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Heinz Mack

Sperone Westwater

The first survey of Heinz Mack's early metal reliefs, made between 1957 and '67, this exhibition showcased an important and underappreciated figure in post-war art while offering a rare opportunity to view the breadth of his experiments with real and apparent movement in sculpture. Mack, who in 1957 founded the ZERO group with fellow West German artist Otto Piene, sought to revitalize the arts in the war-ravaged country by eschewing subjective expressionism in favor of exploring new forms of perception through innovative materials and design principles.

To realize this goal, Mack embarked upon a series of relief sculptures and steles using stainless steel, aluminum, Plexiglas, and other modern and industrial materials, investigating the subtle effects of reflected light. One such work, *Lichtrelief, stabile Vibration für Licht und Ton* (1963), offered a striking example here of the artist's early interest in optical phenomena, as the impinging light and the viewer's shifting vantage point in the gallery dissolved the relief's corrugated-aluminum surface into a pure and shimmering emanation.

The movement suggested by the light

on reflective surfaces anticipated Mack's interest in setting in motion the work of art itself—something that he accomplished in his motorized reliefs, known as "Rotors." In one of these, *Rotor mit Interferenzen* (1960), a motor rotates a patterned metal disc beneath ribbed glass, resulting in an optical vibration that causes the hypnotically rotating disc to dissipate into a beautiful, diaphanous cloud. While using motors allowed Mack to extend his exploration of retinal stimulation, this exhibition revealed the way in which he was able to use light and motion to create an expressive language all his own. —Max Weintraub



Heinz Mack, *Lichtrelief, stabile Vibration für Licht und Ton*, 1963, aluminum and Plexiglas, 48" x 40 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Sperone Westwater.