

OTTO PIENE
Light and Ceramics

opening: 3 July 2014, 7 pm
exhibition dates: 4 July – 26 July 2014

Alongside 'genius loci II', SETAREH opens the exhibition '**Otto Piene. Light and Ceramics.**' This year, Otto Piene, the co-founder of the ZERO group, is celebrated in museums all over the world. SETAREH Gallery is dedicating a retrospective to his ceramics of the last ten years. Current exhibitions of internationally renowned museums like the 'Neue Nationalgalerie' Berlin (July 2014), the 'Guggenheim Museum' New York (ZERO, October 2014) and the 'Langen Foundation' Hombroich, Germany, clearly indicate the immense importance of this artist for the art of the 20th and 21st century.

His enormous artistic range and his utterly experimental attitude towards art made Otto Piene a pioneer of modern art right from the outset.

At the end of the 1950s, together with ZERO, he moved art beyond the realm of traditional painting and towards new media, materials and technologies: he is famous for his light-kinetic works, his spectacular fire and smoke paintings and his completely new and contemporary way of relating to nature and its basic phenomena. For several decades – from the late 1960s until 1994 – he worked at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston (MIT) where he developed and taught stupendous new forms of art and possibilities of expression that influenced art not only in the US but globally. The vast range of his innovative oeuvre includes the use of laser and holography and, in his 'Sky Art', of the environment.

His 700-metre 'Olympic Rainbow' at the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972 also became a political symbol of peace and remains unforgettable.

Otto Piene's varied works are characterized by the proximity and his quest for the elemental forces of nature: light, fire, air and earth. The element of earth and its connection with fire are the main aspects of his latest creations, his CERAMICS.

Since 1999, Otto Piene has been working with ceramics as a medium. His ceramics refer back to the early kinetic works and take up the subject of the grid. Piene himself defines them meaningfully as "*schwere Bilder*" or "heavy pictures": they are less illusionistic than paintings and they have an inherent haptic quality, letting the viewer "feel" rather than just "see" the objects.

Fire has been a central aspect of his work from the 1960s onwards in his famous fire-gouaches and it is the role of fire that attracts him to ceramics, too.

With his clay molds, Otto Piene takes on the archaic role of the demiurge, and he does so quite deliberately: "*The main attraction is to turn little into 'something' and to reproduce certain aspects of the world. The involvement of the hand is important...*"

In line with the title of the exhibition, '**Light and Ceramics**', SETAREH shows several spectacular light-kinetic grid objects. Flashing sources of light, moved by engines, connect the experience of light and space and create a space of light that is always newly emerging.

The exhibition offers the opportunity to relive the fascinating development of Otto Piene's oeuvre and to experience the latest form of expression of this infinitely innovative and creative artist.