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Incorporating THE EVENING NEWS 40p

Welcome to the house of horror

MOST of Gregor Schneider's rather bizarre life has, to date, been devoted to the 20-year-long transformation of his parents' ordinary house in the unremarkable German industrial town of Rheydt. He has turned it into what he calls Dead House ur, a sinister labyrinthine maze of rooms built within rooms, false walls and claustrophobic dead ends.

The 35-year-old artist began the work intuitively and unquestioningly in his adolescence and would have been surprised to know then, that in 2001 it would, in a gloriously surreal turn of events, be dismantled and reassembled for the Venice Biennale, earning him a Golden Lion, the art equivalent of an Oscar, and also be

EXHIBITION

Die Familie Schneider Whitechapel, E1

Nick Hackworth

exhibited as far afield as Los Angeles.

In his first major London show, he has, with the help of the innovative arts organisation Artangel, taken over two adjacent, modest, terraced houses in Whitechapel. The astonishing result, which will disturb most but amuse those with a perverse sense of humour, should be seen by anyone interested in the outer reaches of art, theatre or film

— especially David Lynch fans. Using his unique ability to invest the everyday with demonic intent, Schneider has redesigned and redecorated the houses so that they are paradigms of fairly bare, low-rent, chintzy ordinariness. You can visit by appointment only, and entrance is limited to two people at a time, adding to the sense of menace and isolation. You won't stay alone for long though, for as you explore the rooms one by one, forced into the role of the curious voyeur, you find various members of Die Familie Schneider, actors engaged in activities, from the everyday to the shocking. You'll then go next door for the twist in the tale; it would spoil it

to say too much more, except that the finale serves as a crushing, though exaggerated, insight into the insanity that underlies much supposed normality.

The only serious question mark hovering over this work is placed there by Paul Virillo, a French cultural theorist. He recently argued that the trend for increasing spectacle and breaking of taboos in art will find its logical conclusion in murder for aesthetic purposes. Schneider isn't killing anyone, but it will surely be only a matter of time before someone does.

● *Until 5 January.*
Information: 07981 578754/578755.