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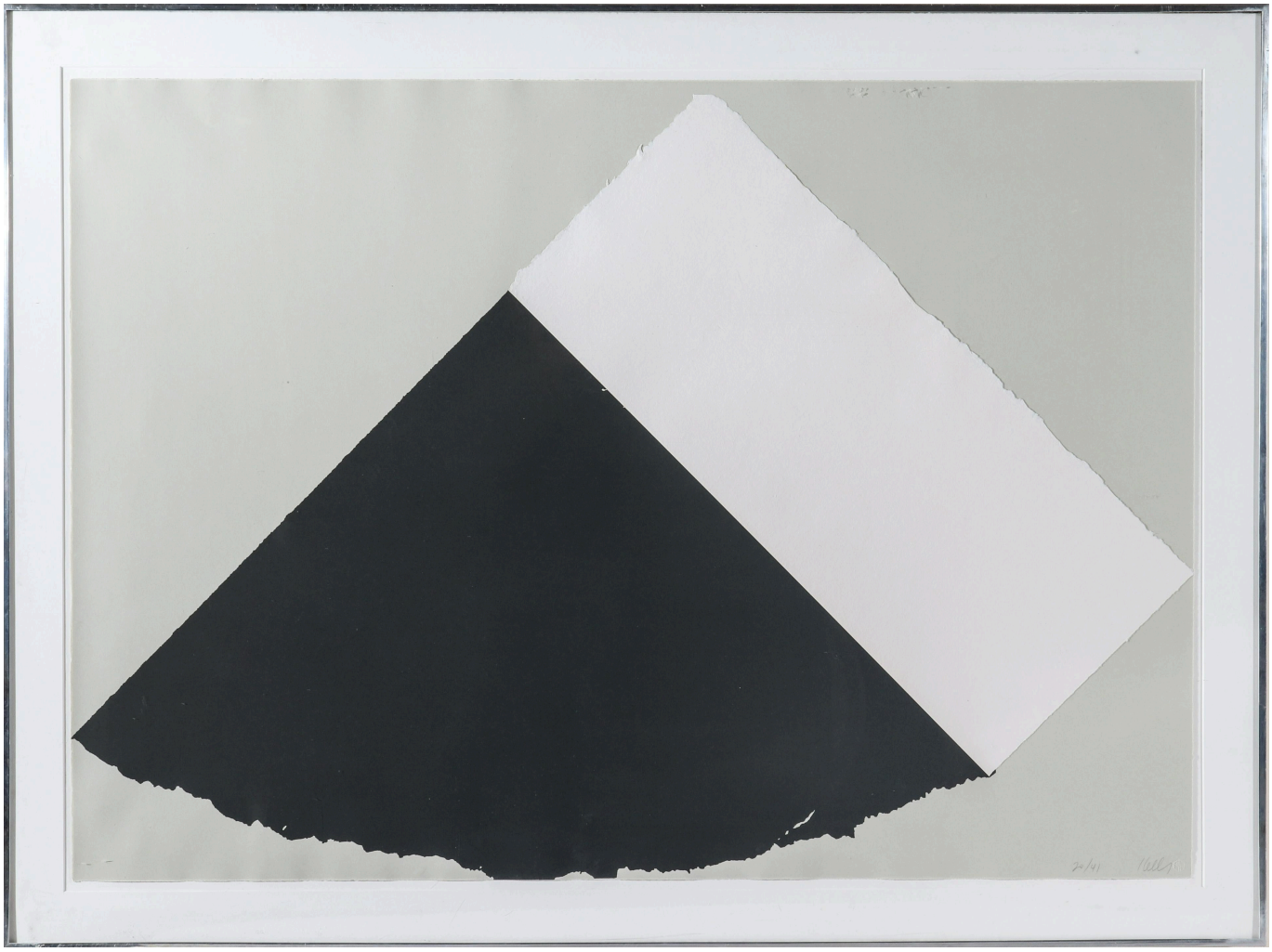
Dark Gray and White

Ellsworth Kelly



Date : 1977-79
Screenprint and collage on handmade paper
29 3/4 × 41 5/8 in
Edition of 41
Pencil signed and numbered

Artist bio

"I have worked to free shape from its ground, and then to work the shape so that it has a definite relationship to the space around it; so that it has a clarity and a measure within itself of its parts (angles, curves, edges and mass); and so that, with color and tonality, the shape finds its own space and always demands its freedom and separateness". – Ellswoth Kelly

Ellsworth Kelly is an American painter, sculptor, and printmaker associated with Hard-edge painting, Color Field painting and the Minimalist school. His works demonstrate unassuming techniques emphasizing the simplicity of form.

Although Kelly can now be considered an essential innovator and contributor to the American abstraction art movement, he was not always seen in such a positive light. It was hard for many to find the connection between Kelly's art and the dominant stylistic trends. For example, observing how light fragmented on the surface of water, he painted Seine (1950), made of black and white rectangles arranged by chance.

He created a new freedom of painterly expression. He began working in extremely large formats and explored the concepts of seriality and monochrome paintings. As a painter he worked in an exclusively abstract mode. By the late 1950's, his painting stressed shape and planar masses (often assuming non-rectilinear formats). His work of this period also provided a useful bridge from the vanguard American geometric abstraction of the 1930's and early 1940's to the Minimalism and reductive art of the mid-1960's and 1970's.

Kelly has distilled his palette and introduced forms never before. He starts with a rectangular canvas that he carefully paints with many coats of white paint; a shaped canvas, usually painted in a single bright color, is placed on top. The quality of line seen in his paintings and in the form of his shaped canvases is very subtle. The use of form and shadow, as well as the construction and deconstruction of the visible implies perfection.