



Fact Sheet

ELLSWORTH KELLY, *THE BARNES TOTEM*

What	<p><i>The Barnes Totem</i> was specially commissioned for the new Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. The sculpture was created by Ellsworth Kelly, widely acknowledged as one of the great masters of contemporary art.</p>
When	<p><i>The Barnes Totem</i> was installed on April 10, 2012</p>
Where	<p>The Barnes Foundation's new campus, located at 2025 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, PA, between 20th and 21st Streets</p>
The Commission	<p>The commission of <i>The Barnes Totem</i> has been made possible through the generosity of The Neubauer Family Foundation as a gift to the Barnes Foundation and the City of Philadelphia.</p>
The Sculpture	<p>The soaring, 40-foot-high abstract sculpture is installed at the end of a reflecting pool, where it stands at the intersection of two walkways of trees. This site was selected by Ellsworth Kelly himself in collaboration with Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects and landscape architect Laurie Olin. The sculpture is in harmony with the design language of both the building and the landscape architecture. The bead-blasted surface of the stainless steel work complements the richly textured limestone and bronze fins of the building's exterior. The sculpture also echoes the vertical forms of the red maples lining the path toward the building's entrance, contributing to Laurie Olin's sensitive landscape design, which includes a number of horticultural elements that evoke the setting of the original Barnes Foundation building in Merion. Kelly's focus on line, form, color, and spatial relationships finds resonance in the formal elements at the heart of Barnes's aesthetic theory and teaching practice—light, line, color, and space.</p>

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The Artist

Born in 1923, Ellsworth Kelly began to develop his distinctive approach to abstraction in the late 1940s in Paris, where he had gone to study on the G.I. Bill. In 1954 he returned to the U.S. and continued creating paintings whose abstract forms, contours and contrasts of line or tone were based on observations of the built environment and the natural world. By the late 1950s Kelly was also making sculptures, using cut-out forms that he juxtaposed against walls or set outdoors. Working against conventional expectations, he typically made these sculptures so they could be seen to be flat, whereas the paintings (often done on shaped supports) were treated as objects present in the three-dimensional world. In 1970, Kelly left New York City and moved upstate, where he found inspiration in his new rural environment, and where his artistic practice began to include the creation of large-scale outdoor sculptures in metal. Over the years, his sculptures have tended to take either the form of wall reliefs or of free-standing totems (as at the Barnes Foundation). He has made public commissions for sites and institutions in cities including New York, Paris, Barcelona, Washington DC, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Houston and Dallas.