

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Autumn Fall, Modern British, Oil,  
Paper, 1965, St Ives

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham

£31,500



REF: 11134

Height: 40.5 cm (15.9")

Width: 50 cm (19.7")

Depth: 2 cm (0.8")

## Description

Wilhelmina Barns-Graham (British, 1912-2004) Autumn Fall Signed and dated 'W. Barns Graham 1965' (lower right) Further signed, inscribed and dated 'TITLE/AUTUMN FALL/DATE 1965/SIZE 17' x 20 ½'/MEDIUM CRYLA & OIL ON PAPER ONTO/HARDBOARD/ARTIST W. Barns-Graham/ADDRESS 1 BARNLOFT, ST IVES. CWLL.' (on the backboard) Oil on paper, on the artist's worked mount, laid on board

Sheet height 25.5 cm., 9 ¾ in. length 35 cm, 13 ¾ In a wooden box frame. Frame height 45 cm, 17 ¾ length 54 cm., 21 ¼ in.

Related to: Untitled, 1965 oil on canvas, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Important Works from her Career, 16th May-15th June 2006, Art First, London. Scottish Gallery, No 3, 4th-26th June 2007. Cinders 1964, oil and acrylic on paper on hardboard, 58.5 x 91.5 cm, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Evolution, Sherbourne House 3rd November-16th December 2007 Bird Song, 1966 oil on canvas, 60.5 x 121.5 cm. Order & disorder, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, paintings 1965-1980, Art First, London 24th March - 23rd April 2009

Barns-Graham's paintings of 1965-1980 are a distinct group, yet they are also part of a continuing thread that weaves its way through her career, from the glacier paintings of the early 1950s to the liberated abstract expressionism of her final decade. The paintings from this period played a vital role in the development of her future work, and without their intense investigation of 'Order and Disorder', the late work may never have materialised.

Autumn Fall is a very beautiful and characteristic work from 1965. The 'new' imagery of the 1960s explored dynamic colour interacting with simple geometric forms- the square and the circle. The contrapuntal arrangements of shape and colour created a vitality of visual movement which was then disrupted through the introduction of irregular rhythms, to create disorder out of order. Barns-Graham herself referred to 'things of a kind in order and chaos', a description that was appropriated into her picture titles.

What may appear to be random, are carefully crafted complex constructions, relying on invisible underlying mathematical frameworks. Unlike the 'Op Art' current being explored by some artists she knew, like Michael Kidner, as well as a younger generation, such as Bridget Riley, attracting phenomenal publicity, Barns-Graham's painting is less painstakingly repetitive in its formal configurations. She was much more interested in the breakdown of structure itself-a process then and now being identified by scientists as a considerable source of power. When combined with her use of primary colours, offset against complementary secondaries, she could endow the paintings with an explosive energy, releasing into pictorial space small clusters of circular discs and tilted squares, in a joyful escape from their linear sequences. Working at Porthmeor Studios in 1947

Born in St Andrews, Fife, and educated at Edinburgh College of Art, in 1940, Barns-Graham moved to St Ives, where she was to be based, either fully or partly, for the rest of her life. St Ives in 1940 was a thriving artists community - many of those who may have otherwise stayed in London had taken refuge there for the duration of the war, and Barns-Graham quickly...