

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

November 3, 2010

PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY
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GALLERY HOURS:

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Tue – Sat: 10:00am–6:00pm



ANSELM KIEFER: *Next Year in Jerusalem*

Saturday, November 6 – Saturday, December 18, 2010

Opening reception for the artist: Saturday, November 6th, from 6 to 8 pm

There is a special border, the border between art and life that often shifts deceptively. Yet, without this border, there is no art. In the process of being produced, art borrows material from life, and the traces of life still shine through the completed work of art. But, at the same time, the distance from life is the essence, the substance of art. And, yet, life has still left its traces. The more scarred the work of art is by the battles waged on the borders between art and life, the more interesting it becomes.

--Anselm Kiefer

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present "Next Year in Jerusalem", Anselm Kiefer's first exhibition in New York since 2002.

The exhibition centers around the installation *Occupations*, which transforms the series of photographs from 1969 in which Kiefer appears making the *Hitlergruß* in front of European sites of historical significance. Inside a steel enclosure, seventy-six photographs, newly printed in large scale, are mounted on lead and hung slightly apart, one in front of the other, on thick metal hooks. While the mass of images can be sensed, the arrangement is only partially visible through open doors in the sides of the container. This imposing structure contains Kiefer's provocative act, literally and imaginatively, to remind of what has happened and what can still happen in the world. *Occupations* is a visceral confrontation between history and the present that is lodged in the stuff of memory.

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Kiefer has transformed the space that surrounds *Occupations* into a labyrinth of glass and steel vitrines, some more than twenty feet high. Each vitrine is a tableau of organic and inorganic material -- cotton dresses, bushes, an airplane fuselage, film spools, and burned books. They appear like ancient reliquaries with titles inscribed directly on the glass. In these works, Kiefer inverts the historical and ritualistic connotations of his chosen materials, particularly lead. In *Valentinus*, named for the second century Gnostic theologian, lead buckets and chains are juxtaposed with diamonds and wire that evoke medieval alchemy; in *Die Schechina* a disembodied white dress is molded to an invisible female figure and pierced by glass shards and numbered glass disks, in reference to one of the ten Kabbalistic markers of spiritual presence.

In large landscape paintings hung around the perimeter of the gallery, Kiefer layers ash, lead, snakeskin and other distressed materials, merging them with iconic German landscapes of mountains, sea, and forest. In *Mount Tabor*, barren furrowed fields lead to the site of Christian pilgrimage where the Transfiguration is said to have occurred. *Fitzcarraldo* comprises four panels on which a winter forest is painted. Clusters of thornbushes are dispersed across the surface, forming a second forest in relief. A lead U-boat noses across the panels, in reference to the late nineteenth-century Peruvian rubber baron Carlos Fitzcarrald, who famously orchestrated the movement of a thirty-ton boat across an isthmus to avoid treacherous conditions. Encased in a huge vitrine, the final effect is one of a mythical refuge or forest where materials are recast as transcendent elements on an epic scale.

Kiefer's monumental archive of human memory gives overt material presence to a broad 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. By constructing elaborate scenographies that fuse art and literature, painting and sculpture, Kiefer engages 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. He integrates, expands, and regenerates imagery and techniques, emphasizing the importance of acts of imagination as a tool against forgetting our culture and history.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by cultural historian and novelist Marina Warner and Anselm Kiefer's own writings.

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. In 2007, he became the first living artist to create a permanent installation at the Louvre since Georges Braque in 1953. In 2009, he directed, composed and designed the sets for *Am Anfang (In the Beginning)* at the Opéra National in Paris.

Kiefer lives and works in France.

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