

Escape from Colditz - Papercuts, Collage and Installation

Annette Schröter

25 October 2025 – 9 January 2026

The Robert Cripps Gallery, Magdalene College, Cambridge is delighted to announce the upcoming exhibition by Leipzig-based artist Annette Schröter (Meissen, Germany, 1956), co-curated and co-organised by Silke Mentchen, Magdalene College and Matthew Shaul, Director, [Departure Lounge Contemporary Art](#).

Inspired in part by her origins near Colditz Castle in Germany and by the tales of wartime derring-do immortalised in the 1970s BBC TV series “Colditz”, *Escape from Colditz* is a contemplation on the theme of escape or escapism presented in a unique series of papercuts and collage.



Mann im Baum 6 (Man in tree), 2024, Annette Schröter.

Annette Schröter was trained as a porcelain painter at the German Democratic Republic's State Porcelain Works in Meissen before studying fine art at the prestigious High School for Graphics and Book Design in Leipzig between 1977-82. Growing up and training in the GDR, much of her work is a response to both the state's idealised propaganda and the quiet resistance to it that was part of everyday life. She critiques the GDR's 'escapist kitsch'— the officially sanctioned, idealised portrayals of rural life that were central to socialist mythology. At the same time, she explores more personal forms of escapism, like artistic practice, gardening, weekend retreats, and traditional handicrafts. These activities offered citizens a form of "inner emigration", a way to

retreat from the harsh realities of environmental depletion, industrial exploitation, and constant surveillance that were part of the daily experience in the socialist state. Growing up on the edge of Meissen, a small town firmly rooted in the Saxon countryside, Schröter's motifs are also inspired by the long antagonism in German history between the mythologies and motifs of the land and those of urban/industrial modernity. Arranged in what she describes as 'family groups' her papercuts and collages include home-made allotment gates, scarecrows and the glories of summer gardens. The papercuts are complemented by a series of assemblages and small installations that celebrate Schröter's collections of GDR folk art, handicrafts, popular culture and kitsch – which she uses as visual prompts for her practice. Schröter's hugely ambitious papercuts and collages – which she started to produce in 2003 – are drawn from a range of sources, her own (often comically banal) photographs, images she finds in magazines, in the daily press and on television, or those that she imagines inspired by news reports on the radio. Her complex works pose huge questions about the extent to which – even as an artist, independent thinker and in Schröter's case an opponent of the GDR's political regime – we are affected by the state's visual grammar and its iconographic hegemonies.

DEPARTURE LOUNGE

Opening times

On Thursday 6 November the Robert Cripps Gallery will open at 2:30pm. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

25 October 2025 – 9 January 2026

Open: Monday to Friday 2–4 pm; Saturday 2–6 pm

Closed: Sunday

ARTiculation Discovery Days

Tuesday 18 November and Wednesday 26 November the Gallery will open at 3 pm due to [ARTiculation Discovery Days](#).

Christmas / New Year closure

Closing 4 pm on Thursday 18 December 2025. Re-opening 2 pm Monday 5 January 2026.

Information for visitors

To access the exhibition, please call in via the Porter's Lodge on Magdalene Street. Entrance will be to the Gallery only.

Visitors are kindly requested not to enter any other areas of the New Library.

Annette Schröter in Conversation

On Saturday 25 October, Annette Schröter will discuss her evolution as an artist, her training in, and impressions from the German Democratic Republic with exhibition curator Matthew Shaul and journalist and author Katja Hoyer.

Registration

The event is free and open to all. Registration is essential; please register via the link below.

[Annette Schröter in conversation Registration](#)

Escape and Escapism – Art and the GDR

On Saturday 15 November, Magdalene will be hosting a free one-day symposium organised to coincide with the exhibition *Escape from Colditz*. An international array of speakers will discuss creative legacies in Visual Arts, Architecture, Photography, Film, Dance and Literature from the GDR.