

GERARD & KELLY

Bardo

17 January – 8 March 2025
79 rue du Temple, 75003 Paris



Gerard & Kelly, *E for Eileen*, 2023. 4K video, color, sound; 22 min.

Marian Goodman Gallery Paris is pleased to announce the first major exhibition in Paris devoted to the work of Gerard & Kelly. Entitled *Bardo*, the exhibition features new sets of works by the duo that collectively illustrate the hybridity and multidisciplinary of their practice, which is rooted in an ongoing investigation of history, architecture and sexuality. The exhibition is imagined as a time-based and multi-sensory experience, and the title, inspired by Tibetan Buddhism, refers to the transitional state between death and rebirth, during which consciousness undergoes profound changes. Through the evocation of three saintly historical figures, openly or symbolically queer, Gerard & Kelly create a space for reflection and resonance between past and present, shadow and light, the profane and the sacred.

Eileen Gray (1878-1976), a Paris-based Irish architect and designer, was the author of a fundamental work of architectural modernism: villa E-1027, built in the bay of Roquebrune-Cap-Martin. Completed in 1929, the villa is one of France's three national monuments of the modern era, and the only one built by a woman. Inspired by the layout and volumes of an ocean liner, the house's vast windows open onto the sky and the Mediterranean. A self-taught architect, Gray meticulously designed every detail of E-1027, including the furniture within the villa, to create a functional living space. Upon entering the gallery, the flickering of *Défense de rire*, 2025, which combines the *Pailla* lamp with a stencil conceived by Gray for E-1027, guides visitors to the lower level for the start of the film. Downstairs the 22-minute film *E for Eileen*, 2023, shot entirely *in situ*, is shown every half-hour. A seating module renders the negative space of the solarium in the villa's garden, and is covered in cork—a material frequently used by Gray. The *Pailla* lamp reappears in *Solarium ensoleillé*, 2025, to illuminate a wall-mounted scaled model of this sunbathing platform constructed from layers of mat board.

The film—part visual essay, part speculative fiction—magnifies Gray's talent by emphasizing the living dimension of her architecture, which is designed to facilitate the circulation of bodies and natural light. As in Gerard & Kelly's previous films, *E for Eileen* questions the ways of living and moving in a given construction by featuring historical characters linked to the site: Eileen Gray (played by Nikki Amuka-Bird), and two of her lovers, architect and critic Jean Badovici (played by Colin Bates) and the famous music-hall singer Damia (Flora Fischbach). With this film, Gerard & Kelly subtly evoke the inner life and social world of Eileen Gray, an openly bisexual woman, who frequented the pre-war Parisian lesbian literary circle and launched her own design gallery in Paris in 1922 under a male pseudonym. From her limited personal archive, Gerard & Kelly have designed four light boxes; *Portrait Recto/Verso*, *Monsieur Gray*, *Eclipse*, and *Souvenir (after a photograph by Eileen Gray)*, 2025 are fragments of memory and clues that lend new insight to Gray's elusive personality.

In the gallery's vaulted space, another forgotten artist, Francesco di Stefano, known as Pesellino (1422-1457), emerges from the shadows. Like Eileen Gray, Pesellino was prolific during his lifetime, receiving commissions from the Medici in Florence and collaborating with the leading painters of his time. He died prematurely of the plague at the age of 35. Gerard & Kelly's sculpture *Glory Hole*, 2025, inspired by Pesellino's painting of *St. Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata* now in the collection of the Louvre Museum, transforms the space into a postmodern sanctuary. The saint, wearing his cassock, half-reclines on the floor; a mirror ball has penetrated his flesh and replaced his head. An emblematic symbol of the disco era, this ball bridges the gap between the worlds of nightlife and the sacred, and its perpetual spinning evokes the wandering of the *bardo*.

The final chapter of the exhibition unfolds in the gallery's showroom, with new works that enter into a subtle dialogue with Julius Eastman (1940-1990), a queer, black American composer active in New York in the 1970s and 80s. In the *Glyphs* series, Gerard & Kelly applied fragments of musical notation onto silk screened images of dancers, captured in glyph-like gestures and shimmering like holograms. Reminiscent of medieval illuminated manuscripts, the artists' process of pressing gold leaf is an act of devotion: a transcription of

Eastman's handwritten score for *Gay Guerrilla* (1979). Gerard & Kelly's engagement with his oeuvre, which was largely lost at the time of his premature death, dates back several years. His music featured in their film *Panorama*, 2021, shot in the Bourse de Commerce in Paris, and in their performance *Gay Guerrilla*, 2023, created at the Centre Pompidou. In new large-format works rendered in silkscreen, stencil and neon, *Pompidou Pulse*, 2025 and *Disco Saint*, 2025, the artists integrate images of the emblematic architecture of the Centre Pompidou with disco dancers captured in ecstatic states. Gerard & Kelly transform the dancer into a saintly figure, evoking a *bardo* in which the sacred and the profane cohabit and where buildings and bodies dissolve.

The cycle of three films made by Gerard & Kelly in emblematic architectural sites in France—*Bright Hours* at Le Corbusier's Cité Radieuse in Marseille, *Panorama* at the Bourse de Commerce in Paris and *E For Eileen* at villa E-1027—will be broadcast on February 9 on France 2 and available for streaming for a limited time on France.tv.

American artists based in Paris since 2018, Gerard & Kelly have collaborated for two decades on performance, film/video, and installation, among other formats. Having collectively studied ballet, visual art, literature, and gender studies, Gerard & Kelly use conceptual strategies in art to examine broader themes of memory and history, sexuality and subjectivity. Their questions are often set against a particular architectural space, pushing the related sociocultural and political precedents of the site into an open engagement with their work. Brennan Gerard was born in Ohio in 1978, and Ryan Kelly was born in Pennsylvania in 1979. They were Van Lier Fellows of the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program and graduated with MFAs from the Interdisciplinary Studio at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2013. *Ruins*, their first solo show in a European institution, was presented at Carré d'Art - Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes in 2022-2023. Solo exhibitions and performances of their work have been presented by Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul de Vence (2024), Centre Pompidou, Paris (2023), MAMCO, Geneva (2020), MOCA, Los Angeles (2020), Festival d'Automne, Paris (2017 and 2019), The Getty Museum, Los Angeles (2019), Pioneer Works, New York (2018), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2016), New Museum, New York (2014), and The Kitchen, New York (2014).

They participated in the 2023 NGV Triennial at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, the 2017 and 2023 Chicago Architecture Biennial, and the 2014 Made in L.A. Biennial at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. Their work has been included in group exhibitions at Collection Lambert, Avignon (2024), FRAC Franche-Comté, Besançon (2022), High Line, New York (2023), and Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York (2015), among others. Gerard & Kelly have received numerous awards and grants, including the VIA Art Fund (2024), Mondes nouveaux program of the French Ministry of Culture (2023), Graham Foundation (2014), and Art Matters (2013). Their works are held in the permanent collections of Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; LACMA – Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; FRAC Franche-Comté, Besançon; Carré d'Art, Nîmes; and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Marian Goodman Gallery champions the work of artists who stand among the most influential of our time and represents over five generations of diverse thought and practice. The Gallery's exhibition program, characterized by its caliber and rigor, provides international platforms for its artists to showcase their work, foster vital dialogues with new audiences, and advance their practices within nonprofit and institutional realms. Established in New York City in 1977, Marian Goodman Gallery gained prominence early in its trajectory for introducing the work of seminal European artists to American audiences. Today, through its exhibition spaces in New York, Los Angeles, and Paris, the Gallery maintains its global focus, representing some 50 artists working in the U.S. and internationally.

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