Anselm Kiefer

By Mark Rosenthal, organized by A. James Speyer, Mark Rosenthal

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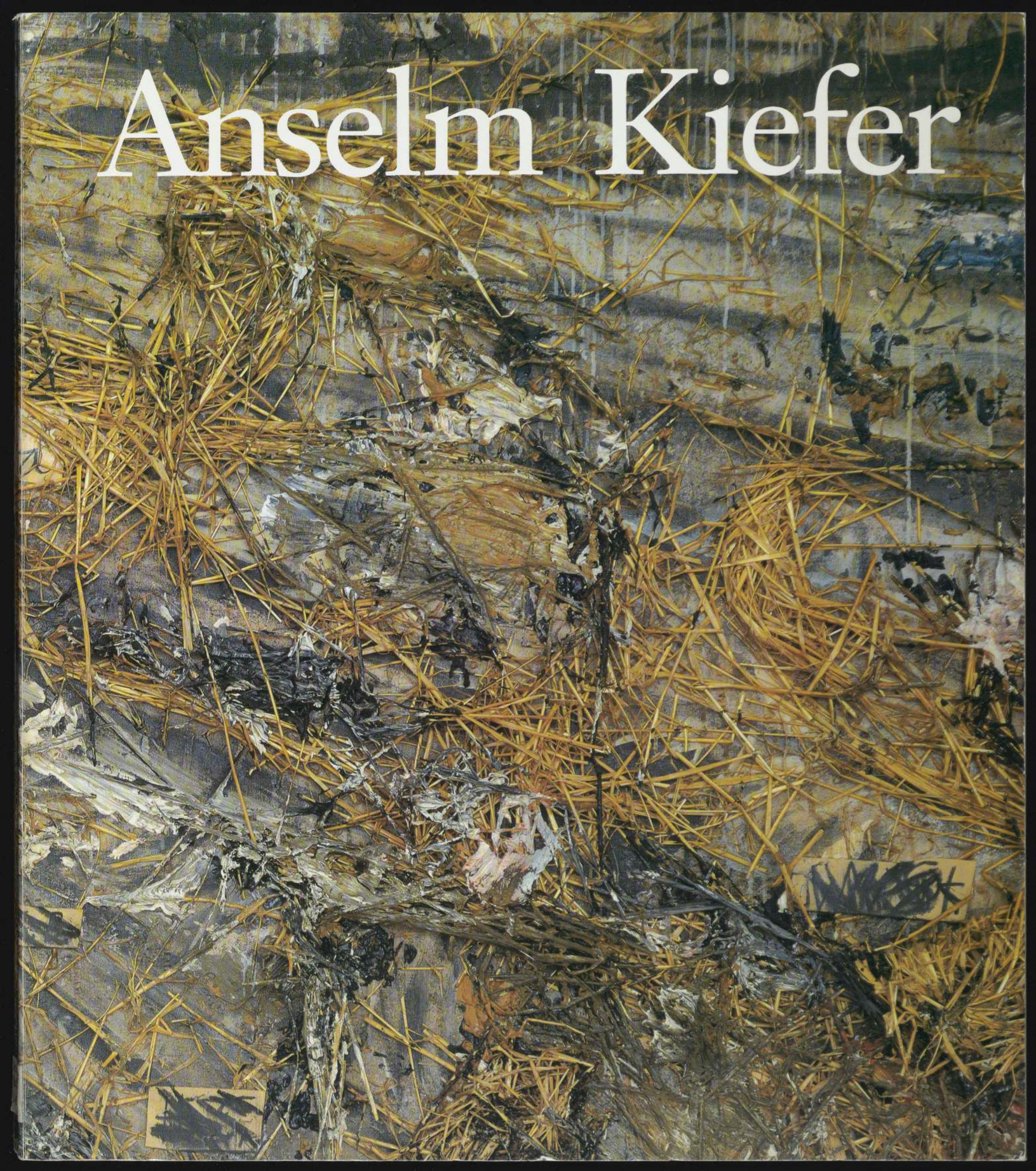

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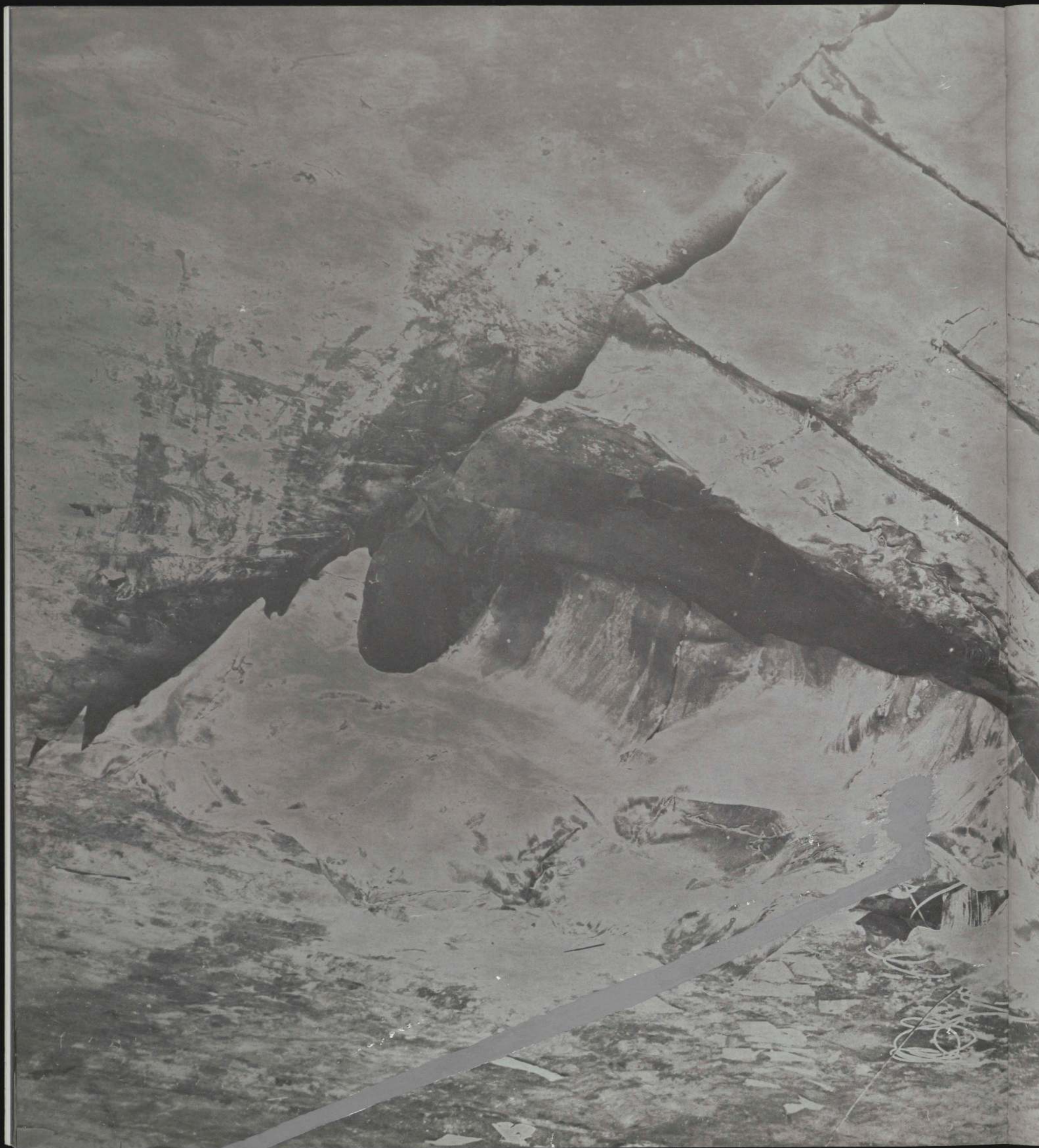

