



Rotation 'Frankfurt', Key Drawing

Kenneth Martin

Not on display

Title/Description: Rotation 'Frankfurt', Key Drawing

Artist/Maker: Kenneth Martin

Born: 1977

Object Type: Print

Accession Number: 31572

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

Copyright: © Estate of Kenneth and Mary Martin

Credit Line: Bequeathed by Joyce and Michael Morris, 2014

This 'key drawing' marks out the sequences created by Kenneth Martin to determine the position and colour of the lines in four related abstract prints, titled *Rotation 'Frankfurt' I-IV*. [1] Martin had been developing complex systems for connecting points on a grid, using numbers on randomly selected cards, since the late 1960s. *Rotation 'Frankfurt', Key Drawing* shows four variations of a system that has been further layered with rules based on the rotation of circles within the grid. There is a key at the top, which shows the number sequence used to decide the colour of the lines in the four related prints. For example, R stands for red and was used for lines running between points 4 and 8, 9 and 5, and 11 and 15.

This dynamic process of composition, informed by tensions between chance and order, was central to Martin's approach and was often made explicit as part of his artworks. *Rotation 'Frankfurt', Key Drawing* draws attention to movement and change as integral elements of the *Rotation 'Frankfurt'* screenprint series.

In 1979 *Rotation 'Frankfurt', Key Drawing* was exhibited alongside *Rotation 'Frankfurt' I-IV* at an exhibition of Kenneth Martin's recent works at the Waddington Galleries in London. Michael Morris attended the exhibition and purchased this print. A few months later, all five prints in the *Rotation 'Frankfurt'* series were used in a lecture by Martin, alongside a summary of his dynamic approach to colour:

'I have used colour to give an attribute to a part, like coloured flex in electricity. I have used colour in a rhythm different from the rhythm of the line as a counteraction. I have used colour to give sequence and anti-sequence. I have worked with complementaries and near complementaries from the spectrum of coloured pigments, and with the complementaries within near neighbours in the colour circle, for the closest neighbours will be moving away from one another to their opposite affinities.' [2]

Lisa Newby, December 2020

[1] To view the full set of *Rotation 'Frankfurt'* prints, visit <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/martin-rotation-frankfurt-i-p05455>

[2] 'Kenneth Martin, Chance and Order: The Sixth William Townsend Lecture, 1979', (London: Waddington Galleries, 1979), p.21. Illustrations of the prints p.22-3. The lecture took place on 28th November 1979 in the Botany Theatre of University College London, Chairman Sir William Coldstream.

Exhibitions

Kenneth Martin: Recent Works, Waddington Galleries, London, 1978

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.
