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## The Museum of Modern Art

### IMPORTANT SCULPTURES BY ELLSWORTH KELLY AND DAVID SMITH ACQUIRED BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Two major sculptures--Ellsworth Kelly's *Sculpture for a Large Wall*, 1957 (1957) and David Smith's *Sentinel* (1961)--were among the works acquired by The Museum of Modern Art for its Department of Painting and Sculpture following the October 14 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

"The Museum of Modern Art continues to be the preeminent institution of its kind in the world because of the commitment and generosity of its Trustees. These extraordinary sculptures by two of America's foremost artists immeasurably enhance the Museum's ability to document and explore the many aspects of modern and contemporary art," remarked Glenn D. Lowry, the Museum's Director.

Kirk Varnedoe, Chief Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, said: "Though these two sculptures are relatively close in date, they advance different traditions in modern art. Smith's freestanding *Sentinel* sums up his knowledge of the Cubist restructuring of the body, while Kelly's *Sculpture for a Large Wall*, more painterly in its relief elements, is like a remarkable primary alphabet of his abstract forms of the next decades. Each is a key piece in the artist's development. Together the gifts allow us to add strength to strength by immeasurably enriching our already powerful collections of these two major figures in American art."

*Sculpture for a Large Wall*, a gift of Museum Chairman Ronald S. Lauder and Jo Carole Lauder, his wife and President of the International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, was critically hailed when it reappeared in New York this spring, following its rescue from the abandoned Transportation Building, Penn Center, Philadelphia, for which it was originally designed and where it had been installed since its creation. The sculpture, conceived as a hanging screen, is comprised of 104 red, yellow, blue, black, and pearl-gray anodized aluminum panels. At more than 11 feet high and 65 feet wide, it is Kelly's largest sculptural work to date.

With the acquisition of this monumental work, The Museum of Modern Art has perhaps the most significant collection of Kelly's work in the world. MoMA was already the largest and most important depository of Kelly's works on paper, following its acquisition in September 1997 of 15 early works from the artist's private collection. The Museum also holds many important paintings and sculptures by the artist, among them *White Plaque: Bridge, Arch and Reflection* (1952-55); *Brooklyn Bridge, VII* (1962), and *Red-Orange Panel with Curve* (1993). Of special interest will be the joining of the newly acquired *Sculpture for a Large Wall* with the key early painting *Colors for a Large Wall* (1951), which the artist gave to the Museum in 1969.

Ellsworth Kelly said: "I'm grateful to The Museum of Modern Art for supporting my work for so many years, and to Jo Carole and Ronald Lauder for making the acquisition of *Sculpture for a Large Wall* possible."

Mr. Lauder said: "When we first saw this piece last spring, my wife and I realized what an important acquisition this would be for The Museum of Modern Art. We knew that it would be an extraordinary addition to the collection, and we are so pleased that it will find a place in the Museum and in Taniguchi's wonderful new building."

The Smith, a fractional and promised gift of Museum Trustee Leon D. Black and his wife, Debra, is the last work in the Sentinel series. It is a key piece in the artist's oeuvre, representing the crucial transitional phase between Smith's totemic works, exemplified by The Museum of Modern Art's *History of LeRoy Borton* (1956), and his final abstract structures, epitomized by MoMA's *Cubi X* (1963). While the imposing stainless steel figure, which stands nearly nine feet tall, is comprised of geometric forms, expressive references to the human form are evident in its upright carriage and in the compositional elements that suggest a head, neck, and gesturing arms. It comes to the Museum from the Collection of Candida and Rebecca Smith, the artist's daughters.

"We could not be happier with this acquisition by the Modern," said Peter Stevens, Administrator of the Collection of Candida and Rebecca Smith and a son-in-law of the artist. "The Museum is the perfect home for this sculpture, not only because of its long commitment to acquiring and studying the work of David Smith, but because there is no better venue to consider Smith's work in the context of the larger history of modern art."

Plans are being made for the prominent display of *Sculpture for a Large Wall* in the current building, as well as in the new, expanded Museum being designed by architect Yoshio Taniguchi. *Sentinel* is on view currently in the Museum's Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden.

In addition, several major gifts were received from the Museum's President, Agnes Gund, including two major sculptures: *Flugobjekt (Rakete)* (1969), by the Belgian artist Panamarenko, and *Robert's Shelflessness* (1998), by American Charles Long. Donald Bryant, a member of the Museum's Committee on Painting and Sculpture, was the generous donor of *What is Painting* (1968), by John Baldessari.

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