

relief structures

ERIC GIBSON

COLIN JONES

PETER LOWE

ANDREW TILBERIS

Although the four artists on view all present rectangular constructive work, two different approaches can clearly be discerned: on the one hand there are the reliefs by Colin Jones and Peter Lowe, on the other the works by Eric Gibson and Andrew Tilberis.

The differences lie much more deeply rooted than what, at first sight, appear to represent only a different attitude to colour; the restriction to black white and grey with Lowe and Jones and the exuberance of various colours with Tilberis and Gibson.

Colin Jones and Peter Lowe adhere, not only by their use of black white and grey, but also in many other respects to an approach in the constructive realm called: Constructionism. This trend was developed during the Fifties largely by John Ernest and Anthony Hill who, together introduced notions from mathematics and topology (arithmetics and group theory) into post-war constructive art in England. The serial build-up and the kinetic shifts of position which occur to certain elements in a series, inherent in this approach, are most apparent in the reliefs done by Peter Lowe but can also be met in the works by Colin Jones. They differ from earlier English Constructionism in that both Jones and Lowe, with their use of the material, express to a far greater degree volume and mass. So far Constructionism has used planes and when using mass it has done so to a negligible degree. With Peter Lowe and Colin Jones, however, there is a definite increase of interest in the problem of the spatiality of the relief. This can easily be seen from the strong juxtaposition of the masses and volumes, the closed spaces, and the non-massive, the open spaces between these which together, build the relief as a whole.

It need not surprise that, along with this increased interest in the use of space, there is the gradual break-down of the static system based on one axis which is replaced by a more dynamic system based on multiple axes. Though the use of multiple axes is still restricted to the composition, running in directions parallel to the background plane (two dimensions), it may be expected that in further phases this could be applied also in a direction perpendicular to the background plane from the front to the back and vice-versa (a third dimension). This would dissolve the unity of mass the elements possess and open up the relief to "construction with and in actual space".

Several of the spacial notions presented so far, indicating problems typical of this no man's land in between painting and sculpture called the relief, can also be found in the works made by Gibson and Tilberis.

With Tilberis the parts increasingly protrude into space, whereas Gibson uses both massive and planilinear elements to model space.

Their more intuitive approach to the composition and arrangement of the parts, based on an interest in structure in nature rather than science, explains why their works cannot be seen to fit in the English Constructionist trend but rather are related to the American Structurist trend fostered by Charles Biederman and others. This is particularly so with Eric Gibson. Andrew Tilberis, through the 'organic' build-up, of his work creates centres and sub-centres.

Constructive art probably is the only realm which admits that in plastic art there exists a given set of problems which needs to be further analysed and synthetised, thus expressing a strong belief in continuation. With this exhibition one is faced, in all four cases, with artists who sincerely participate in the constructive realm of today and one may expect them to present further genuine research and development in the near future.

Joost Baljeu, May 1966.