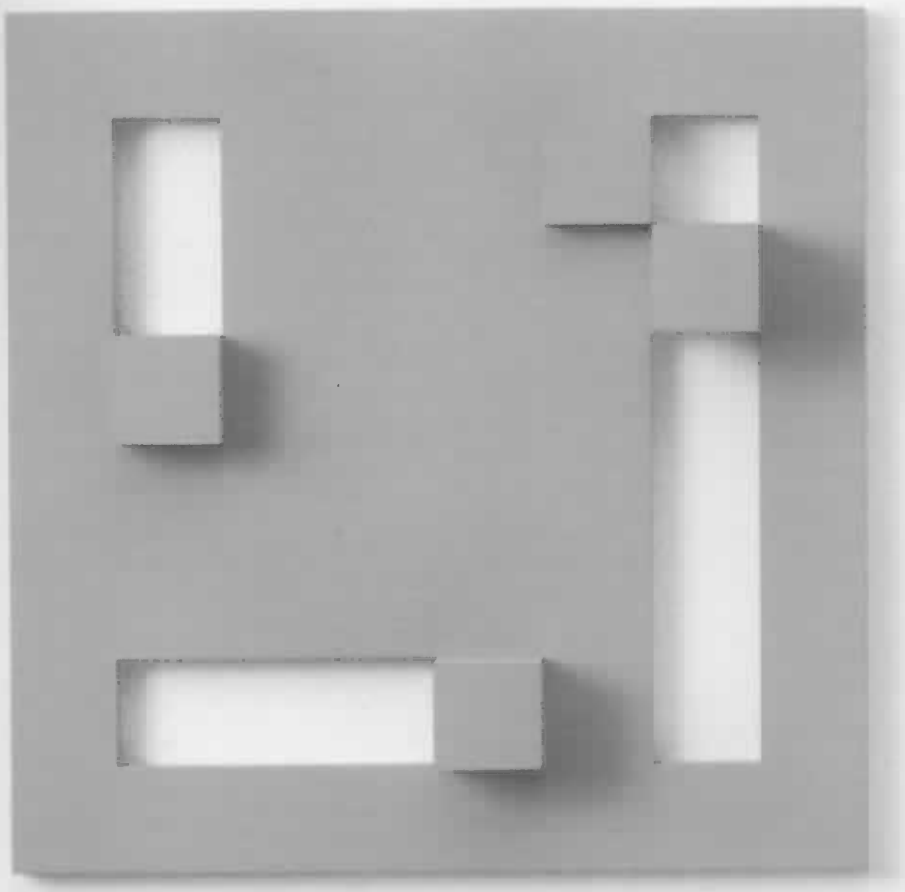
Peter Lowe

1938
born in London
1954-60
studied under Kenneth and Mary Martin at Goldsmiths' College, London University
1960
Experiments with moving and ballanced constructions; made first systematic reliefs
1961-62
became an apprentice product designer
1963-65
taught at Leads College of Art
1965-2000
taught at Goldsmiths' College
1969
Founder member of Systems Group
1973-88
Joined *Internationaler Arbeitskreis für konstruktive Gestaltung* (later: *Arbeitskreis*)
1974
first *volume & void* reliefs
1982
Designs for the film *Plus Echo* Studio Scarabe, Den Hague
1986
Die Treppen von Hünfeld sculpture for *Kunststraße Rhön* project, Bürgerpark Hünfeld
1987
Sculpture in slate for Civic Gardens, Portofino

lives and works in London

(...) Constructed from a single sheet of wood of square format, the volumes of his reliefs are obtained by the subtraction and addition of a modular element. As in Lowe's reliefs since the start of the 1970's, the accent is not placed on the forms but on the relationships that exist between them. In the relief, a square is cut from the thickness of the sheet and is joined to the adjacent surface, two squares leaving a rectangular void are piled upon one another and so forth... The width of the space is, in fact, always proportional to the height of the space in relief. The choice of material remains crucial, not for its texture, the wood is coated with smooth acrylic paint, but for its thickness which constitutes the basic unity on which the composition is calculated. The logic applied to the material and the technique adopted draws the relief closer to collage than to sculpture – its uniform grey surface, a tonality traditionally reserved for shadows, is in fact a purified form in which the attention is carried exclusively to the composition. Rejection of colour, of black and white, appears as the ultimate rejection of all reference to nature. The affirmation of a non-mimetic art also led Lowe to lay claim to modes of creation based on mathematics. Although this claim is rooted in the teaching he received from Kenneth and Mary Martin, his interest in mathematics is reinforced in the 1960's by his discovery of recent literature on topology – for Lowe, the choice of mathematics is not justified by a will to understand and control all possible combinations of forms but, on the contrary, by the desire to create in his works, events and appearances that his imagination could not prefigure. The mathematical system used here, a simple progression, allows an asymmetric composition and its possible development in a series, the system being in itself infinite.

Anne Monfort



Volume & void, 1975-89, 40 x 40 cm, painted wood

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