

OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

ALAN REYNOLDS



Forms on an Ovoid Ground, 1962

Oil on board
51.5 x 50 cms
(20.24 x 19.65 in)
P.O.A.

Signed & numbered 3.
Titled and numbered 3 on an artist's label verso.

Page 1 of 2

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Provenance: 	

Redfern Gallery, London

Richard Attenborough

Galerie Haas, Berlin

Nick Holmes Fine Art, London

Robert Devereux Collection, London

Literature: 	

Alan Reynolds, by JP Hodin, published by the Redfern Artists Series, London 1962, illustrated in colour on the cover of the book & p,45

Michael Harrison *Alan Reynolds; The Making of a Concretist Artist* p. 61 Lund Humphries 2011

This medium sized work belonged to a transitional series produced between 1962 and 1965 where Alan Reynolds borrowed from Braque, Picasso, and Mondrian the formal compositional device of the oval, employed as Michael Harrison states, as "a means of encapsulating and concentrating the image...of the integration of space and solid, and of not allowing it to dissipate towards the corners¹. This was achieved by positing counter-poised horizontal and vertical yellow and blue 'bars' against an infatic near-black oval ground which, in turn, was truncated by the four near square edges of the hardboard support. This obliquely reveals cream surrounds and, with it, spatial and planar layering.

The gently rounded circumference of this oval, blurred and softly painted, contrasts with the clinical symmetry of Mondrian-esque coloured planes and razor-like lines. The effect indeed recalls Mondrian's *Pier and Ocean* and later neo-plastic compositions, though the English palette still holds haunting residues of the nature-derived romanticism of the Suffolk-born artist's early work.

While extending across finished oils and preparatory works on paper alike, the ovoid format was subject to considerable variation during these years, the length or thickness of the lines and bars setting up shifting configurations in spatial intervals. Notwithstanding their position on the fully concretist brink, these abstract ovoid compositions retained autographic and 'organic' paint handling and suggested reflection as if in still water, the soft colour bars above the horizontal medial line repeated in reverse formation below.

Immediately recognisable as the cover image of J P Hodin's 1962 book on Reynolds, *Form on an Ovoid Ground* is highly representative of a phase of work described recently by the artist as, perhaps the best paintings I made.²

1.	 Michael Harrison *Alan Reynolds; The Making of a Concretist Artist* p. 61 Lund Humphries 2011

2.	 Reynolds in conversation with Peter Davies 3/4/11