

Contemporary painting in **GERMANY**

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an exhibition organised by the Auckland City Art Gallery
for the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, May-August 1965

"Had it not been for the Nazi persecutions" wrote the French critic Michel Ragon in 1956 "it is almost certain that the centre of art production today would lie in Germany". That sounds like generosity, for a Frenchman great generosity. Yet five years earlier a periodical *Art d'aujourd'hui*, had asked young Paris artists who meant most to them. Their list was Klee, Kandinsky, Hans Hartung. By the time Ragon wrote they would have added Wols: three German exiles and a man who spent his whole productive life in Germany. Today in the United States the two great teachers of the present generation come from Germany, Albers and Hans Hofmann. The Bauhaus is the father of American design. To this diaspora one must add early deaths — Schwitters in exile, Schlemmer in hiding — and all the gifts which never came to full development. A generation was wiped out. Young German artists in 1945 started from zero.

It takes not less than thirty years to build a new artistic productivity and what matters as much, a public and collecting class to carry it. The country now is rich again: but culturally seen the money is in the wrong hands. As to the artist-generation in its later forties and its fifties now, it is a generation of survivors. It has survived — what is left of it — persecution and war and lack of patronage. It was kept alive for fifteen years by the museums. But museum directors are rarely qualified to pick contemporary art. Many eclectics and epigones have been pulled up into celebrities. Some artists of achievement are ignored, others rated far below their quality. This has been reflected in German shows abroad. So it comes that, among the senior artists in this exhibition, some are internationally known and some not even in Germany.

The younger generation, in its early or its middle thirties now, has had it easier. It could develop faster — lost no time. The growth of public patronage, of prizes, contracts, fellowships, has helped it on — though here too there have been museum directors' favourites. Some young painters had international contacts from the first and are already well known outside Germany. The end result has been a closing of the normal generation gap. A late maturing one has met one early ripe. There is no distinction of style. The age in which the painters live and not their personal age determines that. Since Schools, national or regional, are past, affiliations are to international trends. This does not diminish originality in individuals, any more than the Schools of the past. The first three trends correspond roughly to what in America are known as Abstract-Expressionism, Abstract-Impressionism and Hard-Edge art. Emil Schumacher has moved in his development out of the second group into the first.

He is no pioneer and yet he has a very personal style. It combines stimuli from industry and from the landscape in a way not often seen in European art. In his paint quality, his rhythm and sensibility, his subtle sense of colour and material, he is perhaps the best in Germany. Rupprecht Geiger is his complimentary opposite. His forms are simplified up to the limit of the possible. Contrasts are often violent and he is quite uninterested in paint. But he is a visionary artist — and his vision is that of our own time. Geiger has been compared to Mark Rothko by the Americans. The common factor, I think, is a Russian-landscape influence. In fact Geiger may be called the most original painter in Germany within this period.

Fred Thieler has stood the nearest to America. I think it was a parallel and not an influence. He is an ecstatic, and a revolutionary, who feels the crisis of the times and projects it with all his force. Electric shifts of colour and mounting rhythms fit like hand and glove. In his new work the explosion shifts into monumental form.

The late Heinrich Tost, Hans Kaiser and the much younger Peter Brüning have all more landscape basis, but there is the same explosive quality. Tost was a man with the sun in his belly. He was highly intelligent; but his work is instinct and intoxication with light and organic growth. Kaiser too, is an ecstatic, but his dynamic forms are less wild than they seem. His calligraphic hand has great precision and his colour gets its glow and distance from his work with stained-glass. Brüning has had a very quick and consistent development. He is closest of all to the countryside, its movement, sounds and light. This he interprets in a pure *peinture de geste*. He has a mastery of picture space and picture plane which for his age are very notable. Hann Trier has been up to now the very type of