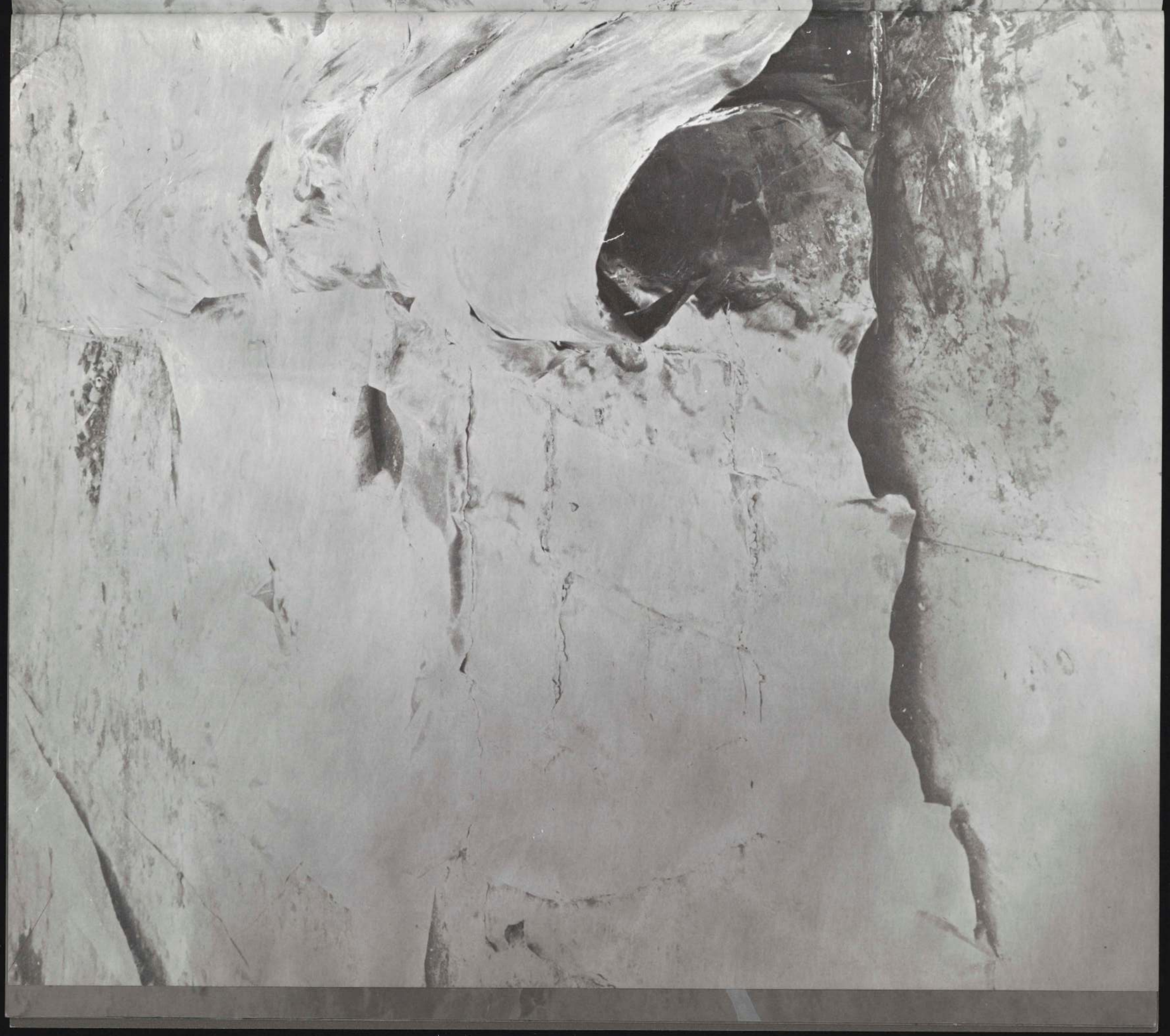

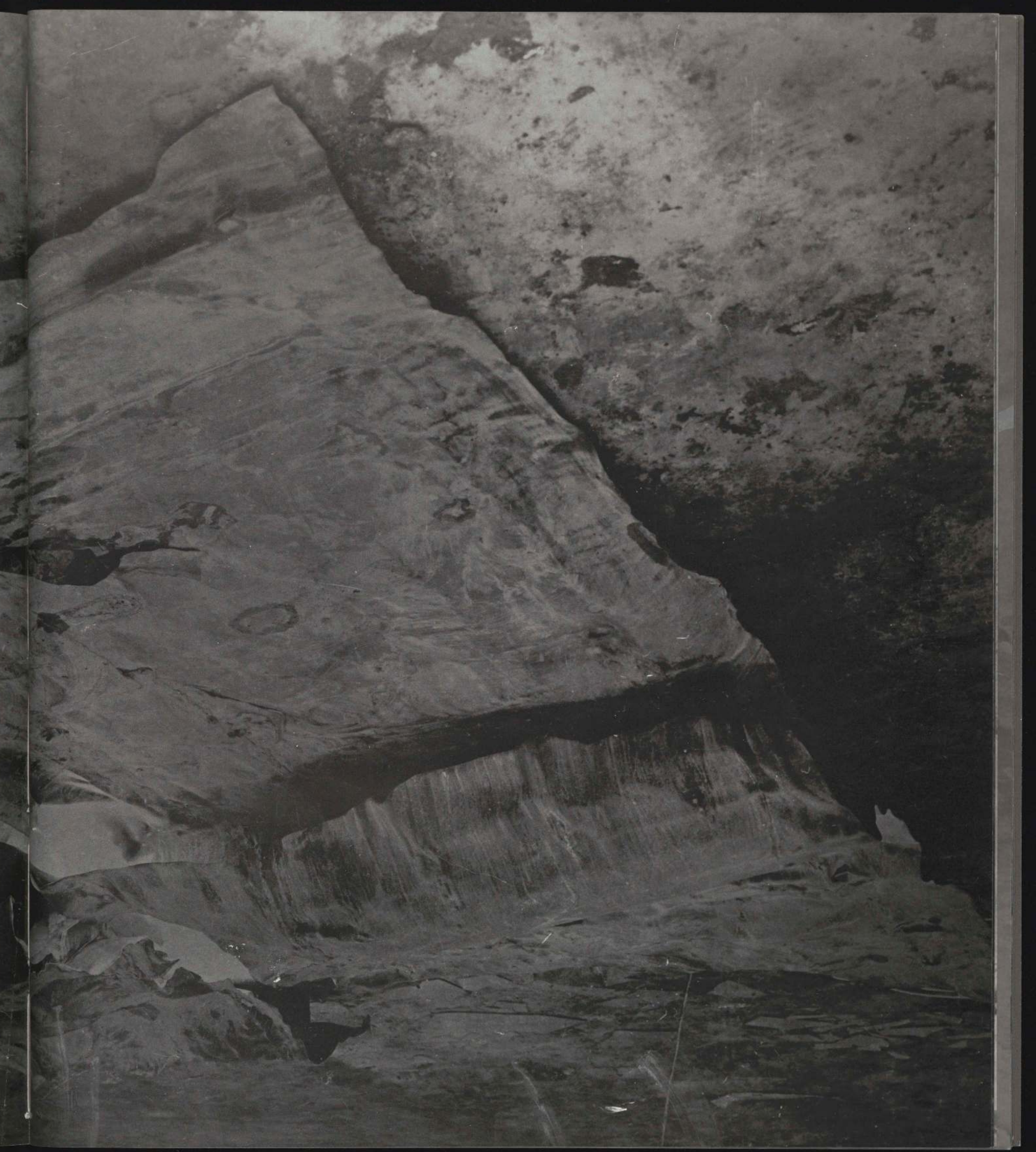

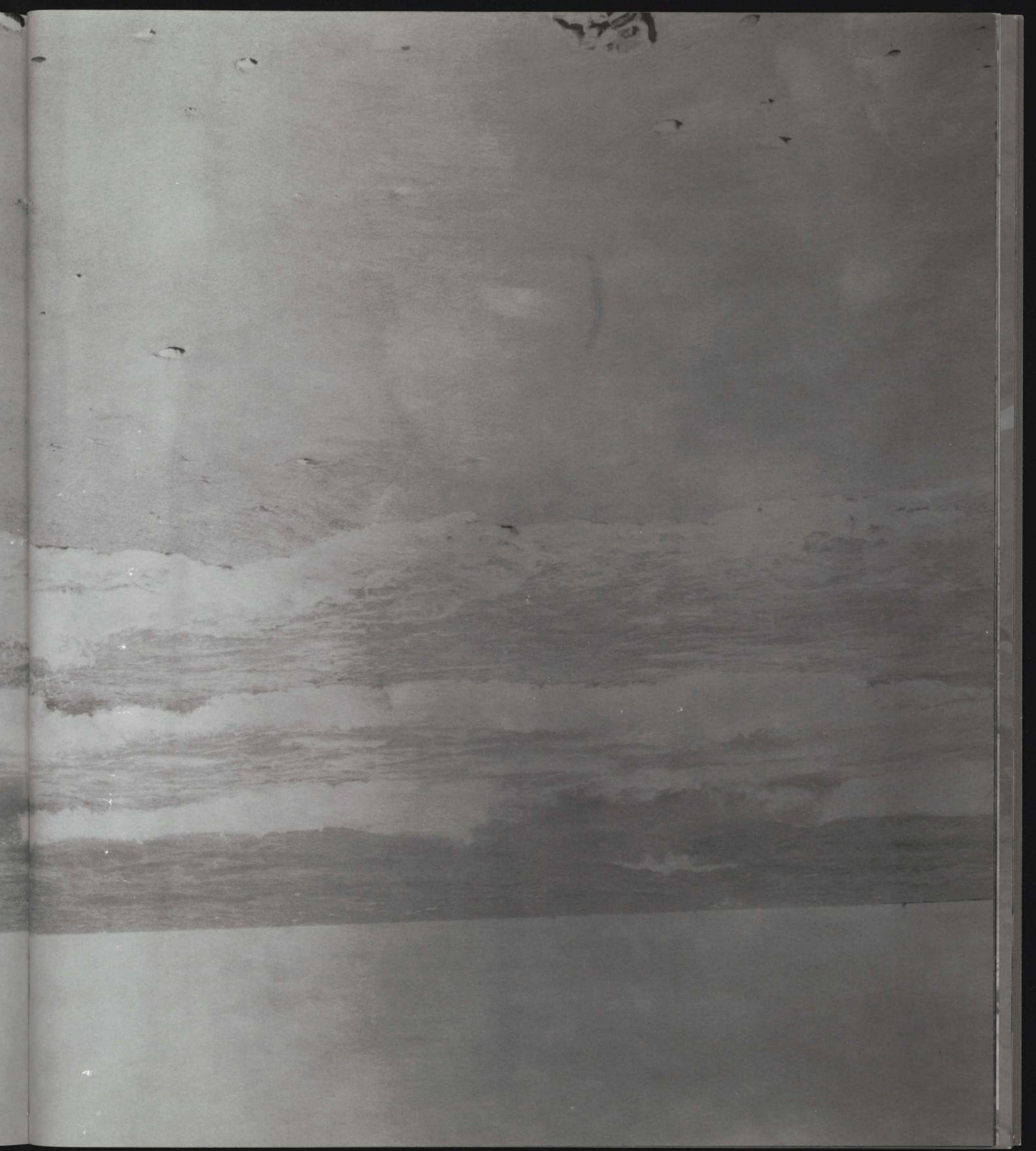

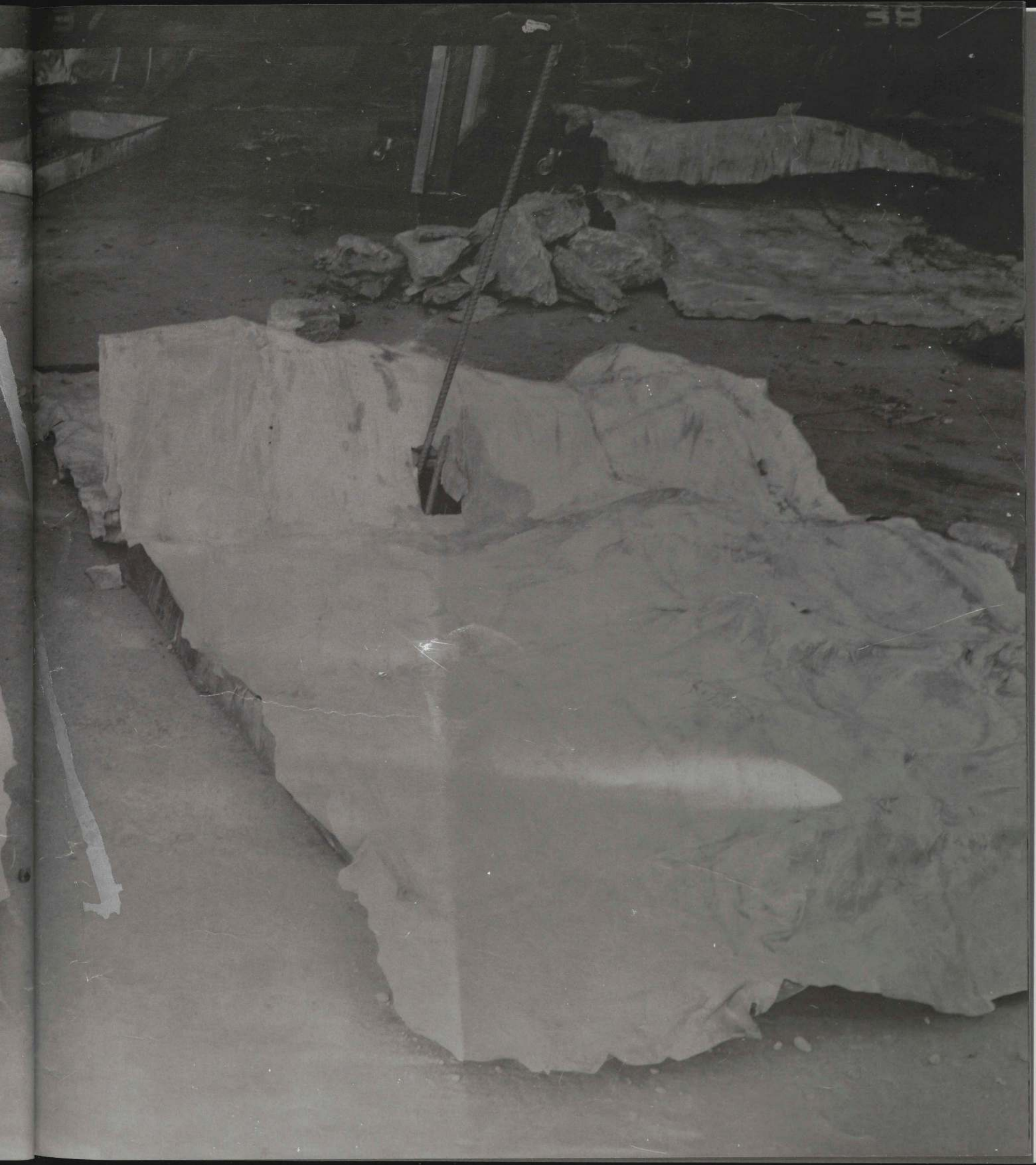

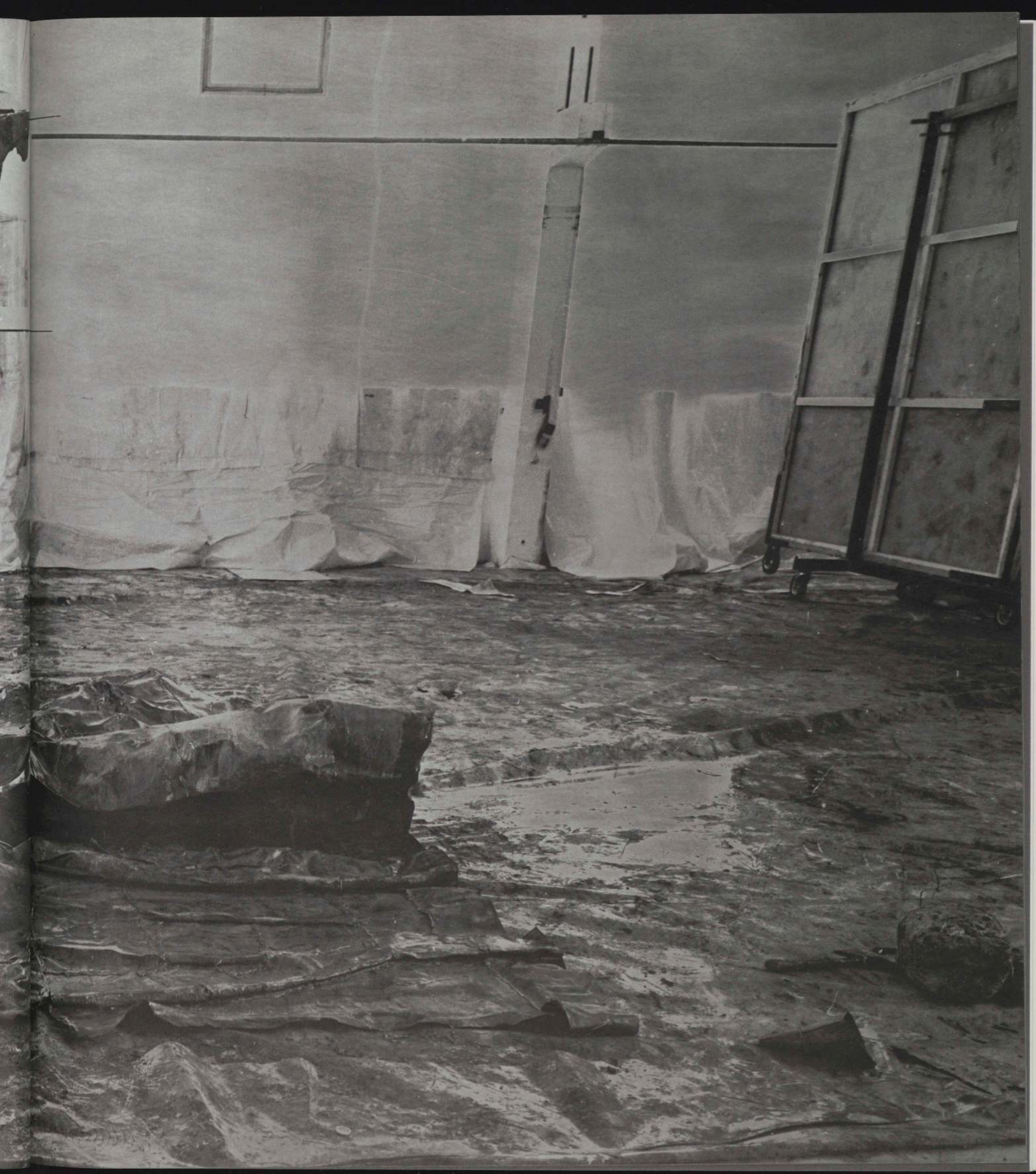

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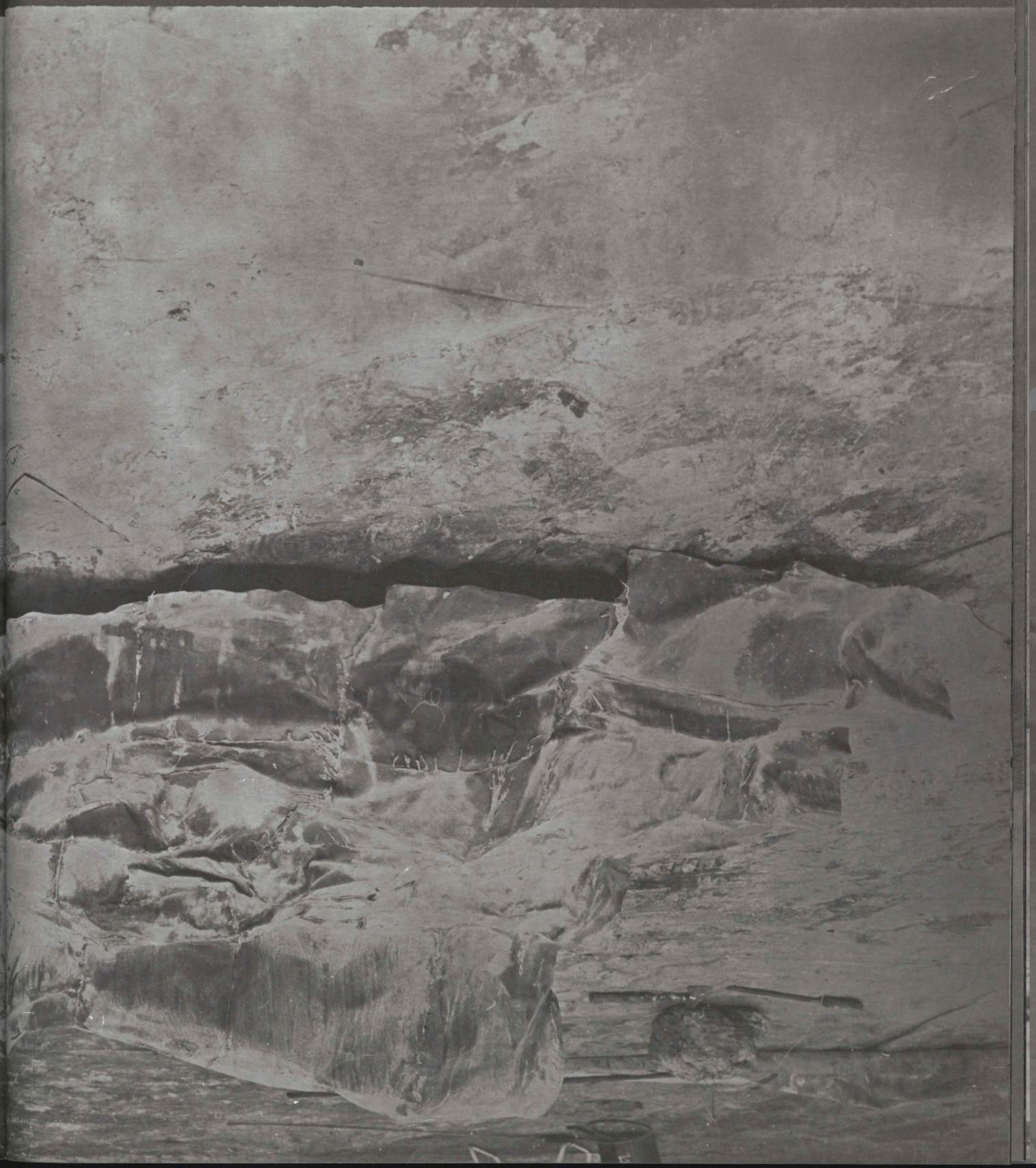

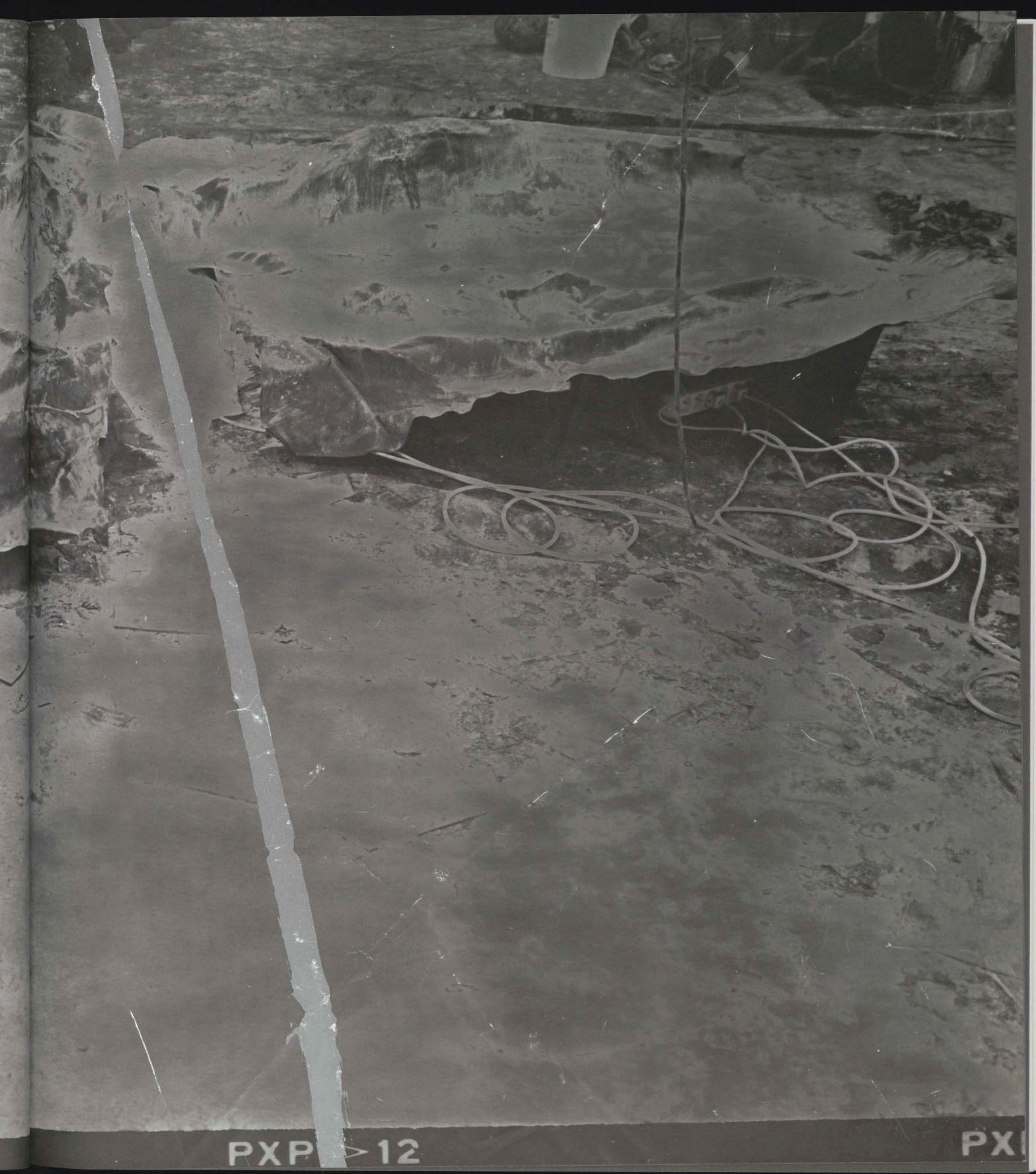
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ILFORD

Anselm Kiefer
Passage through the Red Sea
Durchzug durch das Rote Meer
1986–87

Anselm Kiefer

Ford Motor Company is pleased to have this opportunity to join with two of this nation's most important museums, The Art Institute of Chicago and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, to bring the work of Anselm Kiefer to the United States. Through brief glimpses of his individual works in museums and other collections, American audiences are sensing an artist of first order and significance whom they want to know better. We are proud to be the corporate sponsor of this opportunity.

We particularly are pleased that the artist is going to be working closely with the museums in the realization of this exciting project.

For Ford, the arts represent the common languages of creativity and response that transcend national borders and provide a natural and inspiring means of communication with employees, customers, and residents of the communities in which we operate.

