



Composition with Circles I

Mona Hatoum

Not on display

Title/Description: Composition with Circles I

Artist/Maker: Mona Hatoum

Born: 2018

Object Type: Drawing

Materials: Hair, Paper

Measurements: h. 250 x w. 290 d. 40 mm (framed)

Accession Number: 50811

Production Place: Europe, Germany

Credit Line: Purchased with support from the Art Fund, 2020

Composition with Circles I is a beautifully delicate work composed of seven naturally formed circles of the artist's own hair on handmade paper.

Hatoum has used hair as a material in many of her works throughout her career. For example, in 1995, she created an installation titled *Recollection*, which had a loom holding woven hair and hair balls scattered across the floor. Strands of hair hung from the ceiling, almost imperceptible to the viewer until they felt it as they walked past. Also in 1995, Hatoum created the photograph, *Van Gogh's Back* depicting wet and soapy hair on a man's back, which has been shaped into swirls resembling Van Gogh's brushstrokes. [1]

More recently in 2018, Hatoum made the work *Nail Necklace*, a necklace of nail clippings threaded with human hair, presented on a bust, as if in a jewellery shop. These works are beautiful, yet abject through their materials.

Composition with Circles I is perhaps less abject than these earlier works, although the use of hair creates an interesting tension within the work. The circles reference the geometry often associated with minimalist art. Whilst minimalism may consciously hide any evidence of the artist's own hand, Hatoum reinserts the bodily presence of the artist via the presence of her own hair. The hair is delicate on the thick and textured handmade paper, which becomes almost sculptural.

Composition with Circles I is one of three works Hatoum made in 2018 for the Hepworth Prize for Sculpture at the Hepworth Wakefield, when she won the People's Prize award. It was acquired for the Sainsbury Centre with the Art Fund's New Collecting Award, which was given to purchase sculptors' drawings by contemporary women and non-binary artists for the Sainsbury Centre collection.

Mona Hatoum was born in Beirut to a Palestinian family in 1952 and moved to England in 1975. Her work has encompassed video, performance, photography, sculpture and installation. It explores many subjects including political unrest, displacement and exile as a result of war, or the domestic rendered uncanny.

Tania Moore, November 2021

[1] See Michelle White, *Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma* (Houston: The Menil Collection, 2017).

Exhibitions

'Mona Hatoum: Remains to be seen', White Cube, London, 01/09/2019 - 03/11/2019

'The Hepworth Prize for Sculpture', The Hepworth Wakefield, UK, 26/10/2018 - 20/01/2019