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Heinz Mack

37 DYNAMIC STRUCTURE:
BLACK AND WHITE
*Dynamische Struktur Schwarz auf
Weiss*
Oil 110 x 130

38 WHITE ON BLACK
Weiss auf Schwarz
Oil 110 x 130

39 WHITE IN WHITE
Weiss in Weiss
Oil 110 x 130

G K Pfahler

40 METROPOLITAN 40 1964-65
Mixed media 180 x 160

41 SPIRIT OF REALITY 1963
Mixed media 150 x 130

42 FORMATIVE 1961
Mixed media 150 x 125

Otto Piene

43 PLANET "FRUIT" 1963
Gouache 73 x 102

44 PLANET "FLOWER"
Gouache 73 x 102

45 THREE STORY FIRE
FLOWER 1964
Gouache 96 x 69

Emil Schumacher

46 HITTA 1965
Oil on linen 80 x 10

47 TULLA 1959
Oil on linen 170 x 132

48 TOLMAR 1961
Oil on linen 140 x 96

Fred Thieler

49 R.S.— DARK-N.Z. I 1965
Oil on canvas 300 x 170

50 N.Z. I/65
Collage 123 x 87

51 N.Z. II/65
Collage 123 x 87

Heinrich Tost

52 PAINTERLY CONTINENT
Malerischer Kontinent
Oil 80 x 100

Hann Trier

53 PROTUBERANCES 1964
Protuberanzen
Egg tempera on linen 130 x 146

54 STRAW SPUN INTO
GOLD I 1964
Stroh zu Gold spinnen I
Egg tempera on linen 81 x 116

55 STRAW SPUN INTO
GOLD II 1964
Stroh zu Gold spinnen II
Egg tempera on linen 81 x 116

Günther Üecker

56 ROSE 1963
Nails, canvas and wood 115 x 85

57 RAINBOW 1962
Regenbogen
Nails, canvas and wood 110 x 80

58 GREY PHANTOM 1962
Graues phantom
Nails, canvas and wood 175 x 117

Irmgart Wessel-Zumloh

59 IN THE BOUDOIR
Im Boudoir
Oil 80 x 150

60 GRAPE HARVEST
Zur-zeit-der Weinlese
Oil 70 x 110

61 WITH A BLACK PITCHER
Mit Schwarzem Krug
Oil 90 x 110

Gerhard Wind

62 "FIGURATION G.VIII '59,
PORTA PORTESE"