Donald E. Petersen
Chairman of the Board and
Chief Executive Officer
Ford Motor Company

Anselm Kiefer

It is with great pleasure that the Lannan Foundation has awarded one of its first grants to the Anselm Kiefer exhibition. Through the combined organizational efforts of The Art Institute of Chicago and the Philadelphia Museum of Art the American public will have the opportunity to become better acquainted with the work of one of the outstanding artists of our time.

The Lannan Foundation, established by my father the late J. Patrick Lannan, is dedicated to fostering the creation and appreciation of contemporary art. With our national headquarters located in Los Angeles and our museum in Lake Worth (Palm Beach County), Florida, the foundation has established its interest in bringing contemporary art to a wider audience. In addition, through our grant program the foundation supports projects and exhibitions of contemporary art at other museums and art institutions in the United States. We feel particularly fortunate to have such an auspicious start for our art program by sponsoring this important and timely exhibition of the work of Anselm Kiefer.

J. Patrick Lannan
President
Lannan Foundation

Dedicated to the late A. James Speyer,
Curator of Twentieth Century Painting and Sculpture
at The Art Institute of Chicago, from 1961 to 1986

This exhibition and catalogue were made possible by major grants from the Ford Motor Company and the Lannan Foundation.

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Anselm Kiefer

by Mark Rosenthal

Organized by

A. James Speyer
The Art Institute of Chicago

Mark Rosenthal
Philadelphia Museum of Art

Chicago and Philadelphia

1987

Itinerary of the Exhibition

The Art Institute of Chicago
December 5, 1987—January 31, 1988

Philadelphia Museum of Art
March 6—May 1, 1988

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
June 14—September 11, 1988

The Museum of Modern Art, New York
October 17, 1988—January 3, 1989

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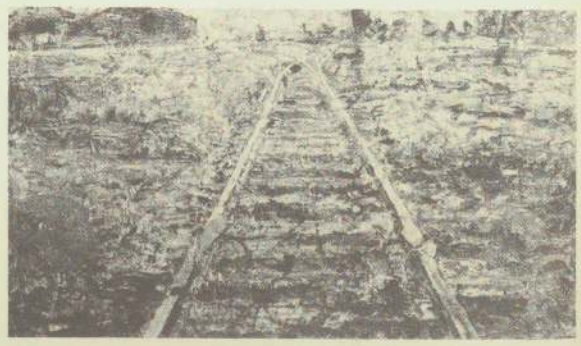
ANSELM KIEFER, born in Germany in 1945, is one of the most prominent European artists working today. His art reaches something deeply felt in the collective imagination. Directly confronting recent German history—the War, the Holocaust, the Occupation—he sets the twentieth-century experience against a timeless fabric of universal myth and history. Even while lamenting the irretrievable human loss and the sense of cultural decline that seem to have dominated much of this century, his works nonetheless speak of renewal, regeneration, and transcendence.

During the last two decades, Kiefer has explored diverse forms of expression. He has produced bound volumes that are eloquent statements without words, and has worked with photographic imagery. His paintings have focused on landscape and at times on architectural subjects. Many of his huge canvases incorporate straw, lead, photographs, plants, and other objects and materials that are fixed to the surface or embedded in the paint, and sometimes scorched or even burned, to disturbing effect. His use of such materials reflects the formative influence of his mentor, the late Joseph Beuys, the German conceptual artist.

Beuys also passed on to him the conviction that art can affect or transform society, and Kiefer remains preoccupied with the implications of transformation. He consciously pursues physical change in a practice that emulates alchemy, the secret medieval art of transforming base metals into gold in a crucible. Associating the role of artist with alchemist, Kiefer subjects his materials to fire—straw is reduced to ash, lead is purified. Because alchemy can seem like a kind of black magic, it has often been linked with the malign powers of an evil deity. The true goal of an alchemist, however, is not merely physical change but rather the spiritual transformation, the redemption, that it symbolizes, and to this idea Kiefer repeatedly returns.

Resonant with metaphorical meaning and dense with juxtaposed levels of reference, Kiefer's art invites prolonged contemplation and multiple interpretation. There is poignancy, and humor too, in its puzzling and provocative combinations: an open book is suspended over a landscape; skis arranged like railroad tracks point toward the horizon; a palette sprouts wings. But always, visual richness is complemented by challenging intellectual content. Kiefer draws from an encyclopedic range of sources; the following glossary elucidates some of his specific references.



Iron Path (Eisen-Steig). 1986
Oil, synthetic polymer paint, and emulsion on canvas with olive branches, iron, and lead, 7′2⅛″ × 12′5⅛″ (220 × 380 cm)
Collection Mr. and Mrs. David Pincus, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

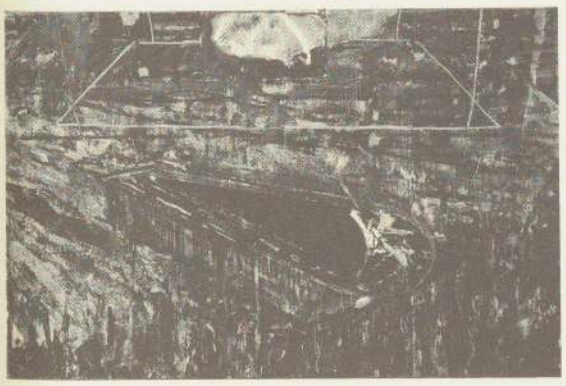
Glossary

I work with symbols which link our consciousness with the past. The symbols create a kind of simultaneous continuity and we recollect our origins.

—Anselm Kiefer

This list identifies key terms and names that appear in the titles of Kiefer's works and explains some of the basic sources of his imagery. More complete discussion may be found in *Anselm Kiefer* by Mark Rosenthal, the publication which provided much of the following material and which is here gratefully acknowledged.

Arminius (Hermann) The chieftain of a Germanic tribe that in the year A.D. 9 ambushed and massacred three legions of Roman soldiers, led by Varus. The National Socialists used the story as an example of German independence and to excite hatred toward foreign influences.



The Red Sea (Das rote Meer). 1984–85
Oil, lead, woodcut, photograph, and shellac on canvas, 9′1¼″ × 13′11⅜″ (278.8 × 425.1 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Enid A. Haupt Fund

Brunhilde and Siegfried Two of the major characters in Richard Wagner's opera cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung*, which was based on Germanic and Icelandic myths. The young hero Siegfried slays a dragon that guards, among other treasures, the gold ring which has been stolen from the bottom of the Rhine and which gives the cycle its name. He later discovers Brunhilde (daughter of the god Wotan), who has been placed by her father, asleep, on a mountaintop surrounded by fire. Siegfried awakens her and they pledge eternal love to one another. He gives her the ring as a token of his faithfulness. But later, Siegfried is tricked with a magic potion to forget her. At the end of the *Ring* cycle, after Siegfried's death, Brunhilde rides her horse, Grane, into the funeral pyre. That fire ignites another in heaven; Valhalla, the home of the gods, burns, the rule of the gods is ended, and the ring returns to the Rhine.

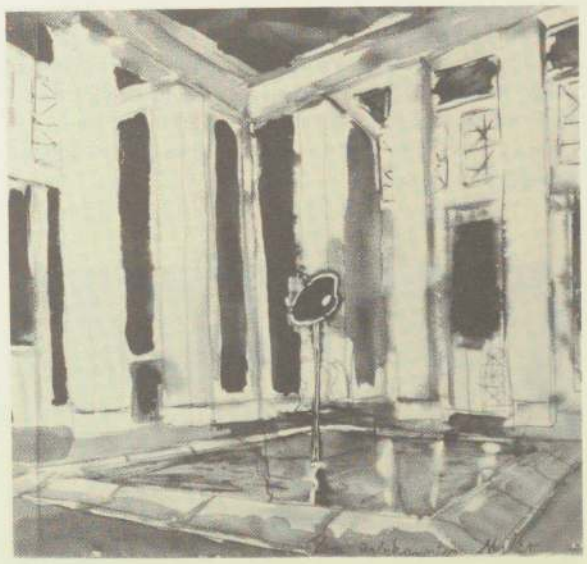
Cockchafer, Fly A German nursery rhyme: "Cockchafer, fly./Father is in the war./Mother is in Pomerania./Pomerania is burnt up." (The region of Pomerania, lost to Germany after World War II, is now mostly in Poland.) Kiefer's landscape of the same title, showing blackened, scorched earth, invokes the human suffering and devastation of war; however, the burning of fields is also a method of refertilizing the soil. The verse may be compared to the familiar English rhyme: "Ladybug, ladybug, fly away home./Your house is on fire, your children are gone."

Gilgamesh A legendary king of Sumeria whose epic quest for immortality was recorded on clay tablets in pre-biblical times. He set out through the cedar forest, which was guarded by the monster Chuwawa, and finally obtained the secret plant of everlasting life. But while Gilgamesh was resting from his exploits, a serpent carried off the plant and consumed it. (Snakes thereafter were able to shed their old skins for new.) Gilgamesh had to return home resigned to failure.

