

On View

Robert Kelly to Unveil Large-Scale Paintings at London's Sophia Contemporary Gallery

Kelly's paintings are drawing comparisons to the work of Kazimir Malevich.

Henri Neuendorf, September 26, 2016



Robert Kelly. Photo: Costas Picadas, courtesy of the artist and Sophia Contemporary Gallery.

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For his new show in London, the American abstract painter Robert Kelly will present a selection of paintings at the [Sophia Contemporary Gallery's](#) 3,000 square foot Mayfair space.

The exhibition encompasses 15 large scale paintings. On view during Frieze London, the gallery will also present four works from Kelly's *Nocturne* series (1999) at the fair's Masters section, alongside Constructivist and Suprematist Russian porcelain and sculpture.

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Kelly is known for his rich, textured work, which unites elements of assemblage, drawing, and painting on the canvas. Sophia Contemporary Gallery is keen to showcase the artist's process-driven approach. "I don't want to paint something, I want to let a painting become itself," the artist explained in a statement.



Paintings by Robert Kelly. Photo: courtesy of the artist and Sophia Contemporary Gallery.

As such, he incorporates found elements and personal ephemera into the work. Postcards, letters, posters, and prints are applied directly to the surface of the canvas, revealing a layered patchwork of paint and personal items.

The work is predominately based on simple shapes and lines, and it recalls the painting of Russian Constructivists, such as Kazimir Malevich. Kelly is also influenced by the likes of [Piet Mondrian](#) and the De Stijl movement, as well as abstract masters including Jean Arp, [Richard Diebenkorn](#), and [Ellsworth Kelly](#).



Robert Kelly *Mimesis CV* (2008). Photo: courtesy of the artist and Sophia Contemporary Gallery.

“Robert Kelly’s work is particularly interesting in the sense that it is both deeply embedded in the history of art yet very contemporary,” gallerist Vassili Tsarenkov told *artnet News* in an email. “We have chosen to present his work as we felt that Robert Kelly’s art operates at the nexus between modernism and contemporary art. We found the parallels between his art and the designs of Malevich, which we will showcase at *Frieze Masters*, fascinating.”

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Sophia Contemporary will host a talk with Kelly on October 6 to coincide with the opening day of *Frieze London*. Titled “Bridging a century: a dialogue with Malevich, far afield,” the gallery will display Malevich’s *Black Square and Circel* (1920/21) especially for the event.

“Robert Kelly: Black on Bone” runs from September 28–October 28 at Sophia Contemporary, London.

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