

## PRESS RELEASE

*New exhibition***Mack at ZKM***16.09.2023 – 07.04.2024*

*Heinz Mack is one of the most important artists of the 20th and 21st centuries. In 1957 he founded the group ZERO with the artist Otto Piene in Düsseldorf. Together with other international artists, they wanted to revolutionize art after World War II. With »Mack at ZKM«, the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe is now dedicating a comprehensive solo exhibition to him with around 130 works from the period 1955 to 2023, including works that are being reconstructed and exhibited for the first time in a long time. Mirror objects in the glaring desert sun, shimmering color prisms in the Arctic, light-reflecting stelae, sparkling rotors, gold and silver gleaming cubes, virtual volumes generated by electrical impulses: Heinz Mack, artist of light, illuminates the atriums of the ZKM in a variety of ways.*

*»Mack at ZKM« (16.09.2023 – 07.04.2024) at ZKM | Karlsruhe.*

**New Materials, New Means of Artistic Expressions**

As early as the 1950s, Heinz Mack was looking for harmony between humankind, nature and technology. In 1957 he founded the group ZERO with the artist Otto Piene in Düsseldorf. Together with other international artists, they wanted to revolutionize art after the Second World War. ZERO is about a new beginning—a zero hour. Light, movement, structure and color are central to Mack's body of work. He used natural elements such as light, fire, air, water or sand as a fully-fledged creative means of expression for his works of art early on. Working with kinetic principles and new industrial materials such as aluminum, acrylic glass, or Fresnel lenses, as well as chemical substances such as phosphorus and mercury, he revolutionized the concept of sculpture. His open works directly involve not only the space, but also the viewers, as they interact with light in unique ways that expand perception.

**Light in All Its Facets: Mack at ZKM**

The exhibition »Mack at ZKM« explores thematic components from the various phases of Mack's artistic career. Some works that have only rarely been exhibited and parts of which have been lost are now being reconstructed or newly staged at ZKM. Among them, for example, is the »Light Choreography«, a composition comprising various works by Mack, some of them motor-driven stelae,

September 2023

Exhibition  
Mack at ZKMDuration  
September 16, 2023 – April 07, 2024Location  
Atrium 8+9, ground floorPress contact  
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[www.zkm.de/en/about-the-zkm/press](http://www.zkm.de/en/about-the-zkm/press)ZKM | Center for Art and  
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presented for the first time in this way, which creates a multisensory, immersive experience that makes light and space vibrate, literally making them dance. Space and time also seem to dissolve in the »Sahara Project«, which has been a fixed point in Mack's work since 1959, making him a pioneer of Land Art in Europe. Again and again, the artist traveled to the desert, which offered ideal conditions to work with light and space in their purest form. On a large sand surface that almost fills Atrium 9, the light phenomena that arise from the interplay of Mack's light objects and the glaring desert sun are made comprehensible in the museum context. The »Sahara Project« is also one of the first works in European art to be conceived in terms of media, as Mack's interventions lasted only for the duration of documentation in photographs and on video, which were then made accessible to the public as well as in the film »Tele-Mack«.

### Mack in Our Time

The exhibition introduces a picture of an artist who has constantly explored the many facets of light, rather like a scientist examining an object in series of experiments. His continuous pursuit of immateriality opens a space for an expanded experience of art. From a contemporary perspective the work anticipates the urgent questions we face in the 21st century. Mack's works using air, water, light, and sand also reflect current issues connected with the economy of natural resources of our Earth. His artistic approach to nature and technology prompts a reflection on the challenges of the humanmade climate catastrophe that we are now confronting.

A publication is being planned for the exhibition (publication date 2024), with contributions by Alistair Hudson, Wolfgang Ulrich, Sophia Sotke and Dr Matthias Meier, Daria Mille and Lilijana Funk, Hartmut Böhme, Katharina Kern and Clara Runge, among others.

### Mack at EnBW

From 30.11.2023 to 21.04.2024, EnBW will be showing Heinz Mack's exhibition »Jardin Artificiel« in the foyer of the company's headquarters in Karlsruhe to accompany the show at the ZKM, which includes collages, photographs and objects from the »Sahara Project«.

### Heinz Mack

Heinz Mack (born 1931 in Lollar, Germany) attended the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, the academy of fine arts of the state of

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North Rhine Westphalia in Düsseldorf, from 1950 to 1953. In 1956 he graduated in philosophy at the University of Cologne. In 1957, together with Otto Piene, he founded the group ZERO, which marked the beginning of a new period – the zero point of the new beginning of experiencing art—and the break with the conventions of postwar art, which was strongly influenced by Informel and Tachisme. In addition to participating in Documenta II (1959) and Documenta III (1964), he represented the Federal Republic of Germany at the XXXV. Venice Biennale in 1970. In the same year he was invited to Osaka, Japan, as a visiting professor, and was elected a member of the Academy of Arts, Berlin, of which he remained a member until 1992. Mack has received many prestigious awards and prizes including the Art Prize of the City of Krefeld (1958), the Premio Marzotto (1963) and the Prize of the Cultural Foundation Dortmund (2012). In 2011, the Federal Republic of Germany honored the artist with the Great Cross of Merit with Star. In 2017 he was awarded the Moses Mendelssohn Medal. His works have been shown in around 360 solo and many group exhibitions and have entered 170 public collections all over the world.

## Imprint

### Curators

Daria Mille, Clara Runge

### Curatorial assistance

Katharina Kern

### Project assistance

Cornelia Eisendle, Marie Klauder, Vivien Ranger

### Technical project management

Andrea Hartinger

### Scenography

Matthias Gommel

### Conservation

Marlies Peller, Leonie Roek

### Registrar

Regina Linder

### Graphic design

Demian Bern

In memory of Peter Weibel (1944–2023), on whose idea this exhibition is based.

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With special thanks to the artist, Ute Mack, Sophia Sotke and the entire studio Mack, the lenders, the ZERO foundation and the Friends of the ZERO foundation.

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