Icarus In Greek mythology, the son of Daedalus, an ingenious artist-inventor who fashioned wings of wax and feathers for the two of them. Ignoring his father's advice, Icarus flew too close to the sun; his wax wings melted, and he fell into the sea.

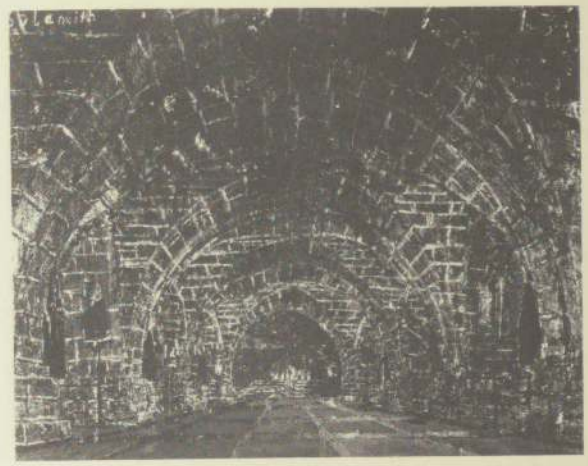
Iconoclastic Controversy The medieval debate as to whether or not Christian art should depict the holy figures. In 726 the practice of creating and venerating representational images (or icons) was banned, but was allowed again in 843.

Julia The name of Kiefer's wife. The couple were married in 1971.



To the Unknown Painter (Dem unbekannten Maler). 1980
Watercolor on paper, 18½ × 19½″ (47 × 49.5 cm)
Collection Antonio Homem, New York

Kyffhäusser Mountains where Germans believed the twelfth-century Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa) waited for the people to summon him. His supposed vigil and the name Kyffhäusser came to be associated with the dream of German national unity. (Barbarossa was used as the code name for the Nazi's ill-fated invasion of Russia.)



Shulamite (Sulamith). 1983
Oil, synthetic polymer paint, emulsion, shellac, and straw on canvas, with woodcut, 9′6⅜″ × 12′1⅛″ (290 × 370 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

March Heath, March Sand The title of an old patriotic tune which became a marching song for Hitler's army. The March Heath, in the Brandenburg region southeast of Berlin, was a frequent battleground in Prussian military history since the seventeenth century. Also known as a popular area for walking tours, it was the subject of a well-known nineteenth-century guidebook.

Margarete and Shulamite The association of these two names is based on a poem by Paul Celan written in a concentration camp in 1945, published 1952. Margarete is the heroine of Goethe's *Faust* (Part I, 1808), also known as Gretchen. Her innocent love of Faust leads to tragedy, as in despair she kills her own baby. In prison she lies on a bed of straw. While Margarete is the golden-haired Aryan, Shulamite is the dark Jewish beauty of the biblical *Song of Songs*. Kiefer has sometimes represented Shulamite as a naked figure, but Margarete has no figurative presence and is indicated only by straw for her hair. The 1983 painting titled *Shulamite* is based on the crypt-like design proposed as a memorial to German soldiers, in Berlin. Kiefer has subverted the Reich's original intention by writing the name Shulamite at the upper left to commemorate instead the Jews who were murdered. In other works of the 1980s, such as the series *To the Unknown Painter*, Kiefer also appropriates images of Nazi architecture.

The Mastersingers of Nuremberg A comic opera by Richard Wagner about the medieval German music guilds and the practice of holding town singing competitions. The numerals that appear in the painting indicate the number of mastersingers in the opera eligible to compete. Wagner's story culminates on St. John's Day, the celebration of midsummer. The stately old city of Nuremberg, a center for the finest cultural achievements, is more recently identified as the site of the Nazi rallies and the war-crimes trials.

Midsummer Night (St. John's Night) The eve of the summer solstice; the shortest night of the

The Mastersingers (Die Meistersinger). 1981–82
Oil, emulsion, and sand on photograph, mounted on canvas, 9′2¼″ × 12′5⅛″ (280 × 380 cm)
Private collection

year. Coinciding with the feast of St. John, midsummer night is traditionally celebrated in Germany with the lighting of wheels of fire on hilltops. The works given this title incorporate real ferns, potent symbolic plants connected to other other midsummer rituals in Germany (*see* Saturn Time).

THE MIRACLE OF THE SERPENTS An event described in the Old Testament book of Exodus, which chronicles the Jews' flight from Egypt and their triumph over oppressors. Aaron and Moses appeared before Pharaoh to ask that he let the Jews leave Egypt. To demonstrate the power of God, Aaron's rod was turned into a snake which devoured the serpents created by Pharaoh's sorcerers.

NORTH CAPE The northernmost tip of Norway, "land of the midnight sun." In the watercolor of this title, Kiefer compares the everlasting Norwegian summer sun with art, by writing in the landscape's sky, "die Kunst geht knapp nich unter" (art doesn't just "set").

OPERATION SEA LION The code name for the Third Reich's plan, never attempted, to invade England by sea in 1940. Kiefer's book titled *Piet Mondrian—Operation Sea Lion* includes photographic images of a model battleship in a bathtub. It is known that Hitler's military strategists actually used tubs and ship models to plan the invasion.

OSIRIS AND ISIS Figures from Egyptian mythology. Osiris was murdered by his brother Set, who tore his body into fourteen parts and scattered the pieces. Isis, the wife and sister of Osiris, gathered all but one of the parts together and restored Osiris to become eternal ruler of the dead.

SATURN TIME Saturn, the Roman god who was equivalent to the Greek god Cronus, or Time. Saturn's reign is said to have been the Golden Age, an early time of innocence and purity. But he is also described as a monster who devoured all his children, except for Jupiter. Thus Saturn is associated with the dual nature of time, which brings an end to all things that have a beginning, and may be said to devour its own offspring. The ferns embedded in Kiefer's work of this title reinforce the theme of time. Ferns are among the oldest plants on our planet. Fern forests are associated with the period preceding the Ice Age, and from prehistoric ferns come sources of energy such as coal.

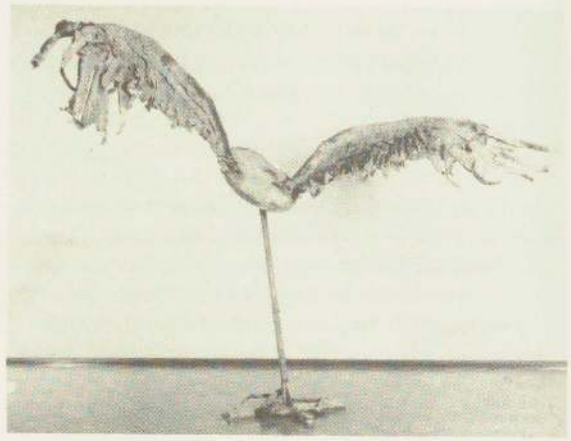
TREE OF JESSE A genealogical tree tracing the ancestors of Christ back to the family of Jesse, the father of David. The tree image, developed in the Middle Ages, is a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah: "A shoot shall grow from the stock of Jesse."

WAYLAND In Norse mythology, a master goldsmith. This artist and alchemist's talents were so valued that the king of Sweden captured and imprisoned him on an island to forge treasures for the court. Wayland took revenge by raping the king's daughter and murdering his two sons. From their skulls he fashioned drinking cups for their father. Like Daedalus in Greek mythology, Wayland made himself wings and escaped.

WAYS OF WORLDLY WISDOM An apologia or treatise on Catholicism written by a Jesuit in 1924. It relied on involved interpretations of various philosophical systems to support its point of view.

YGGDRASIL In Norse mythology, the World-Ash, the tree that supports the universe. One of its three immense roots was perpetually threatened by the gnawing of the serpent Nidhogg, a symbol of dark forces. The sword of Odin (Wotan), king of the gods, was thrust into the tree to destroy Nidhogg. These and other Norse myths are recorded in the Edda, a term used for two literary collections of the thirteenth century written in Old Icelandic, one in poetry and the other in prose.

Osiris and Isis (Osiris und Isis). 1985–87
Oil, synthetic polymer paint, and emulsion on canvas, with clay, porcelain, lead, copper wire, and circuit board, 12′5¼″ × 18′4½″ (380 × 560 cm)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Purchased through a gift of Jean Stein, by exchange, the Mrs. Paul L. Wattis Fund, and the Doris and Donald Fisher Fund



Palette with Wings (Palette mit Flügeln). 1985
Lead, steel, and tin, 9′2¼″ × 11′5¼″ × 39⅜″ (280 × 350 × 100 cm)
Private collection

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LECTURES

Tuesday, October 18, 8:30 p.m. "Reading Kiefer: What We See, What We Know, What It Means," John Hallmark Neff, Director of the Art Program, First National Bank of Chicago.

