

# Karl-Heinz Adler

## *Metrics*

Galerie EIGEN + ART Berlin

August 19 - October 30, 2021



Karl-Heinz Adler *Metrics*, Exhibition view, 2021, Photo: Uwe Walter, Berlin

the artist transposed the basic principle of seriality to the drawing: from 1967 on, he created his "Serielle Lineaturen" (serial lineatures) – precise, large-format works in which rays and elliptical forms are condensed into elaborate compositions, some of which are reminiscent of waves or eddies. However, their hypnotic visuality does not arise from an expressive stance, but from the opposite: controlled rhythm based in a cool, engineer-like approach. The strict serial principle enables an endlessly rich production of pictures. And this is also the key to understanding why Adler's two- and three-dimensional oeuvre is so relevant and inspiring today, precisely for a younger generation of artists. Repetition, modulation, the effects of minimal shifts in grids, and the conscious negation of the producer in favor of a technoid-cool overall aesthetic are also the central building blocks of the electronic culture that developed in the 1990s and that shapes many areas of Western culture to this day.

This aesthetic program, so familiar to us today, makes Adler's form stone program from the late '60s and the '70s seem paradoxically historical and fresh at the same time. Adler broke through the monotony of late Modernism with the means of art and made brutalism dance. The twelve relief modules he designed make it possible to build structures and compositions of diverse character. Sequencing, twisting, mirroring, and the permutation of the various differentiated serial components he employs gave rise to form stone walls based on continuous, sharp-edged lines that run over the grid; theoretically, these walls could be infinitely extended. In the 1970s, the artist himself coined the term "functional ornament". But the freestanding walls, conceived to be viewed from both sides, overcome their ornamental or architectonic character in favor of a more complex category of space formation. The renowned architecture theoretician Niklas Maak refers to the form stone walls as "construction sculptures" and "free art – disguised as façade decoration". In his artistic applied work, Adler adhered to the Bauhaus aim of ordering and improving people's life-worlds with the aid of architecture and art – and at the same time, he went beyond it. These rhythmic surfaces fuse Bauhaus concepts, Constructivist traditions, modern approaches to ornament, and Minimal Art in a new kind of synthesis.

As a loner artist whose practice ably combined the Bauhaus legacy with the aesthetic world language of Concrete Art under the difficult cultural-policy conditions of communist East Germany, Adler takes an exceptional position in recent art history, even if his oeuvre triggers associations with the contemporaries Sol LeWitt and Max Bill. Adler's art is animated by uncompromising will to create form and the self-assertion of the avant-garde. Playfulness and rigor, practice and theory, heaviness and lightness are brought into a fascinating balance. As a "producing system", it is deeply inscribed with renewal and variability in the artistic source code. That is what feeds its timeliness and uncanny presence.

*Kito Nedo*

Karl-Heinz Adler, born in 1927 in Remtengrün in Germany's Vogtland region and died in 2018, is one of the most important representatives of concrete, postwar avant-garde art. His minimalist, geometrically inspired drawings, collages, folding art, and sculptural objects, but also the construction-accompanying works developed jointly with Friedrich Kracht, have for some time now been in the process of international rediscovery in art and architecture circles and are appreciated as pioneering artistic achievements.

Inspired by his work as an instructor in the architecture department at Dresden's Technical College, in 1957 Adler began his first collages, the "Schichtungen" (layerings). At the end of the 1960s,

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## Biography

Born on June 20, 1927, in Remtengrün (Vogtland).  
Lived and worked in Dresden and Remtengrün.  
Died November 4, 2018 in Dresden.

Karl-Heinz Adler is an artist, inventor, and teacher and considered an important but independent supporter of German concrete art and constructivism.

2016	Named an honorary member of the Saxon Academy of Arts
2008	Awarded the title of professor and an honorary professorship for "Bildnerische Lehre" in the Faculty of Architecture at the Technische Universität Dresden
Since 2005	Permanent exhibition at Museum Modern Art Hünfeld
1995	Honorary residence at Villa Massimo in Rome, Italy
1992	Member of the Deutscher Künstlerbund
Since 1991	Numerous national and international solo exhibitions
Since 1990	Growing national and international recognition of his work as an independent contribution to concrete art
1988 – 95	Visiting professor at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf
1977/78	Participated in the 8th National Art Exhibition of the GDR (followed by participation in further exhibitions)
Since 1972	Full concentration on his own artistic work
Since 1966	Works freelance in Dresden
Since 1960	Member of the Kunst am Bau (Art in Architecture) section of the Cooperative of Visual Artists Dresden
1957/58	Develops first constructive collages according to the principle of the layering of serial elements on paper
1955 – 61	Teaching and research at the Technische Hochschule Dresden (architecture, architectural sculpture, nude drawing)
1947 – 53	Diploma, studies art at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste, West Berlin, under Arthur Degner, transfers to the Kunstakademie Dresden, studies under Wilhelm Rudolph and Hans Grundig
1941 – 44	Work and training as a draftsman, studies textile industry at the Kunst- und Fachhochschule in Plauen, under Walther Löbering

## Awards and Honors

2018	Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany
2008	Art prize of the city of Dresden
1988	Vordemberge-Gildewart-Preis
1986	Award of the 1st International Triennial of Drawing, Kalisz, Poland

Here you can find the  
room plan:

