

ELLSWORTH KELLY

Singular Forms 1966 - 2009



Yellow Piece, 1966
acrylic on canvas
75 x 75 inches (190.5 x 190.5 cm)

Mnuchin Gallery is proud to present *Ellsworth Kelly: Singular Forms 1966 – 2009*. In celebration of the artist's ground-breaking contribution to the history of art— his shaped canvas— the exhibition brings together works created from singular forms, in singular colors, spanning over forty years. On view will be important examples of Kelly's shaped canvases, accompanied by related reliefs and sculpture.

One of the most influential artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Ellsworth Kelly is known for his pioneering use of color as form and the powerful presence of his highly refined shapes. Inspired by both the natural and constructed worlds, his abstract visual language evokes the arches of a Romanesque cathedral, the leaves of a grape vine, the rolling hills of a snowy landscape, and the silhouettes of Matisse's cutouts. Bridging the spaces between European modernism, Color Field painting, and Minimalism, Kelly's deeply personal style achieves a distinctive timelessness.

This exhibition takes as its focus those works the artist executed from singular— rather than conjoined or composite— forms. *Yellow Piece* (1966), the artist's first shaped canvas, represents Kelly's pivotal break with the rectangular support and his redefinition of painting's figure/ground relationship. With its curved corners and single, all-encompassing color, the canvas itself becomes the composition, transforming the wall behind it into the picture's ground. Kelly has gone on to explore the expressive possibilities of the monochrome shaped canvas throughout his career, and the exhibition includes examples of this evolution from each of the last four decades. These paintings, ranging from the cool elegance of *Gray Panel II* (1977) to the anatomical allusions of *Blue Curves* (2009), demonstrate the seemingly infinite range of mood and movement suggested by these singular forms.

Kelly has frequently revisited particular shapes to prove his point, executing them in different dimensions, colors and mediums to distinctly varied effects. The exhibition highlights such recurring forms, bringing together metal wall reliefs related to the paintings on view. For example, *Red Panel* (1982) echoes in painted aluminum the slanted square of *Gray Panel II* (1977), while the sweeping arc of *Bronze Curve* (1987) anticipates the painting *Blue Curve* (1996) of nearly ten years later. In addition to the wall reliefs, Kelly's work in three-dimensions is further represented by *Curve XI* (1974), an early example of one of the artist's totemic sculptures.

Born in Newburgh, New York in 1923, Ellsworth Kelly celebrates his 90th birthday this spring. Mnuchin Gallery joins the global art world in honoring the occasion. *Ellsworth Kelly: Singular Forms: 1966 - 2009* will coincide with: the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's *Ellsworth Kelly at 90: Paintings from the Paris Years until Today* (April – June 2013); the Centre Pompidou's *Ellsworth Kelly* (April 2013 – January 2014); the Art Institute of Chicago's *Ellsworth Kelly* (May 2013 – May 2014); the Tate Modern's *Ellsworth Kelly: A 90th Birthday Display* (May 2013 – April 2014); The Barnes Foundation's *Ellsworth Kelly: Sculpture on the Wall* (May – September 2013); the Matthew Marks Gallery's *Ellsworth Kelly at Ninety* (May – June 2013); the Detroit Institute of Art's *Ellsworth Kelly Prints* (May – September 2013); the Museum of Modern Art's *Ellsworth Kelly: Chatham Series* (May – September 2013) and the Phillips Collection's *Ellsworth Kelly: Panel Paintings 2004-2009* (June – September 2013).

Curated by the artist, *Ellsworth Kelly: Singular Forms 1966 – 2009* is organized in association with Matthew Marks Gallery.