

# ARTnews

APRIL 2013

## Manfred Mohr

Carroll/Fletcher  
London

If you didn't know that New York-based German artist Manfred Mohr works almost exclusively with computers, you could probably guess it from his perfectly angular geometric designs. In this survey of his half-century career, "one and zero," there was barely a brushstroke, jagged edge, or gestural



Manfred Mohr, *P-306/350D*, 1984-94, acrylic on canvas, 86 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 98 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Carroll/Fletcher.

element of any kind. Yet Mohr's technique is clearly a lot more complex than simply clicking and dragging.

Born in 1938, the artist was one of the first to use algorithms and technology to make abstract works, and his chilly, hybrid process combines conceptual art and computer science to yield pieces of surprising beauty and subtlety. In *P-709-B5* (2002), a series of colored triangular planes formally recalls Russian Constructivism, minus the political content. A number of videos in which computer-generated shapes slowly but constantly shift form in graceful progression may be more graphic design than art, but they are lovely to watch.

Mohr displayed a more tactile approach with a group of lacquered-steel wall sculptures. They have a cool pliability; in *P522d* (1997), for example, black and metallic-silver lines merge with shadows to create a muscular yet fragile interplay of light and dark, materiality and ethereality.

The show also included a large selection of work from Mohr's pioneering 1971 exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, which presented a suite of drawings made by computer plotters. These were the first computer-generated works most people had ever seen, and they have lost none of their strange, delicate power. Some suggest telex strips or electronic circuit

boards, while others evoke long rows of script or punctuation marks, as if Mohr were devising some new dialect. In a way, he was—and this show demonstrated that this extraordinarily inventive artist is still developing the language of digital art.

—Roger Atwood