



December 2007

Manfred Mohr

Bremen Kunsthalle

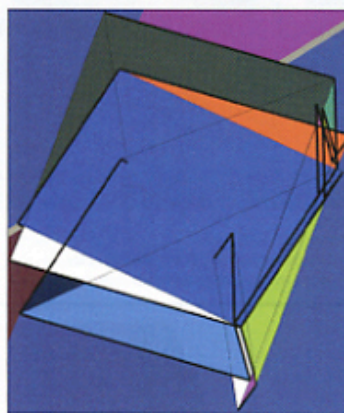
Bremen

This probing retrospective was part of the German develop digital-art award Manfred Mohr won last year. Titled "Broken Symmetry," it surveyed the career of the digital-art pioneer, who has been using computers in his work since 1968.

Mohr's art is situated at the intersection of automated processes and esthetics. He writes computer algorithms—rules that generate visual constructions—but these inventions, whether realized as paintings, drawings, or moving images, are as important to him as the logic behind them.

Like Renaissance artists, Mohr is preoccupied with the problems of representing space on a flat surface. But his illusions are substantially trickier, because he works with spatial dimensions more complicated than we can comprehend. The cube takes center stage in his work, but only as an idea—a supersign from which other signs are constructed. We can see only those permutations of the cube that are comprehensible to us. These edges, surfaces, and diagonals give us access to much more complex spatial dimensions, which we can conceive of but can't see.

Mohr also uses algorithms to create textlike drawings with a plotter connected to a computer. The lines in some drawings let us read how a symbol is constructed, how it is built up and then deconstructed, becoming asymmetrical. Other drawings play with the back of the paper as space, using the paper's transparency to create foreground and back-



Manfred Mohr, *P-671-b*, 1999–2003,
pigment ink on paper, 43 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

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ground. These drawings evoke the same feeling as ancient writing—they seem to have a logic that is incomprehensible to us. In this fascinating way, ancient and modern meet in Mohr's work.

—Arnulf Marzluf

Translated by Marja-Kristina Akinsha.