

MKM / "MACK. Apollo in My Studio" / Press release, October 21, 2015

MKM Museum Küppersmühle für Moderne Kunst, Duisburg

MACK Apollo in My Studio

October 22, 2015 to January 31, 2016

Inauguration on October 21, 2015 at 7 pm.

By the new NRW Minister for Culture Christina Kampmann



MKM Museum Küppersmühle
für Moderne Kunst
Philosophenweg 55
47051 Duisburg (Innenhafen)
www.museum-kueppersmuehle.de
Telefon 02 03 / 30 19 48 -10 / -11
Telefax 02 03 / 30 19 48 -21
office@museum-kueppersmuehle.de

Heinz Mack's contemporary relevance remains undiminished – and light the central theme of this versatile and creative output. The MKM is now dedicating an exhibition to this pioneer of light and kinetic art, featuring previously unshown large-format canvases and sculptures. Among the highlights on view is a walk-in coloured room, designed especially for the show, the "room for Apollo". In combination with striking impact of the colours and light of the walls, seven freely-arranged narrow coloured light-steles transform this space into an energy field and immerse the viewer in an almost illusory experience. Seeing itself becomes the focus.

Organised by the Foundation for Art and Culture, the exhibition is being inaugurated by Christina Kampmann, the new Minister for Culture of the State of North-Rhine Westphalia, on Wednesday, October 21, 2015, at 7 pm in the Museum Küppersmühle.

ZERO, light and the radiant energy of a new beginning

Born in 1931, the philosopher, sculptor and painter Heinz Mack is a multifaceted artist whose light art works and monumental sculptures have garnered worldwide acclaim. Together with Otto Piene, he founded the Europe-wide Zero movement in 1957, to which Günther Uecker also became affiliated in 1961. Promulgating their own "hour zero", these young artists broke with the traditional notions of art. Availing themselves of innovative technologies, including electronics, the protagonists of the ZERO group proceeded to fashion modern and dynamic works, which even today have lost nothing of their immediacy and topicality. Also in the later works of the Heinz Mack the basic principles underpinning this new beginning and the artist's unremitting pre-occupation with light find rigorous expression: *"An idea conceived in 1957 still holds currency today, and is still charging his work with energy. This artist's durability and the unerring capacity of his oeuvre to capture the public's attention across many decades is more than impressive. However, the spotlight of this show in the MKM is cast not on the works of the ZERO period, but on his paintings and sculptures. Heinz Mack has opened the doors to his studio to reveal his hidden treasures to us."* (Walter Smerling, Director MKM)

Painting and sculpture in dialogue

Consequently, the main focus of the exhibition lies in the large-format, richly coloured paintings he has completed since 1991. Prior to this, from 1963 onwards, the artist had resolutely turned his back on painting and dedicated himself exclusively to sculpture. This show presents examples of these

"Chromatic Constellations", the collective title chosen by the artist himself to describe these canvas works.

Seventeen paintings, drawn primarily from across the past three decades. Their intrapictorial bands of colour are suggestive of prismatic refractions of light, and by virtue of their effulgent colourfulness and rippling layers of paint, the paintings appear to radiate from within, evoking the impression of strength and dynamism. *"Mack's application of paint is open, transparent and in motion, the varied density of the pigment vibrates, as if the atmosphere surrounding his colour-intensive canvases is shimmering. It is doubtless of significance that the artist spends much of the year on Ibiza, since his paintings are infused with the light, the sun, the energy and the radiant warmth of the island."*, remarks curator Eva Müller-Remmert.

The luminosity and dynamic-geometrical structures of the paintings also reveal Mack's philosophy on the life-giving power of light: *"Painting has always fascinated me when it is filled with light. But painting also means much more than that to me; it is the portal to the infinitely deep, black space in which light and colour have become an indivisible one. The identity of light and colour, which becomes visible in the spectrum, is the subject of my paintings - it is their only subject."*

(quoted from: Burkhard Leismann (ed): Mack, lichtkunst. Cologne, 1994, 7)

Resonating in the language of form and the surfaces of Heinz Mack's sculptures are the lucid radiance and structure of his early paintings, which comprise simple elementary geometric forms such as the rectangle, the triangle, the circle, and the concomitant dynamic spirals, rhombi and arches. In keeping with these cross-genre parameters, which are common within Heinz Mack's overall output, the luminous canvases on view in the MKM are juxtaposed with an imposing group of sculptures: "Die große Familie" (1997). These are complemented in the following two rooms with steles as well as geometric-rhythmic sculptures, drawn from various creative periods, made of stone, metal and synthetics. Facing them are black and white, but no less colourful, paintings, together with two seminal works from the ZERO period (*Vibrationsbild*, 1958 and *Dynamische Struktur*, 1962), which reveal the timeless correlation between the various genes of Mack's oeuvre.

Kinetic objects and Utopian models

The presentation is rounded off with more recent kinetic objects, which bear references to the ZERO period. Six rotors draw the viewer's gaze through slowly revolving circular discs and surface structures, which refract the light and evoke a meditative, yet disorienting optical-illusional effect. As a further exhibition highlight, the now restored "Große Licht-Prisma" (1983, restored in 2013) mesmerises the viewer with its ever-changing, magical confections of light. Back in the 1960s and 1970s Mack embarked upon a series of spectacular working and film expeditions into the Algerian desert and to the Arctic, where he conjured artistic, utopian environments, which interrogated the dialogue between nature and art, space and time. Previously unshown utopian models and environmental creations for interior and exterior spaces are now being unveiled for the first time in the MKM. Film documentaries on Heinz Mack and biographical archive material which chart the career and key

milestones in the artistic development of the light magician Heinz Mack complete the tour of the exhibition.

Organisation / Sponsorship

"MACK. Apollo in My Studio" is an exhibition project staged by the Foundation for Art and Culture and curated by Eva Müller-Remmert.

The MKM would like to thank the NATIONAL-BANK Aktiengesellschaft for their generous support.

Catalogue

Accompanying the exhibition is a comprehensive catalogue featuring contributions from Peter Iden, Heinz Mack, Eva Müller-Remmert, Bettina Weiland and a discussion between Heinz Mack, Thomas A. Lange and Walter Smerling [ger./eng., 184 pages, 100 illustrations, 29,- Euro museum edition, Wienand Verlag, Cologne, ISBN 978-3-86832-287-3]

Press photos

Free download at: <http://www.museum-kueppersmuehle.de/presse/pressebilder/apollo-in-meinem->