



Ellsworth Kelly Is Strong Link Connecting Guild Hall to Austin Art Scene

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by Andrew Botsford

When it comes to planning trips, timing can be at least as important a consideration as the destination. Both were on the mind of Andrea Grover, executive director of Guild Hall in East Hampton, NY, when she decided in the fall of 2017 to organize a museum art excursion. She also needed, ideally, a tie-in to Guild Hall programming.

Provisionally, the opening of [Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin*](#) (also in Austin, Texas), last weekend supplied the perfect overlay of artist, timing and destination for Grover to put together the first Guild Hall patron trip to "[The Austin Art Scene](#)," April 22-25, 2018.



"Austin" (East Facade) by Ellsworth Kelly, 2015. Artist-designed building with installation of colored glass windows, black and white marble panels, and redwood totem, 60 ft. x 73 ft. x 26 ft. 4 inches. © Ellsworth Kelly Foundation. Photo courtesy Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin.

When Grover assumed the post of executive director in September 2016, Guild Hall already had on

the books the “Ellsworth Kelly in the Hamptons” exhibition opening August 11 and on view to October 8, 2018. Organized by Phyllis Tuchman and focusing on the two periods in the late artist’s life when he lived on the East End, the upcoming exhibition provided a perfect link to the [Austin opening this month](#) of Kelly’s sanctuary.



“Austin” by Ellsworth Kelly, 2015. Artist-designed building with installation of colored glass windows, black and white marble panels, and redwood totem, 60 ft. x 73 ft. x 26 ft. 4 inches. © Ellsworth Kelly Foundation. Photo courtesy Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin.

“This is the year of Kelly,” Grover said in a telephone interview this week. Along with the opening of the sanctuary in Austin and the Guild Hall show in August, she noted exhibitions devoted to Kelly opening at the Menil Collection in Houston in April 2018 and “Ellsworth Kelly: Curated by Jack Shear” at the FLAG Art Foundation in New York from February 23 through May 19, 2018. The artist is also represented in a number of group exhibitions at museums and galleries in the U.S. and internationally.

For the Patron Trip, Austin, Texas was a natural destination—with its array of arts institutions and vibrant arts community—and was home for Grover, who lived in Texas for 15 years and has family in Austin and the surrounding area.

“The art community in Texas is tight knit,” she said, “everyone knows everyone else in Austin, Houston, Fort Worth, Dallas, and across the state. Austin is the kind of destination that a lot of people say ‘I really want to go there’ but probably won’t organize for themselves.”

Open to anyone who is interested, “The Austin Art Scene” was popular from the moment it was first announced, Grover said. At the time of the interview, the trip was nearly filled with 18 out of 20 spots reserved, she said. Interest has been so high that she is contemplating putting together another trip to Texas, possibly in May of this year.

Museum trips, in general, offer a positive experience for institutions and patrons alike, Grover said. The Metropolitan Museum is one of many that organizes trips for patrons and art lovers. This spring, LongHouse Reserve in East Hampton, NY has organized an “[Insiders Tour to Marfa, Texas](#)” March 22-25, as an “art pilgrimage to Donald Judd’s Marfa.” Also this spring, Madoo Conservancy of Sagaponack, NY has planned a trip to [Mallorca and Menorca](#) from April 21 to 29, 2018 to explore both historic and contemporary gardens.

“The intimate experience of these trips helps to develop relationships between curators, staff and patrons,” Grover said, “while also building connections between different art institutions and communities.”

The itinerary for Guild Hall's Austin trip is jam-packed. Monday morning starts off with a private opening for the group of the [Blanton Museum of Art](#) at the University of Texas at Austin. Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs Carter Foster will give a special tour of the exhibition "Form into Spirit," which contextualizes Ellsworth Kelly's highly anticipated and newly opened sanctuary, *Austin*. Guild Hall travelers will then have an opportunity to quietly experience this singular refuge on their own.



"Austin" (Interior, facing West) by Ellsworth Kelly, 2015. Artist-designed building with installation of colored glass windows, black and white marble panels, and redwood totem, 60 ft. x 73 ft. x 26 ft. 4 inches. © Ellsworth Kelly Foundation. Photo courtesy Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin.



"Austin" (West facade) by Ellsworth Kelly, 2015. Artist-designed building with installation of colored glass windows, black and white marble panels, and redwood totem, 60 ft. x 73 ft. x 26 ft. 4 inches. © Ellsworth Kelly Foundation. Photo courtesy Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin.

Still on the UT Austin campus, the group will visit the [Harry Ransom Center](#) for a private tour of the current exhibition, "Vaudeville." After lunch, the group will visit the [Flatbed Press and Gallery](#)—a publishing workshop and private art gallery specializing in original prints—where a special exhibition of large-scale drawings by Spencer Fidler will be on view.

The last stop on Monday will be the [Jones Center](#) at the Contemporary Austin, where Associate Director Emily Clayton will lead a walk through the newly renovated historic center and the inaugural exhibition of the Suzanne Deal Booth Art Prize, "[Rodney McMillian: Against a Civic Death](#)."

On Tuesday, April 24, the group will visit the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at [Laguna Gloria](#), a restored 1916 Mediterranean style villa built by Texas legend Clara Driscoll. The next stop on Tuesday will be at the home of [Suzanne Deal Booth](#) to view her spectacular contemporary collection. The artwork includes pieces by Anish Kapoor, Yayoi Kusama, Haas Brothers, Claes Oldenburg, Jorge Pardo, Gerhard Richter, George Stoll, James Turrell, Richard Tuttle, Edmund de Waal, and Pae White, among others.

Following a Texas barbecue lunch at Lambert's in the historic J.P. Schneider Store, the group has

been invited to view Ellsworth Kelly works at the [Lora Reynolds Gallery](#). Also on view at the gallery will be exhibitions by artists Tom Molloy and Mariah Robertson.

After free time for shopping along South Congress, the group will set out from the hotel for a private sunset viewing of [The Color Inside](#), a Skyspace by James Turrell. Distinctive for its intimate proportions, lyrical lines, and washes of brilliant color that can be experienced during specialized light sequences at sunrise and sunset, *The Color Inside* causes the sky to appear in unimaginable hues.

Noting that Kelly's *Austin* sanctuary is part of a tradition of sorts, Grover referenced chapels associated with Matisse, Rothko, and Chagall among others. Each of these, she said, represents important work by the artists who created them.

"Artist chapels are rare," she said, "but incredibly sublime."



"Austin" (South Facade) by Ellsworth Kelly, 2015. Artist-designed building with installation of colored glass windows, black and white marble panels, and redwood totem, 60 ft. x 73 ft. x 26 ft. 4 inches. © Ellsworth Kelly Foundation. Photo courtesy Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin.

BASIC FACTS: Guild Hall patron trip "The Austin Art Scene" is scheduled April 22 to April 25, 2018. For itinerary and registration information, click [here](#).

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