

# Hombroich Vademecum

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Founded in 1987 by Karl-Heinrich Müller (1936–2007), the museum is an ensemble of landscape, architecture and art. The original Insel Hombroich island is a park dating back to 1816 that was bordered by offshoots of the Erft river and that was rich in historical plants and trees. Landscape architect Bernhard Korte transformed the wild, overgrown park and its adjacent farmland into a unique wetland landscape that combined a creative sense of purpose and a respect for nature in its purest form. Sculptor Erwin Heerich created ten walk-in sculptures on the grounds for showcasing the founder's singular art collection.

In 1994, Müller acquired a nearby former NATO missile base with a view to developing it parallel to Museum Insel Hombroich. Artists and architects Raimund Abraham, Erwin Heerich, Dietmar Hofmann, Oliver Kruse, Katsuhito Nishikawa and Álvaro Siza were all involved in reshaping the grounds, while Tadao Ando designed and constructed the Langen Foundation building. Conceived as a haven for creativity and experimentation, the missile base – or Raketstation – is a place for artists, writers, musicians and academics to live and work. The buildings are open to the general public for exhibitions, concerts and readings, while overnight accommodation can be booked at Gästehaus Kloster (→ 31). In 2002/2003, Müller joined both areas by having artist Per Kirkeby erect five buildings on what is now known as the Kirkeby-Feld. All of which means that Hombroich today is a vibrant, multifaceted cultural space with over 40 buildings on an area of 64 hectares that contains a fascinating diversity of flora and fauna.

The term *vademecum* comes from the Latin "Vade mecum!" meaning "go with me", and describes a kind of useful referential booklet that people can carry around with them. In the same spirit, this booklet brings together information, stories and artistic contributions relating to Hombroich that you can refer to during your visit or at a later date.



Since November 2021, Museum Insel Hombroich has been paving the way for a sustainable ecological future. An expansive but virtually invisible geothermal field will provide the buildings with energy from the earth, while the large exhibition pavilions Labyrinth and Zwölf-Räume-Haus (Twelve-Room House) are to be air-conditioned and fitted with distinctive new glass roofs. However, this also means disturbing the peace and quiet here for a time, with site access roads being laid over the grass and excavators transporting building materials and soil. Similarly, hedges and flower beds will have to make way temporarily for the construction work and paths will be closed off.

All of this will take place under the strict supervision of horticultural, restoration and ecological construction experts and will ultimately improve our climate footprint significantly. By visiting us – especially during this time – you are helping to preserve Hombroich.

In founding the museum, Karl-Heinrich Müller wanted to give something back to the community. By presenting his collection in public, financing an expansive park and cultural landscape and providing years of financial support to various artists, he was instrumental in integrating art into everyday life.

As befits lover of good food, he also ensured that the notion of hospitality was firmly anchored in the principles of the Stiftung Insel Hombroich. Visitors to the museum are invited to come to the cafeteria for refreshments and conversation. We are proud that, despite the changes in the current environment, we are still able to welcome our guests here in this way. We treat visitors to a carefully selected – and sometimes surprising – range of seasonal food, sourced wherever possible from local producers and under ecologically sound conditions. If you wish to give something back in return, feel free to write us a short review outlining your experience. Or you can join our support association or leave a donation in one of the boxes on display in the cafeteria or at the ticket office.

## Trust your own perception



The guiding principle of Hombroich includes bringing art and nature together for people to experience with all their senses and in their own individual way. Even back when the museum was built in the 1980s, the idea was to allow the artworks to take effect together, transcending eras or cultures without an academic concept to underpin it. Gotthard Graubner, who was responsible for presenting the collection, wrote: "I allowed closed group of works to enter into a dialogue with other groups across different cultures. [...] For me, all elements except the art itself are irrelevant, even obtrusive. References to art history should be conveyed through images rather than academic notes." The decision not to provide any written information also has practical consequences: there are no prohibition signs or directions anywhere on the island.

