



Progression of Rectangles, Version II

Anthony Hill

Not on display

Title/Description: Progression of Rectangles, Version II

Artist/Maker: Anthony Hill

Born: 1954 - 1959

Object Type: Relief

Materials: Perspex, Wood

Measurements: h. 405 x w. 405 x d. 45 mm

Accession Number: 31539

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

Credit Line: Bequeathed by Joyce and Michael Morris, 2014

Progression of Rectangles marks Anthony Hill's transition from painting into creating artworks in relief. [1] The subtle irregularity of the arrangement of rectangles along a central horizontal axis develops directly from a series of paintings Hill had been working on since 1953. [2] For this relief, the rectangles have been cut in black and white plastic and placed on a transparent sheet, which has been mounted above a plywood base panel using distancing pegs. This introduces a relationship between the different surfaces and planes of *Progression of Rectangles* that Hill went on to investigate more fully in the constructed reliefs that dominated his consequent work.

Hill produced multiple versions of *Progression of Rectangles* in the mid-1950s. He had originally hoped to display the relief in the experimental exhibition *Artist vs Machine* in 1954, which drew attention to contemporary abstract artists' creative use of industrial materials and techniques. However, *Progression of Rectangles* was not complete in time and Hill's relief was first shown in *Nine Abstract Artists*, which opened at the Redfern Gallery in London in January 1955. [3] This seminal exhibition, organised by the artist Adrian Heath, was used to set out the new approaches to non-figurative art that the group of British artists selected had been exploring since the late 1940s.

By early 1956 Hill had abandoned painting and focused on constructing carefully balanced geometric reliefs in a range of industrial materials. In 1958 Hill displayed *Progression of Rectangles, Version II* in the ICA Library in London, as part of the exhibition *Anthony Hill: Recent Constructions*. [4] He made Michael Morris an additional copy of this work in 1959.

Lisa Newby, January 2021

[1] Alastair Grieve 'The development of Anthony Hill's work from 1950 to the present' in *Anthony Hill, A Retrospective Exhibition*, exh. cat. (London: Hayward Gallery, 1983), pp.5-67, (p.18).

[2] For related examples in the Sainsbury Centre collection, see 31581, 31682 and 31688.

[3] Grieve, 1983, p.18.

[4] *Anthony Hill: Recent Constructions*, ICA Library, London, 13 February - 8 March, 1958. Cat. No. 1.

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

Tania Moore and Calvin Winner (eds.), *Rhythm and Geometry: Constructivist art in Britain since 1951* (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre, 2021), p.103.

Provenance

In October 1984, the University of East Anglia accepted a planned bequest from Joyce and Michael Morris (UEA Alumni). Michael died in 2009 and Joyce in December 2014 when the couple's wishes were implemented.
