



Diagonal Cut

Uecker, Günther

On display

Title/Description: Diagonal Cut

Artist/Maker: Uecker, Günther (Artist)

Born: 1965

Object Type: Relief

Materials: Acrylic paint, Nails

Measurements: h. 850 x w. 850 mm

Inscription: signed and dated 65 on the reverse

Accession Number: 50869

Historic Period: 20th century

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Credit Line: Accepted in lieu of Inheritance Tax by H M Government and allocated to the Sainsbury Centre, 2023

Günther Uecker has long been recognised as one of the great German artists working in the second half of the Twentieth century. The work of Uecker is of great interest to the Centre through his engagement with sculptural practice. The artist is best known for his white nail reliefs.

Diagonal Cut was created in 1965, when the artist was part of Group Zero. Uecker hammered nails into his whitewashed canvas create strong sensory affect that changes depending on the subject's viewpoint. The rhythmic hammering of the nails was done with almost ritualistic repetition - a reflection perhaps of the artist's fascination with purification rituals such as Gregorian chant. From 1960 Uecker began to move away from arranging nails in regularised mathematical sequences and introduced more organic patterns to his work. In the present work, nails cover almost the entire surface of the work. Each at different angles, they collectively form an elemental waving pattern that swirl along the diagonal of the canvas. Two concentrated clusters create areas of dramatic shadow, giving the present work a dynamic composition that transforms with movement.

The acquisition of this sculptural relief greatly enhances our representation of international sculpture, Op Art/kinetic produced in the mid-20th century. Although revered internationally, Uecker's work is not currently well represented in UK public collections. Diagonal Cut greatly enhances our ability to communicate an understanding an appreciation of international post-war sculpture, optical and kinetic art in the UK.

Calvin Winner, April 2023
