## FEATURE MARTIN CREED

The works illustrating this article are by Martin Creed (b. 1968) and are courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Work No. 1065, 2010
Acrylic, enamel, ink, oil and watercolour on canvas, 30×25.5cm
Martin Creed

works seem to attack the viewer's sensibilities, sometimes by restricting their freedom of movement, as in *Work No. 115: A doorstop fixed to a floor to let a door open only 45 degrees* (1995–99).

'To me [that work is] not aggressive. It's more like the experience of going to someone's house and there being a funny doorknob on the bathroom door making it difficult to lock properly. It makes you feel uncomfortable. But those people who own the house have got used to it – they can live around it. Now is that door aggressive? I once heard someone describe the difference between the Germans and Italians in terms of the way both would deal with this sort of situation. Let's say there is a cardboard box in the middle of the road. Well, the German would get out of the car and protest about it. Whereas the Italian would just drive around it.'

Nevertheless, there is a critical line of enquiry in the early work that persists in exposing the architectural and ideological framework of the white cube – and this renders these pieces somewhat dry and exacting. For the most part, Creed makes the viewer hyperaware of the specifics of the context in which they are experiencing his art. He achieves this by underlining different aspects of a given space's character. Work No. 227: The lights going on and off (2000; Fig. 2), with which he won the Turner Prize in 2001, is the apotheosis of this technique.

With music becoming a crucial aspect of Creed's work in the early 2000s, performance also began to play a central role. The act of performing a song opened out on to the broader act of framing a series of movements and gestures as a piece of art. In Work No. 850 from 2008, Creed set runners sprinting through the Duveen Galleries at Tate Britain and, a year later, Work No. 1020 saw the artist choreographing a piece for classically trained dancers at Sadler's Wells.

One of Creed's first performance pieces occurred when he was asked to be a judge for Beck's Futures in 2006. At the time, nobody was expecting Creed to reinterpret the presentation of the award. 'They just asked





me to present [it],' Creed recalls. 'But to me the speech, making the presentation in front of the audience was a work too - in fact, just as much so as a sculpture or song.' Creed turned his speech into a rhyming ad-lib. Two years later, in 2008, he followed this up with a performance for Calvin Klein. 'It's funny you mention [the Calvin Klein] and the Beck's prize speech, because both those things were really important to me. They were important even though they were everyday things. Calvin Klein basically asked me to design a party for them. It was a commercial job, but I was really up for it. Doing things in different venues and contexts is important - whether it's the theatre, dance, or the fashion world.'



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