



# Construction: Three Vertical Elements

Anthony Hill

---

## Not on display

**Title/Description:** Construction: Three Vertical Elements

**Artist/Maker:** Anthony Hill

**Born:** 1957

**Accession Number:** 31590

**Historic Period:** 20th century

**Credit Line:** Bequeathed by Joyce and Michael Morris, 2014

---

In *Construction: Three Vertical Elements* Anthony Hill engages a dynamic relationship between the light reflecting surface of the white plastic-faced chipboard and the three protruding T-shaped and rectangular strips of black plastic. In his detailed account of this relief, published in 1966, Hill describes the theme or idea of the work as ‘the articulation of a tall slab by vertical elements producing “fields” of horizontal tensions across the surface.’ [1]

Hill associated the non-representational geometric relationships in his constructed reliefs with a more precise aesthetic. The proportions of the work were not predetermined or subject to exact measurement, but were, Hill noted, the result of an intuitive sense of balance:

‘In the case of the slab the *exact* ratio of height to breadth to width plays no important part in the surface articulation of the physical idea. The fact that after the work was completed the measurements showed a module that tied in and reinforced the theme simply points to the fact that a theme, even when conceived “intuitively”, will express itself “metrically”, in the general sense of the word.’ [2]

The proportions and surfaces of the relief subtly change as the spectator moves around it. When *Construction: Three Vertical Elements* was displayed at the ICA in 1958, the critic Lawrence Alloway drew attention to the crucial role of changing light as part of this experience:

‘Hill’s constructions communicate to us, both as something made by the artist, the end product of formal decisions, and as an object in the world as responsive to visual change as a mirror.’ [3]

Lisa Newby, February 2021

[1] Anthony Hill, 'The Structural Syndrome in Constructive Art', in *Module, Symmetry, Proportion*, ed. by György Kepes (London: Studio Vista, 1966), p.164.

[2] Ibid.

---

## **Exhibitions**

Anthony Hill: Recent Constructions, ICA, London, 1958

Anthony Hill: A Retrospective Exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London, 1983

---

## **Further Reading**

Anthony Hill, 'The Structural Syndrome in Constructive Art', in *Module, Symmetry, Proportion*, ed. by György Kepes (London: Studio Vista, 1966), p.164.

Alastair Grieve, *Constructed Abstract Art in England: A Neglected Avant-Garde* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2005), p.189.

---

## **Provenance**

Michael Morris purchased *Construction: Three Vertical Elements* from Anthony Hill in 1959.

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.

---