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Oskar Holweck: One Zero Zero

Exhibition dates: 15th November 2024 - 11th January 2025

Private view: 14th November 2024, 6-9 pm

Patrick Heide Contemporary Art

11 Church Street, NW8 8EE, London, UK

Press Release

OSKAR HOLWECK: ONE ZERO ZERO

Patrick Heide Contemporary Art is delighted to present *Oskar Holweck: One Zero Zero*, the German artist's first solo exhibition in the UK, marking 100 years since the birth of this largely overlooked and recently rediscovered seminal post-war figure. The title *One Zero Zero* refers to both, the centenary of his birth as well as his affiliation with *Group Zero*, an influential post-war art movement that originated in Germany and developed international acclaim. In the spirit of *Zero* and other post-war art movements such as *Arte Povera* and *Spatialism*, Holweck's oeuvre is deeply innovative, constantly pushing the boundaries of the artistic process - particularly through the use of one medium: paper. Holweck is thus considered one of the key pioneers of paper art in Europe.

The exhibition at Patrick Heide Contemporary Art features a historic overview of works sourced directly from Holweck's estate spanning different phases of his career. *One Zero Zero* highlights two key aspects of Holweck's practice: his early abstract-gestural ink drawings from the late 1950s and his groundbreaking experiments with monochrome surfaces, which emerged around the same time and continued into the 1980s. The gestural quality of his graphic work served as the foundation for his later explorations, where painterly mark-making shifts to a physical act and engagement with paper.

Oskar Holweck – Form and Texture, an expansive institutional retrospective on the occasion of his centenary, is currently on view at Saarland Museum - Moderne Galerie, Germany. Recent exhibitions include a solo presentation at Villa Zanders (Germany, 2023), a museum dedicated to works on paper, as well as the group exhibitions *Manzoni in Holland* at Stedelijk Museum Schiedam (Netherlands, 2019), *Structura ZERO foundation* at ZERO Haus Düsseldorf (Germany, 2019) and *The Sky as a Studio. Yves Klein and his Contemporaries* at Centre Pompidou Metz (France, 2020).



Exhibition text by Siegmund Grewenig, co-editor of *The Catalogue Raisonné of Works by Oskar Holweck*:

Holweck is one of those few artists who has managed to remain present in art history since the late 1950s. More than 500 exhibitions from Paris to Taipei, from Seoul to Berlin bear witness to this. Major retrospectives are being held in the Rhineland and Saarbrücken to mark the 100th anniversary of his birth. A TV documentary about his life has been made and his catalogue raisonné will be published by the end of his anniversary year.

Early on, Holweck caught the attention of the ground-breaking German avant-garde group Zero and was subsequently invited to participate in their exhibitions. His early ink drawings were serial and experimental, in line with liberating gestural experimentations in Europe and the US, always driven by the desire to explore the fundamental principles of art: light, movement and space. To illustrate that his works are nothing more than a seismographic description of the state of a moment, from the mid-1950s onwards Holweck no longer gave his works conventional titles. The title became the day the work was created.



Holweck had a particular passion for one medium: paper. Folding, cutting, compressing, crumpling, removing, scaring and drilling – he hardly omitted any experiment with and around paper. To this day, he is regarded as a “pioneer of paper art” in Europe. The tools he employed were simple: nails, screws and a drill. The results were all the more surprising! As the works were radically new, he also invented a new genre: *Reissreliefs* (torn reliefs), a term that describes both the process and the result.

Equally, as a university professor, Holweck developed fundamental studies based on the Bauhaus' preliminary courses, aiming to deepen the understanding of "seeing." *Sehen* (seeing) was also the title of an exhibition he conceived, which toured from Cologne to Zurich, London, Glasgow, Bristol, Manchester and Birmingham, where it made a significant impact on art colleges and the public.

Even after many decades, Holweck's oeuvre retains its integrity and originality. The reduction and concentration that distinguish his works still speak to us today; he could be referred to as a classic. His art is not boisterous, it is tranquil, and through its openness, it offers the viewer a pathway to self-reflection