



Press Release / Pressemitteilung

April 2025

Gregor Schneider: Welcome
4 May – 21 September 2025, Haus Esters

Press conference: Friday, May 2, 2025, 11:00 a.m., Haus Esters

Opening: Sunday, May 4, 2025, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

On invitation from the Kunstmuseen Krefeld, the internationally renowned artist Gregor Schneider has carried out a new, site-specific project especially for Haus Esters. His new work *Haus Alhmam Aldaas* revolves around the villa built by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in the 1920s as an example of modern architecture that was to serve as both a residential and a museum exhibition space. For his work, Schneider temporarily turned the museum into the home of a family from Syria. As such it once again fulfilled its original function as a private living space. The exhibition *Welcome* mirrors that transformation with all its particularities while at the same time pointing to a much-discussed humanitarian context: flight and migration in Europe.

Gregor Schneider invited a Syrian family to live in the museum for a certain period of time. The man had fled the war in 2015; his wife later followed him. Their two children were born in Germany. The family adapted the space and furnished the ground floor of Haus Esters in keeping with their needs and tastes. The rooms and garden were filled with life, with the children's voices, the smell of food, and the inhabitants' daily activities. As a museum, Haus Esters was not open to the public in this period. After a time, the family moved out again, taking the furniture, objects, and voices with them. What remains are wallpaper, curtains, small traces—and a void that raises questions:

Where is the family now? What happens to a house that will no longer be lived in but once again museified? Gregor Schneider's work pushes the museum as an institution to its limits. It questions its functions and supposed neutrality while also reflecting how politics deals with migration in Germany. The exhibition *Welcome* is not just an invitation but also a multifaceted commentary on realities we often ignore.

What happens to a museum like Haus Esters when it is inhabited by people from a different cultural background? What aesthetic influence do the new inhabitants have on the rooms? And vice versa: How do the existing rooms shape their lives? In *Welcome*, Gregor Schneider investigates the close interconnectedness of art and everyday reality—and its consequences. The house as a home and shelter is as much under scrutiny as the museum in its role as public space. The palpable emptiness of the rooms—the absence—creates a new openness, a fragile, uncertain situation that defies simple interpretation.

Kunstmuseen Krefeld

Kaiser Wilhelm Museum Haus Lange Haus Esters

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"The Kunstmuseen Krefeld are conceived as a place of dialogue—not only about art, but also about the world in which art comes to be. Gregor Schneider's work in Haus Esters is a striking example of the connection between art, architecture, and social reality in which this special, historical place intertwines with issues of the present," comments museum director Katia Baudin.

Rooms and houses are the core material and meaning-charged metaphors of Gregor Schneider's art. Curator Sylvia Martin points out: "Schneider's artistic development is closely linked to the houses in Krefeld." Schneider's first museum exhibition took place in Haus Lange back in 1994. By exchanging a section of wall, he connected his *Haus u r* with the house's architecture in an intervention so subtle as to be hardly noticeable. In 2000, the artist had his alter ego, *Hannelore Reuen*—the fictitious resident of *Haus u r*—move to the garden shed of Haus Esters. (The name Reuen goes back to his maternal grandmother.) Finally, in 2005, he proclaimed the replica of a room in Haus Esters his personal "death room."

Schneider's return to Haus Esters in May 2025 takes his longstanding exploration of architecture, biography, and societal issues to a new level. The family Alhnam Aldaas, which has been renting an apartment in Mönchengladbach from the artist for the past six years, temporarily became part of his work—not as a model, but as real neighbors, as people with a history and a present. Curator Sylvia Martin stresses: "Schneider thus translates an aspect of his direct living environment into the artistic and museological context—and confronts the museum with a reality that unfolds outside its usual boundaries."

From May 23, photographic works by Gregor Schneider, which were created as part of the project *Welcome*, will be on display at the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum. The presentation of a film work currently being developed by the artist, is planned for the summer at the KWM.

Gregor Schneider (b. in Rheydt in 1969, now lives in Mönchengladbach) is one of the internationally most recognized contemporary artists. His art is present in exhibitions and collections all over the world. His most well-known work is *House u r* in the neighboring city Mönchengladbach-Rheydt. Since 1985 he has been painstakingly building rooms into existing rooms in this house. Over a period of decades, he has developed his own encyclopedia of the spaces with his stored collection of rooms. His *Totes Haus u r* (*Dead House u r*) was awarded the Golden Lion at the 2001 Venice Biennale. In 2023 he received the Ernst Franz Vogelmann Award for his contribution to recent sculpture history and for his lifework. He has served as a sculpture professor at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf since 2016.

HLHE Dialogue: The Special Site

Since 2017, in its *HLHE Dialogue* series in the neighboring Mies van der Rohe villas, the Kunstmuseen Krefeld have been promoting the juxtaposition of historical and recent/contemporary art, design, and architecture as a way of reflecting on the modernist legacy. The current dialogue is devoted to the leitmotif *The Special Site*. The new, site-specific exhibition *Gregor Schneider. Welcome* forms the counterpart to the Haus Lange exhibition *Partially furnished, excellent view* on the history of site-specific art.

Gregor Schneider has created an artist's edition. The edition will be published as a poster print in an edition of 300 copies at a price of 40 euros. (incl. VAT). Each edition copy is numbered and signed by the artist. An artist's book will be published to accompany the exhibition.

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Visit
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Kaiser Wilhelm Museum
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The art museums are a cultural institution
of the City of Krefeld.

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

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