FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Ellsworth Kelly’s Austin Goes Digital during the COVID-19 Crisis

Livestream Brings Joy and Light of Ellsworth Kelly’s “Austin” to Viewers Worldwide

Austin, TX—June 1, 2020—The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas in Austin is pleased to announce the launch of an online portal providing access to the experience of light and color inside Austin, the 2,715-square-foot building and work of art by acclaimed American artist Ellsworth Kelly. The stream debuted on May 31, 2020, in honor of Ellsworth Kelly’s birthday, and allows audiences around the world to take in this renowned work’s patterns of colored light created by its stained-glass windows from sunrise to sunset.

The stream features live footage from two webcams focused on the two window formations that receive the most sunlight throughout the day. The stained-glass arrangements “Tumbling Squares” on the east facade and “Starburst” on the west facade create patterns of colored light that move through Austin’s interior over the course of the day. The livestream provides viewers a unique opportunity to experience the full course of movement of light from dawn to dusk.

“One of my favorite things to do as director of the Blanton is to take a few moments to step inside Ellsworth Kelly’s Austin,” said Simone Wicha. “While there, I’ve seen UT students taking a break from their studies and families whose children experiment with stepping in and out of the light, and I’ve often heard languages from travelers across the world. Ellsworth Kelly said that he wanted Austin to be a
place of calm and light. While nothing can replace the actual experience of being inside Austin, people worldwide can now take a peek from home and have that joyful, soothing experience virtually.”

Since its debut in February 2018, Austin has become a landmark of the city for which it is named; more than 230,000 people have visited the iconic space. One of Ellsworth Kelly’s final works made before his passing in 2015, Austin was hailed by The New York Times as his "masterpiece, the grandest exploration of pure color and form in a seven-decade career spent testing the boundaries of both." Austin’s design incorporates many aspects of Kelly’s oeuvre, with particular emphasis on his work with color, light, shapes, and totems.

In early 2020, the Blanton and Radius Books co-published a comprehensive book on Ellsworth Kelly’s Austin from its inception to its current position as one of the artist’s most important and enduring works. The richly illustrated book, with new photographs of the building, includes an essay by Blanton Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs Carter E. Foster with archival material, drawings, historic photographs, and nearly all the related works Kelly created as he developed the building’s design. The book was recently named one of AIGA’s 50 Books of the Year for 2020.

This virtual iteration of Austin is but one of many efforts that the Blanton has developed to bring its ethos and programming to the web while its doors are temporarily closed, under its #MuseumFromHome initiative. Also available are 360-degree, fully navigable versions of Blanton exhibitions including Ed Ruscha: Drum Skins and The Avant-garde Networks of Amauta: Argentina, Mexico, and Peru in the 1920s. The Blanton’s #MuseumFromHome hub is frequently updated with new exhibitions, curator talks, and content made for families such as coloring sheets and art-making videos.

About the Blanton:
Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with around 19,000 objects. Recognized as the home of Ellsworth Kelly’s Austin, its major collecting areas are modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and prints and drawings. The Blanton offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

About Ellsworth Kelly’s Austin:
In January 2015, the renowned American artist Ellsworth Kelly gifted to the Blanton the design concept for his most monumental work, a 2,715-square-foot stone building with luminous colored glass windows, a totemic wood sculpture, and fourteen black and white marble panels. Titled Austin, honoring the artist’s tradition of naming particular works for the places for which they are destined, the structure is the only building the artist designed, and will be his most lasting legacy. Envisioned by Kelly as a site for joy and contemplation, Austin is a cornerstone of the Blanton’s permanent collection and enriches the lives of visitors from around the world. For more about Austin and the artist, visit KellyattheBlanton.org

Image: Screenshot of livestream of Ellsworth Kelly’s Austin, taken at 10:32 AM CST