

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

March 20, 2008



PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE T. 310.271.9400

BEVERLY HILLS CA 90210 F. 310.271.9420

GALLERY HOURS: Tue – Sat 10:00am – 5:30pm

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH GYM

760 SOUTH WESTMORELAND AVENUE

LOS ANGELES CA 90005

HOURS: Wed – Sun 12:00pm – 6:00pm

ANSELM KIEFER

Gagosian Gallery: Saturday, March 29 – Saturday, April 26, 2008

Opening reception: Saturday, March 29th, from 6 to 8 pm

First Baptist Church Gym: Sunday, March 30 – Sunday, April 27, 2008

Opening reception: Sunday, March 30th, from 12 to 4 pm

"I don't consider myself a Platonist but I think that the spirit is contained in the material and it is the artist's mission to extract it."

--Anselm Kiefer

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce a major exhibition in two parts by Anselm Kiefer, his first in Los Angeles in more than a decade. The Beverly Hills gallery will present recent paintings, sculptures, and innovative photo-collages and, as a special one-off project at the First Baptist Church Gym in mid-Wilshire, the major installation *Palmsonntag (Palm Sunday)*.

Kiefer gives overt material presence to a vast range of cultural myths and metaphors, from the Old and New Testaments to the Kabbalah, from ancient Roman history to the poetry of Ingeborg Bachmann and Paul Célan. He constructs elaborate scenographies that cross the boundaries of art and literature, painting and sculpture by which to engage and understand the complex events of history, the ancestral epics of life, death, and the cosmos, and the fragile endurance of the sacred and the spiritual amid the ongoing destruction of the world. The monumental painting *Der Brennende Dornbusch (The Burning Bush)*, with its dense, sedimentary surface, evokes the exemplary story of salvation in the desolate history of mankind; the pages of massive standing books forged from lead, earth, and silver provide the support for large dried sunflowers that reach towards the sky. In Kiefer's monumental archive of human memory, the gallery and the library, the frame and the book become inseparable, even interchangeable.

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The dialog between the intertwined fate of nature and humanity continues in the stirring *Palmsonntag (Palm Sunday)* installation, which comprises an entire uprooted palm tree and thirty-six “vitrine” paintings containing vertically mounted branches of vegetation (palms, sunflower pods, mangroves) suspended in plaster and earth, phantom specimens in the opened pages of a giant herbiary. In both pagan and Christian iconography, the palm with its sword-like branches, was known as an immortal tree that never actually perished but constantly regenerated, a new sheath of fronds budding from the side of a fallen limb. This traditional Greco-Roman symbol of military triumph was adapted by early Christianity as a sign of Christ’s victory over death and came to serve as a universal emblem of martyrdom. Thus Kiefer intends us to register Palm Sunday as a true triumph; understanding that Christ’s entry into Jerusalem inaugurated the events leading not only to the Passion but also to the Resurrection.

Anselm Kiefer was born in Germany during the last year of World War II. After studying law, he began his art education in Karlsruhe and then Düsseldorf, where he met Joseph Beuys. His work has been shown in and collected by major museums throughout the world. Recent retrospective exhibitions include the Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth (2005) (traveling to the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., and SF MOMA). In 2007, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presented an extensive survey of recent work and Kiefer was commissioned to create a huge site-specific installation of sculptures and paintings for the inaugural “Monumenta” at the Grand Palais, Paris. Recently, he became the first living artist to create a permanent installation at the Louvre since Georges Braque in 1953. Kiefer lives and works in France.

For more information please contact the gallery.



A. Head **SOUTHEAST** on North Camden Drive toward North Santa Monica Boulevard. **B.** Turn **LEFT** at North Santa Monica Boulevard. **C.** Turn **RIGHT** at North Rodeo Drive. **D.** Turn **LEFT** at Wilshire Boulevard. **E.** Turn **RIGHT** at South Vermont Avenue. **F.** Turn **LEFT** at Leeward Avenue. **G.** Turn **RIGHT** at South Westmoreland Avenue.