Oil on canvas 210 x 130

63 "FIGURATION G.XXVII '62"
Oil on canvas 120 x 130

64 "FIGURATION G.XXXVII
'63, ROTES JAVEA BILD"
Oil on canvas 150 x 120

Paul Wunderlich

65 CREATION OF WOMAN I
1962
Oil 116 x 89

66 CREATION OF WOMAN II
1962
Oil 116 x 89

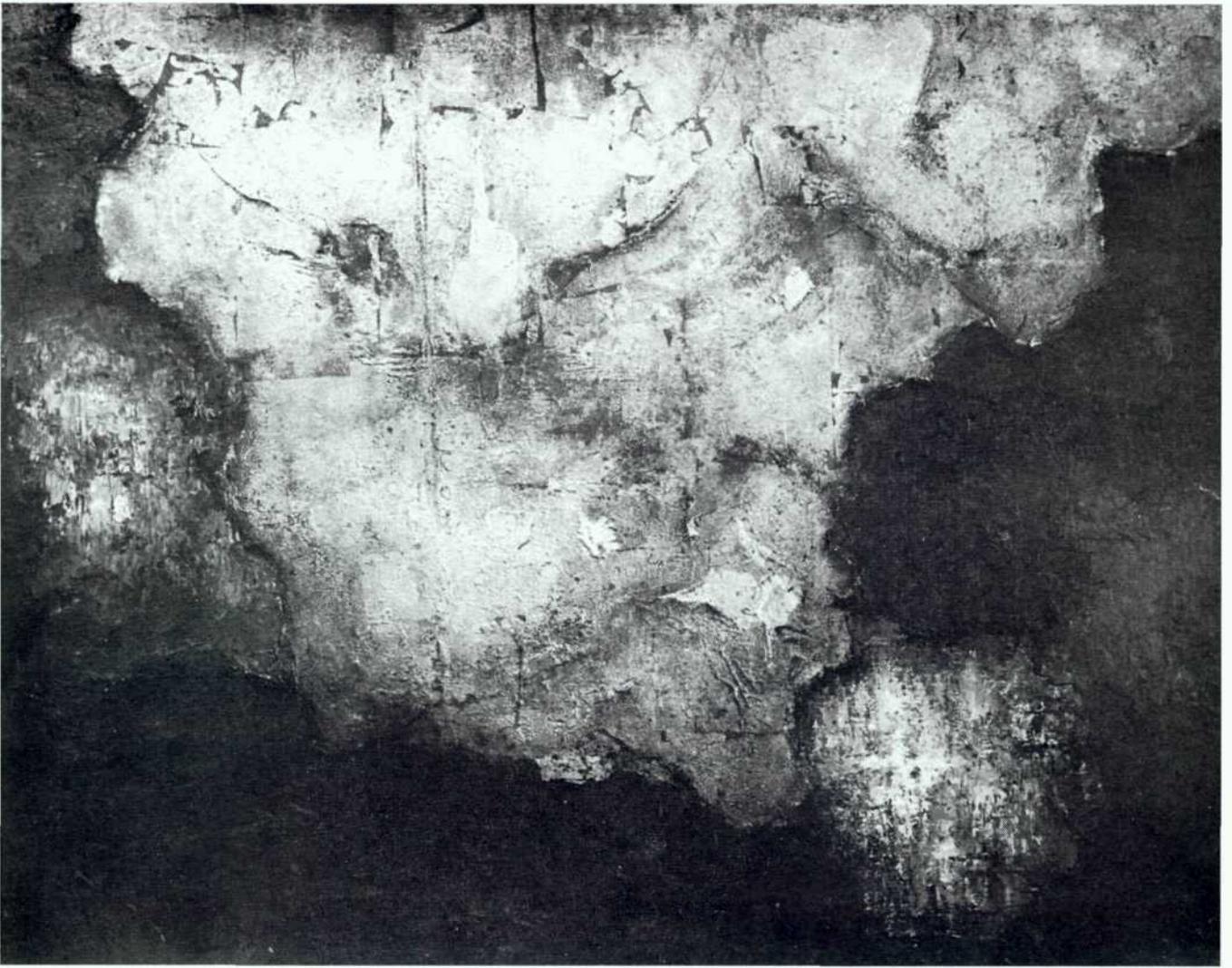


Brüning 62

Brüning 1



Geccelli 20



Von Hündeberg 24



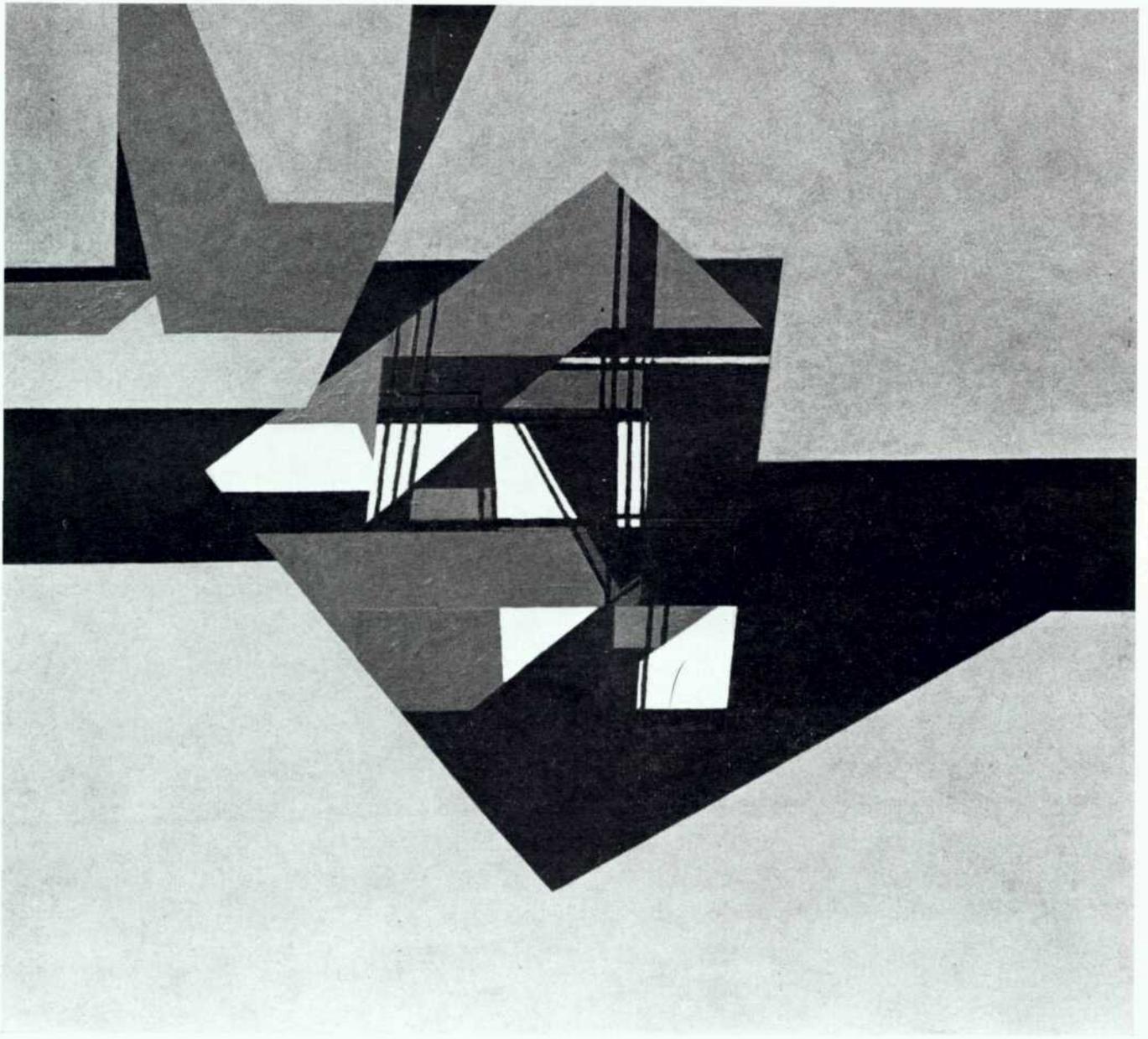
Wessel Zumloh 61



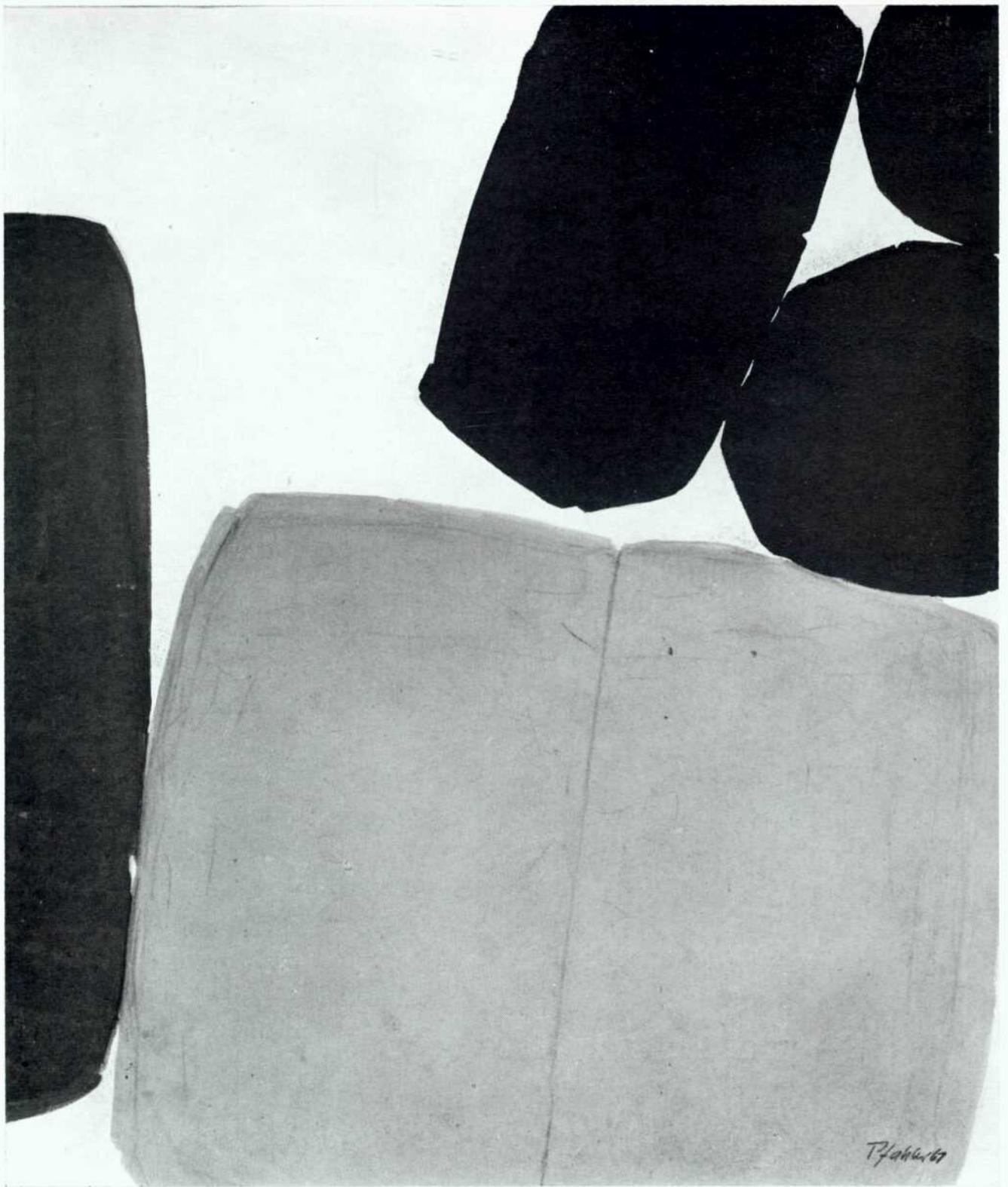
Kaiser 26



Schumacher 48



Wind 64



Pfhaler 42

Brüning

Peter Brüning was born 1929 in Düsseldorf. He studied from 1950 to 1952 at the Stuttgart Academy under Willi Baumeister, who had an important influence on his development. After that he settled down not far from Düsseldorf at Ratingen in the Rhineland, the landscape of which has also been an influence. From the first he has had close connections with Paris and with the Italian cities. In 1956 he was included in two exhibitions at the Studio P. Faccetti in Paris and in 1957 he had a one-man show at the Galerie Apollinaire in Milan. Meanwhile his talent had been recognised in Germany. In 1955 he was given the Förderpreis of the Cornelius prize of the City of Düsseldorf (an award for young painters), in 1959 a fellowship by the Kulturkreis of the German Industrialists Association and in 1961 the Villa Romana prize and fellowship for Florence. In that year he also won a prize in the international Premio Lissone in Italy. In 1960 Brüning had one-man shows in Milan, Rome and Rotterdam, in 1961 in Paris and Basle, in 1962 in Vienna, in 