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RHYTHM AND GEOMETRY: CONSTRUCTIVIST ART IN BRITAIN SINCE 1951. A NEW FREE EXHIBITION AT LAKESIDE ARTS

Friday 7 April – Sunday 23 July 2023

Launch event: Thursday 6 April, 7-9pm

Djanogly Gallery, Lakeside Arts, University of Nottingham

Admission Free

A new touring exhibition opens at the Djanogly Gallery, Lakeside Arts, this April. The exhibition offers visitors the opportunity to see a range of art works drawn from the critically acclaimed collection of the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts based at the University of East Anglia. It celebrates the abstract and constructed art made and exhibited in Britain since 1951, and includes over 60 objects including sculpture, reliefs, mobiles, painting, drawing and printmaking that share a common language of geometry, bold colours and industrial design. The exhibition marks a significant bequest to the Sainsbury Centre from Joyce and Michael Morris, and many of these important works will be exhibited in public for the first time in many years.

The exhibition follows Lakeside Arts' hugely successful 2016 exhibition in the Djanogly Gallery, *Victor Pasmore: Towards a New Reality*, which revealed Pasmore's transition in the 1940s and 50s from paintings of conventional subjects to constructed abstract reliefs made in wood and Perspex. The art historian Herbert Read called it "the most revolutionary event in post-war British art." *Rhythm & Geometry* starts with work by Pasmore and his contemporaries who pursued a similar path. 1951 was to prove a significant turning point in the arts in Britain. The Festival of Britain was staged across the country to celebrate the arts, sciences, technology, and industrial design. In the same year, the first exhibition devoted to abstract art since before WWII was presented by the Artists' International Association. Victor Pasmore and Mary Martin made their first relief sculptures, and Kenneth Martin his first mobile.

The exhibition is opened by an important group of sculptures and reliefs by Pasmore and his fellow Constructionists. It then proceeds to examine how artists in the 1950s used mathematical or scientific principles – including early computer-based coding – to create their art. Some artists in the 1960s experimented with works that involved the active participation of the viewer to move magnetic parts or manipulate their sculptures in other ways, while kinetic art works might involve motorized elements that caused them to actually move. Other artists took their abstraction into different realms exploring the emotive and optical effects of colour and pattern. The exhibition ends with younger generations of painters and printmakers collected by the Sainsbury Centre who have engaged in geometric abstraction since the 1960s.

Artists include: Robert Adams, Lygia Clark, Natalie Dower, Adrian Heath, Anthony Hill, Kenneth Martin, Mary Martin, François Morellet, Victor Pasmore, Jean Spencer, Takis, Mary Webb, Victor Vasarely, Gillian Wise and Li Yuan-Chia. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with new photography and research.

Neil Walker, Head of Visual Arts at Lakeside, says: "the overwhelming sense I get from this work is of a real optimism for the future. These artists – sometimes working together with architects – were part of

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Lakeside Arts, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD

the rebuilding of the country and culture after the war. Their art speaks strongly of faith in science and the idea of progress. I'm also struck by how familiar their particular brand of abstraction now feels, how much has been absorbed through the popularity of mid-century furniture design and minimalist interiors."

Families will be able to pick up an Arts Investigator pack to help children explore the exhibition in a fun way. There are two cafés on site offering a selection of drinks and delicious bites, and visitors can also enjoy the beautiful parklands of the Highfields Park alongside their exhibition visit. To find out more about the exhibition and accompanying talks and workshops, visit lakesidearts.org.uk/RhythmGeometry

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For more information and to arrange interviews, please contact Lakeside Arts' Marketing and Communications Manager Mária Konyeliccka at maria.konyeliccka@nottingham.ac.uk

LISTING INFORMATION

Exhibition Dates: Friday 7 April – Sunday 23 July 2023

Opening Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm | Sunday 12noon-4pm (Closed Mondays)

Address: Djanogly Gallery, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD

Admissions: Free

Events: For talks and events tickets please book online or call the Box Office on 0115 846 7777

