

MNUCHIN GALLERY

HOMAGE TO FRANK STELLA

September 18, 2024 – January 25, 2025

Mnuchin Gallery is honored to announce *Homage to Frank Stella*, on view from September 18, 2024, to January 25, 2025. In commemoration of both his life and artistic legacy, the selected works illuminate the enduring significance of Frank Stella's diverse and exploratory oeuvre through seminal examples spanning from 1958 to 2023. The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue, authored by art historian and critic, Carter Ratcliff.

At the height of the Abstract Expressionist movement, Stella redefined painting with his Black, Aluminum, and Copper series, proposing a new trajectory for the medium which presaged Minimalism. The historical significance of Stella's early works is epitomized in pieces like *Arbeit Macht Frei* (1958) (Work Will Set You Free), where the haunting phrase from Auschwitz's entrance imbues a dark, contemplative gravitas; or the copper *Telluride* (1960-1961), where he emphatically conveys his progression toward a more sculptural approach with a T-shaped canvas. These foundational series would naturally evolve into the asymmetrically shaped canvases, bold colors, and geometric patterns that characterize his Concentric Squares, Protractors, and Irregular Polygons.

Stella sought to challenge and broaden the spatial and conceptual definitions of painting, or as he explained, "what painting wants more than anything else is working space—space to grow with and expand into, pictorial space that is capable of direction and movement, pictorial space that encourages unlimited orientation and extension." In the 1970s, Stella expanded upon these ideas by developing painted wall-constructions. The resulting works, such as *Maha-lat, 5.5x* (1978-1979) from the Indian Bird series and *Norising* (1982) from the Circuit series, seamlessly fuse elements from the disciplines of painting, sculpture, and printmaking.

A masterfully innovative artist, Stella's late career is further defined by his ventures into the sculptural realm, with dynamic shapes and intricate linear constructions reflecting his enduring fascination with the interplay of materials, forms, and structures. Stella's use of Protogen RPT, a lightweight and durable resin, exemplifies his innovative approach to integrating new materials into his work. In *K. 179* (2011), the combination of Protogen RPT and stainless steel tubing enables Stella to synthesize color, shape, and movement in a manner that poetically responds to the rhythms of Domenico Scarlatti's sonatas. Yet, it is *Star with square tubing* (2016) that best crystallizes Stella's decades-long exploration of working space. This final work, echoing the early star-shaped compositions of *Port Tampa City* (1963), encapsulates the full arc of Stella's artistic journey and bridges the divide between minimalist painting and sculpture.

Few artists have left such an indelible mark across so many artistic movements, minds, and generations as Frank Stella. His legacy, spanning nearly seven decades, stands as a testament to his profound influence on the course of contemporary art. Through his groundbreaking explorations of form, color, and spatial relationships, Stella not only challenged the conventions of art history, but also inspired generations of artists to push the limits of their own creativity. His work stands as a testament to the power of innovation in abstraction. Mnuchin Gallery's *Homage to Frank Stella* is a tribute to the artist's accomplishments, offering visitors a momentous opportunity to engage with the pivotal moments that defined his extraordinary career.