

ROWNTREE CLARK



Gillian AYRES
1930 -2018

Abstract c. 1957

ripolin on board
32.7 by 10.7cm
framed: 45.2 x 22 cm

signed lower right 'G. Ayres'

PROVENANCE
Private Collection, Oslo until 2020

EXHIBITIONS
Kara Benson Gallery, Oslo 1957 (?) (catalogue untraced)

ROWNTREE CLARK

Gillian Ayres was one of a few trailblazing female artists working in London in the 1950s and is now widely acknowledged as one of Britain's foremost abstract painters.

Although not dated the work can be securely dated to late 1956 early 1957. It is a one of a small group of rare early works that first brought Ayres to the public attention and established her as one of the most dynamic artists of her generation. In 1957 she held her first exhibition abroad at the Kara Benson Gallery in Oslo before she went on to exhibit in the seminal "Metavisual, Tachiste, Abstract" exhibition held at the Redfern Gallery later in the year. This work no doubt was in that Kara Benson show having remained in a private collection in Oslo until 2020.

Painted in oil, ripolin and plaster the work is from the same series as those that she later exhibited at "Metavisual, Tachiste, Abstract" and is very close in palette as her famous 'Painting (Taschiste) No. 1' (illustrated left - Gillian Ayres photographed in front of the work in 1957). In fact the palette is so similar it is not unreasonable to suggest they were painted on the same day. It was a groundbreaking year for her as she moved away from the more formal linear abstractions and developed her tachiste style of drip and bleeding the paints in to compositions that she would later say "would paint themselves."

Interestingly the present work is mounted on canvas laid board which is a scrap from of another one of her 1957 tachiste works - close to the work sold at Christies 21/10/21 lot 105. The width dimensions are very close, as are the colours, so it could even be the sliced off base of that work.

A major retrospective of her early work was held at the Jerwood Gallery in Hastings in 2012 and was a revelation. Her estate is now represented by Marlborough, who currently have an exhibition of her later work.