



Black and white relief with prisms

Gillian Wise

Not on display

Title/Description: Black and white relief with prisms

Artist/Maker: Gillian Wise

Born: 1961

Object Type: Relief

Materials: Formica, Glass, Perspex

Measurements: h. 380 x w. 660 x d. 65 mm

Accession Number: 31592

Historic Period: 20th century

Credit Line: Bequeathed by Joyce and Michael Morris, 2014

The light, bouncing off and passing through the planes of this constructed relief, is crucial to the impact of this work. The layered, geometric composition is informed by Gillian Wise's early interest in adapting rational mathematical systems to explore abstract experiences of light, space and movement.

Black and White Relief with Prisms was part of Wise's joint exhibition with Anthony Hill at the ICA, London in 1963. The reflective prisms used in this relief were taken from military periscopes, extending Wise's creative use of machine-made materials in this period. [1] In her statement for the ICA exhibition catalogue, Wise distinguishes the effects achieved by integrating prisms into her reliefs:

'The prisms offer much more control of the light which can be coloured according to the materials used, as long as the light comes through them, and there can be a strong illusion of depth in the perspective which makes an interesting counterbalance to the often rather low relief of the work itself.' [2]

Lisa Newby, June 2022

[1] Alastair Grieve, *Constructed Abstract Art in England: A Neglected Avant-Garde* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2005), p.211.

[2] Anthony Hill and Gillian Wise, *Reliefs/Structures*, exh. cat. (London: ICA, 1963), unpaginated.

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.66.

Provenance

A label originally attached to the work by Michael Morris notes that this work was purchased from Gillian Wise 'after ICA show, 1963, Cat. No. 16.'

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.
