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PRESS RELEASE

ELLSWORTH KELLY : WINDOWS

27 FEBRUARY – 27 MAY 2019

GALERIE 0, LEVEL 4

The Centre Pompidou, in close collaboration with the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation (Spencertown, NY), is paying homage to Ellsworth Kelly, a major figure of 20th and 21st century abstract art, by exhibiting his six *Windows* created in France between 1949 and 1950, alongside a collection of paintings, drawings, sketches and photographs that directly echo this theme.

Ellsworth Kelly's French years, as demonstrated by the ground-breaking exhibition at the Jeu de Paume National Gallery in 1992-1993, represented a period of constant invention, which the artist regularly revisited over the course of his career. Through some fifty works that have never before been exhibited together, "Ellsworth Kelly: Windows" invites people to take a closer look at this cardinal moment by focusing on the pattern itself, which provides, so to speak, their dominant tone.

Born in Newburgh, New York, in 1923, Ellsworth Kelly studied art at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn in 1941-1942, before being drafted into the US Army the following year. Assigned to a special troops unit, which today is known as the "Ghost Army," he was tasked with camouflage duties, landing in Normandy in June 1944 and participating in the liberation of France, which led him to discover Paris. In 1945, he returned to the United States and took classes at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston while also visiting various famous museums along the East Coast. At that time his painting was still figurative. However, thanks to the study scholarships granted to demobilized soldiers after World War II, Kelly moved to Paris in October of 1948 and stayed there until June 1954.

He travelled around France, going to see Grunewald's Isenheim altarpiece in Colmar, the Romanesque churches of Poitou-Charentes, and became a regular at Parisian museums, starting with the Louvre. His work quickly took on an increasingly abstract direction and during his stay on Belle-Ile in the summer of 1949, Kelly painted **Window I**, a modest sized painting, in black and white, where the idea of the window only exists at the structural level: an orthogonal window that is furthermore fused here with the study of telegraph poles, as evidenced by a parallel ink on paper.

Back in Paris, which he tirelessly traversed, letting his taste for architecture and details guide the way, the American painter created **Window II** in October-November, a variation of the previous one, imbued with a certain anthropomorphism, **Window III**, an astonishing white monochrome whose outline, derived from a hasty sketch drawn on the back of an envelope, was executed with the help of a string sown onto the canvas, and **Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris**, a painted construction in wood and canvas, was inspired by the structure and proportions of a window from the then National Modern Art Museum (nowadays known as the Palais de Tokyo). This painting-object nearly 1.30 m in height represents, for Kelly, the affirmation of an aesthetic that he would call *already made*, very different from Duchamp's ready-mades in that it always implies a duplication, thanks to a more or less obvious transformation in terms of material, size and colours, and not just a simple shift in the object's use. In principle, this aesthetic would represent a large portion of his later production. In his *Notes from 1969*, Kelly wrote: "After constructing "Window" with two canvases and a wood frame, I realized that from then on, painting as I had known it was finished for me. The new works were to be objects, unsigned, anonymous. Everywhere I looked, everything I saw became something to be made, and it had to be exactly as it was, with nothing added. It was a new freedom; there was no longer the need to compose. The subject was there already made, and I could take from everything. It all belonged to me: a glass roof of a factory with its broken and patched panels, lines on a road map, a corner of a Braque painting, paper fragments in the street. It was all the same: anything goes."

As evidence of its object-like quality, here, the window loses all connotation of transparency, which has been connected with it since the start of the 15th century and Alberti's *De Pictura*, where it was associated with painting itself. Kelly makes us think about – and especially see – the window in terms of opacity. This turns his work into an essential chapter on how to contemplate abstract art's meaning, its specific method of signification and the new relationship that it assumes with its audience. During the first half of 1950, Kelly made **Window V**, an oil on wood, inspired by the shadows seen through a hotel window and initially supposed to be suspended, followed by **Window VI**, the largest of this window sextet, also made out of two canvas and wood panels and specifically depicting the window of a Parisian building (the Swiss Pavilion at the Cité Universitaire, created by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret in 1930).

