



Anomaly Blue

Date

2006

Primary Maker

Alex Hay

Medium

Spray acrylic on linen

Description

Between 1962 and 1964, Alex Hay was a member of the Judson Dance Theater in New York's Greenwich Village, where he, like his fellow artist and friend Robert Rauschenberg, created and participated in avant-garde performances alongside trained and untrained dancers. He was also a Pop artist whose paintings featured mundane objects such as chicken wire and a waitress's order pad and whose fiberglass sculptures replicated brown paper bags and folded paper airplanes on a magnified scale. Hay's work became increasingly conceptual over the course of the 1960s. In 1969, he left New York City for Arizona and did not return to painting for over three decades. In 2007, he presented a new body of work—six paintings, including *Anomaly Blue*—at the New York gallery Peter Freeman Inc., his first solo exhibition in thirty-eight years. *Anomaly Blue* is one of a series of canvases Hay created between 2003 and 2007 that fastidiously depict scraps of wood he saved when renovating his residence—an old hotel in Bisbee, Arizona, where he still lives. The artist made stencils based on his own pencil renderings and used spray paint—not brushes—to build up the images over many months. Between layers of paint, he abraded the surface to add texture and depth and to convey the wear of the actual wood. The canvases, which the New York Times critic Roberta Smith called “found abstractions,” interrogate the relationship between figuration and abstraction. As in his Pop period, Hay has chosen subject matter that is typically rendered

invisible by its banality. Moreover, in both the earlier and the current works, a tension exists between automation, or mass production, and the handmade. By choosing to use stencils and spray paint, he seems to remove the artist's hand from the creation of the work of art; however, by basing the stencils on his own drawings and manipulating the paint to create surface texture, he challenges that idea. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions

Overall: 67 7/8 × 36 1/2 × 1 3/8 in. (172.4 × 92.7 × 3.5 cm)