

Museum Insel Hombroich



Orangery, a sculpture by Erwin Heerich, 1983.

Wandering through the grounds of [Museum Insel Hombroich](#) is a strangely quiet but yet strong experience. All parts of this unusual museum are art: the landscape and pathways are carefully designed to offer a meditative experience; the pavilions scattered in the landscape are giant, minimalistic sculptures in themselves; and then the amazing collection of artworks, carefully exhibited inside the pavilions.



Inside the orangery, sculptures in direct connection with the surrounding landscape.

Museum Insel Hombroich had its start in 1982 when real estate broker Karl Heinrich Müller purchased the property by the Erft River near Düsseldorf to display his extensive collection of art. Despite its name, Insel Hombroich is not a true island but an enclosure, where the busy life of the surrounding metropolitan Düsseldorf seems to disappear far away behind the surrounding tall greenery. The landscape is a naturalistic combination of wetlands, meadows and wooded areas, sensitively designed by landscape architect Bernhard Korte. Wandering through it, the visitor passes through fifteen pavilions, most of them by sculptor Erwin Heerich. Built of recycled, rough bricks, steel and glass, these minimalist buildings have a cloister like feeling. Some of them contain artworks, some are empty, functioning themselves as huge sculptures to be experienced both from outside and inside.



Inside of Turm, by Erwin Heerich, 1989.

After entering Museum Insel Hombroich, there are no guards or attendants. The works of art are shown without any artificial light, so the experience of them changes depending on the time of day and the season of the visit. The scope and quality of the collection is amazing: there is ethnic art from Africa, Polynesia, Mexico and East Asia, and then works by Western artists, from the traditional to the ultra-contemporary. Rembrandt, Matisse and Cezanne, Schwitters, Arp and Calder are just few of the artists on display. There are no signs or nametags around, and the visitors are left alone with the artworks, taking them in without any explanations. An eccentric but effective choice, and a great contrast to the information overload confronting visitors in most museums today.



The pavilions and art are surrounded with gently undulating meadows and woods.

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From *The International Gardener* Liisa (Finland)