



Press Release / Pressemitteilung

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Top Museum Award in Germany: The Kunstmuseen Krefeld are the Museum of the Year 2022

The Kunstmuseen Krefeld—whose venues comprise the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum and two villas designed by Mies van der Rohe, Haus Lange and Haus Esters—have been named Museum of the Year 2022 by the German section of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA). “My team and I are extremely delighted to receive the most prestigious award for museums in Germany,” says museum director Katia Baudin. “Since 2016, we have been working hard to raise the unique profile of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld with their three architectural jewels and their long, multifaceted history. Our starting point is the unique DNA of the institution as a place where art, design, and architecture intersect, which we then build upon while taking contemporary approaches and issues into consideration.” This identity is rooted in the founding history of the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, which has served as a bridge between museum, urban society, and everyday life since around 1900. It is equally influenced by the progressive programming of former director Paul Wember, who brought the international avant-garde to Krefeld in the postwar period and established the tradition of site-specific work in Haus Lange. “Then as now, we see the museum as a platform and laboratory, a living space that facilitates new dialogues between the museum, artists, and the public, between disciplines and eras, between the past and the future. This universal guiding principle is reflected in everything we do, from the exhibition program, the presentation of the collection and our mediation formats to our visual identity,” explains Katia Baudin. “My team and I are proud of this accolade and would like to extend a big thank you to everyone who has supported us over the years, especially the people of Krefeld for their trust in our work.”

"I am very pleased that the Kunstmuseen Krefeld are receiving the attention they deserve through this prestigious award," explains Frank Meyer, Lord Mayor of the City of Krefeld: "The team around Katia Baudin has shown many high-caliber exhibitions in recent years and developed an unmistakable profile in the process. This is also increasingly being noticed outside Krefeld. Particularly during the city's anniversary, the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum and Haus Lange and Haus Esters are important calling cards for our city, because they embody history as well as the present and the avant-garde view of the future."

One of the reasons given by the jury of AICA (Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art) Germany for their decision was the fact that the Kunstmuseen Krefeld and their current program are a groundbreaking pioneer in the interdisciplinary “polyphony” of artistic fields, which has become a subject of discussion once again. “Founded more than 120 years ago, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld remain committed to fostering a close relationship between art, design and architecture,” begins AICA's official statement, and continues: “While the founding phase of Krefeld's ‘civic museum’ was about cultivating ‘good taste’ in an influential way, the idea of using art and design to illustrate the diversity of everyday experiences lives on in the Krefeld museum, which has been under the direction of Katia Baudin since 2016.”

Kunstmuseen Krefeld

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The current program is focused on continually reassessing the museums' history and world-class collection in the context of contemporary issues and challenges. The iconic venues of Haus Lange and Haus Esters remain the impetus and inspiration for new productions by contemporary artists, such as Elmgreen & Dragset in 2016, Jasmina Cibic in 2017, or the participants in the major group exhibition *Anders wohnen* in 2019, which marked the centenary of the Bauhaus.

New perspectives on modernism and its interdisciplinary visions are a recurring theme throughout the program and are accentuated by carefully considered juxtapositions between contemporary and historical approaches, as exemplified by Sonia Delaunay and Andrea Zittel in Haus Lange and Haus Esters in 2022.

In a similar way, the *Sammlungssatelliten* (Collection Satellites) format established in 2018 brings contemporary artists and designers into dialogue with aspects of the collection and the history of the institution and encourages them to develop new work, such as Shannon Bool (2022), Marcel Odenbach (2021), Bik van der Pol (2018), and Robert Stadler, who redesigned the museum café K+ in 2021/22. Collaborations with artists and designers often lead to acquisitions or significant donations, enabling the collection to grow continuously and in close connection with the exhibition program.

The focus is essentially on an experimental approach that often leads to visitors being invited to actively participate in the exhibition—as was the case with Christian Falsnaes in 2018 and the *HL HE Dialog* between Adolf Luther and Julio Le Parc in 2022. Large-scale thematic exhibitions in the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, which reopened in 2016 following major renovation, emphasize particular aspects of the collection, combining new research and unusual perspectives with visually appealing presentations that are made accessible to visitors in a variety of ways: recent examples include *Auf Freiheit zugeschnitten: Das Künstlerkleid um 1900* (2018), *Folklore und Avant-Garde* (2019), *Beuys & Duchamp* (2021), and *ON AIR* (2022).

The exhibition formats are closely aligned with a dedicated art education program that explicitly addresses changes in urban society. Through numerous initiatives—including K+, which is used as an open space, and a permanent platform for participatory projects—the museums open themselves up to diverse groups and provide access to topics that are relevant to society and the future. A place for creative community and exchange: as in the early days of the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld remain internationally active exhibition venues that are attuned to the contemporary landscape while retaining their local roots.

Each year, the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) presents an award to a museum that resists the prevailing trend of “art entertainment” and instead bases its program on well-founded exhibition concepts at a distance from the commercial art world. The guiding philosophy is to adhere to the original mission of museum work—collecting, preserving and presenting—while adapting to the sociocultural shifts and expectations of a changing public on a local and national level. This aim has always been firmly embedded in the Kunstmuseen Krefeld's program and has also been successfully pursued through the exhibition concepts developed in recent years, as well as the major special exhibitions based on the history of the collection and presented to the outside world through innovative mediation formats.

The date of the official award ceremony is yet to be announced. The President of AICA Germany, Danièle Perrier, will present the Museum of the Year award to museum director Katia Baudin and her team. The awards for Exhibition of the Year and Special Exhibition of the Year will also be presented at this event. As Museum of the Year, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld will host the event.

Visit us

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The Kunstmuseen are a cultural institution of the city of Krefeld.
Admission is free for children and young people under 18.