

## **ART WITHOUT BARRIERS**

### **Nature + Architecture + Art**

#### **An introduction to Insel (Island) Hombroich, Neuss, Germany**

A successful fusion of Nature, Architecture and Art grows from a singular well informed vision accompanied by a significant 'generosity of spirit', passionate informed perseverance, determination and community involvement. It doesn't come easy!

In the case of 'Museum Insel Hombroich', just a pleasant country half hour drive from Düsseldorf in Germany all these components come together successfully and they manifest themselves on 62 acres of re-cycled land where harmoniously 'Nature meets Architecture meets Art'.

The museum is not set on an 'insel' as the name suggests but exists as an 'island' only in a metaphoric sense - that being a 'cultural island'.

In 1982 Karl Heinrich Müller an informed real estate developer with a significant art collection purchased Rosa Haus by the River Erft, an overgrown estate comprising of a large house and garden built in 1816. Nearby was an abandoned NATO Cruise missile site (this 32 acres of land complete with bunkers and machinery of war was later purchased by Müller in 1994 and added to the Hombroich complex becoming the Raketenstation Hombroich).

Joining Müller originally were Landscape Architect Bernhard Korte who got to grips with the old gardens and planned the minimalist landscapes, Sculptor Erwin Heerich's who's own minimalist sculptures became the maquettes for the amazing gallery buildings. Artists from the Düsseldorf Academy of Art (including some Joseph Beuys students) took up the original studio spaces.

So - imagine meandering along hedged gravel pathways, over small bridges, up and down perforated steel stairways, past large scale outdoor sculptures, on your way to a collection of fifteen separate gallery buildings scattered throughout gardens, natural forest and waterways.

Imagine having access to a private collection of significant artworks totally unencumbered by turnstiles, uniformed security staff, monitoring security cameras, air conditioning ducts, dazzling spot lights, oversized explanatory plaques and over designed exhibition spaces. Even the doors of each building remain open in the Summer and give visitors a welcoming feeling.

Continue imagining that within this natural light environment, you are witnessing major art from Persia, Mexico, China, Africa, and Polynesia alongside that from a list, which includes Klimt, Matisse, Cezanne, Arp, Brancusi, Chillida, Rembrandt, Schwitters and Graubner. There is even an empty building whose internal architectural white space can be fully enjoyed with eyes and ears - and in which one is encouraged to whisper, sing, hum and make sounds.

What makes 'Museum Insel Hombroich' so exceptional is the 'generosity of spirit' I mentioned earlier and the successful and harmonious fusion of Nature, Architecture and Art.

**This is 'Art Without Barriers'**

Museum Insel Hombroich web site :

<http://www.inselhombroich.de/main.htm>

**Open every day**

Until March 31st: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

From April 1st: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Closed on December 24th and 25th,

December 31st and January 1st

**Admission:**

Adults 10,-- €

Pupils, Students

und Behinderte 5,-- €

*Weekends and bank holidays::*

Adults 15,-- €

Pupils, Students

Disabled 7,-- €

**How to get there:**

Motorway A57,

Exit Neuss-Reuschenberg,

Follow the signs or take the bus lines 869 and 872 from Neuss/bus station

Also definitely not to be missed is the nearby Langen Foundation Gallery designed by Japanese Architect Tadao Ando and built in 2004. A truly rare opportunity to view Ando's work in Europe.

<http://www.langenfoundation.de/phpwcms/>

Douglas Sheerer is a Co-Director of Galerie Düsseldorf together with his wife Magda. They visited galleries and major exhibitions in Germany and Italy in June/July 2007

END : 575 words