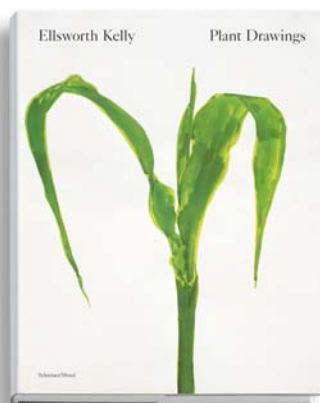


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PRESS RELEASE

Ellsworth Kelly: Plant Drawings

The large book of drawings to accompany the exhibition tour

Schirmer/Mosel is bringing out a large-format volume entitled *Ellsworth Kelly – Plant Drawings* that looks set to become one of this year's most beautiful publications on contemporary art.

Ellsworth Kelly is now 88 years old and is widely considered the great pioneer of contemporary American art; he has primarily been active in the field of minimalist, geometric/abstract painting. That said, he is constantly surprising even the aficionados amongst his audience with his superb ability to produce delicate plant drawings (and watercolors) in the tradition of artists such as Philipp Otto Runge and Henri Matisse, drawings that are emphatically in a class of their own.

A surprise to both connoisseurs and the public, on close inspection the aesthetic basis of Kelly's entire oeuvre turns out to be thorough visual research. The reason: it is his plant drawings (which he refers to, with a degree of exaggeration, as "plant portraits") that he uses as the starting point for his abstract ideas and images. Here, in the interplay of two and three dimensionality, silhouette and outline, line and figure, the positive shape of the leaf and the negative background between the leaves, abstraction and nature are subtly combined.

For almost 60 years now, Ellsworth Kelly's drawings and watercolors have been a visible sign of his lively and highly disciplined approach to nature, an approach that attests to the artist's sensitive eye and his sure hand. Thus, before our amazed eyes, a twig of vine leaves is transformed into a sequence of pulsating green hearts.

Our book brings together for the first time the artist's most important drawings and his watercolors, and they are expertly commented on by Michael Semff, Director of *Staatliche Graphische Sammlung*. In conversation with the curator of New York's Metropolitan Museum Marla Prather, Kelly explains at length the significance of these drawings in terms of his oeuvre as a whole.

The book accompanies the exhibition of the same name which, after premiering in Munich at *Pinakothek der Moderne* and at the *Louisiana Museum of Modern Art* in Denmark will be on show at the *Metropolitan Museum* in New York (from June 4 through September 3, 2012). It contains all the drawings included in the show and is thus currently the most comprehensive and no doubt the most beautiful publication on the work of Ellsworth Kelly.

ELLSWORTH KELLY

Plant Drawings

With texts by Michael Semff and Marla Prather
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