1963 in Paris again and in 1964 for the second time in Rome. During this time he exhibited regularly in Germany and also took part in exhibitions in London and Warsaw (1959) the Hague (1960), Rotterdam, New York and Pittsburgh (1961), Washington DC and five further U.S. cities (1962), Amsterdam (1963) and in a travelling exhibition in Denmark (1964), and yearly in France and Italy. In 1964 he had his first retrospective exhibition at the Museum in Wuppertal, which has since toured Germany. Brüning is represented in the collections of the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh U.S.A., the Museum of Lissone, Italy, and in Germany in Museum Schloss Morsbroich, Leverkusen, the Kaiser-Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld, the Kunsthalle, Mannheim, the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, the Landes Museum, Hanover, the von-der-Heydt Museum, Wuppertal, and the municipal collections of Bonn and of Wolfsburg (the city created by the Volkswagen works).

Dahmen

K. F. Dahmen was born 1917 at Stolberg in the Rhineland, where he now lives. He studied from 1931 to 1933 at the Kunstgewerbeschule in nearby Aachen. His career was interrupted by the Nazi period, by war service and internment. Dahmen painted his first abstract pictures in 1950. From 1951-52 he lived in Paris and Ascona and in 1953-54 he travelled in Belgium, Italy and the South of France. During this time he associated himself with the movement of *art informel* or Tachism. On his return to Germany his 'Parisian' style of painting