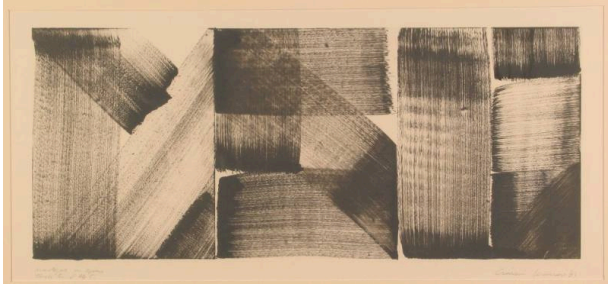


Basic Detail Report



Monotype in Grey (Thanks to J MC C)

Date

1992

Primary Maker

Ciarán Lennon

Medium

Monotype on paper

Dimensions

36 x 78 cm

Description

This is a monotype on paper. This print would have been created by first painting an image onto glass, and then placing paper on top of the image. Pressure is then applied to the back of the paper, which causes it to pick up the image in reverse. This means that only one print can be pulled, although often a second is pulled resulting in a very faint image. Stemming from a childhood fascination, the concept of 'seeing, not seeing and being seen' has been the artist's point of departure throughout his career. He explains: 'As a child I was fascinated by the fact that I couldn't see myself. That everybody else could see the world with me in it and I could see the world with them in it, but each of us could never see ourselves'. (See John Graham, 'Ciarán Lennon: Secret Space / Open Secret', N.C.A.D. undergraduate thesis, 1993, p. 10). The themes of 'the unseen becoming seen' out of which developed the concept of 'the folded and the unfolded' were explored in the early 1970s in sets of bales of stained canvas, partially unfolded and attached to the wall thus revealing a surface previously hidden. Lennon's work prevents the viewer from informed, art historical, cross-referencing and forces one to deal with the work on its own terms. The artist's 'Grid Paintings' of the early 1980s, on deep stretchers, are so called because of the grid pattern which is scored in the densely layered paint. Although grids infer boundless space, these picture spaces allow no entry. They were followed by Lennon's further investigation of the 'folded and unfolded' which in turn heralded a fresh concern with 'the unseen': the concept of creating 'new space' within an artwork - a space quite distinct from conventional notions of material and conceptual space. The artist achieved this by a process of inward folding of the support, either painted paper or canvas, so that the edges become its centre and its centre the edges. Unseen space is encapsulated. It is beyond our gaze but within our consciousness. The 'folded' paper and canvas works proved an enormous catalyst and led to the 'folding' of paint in triangular-shaped, concise brushstrokes in muted tones. Though their restraint in terms of colour and light avoids creating any sense of recession or representation, yet each plane of paint acts as a device to draw our attention inwards and focus upon an intimated but concealed internal space. In 1985 the artist created columnar shaped paintings on box-like stretchers. Thick dense paint wraps the surface in 'folds' of paint and is scored to reveal a painted surface underneath. These large, totem-like paintings strongly insinuate

a human content and confirm the artist's absorption with the idea of creating a work of art which is possessed of a sense of being, a powerful presence in itself. '(1/3/92B)', painted in 1992, is an extreme expression of this conviction. It comprises three panels, each eight feet high and six feet wide and painted in tones of black and has an overpowering presence, both physical and spiritual, which overwhelms the viewer's senses and psyche. 'Monotype in Grey', is related to '(1/3/92B)'. This monochrome work comprises three panels suggestive of triptych. Its tonal variations are a result of the folding over of the broad gestural brushstrokes. The lines created by the bristles of the brush articulate the flatness of the surface beyond which there is nothing. (Extract from 'Images and Insights', Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, 1993, p. 170)