

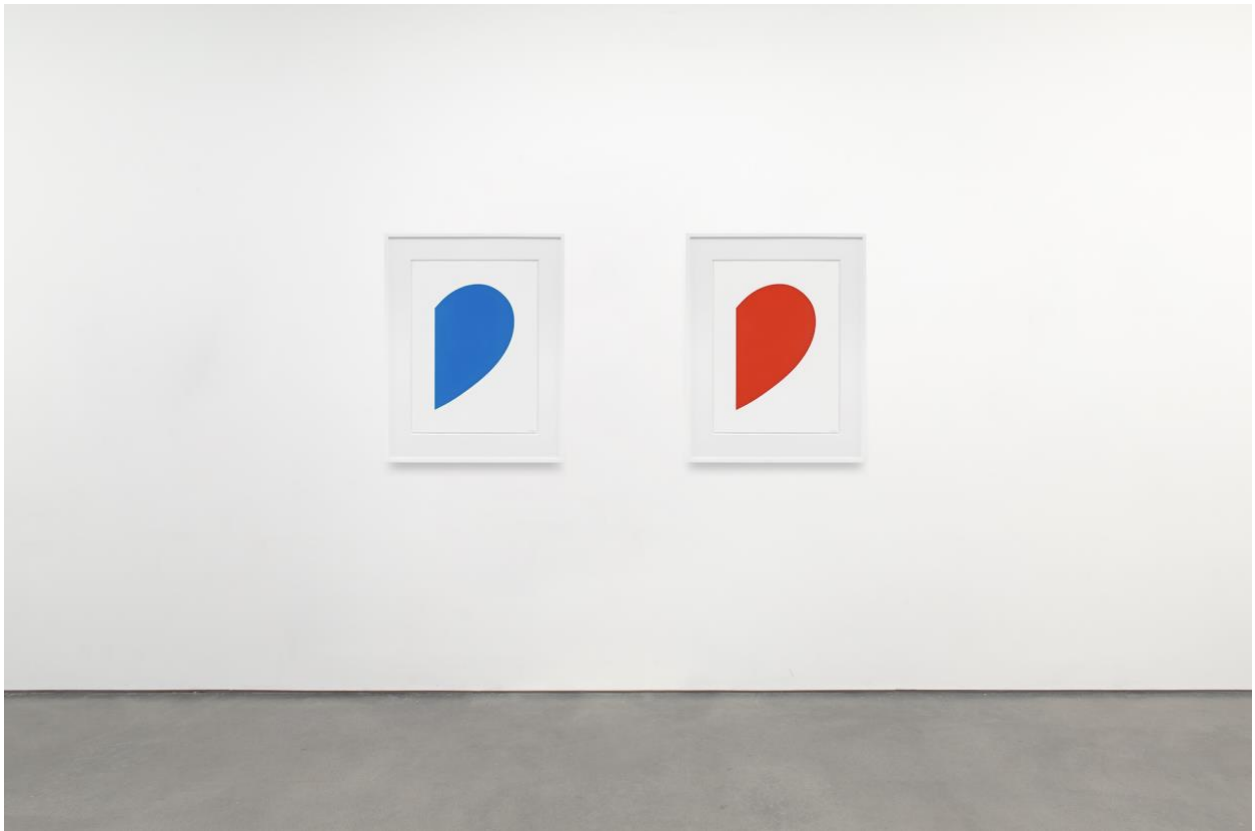
ZEIT CONTEMPORARY ART

PRESS RELEASE

LILT, JOY AND CLARITY

THE PRINTS OF ELLSWORTH KELLY

October 14th - February 4th, 2022



Installation view of Ellsworth Kelly. Blue Curve, 2013. 1-color lithograph. 30 x 22 in. (76.2 x 55.9 cm), and Ellsworth Kelly. Red Curve, 2013. 1-color lithograph. 30 x 22 in. (76.2 x 55.9 cm). Image courtesy of Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles and Zeit Contemporary Art, New York.

