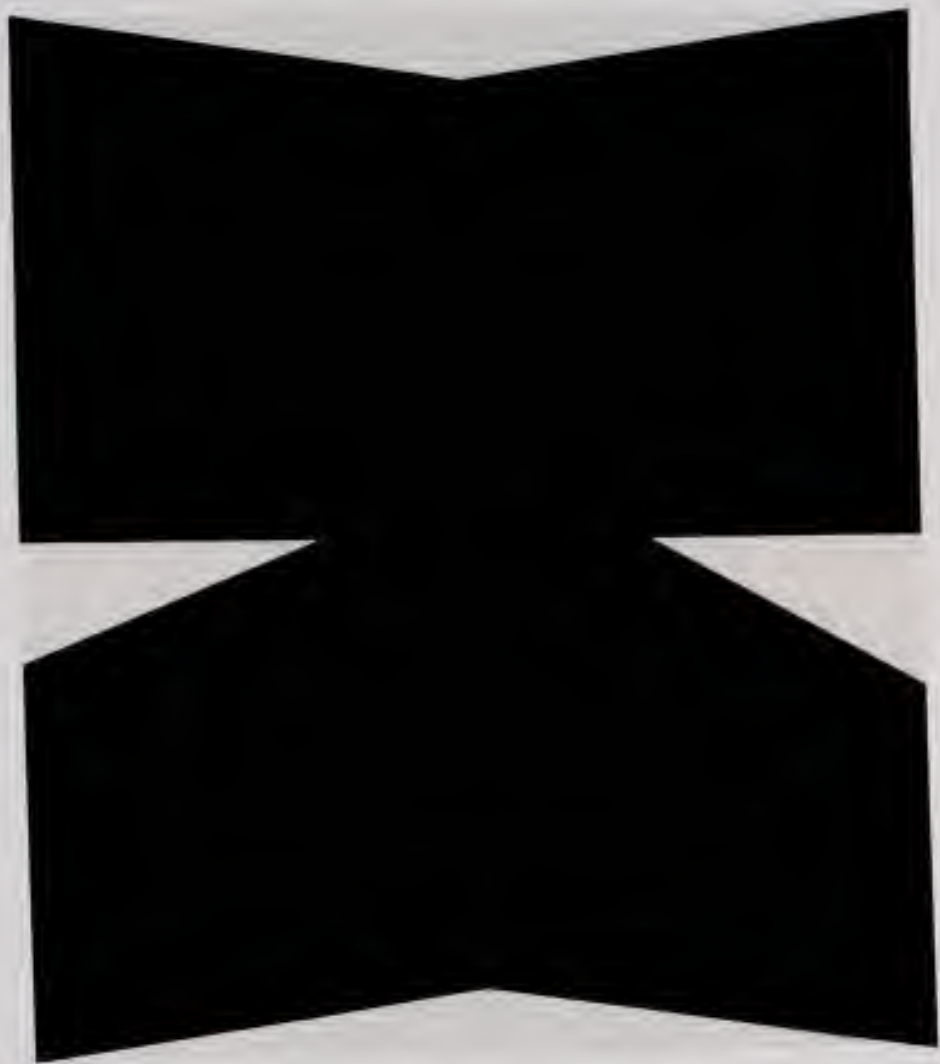
26. *Two Blacks, White and Blue*, 1955

Oil on canvas

Four joined panels, 92 x 24 inches (233.7 x 61 cm) overall

Private collection





27. *South Ferry*, 1956

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 44 x 38 inches (111.8 x 96.5 cm) overall

Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Paul Sternberg, Glencoe, Illinois



28. *Bar*, 1955

Oil on canvas

33 x 96 inches (83.8 x 243.8 cm)

Private collection

29. *Black Ripe*, 1955

Oil on canvas

63 x 59 1/2 inches (160 x 151.1 cm)

Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson



30. *Broadway*, 1958

Oil on canvas

78 x 69 inches (198.1 x 175.3 cm)

Tate Gallery, London, Presented by L. J. Power through
the Friends of the Tate Gallery, 1962



31. *City Island*, 1958

Oil on canvas

78 x 57 inches (198.1 x 144.8 cm)

Collection of Stephen Mazoh



32. *Jersey*, 1958

Oil on canvas

60 x 72 inches (152.4 x 184.2 cm)

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.,

Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1972





33. *Sumac*, 1959

Oil on canvas

74 x 63 inches (188 x 160 cm)

Collection of Irma and Norman Braman



34. *Bay*, 1959

Oil on canvas

70 x 50 inches (177.8 x 127 cm)

The Helman Collection, New York

35. *Pony*, 1959

Painted aluminum

31 x 78 x 64 inches (78.7 x 198.1 x 162.6 cm)

Collection of Miles and Shirley Fiterman



36. *Blue Ripe*, 1959

Oil on canvas

60 x 60 inches (152.4 x 152.4 cm)

Caldic Collection, Rotterdam



37. *Orange Red Relief*, 1959

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 60 x 60 inches (152.4 x 152.4 cm) overall

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift of the artist 96.4550



38. *Rebound*, 1959

Oil on canvas

68¼ x 71½ inches (173.4 x 181.6 cm)

Collection of Franklin and Susanne Konigsberg, Los Angeles



39. *Gate*, 1959

Painted aluminum

67 x 63 x 17 inches (170.2 x 160 x 43.2 cm)

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis,

Partial gift of Kate Butler Peterson, 1995



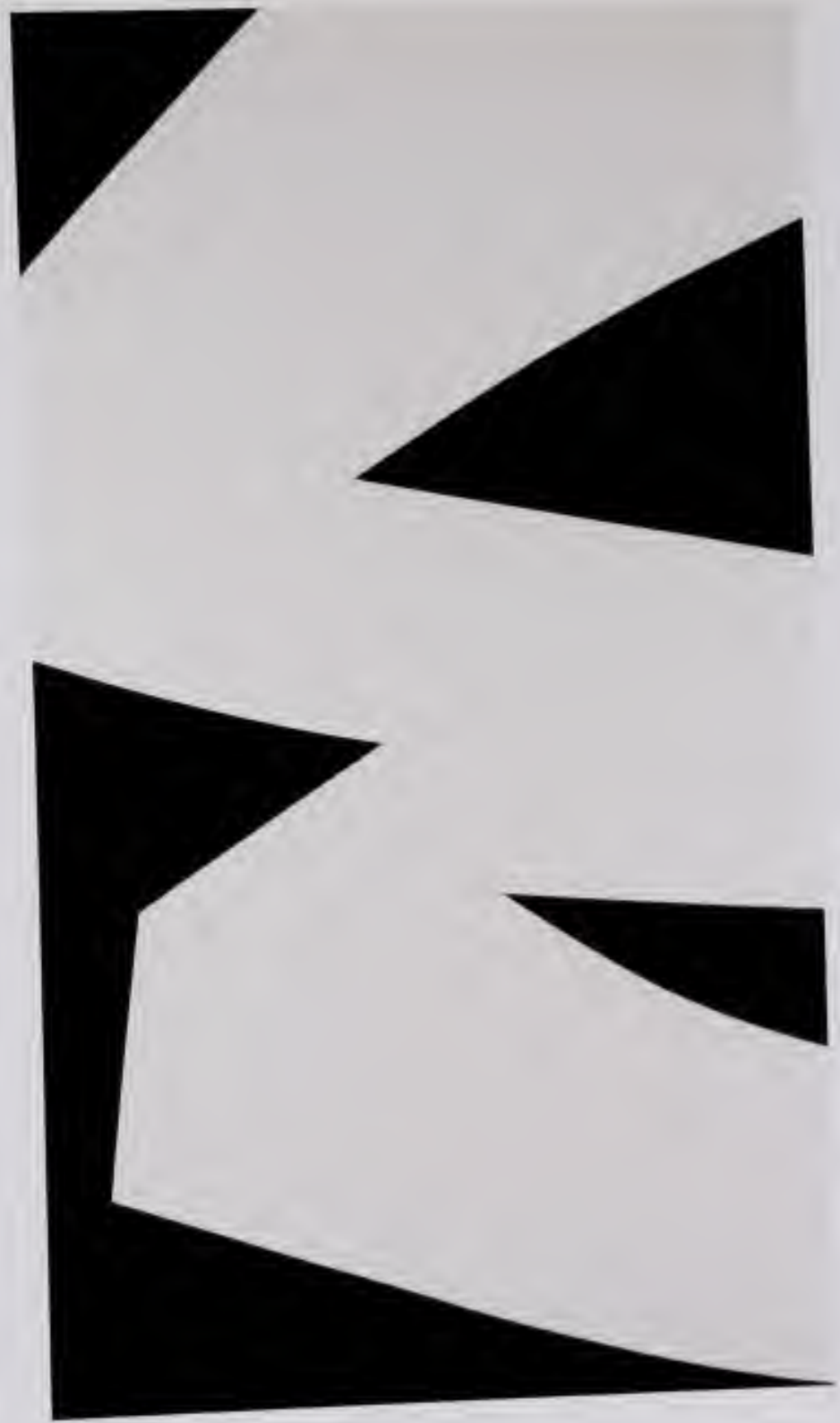
40. *White Black*, 1960

Oil on canvas

86 1/2 x 49 1/2 inches (218.8 x 124.8 cm)

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri,

Purchase, Nelson Trust through the Bequest of Dorothy K. Rice



41. *Block Island II*, 1960

Oil on canvas

88 x 66 inches (223.5 x 167.6 cm)

The Patsy R. and Raymond D. Nasher Collection, Dallas



42. *Red Blue Green*, 1963

Oil on canvas

84 x 136 inches (213.4 x 345.4 cm)

Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego,

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Jack M. Farris







43. *Blue on Blue*, 1963

Aluminum relief

80 x 60 x 7½ inches (203.2 x 152.4 x 19.1 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles,

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick R. Weisman,

in Honor of Richard E. Sherwood, Esq.

44. *Orange Green*, 1964

Oil on canvas

67 x 50 inches (170.2 x 127 cm)

Private collection, New York



45. *Green Red Yellow Blue*, 1965

Acrylic on canvas

Four panels separated by 9-inch intervals, 76 x 57 inches

(193 x 144.8 cm) each; 76 x 255 inches (193 x 647.7 cm) overall

Collection of Irma and Norman Braman



46. *Blue Red*, 1966

Acrylic on canvas

Two joined panels, 81 x 60 x 81 inches (205.7 x 152.4 cm) overall

Private collection



47. *White Angle*, 1966

Painted aluminum

72 1/4 x 36 x 72 1/4 inches (183.5 x 91.4 x 183.5 cm)

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

Gift of the artist, By exchange 72.1997



48. *Blue Green Yellow Orange Red*, 1966

Oil on canvas

Five joined panels, 60 x 240 inches (152.4 x 609.6 cm) overall

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 67.1833

49. *Yellow Piece*, 1966

Acrylic on canvas

75 x 75 inches (190.5 x 190.5 cm)

Private collection





50. *Black over White*, 1966

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 86 x 80 inches (218.4 x 203.2 cm) overall

Private collection



51. *Black White*, 1967

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 82 x 144 (208,3 x 365,8 cm) overall

Private collection



52. *Red Green*, 1968

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 112 x 130 inches (284.5 x 330.2 cm) overall

Private collection, San Francisco



53. *Green White*, 1968

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 71 x 141 inches (180.3 x 358.1 cm) overall

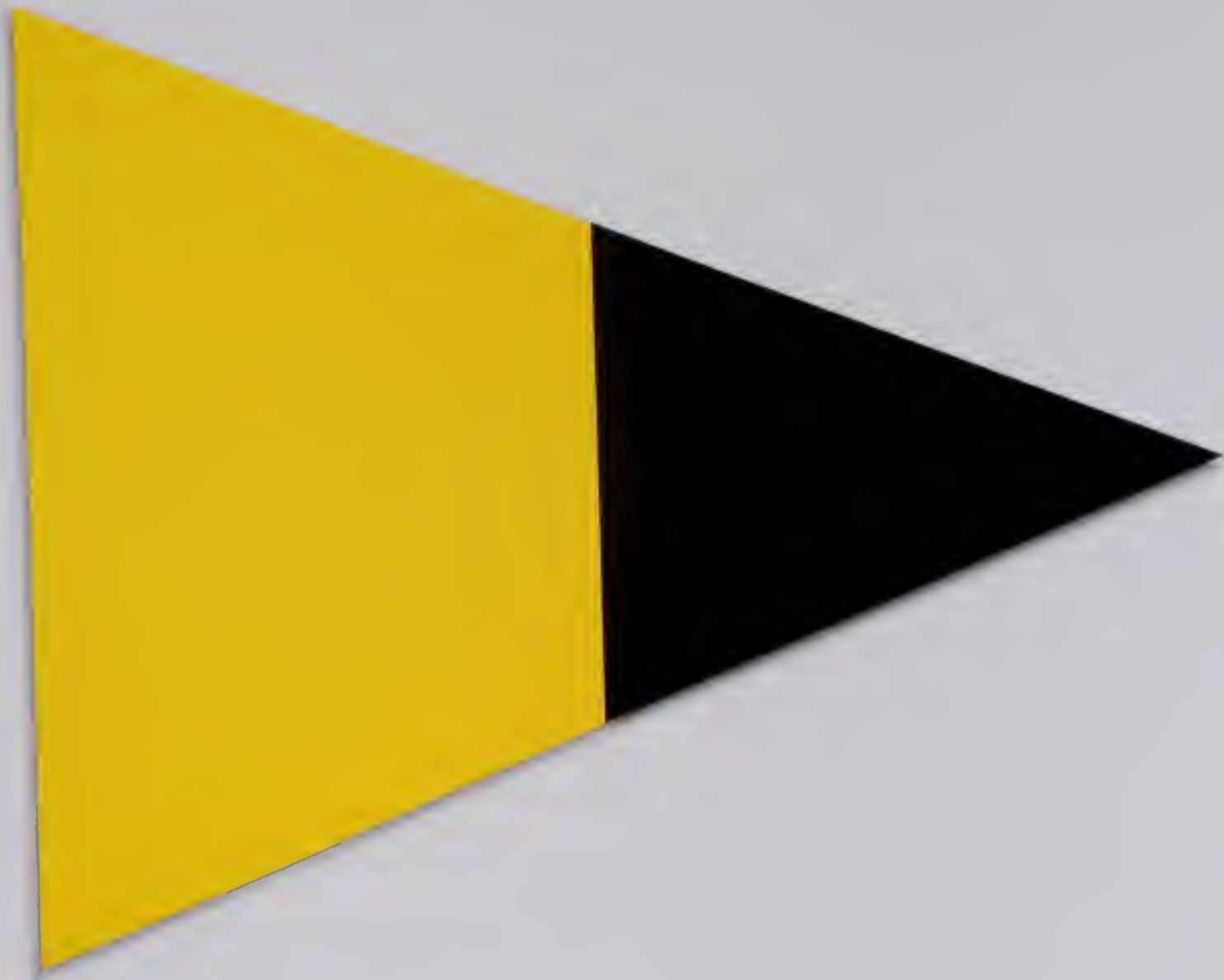
Ginny Williams Family Foundation, Collection of Ginny Williams

54. *Yellow Black*, 1968

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 92 x 116 inches (233.7 x 294.6 cm) overall

Private collection



55. *Black White*, 1968

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 96 x 96 inches (243.8 x 243.8 cm) overall

Private collection





56. *Blue White*, 1968

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 72 x 156 inches (182.9 x 396.2 cm) overall

Private collection, San Francisco



57. *Red White Blue*, 1968

Oil on canvas

101 x 30 inches (256.5 x 76.2 cm)

Collection of Douglas S. Cramer

58. *Black Square with Blue*, 1970

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 120 x 120 inches (304.8 x 304.8 cm) overall

Tate Gallery, London, Purchased 1996





59. *White Black*, 1970

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 111 x 64 inches (281.9 x 162.6 cm) overall

Robert H. Haft, Beverly Hills, California,

Promised gift to The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles



60. *Black Yellow-Orange*, 1970

Oil on canvas

85 x 117 inches (215.9 x 297.2 cm)

Private collection



61. *Green Angle*, 1970

Oil on canvas

70 x 231 inches (177.8 x 586.7 cm)

The Eli and Edythe L. Broad Collection,
Los Angeles



62. *Black with White Bar II*, 1971

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 78 1/2 x 160 inches (199.4 x 406.4 cm) overall

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

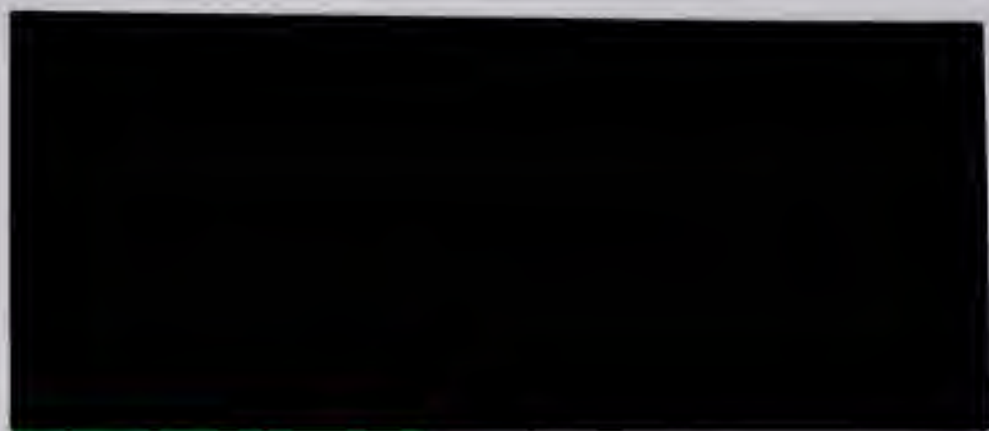


63. *Blue Yellow Red III*, 1971

Oil on canvas

Three joined panels, 72 x 74 inches (182.9 x 188 cm) overall

Collection of Jack Shear



64. *Chatham IX: Black Green*, 1971

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 109 x 96 inches (276.9 x 243.8 cm) overall

Collection of Irving Blum, New York



65. *White Bar with Blue and Red*, 1971

Oil on canvas

Three joined panels, 62 x 140 inches (157.5 x 355.6 cm) overall

Private collection



66. *Blue Curve III*, 1972

Oil on canvas

67 7/8 x 166 1/2 inches (172.1 x 422.9 cm)

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles.

Purchased with funds provided by Paul Rosenberg & Company,

Mrs. Lita A. Hazen, and the David E. Bright Bequest



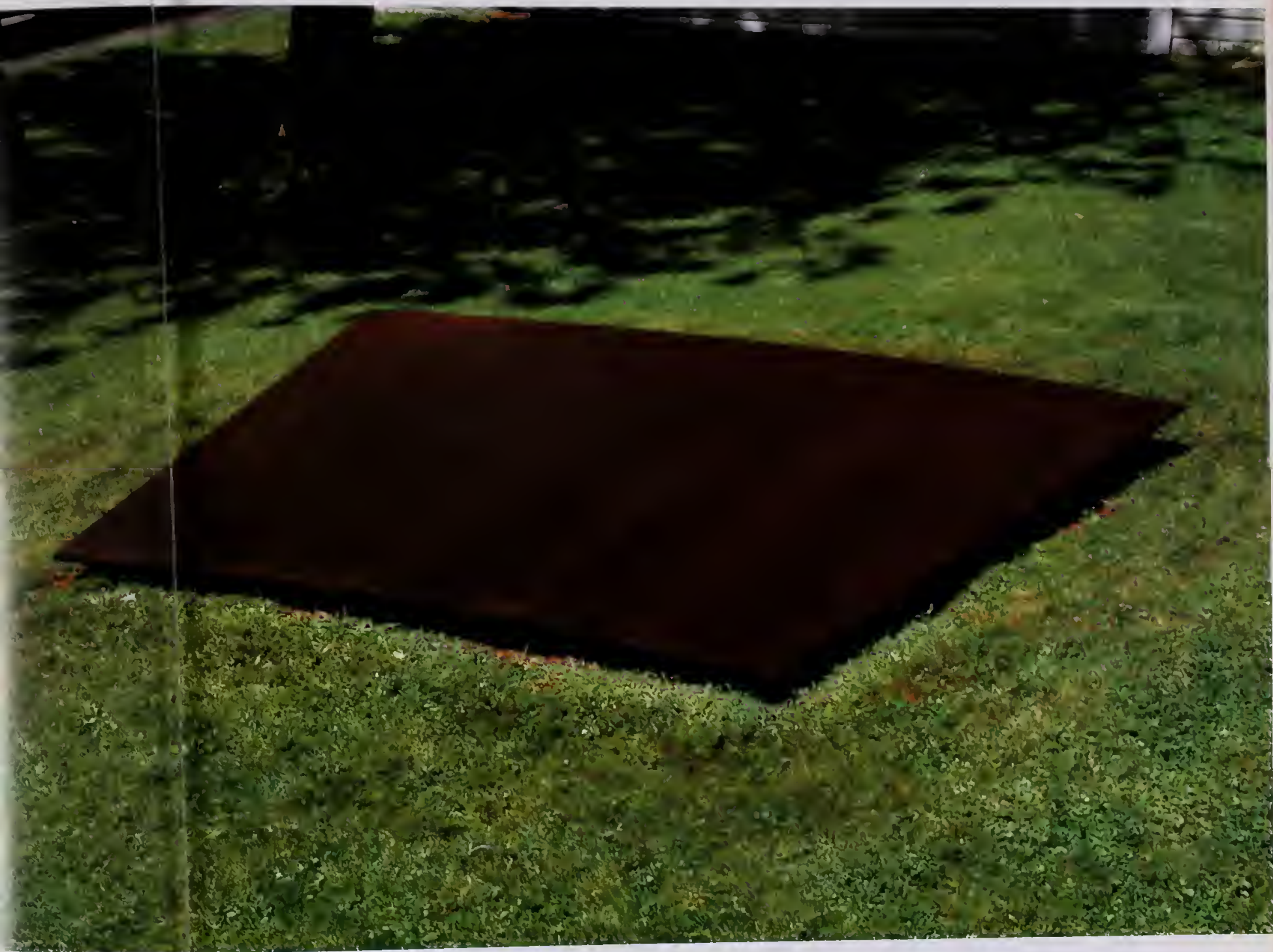
67. *Blue Green Curve*, 1972

Oil on canvas

87 1/2 x 144 inches (222.3 x 365.8 cm)

The Museum of Contemporary Art,

Los Angeles, The Barry Lowen Collection



68. *Curve I*, 1973

Weathering steel

6 x 144 x 118 1/2 inches (15.2 x 365.8 x 300.4 cm)

Private collection



69. *Curve IX*, 1974

Polished aluminum

120 x 21 x 3/8 inches (304.8 x 53.3 x 1.9 cm)

Private collection, San Francisco



71. *Red Curve IV*, 1973

Oil on canvas

100 x 100 inches (254 x 254 cm)

Musee de Grenoble



70. *Black Curve VII*, 1976

Oil on canvas

96 x 76 1/2 inches (243.8 x 194.3 cm)

Collection of Stephen and Nan Swid



72. *Dark Gray and White Panels*, 1978

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 110 x 151 inches (279.4 x 383.5 cm) overall

Collection of Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, Phoenix, Maryland



73. *Blue Panel I*, 1977

Oil on canvas

105 x 56 inches (266.7 x 144.1 cm)

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York,

Fiftieth anniversary gift of the Gilman Foundation, Inc. and Agnes Gund



74. *Dark Gray Panel*, 1977

Oil on canvas

74 x 144 inches (188 x 365.8 cm)

Private collection



75. *Curve XXI*, 1978-80

Birchwood

75 x 170 x 1/8 inches (190.5 x 431.8 x 1.9 cm)

Private collection



77. *Orange Panel*, 1980

Oil on canvas

114 x 92 1/2 inches (289.6 x 235 cm)

Private collection



76. *Diagonal with Curve 1*, 1978

Oil on canvas

109 x 105 inches (276.9 x 266.7 cm)

Private collection



78. *Dark Green Panel*, 1980

Oil on canvas

101 x 101 1/2 inches (256.5 x 257.8 cm)

Private collection



80. *Dark Blue Panel*, 1980

Oil on canvas

103¹/₂ x 146 inches (262.9 x 370.8 cm)

Collection of Stephen and Nan Swid



79. *Red-Orange Panel*, 1980

Oil on canvas

91 x 113 inches (231.1 x 287 cm)

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Gift of Douglas S. Cramer



81. *Diagonal with Curve XIV*, 1982

Weathering steel

67 x 192 x 1/8 inches (170.2 x 487.7 x 1.3 cm)

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,

Gift of the artist in memory of John Caldwell



82. *Curve XXXI*, 1982

Weathering steel

108 x 104' x 1 1/2 inches (274.3 x 265.4 x 3.2 cm)

Tate Gallery, London, Purchased 1996



83. *Curve XXXII*, 1982

Weathering steel

108 x 104 1/2 x 18 1/2 inches (274.3 x 264.8 x 46.4 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Anonymous gift, 1986



84. *Yellow Panel*, 1985

Oil on canvas

108 x 104 1/2 inches (274.3 x 265.4 cm)

Private collection, Courtesy of Jamie C. Lee Gallery





86. *Three Panels: Orange, Dark Gray, Green*, 1986

Oil on canvas

Three panels, 104 1/2 x 94 inches (265.4 x 238.8 cm); 88 x 98 inches (223.5 x 248.9 cm);
and 97 1/2 x 119 1/2 inches (247.7 x 303.5 cm); 116 x 412 1/2 inches (294.6 x 1047.8 cm) overall
Collection of the Douglas S. Cramer Foundation and The Museum of Modern Art, New York,
Fractional gift of the Douglas S. Cramer Foundation





87. *Untitled*, 1986

Bronze

120 x 17 1/2 x 1 1/2 inches (304.8 x 43.8 x 3.2 cm)

The Patsy R. and Raymond D. Nasher
Collection, Dallas



88. *Untitled*, 1988

Bronze

120 x 24½ x 1 inches (304.8 x 62.2 x 2.5 cm)

National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.,

Gift of the artist, in honor of the fiftieth anniversary
of the National Gallery of Art, 1989.88.1

89. *Untitled*, 1987

Bronze

44 ¼ x 92 ½ x 18 ½ inches (112.4 x 235 x 47 cm)

Courtesy of Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London



90. *Untitled (Mandorla)*, 1988

Bronze

101 x 53 ½ x 21 inches (256.5 x 135.9 x 53.3 cm)

Private collection





91. *Yellow Black*, 1988

Oil on linen canvas

Two joined panels, 100" x 139 inches (255.3 x 353.1 cm) overall

Collection of Douglas S. Cramer



92. *Purple Panel with Blue Curve*, 1989

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 76 x 114 inches (193 x 289.6 cm) overall

Collection of Constance R. Caplan, Baltimore



93, *Orange Red Relief (For Delphine Seyrig)*, 1990

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 120 7/8 x 98 1/2 inches (306.1 x 250.2 cm) overall

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid



94. *Yellow Relief with Blue*, 1991

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 120 x 52 inches (304.8 x 132.1 cm) overall

Berardo Collection, Sintra Museum of Modern Art, Lisbon

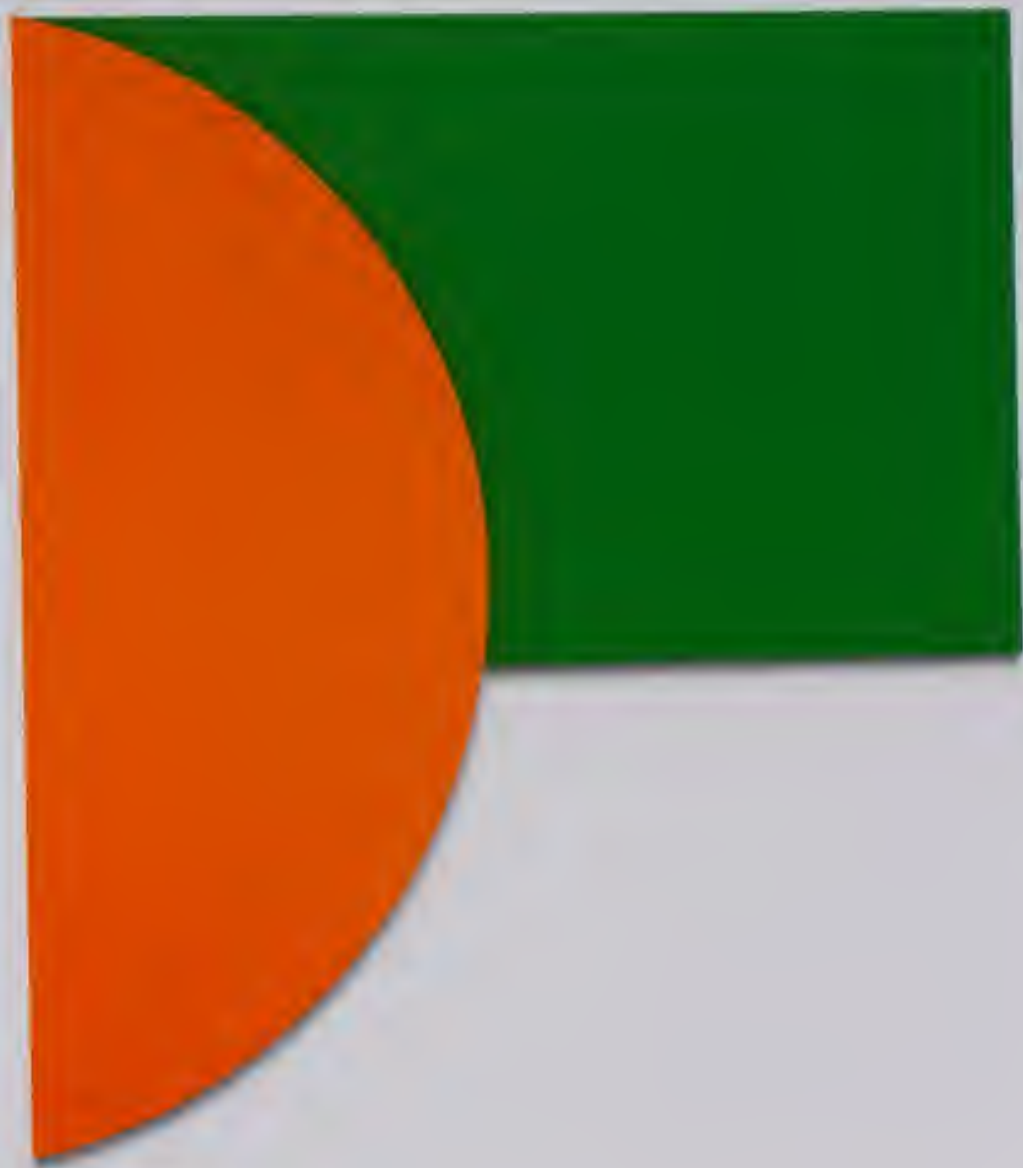
95. *Orange Relief with Green*, 1991

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 93 1/2 x 84 3/4 inches (237.5 x 215.3 cm) overall

Tate Gallery, London, Lent by the American Fund

for the Tate Gallery, 1994



96. *Blue Relief with Black*, 1993

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 98 ¼ x 89 inches (249.6 x 226.1 cm) overall

Private collection, San Francisco



97. *Orange and Gray*, 1993

Oil on canvas

Two joined panels, 120 1/4 x 77 inches (305.4 x 195.6 cm) overall

Private collection



98. *Two Blacks and White*, 1993

Oil on canvas

Three joined panels, 77 x 157½ inches (195.6 x 400.1 cm) overall

Private collection



99. *Dark Blue Curve*, 1995

Oil on canvas

46 x 190 inches (117 x 482.6 cm)

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 96.4551



100. *Untitled*, 1996

Redwood

176 1/2 x 25 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches (448.3 x 64.8 x 11.4 cm)

Private collection



A vertical, black, slightly curved rectangular shape is centered on a white background. The shape is oriented vertically and has a subtle curve, appearing as a solid black bar with a slight taper at the top and bottom.

