



Press Release / Pressemitteilung

Friday, March 28, 2025

Partly Furnished, Excellent View. Site-specific Art for Haus Lange Haus Esters
HLHE DIALOGUE: The Special Site
March 30–September 21, 2025, Haus Lange

This year, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld celebrate the 70th anniversary of Museum Haus Lange. In 1955, the villa was generously donated to the city of Krefeld by the Lange family. The private residence became a public museum for contemporary art. Since then, architecture, art, and design have enjoyed a productive relationship at this special site. On the occasion of the anniversary, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld focus for the first time on projects and works that artists have created in direct response to the site and that would not exist without it. The exhibition *Partly Furnished, Excellent View: Site-Specific Art for Haus Lange Haus Esters* presents this rich and still vibrant legacy of site-specificity with over seventy projects, including paintings, sculptures, installations, films, prints, and numerous documents.

A clear architectural language, expressive materials, nature, light, transparency, and great attention to detail: These are some of the characteristics associated with Haus Lange and Haus Esters in Krefeld. Built by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in the late 1920s, the neighboring villas embody the modernist awakening of the early twentieth century. Their former residents, the Lange and Esters families, experimented with a new way of living in the open spaces. “We are still grateful today to the Lange and Esters families,” says museum director Katia Baudin, “for entrusting their family homes to the City of Krefeld and thus making this unique modernist architectural ensemble accessible to the public. Ulrich Lange, the son of Hermann Lange who originally commissioned the building, generously donated Haus Lange – which has been open as a museum since 1955 – to the city in 1968. In 1976, the heirs of the Esters family obligingly sold their villa to the city. These gestures stand for a civic commitment that keeps the cultural diversity in our city so vibrant. The successful recognition of the two villas, which have been internationally renowned as venues for contemporary art since the 1960s, shows how worthwhile this has been.”

The history of site-specificity at Haus Lange Haus Esters began in 1961, when the young French artist Yves Klein conceived his first and only museum exhibition in his lifetime. Le Vide, Haus Lange’s “Void” room, which has been preserved to this day, testifies to this beginning at a time when it was extremely unusual for a museum to have artists working on and with the site. “The late 1960s saw the beginning of a series of brilliant and sometimes spectacular site-specific projects by now-famous artists, including Christo, Jan Dibbets, Hans Haacke, Richard Long, Fred Sandback, and the group Haus-Rucker-Co,” says Sylvia Martin, curator of the exhibition. To date, some sixty-five artists—and, since 2019, also designers—have engaged with the site.

While in the 1970s and 1980s their interest was primarily in the transparency between the buildings and the surrounding nature, as well as in the materiality of the villas, since the 1990s the focus has increasingly shifted to the living space, the house as a private place.

Kunstmuseen Krefeld

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum Haus Lange Haus Esters

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In 2017, for example, the artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset transformed Haus Lange back into a family home. The story they told was rooted in current political events: The new residents came from Great Britain to escape Brexit.

The exhibition *Partly Furnished, Excellent View* offers a comprehensive insight into the rich history of site-specific art at Haus Lange Haus Esters. It shows how the site in its essential identities—the physical building, the living space of a house, and the institution of a museum—has been addressed with different approaches. Modernism, as formulated by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, is repeatedly put to the test. The exhibition returns works from the collection of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld to the architectural context for which they were created. Loans by artists broaden the overview, including a conceptual work by Lara Almarcegui, who in 2014 focused on the building materials of Haus Lange. Many artists have incorporated furniture and structural details designed by Mies van der Rohe into their projects. Together with original works of art, these components create an immersive and evocative atmosphere. Numerous documents that have rarely or never been shown, including films, photographs, draft designs, posters, sound recordings, and books, complement the staging and visualize the legacy of site-specificity at Haus Lange Haus Esters.

With works and projects by

Lara Almarcegui, Céline Berger, BLESS, Daniel Buren, Christo, Jasmina Cibic, Bogomir Ecker, Elmgreen & Dragset, Barry Flanagan, Hans Haacke, Haus-Rucker-Co, Bethan Huws, Anna K.E., Yves Klein, Karin Kneffel, Richard Long, Mario Merz, Claes Oldenburg, David Reed, Andreas Schmitten, Gregor Schneider, Richard Serra, Timm Ulrichs, Lawrence Weiner, Andrea Zittel and others

On the occasion of the exhibition *Partly Furnished, Excellent View*, a publication will be published in which the history of site-specificity at Haus Lange Haus Esters will be traced and researched for the first time on the basis of numerous documents. The publication will be presented on May 4, 2025.

HLHE Dialogue: The Special Site

Since 2017, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld have been promoting the juxtaposition of historical and more recent or contemporary positions in art, design, and architecture that repeatedly reflect on the legacy of modernism in new ways in the HLHE Dialogue series in the neighboring Mies villas. The central theme of the current dialogue is The Special Site. The exhibition *Partly Furnished, Excellent View. Site-Specific Art for Haus Lange Haus Esters* offers an insight into the history of the site-specific projects at Haus Lange. The internationally renowned artist Gregor Schneider is developing a new site-specific project for Haus Esters, which will be accessible from May 4, 2025.

We thank the Kulturstiftung der Länder and the Kunststiftung NRW for their support.

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Visit
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The Kunstmuseen Krefeld are a cultural institution of the city of Krefeld.

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<https://kunstmuseenkrefeld.de/en/press>

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