Tuesday, October 25, 8:30 p.m. "Anselm Kiefer: The Temptation of Myth and the Terror of History," Andreas Huyssen, Chairman, Department of German, Columbia University.

Tickets for each lecture are $8, Members $7, students $5.

Lectures accompanying this exhibition are supported in part through the generosity of Richard S. Zeisler.

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Foreword

In an interview conducted several months before his death in 1986, Mircea Eliade, the distinguished historian of religions, reflected on his life and ambitions: "I wanted to add to the understanding of Western culture, to do what Pico della Mirandola did in the Renaissance, when he learned Hebrew and studied the Cabala, trying to enlarge the tradition of Greek, Latin, and Hellenistic ideas, going deeper, into more ancient strata." Anselm Kiefer harbors a similar ambition as an artist, and it is no coincidence that the writings of this eminent European scholar, who lived and taught in Chicago for thirty years, can help to illuminate not only the symbolism but also the spiritual aspirations of the young German artist. Eliade taught that the history of religions demonstrates that "spirituality introduced freedom into the cosmos. It allows the possibility of transcending the boundaries." He described the concept of faith in a salvation as an age-old human effort to survive "the terror of history."

Like Eliade, Kiefer studies and confronts "historical man," the modern man who in Eliade's words, "consciously and voluntarily creates history" and who has "faith in an infinite progress." As a German citizen born in 1945, Kiefer has inherited the fruits of that modern faith in its most horrendous form. By talent, temperament, and nationality he is ideally suited to making the present spiritual plight of humankind the universal subject of his intensely German art.

Modern man's lack of a shared spiritual language and a common mythology does not lead Kiefer to the conclusion that art must be created for its own sake, but rather that such a language must be renewed or reinvented. Mark Rosenthal's essay in this catalogue provides an essential tool for our understanding of the quotations and iconography that are central to the artist's work, much as a skillfully annotated edition of *Ulysses* aids the reader of Joyce. For the purpose of Kiefer's often esoteric subject matter is not romantic titillation but the search for lessons in both the recent and distant past to prepare the artist and his audience for the future. He insists on the need to learn from ancient myths and religions as well as recent tragic events if we are to deal with that "terror of history" that casts its shadow over our lives. Kiefer is a young artist and it is premature to make definitive claims for his work, but it is already clear that the powerful visual expression of his "going deeper, into more ancient strata" offers one of the most challenging developments in recent art.

This exhibition was from the outset the result of a close collaboration between A. James Speyer, Mark Rosenthal, and Anselm Kiefer. Jim Speyer's remarkable knowledge and understanding of developments in contemporary European art over the past thirty years led him to an early appreciation of Kiefer's work. His impact on the shape and character of the exhibition was crucial, and it is with the greatest admiration and affection that this catalogue is dedicated to his memory by all those who worked with him and had a hand in its creation. Mark Rosenthal's thoughtful scholarship has made it possible to present Kiefer's art in the context that its complexity requires; his dedication to the exhibition and his assumption, together with Neal Benezra, of responsibilities shared so sympathetically with Jim Speyer, have assured the realization of this ambitious project. Anselm Kiefer has made an extraordinary contribution to this catalogue with his own "book," *Passage through the Red Sea*, which serves to introduce him to the reader as nothing else could. We are deeply grateful to him also for discussing his work and his concerns with the curators with generosity and clarity. Many museum staff members in both Chicago and Philadelphia worked hard to bring both exhibition and catalogue into being, and this cooperative venture was rewarding for us all. George Marcus, who has overseen the preparation of this catalogue, working with the curators and the artist, has achieved a publication which conveys both the scale and the subtlety of the objects in the exhibition.

It is a source of great satisfaction that The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles have joined our own institutions in presenting a comprehensive view of Kiefer's work to the public in the United States for the first time, and we much appreciate the cooperation of our colleagues Richard E. Oldenburg and Richard Koshalek. In turn, all four museums owe warmest thanks to the lenders to the exhibition, whose enthusiasm for Anselm Kiefer is matched by their generous willingness to share the works in their collections with a wide audience.

Our commitment to the exhibition would have been impossible without the early and handsome grant from the Lannan Foundation, and the support of its President, J. Patrick Lannan, and Director of Art Programs, Bonnie Clearwater. As the first major grant from the newly formed foundation to a major exhibition project, it gives impressive evidence of commitment to contemporary art. We are also grateful to the Hon. Barthold D. Witte, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Josef Enzweiler, Consul General in Chicago, for arranging the most welcome support from the German Federal Republic, and to Richard Zeisler for his timely and thoughtful assistance in this regard. A grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and indemnity from the Federal Council of the Arts and Humanities contributed substantially to the project, and Lufthansa German Airlines has provided essential help in the transportation of loans from Europe. Support from the MacArthur Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts to The Art Institute of Chicago and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, respectively, was crucial in our ability to undertake the initial stages of the exhibition as well as portions of local expenses. Finally, the realization of the project and this catalogue on the ambitious scale that Anselm Kiefer's work demands would have been inconceivable without the splendid commitment of the Ford Motor Company, and we are deeply grateful to Robert A. Taub, Director of the Corporate Affairs Planning Office at Ford, and to Mabel H. Brandon, President of Rogers & Cowan, Inc. in Washington, D.C., for their keen interest.

James N. Wood
Director
The Art Institute of Chicago

Anne d'Harnoncourt
The George D. Widener Director
Philadelphia Museum of Art

Acknowledgments

This exhibition has been extremely demanding in its logistical challenges and planning, and we would like to acknowledge the many individuals who have contributed extraordinarily toward its success.

At The Art Institute of Chicago, William R. Leisher, Executive Director, Conservation, was committed to the proper care and movement of the works of art; Virginia Mann, Executive Director, Museum Registration, took responsibility for the transportation of the exhibition; and Dorothy Schroeder, Assistant to the Director, monitored virtually every detail of the show. In the Department of Twentieth Century Painting and Sculpture, Judith Cizek, Assistant to the Curator / Research Assistant, demonstrated unstinting dedication to the project, both as a researcher and as coordinator of loans; and Gloria Lindstrom, former Department Secretary, gave constant support. Also making important contributions were Robert E. Mars, Vice-President for Administrative Affairs; Larry Ter Molen, Vice-President for Development and Public Relations; Katharine C. Lee, Deputy Director; John Kent Lydecker, Executive Director, Museum Education; Susan Ball and Linda Brotman, the former and the current Director of Government Affairs / Foundation Relations; and Eileen E. Harakal, Executive Director of Public Affairs.

At the Philadelphia Museum of Art, George H. Marcus, Head of Publications, provided sensitive and expert editing, and overall catalogue production supervision. In the Department of Twentieth-Century Art, Ella Schaap, Research Assistant, had a primary role, and devoted much dedication and hard work to the project; Amy Ship, former Research Assistant, handled the word processor with admirable skill and contributed research assistance as well; and Mary Ceruti, former Research Assistant, assembled large quantities of material for the bibliography and exhibition history. Others in Philadelphia who made significant efforts toward this enterprise were Suzanne F. Wells, Special Exhibitions Coordinator; Irene Taurins, Registrar; Maria T. Giliotti, Development Director; Danielle Rice, Curator of Education; Sandra Horrocks, Manager of Public Relations; Suzanne Penn, Associate Conservator of Paintings; Barbara S. Sevy, Librarian; Suzanne P. Maguire-Negus, former Senior Library Assistant; Conna Clark, Manager of Rights and Reproductions; and Thomas S. Donio, Slide Librarian.

We would like to express our particular thanks to Nathan Garland who provided an outstanding design for this publication, and Jane Fleugel, who added her expertise to the editing process.

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Following the career of Anselm Kiefer for the last few years has meant joining a delightful band of enthusiastic individuals who collect his work, travel to his exhibitions, and share in the intense experience that his works afford. We have made particular demands on the warm hospitality of Gerald S. Elliott, Lewis and Susan Manilow, David and Gerry Pincus, and Martijn and Jeanette Sanders. To all the lenders to this exhibition go our heartfelt thanks.

Mark Rosenthal, Curator
Twentieth Century Art
Philadelphia Museum of Art

Neal Benezra, Curator
Twentieth Century Painting and Sculpture
The Art Institute of Chicago

Introduction

Anselm Kiefer had just abandoned the study of law and turned to art, late in 1966, when he made a trip to view the monastery at La Tourette, built by the French architect Le Corbusier. The young German intended to study the methods used by the architect to give a concrete material appearance to abstract, religious ideas. It was not enough, however, for Kiefer to visit La Tourette; he felt he must also experience monastic life, so he spent three weeks as a guest of the Dominicans, living in a cell and joining in the daily rituals of the monks.[1] The commitment with which the aspiring artist approached this experience is indicative of his complex character; he would probably agree with Paul Klee, who found, early in his career, that "painting without . . . a live, positive philosophy [is] . . . only partly satisfactory."[2] Kiefer, too, has continuously sought philosophical and spiritual nourishment for his art, although he has never been an adherent of any particular ideological system. Instead, he retains a pronounced, psychological distance, even as he absorbs fundamental tenets, studies their outward manifestations, and gains insights. His process is, in effect, to "try on" each approach, as he had done at La Tourette. These experiences generally enlarge his vision of the theories that exist to explain physical and human events and provide him with personages and stories to use in his art.