101. *Black Curves*, 1996

Oil on canvas

144 x 42 1/2 inches (365.8 x 108 cm)

Private collection



102. *Red Curves*, 1996

Oil on canvas

142 x 65 1/2 inches (360.7 x 166.4 cm)

Private collection



103. *Yellow Curve*, 1996

Oil on canvas

119 x 73 1/2 inches (302.3 x 187.3 cm)

Private collection



104. *Green Curve*, 1996

Oil on canvas

119 x 64 1/2 inches (302.3 x 164.5 cm)

Private collection

105. *Blue Curve*, 1996

Oil on canvas

120 x 108 ¼ inches (304.8 x 275 cm)

Private collection



106. *Untitled*, 1996

Stainless steel

191 ½ x 45 ½ x 24 inches (486.4 x 115.6 x 61 cm)

Private collection





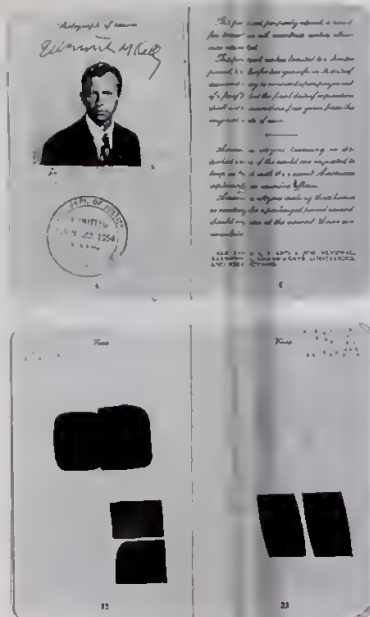
107. *Model for Untitled*, 1996

Bronze

Finished sculpture: 13 5/8 x 240 x 1 3/4 inches
(35.2 x 609.6 x 3.2 cm)

Private collection

Chronology, Exhibition History, Bibliography



2. Photo and ink sketches in Kelly's passport, 1954.



3. Kelly (right) with Alexander Calder and Delphine Seyrig, Roxbury, Connecticut, 1958.

reveal an interest in abstraction. He regularly visits the Musée de l'Homme, Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle, and the Musée National d'Art Moderne.

1949

During the spring, Kelly travels in France, visiting Pontiers, Chauvigny, Saint-Savin, Tavant, and Mont Saint Michel, and making drawings of the frescoes, stonework, and sculptures that he encounters. Kelly submits two paintings to an exhibition at the American Center, but they are rejected. He moves into the Hôtel de Bourgogne on the Ile Saint Louis, where he stays for almost three years. Kelly paints *Plant I*, the first example of his use of a white form against a black ground. *Plant II* (cat. no. 1) marks the emergence of his interest in biomorphic forms. He begins to make collages. *Toilette* is Kelly's first painting developed by simplifying the form of an object, in this case, a Turkish-style toilet. Musician and composer John Cage and dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham, who are also guests at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, meet Kelly and visit his studio. After traveling to Brittany with Ralph Coburn, an artist friend from Boston, Kelly spends the summer there. Back in Paris, Coburn and Kelly visit Abce B. Toklas, who shows them the late Gertrude Stein's art collection. They also attend exhibitions of works by Paul Gauguin, Vasily Kandinsky, Henri Matisse, and Picasso. Kelly completes his first relief, *Window III*, in which he sews string onto the canvas. He prints his first lithograph on the press at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Kelly makes a series of drawings based on the windows at the Musée National d'Art Moderne and works with joined panels for the first time to create *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris* (cat. no. 5). In December, Kelly goes to Sanary, a Mediterranean town, to stay with Coburn. They visit the Musée Picasso, at the Château Grimaldi, in Antibes.

1950

Kelly returns to Paris. He makes *Window V*, his first shaped wood cutout. He meets French critic, painter, and art historian Michel Seuphor, who introduces him to Jean (Hans) Arp. Kelly participates in his first group exhibition in Paris, at the Galerie des Beaux-Arts. In February, Arp invites Kelly, Coburn, and Youngerman to his studio in Meudon. Inspired by the collages of Arp and the late Sophie Taeuber Arp, Kelly begins making collages in which he applies their principles, the laws of chance, to determine the arrangement of the elements. He meets Italian painter Alberto Magnelli, Dada pioneer Francis Picabia, and Georges Vantongerloo, a member of the De Stijl group. Felix Del Marle, Secretary General of *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles*, invites Kelly to exhibit in the fifth *Salon*. Coburn and Youngerman also show at this *Salon*. One of Kelly's works, *White Relief*, is refused on the basis that it is not a work of art. Youngerman marries French actress Delphine Seyrig. Henri Seyrig, Delphine's father, buys *Antibes*, the only work Kelly sells while living in France. Kelly makes *Pink Rectangle*, his first painting based on a collage. He spends the month of August at Villa La Combe, the home of Delphine's mother, Hermine, in the village of Meschers. Kelly makes sketches, collages, and photographs during his stay. In the fall, with his G.I. Bill

finding coming to an end, Kelly accepts a position teaching art to children at the American School in Paris. Delphine's brother Francis Seyrig introduces Kelly to painter George Koskas and pianist Alan Naudé. Art dealer Denise Rene invites Kelly and Youngerman to present their work to the gallery's artists for consideration, but they are not accepted.

1951

Artist Eduardo Paolozzi introduces Kelly to Louis Clayeux, director of Galerie Maeght. Kelly, Koskas, and Youngerman convince Jean Robert Armand and John Franklin Koenig to turn the cellar of their bookstore into a gallery. The three artists convert the space themselves and Kelly's first solo exhibition takes place there, at Galerie Armand. Kelly and Youngerman write to Hilla Rebay, founding director of the Guggenheim Museum and a longtime friend of Arp. Unbeknownst to Kelly, she recommends him for a Guggenheim Museum scholarship, which he does not receive. Kelly applies to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation with a grant proposal for a book of monochrome prints, "Line, Form and Color." Kelly lists Arp, Henri Pierre Roché, Seuphor, and Henri Seyrig as references; in April of the following year, Kelly learns that he did not receive the grant and the book is never published. He sends a painting to the Boston Museum School for inclusion in a group exhibition celebrating the school's seventy-fifth anniversary. After the exhibition closes, the painting *La Combe III*, the only abstract work in the exhibition, is sent to Cage in New York, with whom Kelly has been corresponding, until Kelly's own return to the United States in 1954. Kelly, Naudé, and Youngerman visit Constantin Brancusi's Paris studio. Georges Braque admires Kelly's painting *Meschers* in an exhibition at Galerie Maeght. Gustav Zimmsteg, a Swiss textile manufacturer and art collector who is also impressed by Kelly's work, commissions him to create fabric designs. In November, Kelly again visits Coburn in Sanary, where he is a guest with Naudé and Anne Weber, a friend from Boston. Kelly makes *Colors for a Large Wall* (cat. no. 16), a sixty-four panel painting, his first work composed of separate panels of single colors.

1952

In Sanary, where he remains until May, Kelly buys dyed cotton from which he creates *Red Yellow Blue White* (cat. no. 17), his first work using fabric instead of paint. He designs a dress for Weber, using the same fabric. Kelly visits Unite d'Habitation, the apartment complex designed by Le Corbusier in Marseilles. In May, he joins Naudé at the villa of friend Joanna Wieder in Torcy, a village on the Marne. Kelly writes to Claude Monet's stepson, Jacques Hloschedé, who invites him to Giverny, where he sees the French artist's late *Nymphs* paintings. Kelly, Coburn, and Youngerman participate in *Primera Muestra Internacional de Arte Abstracto*, a group exhibition at Galerie Quatro Muros in Caracas, Venezuela. In September, Kelly moves to a studio at Cite des Fleurs, Paris. He exhibits *Colors for a Large Wall* at Galerie Maeght, where he meets sculptor Alberto Giacometti and painter Joan Miró.

Chronology

This chronology draws upon Nathalie Brinet's "Chronology: 1943-1954" in *Yve-Alain Bois, Jack Cowart, and Alfred Pacquement, Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France, 1948-1954, exh. cat.* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1992), a valuable resource for material on Ellsworth Kelly's early years.



1. Ellsworth Kelly (left) with his brothers, David (center) and Allan (right), in Oradell, New Jersey, 1930.

1923-29

Ellsworth Kelly is born on May 31 in Newburgh, New York. His father, Allan Howe Kelly, who works for the United States Army at West Point, New York, and his mother, Florence Githens Kelly, a former teacher, are from Wheeling, West Virginia. His older brother, Allan, was born in 1921. When Kelly is six months old, he moves with his family to Pittsburgh. His brother David is born in 1926. During a childhood illness, Kelly is introduced by his mother and grandmother, Louisa (Rosenleibe) Kelly, to bird watching, which awakens in Kelly an early passion for color and form that he continues to develop in later years through studying the works of illustrator Louis Agassiz Fuertes and artist and ornithologist John James Audubon. The Kelly family moves to Oradell, New Jersey, in 1929, when Allan Kelly becomes an insurance-company executive at Accident and Casualty of Winterthur, Switzerland.

1930-38

During these years, the family moves frequently, although they do not leave the Oradell vicinity. Kelly attends elementary and junior high school at Oradell Junior High School from 1931 to 1938. Sixth-grade teacher Dorothy Opsut encourages Kelly to paint outdoors. In 1937 and 1938, he creates cover artworks for the school's literary magazine, *Chirp*. The 1938 yearbook lists Kelly as "Best Artist" and "Class Giant." He spends the summer of 1938 in Cape Cod, where he paints.

1938-41

Kelly receives from his mother the book *World-Famous Paintings*, ed. Rockwell Kent (1939), in which he discovers a favorite painting: Paul Cézanne's *Chestnut Trees at the Jas de Bouffan* (1885-86). He attends Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood, New Jersey. He makes his first oil painting, which he shows to art teacher Evelyn Robbins, who recognizes and encourages his talent. He is also active in the school's theater club, *The Mask and Wig*, run by Helen Travolta. Kelly graduates in the spring of 1941. He visits the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

1941-43

Kelly moves to Gamshorough Street, Brooklyn, and studies applied arts at Pratt Institute with Matland E. Graves and Eugen H. Petersen.

1943

Kelly is inducted into the United States Army at Fort Dix, New Jersey on January 1. Initially stationed at Fort Dix, Kelly is sent in late January to Camp Hale, Colorado, to train with the mountain-ski troops. Having requested assignment to the 603rd Engineers Camouflage Battalion at Fort Meade, Maryland, he is transferred there in March; here, he executes silkscreen posters designed by Colonel Homer Saint-Gaudens, son of renowned sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, that are used in classes for training the troops in concealment techniques.

1944

At the beginning of the year, Kelly is transferred to a newly formed unit, the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, at Camp Forest, Tennessee, a decoy unit specializing in camouflage techniques, especially those designed to conceal troop positions from the enemy. Early in May, Kelly's outfit leaves for Europe. His tour of duty takes him to England, France, and Germany. He is involved in the Allied invasion of Normandy, arriving ten days after D day in a maneuver known as "D + 10." He keeps sketchbooks during this time and makes drawings and watercolors. Kelly is stationed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, near Paris, in September. When he visits Paris for the first time, he is unable to visit the city's museums, which are closed due to the war.

1945

In May, Kelly's battalion returns to the United States. On October 23, he is discharged in Jacksonville, Florida.

1946-47

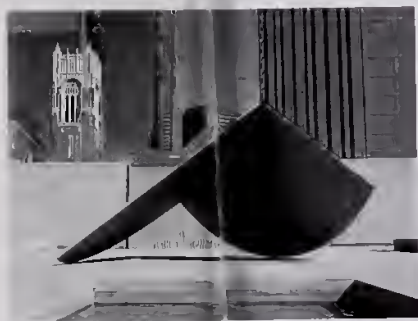
In January, Kelly enrolls in the Diploma Program at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (hereafter referred to as the Boston Museum School) under the G.I. Bill of Rights, which pays his tuition. He studies drawing with Ture Bengtz and painting with Karl Zerbe, an artist associated with German Expressionism. He spends many hours in the galleries of the Museum of Fine Arts; for a class he paints copies of two Old Master works in the museum's collection, Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Virgin and Child* (ca. late 1330s-early 1340s) and (Jacopo Robusti) Tintoretto's *Portrait of a Young Man* (ca. 1580). He is especially impressed by a lecture given by visiting artist Max Beckmann. Kelly lives at the Norfolk House Center in Roxbury, Boston, where he teaches art classes two nights a week in exchange for room and board. He visits the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and the Germanic Museum and the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, while attending classes at the school. He occasionally travels to New York and visits the Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Non-Objective Painting (later named the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum).

1948

Kelly's work is presented for the first time in a group exhibition at the Boris Mirski Art Gallery, Boston. He graduates from the Boston Museum School in the spring. In October, Kelly returns to France with funds provided by the G.I. Bill and stays at the Hôtel Saint-George on rue Bonaparte in Paris. Soon after arriving, Kelly travels to the Musée d'Unterlinden in Colmar to see Matthias Grunewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece* (ca. 1510-15). In Paris, he registers at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but attends classes infrequently. Kelly becomes friends with American artist Jack Youngerman, who arrived in Paris in 1947. Kelly's paintings, which are mostly half-length portraits, show the influence of Pablo Picasso's work and of Byzantine and Romanesque art. He visits the Musée du Louvre, the Musée de Cluny, the Musée Guimet, the Musée Cernuschi, and the library of the Byzantine Institute, an extension of Harvard University. Kelly paints religious figures and for the first time his art begins to



6. Costumes designed by Kelly for *Lento*, a performance by Paul Taylor Dance Company, New York, 1968.



7. *Untitled*, 1983. Stainless steel, 126 x 225 x 189 inches (320 x 571.5 x 480.1 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Commission made possible through funds donated by Michael J. Collins and matching grants from The 500, Inc., and the 1982 Tiffany Company benefit opening.

1964

Kelly is awarded the Painting Prize at *The 1964 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, organized by Gustave von Groschwitz and Leon Anthony Arkus at Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. Kelly is commissioned to create a sculpture for the façade of architect Philip Johnson's New York State Pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair, New York. After the close of the fair, Kelly donates the sculpture, *Two Curves: Blue Red*, to Harvard University, where it is installed in the court at Peabody Terrace. From October to December, Kelly visits Paris, where Galerie Maeght holds a solo exhibition of his works. While in Paris, he begins to work on lithographs with Maeght Editeur. Visiting the south of France, Kelly makes the acquaintance of Marc Chagall and explores Chapelle du Rosaire des Dominicaines de Vence, Matisse's chapel in St. Paul de Vence.

1965

Kelly has his first solo exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York (where he will show until 1971). In May, Kelly travels to Paris where his first series of lithographs, twenty-seven abstract color shapes, are exhibited at Galerie Adrien Maeght. He travels extensively throughout France and Italy for the first time since his return to the United States in 1954. In France, he visits Belle-Ile, Brittany, Dordogne, Normandy, Provence, and St. Paul de Vence. In Italy, he visits Assisi, Florence, Orvieto, Pompeii, Rome, and Siena. Kelly has his first solo exhibition at the Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles (later named Irving Blum Gallery, where Kelly will show until 1971).

1966

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, purchases *Blue Green Red I*, Kelly's first sale to a European museum. Geldzahler selects Kelly, along with fellow artists Helen Frankenthaler, Roy Lichtenstein, and Jules Olitski, to represent the United States at the American Pavilion of the Thirty-third Venice Biennale. Kelly attends the opening in Venice, then travels with Geldzahler to Ravenna where they see the mosaics at San Apollinaire in Classe, at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, and at San Vitale—and then to Padua to see Giotto's later frescoes in the Arena Chapel. Kelly executes his first wall/floor pieces, including *Blue Red* (cat. no. 46), in which the work functions as both a painting and a sculpture.

1967

Kelly's commissioned painting *White over Blue* is installed in Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome in the United States Pavilion at Expo 67, Montreal. Stedelijk Museum is the first European museum to purchase a sculpture, *Blue Red Rocker* (1963).

1968

Kelly travels to Paris and Zurich to install works, including *Colors for a Large Wall*, in *The Art of the Real, USA 1948–1968*, a group exhibition organized by E. C. Goossen for the Museum of Modern Art. Kelly meets Diane Waldman, who subsequently visits him at his studio in New York.

The Whitney Museum buys *Whites* (1963), the first sculpture that Kelly sells to an American museum. Kelly spends the summer in Bridgehampton, where he sees Waldman, through whom he meets critic Elizabeth C. Baker and becomes friends with Lichtenstein. Kelly again designs costumes for Paul Taylor, this time for the dance performance *Lento*. Kelly begins to fabricate large-scale sculptures with Don Lippincott of Lippincott, Inc., North Haven, Connecticut. He creates the sculpture *Yellow Blue*, a commission for Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza in Albany, New York. Kelly's work is included in *Documenta IV*, organized by Arnold Bode, in Kassel, Germany.

1969

Early in the year, Kelly visits Miró on the Spanish island of Majorca. Kelly is chosen by William Lieberman and Roland Penrose to create a mural, *Blue Green*, for the UNESCO building in Paris. For the first time, thirty plant drawings by Kelly are exhibited together in *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*, a group exhibition organized by Geldzahler for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The exhibition includes seven paintings and five sculptures by Kelly.

1970

In March, Kelly moves to Spencertown, in upstate New York, and rents a studio in Cady's Hall, an old theater on Main Street in the nearby town of Chatham. He takes his first of frequent trips to Saint Martin in the Caribbean. Kelly begins to create lithographs with Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles.

1971

The first monographs on Kelly are published: *Ellsworth Kelly: Drawings, Collages, Prints* by Diane Waldman and *Ellsworth Kelly* by John Coplans.

1972

Kelly shows fourteen paintings in *The Chatham Series: Paintings by Ellsworth Kelly*, a solo exhibition organized by Jane N. Wood, at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo.

1973

Kelly's first retrospective exhibition, *Ellsworth Kelly*, curated by E. C. Goossen, is held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and travels to Pasadena Art Museum, California; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Detroit Institute of Arts. Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, presents *Ellsworth Kelly: Curved Series*, Kelly's first solo exhibition at the gallery (where he will show regularly until 1992). Kelly begins working with weathering steel and constructing large outdoor sculptures, including his first completely horizontal sculpture, *Curve I* (cat. no. 68), which is comprised of flat planes placed directly on the ground.

1974

Kelly receives the Painting Prize from the Art Institute of Chicago and is elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He begins an ongoing series of totemic sculptures in weathering steel and polished aluminum.



4. *Transportation Building Lobby Sculpture*, 1956–57. Anodized aluminum; 104 panels, 144 x 768 x 12 inches (365.8 x 1,950 x 30.5 cm) overall. Transportation Building, Penn Center, Philadelphia.



5. Kelly, with paintings he made during the summer of 1960 in The Springs, East Hampton, New York. Foreground: *Black White*; background, left to right: *White Alice*, *Block Island II*, *White Blue*, *Blue Pale Gray*.

1953

Black Square (cat. no. 23) and *White Square* (cat. no. 22) are the last paintings Kelly completes in Paris. He meets Marcel Breuer, one of three architects chosen to design the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, and artist Alexander Calder. Kelly spends Christmas near Rotterdam, the Netherlands, where he first encounters Piet Mondrian's late works at the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen.

1954

Kelly reads a long review in *ARTnews* of an Ad Reinhardt exhibition, *Reinhardt: The Positum and Perils of Purity*, held at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, and begins to think that his work might also be well-received by audiences in New York. In July, he returns to the United States on the Queen Mary. Once Kelly has settled into a studio apartment at 109 Broad Street in Lower Manhattan, he contacts, on Cage's recommendation, painter Robert Rauschenberg. He visits Fred Mitchell, an artist he knew in Paris, who lives nearby, in a loft at Coenties Slip. Kelly supports himself with a night job at the main New York City branch of the United States Post Office, on 34th Street and 8th Avenue. Calder, who visits Kelly at his studio, mentions his work to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., director of the Museum of Modern Art, and to James Johnson Sweeney, director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Sweeney visits Kelly's studio. Curator Dorothy Miller, representing the acquisition committee of the Museum of Modern Art, also visits. Most of Kelly's works this year stem from ideas or projects that he began in France. Kelly meets Reinhardt.

1955

Art dealer David Herbert, who works for Sidney Janis, visits Kelly's Broad Street studio and advises art dealer and gallery owner Betty Parsons also to visit. Parsons offers Kelly a solo exhibition. Kelly completes *White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection* (cat. no. 24), a large wood cutout, the idea for which he conceived in Paris.

1956

Kelly's first solo exhibition in the United States opens in May at the Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. (He will continue to exhibit at Parsons until 1963.) In July, Kelly moves into a loft at 3–5 Coenties Slip. He meets artist Robert Indiana, who also moves to Coenties Slip. Through friend Richard Kelly, a lighting consultant, Kelly receives his first sculpture commissions, *Transportation Building Lobby Sculpture* and *Seven Sculptural Screens in Brass*, both for Penn Center, Philadelphia. These sculptures, which he fabricates at Edison Price, New York, and completes in 1957, mark Kelly's first use of metal (anodized aluminum for the former and for the latter, brass). He makes *Painting in Five Panels*, his first work comprised of canvases of varying sizes that are hung separately on the wall.

1957

Kelly's paintings are selected for inclusion in *Young America 1957*, a group exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; *Atlantic* (1956) is purchased by the

Whitney (Kelly's first museum purchase). He is commissioned to complete a lobby mural at Eastmore House, an apartment building in New York. He makes his first drawings of plants, a subject he will continue to explore in drawings, to the present day. Painter Agnes Martin, fiber artist Lenore Tawney, and Youngerman join the growing community of artists living at Coenties Slip.

1958

Kelly has his first solo exhibition at Galerie Maeght (where he will show until 1965); English collector E. J. Powers buys eight paintings, one of which, *Broadway* (cat. no. 30), he gives to Tate Gallery, London. Kelly begins a series of wood reliefs, his first since 1951.

1959

Kelly's work is included in *Sixteen Americans*, a landmark exhibition curated by Dorothy C. Miller at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. He meets artists Jasper Johns and Frank Stella. His first freestanding sculptures, which are fabricated at Edison Price, are exhibited for the first time, at Betty Parsons Gallery. He begins to make painted metal reliefs.

1960

Kelly's designs for costumes and a stage curtain that he created for choreographer Paul Taylor in 1958 are used in *Tablet*, a dance performed by Taylor's troupe at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy. Kelly travels to Puerto Rico at Christmas. He spends the summer in The Springs, East Hampton, New York, where he meets artist James Rosenquist, who also moves to Coenties Slip.

1961

Kelly receives the Fourth Painting Prize at *The 1961 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Art and Sculpture*, organized by Gordon Bailey Washburn and Leon Anthony Arkus at the Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. He spends the summer in The Springs.

1962

Kelly is awarded the Flota Mayer Witkowsky Prize by the Art Institute of Chicago. He meets curator Henry Geldzahler. His first solo exhibition in London is held at Arthur Tooth & Sons Ltd.

1963

Kelly receives the Brandeis Creative Arts Award from Brandeis University, Waltham, and the Education Ministry Award at the Seventh International Art Exhibition, Tokyo. Kelly's first solo museum exhibition, *Paintings, Sculpture, and Drawings by Ellsworth Kelly*, opens at the Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, D.C., and travels to Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. It is also the first museum exhibition to include his drawings. Kelly moves into the Hôtel des Artistes on West 67th Street on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

- 1990
Kelly is invited to curate the exhibition *Fragmentation and the Single Form* as part of the Museum of Modern Art's Artist's Choice series. He completes his first floor painting, *Yellow Curve*, for an exhibition of the same name at Portikus, Frankfurt. *White Curve* is commissioned for the Swiss corporate headquarters of Nestlé, in Vevey.
- 1991
In November, Kelly completes his second floor panel, *Black Curve*, at Grosse Orangerie, Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin, in conjunction with the exhibition *Schwereelos*.
- 1992
The traveling exhibition *Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France, 1948–1954*, organized by Alfred Pacquement and Jack Cowart, opens at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, and travels to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. and Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster, Münster. Kelly completes *Red Floor Panel* for the exhibition at the Westfälisches Landesmuseum. He makes *Blue Floor Panel*, his first floor panel created in the United States, at Leo Castelli Gallery. Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, hosts *Ellsworth Kelly: Plant Drawings*, its first exhibition of Kelly's work. Kelly creates a room installation of paintings for *Documenta IX*, organized by Jan Hoet. *The Documenta Room* is Kelly's first exhibition at Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. Kelly creates an artist's book of eleven lithographs, published by Limited Edition Club, illustrating *Un Coup de dés* (1870) by French poet Stéphane Mallarmé.
- 1993
Kelly is presented with the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur by the French Republic at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. He creates *Gaul* as part of a sculpture commission for the inauguration of the Norman Foster–designed Carré d'Art, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nîmes. Pratt Institute honors Kelly with its Institute Medal and awards him an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts. Kelly completes the sculpture commission *Memorial* for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, designed by James Freed, in Washington, D.C. Kelly is presented with the honorary title of Amic de Barcelona, Friend of Barcelona, by Pascual Maragall, Mayor of Barcelona.
- 1994
The exhibition *Ellsworth Kelly: The Process of Seeing*, curated by Siri Engberg, is held at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.
- 1995
Kelly receives a sculpture commission from architect Henry Cobb for the Federal Courthouse, Boston (to be completed in late 1998).
- 1996
Kelly is awarded the first Medal for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts on the 125th anniversary of the Boston Museum School; receives an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; and becomes an elected Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Kelly receives sculpture commissions for Rafael Viñoly's Tokyo International Forum and the Peter B. Lewis Theater of The Sackler Center for Arts Education at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: A Retrospective*, curated by Diane Waldman, an exhibition spanning fifty years, opens at the Guggenheim Museum and travels to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Tate Gallery, London; and Haus der Kunst, Munich.



8. *Red Floor Panel*, 1992. Acrylic on canvas on wood, 316 7/8 x 478 3/4 x 1 inches (803.9 x 1,216 x 2.5 cm). Installed at Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster, June 1992.



9. *Gaul*, 1993. Steel, 230 x 45 1/2 x 24 1/2 inches (584.2 x 115.6 x 62.2 cm). Carre d'Art, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nîmes, France.

1975

Kelly has his first solo exhibition at BlumHelman Gallery, New York (where he will show until 1992). Kelly is selected to inaugurate the *Matrix* contemporary-art series at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, in an exhibition curated by Andrea Miller-Keller that includes a series of ten drawings of corn stalks and two sculptures.

1976

Kelly begins to work with Tyler Graphics in Katonah, New York, where he creates works made from colored-paper pulp, an etching, and lithographic prints.

1977

Kelly travels through Spain, Italy, and France. His work is included in *Documenta 6*.

1978

Kelly travels to Barcelona to experience Antoni Gaudi's architecture. He completes *Color Panels for a Large Wall I*, a work commissioned by the Central Trust Company, Cincinnati. Kelly begins to fabricate sculptures with Peter Carlson of Peter Carlson Enterprises, Sun Valley, California. He begins a series of totemic sculptures in stainless steel. Fihes and Schmitt of Schenectady begin construction on Kelly's new studio next to his home in Spencertown.

1979

Friends of the Park commission Kelly to create a sculpture for Lincoln Park, Illinois. At thirty-six feet high, *Curve XXII* is Kelly's largest sculpture to date. Kelly participates in *The 36th Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, organized by Jane Livingston, at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., along with Willem de Kooning, Johns, Lichtenstein, and Rauschenberg. Kelly's first major European exhibition of painting and sculpture, *Ellsworth Kelly: Schilderijen en beelden 1963-1979*, organized by Edy de Wilde and Rini Dippel, opens at the Stedelijk Museum, then travels to the Hayward Gallery, London; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden.

