

Tangled Up

CEZANNE SAID, "I OWE YOU THE TRUTH IN PAINTING."
BUT WHAT IS THE TRUTH IN PAINTING?
IS IT INTRINSIC? (FORM. PROCESS.)
OR EXTRINSIC? (RESEMBLANCE. NARRATIVE.)
IS IT PHYSICAL? (PAINT. CANVAS.)
OR METAPHYSICAL? (SPIRITUAL. SUBLIME.)
IS IT ON THE SURFACE? (SENSUALITY. BEAUTY.)
OR IN THE DEPTHS? (ANGST. DESPAIR. DEATH.)
IS IT THEORETICAL? (CRITIQUE. DECONSTRUCTION.)
OR PHILOSOPHICAL? (IN-ITSELF-FOR-ITSELF.)
IS IT INDIVIDUAL? ("I KNOW WHAT I LIKE.")
OR CONSENSUS? ("ONLY TIME WILL TELL")
IS IT A WINDOW? (FRAMING REALITY.)
OR A MIRROR? (FRAMING THE SELF.)
INDEPENDENT? (FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.)
OR? (CULTURALLY + POLITICALLY CORRECTED.)
BUT WHAT IF THERE IS NO TRUTH LEFT IN PAINT-
ING? WOULD THAT BE UNBEARABLE?

Mel Bochner, *Cezanne Said*, 2016. Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in. Courtesy of the artist.

The Annual Zerner Lecture
Wednesday, October 19
5:30–7pm

Free admission

The lecture will take place in Menschel Hall, Lower Level. Please enter the museums via the entrance on Broadway.

The museums' regular hours will be extended to 5:30pm so that visitors may see Mel Bochner's work (in Gallery 1100, on Level 1) before the lecture begins.

Complimentary parking available in the Broadway Garage, 7 Felton Street, Cambridge.

Modern and contemporary art programs at the Harvard Art Museums are made possible in part by generous support from the Emily Rauh Pulitzer and Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., Fund for Modern and Contemporary Art.

Sponsored by Harvard's Department of History of Art and Architecture and the Harvard Art Museums and through the generosity of alumni and friends in establishing the Henri Zerner Lecture Fund.

in Words

This artist talk features **Mel Bochner** (b. 1940), who is recognized as one of the leading figures in the development of conceptual art in New York in the 1960s and '70s. Emerging at a time when painting was increasingly discussed as outmoded, Bochner became part of a new generation of artists, which also included Eva Hesse, Donald Judd, and Robert Smithson, who were looking at ways of breaking with abstract expressionism and traditional compositional devices. His pioneering introduction of the use of language in the visual led Benjamin Buchloh to describe Bochner's 1966 *Working Drawings* as "probably the first truly conceptual exhibition."

Bochner came of age during the second half of the 1960s, a moment of radical change both in society at large as well as in art. While painting slowly lost its preeminent position in modern art, language moved from talking about art to becoming part of art itself. Bochner has consistently probed the conventions of both painting and language—the way we construct and understand them, and the way they relate to one another—to make us more attentive to the unspoken codes that underpin our engagement with the world.