

Nidus Opening Speech

Ana Vollenbroich & Annelen Schmidt-Vollenbroich

Dear guests,

We would like to extend a warm welcome to you all and are really pleased that so many people have accepted our invitation. At this point we would particularly like to welcome Ms. Cornelia Zuschke, councilor for planning, building and housing for the city of Düsseldorf.

“Sails are open, waves are foaming, but should a mortal soul dare? Then its courage and faith alone” says Friedrich Schiller’s poem “Longing”.

Did the young architect Bruno Lambart have this poem in mind when he built his home and office building on - what other street name could it - Schillerstrasse in 1955? If you ask us: sure!

It was the longing for a new city and a new urban society that spurred an entire generation to dare, have courage and have faith. And so Düsseldorf, like many other cities, was rebuilt from the rubble and reorganized.

When we founded Nidus in 2016, one of our first projects was the renovation of Bruno Lambart’s house on Schillerstrasse. We were curious to find out more about this time and, as non-Düsseldorf residents, explore the city. We were not disappointed on our long walks through the city and discovered numerous houses similar to Bruno Lambart’s.

The longing for life, the spirit of optimism that is inherent in post-war architecture, can be felt and experienced in every corner. Freed from the shadow of the past, the willingness to experiment, lightness and openness of this architecture is evident, for example, in facade ornaments, large-scale glazing and expressive forms. Often reserved and modest, the distinctiveness can often be found in the details. As a whole, however, they form a uniform and defining image of the city of Düsseldorf and other cities.

We wanted to tell this story of the city and that’s how the idea of founding an architecture gallery came about. Our cosmos. In Düsseldorf, where there is so much to discover.

It is the longing for the city and community, coexistence and lightness that touched us and is what drives us. Especially today, when we all feel this feeling even more. So we hope that this will become a place for exchange and dialogue.

We want to build bridges in our gallery and show how wide the spectrum of architecture can be and how it affects all of us - architects or not. It should be about architecture in the broadest sense, namely about architecture as a mirror of society, across all scales, as a bridge to other disciplines, as a creator of identity, as an expression of economics and politics - as a contribution to culture.

A series of exhibitions and lectures are planned. The next exhibition deals with furniture designs by the Memphis group from Italy, curated by Harry Schellenberg from Gusch Düsseldorf, who is also present today. Afterwards we will show an exhibition on the subject of architecture and painting together with Katharina Benjamin from kntxr.

For further information and current news, we would be pleased if you subscribe to our newsletter and visit our website.

Our invitation said: "Here you can experience and purchase architecture". It should therefore be mentioned at this point that Marie Kreibich's photographs can be purchased. We will donate the proceeds to the Düsseldorfer Arche for the design and materials for the children's afternoon workshops. Here, too, we are pleased that Ms. Shahinmehr, the facility manager, is here this evening. Ms. Welbers from the Nidus team will be happy to provide you with further information about the images.

To bring our gallery into existence, we had many helping hands. First of all, our thanks go to Prof. Dr. Alexandra Apfelbaum, who has accompanied and advised us since the beginning of the "House Bruno Lambert" project. She brought us closer to the longing of this time and wrote a fantastic editorial about our exhibition. The Lambert family, who believed in us and entrusted us with their house. Marie Kreibich, who used her photographs to take a loving look at the twelve townhouses we selected. Many thanks to Ms. Trudewind from the Düsseldorf City Archives for her tours through the seemingly endless photo archive and to Christina Prochaska and Alexander Pilar for the precise construction of the models. Prof. Antje Freiesleben, with whom we were able to have stimulating discussions about the topic of post-war architecture, especially in the early days of this project. We are very pleased that she has come all the way from Berlin to be here this evening. We would especially like to thank our team - the Nidus family has grown over the last five years, they believe in us, they support us and best of all: they inspire us. And our families are also here today - there are no words for their support and that's the only reason we can "dare". Thank you for everything!

We see this exhibition as a plea for the everyday buildings of this time and invite you to take a walk through the rebuilt Düsseldorf, not with a view of the landmarks that many already know and appreciate, but the everyday buildings that we are surrounded by all the time. It is no coincidence that the images displayed here are displayed in a row and their framing is reserved. The power of this architecture unfolds modestly and in its quantity and sequence in the city and its wealth of detail becomes apparent at second glance.

But now, let's hand over to Alexandra Apfelbaum for a few introductory words about the exhibition and the architectural-historical classification.

And wish you and us a nice evening today. Thank you!