

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

Press Release for Immediate Release

Heinz Mack / Lucio Fontana

6 October – 21 December 2010

Private View 5 October 2010 6-8 pm

Ben Brown Fine Arts is delighted to announce the opening of *Heinz Mack / Lucio Fontana*, a groundbreaking show placing the oeuvres of these two masters of 20th Century Art in dialogue. Running from October 6th to December 21st at 12 Brook's Mews (London W1K 4DG), the show will focus on Fontana's monochrome white paintings and a selection of Heinz Mack's most significant paintings and sculptures, dating between 1957 and 1966 and coming directly from the artist's studio. This will be the 3rd show of works by Fontana curated by the gallery, as well as the first show of Heinz Mack works in London since 1965.

Heinz Mack is one of the founding member of the hugely influential *ZERO* movement, an artistic group which crystallised in Germany in the second part of the 1950s. The term *ZERO* was coined in 1957 by Mack and Otto Piene to describe their artistic endeavor, and it later came to define the International Art Movement born out of their radical gesture. The central concerns of the movement were to do with the harmonious balance between the natural possibilities of the medium itself and the artificial intervention of the artistic hand. Far from considering these two elements in opposition, *ZERO* strove to create a dialogue between the two, one where the aesthetics would be as pure and organic as possible, allowing for the work's true voice to emerge, facilitated by the artist's intervention.

The relationship between Fontana and Mack started in 1959, when Mack visited Milan and met the Italian artist, who was almost a generation older and had already been a powerful influence on the *ZERO* group. Lucio Fontana's ideology of *Spazialismo* shared many of the concerns central to the *ZERO* movement, and in the years that followed the two artists developed a close bond and an ongoing artistic dialogue.

The works in this exhibition illustrate that although the artistic languages of both Mack and Fontana are profoundly individual, they also very much resonate with one another, and share a profound common core. As Mack stated: *"No matter how much I have learnt from other artists, no matter how much it is also correct that everything that I discover, invent, would like to realise today, has its origin in myself, in my inmost soul. It comes from my source. If there is a latent relation to the work of other artists, I do not see a contradiction in it. I am identical with what I create. It is the whole imaginative museum I enter again and again, and then it may happen, that Egypt is closer to me than New York."* (From an unpublished manuscript, Mack Archives)

In Fontana's *Concetto Spaziale* (1958), the carefully placed slashes an otherwise pristine surface, engages the viewer and draws them into the work, beyond the flat surface and into a three dimensional space lying beyond it. It is the same dynamic quality which can be found in *Lamellar Relief*, executed the same year by Heinz Mack. Again, the surface is pure: an aluminum sheet incised and sculpted by the artist in order to create a delicate relief, with the luminous segments dancing before our eyes.

The artist will be in attendance at the Private View and is available for interviews.

A catalogue is available with a text by Hans Ulrich Obrist.

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