

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

PRESS RELEASE

Ellsworth Kelly Last Paintings

Ellsworth Kelly Plant Drawings

May 5 – June 24, 2017

Opening: Thursday, May 4, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Ellsworth Kelly Last Paintings** and **Ellsworth Kelly Plant Drawings**, the next exhibitions in his galleries at 522 and 526 West 22nd Street.

The nine canvases in **Ellsworth Kelly Last Paintings**, made in the months leading up to Kelly's death in December 2015, are the culmination of his seven-decade pursuit of a singular artistic vision. As John Coplans once wrote, "Kelly is quite likely to delve into any part of his repertoire and at any time add variations that may have been conceived months or years previously." This practice continued until the end of Kelly's life, and several of his last paintings are either variations of earlier works or based on studies he made not just months or years but sometimes decades before. A new diptych revisits a single-panel 1963 painting, eliminating the background and allowing the shapes to float free on the wall. A three-panel painting is a variation of a 1954 collage *Study for Four Color Panels*. In the new work Kelly has removed the white panel and, in a similar way to the diptych, allowed the white of the wall to complete the composition.

The exhibition is accompanied by a clothbound catalogue with an essay by Branden W. Joseph and photographs by Jack Shear of Kelly's studio as he left it on his last day of painting.

Ellsworth Kelly Plant Drawings includes sixteen drawings spanning nearly sixty years, the majority of which are exhibited here for the first time. Since the late 1940s Kelly's drawings of nature have played a central role in his art. "The drawings from plant life seem to be the bridge to the way of seeing that brought about the paintings in 1949 that are the basis for all my later work," Kelly wrote. "They are exact observations of the form of the leaf or flower or fruit seen. Nothing is changed or added."

The drawings express an enthusiasm for found compositions that is unique to Kelly's work. He made each drawing from life, sometimes barely lifting the pencil as he translated the plant's contours to paper. Despite the immediacy of their execution, the drawings share a great deal with his paintings and sculptures — not only in their focus on direct visual impressions but also in their fascination with the effects of negative space and overlapping planes.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated clothbound catalogue.

Ellsworth Kelly Last Paintings and **Ellsworth Kelly Plant Drawings** are on view at 522 & 526 West 22nd Street from May 5 to June 24, 2017, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please contact Jacqueline Tran at 212-243-0200 or jacqueline@matthewmarks.com.

For press inquiries, please contact Andrew Black, Contemporary Art Service, at 646-645-0384 or andrew@contemporaryartservice.com.