Lilt, Joy and Clarity: The Prints of Ellsworth Kelly

Online Viewing Room, October 14th, 2021 – February 4th, 2022

New York, NY. October 14, 2021. Zeit Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Lilt, Joy and Clarity: The Prints of Ellsworth Kelly*, an online viewing room organized in close collaboration with Gemini G.E.L., on view through February 4th, 2022.

Ellsworth Kelly (1923 – 2015) is arguably unmatched in his spare yet vibrant language, instantly recognizable in any medium. This viewing room focuses on his prints which, as Richard H. Axson argues in the catalogue raisonné, perhaps encapsulate Kelly's goals and aesthetic even more so than his paintings and sculptures: the prints, with no distraction in the guise of a backing or three-dimensionality, epitomize Kelly's trademark simplified emphasis on shape, color, surface, and ground as well as his interest in pristine surfaces and the importance of negative space.

After serving in WWII in the camouflage unit, an experience which undoubtedly inflected him artistically, Kelly honed his abstract formalist aesthetic in Paris from 1948-1954, abandoning his earlier forays into figuration. While he sporadically attended classes at the École des Beaux Arts, his real artistic education was constituted through firsthand exposure to the art of Henri Matisse, Jean Arp, Alexander Calder, Joan Miró, and Constantin Brancusi. Matisse's use of color and Brancusi's use of form in particular had a great impact on the artist. While Kelly's formalist works are often compared to minimalism and hard-edged geometric abstraction, his artistic project occupies a unique place in relation to these movements both because it came before them and because his inspiration always began from forms found in nature.

Alongside many of his contemporaries, Kelly began to explore printmaking during the mid-60s. Any discussion of his prints is remiss without mentioning the importance of his collaboration with Gemini G.E.L. Gemini was Kelly's workshop of choice as a result of their adventurous yet determined ethos, resulting in many technological innovations in order to create prints suited to Kelly's unique specifications. As is evident in the works included in this viewing room, Kelly was very exacting and particular when it came to choosing and mixing color. When proofing one print entitled *Black Brown*, it ultimately took three printers five days and multiple gallons of ink to create the perfect shade of brown for the artist. Kelly also went above and beyond when it came to printing more monumentally sized works. In the late 1980s, while working on the extended *Purple Red Gray Orange* lithographic series, Kelly decided he wanted to create a print that was 225 inches long. As the press bed was a comparatively mere 102 inches, Kelly and the printers came up with the solution to create 4 separate prints of each of the shapes and subsequently combine them; this print was one of the largest fine art lithographs ever made. This lithograph has no counterpart in paintings, revelatory of Kelly's delight in the medium in and of itself.

This viewing room in particular is largely concerned with Kelly's later prints while simultaneously providing a cohesive perspective into the key aspects of his practice. While *Color Panels*, *Color Square I*, and *Dartmouth* reveal Kelly's delight in chance through the playful arrangement of

colors, *Red Curve* and *Blue Curve* are expressive of the careful choice of color and love of shape that undermines his *oeuvre*. *River II* is a most interesting and unique print. As art critic Dave Hickey points out in an essay accompanying an exhibition of the *Rivers* series at Gemini, all of the prints belonging to this series are illustrative of Kelly's interests across media throughout his artistic career in that they feature large scale as in his paintings, a sense of texture as in his weathered-steel and wooden sculptures, collage as in his early years, chance through their random combination of patterns, and, lastly, the prominent relation to nature that holds together his entire artistic output.

"We are thrilled to provide this unique vision of Ellsworth Kelly as a printmaker in collaboration with Gemini G.E.L., whose lithographic studios in Los Angeles became Kelly's laboratory to expand the possibilities of the medium. Kelly belongs to a generation of post-war artists that understood art beyond the traditional constraints of easel painting. It's fascinating to see how this vision fueled his interest in making more than 300 prints through his career," declares art historian Joan Robledo-Palop, Founder and CEO of Zeit Contemporary Art. "For Kelly, the making of a good print involved a series of intuitive decisions about shape, color, the relationship of color to shape, and the relationship of colored shape to the field of paper it rests on. We are delighted with this collaboration with Zeit Contemporary Art as well as with the interest of new generations in the work of Ellsworth Kelly," explains Joni Weyl, co-owner of Gemini G.E.L. This viewing room thus acts as an ode to Kelly and Gemini G.E.L. and the collaborations that led to these enduring works of art.

