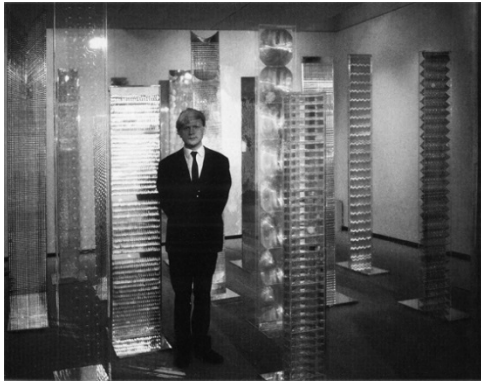


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Robinson, Walter. "Big Mack Attack." *www.artnet.com (Artnet Magazine)*, 7 January 2011.

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Heinz Mack with some of his sculptures in the 1950s, from *Mackazine* vol. 2, published by Sperone Westwater

Heinz Mack, the handsome white-haired master of ineffable light and space, had an epiphany back in 1959, when he saw his first mirages in the North African desert. "I felt convinced that my work could be transformed into immaterial apparitions," he said. "That these manmade artifacts could be changed totally into instruments of light and nature."

And so they have, as working with silvery metal and its elusive reflections, sometimes sent skyward in dramatic columns, Mack helped transform post-war European art (along with his colleagues Yves Klein, Lucio Fontana, Otto Piene, Jean Tinguely and Günther Uecker, among others) into something distinctly of its time.



"Heinz Mack: Early Metal Reliefs 1957-1967," installation view, at Sperone Westwater

Incredibly, though Mack's work is represented in more than 130 museums around the globe, and though his 42-meter-high monumental sculpture in Stuttgart is the tallest pillar in Europe, he remains something of a mystery in the U.S. The current exhibition at Sperone Westwater -- largely featuring classic works from 1957-67, which means they're about 50 years old -- is arguably his first New York gallery show since his debut at Howard Wise Gallery on 57th Street back in 1965.

The works look completely new; they don't seem to age, an anomaly even in the machine era. "I hate patina," Mack said.



"Heinz Mack: Early Metal Reliefs 1957-1967," installation view, at Sperone Westwater

This time capsule of a show contains a notable portion of revolution, with the artist's eye turned not toward nature or Pop media but instead on the metallic surfaces of modern industry. Whether brash and sturdy like stainless steel or as delicate as foil honeycombs, Mack's sculptures and wall works are a kind of Arte Povera that draws its magic from a technological alchemy of hard surfaces and sharp edges.

Several things in the show are kinetic, including a spinning aluminum disc and a forest of rotating brass axles (both dating to 1960), which dissolve their own form, and our experience of it, into a dazzle that can barely be seen in person, much less via photography.

One alcove contains three gallery-sized stele that hint at the monumental spires and endless columns that are signature works in Europe for Mack, who met Brancusi as a young man. In the 1970s New Yorkers

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Heinz Mack, *Lamellen-Relief*, 1967/68, aluminum, Plexiglas, wood, stainless steel, ca. 49 x 40 x 4 in.



Heinz Mack, box of *Light Spirals*, 1966, in "Heinz Mack: Early Metal Reliefs 1957-1967" at Sperone Westwater

came close to having just such a Peace Pillar at the U.N., soaring 35 floors tall, as a gift from Germany in thanks for the Marshall Plan.

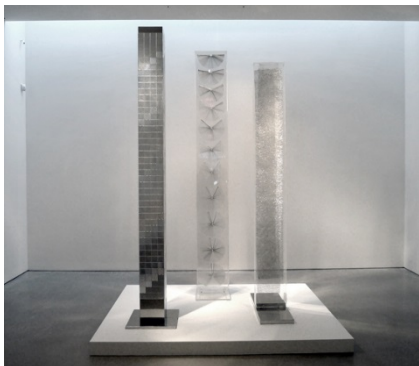
David Rockefeller, who provided the U.N. with its land, favored the project; Wallace K. Harrison, the architect, wanted it; Helmut Schmidt, the German chancellor, was in favor. But the scheme fell through all the same, when the German foreign affairs ministry opposed it on budgetary grounds.

Mack, who turns 80 this year, has a busy time ahead of him. In addition to the New York show, an expansive survey of his work is about to open in Bonn, and plans are afoot for a big traveling exhibition of the ZERO group (possible partners include the Guggenheim Museum, the Neue Nationalgalerie and the Stedelijk).

Mack is especially happy about having his earthworks -- he made several experimental interventions in the Sahara and the Arctic, beginning in 1959 -- represented in a big "Land Art" show scheduled to open in Los Angeles in 2012 or 2013. And Dumont Verlag is publishing a huge, 500-page book on his work, with pictures that are not to be believed.

In the meantime, Sperone Westwater has published the substantial second number of Mack's *Mackazin*, featuring a wealth of black-and-white photos of his works. *Mackazin* number one came out in 1967 on the occasion of the first ZERO exhibition in New York.

*"Heinz Mack: Early Metal Reliefs 1957-1967," Jan. 7-Feb. 19, 2011, at Sperone Westwater, 257 Bowery, New York, N.Y. 10002*



Three stele by Heinz Mack, from left: *Karo-Stele* (1968), *Stele mit 11 Flügeln* (1964/1997), and *Silberlicht-Stele* (1964)



Heinz Mack, *Kleiner Stelenwald*, 1960 (during installation)



Heinz Mack's rendering of his peace pillar at the U.N. in New York, from *Mackazine* vol. 2, published by Sperone Westwater