



The Nine - Hommage à Khlebnikov No. 2

Anthony Hill

Not on display

Title/Description: The Nine - Hommage à Khlebnikov No. 2

Artist/Maker: Anthony Hill

Born: 1976

Object Type: Relief

Materials: Aluminium, Plastic

Accession Number: 31540

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

Credit Line: Bequeathed by Joyce and Michael Morris, 2014

The black sides of the thin white L-shaped pieces used in this shallow relief come in and out of view when observed from different angles. They have been grouped in threes around nine crosses engraved into the white-faced base plane of the relief.

The nine configurations of L-shaped elements were informed by Anthony Hill's interest in graph theory. In an article outlining this connection, Hill shows how the arrangements derived from the sixty-five possible variants of a mathematical 'tree' with seven points and six lines. Hill selected the nine variants that shared two common features: they all have five right angles and they can all be drawn by connecting three L-shapes. [1]

Mathematics had provided Hill with a useful starting point for composing non-figurative art works since the late 1950s. He described the process as putting abstract mathematical notions 'to work', by combining measured modulations with his own artistic decisions. [2] Hill published his research into combinatorial mathematics and graph theory and was appointed as an Honorary Research Fellow in the Mathematics Department of the University of London in 1970. [3]

In the mid-1970s Hill dedicated a series of abstract constructed reliefs to the Soviet poet and aesthetician Velimir Khlebnikov (1885-1922). He wanted to acknowledge his admiration of Khlebnikov's writing and contribution to the Russian Formalist movement, which Hill associated with contemporary definitions of Structuralism.

Lisa Newby, March 2021

[1] Anthony Hill, 'A View of Non-Figurative Art and Mathematics and an Analysis of a Structural Relief', *Leonardo*, Volume 10, No.1 (Winter, 1977), pp.7-12. For an overview of the Constructionists interest in mathematics, including an analysis of this work, see Alan Fowler, 'A Rational Aesthetic', http://www.saturationpoint.org.uk/a_rational_aesthetic.html, originally published in *Philosophy of Mathematic Journal*, No.24 (December, 2009).

[2] Hill, 1977, p.12.

[3] Alastair Grieve 'The development of Anthony Hill's work from 1950 to the present', *Anthony Hill, A Retrospective Exhibition*, exh. cat. (London: Hayward Gallery, 1983), p.54.

Exhibitions

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

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.