Visitors are encouraged to experience it in their own way. The place is an appeal to people's own sense of responsibility and aims to raise awareness of where they are and how they can engage with landscape, nature and art in a mindful way. This includes the ongoing search for orientation and the diverting experience of losing one's bearings.

## #inselhombroich Voices from social media

*"I was standing in the undergrowth fixing my hair. It was really gorgeous. The undergrowth around me was gorgeous too, of course, but somehow the effect even extended to the thatch on my head."*

*@inselhombroich is beautiful in its entirety. The wildest of nature with houses that look dreary at first glance but are actually quite fascinating to look at and listen to.*

*There is some art on display too, but in fact the buildings and the rooms are also art in themselves. You can lose your way easily on the island, even though the Labyrinth is closed for the moment. You think you've got no sense of direction and then you constantly run into other people who are lost as well. Some of them claim to know where they are but if you probe more deeply, it turns out they're not all that sure after all. So you still feel lost but not so alone and not like a complete idiot. And at the end when you ask why the directions were so cryptic that everyone ends up getting lost, you find out that it was all planned that way all along, that it's all part of the experience. I guess I've just discovered the meaning of life :)"*

@mowhateva



## Museum meets missile base

The Kirkeby Field combines the museum with the Raketenstation – the former missile base. Named after Danish artist Per Kirkeby, the area consists of five buildings based on his designs that were constructed between 2002 and 2009: the Feld-Haus – Museum of Popular Imagery, the Drei Kapellen and the Kahmen Collection. The partner institutions Skulpturenhalle Neuss and the Langen Foundation are also located next to the field.

### *Feld-Haus – Museum of Popular Imagery*

Designed by Per Kirkeby as an architectural sculpture, this building is home to one of the few museums anywhere dedicated to popular graphic prints. It was opened in 2010 as an offshoot of the Clemens Sels Museum in Neuss. The collection display and autumn exhibition give fascinating insights into the many facets of popular graphic prints, which were produced and sold extensively in the 19th century. In spring, the Feld-Haus presents alternating exhibitions featuring contemporary positions. Saturday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. [www.clemens-sels-museum-neuss.de](http://www.clemens-sels-museum-neuss.de)

### *Kahmen Collection in the Kirkeby-Feld*

This building, which belongs to the Hombroich Institute of Literature and Art, was constructed by Volker Kahmen in 2007 to house artworks from his collection. These include works by Bernd and Hilla Becher, Ulrich Erben, Bruno Goller, Gotthard Graubner, Jochen Hiltmann, René Magritte, Christine Reifenberger, Oskar Schlemmer and others. The Kahmen Collection can be viewed as part of guided tours (→ 22).

### *Drei Kapellen*

This ensemble includes a presentation of Per Kirkeby's work in Hombroich and an exhibition of photos by Ursula Schulz-Dornburg. The third building is used for alternating projects. Drei Kapellen can be viewed as part of guided tours (→ 22).

### *Skulpturenhalle Neuss*

Belonging to the Thomas Schütte Foundation, this sculpture hall and its unique architecture send a signal that can be seen from afar against the flat landscape. To date, it is the largest and most ambitious structure to have been based on one of the artist's models. It holds two exhibitions a year, alternating between lesser known Schütte works and sculptures by international artists.

April to August, Friday to Sunday, 10 am to 6 p.

September to March, Friday to Sunday, 11 am to 5 pm [www.thomas-schuetzte-stiftung.de](http://www.thomas-schuetzte-stiftung.de)

### *Langen Foundation*

Since 2004, the Langen Foundation has been based in a building designed by Japanese architect Tadao Ando. It puts on regularly alternating exhibitions by prominent contemporary artists. In addition, it holds alternating presentations showcasing works from Marianne and Viktor Langen's Japan collection, which is one of the largest and highest-quality collections of its kind in Europe. With this building, Ando aimed to establish continuity between inside and outside and used reinforced concrete, glass and steel in a double-shell construction that adapts to the surrounding landscape.

Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am to 6 pm

[www.langenfoundation.de](http://www.langenfoundation.de)

# Raketenstation Hombroich

In 1966, the Federal Republic of Germany built this missile base for around DM 60 million as part of its "line of defence stretching from North Cape to Turkey". Among other things, NATO stationed warheads for cruise missiles and Pershing rockets here. When the Nuclear Disarmament Treaty was signed between the USA and the Soviet Union, the military facilities in the unmapped military zone were dismantled. In the years that followed, the grounds were neglected except for occasional farming use. In 1994, Karl-Heinrich Müller acquired the missile base and, together with artist friends, transformed it into a counterpart to the museum. Since then, it has been used as a laboratory, a place for experimentation and a base for artists of all disciplines to live and work in. Although the main focus is on creating new works, temporary exhibitions are also held here.

You are invited to explore the Raketenstation on foot and to discover the architecture and sculptures outside.

Please respect the artworks and help to protect them.

Monday to Sunday, 10 am to 6 pm



*falconry*

"I reared me a falcon"  
Der von Kürenberg (1150)

the sky an opened fist,  
leathery december. into which  
the griffin (kestrel, tower falcon,  
kite?) towers and shakes  
at the languages. stands  
shaking; the tower wall marked  
with falcon droppings. a white, where,  
*wideness*, the evening star  
is revealed.

(for *Albrecht Mauritius Wenner*)

„falknerei“, Werke II, © Suhrkamp Verlag, Berlin 2021,  
Translation: Andrew Duncan, 2019

The poet and essayist Thomas Kling (1957-2005) in Hombroich for many years. This is also where the Thomas Kling Archive is located today.

Contemporary music is also represented at the Raketestation thanks to resident composer Christoph Staude, who studied under Witold Szalonek in Berlin and under Rolf Riehm and Bernhard Kontarsky in Frankfurt. For Staude, composing means absolute freedom, a state of complete openness in which he moves from one sound experience to the next. Together with older classical works, New Music is a permanent fixture in Hombroich's event programme. It focuses above all on – often radical – expansions of tonal, harmonic, melodic and rhythmic means and forms. A trend towards individualisation emerged from the 1970s onwards, finally breaking with serial composition.

With the Raketenfestival in spring 2022, the range of contemporary music at Hombroich was expanded to include electronic genres for the very first time. The Inselfestival, which takes place every two years, continues to set the tone in the fields of classical and New Music. Rooted in one of Hombroich's guiding principles, the music can be experienced without a theoretical framework and combined with architecture, nature and fine art.

Oswald Egger

## *In Reality the Place Is More Beautiful and Much Bigger*

Whoever, parallel to art, roams through the nature of things at Hombroich will be struck by its eye-catching buildings: these are frequently grandiloquent, boastful too, sort of oval or, one might say, tax-haven-shaped, so that, with each of them going green on the other, or yellow, or red, they outdo one another in swagger, their architecture waywardly erratic, even odious. Thus the variform ensemble that is "Hombroich" is seen, understood and used as a family of buildings and well-curated interests. The entire area, its be-all and end-all, is the more regulated version of the promise contained in an idea that allows little perception or sense of what it actually betokens or eschews in something ever more rarely evidenced. Like an echo, which, through its repetition of constraint, makes the most of reality, and yet encounters less and less reality in doing so. On the one hand, what emerges, simultaneously, is that which arguably precedes one, that which follows all of this, what whooshes in between, what is in the process of vanishing. But then, in a heartbeat, the unspoken kicks in, and is often more real than whatever merely floats about or oscillates in one's mind's eye. Within this, however, and against it, poetic activity has at its disposal more resonant and far-ranging zones of possibility, necessity, conditionality: areal areas. Like the idea of a legend of the Eternal One wandering through a more covert history of ideas without end or mutation: once upon a time he came upon a