aroused opposition and for a time he was better known in Paris than in his own country. His one-man shows have been in Paris (yearly 1955-59, 1961, 1964, 1965), Ascona (1961), Schiedamm, Holland (1956), Brussels (1959), Milan (1961), Ibiza, Oslo and Rotterdam (1963), New York (1964) as well as in Aachen (1946 and 1949) and in various German cities every year since 1957. During this time he has taken part in international exhibitions every year since 1955 in Paris, as well as in Zurich (1954), Amsterdam (1956), Clermont-Ferrand and Barcelona (1957), Lausanne (1958, 1959, 1961, 1962), Charleroi (1958, 1962), Basle, Rome (1958), London (1959, 1964), Milan (1959, 1960), Turin and Chau-de-Fonds (1959), New York (1960, 1961), Rio de Janeiro (1960), the Hague and Grenchen (1960, 1961), Lisbon, Brussels and in Canada (1961), Pittsburgh U.S.A. (1961, 1964), Tokyo (1962), Rotterdam (1962, 1964), Washington DC and five further U. S. cities (1962-63), Madrid, Luxemburg, and St. Etienne (1964), Detroit (1965). In 1958 Dahmen received the international prize for abstract painting in Lausanne. He is represented in the collections of the Boymans Museum in Rotterdam, La Chau-de-Fonds (Switzerland) and Caracas (Venezuela), in Germany in those of the Kunsthalle, Recklinghausen, Kunsthalle, Mannheim, Suermont Museum, Aachen, Museum Schloss Morsbroich, Leverkusen, the von-der-Heydt Museum, Wuppertal, the Municipal Art Collections, Bonn and the museums of Witten and Düren. He has carried out important mural projects in Mannheim, Heidelberg and Aachen.

