

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ACQUIRES SEMINAL WORKS ON PAPER BY ELLSWORTH KELLY

Fifteen Early Works from Kelly's Private Collection Acquired in Part as a Gift from the Artist

Fifteen works on paper by Ellsworth Kelly, executed from the later 1940s to the early 1950s, have been acquired by The Museum of Modern Art, it was reported last week by Glenn D. Lowry, Director of the Museum. The works come directly from Kelly's private collection and are given in part as a gift of the artist, with the remainder made possible through the support of the Museum's Committee on Drawings. The sketches and studies in pencil, gouache, ink, and even collage were little known until about a decade ago.

The group will be shown at MoMA for the first time in *Ellsworth Kelly: Fifteen Works On Paper 1949-1958, A Recent Acquisition*, an exhibition opening at The Museum of Modern Art on September 18, 1997 and continuing through January 13, 1998.

Created mostly in France, where Kelly lived from 1948 to 1954, these seminal works exhibit the stylized motifs drawn from the natural and architectural environment that the artist was just beginning to explore. Upon his return to the United States in the mid-1950s, Kelly continued to distill elements from his surroundings leading to the abstract idiom of his mature years.

According to Mr. Lowry, "With these works, The Museum of Modern Art becomes the largest and most important repository in the world of Ellsworth Kelly's works on paper. When

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considered along with our substantial collection of Kelly's paintings, our ongoing dedication to the understanding of this extraordinary artist, whose influence on the contemporary aesthetic has been profound, is abundantly clear."

Margit Rowell, Chief Curator, Department of Drawings, stated, "The Museum's long-standing commitment to this major American artist and Kelly's commitment to our institution are mirrored in this acquisition, made possible by the enthusiastic support of the Committee on Drawings and a most generous gift by the artist himself. This acquisition illustrates the Museum's ongoing efforts to expand its holdings of Ellsworth Kelly's work and to further explore the origins and development of the artist's distinctive vocabulary."

Mr. Kelly remarked, "I would like to thank Margit Rowell and the Committee on Drawings for making it possible for these works on paper to enter the Museum's collection."

June Larkin, Chairman of the Committee on Drawings, noted, "This acquisition significantly broadens the scope of the Museum's collection of works by Ellsworth Kelly. The purchase of these works from the artist's formative years is a remarkable opportunity for The Museum of Modern Art."

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