As the only exception to the chronology of Kelly's time in France (1948-1954), the exhibit also includes his last unfinished painting, *White over Black III* (2015), a large black and white painting, in two attached sections, which inevitably alludes to the *Window* from the National Museum of Modern Art, with which it will be exhibited for the first time. A few months before his death on 27 December 2015, at the age of 92, Ellsworth Kelly decided to donate his most famous work to the Centre Pompidou, *Window, Museum of Modern Art, Paris* (1949).

THE EXHIBITION

CURATOR

Jean-Pierre Criqui, Curator, Department of Contemporary Collections at the Musée National d'Art Moderne, assisted by **Annalisa Rimmaudo**, Head of Research at the Musée National d'Art Moderne.

Head of Production: **Dorothee Lacan**

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

ADMISSION AND PRICES

Centre Pompidou, 75191 Paris cedex 04

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Access: metro Hôtel de Ville and Rambuteau, RER Châtelet-Les-Halles.

Opening times: every day from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., except Tuesdays and May 1st.

Admission: €14, reduced price €11

Free for those under 18. Young people under 26*, teachers and students at schools of art, drama, dance and music and members of the Maison des artistes may visit the Museum for free and buy tickets for exhibitions at the concessionary rate. Free admission for Centre Pompidou members.

Home printable tickets: centrepompidou.fr

* Nationals of Member States of the EU or the European Economic Area aged 18-25.

Valid the same day for the Musée National d'Art Moderne and all exhibitions.

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AU MÊME MOMENT AU CENTRE POMPIDOU

IN PARIS

VASARELY: SHARING FORMS

6 FEBRUARY – 6 MAY 2019

GALERIE 2, LEVEL 6

JOSS HOOVELING

6 FEBRUARY – 29 APRIL 2019

ESPACE FOCUS, LEVEL 5

MUTATIONS / CRÉATIONS 3

LA FABRIQUE DU VIVANT

ERIKA VERZUTTI

20 FEBRUARY – 15 APRIL 2019

GALERIES 3 ET 4, LEVEL 1

HARRY SHUNK

JANOS KENDER

27 FEBRUARY – 27 MAY 2019

GALERIE DE PHOTOGRAPHIES,
LEVEL -1

STÉPHANE MANDELBAUM

6 MARCH – 20 MAY 2019

GALERIE D'ART GRAPHIQUE,
LEVEL 4

UNE SAISON ROUMAINE

AU CENTRE POMPIDOU

ISIDORE ISOU

6 MARCH – 20 MAY 2019

GALERIE DU MUSÉE, LEVEL 4

CIPRIAN MURESAN

SERBAN SAVU

L'ATELIER SANS FIN

3 APRIL – 1ST JULY 2019

ATELIER BRANCUSI

IN MUSEUM

MUSÉE EN ŒUVRE(S)

NOUVELLE PRÉSENTATION

DES COLLECTIONS

CONTEMPORAINES

SINCE 20 SEPTEMBER 2017

MUSÉE, LEVEL 4

HISTOIRE(S) D'UNE COLLECTION

NOUVELLE SÉQUENCE

D'EXPOSITIONS-DOSSIERS

DANS LE PARCOURS DES

COLLECTIONS MODERNES

FROM 31 MAY 2018

MUSÉE, LEVEL 5

IN METZ

PEINDRE LA NUIT

UNTIL 5 AVRIL 2019

GALERIES 2 ET 3

L'AVENTURE DE LA COULEUR

ŒUVRES PHARES

DU CENTRE POMPIDOU

UNTIL 22 JUILLET 2019

GRANDE NEF

LEE UFAN

HABITER LE TEMPS

27 FEBRUARY – 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

GALERIE 1

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IN MÁLAGA

MATISSE

6 MARCH – 9 JUNE 2019

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IN BRUSSELS

KANAL-CENTRE POMPIDOU

UNE ANNÉE DE PRÉFIGURATION

UNTIL 10 JUIN 2019

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kanal.brussels

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