



Art at MIT

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MIT EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS ELLSWORTH KELLY'S SCULPTURE

The List Visual Arts Center at MIT will present Ellsworth Kelly: Small Sculpture 1958-87, December 19 - March 27, 1988, the sixth in an exhibition series designed to investigate the formal vocabularies of major 20th century sculptors who are represented by major works on the MIT campus. A public reception for this exhibition and for LA Hot and Cool occurs Friday, December 18, 5-7 pm.

A retrospective of Kelly's works on paper and seven major paintings are on view at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Boston, December 6 - January 31, 1988.

One of the most important American abstract artists to emerge in the 1950s, Kelly has been recognized for his dramatically simple shapes and potent color in both painting and sculpture in solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, surveyed the artist's sculpture in a major traveling exhibition in 1982.

Kelly studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1946-47, and his first one-person museum exhibition was presented at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, in 1963.

Ellsworth Kelly: Small Sculpture focuses on the two richest periods of his sculptural investigation: the decade in New York beginning in 1954, following his return from six years of study and work in Paris; and the last fifteen years since he relocated his home and studio from New York City to upstate New York. In the exhibition brochure, Curator and Acting Director Katy Kline wrote, "Though these individual pieces are not large, they have the same conviction and presence of the artist's large-scale sculptures. Works have been selected to represent his deft touch with both straight and curved edges (both mathematically plotted and drawn free-hand) and to include his two time-honored materials, wood and metal, with the many different finishes which inflect their austerity and give them such individual voices."

Since 1980 MIT has displayed Kelly's large Curve XII (on long-term loan from a private collection) in the Hayden Library Building on Memorial Drive. The quiet tension between the springing resiliency of an arc pushing against the straight right angles of its architectural background illustrates Kelly's ability to exploit the tension between a rigidly ordered geometry and looser "organic" tendencies. In this case the 10-foot curve of the work describes the segment of the perimeter of an immense circle 46 feet in diameter and suggests the grandeur of planetary contours photographed from space.