ALMINE RECH

MUSEUMS WITHOUT BORDERS

Jan 24 — Aug 30, 2026 | Frac Grand Large, Dunkirk, France

An exchange between Dunkirk (Hauts-de-France) and Krefeld (North Rhine–Westphalia, Germany), drawing on the respective collections of Kunstmuseen Krefeld and the Frac Grand Large.

Through the exhibition 'MUSEUMS WITHOUT BORDERS', the Frac Grand Large highlights the pioneering role of Kunstmuseen Krefeld at the intersection of art, craft, and design. Free from a chronological approach, the exhibition is structured around major thematic groupings drawn from the museum's collection, offering a critical reading of the history of 20th- and 21st-century art in its aesthetic, social, and political dimensions.

From early 20th-century advertising art to Bauhaus works, from the experimental avant-gardes of the 1960s to more recent commissioned pieces, the exhibition explores the connections between modern art and industrial production, as well as their resonances with the architecture of Mies van der Rohe's two villas: Haus Lange and Haus Esters.

By bringing together archives, historical works, and contemporary proposals, 'MUSEUMS WITHOUT BORDERS' invites reflection on our ways of inhabiting space and on the role of today's public collections—as tools of memory, vectors of knowledge, and critical spaces in constant evolution.

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Through the exhibition 'MUSEUMS WITHOUT BORDERS', the Frac Grand Large highlights the pioneering role of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld —whose venues comprise the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum (KWM) and two villas designed by Mies van der Rohe, Haus Lange and Haus Esters— at the crossroads of art, craftsmanship and design. Breaking away from a chronological reading, the exhibition is structured around major thematic groups from the museum's collection, offering a critical reading of the history of art in the 20th and 21st centuries in its aesthetic, social and political dimensions.

From early 20th-century advertising art to Bauhaus pieces, from the experimental avant-garde of the 1960s to more recent commissioned works, the exhibition explores the links between modern art and industrial production, and the resonances with the architecture of the two villas, Haus Lange and Haus Esters.

By bringing together archives, historical works and contemporary proposals, 'MUSEUMS WITHOUT BORDERS' invites us to reflect on how we inhabit space and on the role of today's public collections — both as tools for memory, vectors of knowledge and constantly evolving critical spaces.

'MUSEUMS WITHOUT BORDERS' is the second part of an exhibition that was first held from 28 April to 8 September 2024 in Krefeld, presenting a selection of works from the Frac Grand Large collection, curated by Katia Baudin, director of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld and former director of the Frac Nord – Pas-de-Calais.

The 50th anniversary in 2024 of the twinning of the cities of Dunkirk and Krefeld provided the opportunity for an exceptional dialogue between the Fonds régional d'art contemporain and the Kunstmuseen Krefeld, resulting in a cross-exhibition of their collections.

This project draws on the history of the two institutions, marked by their industrial contexts, and on their collections, which focus on the evolution of applied arts and design. It highlights the richness of artistic exchanges between France and Germany in the 20th and 21st centuries, the role of art in industry, the critical ambition of artists in the social and ecological fields, and their commitment to thinking about alternatives and creating possibilities.

Each institution chooses to highlight unique moments that have marked the history of art and design by inviting the other collection to inhabit remarkable architectures, both physical and symbolic spaces. In Krefeld in 2024, the focus was on Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Bauhaus villas Haus Lange and Haus Esters; for the exhibition in Dunkirk in 2026, the exhibition will occupy all the spaces of the contemporary building by Lacaton & Vassal, with an extension to the Villa Cavrois, located in Croix in the Lille area and designed by Robert Mallet-Stevens.

Far from being a one-off project, ‘MUSEUMS WITHOUT BORDERS’ is designed as a long-term platform for exchange, a vehicle for development that is conscious of the challenges of sustainability and social cohesion for both regions.