Fassbender

Josef Fassbender was born 1903 in Cologne, where he now lives. He studied from 1926 to 1928 at the Kölner Werkschulen and in 1929 received the Villa Romana prize and fellowship for Florence. In 1935 his graphic work was shown at the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne; but the next year his paintings for the Kunstlerbund exhibition in Munich were seized by the Nazis. From 1941-44 he saw service as a cartographer. He was taken prisoner in the latter year and was in British internment until 1946. During his absence the whole of his work up to that time was destroyed in the Allied air-raids on Cologne. On his return he settled at Bornheim near Bonn and began to build up his work again. In 1950, at the age of forty-seven, he had the first one-man show of his life at the

Galerie der Spiegel in Cologne. He returned to the city in 1953.

There followed a series of teaching appointments: as guest professor at the Hochschule für bildende Kunst in Hamburg (1953-54), as head of the graphics class at the Werkkunstschule in Krefeld (1955-58) and finally as full professor at the Academy in Düsseldorf, where he still works. Fassbender was awarded the Art Prize of the City of Cologne in 1957, that of the Province of Northrhine-Westphalia in 1960 and the second prize in the Premio Marzotto at Valdagno, Italy, in the same year. In 1964 he won the international graphics prize of the Venice Biennale. In 1956 Fassbender had a one-man show at the Museum in Duisburg, in 1957 at the Galerie der Spiegel in Cologne, in 1958 at the Karl-Ernst-Osthaus Museum in Hagen. In 1961 his retrospective exhibition began at the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hanover and travelled, via the main German museums, to the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Save for the showing of his drawings at the Biennale in 1964 he has had no other one-man show outside Germany, but has taken part in many international exhibitions. Fassbender has carried out or designed a number of mural paintings and wall-tapestries since 1954, of which the most important are in Bonn, Cologne, Bad Godesberg and Düsseldorf.

Geiger

Rupprecht Geiger was born 1908 in Munich, the son of the painter, etcher and teacher Willi Geiger. He qualified as an architect, a profession he practiced for a number of years. As a painter he is self-taught, but the formative influence was almost certainly a year in Spain in 1924, when he was sixteen years old. Geiger was mobilised in 1940. He served on the Russian front until 1944 and thereafter in Greece. These were the complementary experiences. He obtained a medical discharge and so avoided internment. On the collapse of Germany all building ceased and he was able to do nothing but paint for the first time. He was a founder-member of the artists' group ZEN49, active in Munich 1950-55, but he has remained apart from all artistic tendencies, completely personal. In 1953 Geiger had one-man shows in Munich and Cologne, in 1956 in Berlin and Stockholm, in 1957 Milan and Paris, 1958 Düsseldorf and Munich, 1960 Rome, 1961 in Munich and in Essen (his first successful show in Germany), in 1963 in Freiburg, Wiesbaden and Cologne and in 1964 in Munich, Vienna, Wolfsburg and Rome. Meanwhile he took part in exhibitions in Lucern, Switzerland (1953), Paris (1955), Grenchen, Switzerland and Pittsburg U.S.A. (1958), Sao Paulo, Tokyo, New York and a travelling exhibition in the U.S. (1959), Rio de Janeiro (1960), Charleroi, Auckland and Grenchen (1961), Paris Pittsburg, Washington DC and five further cities (1962), London and Milan (1963), Paris, Copenhagen and Grenchen (1964). A number of these exhibitions have been devoted to prints and it is as a print maker that Geiger has been best received. Since the death of Willi Baumeister, he is the master of the silkscreen print in Germany. Since 1961 the power and originality of his oils has begun to be recognised and he is represented in the collections of the Lehnbach Gallery and the Bavarian State Collections in Munich, the Municipal Gallery in Stuttgart, the Folkwang-Museum in Essen, the Municipal Museum in Regensburg, the von-der-Heydt Museum in Wuppertal, the Gallery of the 20th Century in Berlin and the Municipal Museum in Cassel and the Auckland City Art Gallery.

Geccelli

Johannes Geccelli, of Italian descent on his father's side, was born 1925 at Königsberg in East Prussia. He was mobilised in 1943, when he was just about to enter art school there, and was later in British internment. When he was released in 1947 it was no longer possible to return home, since East Prussia had been annexed by Poland. He therefore moved to Düsseldorf and from 1947-51 studied at the Academy there, training as an art teacher. He taught for twelve years at a High School in Mülheim on the Ruhr. In 1964 he was a guest professor at the Hochschule für bildende Kunst in Hamburg and in 1965 was appointed a full professor at that in Berlin. In 1958 Geccelli was given the Förderpreis of the Cornelius prize of the city of Düsseldorf (an award for young painters) in 1960 the Villa Romana Prize and fellowship for Florence, and in 1963 the Ruhr Prize. In 1957 and 1959 he had one-man shows in Düsseldorf, in 1960 in Wuppertal and Witten, in 1961 in Berlin, 1962 in Stuttgart, 1963 at the Wuppertal Museum, in Düsseldorf and Siegen, 1964 in Berlin and Oldenburg. He has not exhibited alone outside Germany. He has however participated in exhibitions in Milan (Premio Marzotto 1960-61), Lille, France (1962), Washington DC and five further cities (1962) and Pittsburg U.S.A. (1964). Geccelli is represented in the collections of the Kunsthalle, Recklinghausen, the Märkisches Museum in Witten, the von-der Heydt Museum in Wuppertal, Northrhine-Westphalia, Mülheim on the Ruhr, Oldenburg, Wolfsburg and Ludwigshafen.

