

JASON MCCOY GALLERY

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Robert Kelly, *Voz de Dios I*, 2022, Mixed media on board, 17 x 14 inches

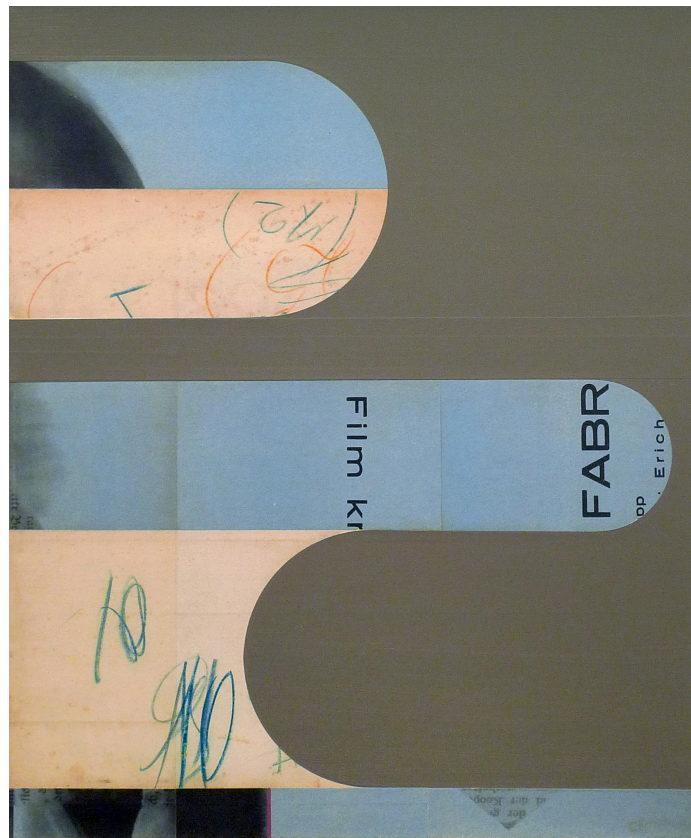
Robert Kelly: Neither Known Nor Unknown

May 4 – July 1, 2022

Jason McCoy Gallery is pleased to present ***Neither Known Nor Unknown***, an exhibition of recent paintings by **Robert Kelly** that explores the interplay of awareness and wonder.

Largely originating from the past two years, the works featured in this installation continue Kelly's ongoing meditation on the clarity of form, rooted in the understanding that art can grant us the capacity to be aware of our own existence as an entity in time. He explains: "*Finding a stone (on a beach walk) draws our attention through form, shape, polish and substance, and suggest a connectivity created by this momentary flash of recognition. A pause. Paintings call at us this way; the wonder and perplexing way the mind represents images and objects to itself and how they correspond with the objectivity of the external world.*"

Meanwhile, Kelly's sources of inspiration are broad, ranging from early Spanish retablos and vintage film posters to the landscape, art, and history of the American Southwest. For instance, born and raised in Santa Fe, Kelly has a deep admiration for native American pueblo cultures and is particularly fascinated with the iconography of 10th-12th century Mimbres pottery. Furthermore, the serene beauty of the region's adobe architecture has informed his aesthetic as much as the mythic sparsity of its unique landscape. Overall, a distinct sense of balance and formal harmony weave through Kelly's oeuvre and it is indeed a sense of stillness that most clearly describes his small and large compositions alike. It is a quality he also seeks and admires in the works of those he cites as most impactful to his work. Besides Piero della Francesca, Kelly will name the vulnerable modernity of Bill Traylor, the intimacy of Paul Klee's marks, the painterly geology of Per Kirkeby, the simple formal exchanges of Blinky Palermo, and the Brazilian Neo-Concretists, as much a part of his visual spirituality as the art of Tony Smith, Malevich, Calder, or the pairings of Arp and Schwitters.



Robert Kelly, *Film Faber I*, 2019, Oil and mixed media on linen, 26 x 21 1/2 inches

What sets Kelly's minimal vocabulary apart are his surfaces. Rather than working on plain white grounds, he employs archival print material, such as historic advertisements from the 1950s and 1960s that in a former life announced movies, concerts, or art exhibitions. By mounting these documents backwards onto canvas, Kelly transforms them into faint yet atmospheric echoes of the past. As their backsides are facing us, only a few phantom images remain, a sequence of letters perhaps, a single word or shape. Drawing inspiration from these pre-made marks, Kelly then responds in his own signature language of crisply delineated, geometric shapes, favoring a limited palette for each. Sharing his thoughts on two of the works featured here, *Moon Shadow* and *Voz de Dios*, Kelly notes that they are "*meditations of the circular and the celestial, where form invites correspondences and associations with the melancholic and with divinity itself.*" To Kelly, distilled forms and shapes have the power to move us towards inner quietude and reflection. He notes: "*It is when losing ourselves at these moments, that we are free to become anyone at these points in time and space.*"



Robert Kelly: Studio Installation View, 2022

Born in 1956 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, **Robert Kelly** received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard University in 1978. His work has been exhibited extensively in the United States and abroad, including most recently in Brazil and Italy. His work is represented in the permanent collection of The Rose Art Museum, FL; University of New Mexico Art Museum, NM; The Brooklyn Museum, NY; The Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, NM; Milwaukee Art Museum, WI; Smith College Art Museum, MA; Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, NJ; Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, AL; The Fogg Museum, Harvard University, MA; The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; The Margulies Collection, Miami, FL; The McNay Museum of Art, TX, and the New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, NM. Kelly lives and works in New York City. *Neither Known Nor Unknown* is the artist's second solo show with Jason McCoy Gallery.