

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Ellsworth Kelly Photographs

February 26 – April 30, 2016

Opening: Thursday, February 25, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Ellsworth Kelly Photographs**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 523 West 24th Street. Featuring over thirty gelatin silver prints of photos taken between 1950 and 1982, this exhibition is the first ever devoted to Kelly's photography. Kelly finished preparing the prints and planning the exhibition shortly before his death, on December 27, at the age of ninety-two.

Ellsworth Kelly is credited with inventing a new kind of painting, one inspired by nature and chance compositions encountered in the world. This artistic breakthrough took place in the late 1940s, while he was living in France: "Everywhere I looked, everything I saw became something to be made, and it had to be made exactly as it was, with nothing added. It was a new freedom; there was no longer the need to compose."

Kelly's fascination with already-made compositions is clear in his photographs. He started taking pictures in 1950, using a borrowed Leica to "make notations of things I had seen and subjects I had been drawing." Unlike his sketches and collages, his photographs were never part of the process of making a painting or sculpture; they were simply a record of his vision. As such, they convey his enthusiasm for the visible world around him — the compositional possibilities to be found in an asparagus plant, for example, or a stack of bricks.

Kelly bought his own camera in the 1960s and used it to photograph barns on Long Island, their interlocking forms evoking the planes of his own paintings and sculptures. Architectural details were the focus of several subsequent photographs, which he shot primarily in France and upstate New York, where he lived from 1970 until the end of his life. Central to many of these images are windows, roofs, and the shadows they cast. In a 1963 interview he explained that his works up to that point had primarily been "paintings of things I'd seen, like a window, or a fragment of a piece of architecture, or someone's legs; or sometimes the space between things, or just how the shadow of an object would look. [...] I'm not interested in the texture of the rock, or that it is a rock, but in the mass of it, and its shadow."

Accompanying the exhibition is a clothbound catalogue with duotone reproductions. Kelly was closely involved in all aspects of the book, the first to be published on his photographs.

Ellsworth Kelly Photographs is on view at 523 West 24th Street from February 26 to April 30, 2016, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please contact Jacqueline Tran at 212-243-0200 or jacqueline@matthewmarks.com