1980

Kelly is made a Fellow of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence.

1981

With Peter Carlson and Gemini G.E.L., Kelly produces editions of a series of painted-metal wall sculptures. He begins a series of totemic sculptures in wood.

1982

A retrospective exhibition of Kelly's sculpture, *Ellsworth Kelly: Sculpture*, opens at the Whitney Museum and travels to the Saint Louis Art Museum. Kelly meets photographer Jack Shear.

1983

Dallas Museum of Art, which is being redesigned by architect Edward Larrabee Barnes, commissions Kelly to create a sculpture, *Untitled*, for its reopening in January 1984. *Curve XXIX* is installed on the grounds of the Farnsworth House, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, in Plano, Illinois.

1984

The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., creates a room installation featuring seven paintings by Kelly. Kelly has four pieces included in ROSC '84 at the Arts Council in Dublin. He travels to Berlin, Dublin, London, and Paris.

1985

Kelly is commissioned to create public sculptures, completed in 1987, by the city of Barcelona: *The Barcelona Sculpture at General Moragues Plaza* and *Creneta del Coll*. Kelly's photographs are exhibited for the first time, in *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*, organized by Robert Metzger, at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut; the exhibition travels to Baruch College Gallery in New York.

1986

A room of eight paintings by Kelly is installed as part of the inaugural exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, *Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945-1986*, organized by Julia Brown Turrell. Kelly creates *Red Curve* (cat. no. 85) for the I. M. Pei-designed Raffles City Hotel in Singapore. He also creates *Houston Triptych* for the Lillie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

1987-88

Kelly's first retrospective exhibition of works on paper, *Ellsworth Kelly: Works on Paper*, curated by Diane Upright, opens at the Fort Worth Museum of Art and travels to Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Baltimore Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City. His first retrospective of prints, *Ellsworth Kelly: A Print Retrospective*, organized by the American Federation of the Arts, opens at the Detroit Institute of Arts and travels to the Huntsville Museum of Art, Alabama; Des Moines Art Center; Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, Massachusetts; Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; and University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley. Kelly is awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Republic.

1989

Kelly is invited by the Art Institute of Chicago to install a group of six single-panel paintings in the courtyard of the new Rice Wing. I. M. Pei commissions Kelly's wall sculpture *Dallas Panels* for the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas. The exhibition *Ellsworth Kelly: Works on Paper* opens at Museum Overholland, Amsterdam.

- Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly*.
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—B[arnitz], J[acqueline]. "In the Galleries: Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 39, no. 9 (May–June 1965), pp. 58–59.
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—Rosenthal, Nan. "New York: Gallery Notes." *Art in America* (New York), no. 2 (April 1965), pp. 117–24.
- Galerie Adrien Maeght, Paris. *Kelly: 27 Lithographs*.
June 1–30. Exh. cat., with preface by Dale McConathy.
- 1966
- Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles. *New Work by Ellsworth Kelly*.
March 15–April 20.
—D[aniel], F[idel] A. "Ellsworth Kelly, Ferus Gallery." *Artforum* (San Francisco) 4, no. 9 (May 1966), p. 15.
—von Meier, Kurt. "Los Angeles Letter." *Art International* (Lugano) 10, no. 5 (May 1966), pp. 58–59.
- 1967
- Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly*.
May 1–25. Exh. cat.
—Mellow, James R. "New York." *Art International* (Zurich) 11, no. 5 (May 1967), pp. 58–60.
—Perreault, John. "Color as Light." *The Village Voice* (New York), March 9, 1967, pp. 12–13.
—W[aldman], D[iane]. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 66, no. 2 (April 1967), p. 13.
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—Hoag, Jane. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 66, no. 9 (Jan. 1968), p. 52.
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—Wasserman, Emily. "Ellsworth Kelly, Sidney Janis Gallery." *Artforum* (New York) 7, no. 4 (Dec. 1968), pp. 58–59.
- Irving Blum Gallery, Los Angeles. *Four Paintings and One Sculpture by Ellsworth Kelly*. Nov. 5–30.
- 1970
- The Vancouver Art Gallery. *Ellsworth Kelly Lithographs at Vancouver Art Gallery*. July 20–Aug. 30.
- Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly*.
Sept. 1–Oct. 15. Exh. cat., with text by John Coplans.
- 1971
- Galerie Renée Ziegler, Geneva. *Ellsworth Kelly*.
March 10–April 12.
- Dayton's Gallery 12, Minneapolis. *Ellsworth Kelly*.
May 1–June 5. Exh. cat.
- Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. *Recent Paintings by Ellsworth Kelly*. Nov. 3–27. Exh. cat.
—C[ampbell], L[awrence]. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 70, no. 8 (Dec. 1971), pp. 16–17.
—Perreault, John. "Wavering Home: Kelly's Light Slabs." *The Village Voice* (New York), Nov. 11, 1971, pp. 23–24.
—Ratcliff, Carter. "New York." *Art International* (Lugano) 16, no. 1 (Jan. 20, 1972), pp. 66–71.
- 1972
- Galerie Renée Ziegler, Geneva. *Ellsworth Kelly*.
March 10–April 12.
- Galerie Denise René Hans Mayer, Düsseldorf. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings*. July 1–31.
—Friedrichs, Yvonne. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Das Kunstwerk* (Stuttgart) 25, no. 5 (Sept. 1972), p. 43.
- Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. *The Chatham Series: Paintings by Ellsworth Kelly*. July 11–Aug. 27.
Organized by Jane N. Wood.
—Kramer, Hilton. "Color Lures the Eye to Kelly's Paintings." *The New York Times*, July 26, 1972, p. 22.
- 1973
- Irving Blum Gallery, Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly: Chatham Series*. March 13–April 15.
- Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly: Drawings and Prints*. March 18–April 5.
- Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings*.
April 1–30.
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Curved Series*. April 7–28.
—Crimp, Douglas. "New York Letter." *Art International* (Lugano) 17, no. 6 (summer 1973), pp. 88–90.
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—Siegel, Jeanne. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 72, no. 6 (summer 1973), p. 99.
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly*.
Sept. 10–Nov. 4. Organized by E. C. Goossen. Traveled to Pasadena Art Museum, California, Jan. 14–March 3, 1974; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, March 30–May 19, 1974; and the Detroit Institute of Arts, June 17–Aug. 4, 1974. *Ellsworth Kelly*, a monograph, with preface and texts by Goossen.
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—Hughes, Robert. "Classic Sleeper." *Time* (New York) 102, no. 12 (Sept. 17, 1973), pp. 72–73.
- Kingsley, April. "New York." *Art International* (Lugano) 17, no. 10 (Dec. 1973), pp. 34–36, 59–60.
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—Masheck, Joseph. "Ellsworth Kelly at the Modern." *Artforum* (New York) 12, no. 3 (Nov. 1973), pp. 54–57.
- 1975
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- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Recent Sculptures*. March 8–April 5.
—Smith, Roberta. "Ellsworth Kelly, Leo Castelli Gallery, Uptown." *Artforum* (New York) 14, no. 1 (Sept. 1975), pp. 69–71.
—Zucker, Barbara. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 74, no. 5 (May 1975), p. 96.
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Gray Series*.
April 13–May 3.
—Dertner, Phyllis. "Ellsworth Kelly at Castelli Uptown." *Art in America* (New York) 63, no. 4 (July–Aug. 1975), pp. 97–98.
—Zimmer, William. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 49, no. 10 (June 1975), p. 8.
- Acc Gallery, Venice, California. *Ellsworth Kelly: Steel & Aluminum Sculpture 1975*. June 12–July 5.
- Blum-Helman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings*.
Sept.–Oct.
- 1976
- Jane C. Lee Gallery, Houston. *Ellsworth Kelly: Sculpture*.
March 6–April 3.
- 1977
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings*.
Feb. 5–26.
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—Zimmer, William. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 51, no. 8 (April 1977), p. 34.
- Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly, Colored Paper Images*. March 5–20.
- 1978
- Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly: Twelve Leaves*.
May 26–Sept. 1.
—Worth, Melinda. "Ellsworth Kelly's Twelve Leaves." *ARTnews* (New York) 77, no. 7 (Sept. 1978), p. 106.
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Paperworks by Ellsworth Kelly*. Dec. 11, 1978–Jan. 30, 1979.
Organized by Riva Castleman.
- 1979
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Recent Paintings and Sculptures*.
April 26–June 24. Exh. cat., with foreword by Philippe de Montebello and text by Elizabeth C. Baker.

Selected Exhibition History

Exhibition entries are followed by related articles and reviews.

Solo Exhibitions

1951

Galerie Arnaud, Paris. *Kelly Peintures & reliefs*.

April 26–May 9.

—G. B. "Kelly." *Arts: beaux arts, littérature, spectacles* (Paris), May 4, 1951.

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1956

Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings 1951–1956*. May 21–June 8.

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1957

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Sept. 23–Oct. 12.

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—Preston, Stuart. "Galleries Offer Diverse Fare." *The New York Times*, Sept. 29, 1957, p. X17.

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1958

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Exh. cat., published in *Derrière le Miroir*, no. 110 (Oct. 1958), with text by E. C. Goossen.

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—Tilim, Sidney. "Month in Review." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 34, no. 1 (Oct. 1959), pp. 49–50.

1961

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—Preston, Stuart. "Art at Opposite Poles: Ellsworth Kelly and Kostas Panaras Exhibit Nonobjective Extremes." *The New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1961, p. L11.

—S[andler], I[rrving] H. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 60, no. 7 (Nov. 1961), p. 13.

—T[ullim], S[idney]. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 36, no. 3 (Dec. 1961), p. 48.

1962

Arthur Tooth & Sons Ltd., London. *Ellsworth Kelly*.

May 29–June 23. Exh. cat., with introduction by Lawrence Alloway.

—Butcher, George. "Ellsworth Kelly Exhibition at Tooth's Gallery." *The Guardian* (London), June 9, 1962, p. 4.

—Reichardt, Jasia. "Les Expositions à l'étranger: Londres." *Aujourd'hui: Art et architecture* (Paris) 8, no. 38 (Sept. 1962), pp. 58–59.

—Sylvester, David. "Homage to Venus." *New Statesman* (London), June 8, 1962, pp. 839–40.

1963

Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Painting and Sculpture*. Oct. 29–Nov. 23.

—"Ellsworth Kelly." *New York Herald Tribune*, Nov. 2, 1963, section 1, p. 9.

—Fried, Michael. "New York Letter." *Art International* (Lugano) 7, no. 10 (Christmas–New Year, 1963–64), pp. 54–56.

—Sandler, Irving. "In the Art Galleries." *New York Post*, Nov. 10, 1963, p. 14.

Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, D.C.

Paintings, Sculpture and Drawings by Ellsworth Kelly.

Dec. 11, 1963–Jan. 26, 1964. Traveled to the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Feb. 1–March 8, 1964.

Exh. cat., with foreword by Adelyn D. Breeskin and interview by Henry Geldzahler.

—Gettem, Frank. "Paintings and Sculpture Show of Ellsworth Kelly at 'Modern.'" *The Washington Star*, Dec. 15, 1963, p. C6.

—Kay, Jane H. "Kelly's Colorful, Personal Geometry." *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), Feb. 14, 1964, p. 6.

1964

Galerie Maeght, Paris. *Ellsworth Kelly*. Nov. 20–Dec. 31.

Exh. cat., published in *Derrière le Miroir*, no. 149 (Nov. 1964), with text by Dale McConathy.

—Ashbery, John. "Op's Copping Pop's Top Spot." *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), Nov. 24, 1964, pp. 50–51.

—Ferrer, André. "Keskispass?" *Arts: Beaux arts, littérature, spectacles* (Paris), Dec. 10, 1964, p. 34.

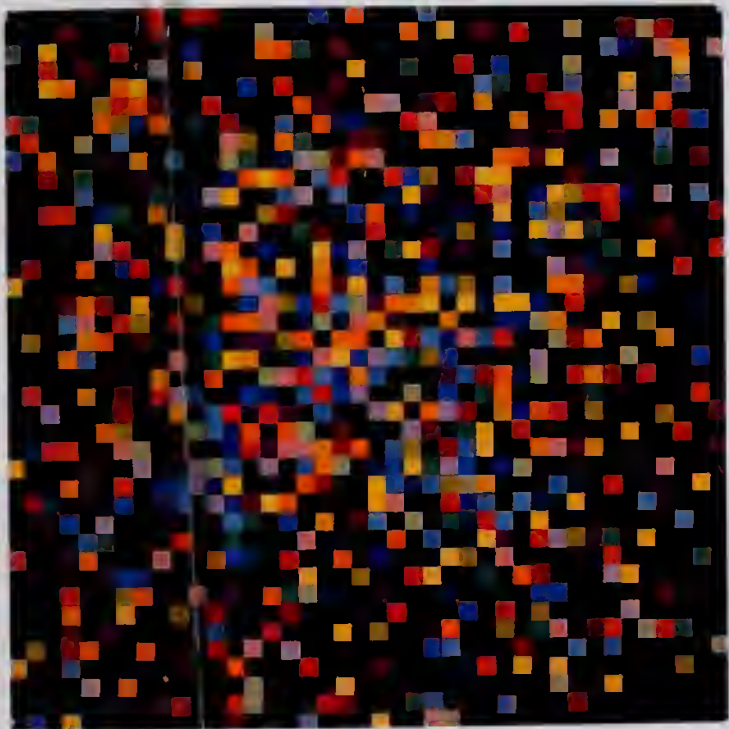
1965

Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles. *An Exhibition of Recent Lithography Executed in France by the Artist Ellsworth Kelly*. March 9–April 5.

—P[ethin], I[rrving] B. "Ellsworth Kelly, Ferus Gallery." *Artforum* (San Francisco) 3, no. 8 (May 1965), p. 16.

- Dorsey, John. "The World's Color and Shape." *The Baltimore Sun*, May 29, 1988, section P, pp. 1, 3.
- Kutner, Janet. "Fort Worth: Kelly Retrospective Sketches a Revealing Picture." *Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 12, 1987, section C, pp. 1–2.
- . "Fort Worth: Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 86, no. 9 (Nov. 1987), p. 216.
- Detroit Institute of Arts, *Ellsworth Kelly: A Print Retrospective*. Sept. 13–Nov. 1. Organized by the American Federation of the Arts and guest curator Richard H. Axsom. Exh. cat., with text by Axsom and cat. raisonné compiled by Axsom with the assistance of Phyllis Floyd. Traveled to the Huntsville Museum of Art, Alabama, Nov. 22, 1987–Jan. 7, 1988; Des Moines Art Center, Feb. 5–April 3, 1988; Neuberger Museum, State University of New York, Purchase, New York, April 17–June 12, 1988; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nov. 10–Dec. 31, 1988; University of Oklahoma Museum of Art, Norman, Oklahoma, Jan. 14–Feb. 19, 1989; Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, June 25–Aug. 20, 1989; University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley, Oct. 11–Dec. 3, 1989; and Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Dec. 23, 1989–Feb. 25, 1990.
- Colby, Joy Hakanson. "Ellsworth Kelly, America's Prince of Prints." *The Detroit News*, Sept. 13, 1987, p. K1.
- Miro, Marsha. "Ellsworth Kelly: Nature Shapes His Vision." *Detroit Free Press*, Sept. 13, 1987, section E, pp. 1, 8.
- Bakalar Sculpture Gallery, List Visual Arts Center, M.I.T., Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Ellsworth Kelly: Small Sculpture 1958–87*. Dec. 19, 1987–March 27, 1988. Exh. cat., with text by Katy Kline.
- Taylor, Robert. "Sculpture, Dr. Wings and 'Dime Store Deco.'" *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 29, 1988, p. 11.
- 1988
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: New Work*. Nov. 2–Dec. 3. Exh. cat., with text by Robert Storr.
- Brenson, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, Nov. 18, 1988, p. C28.
- BlumHelman Gallery, Santa Monica, California. *Ellsworth Kelly: New Work*. Nov. 8–Dec. 3.
- The Eli Broad Family Foundation, Santa Monica, California. *The Eli Broad Family Foundation Exhibition*. Dec. 1988–Sept. 1989.
- 1989
- Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis. *Ellsworth Kelly*. April 29–June 3.
- Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris. *Ellsworth Kelly*. May 6–31. Exh. cat.
- Museum Overholland, Holland. *Ellsworth Kelly: Works on Paper*. July 1–Sept. 24. Exh. cat., with text by Diane Upright. In English and Dutch; trans. Saskia van der Lingen.
- de Vries, Peter Yvon. "Ellsworth Kelly Kijkt Aandachtig om zich Heen de Vorm Niet Het Verhaal." *De Tijd* (Amsterdam), no. 305 (June 30, 1989), pp. 24–29.
- Hettig, Frank-Alexander. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Das Kunstwerk* (Stuttgart) 42, no. 4 (Dec. 1989), pp. 63–64.
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Curves/Rectangles*. Nov. 7–Dec. 9. Exh. cat., with text by Barbara Rose.
- Decter, Joshua. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 63, no. 6 (Feb. 1989), p. 99.
- Russell, John. "Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, Nov. 24, 1989, p. C33.
- Ostrow, Saul. "Ellsworth Kelly: Blum Helman." *Flash Art* (Milan), no. 151 (March–April 1990), p. 145.
- 1990
- Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. *Kelly: Portraits at Gemini G.E.L.* Feb. 6–March 20. Exh. cat., with text by Richard H. Axsom.
- Susan Sheehan Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly, Prints: 1949–1989*. March 1–April 28. Exh. brochure, with text by Susan Sheehan.
- Gallery Kasahara, Osaka. *Ellsworth Kelly: Eleven Painted Wall Sculptures*. April 16–May 19. Exh. cat., with text by Carter Ratchiff. In English and Japanese; trans. Kayoko Hosokawa.
- Portikus, Frankfurt. *Ellsworth Kelly—Yellow Curve*. April 28–June 4. Exh. cat., with text by Gottfried Boehm and foreword by Kasper König. In English and German; trans. Burke Barrett and Isabel Feder.
- Phora, Pia. "Ellsworth Kelly." trans. Ingeborg von Zitzewitz. *Contemporanea* (New York), no. 21 (Oct. 1990), p. 90.
- Puvogel, Renata. "Ellsworth Kelly: Portikus." *Flash Art* (Milan) 23, no. 155 (Nov.–Dec. 1990), p. 160.
- 65 Thompson Street, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Recent Painting & Sculpture*. May 14–July 31.
- Brenson, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly: 65 Thompson." *The New York Times*, May 25, 1990, p. C21.
- Sorenson, Dina. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 65, no. 3 (Nov. 1990), p. 103.
- 1991
- Fred Hoffman Gallery, Santa Monica, California. *Ellsworth Kelly, A Historical Selection: 1965–1988*. March 23–April 20.
- Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis. *Ellsworth Kelly (Wall Reliefs)*. April 2–May 18.
- Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, at Jont Moisant Weyl, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Diagonals and Colored Panels 1970–1990*. April 12–June 15.
- Dia Center for the Arts, Bridgehampton, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Two Lithographic Suites, 1964–65*. Aug. 17–Oct. 6. Organized by Henry Geldzahler.
- Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly: At Right Angles, 1964–1966*. Nov. 19–Dec. 21. Organized with John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco, and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Traveled to John Berggruen Gallery, Jan. 8–Feb. 1, 1992; and Paula Cooper Gallery, Feb. 14–March 14, 1992. Exh. cat., with text by Roberta Bernstein.
- Baker, Kenneth. "Kelly's Timeless Abstracts Hold Up." *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jan. 11, 1992, p. C7.
- Cotter, Holland. "Ellsworth Kelly: 'At Right Angles, 1964–1966.'" *The New York Times*, March 13, 1992, p. C28.
- Jack Glenn Gallery, Los Angeles, California. *Ellsworth Kelly: Wall Reliefs*. Nov. 30, 1991–Jan. 3, 1992.
- 1992
- Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris. *Ellsworth Kelly*. March 17–April 18. Exh. brochure, with reprinted excerpts of text by Ann Hindry. In French and English; trans. Neal Cooper.
- Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris. *Ellsworth Kelly: Les années françaises, 1948–1954*. March 17–May 24. Organized by Jack Cowart and Alfred Pacquement. Exh. cat., with texts by Yve-Alain Bois, Cowart, and Pacquement; cat. of works by Catherine Craft; and extensive chronology by Nathalie Brunet. Traveled to Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster, as *Ellsworth Kelly: Die Jahre in Frankreich 1948–1954*, June 14–Aug. 23 (exh. cat., trans. Ingrid Hacker-Klier, Magda Moses, and Bram Opstelten); and National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., as *Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France, 1948–1954*, Nov. 1, 1992–Jan. 24, 1993 (exh. cat., trans. Thomas Repensek and Gregory Suis).
- Kimmelman, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly's Coming of Age in Paris." *The New York Times*, Nov. 1, 1992, section 2, p. 31.
- Kramer, Hilton. "A Painter's Two Cultures: Ellsworth Kelly Was an American in Paris." *Art & Antiques* (New York) 15, no. 2 (March 1993), pp. 104–05.
- Perl, Jed. "Art: An American in Paris." *The New Criterion* (New York) 2, no. 5 (Jan. 1993), pp. 46–50.
- Plagens, Peter. "The Wonder Years: How Two Audacious Young Americans Broke into the Avant-Garde." *Newsweek* (New York) 120, no. 24 (Dec. 14, 1992), pp. 76–77.
- Russell, John. "Ellsworth Kelly, an American in Paris." *The New York Times*, April 5, 1992, section 11, pp. 39, 44.
- Benedicte Saxe Gallery, Beverly Hills. *Ellsworth Kelly: Selected Graphic Works Published by Maeght Editions, Paris & Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, 1960s–1980s*. April 4–May 30.

- Beatty, Frances. "Kelly, Smith: 'Less Is More' Revisited." *Art/World* (New York), May 18–June 13, 1979, pp. 1, 12.
- Kramer, Hilton. "Art: Earthly Delights of Shaker Drawings." *The New York Times*, May 4, 1979, p. C22.
- Lubell, Ellen. "The Graying of Ellsworth Kelly." *The SoHo Weekly News* (New York), May 17, 1979, pp. 45, 58.
- Whelan, Richard. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 78, no. 7 (Sept. 1979), p. 180.
- Galerie Maeght, Zurich. *Ellsworth Kelly: Lithographien*. Nov. 4–10.
- Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. *Ellsworth Kelly: Schilderijen en beelden 1963–1979/Paintings and Sculptures 1963–1979*. Dec. 13, 1979–Feb. 3, 1980. Organized by Edy de Wilde and Rini Dippel. Exh. cat., with text by Barbara Rose and statement by Kelly. In English and Dutch; trans. Caroline ter Braak and Ina Rike. Traveled in modified form to Hayward Gallery, London, Feb. 27–April 7, 1980; Musée National d'Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, as *Ellsworth Kelly: Peintures et sculptures 1968–1979*, April 23–June 15, 1980 (exh. cat., with statement by Pontus Hulten; trans. Catherine Ferhos and Catherine Thieck); and Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, as *Ellsworth Kelly: Gemälde und Skulpturen 1966–1979*, July 5–Sept. 7, 1980 (exh. cat., with foreword by Katharina Schmidt and text by Antje von Graevenitz; trans. Elisabeth Jappe).
- Anderson, Susan Heller. "Paris Hails Ellsworth Kelly, Foster Son, and His Art." *The New York Times*, July 26, 1980, p. 9.
- Michel, Jacques. "Peintures d'Ellsworth Kelly: La structure des choses." *Le Monde* (Paris), May 15, 1980, p. 20.
- Overy, Paul. "Ellsworth Kelly in Europe." *International Herald Tribune* (Paris), March 21, 1980, p. 9W.
- Roberts, John. "Ellsworth Kelly at the Hayward." *Artscribe* (London), no. 22 (April 1980), pp. 57–58.
- Shepherd, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Review* (London), Feb. 29, 1980, p. 87.
- 1980
- Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. *Paperworks by Ellsworth Kelly*. Aug. 19–Oct. 19.
- 1981
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Paintings & Sculpture*. April 7–May 2. In conjunction with Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Paintings*. April 11–May 9; and Castelli Uptown, New York. *Paint Drawings*. April 11–May 2. Combined exh. cat., *Ellsworth Kelly*.
- Russell, John. "Art: Ellsworth Kelly and Red Grooms Shows." *The New York Times*, April 17, 1981, p. C18.
- Larry Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly: Major Paintings and Sculpture*. Nov. 24–Dec. 19.
- 1982
- Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly at Gemini: 1979–1982*. April 7–May 28. Exh. cat., with text by Carter Ratcliff.
- Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly, Painted Wall Sculptures: Ellsworth Kelly, The Concorde Series*. May 20–June 19.
- Muchnic, Suzanne. "The Galleries: La Cienega Area." *Los Angeles Times*, May 28, 1982, part VI, p. 12.
- John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco. *Ellsworth Kelly: Painted Wall Sculptures*. June 9–26.
- Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston. *Steel Sculpture*. Sept. 15–Oct. 15.
- Temin, Christine. "Newbury St. Beckons Hub Artists." *The Boston Globe*, Sept. 16, 1982, p. 38.
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Sculpture*. Dec. 17, 1982–Feb. 27, 1983. Organized by Emily Rauh Pulitzer and Patterson Sims. Exh. cat., with foreword by Tom Armstrong, acknowledgments by Sims and Pulitzer, and cat. raisonné. Traveled to the Saint Louis Art Museum, March 26–May 30 (exh. cat., with text by Alexandra Bellos).
- Brenson, Michael. "In Sculpture, Too, He Is an Artist of Surprises." *The New York Times*, Dec. 12, 1982, section 2, pp. 1, 38.
- Grant, Daniel. "Kelly Explores Two Media." *Newsday* (New York), Dec. 31, 1982, part II, pp. 15–16.
- Russell, John. "Art: Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, Dec. 17, 1982, p. C34.
- Spies, Werner. "Reduktion als Widerstand: Skulptur in Amerika/Das Whitney Museum zeigt Ellsworth Kelly." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Frankfurt), Feb. 5, 1983, p. 25.
- 1983
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: New Paintings*. Dec. 1, 1982–Jan. 8, 1983.
- Kohn, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Flash Art* (Milan), no. 111 (March 1983), p. 58.
- Licht, Matthew. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 5, no. 6 (Feb. 1983), p. 41.
- 1984
- Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles. *Painted Aluminum Wall Sculpture*. Jan. 12–Feb. 18. In conjunction with Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Weathering Steel Wall Sculpture*. Jan. 21–Feb. 18. Exh. cat., *Ellsworth Kelly*, with statement by Kelly.
- Muchnic, Suzanne. "The Galleries: La Cienega Area." *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 27, 1984, part VI, pp. 2, 4.
- Goldman-Kraft Gallery, Chicago. *Ellsworth Kelly: Painted Wall Sculpture/Graphics*. April 6–May 1.
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Works in Wood*. May 2–June 2. Exh. cat.
- Brenson, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly: 'Wood Sculptures.'" *The New York Times*, May 4, 1984, p. C26.
- McEvelley, Thomas. "Ellsworth Kelly, Blum Helman Gallery." *Artforum* (New York) 23, no. 3 (Nov. 1984), p. 98.
- 1985
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly, New Paintings*. March 6–30.
- Russell, John. "At Midtown Galleries, Good Shows Abound." *The New York Times*, March 15, 1985, pp. C1, C18.
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: New Wall Reliefs*. March 30–April 13.
- Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Painted Wall Sculptures*. June 18–Aug. 11.
- Campbell, Lawrence. "Wall Sculptures by Ellsworth Kelly on Exhibit in Katonah." *The New York Times*, July 7, 1985, p. WC16.
- Anne Weher Gallery, Georgetown, Maine. *Ellsworth Kelly Prints*. July 14–Aug. 4.
- Crichton, Alan. "Lithographs by Ellsworth Kelly and Photographs by Todd Webb." *Art New England* (Brighton, Massachusetts) 6, no. 11 (Nov. 1985), p. 12.
- 1986
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings*. April 30–June 7. In conjunction with BlumHelman Warehouse, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Sculptures*. May 3–June 7. Exh. cat., *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings and Sculptures 1986*.
- Brenson, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, May 9, 1986, p. C27.
- Westfall, Stephen. "Ellsworth Kelly at BlumHelman, BlumHelman Warehouse and Kent." *Art in America* (New York) 74, no. 11 (Nov. 1986), pp. 161–62.
- 1987
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Coral Leaf Drawings*. May 4–June 6.
- Russell, John. "Roy Lichtenstein and Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, June 5, 1987, p. 24C.
- Fort Worth Art Museum, Texas. *Ellsworth Kelly: Works on Paper*. Sept. 13–Oct. 25. Organized by Diane Upright. Exh. cat., with text by Upright, acknowledgments by E. A. Carmean, Jr., and introduction by Henry Geldzahler. In conjunction with Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *Ellsworth Kelly: Seven Paintings (1952–55/1987)*. Dec. 2, 1987–Jan. 31, 1988. Organized by Trevor J. Fairbrother; exh. cat., with text by Fairbrother. Traveled to Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, March 5–May 15, 1988; Baltimore Museum of Art, May 31–July 24, 1988; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Aug. 11–Sept. 25, 1988; and Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Oct. 22–Dec. 31, 1988.
- Baker, Kenneth. "Ellsworth Kelly's Bare-Bones Abstract Aesthetic." *San Francisco Chronicle*, Aug. 21, 1988, pp. 12–13.