green meadow, on a second occasion he found a flourishing town brimming over with pride, albeit one he will have left long ago. And when, some day, he comes to that place for a third time, a meadow may green again, and few stones would reveal traces of architectural forms, settlements or people. But edification is not necessarily concerned with edifices and rarely with concord or compound interest on value appreciation and extensions. And it is often inaccessible to those who have no access: ground without a guide or banister. Someone who discovers nothing is presumably in search of an absolute something, yet everywhere finds nothing but things. "But what remains", as we know, "is founded by poets". And this other principle of hope for something more open, the monument built more durably than bronze (and therefore set to remain) through poetic activity alone, word for word, would have more potential being, between Horace and Hölderlin, and in brighter colours, "like flowers": only if they are roses, will they bloom,

The poet Oswald Egger, who has worked at Hombroich for the past 20 years, is director of the non-profit company Das böhmische Dorf (The Bohemian Village) and responsible for contemporary writing programmes.



# Practical information

## *Please note the following:*

Please respect the artworks and natural surroundings by remaining on the footpaths.  
Do not touch the pictures or sculptures.  
Do not leave your children unsupervised.  
Food and drink may only be consumed in the cafeteria area.  
Dogs are not allowed in the museum. However, they are allowed in the Raketenstation if on a leash.  
Cars are parked at their owners' own risk. Please also note the opening times for the car park.

## *Guided tours*

Public guided tours of the museum and the Raketenstation are held on the first Sunday of every month.  
You can find information about other guided tours at [www.inselhombroich.de](http://www.inselhombroich.de).

Please email any queries about private tours to [fuehrungen@inselhombroich.de](mailto:fuehrungen@inselhombroich.de) or call +49 (0)211 989 2005.

## *Support and donations*

Our support association has been sponsoring the Stiftung Insel Hombroich's art programme since 1993, including concerts of New Music and other modern works.  
[foerderverein@inselhombroich.de](mailto:foerderverein@inselhombroich.de)  
[www.foerderverein-hombroich.de](http://www.foerderverein-hombroich.de)

## *Gästehaus Kloster*

Accommodation with self-catering  
Book by calling +49 (0)2182 88 74 017 or emailing [vermietung@inselhombroich.de](mailto:vermietung@inselhombroich.de)

## *Taking photographs in Hombroich*

Here in Hombroich, you have the chance to experience art and nature at first hand and to take a break from your phone. If you want to take photographs here, please note the following:

You may only take photographs for private usage – tripods and flash photography are not allowed. If the photos are to be published, you must first obtain consent from the Stiftung Insel Hombroich. Please note that you will have to clarify the copyright status of any photographed works before publishing the photos.  
Please email all commercial inquiries for shooting or filming to [vermietung@inselhombroich.de](mailto:vermietung@inselhombroich.de).

## *Publishing details*

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[www.inselhombroich.de](http://www.inselhombroich.de)

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# Addresses and contact details

## *Museum Insel Hombroich*

Minkel 2, 41472 Neuss, Germany, +49 (0)2182 88 74 000  
museum@inselhombroich.de

April to September, daily, 10 am to 7 pm

October to March, daily, 10 am to 5 pm

The museum is closed on 24, 25 and 31 December  
and on 1 January.

## *Raketenstation Hombroich*

41472 Neuss, Germany, +49 (0)2182 88 74 001  
stiftung@inselhombroich.de  
daily, 10 am to 6 pm

[www.inselhombroich.de](http://www.inselhombroich.de)  
@inselhombroich

#inselhombroich #museuminselhombroich  
#raketenstationhombroich

## *Langen Foundation*

[www.langenfoundation.de](http://www.langenfoundation.de)

## *Skulpturenhalle Neuss*

[www.thomas-schuetten-stiftung.de](http://www.thomas-schuetten-stiftung.de)

## *Feld-Haus – Museum of Popular Imagery*

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Kulturraum		Hombroich