

The Museum of Modern Art

West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Circle 5-8900 Cable: Modernart

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Fifteen constructions of 1963 and '64 by Günter Haese, a 40-year-old German artist whose work has never before been seen in the United States, will be on view at The Museum of Modern Art from October 16 through November 15. The exhibition is directed by William C. Seitz, Associate Curator, Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions.

Haese's evocative and witty assemblages of clockwork, wire and wire mesh bear such titles as Noli Me Tangere, Roi Soleil and Pandora's Box. When activated by vibration or air currents they have characteristic movements that further enliven them.

Until 1960 Haese was a traditional painter and sculptor. This change of direction began during the winter of 1960-61 when he dismantled a clock. Fascinated by the little gears, balance wheels, tension springs and spindles spread around him, he arranged them on a flat surface, made monotypes from them, and traced their rims and spirals.

By 1962 he had made about fifty of these monotypes, but then the attraction of the objects led him to reconstruct them within a framework of fine brass wire and later screening, into the airy, delicate assemblages that make up this exhibition. Their wit and fantasy recall the imagery of Paul Klee; yet, it appears that Haese, who grew up in the Third Reich, knew almost nothing of Klee. When the parallel was called to his attention, according to Herbert Pée, director of the Ulm Museum where Haese had his first show of constructions in 1963, "he found self-confirmation in it and yet at the same time saw that he was entirely different."

The earliest pieces were static, but as he learned to control his material easily, the wire, which was originally a device, became the medium of form. Many in this exhibition require only the slightest impulse, even only a breath, to bring them to life.

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Gunter Haese was born in Kiel, Germany, in 1924. As a young man he began to paint without instruction. After serving in the army from 1942 until 1945, he entered a private art school in Plön. There he studied the early Netherlandish artists and became absorbed with Hieronymous Bosch, Grünewald and, after many visits to the Kunsthalle in Hamburg, Caspar David Friedrich and the Dutch artists of the 17th century. In 1950 he entered the Düsseldorf Academy where he attended the introductory class of Bruno Goller. He then changed to the sculpture class of Ewald Mataré where he increased his technical skill. Between 1959 and 1960, until he discovered the wheels of clocks, he made an unsatisfying livelihood by executing reliefs and mosaics for buildings in Düsseldorf where he still lives.

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.. CI 5-8900.