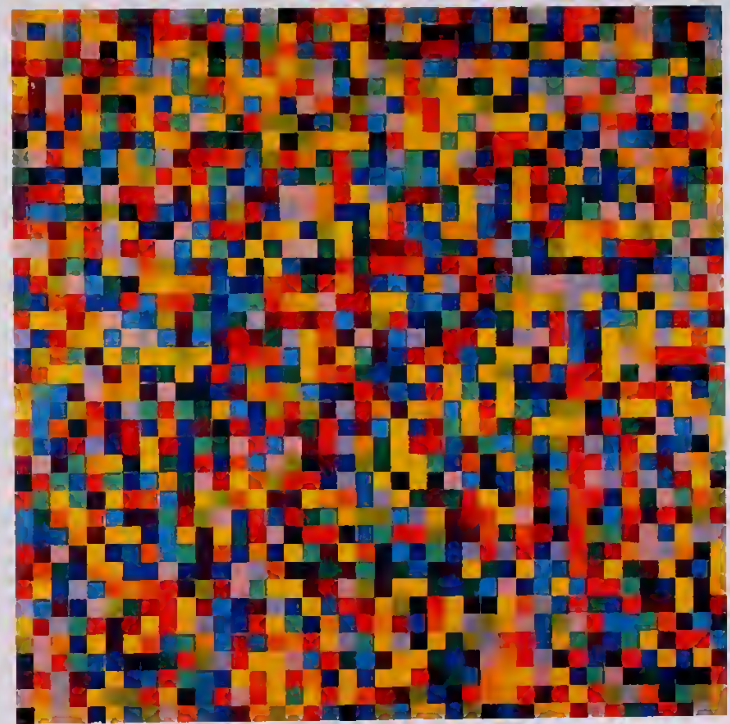


117. *Spectrum Colors Arranged by Chance V*, 1951

Collage on paper

39 x 39 inches (99.1 x 99.1 cm)

Private collection



118. *Spectrum Colors Arranged by Chance VII*, 1951

Collage on paper

39 x 39 inches (99.1 x 99.1 cm)

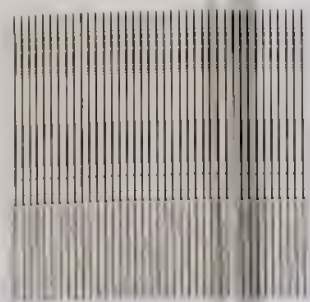
Private collection

- Laura Carpenter Gallery, Santa Fe. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings and Sculpture*. June 11–July 15.
- Susan Sheehan Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: The Paris Prints 1964–1965*. Oct. 1–31. Exh. cat., with text and interview by Henry Geldzahler.
- Matthew Marks Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Plant Drawings*. Oct. 14–Nov. 28. Exh. cat., with text by John Ashbery.
—Schwabsky, Barry. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Artforum* (New York) 31, no. 5 (Jan. 1993), p. 85.
—Solomon, Deborah. "The Gallery: Ellsworth Kelly." *The Wall Street Journal* (New York), Oct. 21, 1992, p. A14.
- Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. *The Documenta Room*. Oct. 21–Nov. 20.
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly*. Nov. 11, 1992–Jan. 2, 1993. Exh. cat., with text by Klaus Kertess.
—"Ellsworth Kelly." *The New Yorker* (New York) 68, no. 43 (Dec. 14, 1992), p. 20.
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Installation*. Nov. 21–Dec. 19.
—Bonami, Francesco. "Spotlight: Ellsworth Kelly." *Flash Art* (Milan) 26, no. 169 (March–April 1993), p. 77.
- 1993
- Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis. *Ellsworth Kelly Editions*. Feb. 4–April 3.
- Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly Prints*. June 3–July 2.
- 1994
- The Eli Broad Family Foundation, Santa Monica, California. *The Eli Broad Family Foundation Exhibition*. Jan. 29–July 31.
- Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. *Spencertown: Recent Paintings by Ellsworth Kelly*. Sept. 8–Oct. 15. Organized by Anthony d'Offay and Matthew Marks. Traveled to Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, Oct. 29, 1994–Jan. 29, 1995. Exh. cat., with photographic text by Jack Shear and introduction by Yve-Alain Bois.
—Cotter, Holland. "Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, Dec. 16, 1994, p. C36.
—Kuspit, Donald. "Ellsworth Kelly: Matthew Marks Gallery." *Artforum* (New York) 33, no. 7 (March 1995), pp. 88–89.
—Mac Adam, Alfred. "Ellsworth Kelly: Matthew Marks." *ARTnews* (New York) 94, no. 2 (Feb. 1995), p. 121.
- Milwaukee Art Museum. *Ellsworth Kelly: Works from the Permanent Collection*. Sept. 16, 1994–Jan. 1, 1995.
- Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. *Ellsworth Kelly: The Process of Seeing*. Oct. 2, 1994–Feb. 5, 1995. Organized by Siri Engberg. Exh. brochure, with foreword by Engberg.

- 1995
- Susan Sheehan Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly—Colored Paper Images 1976–77: The Creative Process*. Oct. 17–Dec. 2. Exh. cat., with introduction by David Kiehl.
- 1996
- Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, St. Louis. *Ellsworth Kelly: Black and White*. Jan. 25–April 13.
—Duffy, Robert W. "The Essence of Ellsworth Kelly." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 24, 1996, p. 4D.

Group Exhibitions

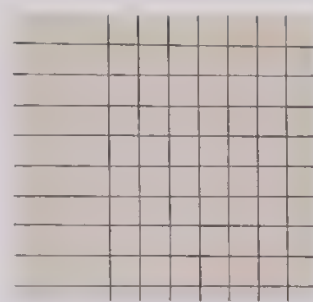
- 1948
- Boris Mirski Art Gallery, Boston. Spring. Exh. cat.
- 1950
- Galerie des Beaux-Arts, Paris. *Premier Salon des jeunes peintres*. Jan. 26–Feb. 15. Exh. cat., with preface by Pierre Descargues.
—Bouret, Jean. "Le Premier Salon des jeunes peintres." *Arts: Beaux arts, littérature, spectacles* (Paris), Jan. 27, 1950, pp. 1, 4.
- Palais des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris. *Sème Salon des réalités nouvelles*. June 10–July 15. Exh. cat., with introduction by A. Frédo Sidès.
- 1951
- Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, Paris. *6ème Salon des réalités nouvelles*. June. Exh. cat.
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *75th Anniversary Celebration Exhibition of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts*. June 7–Sept. 16.
- Galerie Maeght, Paris. *Tendance*. Oct. Exh. cat., published in *Derrière le Miroir* (Paris), no. 41 (Oct. 1951), with text by Charles Estienne.
—Estienne, Charles. "Mur et chevalet." *L'Observateur* (Paris), no. 80 (Nov. 22, 1951), p. 19.
- 1952
- Galerie Maeght, Paris. *Tendance*. Oct. Exh. cat., published in *Derrière le Miroir* (Paris), no. 50 (Oct. 1952), with text by Michel Seuphor.
- 1953
- Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santander, Spain. *Exposición Internacional de Arte Abstracto*.
- 1956
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Recent Drawings U.S.A.* April 25–Aug. 5. Exh. cat.
- 1957
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Young America 1957*. Feb. 27–April 14. Exh. cat., with foreword by Lloyd Goodrich.
—P[ollet], E[lizabeth]. "Young Americans." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 31, no. 7 (April 1957), pp. 57–58.
- 1958
- World's Fair, United States Pavilion, Brussels. *American Art: Four Exhibitions*. April 17–Oct. 18. Organized by the American Federation of Arts. Exh. cat., with texts by Leslie Cheek, Jr., Robert Goldwater, Grace L. McCann Morley, and George W. Staempfli, and foreword by Harris K. Prior. In English, French, and Dutch.
—Genauer, Emily. "Show Puts New Light on Our Brussels Art Selections." *New York Herald Tribune*, Jan. 4, 1959, section 6, pp. 9, 1.



119.3. *Vertical Lines*



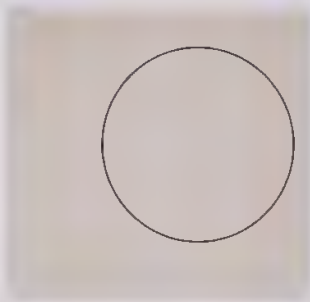
119.4. *Horizontal and Vertical Lines*



119.5. *Grid Lines*



119.8. *Curve*



119.9. *Circle Line*



119.10. *Circle Form*



119.13. *Square Form*



119.14. *Vertical Band*



119.15. *Rectangle*



119.18. *Black and White*



119.19. *Black*



119.20. *White*



119.1. *Horizontal Line*



119.2. *Vertical Line*



119.6. *Diagonal*



119.7. *Diagonal Lines*



119.11. *Mandorla Form*



119.12. *Triangle Form*



119.16. *Horizontal Band*



119.17. *White and Black*

119.1–40. *Line, Form and Color*, 1951

Ink on paper (.1–.9, .17–.18) and collage on paper (.10–.16, .19–.40)

7½ x 8 inches (19.1 x 20.3 cm)

Private collection



119.24. *Green*



119.25. *Red, Yellow, Blue*



119.29. *Yellow and Blue*



119.30. *Nine Colors*



119.34. *Black and Yellow*



119.35. *Black, Brown, White*



119.39. *White on White*



119.40. *Black on Black*



119.21. *Red*



119.22. *Yellow*



119.23. *Blue*



119.26. *Red, Blue, Yellow*



119.27. *Red and Yellow*



119.28. *Blue and Red*



119.31. *Red and Blue*



119.32. *Blue and Red*



119.33. *Purple and Orange*



119.36. *Pink and Orange*



119.37. *Blue and White*



119.38. *Green Curves*

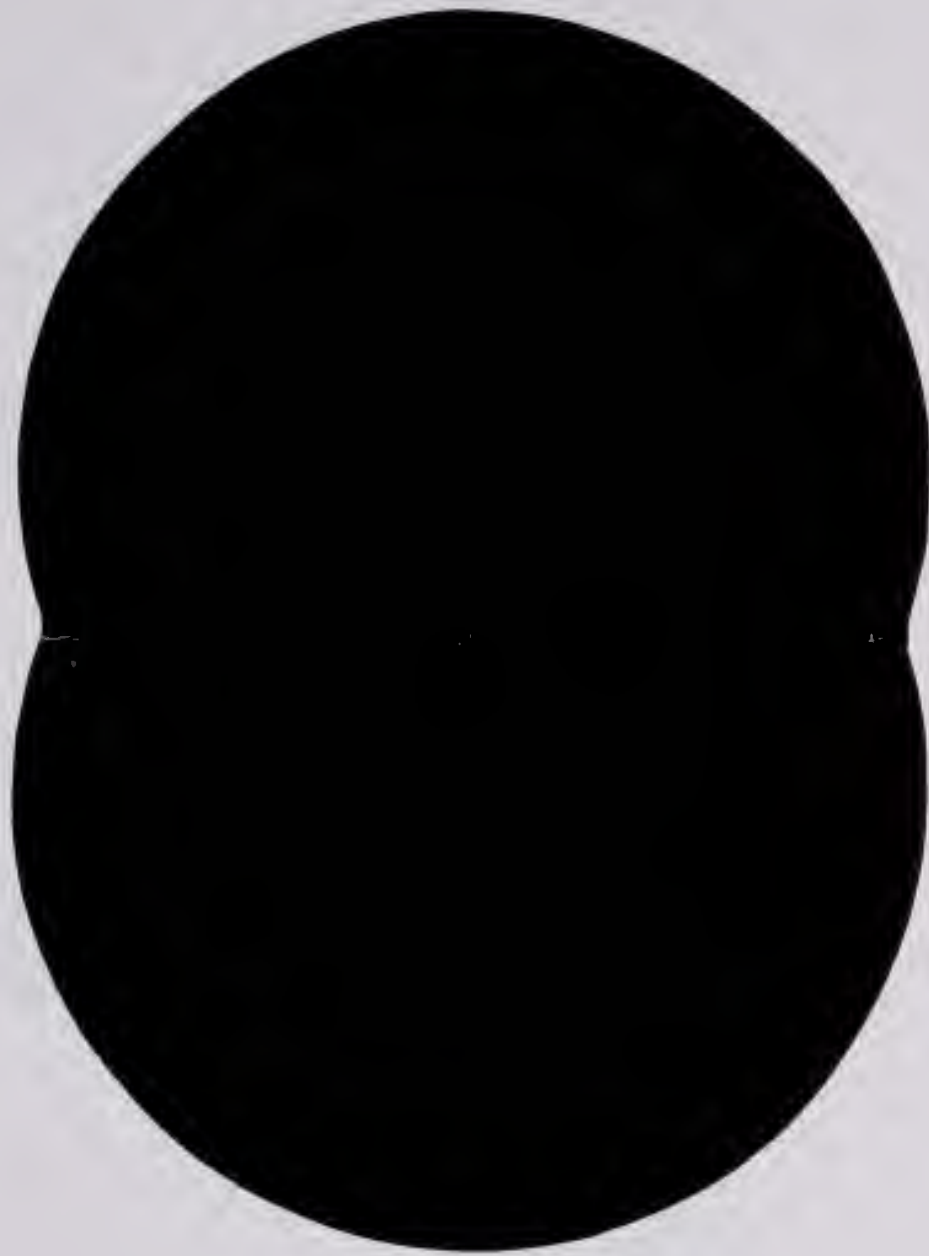


121. *Study for White over Blue*, 1952

Relief collage on paper

9" x 2 7/8" x 1/4" inches (24.1 x 6.7 x 1.0 cm)

Private collection



120. *Study for White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection*, 1951

Collage on paper

20 1/4 x 14 1/4 inches (51.4 x 36.2 cm)

Private collection





123. *Four Color Panels*, 1953

Collage on paper

3 7/8 x 12 1/2 inches (8.9 x 31.8 cm)

Private collection



124. *Nine Colors on White*, 1953

Collage on paper

23 1/2 x 19 1/2 inches (59.7 x 49.8 cm)

Private collection



125. *Gauloise Blue with Red Curve*, 1954

Collage on postcard

3 1/4 x 5 1/2 inches (8.3 x 14 cm)

Private collection, Gloucester, Massachusetts



126. *White Curve on White*, 1955

Collage on paper

13 1/2 x 6 inches (34.9 x 15.2 cm)

Private collection



127. *Wall, Beekman Downtown Hospital, 1955*

Pencil and gouache on paper

12 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches (32.4 x 32.4 cm)

Private collection

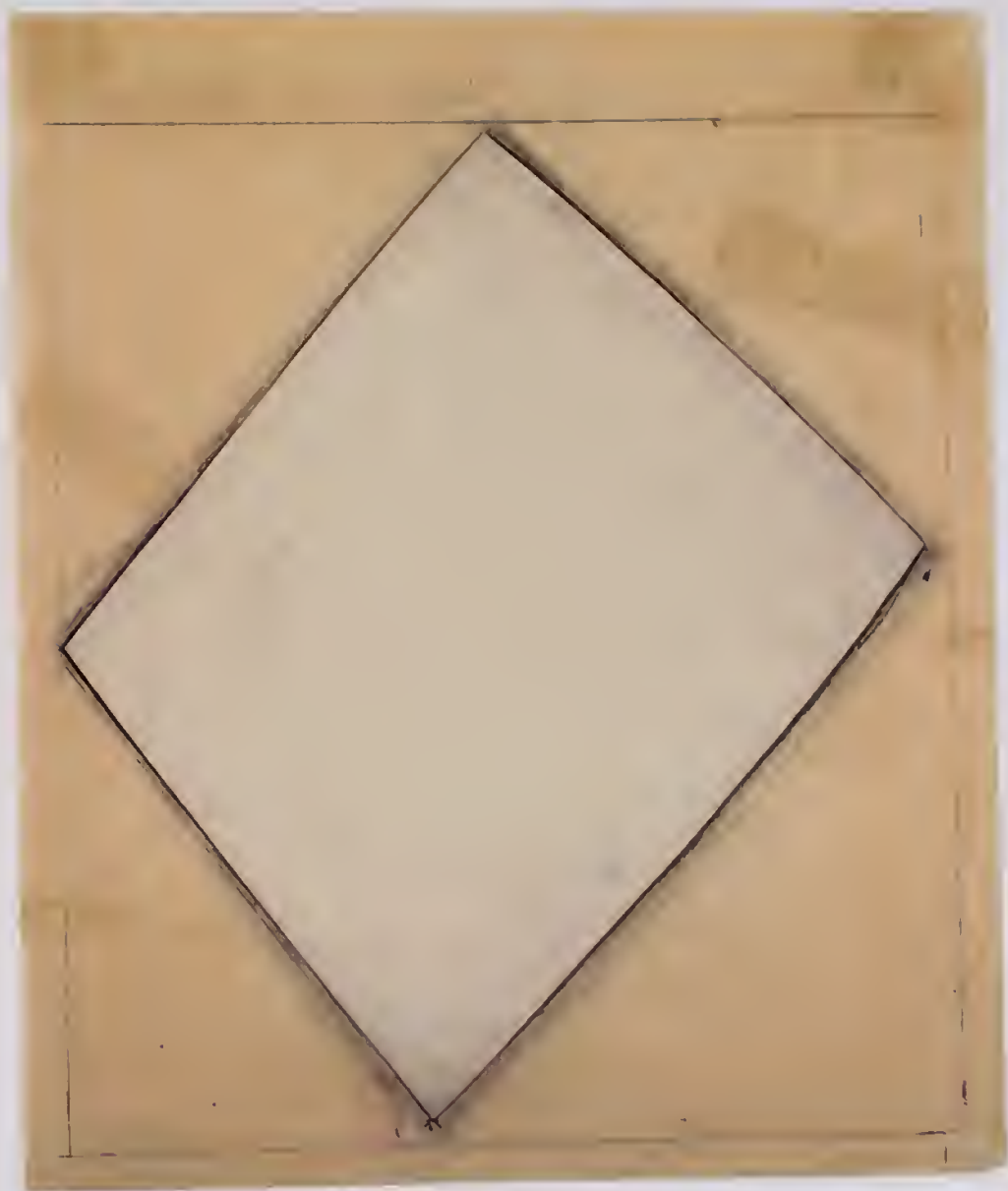


128. *Preliminary Study for Wall*, 1955

Collage on paper

10 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 inches (25.7 x 22.9 cm)

Private collection



129. *Study for a White Sculpture*, 1958

Pencil and collage on paper

14 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches (36.8 x 30.8 cm)

Private collection



130. *Study for Blue White*, 1960

Ink on paper

30% x 22% inches (77.8 x 57.5 cm)

The Art Institute of Chicago, B. C. Holland Memorial,

Restricted gift of Mr. and Mrs. B. C. Holland in honor of Douglas Druck

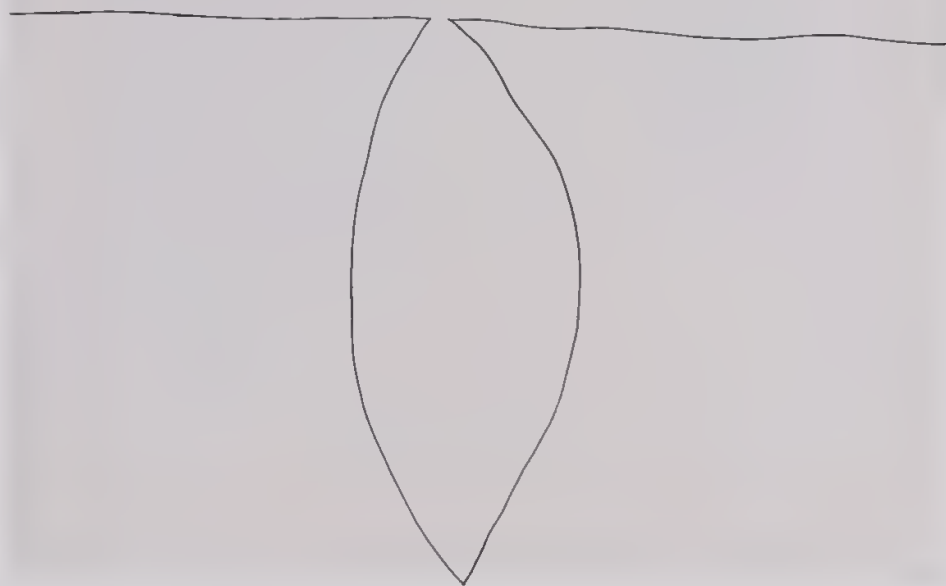


131. *White and Red*, 1962

Ink on paper

28 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (72.4 x 57.2 cm)

Private collection, San Francisco

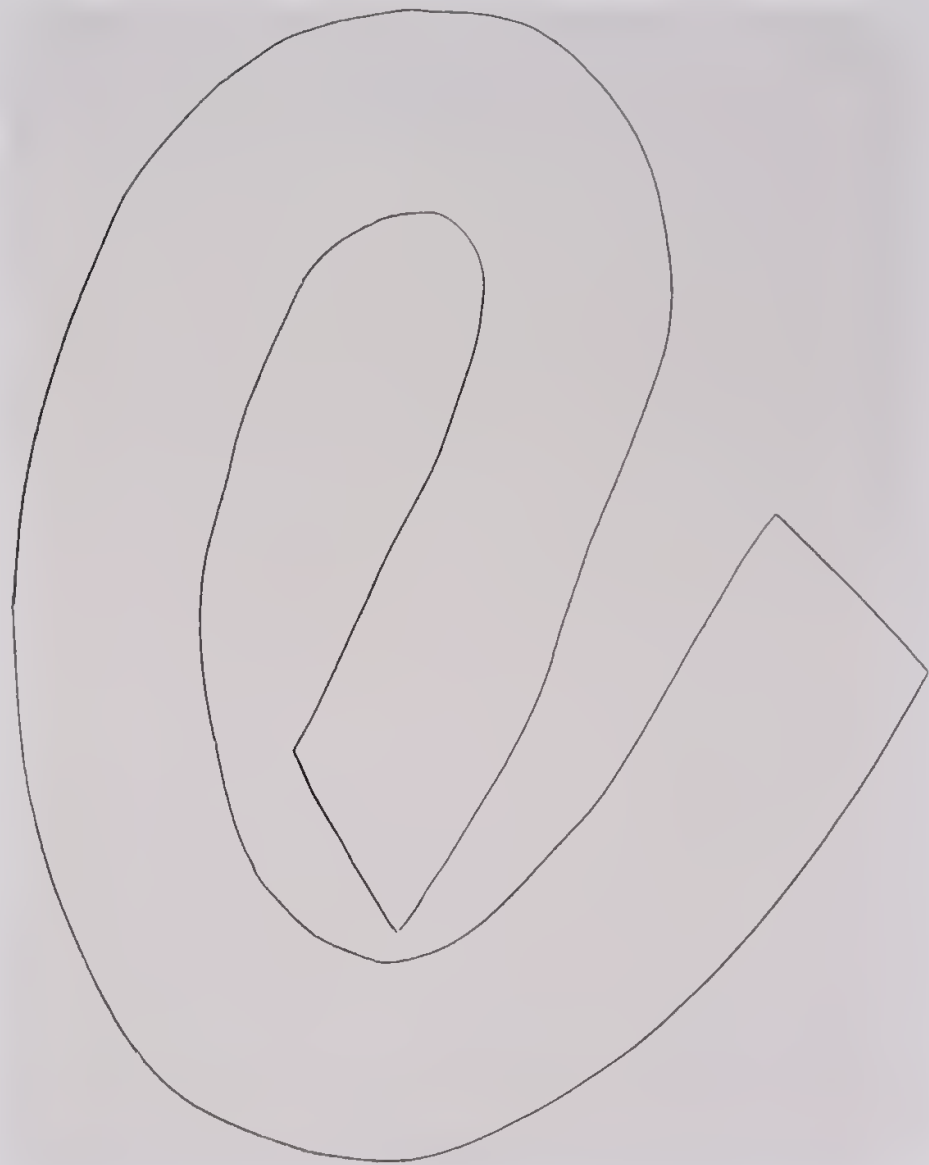


132. *One Stroke*, 1962

Pencil on paper

28 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches (72.4 x 57.2 cm)

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Purchased with
funds contributed by Beatrice and Silas H. Rhodes 69.1898

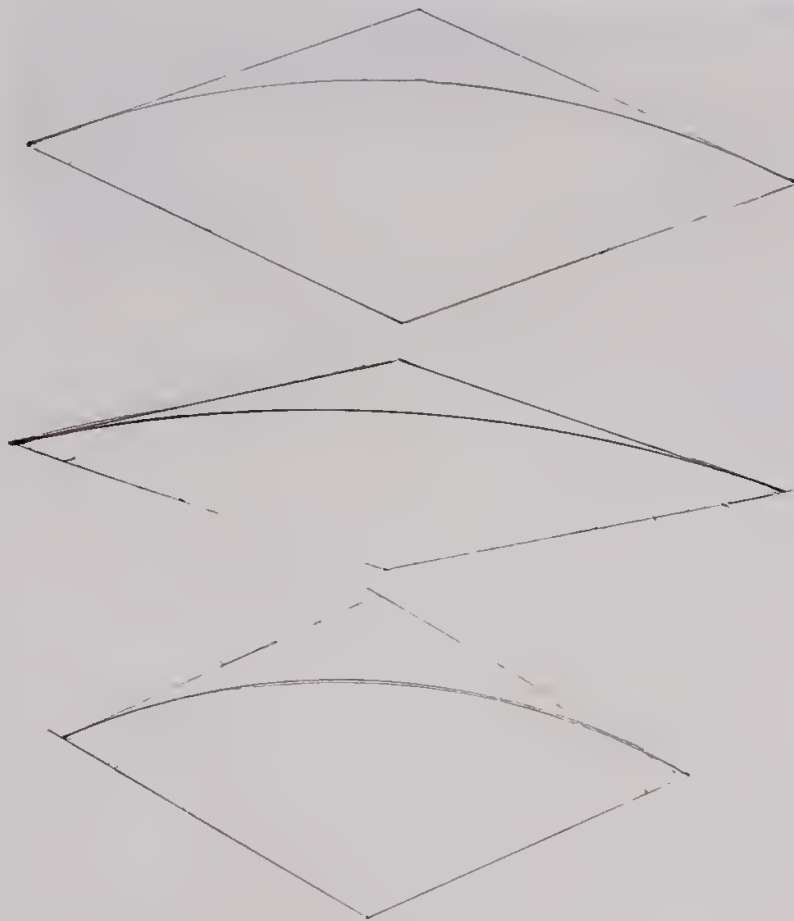


133. *Untitled*, 1962

Pencil on paper

28 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches (72.4 x 57.2 cm)

Private collection

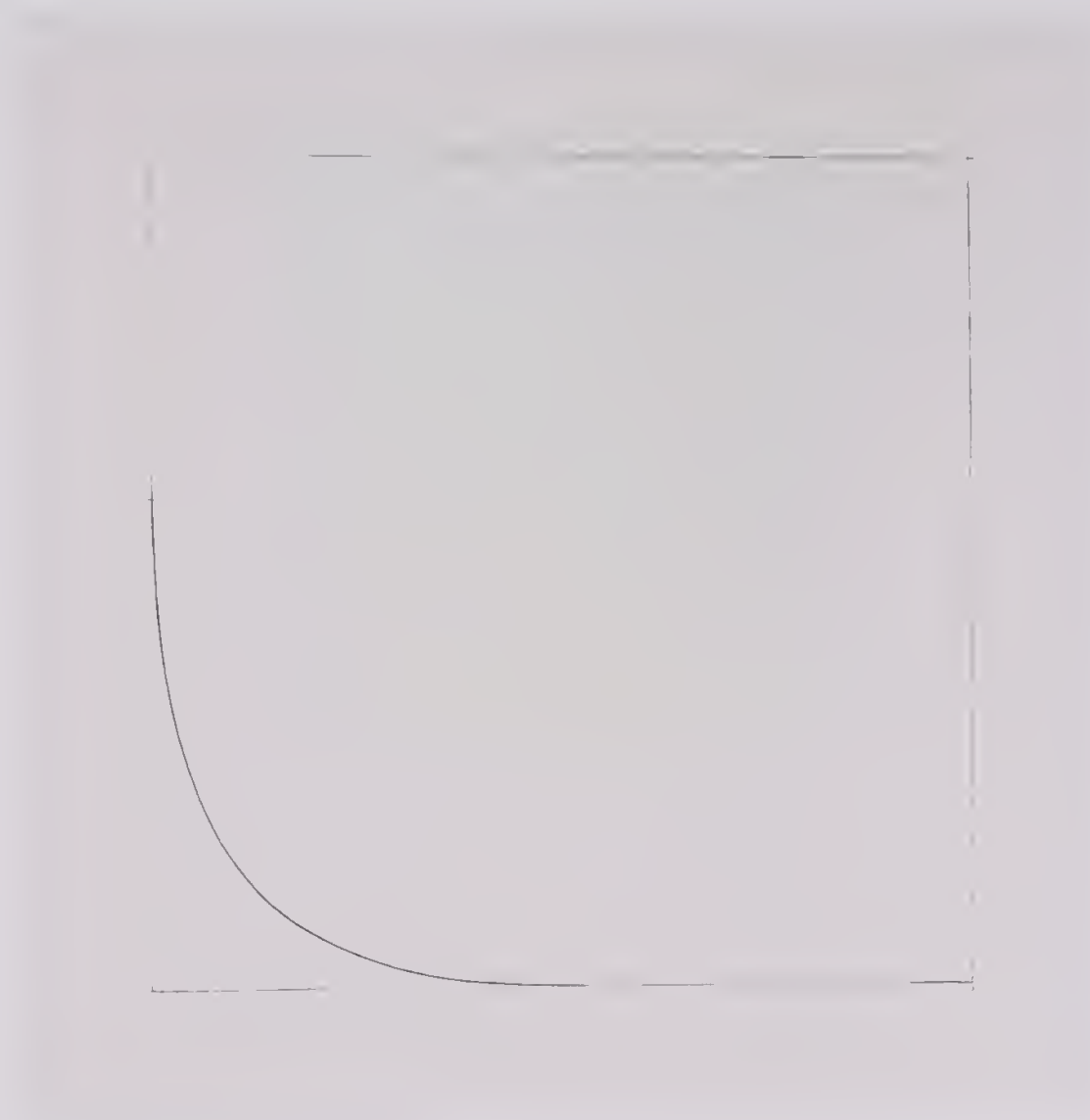


134. *Studies for Yellow, Red and Blue Curves*, 1971

Pencil on paper

16 1/2 x 12 1/4 inches (41.9 x 32.1 cm)

