



Two curves on a rectangular frame

Robert Adams

Not on display

Title/Description: Two curves on a rectangular frame

Artist/Maker: Robert Adams

Born: 1964

Object Type: Sculpture

Materials: Paint, Steel

Accession Number: 31544

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

Credit Line: Bequeathed by Joyce and Michael Morris, 2014

In 1961, Robert Adams embarked on a new form: the screen. They were almost two-dimensional and to be viewed from two aspects. The first screens included tightly-knit metal shapes with small gaps between allowing the light through. By 1964, the date of *Two Curves on a Rectangular Frame*, the negative space was more open with larger spaces enclosed by a linear structure of metal rods.

In a rare use of colour for Adams, the black structure contains a single red square, suggestive of a painting by Piet Mondrian. Adams references the modernist grid of Mondrian and his contemporaries, however, subtly subverts it by introducing the two curves which cut across at different angles. They incorporate a different energy to the work, as Adams was interested in introducing the suggestion of movement through asymmetry. The linear, welded nature of *Two Curves on a Rectangular Frame* relates to the sculpture that is described as 'drawing in space'. Like the graphic lines of a pencil, the linear rods describe contour and enclose space. In its relative flatness, this screen work is even closer to the properties of a traditional drawing.

Some of Adams' frames developed into functioning gates and the Sainsbury Centre collection has a maquette for a gate (31546), but this small work was designed as an independent tabletop sculpture.

The Sainsbury Centre has the most important body of work by Robert Adams in a public collection in the UK with 27 sculptures and 8 works on paper. They were acquired by collectors Joyce and Michael Morris and bequeathed to the Sainsbury Centre in 2016.

Tania Moore, May 2021

Exhibitions

'Rhythm and Geometry: Constructivist art in Britain since 1951', Sainsbury Centre, UK, 02/10/2021 - 17/07/2022

Further Reading

Alastair Grieve, *The Sculpture of Robert Adams* (London: Lund Humphries, 1992)

Alastair Grieve, *Constructed Abstract Art in England: A Neglected Avant-Garde* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005)

Provenance

Bought by Michael Morris from the artist in 1964.

In October 1984, the University of East Anglia accepted a planned bequest from Joyce and Michael Morris (UEA Alumni). Michael died in 2009 and Joyce in December 2014 when the couple's wishes were implemented.
