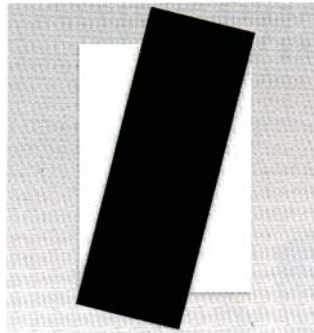


New Yorker
March 23, 2009
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CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
GOOD FORM

New paintings and old drawings by the eighty-five-year-old seraph of abstraction, Ellsworth Kelly, make for the finest show in town, at three spaces of the Matthew Marks gallery. Kelly's greatness has snuck up on us, in plain sight, for more than half a century. It's stark now. The newest works pair



rectangular one-color canvases, one mounted diagonally across the other. Others are arrays of abutted vertical panels. All reduce drawing to the unframed edges of the supports, dramatizing colors that thrill like a trumpet voluntary. Sailing the walls, the paintings impart a conviction of strength in simplicity—or “sweetness and might,” as Simon Schama once termed Kelly's ruling qualities. Drawings from the fifties and sixties, done in New York after Kelly's six eureka years in Paris, abstract bits of observed reality. They are sheerly fresh. Most masters of modern art look a mite dated now. Not Kelly, who has proven to be as up to date as the Parthenon, advancing a classical balance, between eye and mind, which alerts the body and clarifies the soul.

—Peter Schjeldahl
