

Press Release

## **The *Stiftung Insel Hombroich* is awarded the *Sparkassen-Kulturstiftung Rheinland* foundation's grand prize**

(Düsseldorf, July 9, 2020). The *Stiftung Insel Hombroich* foundation is this year's laureate of the *Sparkassen-Kulturstiftung Rheinland* foundation's grand prize, the *Großer Kulturpreis*. With an endowment of 30,000 Euros, it is one of Germany's most important arts and culture prizes.

"The *Insel Hombroich* is one of a kind. The way that art and architecture are interwoven with nature triggers a unique type of fascination in visitors to the site. The natural harmony of this river ecosystem is an ideal location to juxtapose unusual architecture and exceptional art in a landscape distinctive to the Rhineland region," says the mayor of the City of Aachen and *Sparkassen-Kulturstiftung Rheinland* foundation's Board Chairman, Marcel Philipp, about the decision.

"A private initiative has culminated in this remarkable ensemble for all our senses. Hombroich has come to stand for a special expression of cultural life in the Rhineland region, one whose charisma radiates far beyond the borders of our region," adds Michael Breuer, President of the Savings Banks Association of the Rhineland Region and Chair of the foundation's Board of Trustees.

The *Museum Insel Hombroich* borders the city of Neuss, Germany. Over the past thirty years, Hombroich has come to serve as the nucleus for a unique cultural space between the larger cities of Düsseldorf and Cologne, developing a distinctive character: Hombroich is at once a museum, artist residence, a landscape and a meeting place for architectural, artistic, literary, philosophical and musical happenings. Pieces by Rembrandt, Jean Fautrier, Lovis Corinth, Alexander Calder, Hans Arp, Henri Matisse, Yves Klein, Francis Picabia, Kurt Schwitters and Gotthard Graubner are equally a part of a collection that also houses Khmer sculptures and archeological treasures.

Embedded in an at once constructed yet still seemingly pristine landscape, ten pavillions designed by sculptor Erwin Heerich serve as both walk-in sculptures as well as exhibition spaces for the extensive art collection of Düsseldorf estate agent Karl-Heinrich Müller (1936 - 2007). For years, the prolific art collector combed Europe for a suitable exhibition space, before finally finding it right on his doorstep in Neuss, only kilometers from his hometown.

In the early 1980s, Karl-Heinrich Müller thus acquired then abandoned Hombroich Island on the Erft River. Working together with the artists Anatol, Erwin Heerich and Gotthard Graubner as well as the landscape architect Bernhard Korte, he created the basis for the implementation of his vision for a complex Gesamtkunstwerk spreading over 21 hectares of land, applying the motto of French impressionist Paul Cézanne "Art is a harmony parallel to nature." Today, the Museum Insel Hombroich belongs to the *Stiftung Insel Hombroich* foundation, which was established in 1997. In addition to the museum, the foundation is meanwhile responsible for maintaining a total cultural space of more 60 hectares, including the former NATO missile base *Raketenstation Hombroich* and the *Kirkeby-Feld* field.

The *Sparkassen-Kulturstiftung Rheinland* foundation was established in 1987 on the initiative of the savings banks (*Sparkassen*) of the Rhineland region of Germany. The foundation supports regionally significant arts and culture projects from all disciplines in the Rhineland region. Since the foundation's inception, it has awarded more than 13 million Euros to promote arts and culture in the area. The *Große Kulturpreis* prize is awarded to outstanding arts and culture professionals or organisations that contribute in an exceptional way to the enrichment of cultural life in the Rhineland region.

This significant prize acknowledges the achievements of an award winner whose whole body of work is of cultural significance for the Rhineland region of Germany. Since 1989, the foundation has been recognizing individual arts & culture professionals and arts & culture organisations alike. Previous laureates include Pina Bausch, Hilla Becher, Wim Wenders and Andreas Gursky, amongst others.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the award ceremony will take place on a smaller scale than usual in the late summer of 2020.

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