Private collection



135. *Study for Curve*, 1973

Pencil on paper

39 x 39 inches (99.1 x 99.1 cm)

Private collection



136. *Wall*, 1976

Pencil and collage on paper

29 x 23 inches (73.7 x 58.4 cm)

Private collection



137. *Black White*, 1976
Pencil and collage on paper
42 x 31 1/2 inches (106.7 x 80.6 cm)
Private collection



138. *Study for Painting in Eighteen Panels*, 1978

Collage on paper

18 x 129 1/4 inches (45,7 x 329,6 cm)

Private collection



140. *Lines (3/4) Radius: 164*, 1982

Pencil and ink on paper

36 x 36 inches (91,4 x 91,4 cm)

Private collection



139. *Lines (3/4) Radius: 164*, 1982

Pencil on paper

36 x 36 inches (91.4 x 91.4 cm)

Private collection



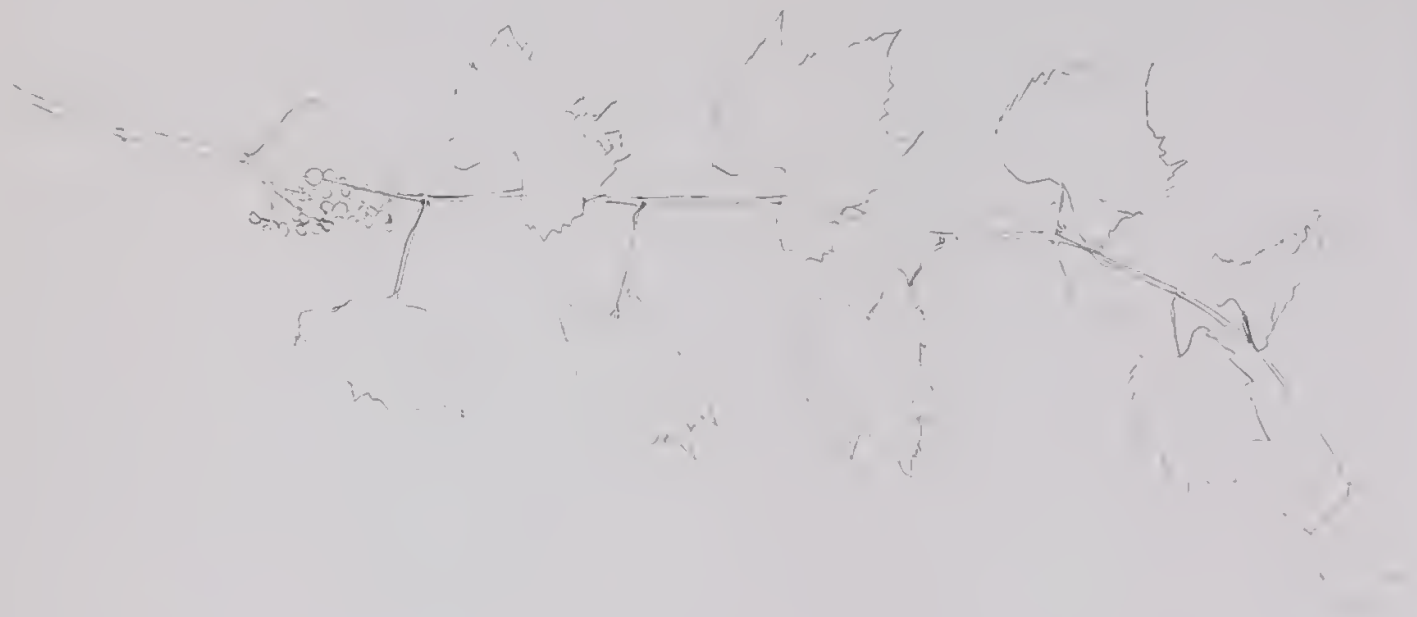


142. *Lemon Branch*, 1964

Pencil on paper

28 1/2 x 22 1/2 inches (72.4 x 57.2 cm)

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Purchased with
funds contributed by Beatrice and Silas H. Rhodes 69.1896

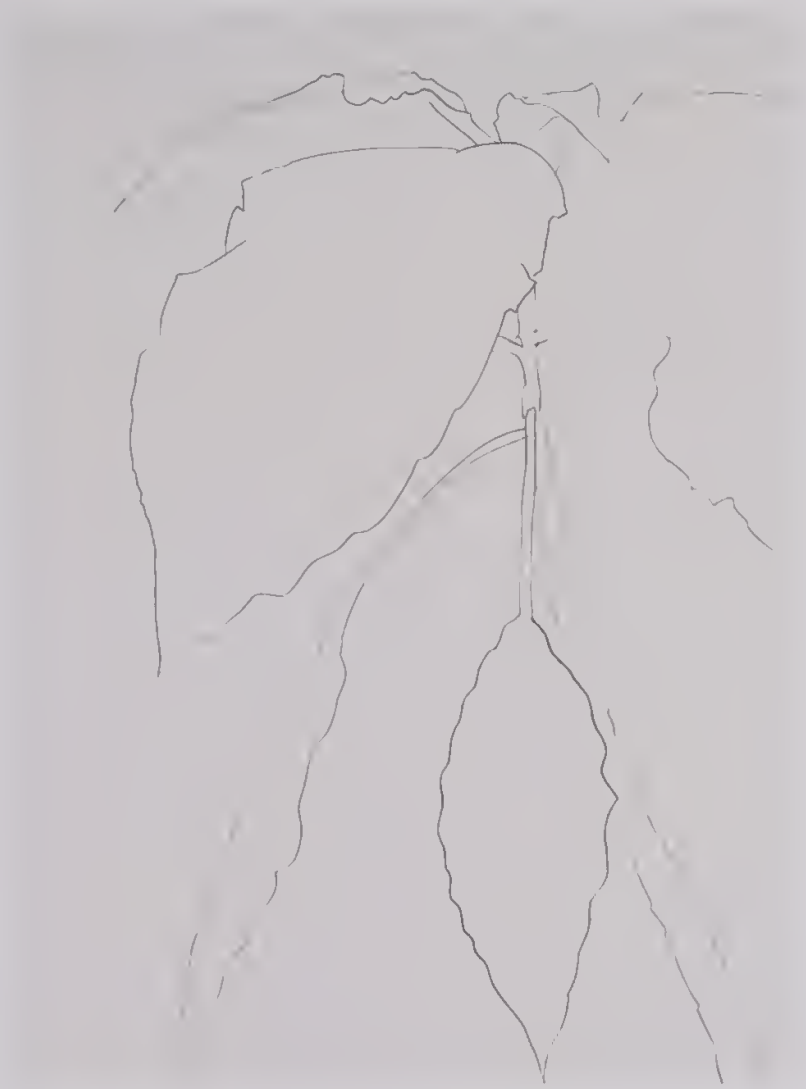


143. *Wild Grape*, 1980

Pencil on paper

30 x 44 inches (76.2 x 111.8 cm)

Collection of Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, Phoenix, Maryland

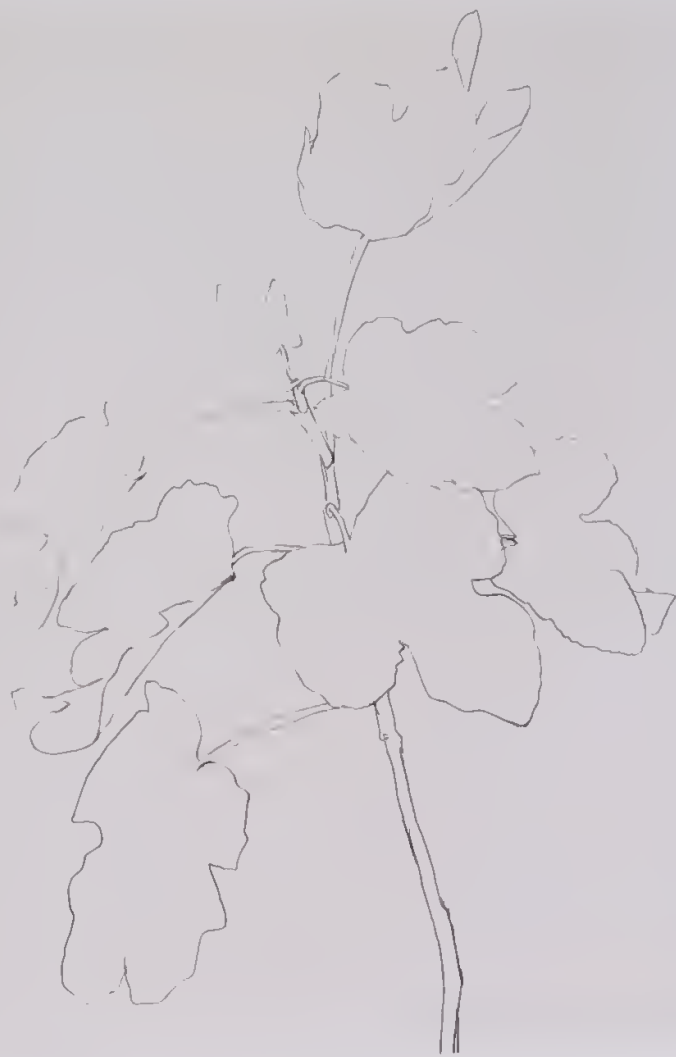


144. *Datura*, 1982

Pencil on paper

30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Private collection

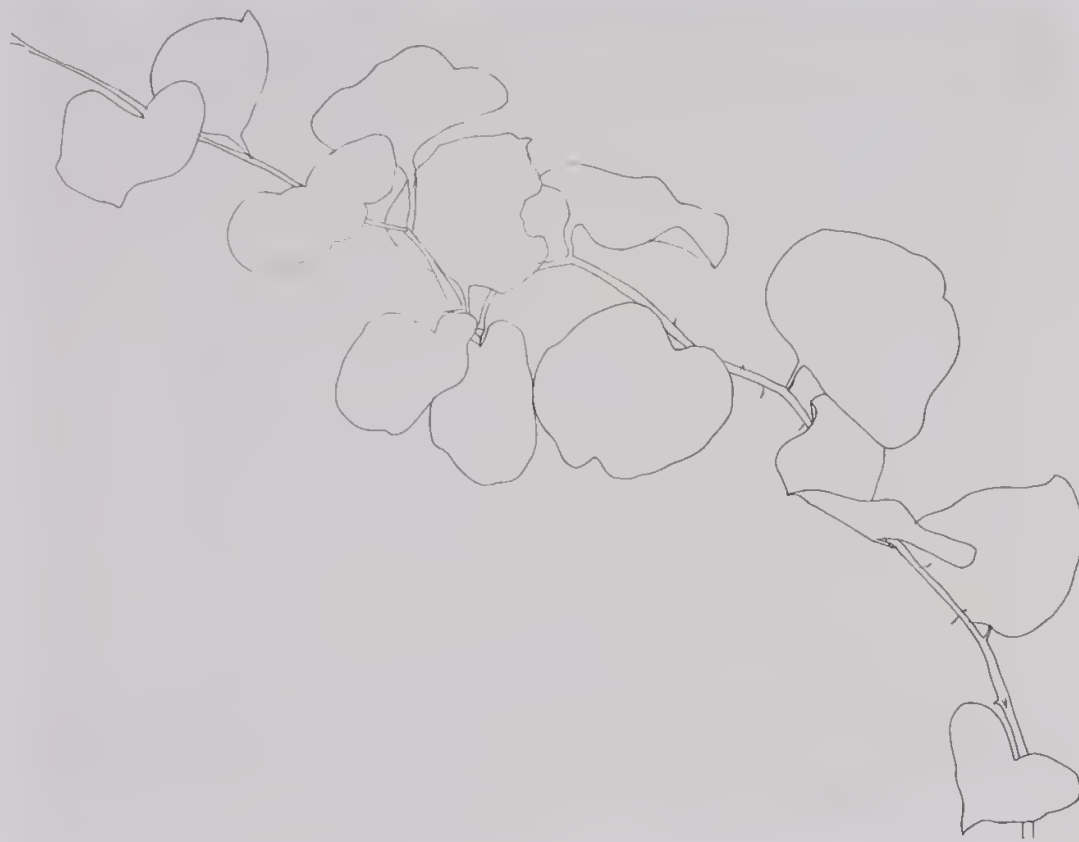


145. *Fig.* 1982

Graphite on paper

30 x 22 inches (76.2 x 55.9 cm)

Private collection, San Francisco

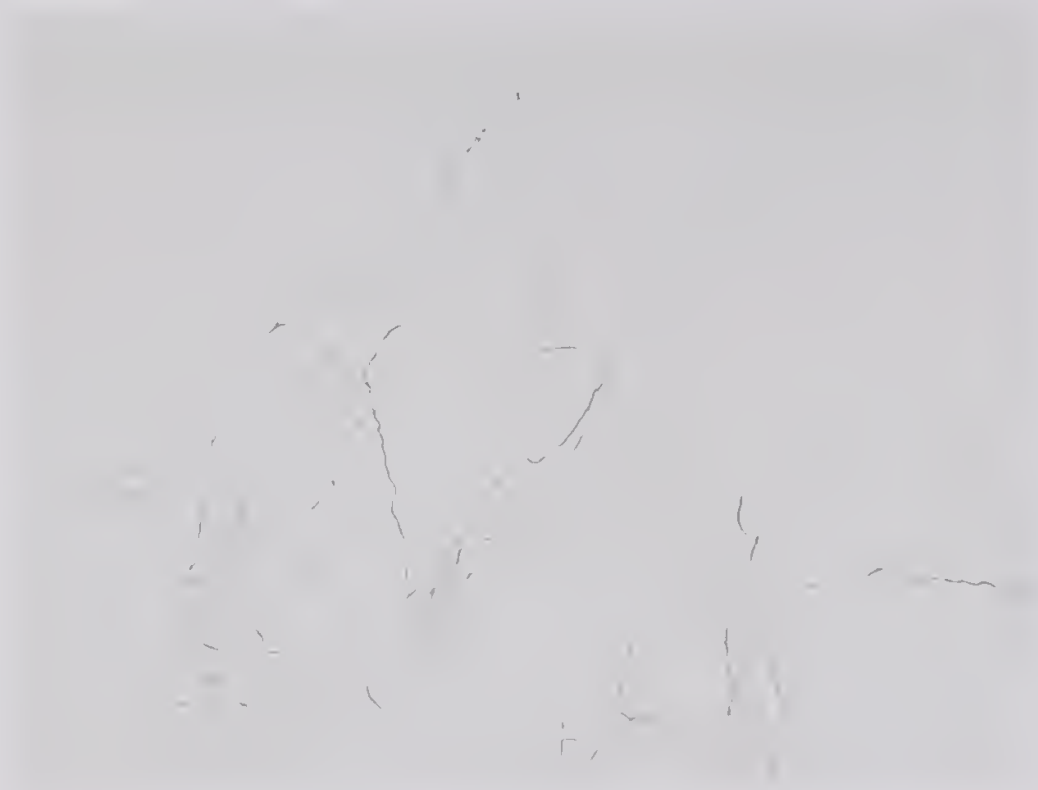


146. *Briar*, 1961

Ink on paper

22½ x 28½ inches (57.2 x 72.4 cm)

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, Gift of
Samuel Wagstaff in memory of Elva McCormick



147. *Sunflower*, 1983

Pencil on paper

22 x 30 inches (55.9 x 76.2 cm)

Collection of Jack Shear



148. *Two Irises*, 1983

Pencil on paper

22 x 28 inches (55.9 x 71.1 cm)

Private collection, San Francisco



149. *Siberian Iris*, 1989

Ink on paper

30 x 22 1/4 inches (76.2 x 57.2 cm)

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Kimmell, Ridgefield, Connecticut



150. *Four Blacks and Whites, Upper Manhattan*, 1957

Collage on postcard on paper

3 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches (8.9 x 14 cm)

Private collection

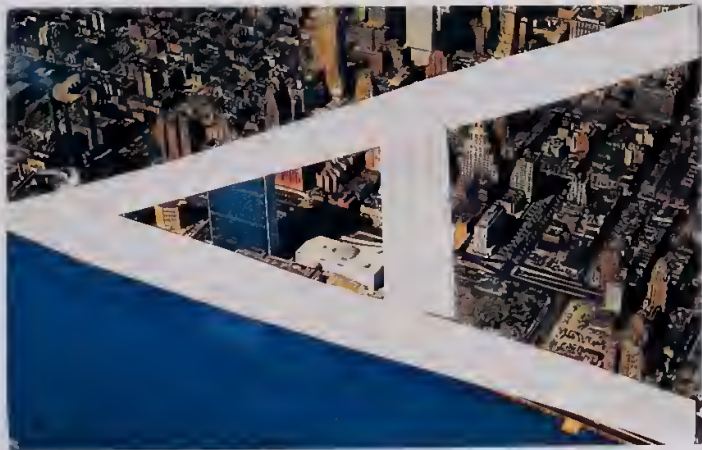


151. *Statue of Liberty*, 1957

Collage on postcard

5 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches (14 x 8.9 cm)

Private collection



152. *Horizontal "A,"* 1957
Collage on postcard
3 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches (8.9 x 14 cm)
Private collection



153. *Study for a Blue and White Sculpture for Les Tuileries,* 1964
Collage on postcard
3 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches (8.9 x 14 cm)
Private collection



154. *Horizontal Nude*, 1974

Collage on postcard

4 x 5 1/2 inches (10.2 x 14.9 cm)

Private collection



Philipsburg, St. Maarten, Netherlands

155. *Philipsburg*, 1974

Collage on postcard

4 1/4 x 6 inches (10.8 x 15.2 cm)

Private collection



156. *Cincinnati Riverfront Stadium*, 1980

Collage on postcard

3 7/8 x 5 1/2 inches (8.9 x 14 cm)

Private collection



157. *The Young Spartans*, 1984

Collage on postcard

4 3/8 x 5 3/4 inches (10.5 x 14.9 cm)

Private collection



158. *Beach Cabana, Meschers #1*, 1950

Gelatin-silver print

14 x 11 inches (35.6 x 27.9 cm)

Private collection



159, *Shadows on Stairs, Villa La Combe, Meschers, 1950*
Gelatin-silver print
14 x 11 inches (35.6 x 27.9 cm)
Private collection



160, *Bricks, Meschers #1, 1950*
Gelatin-silver print
14 x 11 inches (35.6 x 27.9 cm)
Private collection



161. *Shelled Bunker, Meschers #7*, 1950

Gelatin-silver print

11 x 14 inches (27.9 x 35.6 cm)

Private collection



162. *Curve Seen from a Highway, Austerlitz, New York*, 1970

Gelatin-silver print

11 x 14 inches (27.9 x 35.6 cm)

Private collection



163. *Sidewalk, New York City, 1970*

Gelatin-silver print

11 x 14 inches (27.9 x 35.6 cm)

Private collection



164. *Hangar Doorway, Saint Barts, 1977*

Gelatin-silver print

11 x 14 inches (27.9 x 35.6 cm)

Private collection



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PERCHED ROCK, ROCKER CREEK, ARIZONA



Chronology, Exhibition History, Bibliography

Chronology

*This chronology draws upon Nathalie Brunet's "Chronology: 1943–1954" in *Yve-Alain Bois, Jack Cowart, and Alfred Pacquement, Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France, 1948–1954, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1992), a valuable resource for material on Ellsworth Kelly's early years.**

1923–29

Ellsworth Kelly is born on May 31 in Newburgh, New York. His father, Allan Howe Kelly, who works for the United States Army at West Point, New York, and his mother, Florence Githens Kelly, a former teacher, are from Wheeling, West Virginia. His older brother, Allan, was born in 1921. When Kelly is six months old, he moves with his family to Pittsburgh. His brother David is born in 1926. During a childhood illness, Kelly is introduced by his mother and grandmother, Louisa (Rosenleibe) Kelly, to bird watching, which awakens in Kelly an early passion for color and form that he continues to develop in later years through studying the works of illustrator Louis Agassiz Fuertes and artist and ornithologist John James Audubon. The Kelly family moves to Oradell, New Jersey, in 1929, when Allan Kelly becomes an insurance-company executive at Accident and Casualty of Winterthur, Switzerland.

1930–38

During these years, the family moves frequently, although they do not leave the Oradell vicinity. Kelly attends elementary and junior high school at Oradell Junior High School from 1931 to 1938. Sixth-grade teacher Dorothy Opsut encourages Kelly to paint outdoors. In 1937 and 1938, he creates cover artworks for the school's literary magazine, *Chryp*. The 1938 yearbook lists Kelly as "Best Artist" and "Class Giant." He spends the summer of 1938 in Cape Cod, where he paints.

1938–41

Kelly receives from his mother the book *World-Famous Paintings*, ed. Rockwell Kent (1939), in which he discovers a favorite painting: Paul Cézanne's *Chestnut Trees at the Jas de Bouffan* (1885–86). He attends Dwight Morrow High School in Englewood, New Jersey. He makes his first oil painting, which he shows to art teacher Evelyn Rohbins, who recognizes and encourages his talent. He is also active in the school's theater club, The Mask and Wig, run by Helen Travolta. Kelly graduates in the spring of 1941. He visits the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

1941–43

Kelly moves to Gainsborough Street, Brooklyn, and studies applied arts at Pratt Institute with Maitland E. Graves and Eugen H. Petersen.

1943

Kelly is inducted into the United States Army at Fort Dix, New Jersey on January 1. Initially stationed at Fort Dix, Kelly is sent in late January to Camp Hale, Colorado, to train with the mountain-ski troops. Having requested assignment to the 603rd Engineers Camouflage Battalion at Fort Meade, Maryland, he is transferred there in March; here, he executes silkscreen posters designed by Colonel Homer Saint-Gaudens, son of renowned sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, that are used in classes for training the troops in concealment techniques.

1944

At the beginning of the year, Kelly is transferred to a newly formed unit, the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, at Camp Forest, Tennessee, a decoy unit specializing in camouflage techniques, especially those designed to conceal troop positions from the enemy. Early in May, Kelly's outfit leaves for Europe. His tour of duty takes him to England, France, and Germany. He is involved in the Allied invasion of Normandy, arriving ten days after D day in a maneuver known as "D + 10." He keeps sketchbooks during this time and makes drawings and watercolors. Kelly is stationed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, near Paris, in September. When he visits Paris for the first time, he is unable to visit the city's museums, which are closed due to the war.

1945

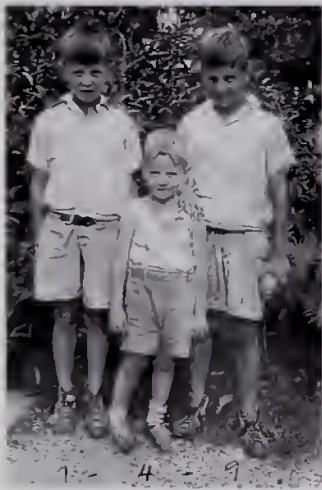
In May, Kelly's battalion returns to the United States. On October 23, he is discharged in Jacksonville, Florida.

1946–47

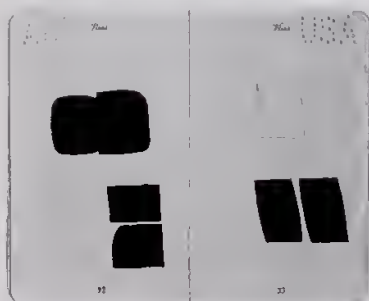
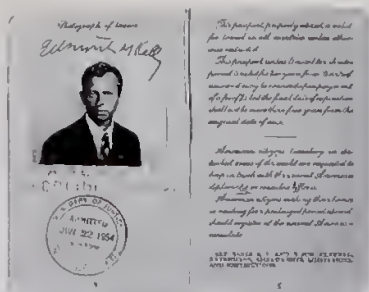
In January, Kelly enrolls in the Diploma Program at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (hereafter referred to as the Boston Museum School) under the G.I. Bill of Rights, which pays his tuition. He studies drawing with Ture Bengtz and painting with Karl Zerbe, an artist associated with German Expressionism. He spends many hours in the galleries of the Museum of Fine Arts; for a class he paints copies of two Old Master works in the museum's collection, Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Virgin and Child* (ca. late 1330s–early 1340s) and (Jacopo Tintoretto's *Portrait of a Young Man* (ca. 1580). He is especially impressed by a lecture given by visiting artist Max Beckmann. Kelly lives at the Norfolk House Center in Roxbury, Boston, where he teaches art classes two nights a week in exchange for room and board. He visits the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and the Germanic Museum and the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, while attending classes at the school. He occasionally travels to New York and visits the Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Non-Objective Painting (later named the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum).

1948

Kelly's work is presented for the first time in a group exhibition at the Boris Mirski Art Gallery, Boston. He graduates from the Boston Museum School in the spring. In October, Kelly returns to France with funds provided by the G.I. Bill and stays at the Hôtel Saint-George on rue Bonaparte in Paris. Soon after arriving, Kelly travels to the Musée d'Unterlinden in Colmar to see Matthias Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece* (ca. 1510–15). In Paris, he registers at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but attends classes infrequently. Kelly becomes friends with American artist Jack Youngerman, who arrived in Paris in 1947. Kelly's paintings, which are mostly half-length portraits, show the influence of Pablo Picasso's work and of Byzantine and Romanesque art. He visits the Musée du Louvre, the Musée de Cluny, the Musée Guimet, the Musée Cernuschi, and the library of the Byzantine Institute, an extension of Harvard University. Kelly paints religious figures and for the first time his art begins to



1. Ellsworth Kelly (left) with his brothers, David (center) and Allan (right), in Oradell, New Jersey, 1930.



2. Photo and ink sketches in Kelly's passport, 1954.



3. Kelly (right) with Alexander Calder and Delphine Seyrig, Roxbury, Connecticut, 1958.

reveal an interest in abstraction. He regularly visits the Musée de l'Homme, Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle, and the Musée National d'Art Moderne.

1949

During the spring, Kelly travels in France, visiting Poitiers, Chauvigny, Saint-Savin, Tavant, and Mont-Saint-Michel, and making drawings of the frescoes, stonework, and sculptures that he encounters. Kelly submits two paintings to an exhibition at the American Center, but they are rejected. He moves into the Hôtel de Bourgogne on the Ile Saint-Louis, where he stays for almost three years. Kelly paints *Plant I*, the first example of his use of a white form against a black ground. *Plant II* (cat. no. 1) marks the emergence of his interest in biomorphic forms. He begins to make collages. *Toilette* is Kelly's first painting developed by simplifying the form of an object, in this case, a Turkish-style toilet. Musician and composer John Cage and dancer and choreographer Merce Cunningham, who are also guests at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, meet Kelly and visit his studio. After traveling to Brittany with Ralph Coburn, an artist friend from Boston, Kelly spends the summer there. Back in Paris, Coburn and Kelly visit Alice B. Toklas, who shows them the late Gertrude Stein's art collection. They also attend exhibitions of works by Paul Gauguin, Vasily Kandinsky, Henri Matisse, and Picasso. Kelly completes his first relief, *Window III*, in which he sews string onto the canvas. He prints his first lithograph on the press at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Kelly makes a series of drawings based on the windows at the Musée National d'Art Moderne and works with joined panels for the first time to create *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris* (cat. no. 5). In December, Kelly goes to Sanary, a Mediterranean town, to stay with Coburn. They visit the Musée Picasso, at the Château Grimaldi, in Antibes.

1950

Kelly returns to Paris. He makes *Window V*, his first shaped wood cutout. He meets French critic, painter, and art historian Michel Seuphor, who introduces him to Jean (Hans) Arp. Kelly participates in his first group exhibition in Paris, at the Galerie des Beaux-Arts. In February, Arp invites Kelly, Coburn, and Youngerman to his studio in Meudon. Inspired by the collages of Arp and the late Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Kelly begins making collages in which he applies their principles, the laws of chance, to determine the arrangement of the elements. He meets Italian painter Alberto Magnelli, Dada pioneer Francis Picabia, and Georges Vantongerloo, a member of the De Stijl group. Félix Del Marle, Secretary General of *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles*, invites Kelly to exhibit in the fifth *Salon*. Coburn and Youngerman also show at this *Salon*. One of Kelly's works, *White Relief*, is refused on the basis that it is not a work of art. Youngerman marries French actress Delphine Seyrig. Henri Seyrig, Delphine's father, buys *Antibes*, the only work Kelly sells while living in France. Kelly makes *Pink Rectangle*, his first painting based on a collage. He spends the month of August at Villa La Combe, the home of Delphine's mother, Hermine, in the village of Meschers. Kelly makes sketches, collages, and photographs during his stay. In the fall, with his G.I. Bill

funding coming to an end, Kelly accepts a position teaching art to children at the American School in Paris. Delphine's brother Francis Seyrig introduces Kelly to painter George Koskas and pianist Alain Naude. Art dealer Denise Rene invites Kelly and Youngerman to present their work to the gallery's artists for consideration, but they are not accepted.