NOTES TO EDITORS

Lakeside Arts is the University of Nottingham's public arts centre presenting a programme of visual arts and museum exhibitions, theatre, dance, children and families' productions, workshops as well as a learning programme for everyone. Its venues include the Djanogly Recital Hall which stages concerts by internationally renowned soloists and chamber ensembles; the Djanogly Gallery; the University Museum which has a permanent collection of archaeology covering a period of some 250,000 years; and the Djanogly Theatre presenting UK and international touring work as well as producing and co-producing new theatre and dance.

www.lakesidearts.org.uk

Lakeside Arts Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: @LakesideArts

The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts is one of the most important public university art galleries in Britain. It was founded in 1973 at the University of East Anglia (UEA) with the support of one of the nation's great philanthropic families, Sir Robert and Lady Sainsbury, who donated their extraordinary art collection which includes works dating from prehistory to the late 20th century from across the globe. A radical new building by Norman Foster was designed to house the collection and was his first public work.

RELATED EVENTS

LAUNCH EVENT | Thursday 6 April, 7-9pm

Join us for a great night out to celebrate the launch of the exhibition – admission is free, no prior booking required. Each guest will receive a free drink and a chance to get a first look at the exhibition.

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LECTURE: COLLECTIVELY CONSTRUCTING | Thursday 6 April, 6-7pm (followed by launch event)

Tania Moore, co-curator of the Rhythm & Geometry exhibition, explores the social and artistic contexts in which Constructivist art emerged in Britain in the second half of the twentieth century. Her talk will focus on two artist groups: the Constructionists of the 1950s and the Countervail collective of women artists in the 1990s.

LECTURE: BUILDING TOMORROW | Thursday 18 May, 1-2pm

Elain Harwood, author of *Space, Hope and Brutalism, English Architecture 1945-75*

High-quality art in public places is a post-war phenomenon in the UK, as are artists' and architects' collaborations on public housing and buildings. The movement reached its culmination in *This is Tomorrow* (1956), an exhibition which gave the world Robby the Robot. This talk explores the involvement of artists in the rebuilding of Britain.

GALLERY TOURS

Thursday 22 June, 1-2pm | led by Neil Walker, Head of Visual Arts Programming

Thursday 13 July, 1-2pm | led by artist Marek Tobolewski

Rhythm & Geometry is a touring exhibition from the collection of the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia.

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The conservation project has been supported by:



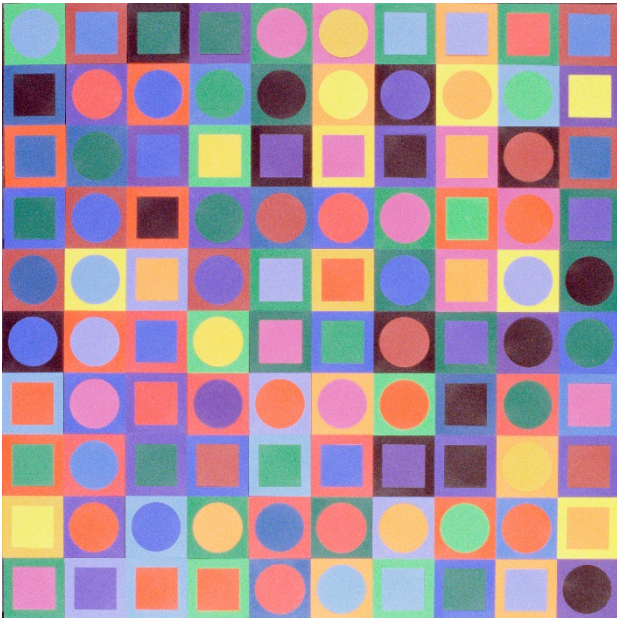
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IMAGES

1. *Climbing Form*, 1957. Mary Martin, Sainsbury Centre Collection © The Estate of Mary Martin



2. *Planetary Folklore Participants No.1*, 1969 by Victor Vasarely. Sainsbury Centre Collection. DACS 2022

3. *Screw Mobile*, 1953 by Kenneth Martin. Sainsbury Centre Collection © The Estate of Kenneth Martin

