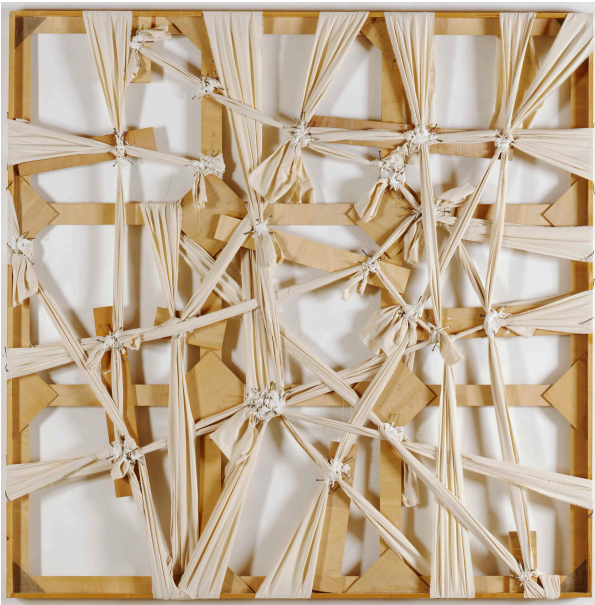


CARDI GALLERY  
Presents  
GÜNTHER UECKER

September – November 2014  
Opening: Tuesday, September 9th 2014, 7-9pm



July 29, 2014 (Milan, Italy) - Cardi Gallery is pleased to open its fall season with a solo-show featuring the German sculptor, stage designer and kinetic artist Günther Uecker, perhaps most well known for his association with the Zero Group, one of the most significant avant-garde movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Featuring works produced from the late 60s to the present, the exhibition charts the many stages of Uecker's prolific career. Curator Davide Di Maggio selected pieces for this show directly from Uecker's studio in Düsseldorf. *Günther Uecker* opens on September 9, 2014 and will remain on view through November 2014.

Rejecting the Socialist Realism that was prevalent through his student years, Uecker first became known for a very physical series of relief-form paintings, often puncturing the surface of the canvas with every-day objects such as nails, corks and cardboard cubes. Mid-way between sculpture and painting, the methodical and durational process of these early works reflected his fascination with purification rituals practiced in Buddhism, Taoism, and Islam. After an influential meeting with John Cage, Uecker's precise, mathematical approach shifted to a more free-form process as he transitioned from

repetitive lines in canvas to inserting nails into everyday objects, including television sets, chairs, and pianos. He also began to incorporate kinetic and electrical elements – such as rotating discs and light boxes – in an exploration of the various elements of light, space, movement and time.

Uecker, along with Heinz Mack and Otto Piene, formed the core of the Zero Group, which encompassed an orbit of international adherents, including Yves Klein and Lucio Fontana. Reeling from the traumas of World War II, they sought to create a regenerative pictorial language focused on light and movement, seeking a break from traditional painting or sculpture and returning art to a "zero base." While the Zero Group disbanded in 1966, Uecker continued exploring new directions, including multiple series of works inspired by Conceptual, Land and Body Art. He later designed and executed several stage sets for operas, including Ludwig van Beethoven's *Fidelio* (1805/06), and Richard Wagner's *Parsifal* (1877–82) and *Lohengrin* (1846–48).

With a continually evolving practice, Uecker refuses to be bound by the past. While his central participation in the Zero Group marks a crucial point both in his oeuvre and in the development of contemporary art, his later works show a willingness to take risks and establish autonomy from this earlier period in his career.

#### About Günther Uecker

Günther Uecker (b. 1930) is a German sculptor, op artist and installation artist. Uecker began his artistic education in 1949 at Wismar. He then went to the art school at Berlin-Weißensee and in 1955 to Düsseldorf where he studied under Otto Pankok at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. In addition to numerous Zero Group exhibitions, Uecker has participated Documenta 4, Kassel, Germany (1968), the Venice Biennale (1970), and has had numerous solos shows, including one at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (1983), a retrospective at the Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung, Munich (1990), and another solo show at the Ulmer Museum, Ulm, Germany (2010). He taught at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf from 1974 to 1995, and was promoted to professor in 1976. Uecker's work can be found in the collections of major institutions worldwide, among them: the ZERO foundation and Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf; Calderara Foundation Collection, Milan; Courtauld Institute of Art, (London); Honolulu Museum of Art, the Schleswig-Holstein Museums (Germany), Studio Esseci (Padua, Italy), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, Netherlands), Von der Heydt-Museum (Wuppertal, Germany); Museum of Modern Art, New York; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; and the Walker Art Center, Minnesota. Uecker lives and works in Düsseldorf.

#### About Cardi Gallery

Located in the heart of Milan, Cardi Gallery is the premier gallery for Italian post-war contemporary art and Arte Povera. Nicolo Cardi, who heads up the gallery with his father Renato Cardi, comes from a strong family legacy of nurturing and supporting the careers of modern Italian artists. Today, father and son continue to use the gallery as a platform to shape the arts and culture landscape in Milan and throughout Italy. In the 1970s, Renato Cardi began collecting the work of under-recognized artists such as Lucio Fontana and Michelangelo Pistoletto and started to build a distinguished collection of work from the Arte Povera movement. Through the support of these artists and by presenting their work at Cardi Gallery, both the gallery and Renato gained a reputation for being a critical steward and launching their careers. Active for over 30 years, the gallery produces four major exhibitions a year and regularly participates in several international art fairs. The seasonal shows and involvement in art fairs highlight the gallery's comprehensive holdings of Italian artists such as Alighiero Boetti, Alberto Burri, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Enrico Castellani, Luciano Fabro, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Mario Merz, Jannis Kounellis and Michelangelo Pistoletto.

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*Image: Günter Uecker, Verletzungen - Verbindungen, 1990 Nail, white glue, canvas on wood 300 x 280 cm, courtesy Cardi Gallery*