Berlin and Munich (1961 and 1964), Hamburg (1962), Mannheim, Düren, Heidelberg and Lübeck. During this time he has taken part in international exhibitions in Pittsburgh U.S.A. (1952, 1955, 1958, 1961 and 1964), in Sao Paulo (1959, 1965) and in travelling exhibitions in the United States (1959-60) and in Washington DC and five further American cities (1962). Trier is represented with paintings or prints in virtually all the public collections of Federal Germany, as well as in those of Amsterdam, Boston, Seattle, Atlanta, Pittsburgh and New York.

Tost

Heinrich Tost was born 1901 in Dessau and died 1964 at Timmendorfer Strand. Tost studied independently in Munich in 1922-25. An extreme independent, he was dissatisfied with artistic life there and moved to Berchtesgarden. Here he spent four years alone making landscape studies of the High Alps. In 1929 he settled down for the first time, with his own studio, in Berlin. Here he remained until 1931 and here he made his first abstract watercolours. From 1931 to 1934 he went wandering again, through Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Italy. In 1936 he settled down finally in Berlin and began work on linear landscape-studies. He was mobilised, saw war service and was interned. After his return in 1947 he had the first exhibition of his life, at the age of forty-six. He then began working on abstract paintings in oil. Two other exhibitions in Berlin followed, in 1949 and 1957. They gained him very little recognition. In 1962 the 'Freunde junger Kunst' society of Düsseldorf arranged two exhibitions, one in Bochum at the Galerie Falazik and the other at the Malkasten club in Düsseldorf. The first had a limited success, but the second was violently attacked in the local press. In 1963-64 Tost went to the South of Germany to paint, as was his custom. He fell ill, was returned to Berlin and underwent an operation. In the Summer he went to Timmendorfer Strand to recuperate, fell ill again, was operated on too late and died after an illness of two months. His invitation to the present exhibition reached him when he was already dying.

Üecker

Günther Uecker was born 1930 in Mecklenburg. He studied painting in Wismar, at the Academy in Wiessensee, Berlin and at the Academy in Düsseldorf. Since 1957 he has concerned himself with 'space-objects', usually in the form of reliefs made by driving nails into wooden backgrounds. These are then usually, but not always, sprayed with white paint. They have been through a long process of development. The latest phase is the 'nailing' of existing objects, such as tables, chairs and pianos. Uecker was represented at the second of the 'one-evening exhibitions' organised by Heinz Mack and Otto Piene in Düsseldorf in 1958. When these led to the occasional publication ZERO and more gradually to the international association Uecker joined the other two to form the core of the group in Germany. The three have consistently exhibited, published and organised demonstrations together, sometimes with and sometimes without a wider following. Uecker's personal exhibitions, apart from those in Germany, have been 1959 in Milan, 1962 Antwerp, 1964 Paris and the Hague; those with Mack and Piene 1961 in Rome, 1962 Brussels, 1964 London, Klagenfurt, New York. He has taken part in international exhibitions in Paris (1960, 1962, 1963), London (1962), Amsterdam (1961, 1962), as well as in Antwerp, Zürich, Formosa, Stockholm, Zagreb, the Hague, Ghent, Bern, San Marino, Basle, etc. Uecker is represented in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, of the Tate Gallery, the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis, the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo, as well as in the museums of Brussels, Eindhoven, Hannover, Wuppertal, Bochum, Krefeld and Leverkusen.