1951

Artist Eduardo Paolozzi introduces Kelly to Louis Clayeux, director of Galerie Maeght. Kelly, Koskas, and Youngerman convince Jean-Robert Arnaud and John Franklin Koenig to turn the cellar of their bookstore into a gallery. The three artists convert the space themselves and Kelly's first solo exhibition takes place there, at Galerie Arnaud. Kelly and Youngerman write to Hilla Rebay, founding director of the Guggenheim Museum and a longtime friend of Arp. Unbeknownst to Kelly, she recommends him for a Guggenheim Museum scholarship, which he does not receive. Kelly applies to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation with a grant proposal for a book of linoleum prints, "Line, Form and Color." Kelly lists Arp, Henri-Pierre Roché, Seuphor, and Henri Seyrig as references; in April of the following year, Kelly learns that he did not receive the grant and the book is never published. He sends a painting to the Boston Museum School for inclusion in a group exhibition celebrating the school's seventy-fifth anniversary. After the exhibition closes, the painting *La Combe III*, the only abstract work in the exhibition, is sent to Cage in New York, with whom Kelly has been corresponding, until Kelly's own return to the United States in 1954. Kelly, Naudé, and Youngerman visit Constantin Brancusi's Paris studio. Georges Braque admires Kelly's painting *Meschers* in an exhibition at Galerie Maeght. Gustav Zumsteg, a Swiss textile manufacturer and art collector who is also impressed by Kelly's work, commissions him to create fabric designs. In November, Kelly again visits Coburn in Sanary, where he is a guest with Naude and Anne Weber, a friend from Boston. Kelly makes *Colors for a Large Wall* (cat. no. 16), a sixty-four panel painting, his first work composed of separate panels of single colors.

1952

In Sanary, where he remains until May, Kelly buys dyed cotton from which he creates *Red Yellow Blue White* (cat. no. 17), his first work using fabric instead of paint. He designs a dress for Weber, using the same fabric. Kelly visits Unité d'Habitation, the apartment complex designed by Le Corbusier in Marseille. In May, he joins Naudé at the villa of friend Joanna Wieder in Forcy, a village on the Marne. Kelly writes to Claude Monet's stepson, Jacques Hoschedé, who invites him to Giverny, where he sees the French artist's late *Nymphéas* paintings. Kelly, Coburn, and Youngerman participate in *Primera Muestra Internacional de Arte Abstracto*, a group exhibition at Galerie Cuatro Muros in Caracas, Venezuela. In September, Kelly moves to a studio at Cite des Fleurs, Paris. He exhibits *Colors for a Large Wall* at Galerie Maeght, where he meets sculptor Alberto Giacometti and painter Joan Miró.



4. *Transportation Building Lobby Sculpture*, 1956–57. Anodized aluminum; 104 panels, 144 x 768 x 12 inches (365.8 x 1,950 x 30.5 cm) overall. Transportation Building, Penn Center, Philadelphia.



5. Kelly, with paintings he made during the summer of 1960 in The Springs, East Hampton, New York. Foreground: *Black White*; background, left to right: *White Alice*, *Block Island II*, *White Blue*, *Blue Pale Gray*.

1953

Black Square (cat. no. 23) and *White Square* (cat. no. 22) are the last paintings Kelly completes in Paris. He meets Marcel Breuer, one of three architects chosen to design the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, and artist Alexander Calder. Kelly spends Christmas near Rotterdam, the Netherlands, where he first encounters Piet Mondrian's late works at the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen.

1954

Kelly reads a long review in *ARTnews* of an Ad Reinhardt exhibition, *Reinhardt: The Position and Perils of Purity*, held at Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, and begins to think that his work might also be well-received by audiences in New York. In July, he returns to the United States on the Queen Mary. Once Kelly has settled into a studio apartment at 109 Broad Street in Lower Manhattan, he contacts, on Cage's recommendation, painter Robert Rauschenberg. He visits Fred Mitchell, an artist he knew in Paris, who lives nearby, in a loft at Coenties Slip. Kelly supports himself with a night job at the main New York City branch of the United States Post Office, on 34th Street and 8th Avenue. Calder, who visits Kelly at his studio, mentions his work to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., director of the Museum of Modern Art, and to James Johnson Sweeney, director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Sweeney visits Kelly's studio. Curator Dorothy Miller, representing the acquisition committee of the Museum of Modern Art, also visits. Most of Kelly's works this year stem from ideas or projects that he began in France. Kelly meets Reinhardt.

1955

Art dealer David Herbert, who works for Sidney Janis, visits Kelly's Broad Street studio and advises art dealer and gallery owner Betty Parsons also to visit. Parsons offers Kelly a solo exhibition. Kelly completes *White Plaque: Bridge Arch and Reflection* (cat. no. 24), a large wood cutout, the idea for which he conceived in Paris.

1956

Kelly's first solo exhibition in the United States opens in May at the Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. (He will continue to exhibit at Parsons until 1963.) In July, Kelly moves into a loft at 3–5 Coenties Slip. He meets artist Robert Indiana, who also moves to Coenties Slip. Through friend Richard Kelly, a lighting consultant, Kelly receives his first sculpture commissions, *Transportation Building Lobby Sculpture* and *Seven Sculptural Screens in Brass*, both for Penn Center, Philadelphia. These sculptures, which he fabricates at Edison Price, New York, and completes in 1957, mark Kelly's first use of metal (anodized aluminum for the former and for the latter, brass). He makes *Painting in Five Panels*, his first work comprised of canvases of varying sizes that are hung separately on the wall.

1957

Kelly's paintings are selected for inclusion in *Young America 1957*, a group exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; *Atlantic* (1956) is purchased by the

Whitney (Kelly's first museum purchase). He is commissioned to complete a lobby mural at Eastmore House, an apartment building in New York. He makes his first drawings of plants, a subject he will continue to explore in drawings, to the present day. Painter Agnes Martin, fiber artist Lenore Tawney, and Youngerman join the growing community of artists living at Coenties Slip.

1958

Kelly has his first solo exhibition at Galerie Maeght (where he will show until 1965); English collector E. J. Powers buys eight paintings, one of which, *Broadway* (cat. no. 30), he gives to Tate Gallery, London. Kelly begins a series of wood reliefs, his first since 1951.

1959

Kelly's work is included in *Sixteen Americans*, a landmark exhibition curated by Dorothy C. Miller at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. He meets artists Jasper Johns and Frank Stella. His first freestanding sculptures, which are fabricated at Edison Price, are exhibited for the first time, at Betty Parsons Gallery. He begins to make painted metal reliefs.

1960

Kelly's designs for costumes and a stage curtain that he had created for choreographer Paul Taylor in 1958 are used in *Tablet*, a dance performed by Taylor's troupe at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy. Kelly travels to Puerto Rico at Christmas. He spends the summer in The Springs, East Hampton, New York, where he meets artist James Rosenquist, who also moves to Coenties Slip.

1961

Kelly receives the Fourth Painting Prize at *The 1961 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, organized by Gordon Bailey Washburn and Leon Anthony Arkus at the Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. He spends the summer in The Springs.

1962

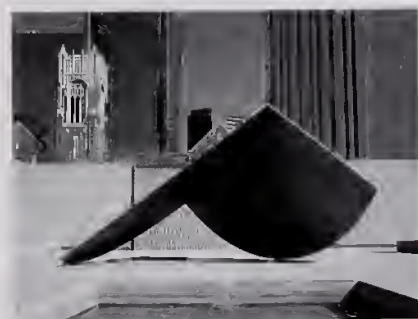
Kelly is awarded the Flora Mayer Witkowsky Prize by the Art Institute of Chicago. He meets curator Henry Geldzahler. His first solo exhibition in London is held at Arthur Tooth & Sons Ltd.

1963

Kelly receives the Brandeis Creative Arts Award from Brandeis University, Waltham, and the Education Minister's Award at the Seventh International Art Exhibition, Tokyo. Kelly's first solo museum exhibition, *Paintings, Sculpture and Drawings by Ellsworth Kelly*, opens at the Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, D.C., and travels to Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. It is also the first museum exhibition to include his drawings. Kelly moves into the Hôtel des Artistes on West 67th Street on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.



6. Costumes designed by Kelly for *Lento*, a performance by Paul Taylor Dance Company, New York, 1968.



7. *Untitled*, 1983. Stainless steel, 126 x 225 x 189 inches (320 x 571.5 x 480.1 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Commission made possible through funds donated by Michael J. Collins and matching grants from The 500, Inc., and the 1982 Tiffany Company benefit opening.

1964

Kelly is awarded the Painting Prize at *The 1964 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*, organized by Gustave von Groschwitz and Leon Anthony Arkus at Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. Kelly is commissioned to create a sculpture for the façade of architect Philip Johnson's New York State Pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair, New York. After the close of the fair, Kelly donates the sculpture, *Two Curves: Blue Red*, to Harvard University, where it is installed in the court at Peabody Terrace. From October to December, Kelly visits Paris, where Galerie Maeght holds a solo exhibition of his works. While in Paris, he begins to work on lithographs with Maeght Editeur. Visiting the south of France, Kelly makes the acquaintance of Marc Chagall and explores Chapelle du Rosaire des Dominicaines de Vence, Matisse's chapel in St. Paul de Vence.

1965

Kelly has his first solo exhibition at Sidney Janis Gallery, New York (where he will show until 1971). In May, Kelly travels to Paris where his first series of lithographs, twenty-seven abstract color shapes, are exhibited at Galerie Adrienne Maeght. He travels extensively throughout France and Italy for the first time since his return to the United States in 1954. In France, he visits Belle-Ile, Brittany, Dordogne, Normandy, Provence, and St. Paul de Vence. In Italy, he visits Assisi, Florence, Orvieto, Pompeii, Rome, and Siena. Kelly has his first solo exhibition at the Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles (later named Irving Blum Gallery, where Kelly will show until 1971).

1966

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, purchases *Blue Green Red I*, Kelly's first sale to a European museum. Geldzahler selects Kelly, along with fellow artists Helen Frankenthaler, Roy Lichtenstein, and Jules Olitski, to represent the United States at the American Pavilion of the Thirty-third Venice Biennale. Kelly attends the opening in Venice, then travels with Geldzahler to Ravenna where they see the mosaics at San Apollinaire in Classe, at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, and at San Vitale—and then to Padua to see Giotto's later frescoes in the Arena Chapel. Kelly executes his first wall/floor pieces, including *Blue Red* (cat. no. 46), in which the work functions as both a painting and a sculpture.

1967

Kelly's commissioned painting *White over Blue* is installed in Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome in the United States Pavilion at Expo 67, Montreal. Stedelijk Museum is the first European museum to purchase a sculpture, *Blue Red Rocker* (1963).

1968

Kelly travels to Paris and Zurich to install works, including *Colors for a Large Wall*, in *The Art of the Real, USA 1948–1968*, a group exhibition organized by E. C. Goossen for the Museum of Modern Art. Kelly meets Diane Waldman, who subsequently visits him at his studio in New York.

The Whitney Museum buys *Whites* (1963), the first sculpture that Kelly sells to an American museum. Kelly spends the summer in Bridgehampton, where he sees Waldman, through whom he meets critic Elizabeth C. Baker and becomes friends with Lichtenstein. Kelly again designs costumes for Paul Taylor, this time for the dance performance *Lento*. Kelly begins to fabricate large-scale sculptures with Don Ippincott of Ippincott, Inc., North Haven, Connecticut. He creates the sculpture *Yellow Blue*, a commission for Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza in Albany, New York. Kelly's work is included in *Documenta IV*, organized by Arnold Bode, in Kassel, Germany.

1969

Early in the year, Kelly visits Miró on the Spanish island of Majorca. Kelly is chosen by William Lieberman and Roland Penrose to create a mural, *Blue Green*, for the UNESCO building in Paris. For the first time, thirty plank drawings by Kelly are exhibited together in *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*, a group exhibition organized by Geldzahler for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The exhibition includes seven paintings and five sculptures by Kelly.

1970

In March, Kelly moves to Spencertown, in upstate New York, and rents a studio in Cady's Hall, an old theater on Main Street in the nearby town of Chatham. He takes his first of frequent trips to Saint Martin in the Caribbean. Kelly begins to create lithographs with Gemini G.F.L., Los Angeles.

1971

The first monographs on Kelly are published: *Ellsworth Kelly: Drawings, Collages, Prints* by Diane Waldman and *Ellsworth Kelly* by John Coplans.

1972

Kelly shows fourteen paintings in *The Chatham Series: Paintings by Ellsworth Kelly*, a solo exhibition organized by Jane N. Wood, at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo.

1973

Kelly's first retrospective exhibition, *Ellsworth Kelly*, curated by E. C. Goossen, is held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and travels to Pasadena Art Museum, California; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Detroit Institute of Arts. Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, presents *Ellsworth Kelly: Curved Series*, Kelly's first solo exhibition at the gallery (where he will show regularly until 1992). Kelly begins working with weathering steel and constructing large outdoor sculptures, including his first completely horizontal sculpture, *Curve I* (cat. no. 68), which is comprised of flat planes placed directly on the ground.

1974

Kelly receives the Painting Prize from the Art Institute of Chicago and is elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He begins an ongoing series of totemic sculptures in weathering steel and polished aluminum.



8. *Red Floor Panel*, 1992. Acrylic on canvas on wood, 316 1/2 x 478 1/2 x 1 inches (803.9 x 1,216 x 2.5 cm). Installed at Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster, June 1992.



9. *Gaul*, 1993. Steel, 230 x 45 1/2 x 24 1/2 inches (584.2 x 115.6 x 62.2 cm). Carre d'Art, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nîmes, France.

1975

Kelly has his first solo exhibition at BlumHelman Gallery, New York (where he will show until 1992). Kelly is selected to inaugurate the *Matrix* contemporary-art series at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, in an exhibition curated by Andrea Miller-Keller that includes a series of ten drawings of corn stalks and two sculptures.

1976

Kelly begins to work with Tyler Graphics in Katonah, New York, where he creates works made from colored-paper pulp, an etching, and lithographic prints.

1977

Kelly travels through Spain, Italy, and France. His work is included in *Documenta 6*.

1978

Kelly travels to Barcelona to experience Antoni Gaudi's architecture. He completes *Color Panels for a Large Wall 1*, a work commissioned by the Central Trust Company, Cincinnati. Kelly begins to fabricate sculptures with Peter Carlson of Peter Carlson Enterprises, Sun Valley, California. He begins a series of totemic sculptures in stainless steel. Fibes and Schmitt of Schenectady begin construction on Kelly's new studio next to his home in Spencertown.

1979

Friends of the Park commission Kelly to create a sculpture for Lincoln Park, Illinois. At thirty-six feet high, *Curve XXII* is Kelly's largest sculpture to date. Kelly participates in *The 36th Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, organized by Jane Livingston, at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., along with Willem de Kooning, Johns, Lichtenstein, and Rauschenberg. Kelly's first major European exhibition of painting and sculpture, *Ellsworth Kelly: Schilderijen en beelden 1963-1979*, organized by Edy de Wilde and Rini Dippel, opens at the Stedelijk Museum, then travels to the Hayward Gallery, London; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden.

1980

Kelly is made a Fellow of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence.

1981

With Peter Carlson and Gemini G.E.L., Kelly produces editions of a series of painted-metal wall sculptures. He begins a series of totemic sculptures in wood.

1982

A retrospective exhibition of Kelly's sculpture, *Ellsworth Kelly: Sculpture*, opens at the Whitney Museum and travels to the Saint Louis Art Museum. Kelly meets photographer Jack Shear.

1983

Dallas Museum of Art, which is being redesigned by architect Edward Larrabee Barnes, commissions Kelly to create a sculpture, *Untitled*, for its reopening in January 1984. *Curve XXIX* is installed on the grounds of the Farnsworth House, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, in Plano, Illinois.

1984

The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., creates a room installation featuring seven paintings by Kelly. Kelly has four pieces included in *ROSC '84* at the Arts Council in Dublin. He travels to Berlin, Dublin, London, and Paris.

1985

Kelly is commissioned to create public sculptures, completed in 1987, by the city of Barcelona: *The Barcelona Sculpture at General Moragues Plaza* and *Creueta del Coll*. Kelly's photographs are exhibited for the first time, in *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*, organized by Robert Metzger, at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut; the exhibition travels to Baruch College Gallery in New York.

1986

A room of eight paintings by Kelly is installed as part of the inaugural exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, *Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945-1986*, organized by Julia Brown Turrell. Kelly creates *Red Curve* (cat. no. 85) for the I. M. Pei-designed Raffles City Hotel in Singapore. He also creates *Houston Triptych* for the Lillie and Hugh Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

1987-88

Kelly's first retrospective exhibition of works on paper, *Ellsworth Kelly: Works on Paper*, curated by Diane Upright, opens at the Fort Worth Museum of Art and travels to Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Baltimore Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City. His first retrospective of prints, *Ellsworth Kelly: A Print Retrospective*, organized by the American Federation of the Arts, opens at the Detroit Institute of Arts, and travels to the Huntsville Museum of Art, Alabama; Des Moines Art Center; Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, Massachusetts; Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; and University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley. Kelly is awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Republic.

1989

Kelly is invited by the Art Institute of Chicago to install a group of six single-panel paintings in the courtyard of the new Rice Wing. I. M. Pei commissions Kelly's wall sculpture *Dallas Panels* for the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas. The exhibition *Ellsworth Kelly: Works on Paper* opens at Museum Overholland, Amsterdam.

1990

Kelly is invited to curate the exhibition *Fragmentation and the Single Form* as part of the Museum of Modern Art's Artist's Choice series. He completes his first floor painting, *Yellow Curve*, for an exhibition of the same name at Portikus, Frankfurt. *White Curve* is commissioned for the Swiss corporate headquarters of Nestlé, in Vevey.

1991

In November, Kelly completes his second floor panel, *Black Curve*, at Grosse Orangerie, Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin, in conjunction with the exhibition *Schwerelos*.

1992

The traveling exhibition *Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France, 1948–1954*, organized by Alfred Pacquement and Jack Cowart, opens at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, and travels to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. and Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster, Münster. Kelly completes *Red Floor Panel* for the exhibition at the Westfälisches Landesmuseum. He makes *Blue Floor Panel*, his first floor panel created in the United States, at Leo Castelli Gallery. Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, hosts *Ellsworth Kelly: Plant Drawings*, its first exhibition of Kelly's work. Kelly creates a room installation of paintings for *Documenta IX*, organized by Jan Hoet. *The Documenta Room* is Kelly's first exhibition at Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. Kelly creates an artist's book of eleven lithographs, published by Limited Edition Club, illustrating *Un Coup de dés* (1870) by French poet Stéphane Mallarmé.

1993

Kelly is presented with the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur by the French Republic at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. He creates *Gaul* as part of a sculpture commission for the inauguration of the Norman Foster–designed Carré d'Art, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nîmes. Pratt Institute honors Kelly with its Institute Medal and awards him an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts. Kelly completes the sculpture commission *Memorial* for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, designed by James Freed, in Washington, D.C. Kelly is presented with the honorary title of Amic de Barcelona, Friend of Barcelona, by Pascual Maragall, Mayor of Barcelona.

1994

The exhibition *Ellsworth Kelly: The Process of Seeing*, curated by Siri Engberg, is held at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

1995

Kelly receives a sculpture commission from architect Henry Cobb for the Federal Courthouse, Boston (to be completed in late 1998).

1996

Kelly is awarded the first Medal for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts on the 125th anniversary of the Boston Museum School; receives an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; and becomes an elected Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Kelly receives sculpture commissions for Rafael Viñoly's Tokyo International Forum and the Peter B. Lewis Theater of The Sackler Center for Arts Education at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: A Retrospective*, curated by Diane Waldman, an exhibition spanning fifty years, opens at the Guggenheim Museum and travels to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Tate Gallery, London; and Haus der Kunst, Munich.

Selected Exhibition History

Exhibition entries are followed by related articles and reviews.

Solo Exhibitions

1951

Galerie Arnaud, Paris. *Kelly Peintures & reliefs*.

April 26–May 9.

—G. B. "Kelly." *Arts: beaux arts, littérature, spectacles* (Paris), May 4, 1951.

—"Kelly." *Combat* (Paris), May 8, 1951, p. 4.

1956

Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings 1951–1956*. May 21–June 8.

—B[utler], B[arbara]. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 30, no. 4 (June 1956), p. 52.

—G[enauer], E[mily]. "Art Exhibition Notes: Kelly at Parsons." *New York Herald Tribune*, June 2, 1956, section 1, p. 9.

—T[ylor], P[arker]. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 55, no. 4 (summer 1956), p. 51.

—"About Art and Artists: Lesser-known Figures Give One-Man Shows of Promise at Galleries Here." *The New York Times*, May 26, 1956, p. L41.

1957

Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly*.

Sept. 23–Oct. 12.

—B[urrey], S[uzanne]. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 32, no. 1 (Oct. 1957), pp. 56–57.

—Preston, Stuart. "Galleries Offer Diverse Fare." *The New York Times*, Sept. 29, 1957, p. X17.

—T[ylor], P[arker]. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 56, no. 6 (Oct. 1957), pp. 17–18.

1958

Galerie Maeght, Paris. *Ellsworth Kelly*. Oct. 24–Nov. 30.

Exh. cat., published in *Derrière le Miroir*, no. 110 (Oct. 1958), with text by E. C. Goossen.

—Mock, Jean Yves. "Ellsworth Kelly at the Galerie Maeght." *Apollo* (London) 68, no. 406 (Dec. 1958), p. 220.

1959

Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Painting and Sculpture*. Oct. 19–Nov. 7.

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—Tillim, Sidney. "Month in Review." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 34, no. 1 (Oct. 1959), pp. 49–50.

1961

Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. *Kelly*. Oct. 19–Nov. 4.

—Preston, Stuart. "Art at Opposite Poles: Ellsworth Kelly and Kostas Paniaras Exhibit Nonobjective Extremes." *The New York Times*, Oct. 21, 1961, p. L11.

—S[andler], I[rrving] H. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 60, no. 7 (Nov. 1961), p. 13.

—T[illim], S[idney]. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 36, no. 3 (Dec. 1961), p. 48.

1962

Arthur Tooth & Sons Ltd., London. *Ellsworth Kelly*.

May 29–June 23. Exh. cat., with introduction by Lawrence Alloway.

—Butcher, George. "Ellsworth Kelly Exhibition at Tooth's Gallery." *The Guardian* (London), June 9, 1962, p. 4.

—Reichardt, Jasia. "Les Expositions à l'étranger: Londres." *Aujourd'hui: Art et architecture* (Paris) 8, no. 38 (Sept. 1962), pp. 58–59.

—Sylvester, David. "Homage to Venus." *New Statesman* (London), June 8, 1962, pp. 839–40.

1963

Betty Parsons Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Painting and Sculpture*. Oct. 29–Nov. 23.

—"Ellsworth Kelly." *New York Herald Tribune*, Nov. 2, 1963, section 1, p. 9.

—Fried, Michael. "New York Letter." *Art International* (Lugano) 7, no. 10 (Christmas–New Year, 1963–64), pp. 54–56.

—Sandler, Irving. "In the Art Galleries." *New York Post*, Nov. 10, 1963, p. 14.

Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, D.C.

Paintings, Sculpture and Drawings by Ellsworth Kelly.

Dec. 11, 1963–Jan. 26, 1964. Traveled to the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Feb. 1–March 8, 1964. Exh. cat., with foreword by Adelyn D. Breeskin and interview by Henry Geldzahler.

—Getlein, Frank. "Paintings and Sculpture Show of Ellsworth Kelly at 'Modern.'" *The Washington Star*, Dec. 15, 1963, p. C6.

—Kay, Jane H. "Kelly's Colorful, Personal Geometry." *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), Feb. 14, 1964, p. 6.

1964

Galerie Maeght, Paris. *Ellsworth Kelly*. Nov. 20–Dec. 31.

Exh. cat., published in *Derrière le Miroir*, no. 149 (Nov. 1964), with text by Dale McConathy.

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—Ferrier, André. "Keskispass?" *Arts: beaux arts, littérature, spectacles* (Paris), Dec. 10, 1964, p. 34.

1965

Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles. *An Exhibition of Recent Lithography Executed in France by the Artist Ellsworth Kelly*. March 9–April 5.

—P[erlin], I[rrving] B. "Ellsworth Kelly, Ferus Gallery." *Artforum* (San Francisco) 3, no. 8 (May 1965), p. 16.

- Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly*. April 6–May 1. Exh. cat.
- Ashton, Dore. "Kelly's Unique Spatial Experiences." *Studio International* (London) 170, no. 867 (July 1965), pp. 40–43.
- B[arnitz], J[acqueline]. "In the Galleries: Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 39, no. 9 (May–June 1965), pp. 58–59.
- Kozloff, Max. "The Variables of Energy." *The Nation* (New York), May 10, 1965, pp. 513–14.
- Rosenthal, Nan. "New York: Gallery Notes." *Art in America* (New York), no. 2 (April 1965), pp. 117–24.
- Galerie Adrien Maeght, Paris. *Kelly: 27 Lithographies*. June 1–30. Exh. cat., with preface by Dale McConathy.
- 1966
- Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles. *New Work by Ellsworth Kelly*. March 15–April 20.
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- von Meier, Kurt. "Los Angeles Letter." *Art International* (Lugano) 10, no. 5 (May 1966), pp. 58–59.
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- Mellow, James R. "New York." *Art International* (Zurich) 11, no. 5 (May 1967), pp. 58–60.
- Perreault, John. "Color as Light." *The Village Voice* (New York), March 9, 1967, pp. 12–13.
- W[aldman], D[iane]. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 66, no. 2 (April 1967), p. 13.
- Irving Blum Gallery, Los Angeles. *A Suite of Twelve Lithographs by Ellsworth Kelly*. Nov. 7–Dec. 8.
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- Livingston, Jane. "Ellsworth Kelly, Irving Blum Gallery." *Artforum* (New York) 6, no. 5 (Jan. 1968), p. 61.
- 1968
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- Ashton, Dore. "New York Commentary." *Studio International* (London) 176, no. 906 (Dec. 1968), pp. 266–67.
- Wasserman, Emily. "Ellsworth Kelly, Sidney Janis Gallery." *Artforum* (New York) 7, no. 4 (Dec. 1968), pp. 58–59.
- Irving Blum Gallery, Los Angeles. *Four Paintings and One Sculpture by Ellsworth Kelly*. Nov. 5–30.
- 1970
- The Vancouver Art Gallery. *Ellsworth Kelly Lithographs at Vancouver Art Gallery*. July 20–Aug. 30.
- Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly*. Sept. 1–Oct. 15. Exh. cat., with text by John Coplans.
- 1971
- Galerie Renée Ziegler, Geneva. *Ellsworth Kelly*. March 10–April 12.
- Dayton's Gallery 12, Minneapolis. *Ellsworth Kelly*. May 1–June 5. Exh. cat.
- Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. *Recent Paintings by Ellsworth Kelly*. Nov. 3–27. Exh. cat.
- C[ampbell], L[awrence]. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 70, no. 8 (Dec. 1971), pp. 16–17.
- Perreault, John. "Wavering Home: Kelly's Light Slabs." *The Village Voice* (New York), Nov. 11, 1971, pp. 23–24.
- Ratcliff, Carter. "New York." *Art International* (Lugano) 16, no. 1 (Jan. 20, 1972), pp. 66–71.
- 1972
- Galerie Renée Ziegler, Geneva. *Ellsworth Kelly*. March 10–April 12.
- Galerie Denise René Hans Mayer, Düsseldorf. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings*. July 1–31.
- Friedrichs, Yvonne. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Das Kunstwerk* (Stuttgart) 25, no. 5 (Sept. 1972), p. 43.
- Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. *The Chatham Series: Paintings by Ellsworth Kelly*. July 11–Aug. 27. Organized by Jane N. Wood.
- Kramer, Hilton. "Color Lures the Eye to Kelly's Paintings." *The New York Times*, July 26, 1972, p. 22.
- 1973
- Irving Blum Gallery, Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly: Chatham Series*. March 13–April 15.
- Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly: Drawings and Prints*. March 18–April 5.
- Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings*. April 1–30.
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Curved Series*. April 7–28.
- Crimp, Douglas. "New York Letter." *Art International* (Lugano) 17, no. 6 (summer 1973), pp. 88–90.
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- Hughes, Robert. "Classic Sleeper." *Time* (New York) 102, no. 12 (Sept. 17, 1973), pp. 72–73.
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- Masheck, Joseph. "Ellsworth Kelly at the Modern." *Artforum* (New York) 12, no. 3 (Nov. 1973), pp. 54–57.
- 1975
- Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut. *Ellsworth Kelly: Matrix I*. Jan.–Feb. Organized by Andrea Miller-Keller. Exh. brochure, with text by Miller-Keller.
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Recent Sculptures*. March 8–April 5.
- Smith, Roberta. "Ellsworth Kelly, Leo Castelli Gallery, Uptown." *Artforum* (New York) 14, no. 1 (Sept. 1975), pp. 69–71.
- Zucker, Barbara. "Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 74, no. 5 (May 1975), p. 96.
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Gray Series*. April 13–May 3.
- Derfner, Phyllis. "Ellsworth Kelly at Castelli Uptown." *Art in America* (New York) 63, no. 4 (July–Aug. 1975), pp. 97–98.
- Zimmer, William. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 49, no. 10 (June 1975), p. 8.
- Ace Gallery, Venice, California. *Ellsworth Kelly: Steel & Aluminum Sculpture 1975*. June 12–July 5.
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings*. Sept.–Oct.
- 1976
- Jane C. Lee Gallery, Houston. *Ellsworth Kelly: Sculpture*. March 6–April 3.
- 1977
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings*. Feb. 5–26.
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- 1978
- Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly: Twelve Leaves*. May 26–Sept. 1.
- Worth, Melinda. "Ellsworth Kelly's Twelve Leaves." *ARTnews* (New York) 77, no. 7 (Sept. 1978), p. 106.
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- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Recent Paintings and Sculptures*. April 26–June 24. Exh. cat., with foreword by Philippe de Montebello and text by Elizabeth C. Baker.

