



Animals LC2

Lygia Clark

Not on display

Title/Description: Animals LC2

Artist/Maker: Lygia Clark

Born: 1969

Object Type: Sculpture

Materials: Aluminium

Measurements: h. 254 x w. 254 x d. 254 mm

Accession Number: 31169B

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: England, Europe

This sculpture is from a series of interactive works that Clark called *Bichos* - 'little beasts or bugs' in Portuguese. They are geometric forms made from aluminium sheets, hinged together to form insect-like creatures. In 1960 Clark stated, 'I gave the name *Bichos* to my works of this period, because their characteristics are fundamentally organic. Furthermore, the hinge between the planes reminds me of a backbone.' [1] The *Bichos* were intended to be manipulated by hand. They offered multiple possible forms that could only be determined through the participation of the spectator. For Clark, these artworks would have no representative meaning outside of their manipulation and thereby the line between the participant and artwork would be blurred. The *Bichos* are deceptively simple in their construction. They are made of pieces of aluminium sheeting cut into triangles, squares and hemispheres which are hinged with steel pins. Moved by the participant, their hinges are stiffened so that they hold their position.

In 1968, Clark had an exhibition at the Signals Gallery in London and this work was made as a multiple by a company called Unlimited, at Widcombe Manor, Bath. It was purchased for the collection in 1970. Although Clark was committed to the mass production of art, this piece was produced in small numbers, making it relatively rare.

Born in Brazil, Lygia Clark was a co-founder of the Neo-Concrete movement and published their manifesto in 1959. This redefined the prevailing trend in Brazilian art known as Concrete Art, a variant form of Constructivism. The Neo-Concretists believed that art was subjective and organic. Clark wrote that an artwork should not be considered "a 'machine' nor an 'object,' but rather, an almost-body" which can only be made whole through viewer participation.

Clark lived and worked in Rio de Janeiro, during a turbulent period of social and political change. Her approach aimed to deepen the relationship between art and society, by developing participatory action as part of the artwork. She rejected the rationalist approach to abstract art based on geometry and mathematics that had dominated post-war Constructivism. Later in life, Clark also explored the role of sensory perception and the psychic interaction that participants would have with her artwork. In the final years of her career, Clark focused solely on psychotherapy and the use of art for healing patients.

Calvin Winner, May 2022

[1] Louise Hughes, Tate online catalogue, 2015, accessed May, 2022,
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/clark-creature-maquette-320-t13710>

Exhibitions

'Rhythm and Geometry: Constructivist art in Britain since 1951', Sainsbury Centre, UK, 02/10/2021 - 17/07/2022

'Rhythm and Geometry: Constructivist art in Britain since 1951', Djanogly Art Gallery, UK,

07/03/2023 - 23/07/2023

Further Reading

Cornelia H. Butler, Luis Pérez-Oramas, Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art, 1948-1988, MOMA (2014)
