

MGKSiegen

Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen
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Press Release

MGKSiegen publishes new digital feature on photos by Bernd and Hilla Becher

The Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen has developed a new digital format dedicated to communicating its own museum collection. In the Entdecken section of the museum's website www.mgksiegen.de, a specially designed feature is now being published for the first time. It focuses on the "Framework Houses in Siegen's Industrial Region" by the internationally renowned as well as regionally significant photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher.

In addition to professional audio clips and high-resolution photo series, the content includes informative short texts and an interactive map. All the content has been designed to appeal to a wide audience and can be used during a visit, for preparation and follow-up purposes, and to engage with the collection's works wherever one's location.

"Framework Houses in Siegen's Industrial Region", created from 1959-1978, is considered to be the first joint photographic project by the artist couple Bernd and Hilla Becher. On display are views of the box-frame, half-timbered buildings that are closely associated with the industrial history of the Siegerland region; these have had a significant impact on the region's architectural landscape. The regionally typical buildings from the period between 1860 and 1920 have survived in Siegen's urban landscape to this day. The first half-timbered house photographs were exhibited in Siegen, Bernd Becher's birthplace, as early as 1964; in 2001, for the opening of MGKSiegen, the artists put together a 146-part series consisting of 12 multi-part tableaux, supplemented by a number of street and town views. Acquired in 2003 for the museum collection (together with the Photographic Collection/ SK Foundation for Art and Culture, Cologne), the "Framework Houses in Siegen's Industrial Region" belong to the MGKSiegen's core holdings. Over the years, other groups of photographs by Bernd and Hilla Becher have been added to the museum collection, showing images of collieries, mines and ironworks from Siegen's industrial area.

All the materials relating to "Bernd and Hilla Becher. Framework Houses in Siegen's Industrial Region" can be accessed using various mobile devices. They cover the artist couple's biographies, their artistic training and careers as well as the artistic method they developed, with which they wrote photographic history. The audio contributions provide the basic framework of the mobile subpage. These are accompanied and supplemented by introductory texts and comprehensive image series consisting of architectural photographs as well as views of exhibitions, works, and work details. A lot of space has been granted to the architectural features of the half-timbered houses, also in relation to a regional architecture that is undergoing change. Consequently, a selection of the half-timbered houses from the southern district of Siegen Eiserfeld, photographed by Bernd and Hilla Becher since the end of the 1950s, has been re-photographed. This comparative photo series taken

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by Zurich-based photographer Philipp Ottendörfer documents the current condition of the houses. Digitally juxtaposed with the historical photographs by the artist couple, they make the changes impressively tangible. One special feature is the embedding of the two groups of photographs in an interactive map, which invites visitors to take a walk on site in Siegen Eiserfeld.

Last but not least, the digital publication offers users a look at the immense influence that the work of Bernd and Hilla Becher has had on artistic photography to the present day. Additional works by the Bechers from the MGKiegen and by their students, such as Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer, Simone Nieweg and Thomas Struth, provide an insight into the so-called Becher School's artistic photography and history of influence.

The digital resource "Bernd and Hilla Becher. Framework Houses in Siegen's Industrial Region" was created as part of the "Museum Digital" project funded by the State Ministry of Culture and Science of North Rhine-Westphalia.

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Bernd and Hilla Becher, Framework Houses in Siegen's Industrial Region, 1959-1978, MGKSiegen, Contemporary Collection, Courtesy Estate Bernd and Hilla Becher, represented by Max Becher