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- Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. *Ellsworth Kelly: Schilderen en beelden 1963–1979/Paintings and Sculptures 1963–1979*. Dec. 13, 1979–Feb. 3, 1980. Organized by Edy de Wilde and Rini Dippel. Exh. cat., with text by Barbara Rose and statement by Kelly. In English and Dutch; trans. Caroline ter Braak and Ina Rike. Traveled in modified form to Hayward Gallery, London, Feb. 27–April 7, 1980; Musée National d'Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, as *Ellsworth Kelly: Peintures et sculptures 1968–1979*, April 23–June 15, 1980 (exh. cat., with statement by Pontus Hulten; trans. Catherine Ferbos and Catherine Thieck); and Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, as *Ellsworth Kelly: Gemälde und Skulpturen 1966–1979*, July 5–Sept. 7, 1980 (exh. cat., with foreword by Katharina Schmidt and text by Antje von Graevenitz; trans. Elisabeth Jappel).
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- Shepherd, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Review* (London), Feb. 29, 1980, p. 87.
- 1980
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. *Paperworks by Ellsworth Kelly*. Aug. 19–Oct. 19.
- 1981
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- 1982
Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly at Gemini: 1979–1982*. April 7–May 28. Exh. cat., with text by Carter Ratcliff.
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- Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston. *Steel Sculpture*. Sept. 15–Oct. 15.
- Temin, Christine. "Newbury St. Beckons Huh Artists." *The Boston Globe*, Sept. 16, 1982, p. 38.
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Sculpture*. Dec. 17, 1982–Feb. 27, 1983. Organized by Emily Rauh Pulitzer and Patterson Sims. Exh. cat., with foreword by Tom Armstrong, acknowledgments by Sims and Pulitzer, and cat. raisonné. Traveled to the Saint Louis Art Museum, March 26–May 30 (exh. cat., with text by Alexandra Bellos).
- Brenson, Michael. "In Sculpture, Too, He Is an Artist of Surprises." *The New York Times*, Dec. 12, 1982, section 2, pp. 1, 38.
- Grant, Daniel. "Kelly Explores Two Media." *Newsday* (New York), Dec. 31, 1982, part II, pp. 15–16.
- Russell, John. "Art: Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, Dec. 17, 1982, p. C34.
- Spies, Werner. "Reduktion als Widerstand: Skulptur in Amerika/Das Whitney Museum zeigt Ellsworth Kelly." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Frankfurt), Feb. 5, 1983, p. 25.
- 1983
BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: New Paintings*. Dec. 1, 1982–Jan. 8, 1983.
- Kohn, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Flash Art* (Milan), no. 111 (March 1983), p. 58.
- Licht, Matthew. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 5, no. 6 (Feb. 1983), p. 41.
- 1984
Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles. *Painted Aluminum Wall Sculpture*. Jan. 12–Feb. 18. In conjunction with Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Weathering Steel Wall Sculpture*. Jan. 21–Feb. 18. Exh. cat., *Ellsworth Kelly*, with statement by Kelly.
- Muchnic, Suzanne. "The Galleries: La Cienega Area." *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 27, 1984, part VI, pp. 2, 4.
- Goldman-Kraft Gallery, Chicago. *Ellsworth Kelly: Painted Wall Sculpture/Graphics*. April 6–May 1.
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Works in Wood*. May 2–June 2. Exh. cat.
- Brenson, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly: 'Wood Sculptures.'" *The New York Times*, May 4, 1984, p. C26.
- McEvelley, Thomas. "Ellsworth Kelly, Blum Helman Gallery." *Artforum* (New York) 23, no. 3 (Nov. 1984), p. 98.
- 1985
BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly, New Paintings*. March 6–30.
- Russell, John. "At Midtown Galleries, Good Shows Abound." *The New York Times*, March 15, 1985, pp. C1, C18.
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: New Wall Reliefs*. March 30–April 13.
- Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Painted Wall Sculptures*. June 18–Aug. 11.
- Campbell, Lawrence. "Wall Sculptures by Ellsworth Kelly on Exhibit in Katonah." *The New York Times*, July 7, 1985, p. WC16.
- Anne Weher Gallery, Georgetown, Maine. *Ellsworth Kelly Prints*. July 14–Aug. 4.
- Crichton, Alan. "Lithographs by Ellsworth Kelly and Photographs by Todd Webb." *Art New England* (Brighton, Massachusetts) 6, no. 11 (Nov. 1985), p. 12.
- 1986
BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings*. April 30–June 7. In conjunction with BlumHelman Warehouse, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Sculptures*. May 3–June 7. Exh. cat., *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings and Sculptures 1986*.
- Brenson, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, May 9, 1986, p. C27.
- Westfall, Stephen. "Ellsworth Kelly at BlumHelman, BlumHelman Warehouse and Kent." *Art in America* (New York) 74, no. 11 (Nov. 1986), pp. 161–62.
- 1987
BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Coral Leaf Drawings*. May 4–June 6.
- Russell, John. "Roy Lichtenstein and Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, June 5, 1987, p. 24C.
- Fort Worth Art Museum, Texas. *Ellsworth Kelly: Works on Paper*. Sept. 13–Oct. 25. Organized by Diane Upright. Exh. cat., with text by Upright, acknowledgments by E. A. Carmean, Jr., and introduction by Henry Geldzahler. In conjunction with Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Ellsworth Kelly: Seven Paintings (1952–55/1987)*. Dec. 2, 1987–Jan. 31, 1988. Organized by Trevor J. Fairbrother; exh. cat., with text by Fairbrother. Traveled to Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, March 5–May 15, 1988; Baltimore Museum of Art, May 31–July 24, 1988; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Aug. 11–Sept. 25, 1988; and Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Oct. 22–Dec. 31, 1988.
- Baker, Kenneth. "Ellsworth Kelly's Bare-Bones Abstract Aesthetic." *San Francisco Chronicle*, Aug. 21, 1988, pp. 12–13.

- Dorsey, John. "The World as Color and Shape." *The Baltimore Sun*, May 29, 1988, section P, pp. 1, 3.
- Kutner, Janet. "Fort Worth's Kelly Retrospective Sketches a Revealing Picture." *Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 12, 1987, section C, pp. 1–2.
- . "Fort Worth: Ellsworth Kelly." *ARTnews* (New York) 86, no. 9 (Nov. 1987), p. 216.
- Detroit Institute of Arts, *Ellsworth Kelly: A Print Retrospective*. Sept. 13–Nov. 1. Organized by the American Federation of the Arts and guest curator Richard H. Axsom. Exh. cat., with text by Axsom and cat. raisonné compiled by Axsom with the assistance of Phylis Floyd. Traveled to the Huntsville Museum of Art, Alabama, Nov. 22, 1987–Jan. 17, 1988; Des Moines Art Center, Feb. 5–April 3, 1988; Neuberger Museum, State University of New York, Purchase, New York, April 17–June 12, 1988; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nov. 10–Dec. 31, 1988; University of Oklahoma Museum of Art, Norman, Oklahoma, Jan. 14–Feb. 19, 1989; Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, June 25–Aug. 20, 1989; University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley, Oct. 11–Dec. 3, 1989; and Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Dec. 23, 1989–Feb. 25, 1990.
- Colby, Joy Hakanson. "Ellsworth Kelly, America's Prince of Prints." *The Detroit News*, Sept. 13, 1987, p. K1.
- Miro, Marsba. "Ellsworth Kelly: Nature Shapes His Vision." *Detroit Free Press*, Sept. 13, 1987, section E, pp. 1, 8.
- Bakalar Sculpture Gallery, List Visual Arts Center, M.I.T., Cambridge, Massachusetts. *Ellsworth Kelly: Small Sculpture 1958–87*. Dec. 19, 1987–March 27, 1988. Exh. cat., with text by Katy Kline.
- Taylor, Robert. "Sculpture, Drawings and 'Dime Store Deco.'" *The Boston Globe*, Feb. 29, 1988, p. 11.
- 1988
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: New Work*. Nov. 2–Dec. 3. Exh. cat., with text by Robert Storr.
- Brenson, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, Nov. 18, 1988, p. C28.
- BlumHelman Gallery, Santa Monica, California. *Ellsworth Kelly: New Work*. Nov. 8–Dec. 3.
- The Eli Broad Family Foundation, Santa Monica, California. *The Eli Broad Family Foundation Exhibition*. Dec. 1988–Sept. 1989.
- 1989
- Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis. *Ellsworth Kelly*. April 29–June 3.
- Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris. *Ellsworth Kelly*. May 6–31. Exh. cat.
- Museum Overbolland, Holland. *Ellsworth Kelly: Works on Paper*. July 1–Sept. 24. Exh. cat., with text by Diane Upright. In English and Dutch; trans. Saskia van der Lingen.
- de Vries, Peter Yvon. "Ellsworth Kelly Krijkt Aandachtig om zich Heen de Vorm Niet Het Verhaal." *De Tijd* (Amsterdam), no. 305 (June 30, 1989), pp. 24–29.
- Hettig, Frank-Alexander. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Das Kunstwerk* (Stuttgart) 42, no. 4 (Dec. 1989), pp. 63–64.
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Curves/Rectangles*. Nov. 7–Dec. 9. Exh. cat., with text by Barbara Rose.
- Decter, Joshua. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 63, no. 6 (Feb. 1989), p. 99.
- Russell, John. "Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, Nov. 24, 1989, p. C33.
- Ostrow, Saul. "Ellsworth Kelly: Blum Helman." *Flash Art* (Milan), no. 151 (March–April 1990), p. 145.
- 1990
- Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles. *Kelly: Portraits at Gemini G.E.L.*. Feb. 6–March 20. Exh. cat., with text by Richard H. Axsom.
- Susan Sheehan Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly, Prints: 1949–1989*. March 1–April 28. Exh. brochure, with text by Susan Sheehan.
- Gallery Kasahara, Osaka. *Ellsworth Kelly: Eleven Painted Wall Sculptures*. April 16–May 19. Exh. cat., with text by Carter Ratchliff. In English and Japanese; trans. Kayoko Hosokawa.
- Portikus, Frankfurt. *Ellsworth Kelly—Yellow Curve*. April 28–June 4. Exh. cat., with text by Gottfried Boehm and foreword by Kasper König. In English and German; trans. Burke Barrett and Isabel Feder.
- Phora, Pia. "Ellsworth Kelly," trans. Ingeborg von Zitzewitz. *Contemporanea* (New York), no. 21 (Oct. 1990), p. 90.
- Puvogel, Renata. "Ellsworth Kelly: Portikus." *Flash Art* (Milan) 23, no. 155 (Nov.–Dec. 1990), p. 160.
- 65 Thompson Street, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Recent Painting & Sculpture*. May 14–July 31.
- Brenson, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly: 65 Thompson." *The New York Times*, May 25, 1990, p. C21.
- Sorenson, Dina. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 65, no. 3 (Nov. 1990), p. 103.
- 1991
- Fred Hoffman Gallery, Santa Monica, California. *Ellsworth Kelly, A Historical Selection: 1965–1988*. March 23–April 20.
- Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis. *Ellsworth Kelly (Wall Reliefs)*. April 2–May 18.
- Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, at Joni Morsant Weyl, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Diagonals and Colored Panels 1970–1990*. April 12–June 15.
- Dia Center for the Arts, Bridgehampton, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Two Lithographic Suites, 1964–65*. Aug. 17–Oct. 6. Organized by Henry Geldzahler.
- Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles. *Ellsworth Kelly: At Right Angles, 1964–1966*. Nov. 19–Dec. 21. Organized with John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco, and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Traveled to John Berggruen Gallery, Jan. 8–Feb. 1, 1992; and Paula Cooper Gallery, Feb. 14–March 14, 1992. Exh. cat., with text by Roberta Bernstein.
- Baker, Kenneth. "Kelly's Timeless Abstracts Hold Up." *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jan. 11, 1992, p. C7.
- Cotter, Holland. "Ellsworth Kelly: 'At Right Angles, 1964–1966.'" *The New York Times*, March 13, 1992, p. C28.
- Jack Glenn Gallery, Los Angeles, California. *Ellsworth Kelly: Wall Reliefs*. Nov. 30, 1991–Jan. 3, 1992.
- 1992
- Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris. *Ellsworth Kelly*. March 17–April 18. Exh. brochure, with reprinted excerpts of text by Ann Hindry. In French and English; trans. Neal Cooper.
- Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris. *Ellsworth Kelly: Les années françaises, 1948–1954*. March 17–May 24. Organized by Jack Cowart and Alfred Pacquement. Exh. cat., with texts by Yve-Alain Bois, Cowart, and Pacquement; cat. of works by Catherine Craft; and extensive chronology by Nathalie Brunet. Traveled to Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Münster, as *Ellsworth Kelly: Die Jahre in Frankreich 1948–1954*, June 14–Aug. 23 (exh. cat., trans. Ingrid Hacker-Klier, Magda Moses, and Bram Opstelten); and National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., as *Ellsworth Kelly: The Years in France, 1948–1954*, Nov. 1, 1992–Jan. 24, 1993 (exh. cat., trans. Thomas Repensek and Gregory Sims).
- Kimmelman, Michael. "Ellsworth Kelly's Coming of Age in Paris." *The New York Times*, Nov. 1, 1992, section 2, p. 31.
- Kramer, Hilton. "A Painter's Two Cultures: Ellsworth Kelly Was an American in Paris." *Art & Antiques* (New York) 15, no. 2 (March 1993), pp. 104–05.
- Perl, Jed. "Art: An American in Paris." *The New Criterion* (New York) 2, no. 5 (Jan. 1993), pp. 46–50.
- Plagens, Peter. "The Wonder Years: How Two Audacious Young Americans Broke into the Avant Garde." *Newsweek* (New York) 120, no. 24 (Dec. 14, 1992), pp. 76–77.
- Russell, John. "Ellsworth Kelly, an American in Paris." *The New York Times*, April 5, 1992, section H, pp. 39, 44.
- Benedicte Saxe Gallery, Beverly Hills. *Ellsworth Kelly: Selected Graphic Works Published by Maeght Editions, Paris & Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, 1960s–1980s*. April 4–May 30.

- Laura Carpenter Gallery, Santa Fe. *Ellsworth Kelly: Paintings and Sculpture*. June 11–July 15.
- Susan Sheehan Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: The Paris Prints 1964–1965*. Oct. 1–31. Exh. cat., with text and interview by Henry Geldzahler.
- Matthew Marks Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Plant Drawings*. Oct. 14–Nov. 28. Exh. cat., with text by John Ashbery.
—Schwabsky, Barry. "Ellsworth Kelly." *Artforum* (New York) 31, no. 5 (Jan. 1993), p. 85.
—Solomon, Deborah. "The Gallery: Ellsworth Kelly." *The Wall Street Journal* (New York), Oct. 21, 1992, p. A14.
- Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. *The Documenta Room*. Oct. 21–Nov. 20.
- BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly*. Nov. 11, 1992–Jan. 2, 1993. Exh. cat., with text by Klaus Kertess.
—"Ellsworth Kelly." *The New Yorker* (New York) 68, no. 43 (Dec. 14, 1992), p. 20.
- Leo Castelli Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly: Installation*. Nov. 21–Dec. 19.
—Bonami, Francesco. "Spotlight: Ellsworth Kelly." *Flash Art* (Milan) 26, no. 169 (March–April 1993), p. 77.
- 1993
- Greenberg Gallery, St. Louis. *Ellsworth Kelly Editions*. Feb. 4–April 3.
- Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly Prints*. June 3–July 2.
- 1994
- The Eli Broad Family Foundation, Santa Monica, California. *The Eli Broad Family Foundation Exhibition*. Jan. 29–July 31.
- Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. *Spencertown: Recent Paintings by Ellsworth Kelly*. Sept. 8–Oct. 15. Organized by Anthony d'Offay and Matthew Marks. Traveled to Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, Oct. 29, 1994–Jan. 29, 1995. Exh. cat., with photographic text by Jack Shear and introduction by Yve-Alain Bois.
—Cotter, Holland. "Ellsworth Kelly." *The New York Times*, Dec. 16, 1994, p. C36.
—Kuspit, Donald. "Ellsworth Kelly: Matthew Marks Gallery." *Artforum* (New York) 33, no. 7 (March 1995), pp. 88–89.
—Mac Adam, Alfred. "Ellsworth Kelly: Matthew Marks." *ARTnews* (New York) 94, no. 2 (Feb. 1995), p. 121.
- Milwaukee Art Museum. *Ellsworth Kelly: Works from the Permanent Collection*. Sept. 16, 1994–Jan. 1, 1995.
- Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. *Ellsworth Kelly: The Process of Seemg*. Oct. 2, 1994–Feb. 5, 1995. Organized by Siri Engberg. Exh. brochure, with foreword by Engberg.
- 1995
- Susan Sheehan Gallery, New York. *Ellsworth Kelly—Colored Paper Images 1976–77: The Creative Process*. Oct. 17–Dec. 2. Exh. cat., with introduction by David Kiehl.
- 1996
- Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, St. Louis. *Ellsworth Kelly: Black and White*. Jan. 25–April 13.
—Duffy, Robert W. "The Essence of Ellsworth Kelly." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, March 24, 1996, p. 4D.
- Group Exhibitions
- 1948
- Boris Mirski Art Gallery, Boston. Spring. Exh. cat.
- 1950
- Galerie des Beaux-Arts, Paris. *Premier Salon des jeunes peintres*. Jan. 26–Feb. 15. Exh. cat., with preface by Pierre Descargues.
—Bouret, Jean. "Le Premier Salon des jeunes peintres." *Arts: Beaux arts, littérature, spectacles* (Paris), Jan. 27, 1950, pp. 1, 4.
- Palais des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris. *5ème Salon des réalités nouvelles*. June 10–July 15. Exh. cat., with introduction by A. Frédo Sidès.
- 1951
- Salon des Réalités Nouvelles, Paris. *6ème Salon des réalités nouvelles*. June. Exh. cat.
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *75th Anniversary Celebration Exhibition of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts*. June 7–Sept. 16.
- Galerie Maeght, Paris. *Tendance*. Oct. Exh. cat., published in *Derrière le Miroir* (Paris), no. 41 (Oct. 1951), with text by Charles Estienne.
—Estienne, Charles. "Mur et chevalet." *L'Observateur* (Paris), no. 80 (Nov. 22, 1951), p. 19.
- 1952
- Galerie Maeght, Paris. *Tendance*. Oct. Exh. cat., published in *Derrière le Miroir* (Paris), no. 50 (Oct. 1952), with text by Michel Seuphor.
- 1953
- Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Santander, Spain. *Exposición Internacional de Arte Abstracto*.
- 1956
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Recent Drawings U.S.A.* April 25–Aug. 5. Exh. cat.
- 1957
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Young America 1957*. Feb. 27–April 14. Exh. cat., with foreword by Lloyd Goodrich.
—P[ollet], E[lizabeth]. "Young Americans." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 31, no. 7 (April 1957), pp. 57–58.
- 1958
- World's Fair, United States Pavilion, Brussels. *American Art: Four Exhibitions*. April 17–Oct. 18. Organized by the American Federation of Arts. Exh. cat., with texts by Leslie Cheek, Jr., Robert Goldwater, Grace L. McCann Morley, and George W. Staempfli, and foreword by Harris K. Prior. In English, French, and Dutch.
—Genauer, Emily. "Show Puts New Light on Our Brussels Art Selections." *New York Herald Tribune*, Jan. 4, 1959, section 6, pp. 9, 11.

- Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. *The 1958 Pittsburgh Bicentennial International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*. Dec. 5, 1958–Feb. 8, 1959. Organized by Gordon Bailey Washburn and Leon Anthony Arkus. Exh. cat., with introduction by Washburn.
- Kramer, Hilton. "Report on the Carnegie International." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 33, no. 4 (Jan. 1959), pp. 30–37.
- 1959
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*. Dec. 9, 1959–Jan. 31, 1960.
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Sixteen Americans*. Dec. 16, 1959–Feb. 17, 1960. Organized by Dorothy C. Miller. Exh. cat., with foreword and acknowledgments by Miller.
- Rubin, William. "Younger American Painters." *Art International* (Zurich) 4, no. 1 (Jan. 1960), pp. 24–31.
- 1960
- David Herbert Gallery, New York. *Modern Classicism*. Feb. 8–27. Exh. cat., with texts by Edith Burkhardt, Barbara Butler, Lilian Lonngren, Stuart Preston, Robert Rosenhlm, Martica Sawin, James Schuyler, James Johnson Sweeney, and Anita Ventura, and reprinted text by E. C. Goossen.
- Stedelijk van Abhemuseum, Eindhoven, Holland. *Jonge Kunst uit de collectie Dotremont-Brussel*. Feb. 20–March 27. Exh. cat., with foreword by Edy de Wilde and introduction by Michel Tapié. In Dutch and French.
- 1961
- Arthur Tooth & Sons Ltd., London. *American Abstract Painters*. Jan. 24–Feb. 18. Exh. cat., with introduction by Lawrence Alloway.
- Alloway, Lawrence. "Six from New York." *Art International* (Zurich) 5, no. 2 (March 1961), pp. 51–52.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *American Abstract Expressionists and Imagists*. Oct. 13–Dec. 31. Organized by H. H. Arnason. Exh. cat., with foreword and introduction by Arnason.
- Alloway, Lawrence. "Easel Painting at the Guggenheim." *Art International* (Zurich) 5, no. 10 (Christmas 1961), pp. 26–34.
- Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. *The 1961 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*. Oct. 27, 1961–Jan. 7, 1962. Organized by Gordon Bailey Washburn and Leon Anthony Arkus. Exh. cat., with introduction by Washburn.
- Canaday, John. "Art: International Exhibition Opens in Pittsburgh." *The New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1961, p. L66.
- Frigerio, Simone. "L'Exposition internationale de Pittsburgh et les prix de l'Institut Carnegie." *Aujourd'hui* (Paris), no. 34 (Dec. 1961), pp. 62–63.
- 1962
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Geometric Abstraction in America*. March 20–May 13. Exh. cat., with text by John Gordon.
- Kozloff, Max. "Geometric Abstraction in America." *Art International* (Zurich) 6, nos. 5–6 (summer 1962), pp. 98–103.
- World's Fair, United States Pavilion, Seattle. *Art since 1950: American and International*. April 21–Oct. 21. Exh. cat., with foreword by Norman Davis and introduction by Sam Hunter.
- 1963
- The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. *Twenty-eighth Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*. Jan. 18–March 3. Organized by Conrad Marca-Relli, Ben Shahn, and Gordon M. Smith. Exh. cat., with introduction by Hermann Warner Williams, Jr.
- The Jewish Museum, New York. *Toward a New Abstraction*. May 19–Sept. 15. Organized by Alan Solomon. Exh. cat., with preface by Solomon, texts by Dore Ashton, Herman Cherry, Michael Fried, Henry Geldzahler, Robert Rosenhlm, Irving Sandler, Solomon, Leo Steinberg, and Ulfert Wilke, and introduction by Ben Heller.
- Wilson, Painter. "Second-Generation Abstraction." *Time* (New York) 81, no. 21 (May 24, 1963), p. 78.
- Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York. *New Directions in American Painting*. Dec. 1, 1963–Jan. 5, 1964. Organized by Sam Hunter and the Poses Institute of Fine Arts, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts. Exh. cat., with introduction by Hunter. Traveled to Isaac Delgado Museum of Art, New Orleans, Feb. 7–March 8, 1964; Atlanta Art Association, Georgia, March 18–April 22, 1964; The J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, May 4–June 7, 1964; Art Museum, Indiana University, Bloomington, June 22–Sept. 20, 1964; Washington University, St. Louis, Oct. 5–30, 1964; and Detroit Institute of Arts, Nov. 10–Dec. 6, 1964.
- 1964
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. *Post-Painterly Abstraction*. April 23–June 7. Traveled to Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, July 14–Aug. 16; and Art Gallery of Toronto, Canada, Nov. 20, 1964–Jan. 3, 1965. Exh. cat., with introduction by Clement Greenberg and foreword by James Elliot.
- Coplans, John. "Post-Painterly Abstraction: The Long-Awaited Greenberg Exhibition Fails to Make Its Point." *Artforum* (San Francisco) 2, no. 11 (May 1964), pp. 4–9.
- Sherman, John K. "Walker Show is Attention Grabber." *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, July 19, 1964.
- Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany. *Documenta III: Internationale Ausstellung*. June 27–Oct. 5. Organized by Arnold Bode. Exh. cat., with texts by Bode and Werner Haftmann, and foreword by Karl Branier.
- Frigerio, Simone. "Les Expositions à l'étranger. La Documenta III de Kassel." *Aujourd'hui* (Paris), no. 47 (Oct. 1964), pp. 54–55.
- Hocutt, Luce. "Documenta III." *L'Œil* (Paris), no. 117 (Sept. 1964), pp. 24–31, 47.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *American Drawings*. Sept.–Oct. Organized by Lawrence Alloway. Exh. cat., with text by Alloway.
- Judd, Donald. "American Drawings." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 39, no. 2 (Nov. 1964), p. 59.
- World's Fair, New York State Pavilion, New York. *American Contemporary Drawings*. Sept. 17–Oct. 25, 1964. Exh. cat., with introduction by Lawrence Alloway and statement by Thomas Messer.
- Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. *The 1964 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*. Oct. 30, 1964–Jan. 10, 1965. Organized by Gustave von Groschwitz and Leon Anthony Arkus. Exh. cat., with foreword by von Groschwitz.
- Levin, Kim. "Anything Goes at the Carnegie." *ARTnews* (New York) 63, no. 8 (Dec. 1964), pp. 34–36, 63.
- Roherts, Colette. "Expositions à l'étranger: Internationale de Pittsburgh au Carnegie." *Aujourd'hui* (Paris), no. 48 (Jan. 1965), pp. 94–95.
- Tillim, Sidney. "Month in Review." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 39, no. 3 (Dec. 1964), pp. 57–61.
- 1965
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *The Responsive Eye*. Feb. 25–April 25. Organized by William C. Seitz. Exh. cat., with text by Seitz. Traveled to City Art Museum, St. Louis, May 20–June 20; Seattle Art Museum, Washington, July 15–Aug. 22; Pasadena Art Museum, California, Sept. 28–Nov. 7; and Baltimore Museum of Art, Dec. 14, 1965–Jan. 23, 1966.
- Rose, Barbara. "Beyond Vertigo: Optical Art at the Modern." *Artforum* (San Francisco) 3, no. 7 (April 1965), pp. 30–33.
- Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland. *Signal Exhibition: Held, Kelly, Mattmuller, Noland, Oluski, Pfahler, Plumb, Turnbull*. June 26–Sept. 5. Organized by A. Rudlinger. Exh. cat., with text by Rudlinger.
- 1966
- The Jewish Museum, New York. *Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculptors*. April 27–June 12. Organized by Kynaston L. MacShine. Exh. cat., with acknowledgments and introduction by MacShine.

International Art Program of the National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. *XXXIII Esposizione biennale internazionale d'arte Venezia/XXXIII International Biennial Exhibition of Art: Helen Frankenthaler, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Jules Olitski*. Premiered at the Venice Biennale, June 18–Oct. 16. Organized by Henry Geldzahler. Exh. cat., with foreword by David D. Scott, introduction by Geldzahler, and texts by Geldzahler, Clement Greenberg, Robert Rosenblum, and William Rubin.

—Baro, Gene. "U.S.A. at Venice." *Art and Artists* (London) 1, no. 3 (June 1966), pp. 58–61.

—Celant, Germano. "Esposizioni." *Casabella* (Milan) 30, no. 308 (Aug. 1966), pp. 64–66.

—Lynton, Robert. "Venice 1966." *Art International* (Lugano) 10, no. 7 (Sept. 1966), pp. 83–89.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *Systemic Painting*. Sept. 21–Nov. 27. Organized by Lawrence Alloway. Exh. cat., with text by Alloway.

—Pincus-Witten, Robert. "'Systemic' Painting: A Well-Chosen View is Presented by Lawrence Alloway." *Artforum* (Los Angeles) 5, no. 3 (Nov. 1966), pp. 42–45.

National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. *Two Decades of American Painting*. Oct. 15–Nov. 27. Traveled to National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Dec. 10, 1966–Jan. 22, 1967 (exh. cat., with introduction by Waldo Rasmussen, texts by Lucy R. Lippard, Irving Sandler, and G. R. Swensen; in English and Japanese); Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi, March 25–April 15, 1967; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, June 7–July 9, 1967; and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, July 17–Aug. 13, 1967 (expanded exh. cat., with preface by Waldo Rasmussen, acknowledgments by Eric Langker, Hal Missingham, N. R. Seddon, and Eric Westbrook; in English).

1967

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. *American Sculpture of the Sixties*. April 28–June 25. Organized by Maurice Tuchman. Exh. cat., with introduction by Tuchman and texts by Lawrence Alloway, Wayne V. Anderson, Dore Ashton, John Coplans, Clement Greenberg, Max Kozloff, Lucy R. Lippard, James Monte, Barbara Rose, and Irving Sandler. Traveled to Philadelphia Museum of Art, Sept. 15–Nov. 5.

—Leider, Philip. "American Sculpture at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art." *Artforum* (New York) 5, no. 10 (June 1967), pp. 6–11.

—Tuten, Frederic. "American Sculpture of the Sixties: A Los Angeles 'Super Show.'" *Arts Magazine* (New York) 41, no. 7 (May 1967), pp. 40–44.

—Wechsler, Judith. "Why Scale?" *ARTnews* (New York) 66, no. 4 (summer 1967), pp. 32–35, 67–68.

Expo 67, United States Pavilion, Montreal. *American Painting Now*. April 28–Oct. 27. Organized by Alan Solomon. Exh. cat., published in conjunction with Horticultural Hall, Boston, with acknowledgments by Sue M. Thurman and text by Solomon. Traveled to Horticultural Hall, Dec. 15, 1967–Jan. 10, 1968.

Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh.

The 1967 Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture.

Oct. 27, 1967–Jan. 7, 1968. Organized by Gustave von Groschwitz and Leon Anthony Arkus. Exh. cat., with introduction by von Groschwitz.

—Hudson, Andrew. "The 1967 Pittsburgh International." *Art International* (Zurich) 11, no. 10 (Christmas 1967), pp. 57–64.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *Guggenheim International Exhibition, 1967: Sculpture from Twenty Nations*. Oct. 20, 1967–Feb. 4, 1968. Organized by Edward F. Fry. Exh. cat., with introduction by Fry. Traveled to Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Feb. 24–March 27, 1968; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, April 26–June 9, 1968; and Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, June 20–Aug. 18, 1968.

—Fry, Edward F. "Sculpture of the Sixties." *Art in America* (New York) 55, no. 5 (Sept.–Oct. 1967), pp. 26–28.

—Mellow, James R. "The 1967 Guggenheim International." *Art International* (Lugano) 11, no. 10 (Christmas 1967), pp. 50–56.

1968

Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany. *4. Documenta: Internationale Ausstellung*. June 27–Oct. 6. Organized by Arnold Bode. Exh. cat., with texts by Bode, Max Imdahl, and Jean Leering, and foreword by Karl Branner.

—Russell, John. "Aimez-Vous Documenta?" *L'Oeil* (Paris), nos. 164–65 (Aug.–Sept. 1968), pp. 32–39.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Art of the Real, 1948–1968*. July 3–Sept. 8. Organized by E. C.

Goossen. Exh. cat., with preface, acknowledgments, and text by Goossen. Traveled to Grand Palais, Paris, Nov. 14–Dec. 23; Kunsthaus, Zurich, as *Der Raum in der amerikanschen Kunst 1948–1968*, Jan. 18–Feb. 23, 1969 (exh. cat., with introduction by Felix Andreas Baumann and bibliography compiled by Bernhard Karpel); and Tate Gallery, London, April 22–June 1, 1969 (exh. cat., with foreword by Gabriel White).

—Battcock, Gregory. "The Art of the Real: The Development of a Style: 1948–68." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 42, no. 8 (summer 1968), pp. 44–47.

—Dore, Ashton. "New York Commentary: 'The Art of the Real' at the Museum of Modern Art." *Studio International* (London) 176, no. 903 (Sept. 1968), pp. 92–93.

—Netter, Maria. "Der Raum in der amerikanschen Kunst." *Die Weltwoche* (Zurich), Jan. 31, 1969, p. 26.

Pasadena Art Museum, California. *Serial Imagery*.

Sept. 17–Oct. 27. Organized by John Coplans. Exh. cat., with text by Coplans. Traveled to Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, Nov. 17–Dec. 22; and Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California, Jan. 25–Feb. 23, 1969.

—"Paintings, Masks, Light Floors Displayed." *Santa Barbara News* (California), Feb. 2, 1969, p. C12.

1969

Vancouver Art Gallery, British Columbia. *New York 13*. Jan. 22–Feb. 24. Organized by Doris Shadbolt.

Traveled to Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Canada, March 14–April 20; Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal, June 3–July 6. Exh. cat.,

with introduction by Shadbolt and text by Lucy R. Lippard.

—Starrs, Roy. "An Expert Sets the Scene for *New York 13*." *Vancouver Province*, Jan. 22, 1969.

—Thériault, Normand. "Objects Made in N.Y. USA." *La Presse* (Montreal), June 14, 1969, p. 42.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*. Oct. 16, 1969–Feb. 8, 1970. Organized by Henry Geldzahler. Exh. cat., with foreword by Thomas P. F. Hoving and texts by Michael Fried, Geldzahler, Clement Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg, Robert Rosenblum, and William Rubin.

1970

University of California, Los Angeles Art Gallery. *Color*. Feb. 16–March 22. Organized by the Graduate

Seminar of the Department of Art. Exh. cat., with acknowledgments by E. S. Wright and texts by Lynn Bailess, Sister Catherine Bock, Jan Burland, Carol Donnell, Sue Ginsburg, Richard N. Janick, Charles Kessler, Andrea Levin, Mary Anne Richardson, and Melinda Terbell.

—Wilson, William. "Color Stays Fresh at UCLA Gallery." *Los Angeles Times* (Sunday magazine insert), March 1, 1970, p. 48.

Fondation Maeght, St-Paul-de-Vence, France. *L'Art vivant aux Etats-Uns*. July 16–Sept. 30. Exh. cat., with preface and introduction by Dore Ashton.

1971

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *Structure of Color*. Feb. 25–April 18. Organized by Marcia Tucker. Exh. cat., with text by Tucker.

1973

Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris. *Maîtres de l'abstraction américaine aujourd'hui*. Nov. 6–Dec. 15.

1974

Whitney Museum of American Art, Downtown at Federal Reserve Plaza, New York. *Nine Artists/Coenties Slip*. Jan. 10–Feb. 14. Exh. brochure.

- "Nine Artists/Coenties Slip." *The Village Voice* (New York), Jan. 31, 1974, p. 33.
- Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. *Johns, Kelly, Lichtenstein, Motherwell, Nanman, Rauschenberg, Serra, Stella: Prints from Gemini G.E.L.* Aug. 17–Sept. 29. Organized by Philip Larson. Exh. cat., with introduction by Larson. Traveled to Akron Art Institute, Ohio, Dec. 15, 1974–Jan. 26, 1975; Ackland Art Center, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Feb. 23–April 6; Winnipeg Art Gallery, Canada, May 6–June 15; and Denver Art Museum, July 13–Aug. 24.
- Krebs, Patricia. "Art and Technology: Closing a Big Gap." *Greensboro Daily News* (Raleigh, North Carolina), March 30, 1975, p. B12.
- Wood, Ernie. "Studio is the Difference for Print Show." *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, North Carolina), March 2, 1975, p. 5V.
- 1975
- Janie C. Lee Gallery, Houston. *Monumental Sculpture*. Feb.
- National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. *Sculpture: American Directions, 1945–1975*. Oct. 3–Nov. 30. Traveled to Dallas Museum of Art, Jan. 8–Feb. 29, 1976; and New Orleans Museum of Art, April 1–May 16, 1976.
- Seeman, Joan. "The Flowering of American Sculpture." *ARTnews* (New York) 74, no. 10 (Dec. 1975), pp. 46–48.
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *American Art since 1945 from the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art*. Exh. cat., with foreword by Richard E. Oldenburg and acknowledgments and introduction by Alicia Legg. Traveled to Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, Oct. 23–Nov. 30; Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, Jan. 11–Feb. 22, 1976; Denver Art Museum, March 19–May 2, 1976; Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, May 31–July 11, 1976; Dallas Museum of Art, Aug. 19–Oct. 3, 1976; Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Oct. 25–Dec. 5, 1976; Greenville County Museum, South Carolina, Jan. 12–Feb. 20, 1977; and Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, March 14–April 17, 1977.
- "American Art since 1945": New Museum Exhibit." *Richmond News Leader* (Virginia), March 5, 1977, p. A18.
- 1976
- The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Ohio. *Aspects of Postwar Painting in America*. Jan. 17–Feb. 29. Exh. cat., with preface and acknowledgments by Thomas M. Messer.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *Twentieth-Century American Drawings: Three Avant-Garde Generations*. Jan. 23–March 23. Organized by Diane Waldman. Exh. cat., with text by Waldman. Traveled to Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, May 27–July 11; and Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany, July 18–Aug. 29.
- Robins, Corinne. "Drawing to an End." *Arts Magazine* (New York) 50, no. 8 (April 1976), pp. 92–93.
- Smith, Roberta. "Drawing Now (and Then)." *Artforum* (New York) 14, no. 8 (April 1976), pp. 52–59.
- Whitney Museum of American Art, Downtown at Federation Reserve Plaza, New York. *Surface, Edge, Color*. Dec. 8, 1976–Jan. 12, 1977. Exh. cat.
- 1977
- Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. *Paris—New York*. June 2–Sept. 19. Exh. cat., with acknowledgments by Pontus Hulten; texts by Daniel Abadie, Robert Bordaz, Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, Elliot Carter, Leo Castelli, William Copley, Daniel Cordier, Hubert Damisch, Maurice Girodias, David Hare, Hulten, Donald Karshan, Billy Kluer, Henri Langlois, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Robert Lebel, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Robert Motherwell, Alfred Pacquement, Marcelin Pleynet, Jean Prouvé, Pierre Restany, Harold Rosenberg, Hélène Seckel, Ileana Sonnabend, and Friedrich Teja Bach; and extensive chronology, artists' biographies, and bibliographies. In French.
- Documenta 6*. Kassel, Germany. June 26–Oct. 2. Organized by Manfred Schneckenburger. Exh. cat., with foreword by Arnold Bode, Hans Eichel, and Schneckenburger, and texts by Karl Oskar Blase, Gerhard Bott, Baron Brock, Joachim Diederichs, Rolf Dittmar, Ulrich Gregor, Birgit Hein, Wulf Herzogenrath, Klaus Honnef, Peter W. Jansen, Lothar Lang, Michael Maek-Gérard, Günter Metken, Lothar Roman, David A. Ross, Wieland Schmied, and Evelyn Weiss.
- Shapiro, David. "A View of Kassel." *Artforum* (New York) 16, no. 1 (Sept. 1977), pp. 56–62.
- John Weber Gallery, New York. *Drawings for Outdoor Sculpture 1946–1977*. Oct. 29–Nov. 23. Organized by Susanna E. Singer. Exh. cat., with introduction by David Shapiro. Traveled to Mead Gallery, Amherst College, Massachusetts, Feb. 3–March 4, 1978; University of California Art Galleries, Santa Barbara, June 27–Sept. 4, 1978; La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, California, Sept. 15–Oct. 27, 1978; and Hayden Gallery, M.I.T., Cambridge, Massachusetts, Nov. 18–Dec. 19, 1978.
- 1978
- Pace Gallery, New York. *Grids: Format and Image in Twentieth-Century Art*. Dec. 16, 1978–Jan. 20, 1979. Exh. cat., with text by Rosalind Krauss. Traveled to the Akron Art Institute, Ohio, March 24–May 6, 1979.
- Kingsley, April. "Visions and Revisions." *The Village Voice* (New York), Jan. 15, 1979, p. 82.
- Kramer, Hilton. "Art: 'Grid' Is Theme of Group." *The New York Times*, Dec. 29, 1978, p. C 20.
- 1979
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *1979 Biennial Exhibition*. Feb. 6–April 8. Organized by John G. Hanhardt, Barbara Haskell, Richard Marshall, Mark Segal, and Patterson Sims. Exh. cat., with preface by Tom Armstrong and foreword by the organizers.
- The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. *The Thirty-sixth Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*. Feb. 24–April 8. Organized by Jane Livingston. Exh. cat., with text by Livingston.
- Tannous, David. "Report from Washington: Big-Name Biennial, Plus. . . ." *Art in America* (New York) 67, no. 4 (July–Aug. 1979), pp. 24–25.
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *The Decade in Review: Selections from the 1970s*. June 19–Sept. 2. Exh. brochure, with text by Patterson Sims.
- Fine Arts Gallery, California State University, Northridge. *Americans in Paris: The Fifties*. Oct. 22–Nov. 30. Organized by Merle Schipper. Exh. cat., with introduction by Schipper.
- Colpitt, Frances. "Americans in Paris." *Artweek* (Oakland, California) 10, no. 37 (Nov. 10, 1979), p. 5.
- Wortz, Melinda. "Los Angeles." *ARTnews* (New York) 79, no. 3 (March 1980), pp. 160–62.
- 1980
- University Gallery, University of Massachusetts at Amherst. *Sculpture on the Wall: Relief Sculpture of the Seventies*. March 29–May 4. Exh. cat., with introduction by Hugh Davies.
- Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. *The Fifties: Aspects of Painting in New York*. May 22–Sept. 21. Exh. cat., with foreword by Abram Lerner and text by Phyllis Rosenzweig.
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. *Twenty American Artists*. July 24–Sept. 7. Exh. cat., with acknowledgments and introduction by Henry T. Hopkins.
- 1981
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *1981 Biennial Exhibition*. Feb. 4–April 5.
- Schwartz, Ellen. "At the Whitney and the Guggenheim: It's the Gospel According to Their Organizers, Not 'The Word.'" *ARTnews* (New York) 80, no. 4 (April 1981), pp. 122–27.
- Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. *Paris/1937—Paris/1957: Créations en France*. May 28–Nov. 2. Exh. cat., with preface by Jean-Claude Grosse and Pontus Hulten; texts by Daniel Abadie, Agnes Angliviel de La Beaumelle, Philippe Arbaizar, André Berne-Joffroy, Marcel Billot, Tom Bishop, Yvonne Brunhammer, Laure de Bazet-Vallet, François Chapon, François Châtelet, Raymond Chirat, Henry-Claude Cousseau, Eugène Claudius-Petit, Christian Derouet, Pierre Dumayet, Gladys Fabre, Raymond Gid, Michel Giroud, Raymond Guidot, Julia Kristeva, Claude Laugier, Henri Lefebvre, Sylvain Lecombe,

- Catherine Millet, Charlotte Perriand, José Pierre, Jean Prouvé, Michel Ragon, Alain Sayag, Germain Viatte, Dominique Viéville, Patrick Weiser, and Sarah Wilson; and chronology by Annick Lionel-Marie.
- Haus der Kunst, Munich. *Amenkamsche Malerer: 1930–1980*. Nov. 14, 1981–Jan. 31, 1982. Organized by Haus der Kunst and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Exh. cat., with texts by Tom Armstrong and Bernd Growe, and biography and bibliography by Ellen Goldhaar and Ann Lucke. In German; trans. Helmut Schneider.
- 1982
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *The New York School: Four Decades, Guggenheim Museum Collection and Major Loans*. July 1–Aug. 29. Exh. brochure, with preface by Diane Waldman and text by Lisa Dennison.
- Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston. *The Americans: The Collage*. July 11–Oct. 3. Exh. cat., with introduction by Linda L. Cathcart and artists' biographies by Emily L. Todd.
- Denver Art Museum, Colorado. *Constructivism and the Geometric Tradition: Selections from the McCrory Corporation Collection*. Nov. 3–Dec. 13. Exh. cat., with foreword by Thomas N. Maytham, preface by Celia Ascher, text by Willy Rotzler, and artists' biographies by Charlotta Kotik and Steven A. Nash. Traveled to San Antonio Museum of Art, March 12–May 14; New Orleans Museum of Art, June 11–Aug. 14, 1983; Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio, Nov. 13–Dec. 31, 1983; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Feb. 8–April 1, 1984; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, May 6–June 17, 1984.
- 1983
- Helsinki Ateneum, Finland. *ARS 83 Helsinki*. Oct. 14, 1983–Jan. 15, 1984. Organized by the Fine Arts Academy of Finland. Exh. cat., with foreword by Mats B., Yrjana Levanto, Barbara J. London, J. O. Mallander, Pauli Paaermaa, Leena Peltola, and Matti Ranki. In Finnish, Swedish, and English; trans. Maria Ahlmén, Harald Arnkil, Susanne Lehtinen, and Marjatta Levanto.
- 1984
- Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. *La Grande Parade. Hoogtepunten van de schilderkunst na 1940/Highlights in Painting after 1940*. Dec. 15, 1984–April 15, 1985. Organized by Edy de Wilde, Hendrik Driessen, Karel Schampers, and Alexander van Grevenstein. Exh. cat., with foreword and introduction by de Wilde. In English and Dutch; trans. Beth O'Brien and J. J. van der Maas.
- 1985
- The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut. *A Second Talent: Painters and Sculptors Who Are Also Photographers*. Sept. 22–Dec. 29. Organized by Robert Metzger. Traveled to Baruch College Gallery, New York, Feb. 6–March 14, 1986. Exh. cat., with introduction by Robert Metzger.
- The Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Contrasts of Form: Geometric Abstract Art 1910–1980*. Oct. 2, 1985–Jan. 7, 1986. Organized by Magdalena Dabrowski. Exh. cat., with introduction by John Elderfield, texts by Magdalena Dabrowski, and selected bibliography by Clive Phillpot. Traveled as *Contrastes de forma: Abstracción Geométrica, 1910–1980* to Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, April 17–June 8, 1986; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, July 17–Aug. 25, 1986; and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Caracas, Nov. 11, 1986–Jan. 4, 1987 (expanded exh. cat., with introduction by Thomas Messer and Richard E. Oldenburg, and forewords by Javier Solana Madariaga, Daniel E. Martinez, and Carmen Elisa Madlener dos Santos; trans. Joan Oliver); and traveled as *Contrastes de forma: Arte Geométrica Abstrata 1910–1980* to Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Brazil, Sept. 18–Oct. 20, 1986 (expanded exh. cat., with foreword by Sofia Imber; trans. Clave).
- Amarante, Leonor. "Na cidade, uma bela uniao de dois rivais." *O Estado de S. Paulo* (São Paulo), Sept. 18, 1986, Caderno 2, p. 3.
- Ashton, Dore. "'Contrasts of Form: Geometric Abstract Art, 1910–1980.'" *Arts Magazine* (New York) 60, no. 4 (Dec. 1985), pp. 18–20.
- Subirats, Eduardo. "A arte e o museu," trans. Cassia Rocha. *Folhetim-Folha de S. Paulo* (São Paulo), Oct. 19, 1986, pp. 6–7.
- Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. *1985 Carnegie International*. Nov. 9, 1985–Jan. 5, 1986. Organized by John R. Lane and John Caldwell. Exh. cat., with foreword by Lane, introduction by Lane and Caldwell, and texts by Bazon Brock, Benjamin H. D. Buchloch, Germano Celant, Hal Foster, Rudi H. Fuchs, Johannes Gachnang, Per Kirkeby, Jannis Kounellis, Hilton Kramer, Donald B. Kuspit, Thomas McEvilley, Achille Bonito Oliva, Mark Rosenthal, Peter Schjeldahl, and Nicholas Serota.
- van der Marck, Jan. "Report from Pittsburgh: The Triennial Revived." *Art in America* (New York) 74, no. 5 (May 1986), pp. 49–55.
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *Transformations in Sculpture: Four Decades of American and European Art*. Nov. 22, 1985–Feb. 16, 1986. Organized by Diane Waldman. Exh. cat., with preface by Thomas Messer and text by Waldman.
- 1986
- Queens Museum, Flushing, New York. *After Matisse*. March 30–May 25. Organized by Independent Curators Incorporated, New York. Exh. cat., with acknowledgments by Susan Sollins and texts by Dore Ashton, Tiffany Bell, and Irving Sandler. Traveled to Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia, Sept. 18–Nov. 16; Portland Museum of Art, Maine, Dec. 9, 1986–Feb. 9, 1987; Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach, Florida, March 17–May 17, 1987; the Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., June 20–Aug. 16, 1987; Dayton Art Institute, Ohio, Sept. 12–Nov. 8, 1987; and Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, Dec. 10, 1987–Feb. 7, 1988.
- Dietz Krebs, Betty. "After Matisse: Exhibit Explores Master's Influence." *Dayton Daily News and Journal Herald* (Ohio), Sept. 12, 1987, p. 2.
- Lacher, Irene. "The Mastery of Matisse." *The Miami Herald*, March 5, 1987, p. 17.
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles. *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890–1985*. Nov. 23, 1986–March 8, 1987. Organized by Maurice Tuchman with the assistance of Judi Freeman. Exh. cat., with foreword by Earl A. Powell; acknowledgments by Tuchman; texts by Carel Blotkamp, John E. Bowlt, Charlotte Douglas, Charles C. Eldredge, Ake Fant, Robert Galbreath, Linda Dalrymple Henderson, Geurt Imanse, Edward Kásinec, Boris Kerdimun, Donald Kuspit, Rose-Carol Washton Long, John E. Moffitt, William Moritz, Sixten Ringhom, W. Jackson Rushing, Tuchman, Harriett Watts, and Robert P. Welsh; and chronologies by Judi Freeman. Traveled to Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, April 25–June 19, 1987; and Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Sept. 2–Nov. 22, 1987.
- McEvilley, Thomas. "The Opposite of Emptiness." *Artforum* (New York) 25, no. 7 (March 1987), pp. 84–91.
- Stavitsky, Gail. "Concerning 'The Spiritual in Art.'" *Arts Magazine* (New York) 61, no. 10 (June/summer 1987), pp. 32–34.
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. *Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945–1986*. Dec. 10, 1986–Jan. 10, 1988. Organized by Julia Brown Turrell. Exh. cat., with introduction by Turrell and texts by Germano Celant, Hal Foster, Donald Kuspit, Thomas Lawson, Kate Linker, Achille Bonito Oliva, Ronald J. Onorato, and John C. Welchman.
- 1988
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *Aspects of Collage, Assemblage and the Found Object in Twentieth-Century Art*. March 29–May 22. Organized by Diane Waldman. Exh. brochure, with preface and acknowledgments by Waldman, and text by Susan Haggood.
- Kunstmuseum, St. Gallen, Switzerland. *Rot Gelb Blau: Die Primärfarben in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts*. March 19–May 21. Exh. cat., with foreword by Felix Thurlmann and texts by Bernhard Burgi and Veit Loers. Traveled to Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, June 12–Sept. 18.
- Charrière, Edmond. "La Couleur absolue." *Art Press* (Paris), no. 128 (Sept. 1988), pp. 10–17.
- Musée St. Pierre, Lyon. *La Couleur seule: L'expérience du monochrome*. Oct. 7–Dec. 5. Organized by Bernard Gavoty, Martine Petit, Thierry Prat, and Thierry Raspail. Exh. cat., with foreword by Raspail,

- introduction by Maurice Besset, and texts by Alain Charre, Edmond Charrière, Thierry de Duve, Giorgio Franchetti, Jean-Claude Marcadé, Thomas McEvilley, Robert Nickas, Ursula Perucchi-Petri, Pierre Restany, Dieter Schwarz, and Richard Stanislawski.
- 1989
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. *Abstraction Geometry Painting: Selected Geometric Abstract Painting in America since 1945*. Sept. 17–Nov. 5. Organized by Michael Auping. Exh. cat., with text by Auping. Traveled to the Center for Fine Arts, Miami, Dec. 15, 1989–Feb. 25, 1990; Milwaukee Art Museum, April 1–June 1, 1990; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, July 1–Sept. 16, 1990.
- 1990
Richard Green Gallery, Santa Monica, California. *Five Artists from Coenties Slip: 1956–1965*. Sept. 20–Oct. 27.
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York. *Classic Modernism: Six Generations—Mondrian, Albers, Newman, Kelly, Rymann, Halley*. Nov. 15–Dec. 25.
- 1991
Stux Modern Gallery, New York. *Geometries of Color: American Post-Painterly Abstraction*. Jan. 30–March 9. Exh. cat., with text by Beth Wilson.
Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. *Carl Andre, Ellsworth Kelly, Richard Long: Bronze, Steel, Stone, Wood: Three Installations of Sculpture*. March 4–April 13.
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. *1991 Biennial Exhibition*. April 18–June 16. Exh. cat., with foreword by David A. Ross, introduction by Richard Marshall, and texts by Richard Armstrong, John G. Hanhardt, and Lisa Phillips.
Fondation Daniel Templon, Musée Temporaire, Fréjus, France. *La Sculpture contemporaine après 1970*. July 4–Sept. 29. Exh. cat., with introduction by Caroline Smulders and texts by Pierre Cabanne, Daniel Dobbels, Siegfried Gohr, Demetrio Papanoni, Carter Ratcliff, and Smulders. In English and French; trans. Neal Cooper, Marie-France de Paloréma, Jeanne Etoré, and John William Gabriel.
Emily Davis Gallery, University of Akron, Ohio. *The Encompassing Eye: Photography as Drawing*. Oct. 22–Nov. 16. Organized by Charles Hagen. Exh. cat., published in *Aperture* (New York), no. 125 (fall 1991), with texts by Mary Foresta, Michael Gray, Charles Hagen, Robert Harbison, Weston Naef, Graham Nash, Carter Ratcliff, Donald J. Saff, and Toshio Shibata; and interview with Kelly by Hagen. Traveled to Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach California, Feb. 14–May 24, 1992; Lehman College, Bronx, New York, Oct. 1–30, 1992; Marsh Art Gallery, University of Richmond, Virginia, Nov. 13, 1992–Jan. 10, 1993; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College, Chicago, June 12–July 31, 1993.
- 1992
Documenta IX. Kassel, Germany. June 13–Sept. 20. Organized by Jan Hoet. Exh. cat., with foreword by Wofram Breimeier and texts by Bart de Baere, Cornelius Castoriadis, Hilde Daem, Claudia Herstatt, Hoet, Heiner Müller, Joyce Carol Oates, Paul Robbrecht, Jacques Roubaud, Pier Luigi Tazzi, and Denys Zacharopoulos.
- 1993
BlumHelman Gallery, New York. *A Private View: Artists' Photographs*. Jan. 6–Feb. 13.
Pace Gallery, New York. *Sculpture and Color*. Jan. 15–Feb. 13; *Indiana, Kelly, Martin, Rosenquist, Youngerman at Coenties Slip*. Jan. 16–Feb. 13. Exh. cat., with text by Mildred Glmcher.
Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin. *Amerikanische Kunst im 20. Jahrhundert: Malerei und Plastik 1913–1993*. May 8–July 25. Organized by Christos M. Joachimides and Norman Rosenthal. Exh. cat., with foreword by Sir Roger de Grey; texts by Brooks Adams, David Anfan, Richard Armstrong, John Beardsley, Neal Benezra, Arthur C. Danto, Abraham A. Davidson, Wolfgang Max Faust, Mary Emma Harris, Joachimides, Thomas Kellein, Donald Kuspit, Mary Luhlin, Karal Ann Marling, Barbara Moore, Francis V. O'Connor, Achille Bonito Oliva, Stephen Polcaro, Carter Ratcliff, Rosenthal, Irving Sandler, Wieland Schmied, Peter Selz, Gail Stavitsky, and Douglas Tallack; and artists' biographies. Trans. David Britt, John Browjohn, Anton Ebner, John William Gabriel, Wolfgang Himmelberg, Christel Morano, Magda Moses, Joachim Neugroschel, Bram Opstelten, and John Ormrod. Traveled to the Royal Academy of Arts, London, as *American Art in the Twentieth Century: Painting and Sculpture 1913–1993*. Sept. 16–Dec. 12. Exh. cat.
—Heartney, Eleanor. "Report from Germany." *Art in America* (New York) 81, no. 10 (Oct. 1993), pp. 43–48.
—Renton, Andrew. "American Art in the Twentieth Century." *Flash Art* (Milan) 26, no. 173 (Nov. 1993), pp. 104–05.
—Russell, John. "American Art through European Eyes." *The New York Times*, May 30, 1993, pp. 29, 31.
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Musée du Louvre, Paris. *Copier Creer—De Turner a Picasso: 300 Oeuvres inspirées par les maîtres du Louvre*. April 26–July 26. Organized by Jean-Pierre Cuzin. Exh. cat., with preface by Michel Laclotte and texts by Bernard Ceysson, Cuzin, Marie-Anne Dupuy, Fabrice Hergott, Jean Leymarie, Henri Loyrette, and Arlette Sérulaz.
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. *Rolywholyover A Circus*. Sept. 12–Nov. 28. Organized by Julie Lazar. Exh. cat., with foreword by Richard Koshalek and texts by Anne d'Harnoncourt, Laura Kuhn, Lazar, Marshall McLuhan, Joan Retallack, Daisetz T. Suzuki, Mark Swed, and Andrew Weil.
- 1994
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The Drawing Center, New York. *The Return of the Cadavre Exquis*. Nov. 6–Dec. 18. Exh. cat., with foreword by Ann Philbin and texts by Mary Ann Caws, Elizabeth Finch, Ingrid Schaffner, and Charles Simic. Traveled to the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Feb. 5–April 10, 1994; Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica, California, July 7–Sept. 5, 1994; Forum for Contemporary Art, St. Louis, Sept. 30–Nov. 12, 1994, and American Center, Paris, Dec. 1994–Jan. 1995.
- 1994
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- 1995
Bilbao Museum of Fine Arts, Spain. *La Tradición de lo Nuevo: Obras Maestras de la Colección Guggenheim, 1945–1990*. May 10–July 15. Exh. cat., with prologue by Karmen Garimendia, preface by Thomas Krens, and texts by Scott Guerman and Sam Hunter. In Spanish and Basque; trans. Brian Webster and Manu Lopez.
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Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *Degrees of Abstraction: From Morris Louis to Mapplethorpe*. March 11–Oct. 22. Organized by Trevor J. Fairbrother.
Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. *Revolution: Art of the Sixties from Warhol to Benys*. Sept. 30–Dec. 10. Organized by Chieko Hirano, Yusuke Minami, Junichi Shioda, and Yohko Watanabe. Exh. cat., with foreword by Yasuo Kamon and texts by Ann Brenner, Claudia Gould, Shioda, Jon Thompson, and Watanabe. In Japanese and English; trans. Tetsuro Ishida, Keiko Katsuya, and Minami.

1996

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. *Abstraction in the Twentieth Century: Total Risk, Freedom, and Discipline*. Feb. 9–May 12. Organized by Mark Rosenthal. Exh. cat., with foreword by Thomas Krens, and acknowledgments and texts by Rosenthal.
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Exhibition Curated by Ellsworth Kelly

- Museum of Modern Art, New York. *Artist's Choice: Ellsworth Kelly—Fragmentation and the Single Form*. June 15–Sept. 4, 1990. Exh. brochure, with text by Kelly and afterword by Kirk Varnedoe.
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Au Diable les oiseaux: regarder avec Ellsworth Kelly. Written by Pierre Aubry and Rachel Stella, 1995.

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