About Zeit Contemporary Art

Founded in 2016, Zeit Contemporary Art is a firm specializing in modern, post-war and contemporary art, located at 590 Madison Avenue, 21st Floor, New York, NY 10022. Its mission is deeply committed to the understanding of art as a complex cultural object that defines the time and space where it is created. Zeit Contemporary Art organizes four carefully curated exhibitions a year both on contemporary artists and historically focused projects. Additionally, the firm represents the work of pioneering artists and provide a unique service of private sales of museum quality works.

For press inquiries and additional information: contact@zeitcontemporaryart.com

Viewing Room: <https://www.zeitcontemporaryart.com/viewing-room/10-lilt-joy-and-clarity-the-prints-of-ellsworth-kelly/>

Video: <https://vimeo.com/629607744>

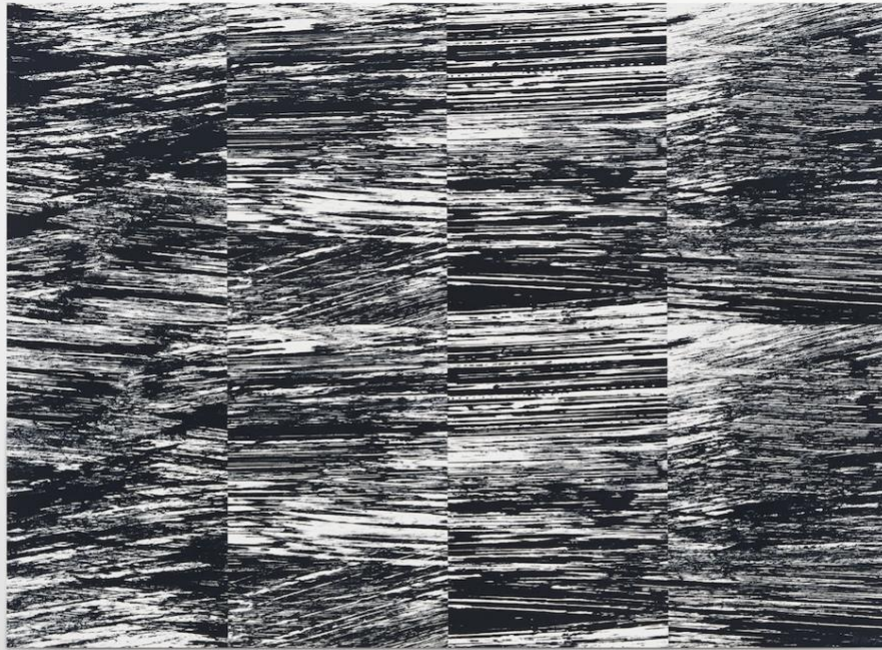
Zeit Contemporary Art: <https://www.zeitcontemporaryart.com/>



Ellsworth Kelly. Yellow Red-Orange, 1970. Lithograph on special Arjomari paper. 35 1/4 x 36 1/4 in. (89.5 x 92.1 cm).
Image courtesy of Zeit Contemporary Art, New York



Ellsworth Kelly. Red, 2003. 1-color lithograph on Rives BFK white paper. 29 1/50 x 22 18/50 in. (73.7 x 56.8 cm).
Image courtesy of Zeit Contemporary Art, New York



Ellsworth Kelly. River II, 2005. Wall relief comprised of two 4-color lithographs, clear coated and mounted onto two conjoined aluminum panels. Each panel 40 x 109 in. (101.6 x 267.9 cm). Image courtesy of Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles and Zeit Contemporary Art, New York



Ellsworth Kelly. Dartmouth, 2011. 5-color lithograph. 14 x 28 1/2 in. (35.6 x 72.4 cm). Image courtesy of Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles and Zeit Contemporary Art, New York