

 **CULTURAL PROMOTION COORDINATION**

 **General Directorate of Visual Arts**

#### Press Release

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 **January | 2017**

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MEXICO AND LATIN AMERICA

**The MUAC will present an exhibition by the artist Gregor Schneider, whose work defies architectural logic and questions the limits of space**

* Throughout his career Schneider has created numerous spatial constructions that unsettle notions of placidity and present themselves as disquieting enclosures with the power to disconcert, to provoke discomfort and to suffocate.
* The show includes photographs, videos, his most emblematic work, *Haus u r* (*u r House*) and a new piece produced expressly for the MUAC.

At the age of 16 (in the mid nineteen-eighties), Gregor Schneider went to live alone in a family house on Unterheydener Street in his native city of Rheydt near Cologne, Germany. The house, number 12, became a laboratory where Schneider experimented with his artistic production using objects and molds, as well as with space and its construction.

Since then, and for more than 20 years, he has devoted himself to the rebuilding, remaking and transformation of spaces within the house: divisions, walls, gaps and new windows, rooms within rooms, to the point where it became impossible to recognize the original structure of the building.

*Gregor Schneider Kindergarten,* an exhibition curated by Virginia Roy and due to open at the MUAC on 11 February, offers to immerse the public in several spaces: a strange playroom for children, a bathroom, an enigmatic room, a bedroom, before leaving through the garage.

A mosaic of photographs mounted on a wall, in which the work of his previous installations can be viewed, marks the beginning of the show, the first by this German artist to be held in Latin America.

**Disquieting, perturbing habitats**

Situating these rooms in an exhibition space means that the architecture of the museum disappears under a form of camouflage, giving way to a dislocation that is both spatial and temporal.

In this transformation of the experiential, rooms cease to be functional spaces with their own intelligible logic. On the contrary, Schneider fosters in them an impulse toward formlessness, turning the structures of living space into something spectral and melancholy. Uninhabited, the rawness of the space gives rise to a manifest discomfort. The placidity and coziness of the house becomes disconcerting; its rooms become disquieting habitats, losing their qualities of intimacy, familiarity and refuge.

The rooms lose their intimate quality and become public, visited spaces – or rather, places that have been "invaded” by an “unwelcome” spectator who cancels the threshold between the public and private. Schneider turns private spaces into cold, public and anonymous ones; into intermediate spaces, spaces of connection and disconnection, that participate in the collective and the individual at the same time.

The show brings together his photographic series *Haus u r* [*u r House*] (1985 to date), an ongoing experiment in construction and transformation, where the intervened space takes on new presences and meanings; *Totes Haus u r* [*u r Dead House*] (2001) in which he records the dismantling of the rooms of his house in Rheydt in preparation for their transportation to Venice (a project for which he was awarded the Golden Lion), as well as other earlier projects developed throughout his career.

*Die Familie Schneider* [*The Schneider Family*] (2004), a video installation produced in London in which the artist superimposes two identical spaces and in which he simultaneously reproduces the same actions undertaken by the same people. Schneider exploits his strategy of repetition and duality in order to throw into relief the tediousness of routine and the peculiar activities of a dysfunctional family.

On discovering that Joseph Goebbels had lived just meters from his house in Rheydt, Schneider acquires the house belonging to the Nazi Minister of Propaganda to undertake a series of projects culminating in the purchase of the house in 2013. Schneider lives in the house in the belief that part of the “spirit of Nazism” is preserved there.

Developing out of this project are the videos *Essen* [*Eating*] (2014) and *Schlafen* [*Sleeping*] (2014), showing the artist eating in the kitchen or sleeping in the bed in the room where Goebbels was born. The artist re-occupies and lives among these spaces, opening tunnels and creating connections between rooms, before eventually destroying the walls with a hammer.

Finally, Schneider registers and records the plans of the building on a USB, which he exhibits as *Dead Letter Box* (2014), and in which he delegates responsibility for the possible reconstruction or demolition of the home of an agent of one of the largest genocides in history.

**Work produced expressly for the exhibition**

Produced especially for the exhibition, *Spielplatz* [*Playground*] (2017) takes on the question of relationship to playgrounds – common in Germany – that proliferated during the period of postwar urban reconstruction, and which he himself frequented as a child. Children’s play areas expose the modern ambiguity of their conception. On the one hand, they are spaces of spontaneity and freedom facilitated by game and play; on the other, they operate within the normativity and control characterizing modern society.

Schneider proposes a non-functional area of play where rules are neither known nor clear. In this way, he once again subverts the utilitarian and functional aspects of spaces and elements, as he did initially in the case of the rooms. This is not a new formalization of play but the creation of a space of disquiet and confusion where, once again, we are unsure whether Schneider is basing his work on real biographical elements or whether the whole thing is a work of fiction. And, moreover, where we are ourselves unsure how to act.

Certain elements of Playground suggest specific references: the sandpit could be linked to the historical *Sandgarten*, or the metallic tubes might allude to the practice of sport and the modern emphasis on sport as a formative activity. Above all, Playground represents an invitation to inhabit that (false) public space in other ways, and to question, out of the experience of disquiet, the dimension and re-signification of spaces. From his own vital experience, Schneider offers a space of memory to reactivate and inhabit the area of play.

*Gregor Schneider Kindergarten* will open at the MUAC on 11 February at 13:00 p.m. The exhibition will remain open until 23 July in rooms 1 and 2.

UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (MUAC). Insurgentes Sur 3000. Centro Cultural Universitario. Delegacion Coyoacan Postcode: 04510. Opening Hours: Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from 10:00 to 18:00 hrs.; Thursday and Saturday from 10:00 to 20:00 hrs. Admission: Thursday to Saturday $40.00 general public. 50% discount available to students, teachers, UNAM, INAPAM, retired ISSSTE and IMSS with a valid ID; Wednesday and Sunday $20.00 general public. 2 x 1 students (with a valid ID). Discounts do not apply to reduced entry fare. Free entry to children under 12 yrs., member of ICOM, AMPROM, CIMAM and Press (with a valid ID). Tels.: 5622 69 39 and 5622 69 99 ext. 48791. Email: difusion@muac.unam.mx Website: www.muac.unam.mx. DiGAV-UNAM Promotion and Media.