Wessel-Zumloh

Irmgart Wessel-Zumloh was born 1907 as the daughter of a judge at Grevenbrück in Westphalia. In 1928 she herself began the study of law in Munich. In 1929 she switched to art and studied painting at the Academies of Königsberg and Berlin for three years. She married a painter, Wilhelm Wessel, in 1934 and settled down at Iserlohn in Westphalia, where she still lives. She has however spent long periods abroad, during the War in Rome and since 1950 in France, Spain, Italy, Greece and the Near East. A long stay in Spain (1957-58) had a special influence on her development. Most of her personal exhibitions have been in Germany: in 1946 Hagen, 1950 Bochum, Wuppertal and Rheydt, 1953 Duisburg, 1956 Bern, Switzerland, 1957 Witten, 1958 Hamm, 1960 Munster, Frankfurt, Wuppertal, 1961 Hagen and Cassel, 1962 Munich, 1964 Bremen and Ulm. But during this time she has taken part in exhibitions in Amsterdam and Eindhoven (1954), Lissone, Italy (1956), Madrid and Barcelona (1959) Lille, France and Bruges, Belgium (1961),

Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Santiago de Chile, Venice, Athens, Salonika, Beirut, Washington DC and five further U.S. cities (1962) and Paris (1963). Irmgart Wessel-Zumloh was awarded the Karl-Ernst-Osthaus prize of the city of Hagen in 1952, the Industry Prize of Northrhine Westphalia in 1953 and the Wilhelm Morgner Prize of the city of Soest in 1957. She is represented in the collections of the Von-der-Heydt Museum in Wuppertal, the Municipal Art Gallery in Bochum, the Karl-Ernst-Osthaus Museum and the Municipal collection of Hagen, the Museum at Ostwall, Dortmund, the Gustav-Lubke Museum and Municipal Art collection of Hamm, the Märkisches Museum, Witten, the Lehbruck Museum, and the Municipal collection of Duisburg, the Art collections of Northrhine-Westphalia, the Wilhelm-Morgner-Museum in Soest and the Municipal collection of Iserlohn.

Wind

Gerhard Wind was born 1928 in Hamburg. He studied at the Landtskunschool (now Hochschule für Bildende Künste) there from 1952-54 and at the Düsseldorf Academy from 1954-58. In the latter period he also acted as assistant to Josef Fassbender on his mural contracts. While still at the Academy he was awarded a fellowship by the Kulturkreis of the German Industrialists Association in 1956, the Förderpreis of the Cornelius Prize of Düsseldorf in 1957 and the Villa Massimo Prize with fellowship for Rome in 1958. On his return from Italy he settled down in Düsseldorf, where he now lives. His one-man shows have been 1956 in Hamburg, 1957, 1963 and 1964 in Düsseldorf, 1958 and 1960 in Cologne, 1961 in Frankfurt and 1964 in Lübeck. He has not shown alone outside Germany, but among other international exhibitions he has been represented at the Venice Biennale, in Rome and in Lucern (1958), at the Graphics Biennial in Ljubljana (1959, 1961, 1963, 1965), in Rio de Janeiro (1960), in Auckland (1961), in Washington DC and five further U. S. cities (1962) and in Tokyo (1965). Wind is represented in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Seattle Art Museum, the Gallagher Memorial collection of the University of Arizona and in Germany in the Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf, the Municipal Art Collection, Bonn, the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, the Kunsthalle Hamburg, the Bavarian State Collections in Munich, the Kunstmuseum of Oldenburg, the Landesmuseum in Bonn. and in the Auckland City Art Gallery. In addition to his painting, he has carried out a number of contracts for murals, wall-hangings, windows and recently also for reliefs in wood, concrete and sandstone in schools, in public buildings and for industry.

Wunderlich

Paul Wunderlich was born 1927 in Berlin. He studied at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg. 1960 to 1964 he taught graphic art at the same school. 1961 to 1963 he lived first in Paris and then in Italy. 1963 he was appointed to a professorship in Hamburg, where he now lives. Wunderlich was awarded a fellowship by the Kulturkreis of the German Industrialists Association in 1954, the national Kunstpreis der Jugend for graphic art in 1960, the Collins Prize of the city of Philadelphia for lithography in 1962 and the International Forum Award in Tokyo in 1964. In 1963 he had one-man shows at the Prints Club of Philadelphia, the San Francisco Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, Miami. In Germany his personal exhibitions have been in Hamburg (1957, 1960, 1962), Düsseldorf (1958, 1961, 1963), Berlin and Hanover (1962) Frankfurt (1963) and Munich (1964) as well as in Lübeck, Worpsswede, Heidelberg, and Kaiserslautern. This year he will be showing in Rome. During this time he has participated in international exhibitions in Paris (1957, 1961), Washington DC and five further U.S. cities (1962), Philadelphia (1963) and Tokyo (1964). Wunderlich is represented in the Museums of Modern Art in New York and Miami and in the San Francisco Museum as well as in the graphics collections of some fifteen museums in Federal Germany.