Kiefer freely intermingles real and mythic times, spatial depictions, philosophical outlooks, and media in order to create grand, encompassing statements. In his approach, historical and mythical events are signposts, presenting information about the nature of the world. But it would be a mistake to suggest that Kiefer is a modern-day history painter, for he has little interest in the literal recording of a narrative. His recall of a particular incident or subject is meant to introduce a spiritual outlook or moral lesson that is almost always ambiguous or paradoxical, since Kiefer's view of experience is that there are no truths, only interpretations.[3] Thus his grappling with issues concerning history, love, art, and spirituality will never be resolved nor will the profoundly black character of his work be entirely dispelled.

Kiefer is sometimes criticized for addressing Nazi history and wallowing in the past while not speaking to current problems, such as the existence of two Germanys. For this reason, he is often seen by his countrymen as an unlikely standard-bearer for contemporary German art. It is Kiefer's view, however, that the country at present is thoroughly imbued with attitudes and precedents that have existed throughout German history.[4] Indeed, by confronting the still disturbing underlying bogeys of modern German society, he seems to live up to the radical, avant-garde stance taken by those artists branded as "degenerate" in the 1930s by the Nazi government.[5]

Kiefer is reluctant to discuss the details of his life and his working methods, believing such information hinders appreciation of the spiritual and philosophical content of his art. Some material about him exists in previously published articles, and he himself contributed an autobiography to an exhibition catalogue in 1977 (fig. 1), but when interviewed in recent years, the artist has agreed only to be paraphrased. The consequent lack of background information does not leave the viewer completely helpless in approaching the paintings, however, since the artist is willing to discuss meaning in his work and frequently employs words to add implications to his images. Nevertheless, Kiefer expects his audience to be well versed in such areas as Norse myth, Wagnerian opera, Nazi war plans, theological and biblical history, and alchemy.

To unravel the meaning of Kiefer's paintings requires bringing together the artist's statements and patterns of imagery with an analysis of the character of his works and the words inscribed on their surfaces. This approach is particularly appropriate for the art dating from the beginning of his career to 1980, when his ambitions seemed largely focused on content. Since 1980, however, his work has assumed greater formal power and magnitude, even as his range of subject matter has expanded. These paintings have taken on a greater presence as objects and demand a broader investigation, surveying not only their content but also their sensual character.

Figure 1. Anselm Kiefer, Autobiography, 1976. Translated from Bonn, Kunstverein, *Anselm Kiefer* (March 17—April 24, 1977).

March 8, 1945 Born in Donaueschingen

Grandmother

Ruins

Black forests

1951 Moved to his parents' in Ottersdorf

Primary school

Heaven-hell

Rhine

Lowland forest

Border

1956 Secondary school in Rastatt

Rilke

Rodin

1963 Jean Walter Prize (travel grant to visit France)

Van Gogh

Holland

France

1965 Qualifying examination

Italy

Sweden

Study of law and French

Freiburg

1966 Paris

Haute couture

Le Corbusier (La Tourette)

Art studies under Peter Dreher, Freiburg

1969 Art studies under Horst Antes, Karlsruhe

Motorcycle

Marble

Jean Genet

Huysmans

Ludwig II of Bavaria

Paestum

Adolf Hitler

Julia

Paintings: Heroic landscapes

1970 Created books on heroic allegories, occupations, holes in the sky

State examinations, won scholarship from Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes

Study with Joseph Beuys, Düsseldorf

Paintings on Trinity Quaternity, above-below, I-Thou

1971 Marriage to Julia

Oden Forest

Wood

Grain

Richard Wagner

Son Daniel

Winter spring summer fall

Watercolors

1973 Boulder-rock

Baselitz

Nibelung

Parsifal

Michael Werner

1974 Works of the scorched earth

Heliogabalus

Johnny

Stefan George

Norwegian light

Hans Henny Jahn

Sick art

1975 Thirty years old

How to Paint

Created books: Cauterization, Sinking, Becoming Wood, Becoming Sand

Mushrooms

Daughter Sarah

1976 Siegfried Forgets Brunhilde

Maria

The essential is not yet done

Developing an Outlook: 1969 to 1973

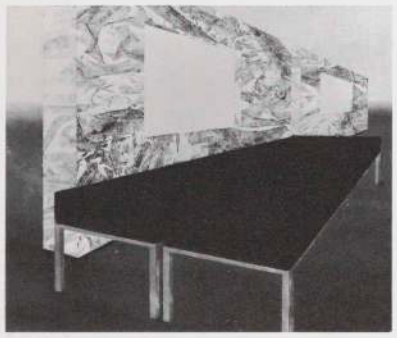

Figure 2. Anselm Kiefer, *The Second Sinful Fall of Parmenides* (*Der zweite Sündenfall des Parmenides*), 1969. Oil on canvas, 82⅝ x 98⅜" (210 x 250 cm). Private Collection.

Figure 3. Anselm Kiefer, *You're a Painter* (*Du bist Maler*), 1969. Bound book, 9⅞ x 7½ x ⅜" (25 x 19 x 1 cm). Private Collection.

Kiefer's daring, inherently German outlook began to overcome his tentative beginnings in 1969. In comparing two works of that year, *The Second Sinful Fall of Parmenides* (fig. 2) with *You're a Painter* (fig. 3), one sees a radical shift in style and subject matter. The first is a highly finished, "contemporary" painting, largely in the mode of American artists such as Richard Artschwager, whereas the second is a book, a roughly hewn declaration possessing a Germanic imprint. Kiefer's pithy autobiography (fig. 1) charts this seemingly sudden transition from an international to a native point of view. Born and raised in Germany's Donaueschingen region, which takes its name from the river Danube (Donau) that runs through it, Kiefer was deeply imprinted by the splendors of the Black and Oden forests.[1] But early on he sought experiences abroad, and between 1963 and 1966 he traveled to France, Holland, Italy, and Sweden; during this time Vincent van Gogh, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Auguste Rodin were his heroes. He chose to study in Freiburg, a city near the border of France, where he could use his skill in French and experience life in a frontier context. As a child, living in Rastatt, on the Rhine border with France, he had been much impressed by the potential danger of such a situation;[2] he emphasized this point in his autobiography with the notations "Heaven-hell" and "Border." Following three semesters of courses preparing for a law degree, this son of an art educator turned to the study of art at the Freiburg Academy. But only in 1969, as the shift in the two works cited above and his autobiography indicate, did Kiefer emphatically look again at his identity as a German.

Kiefer's intellectual and artistic evolution mirrored the transformation that had occurred earlier in the decade in the work of a number of German artists. From the end of World War II through the 1960s, German art was, quite naturally, in disarray.[3] Through the 1950s, various derivative forms of Abstract Expressionism prevailed; in the 1960s, German artists largely succumbed to the overpowering influence of American Pop, Op, Minimal, and Hard Edge styles, but they had difficulty integrating these international artistic developments into their own native tendencies. Amidst the uninspired work of the period, a few artists were seeking a breakthrough by creating a uniquely Germanic viewpoint, but it is indicative of their lack of prominence that Kiefer did not become aware of them until about 1970.[4]

Among this group were Georg Baselitz and Eugen Schönebeck, who issued a manifesto in 1961 demanding an indigenous outlook for German arts;[5] by the end of the decade, Markus Lüpertz was, likewise, recommending that his colleagues paint German themes.[6] These individuals felt a sense of cultural hegemony engulfing them and, rather than merely looking on American art in the formalist terms of its pioneers, they feared a loss of their identity. Baselitz's *Different Signs* (fig. 4) and A. R. Penck's *Method of Coping* (fig. 5), both of 1965, emphasize the dilemma of the German artist. In the first, the painter from a war-torn country helplessly holds a palette, as if wondering what course of action is possible for him. In the second, Penck examines the two seemingly fundamental alternatives of the artist at that time: to paint in a nonobjective mode or to add explicit content to his work. Their loosely brushed, primitivistic alternative can also be seen in paintings of the 1960s of K. H. Hödicke and Lüpertz. For major influences on these artists, one might look to early twentieth-century German art, and to France and England, to Jean Dubuffet and Francis Bacon, rather than to the United States, as the young Germans sought exemplars who were closer to their own situation. The painter Horst Antes, Kiefer's teacher at the Academy in Karlsruhe in 1969, also offered a figuratively expressive alternative to the prevailing internationalist sophistication of his contemporaries.

A second, divergent approach in the desert of derivative work in Germany can be perceived in the powerfully satiric paintings of Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter, both of whom questioned the very orthodoxy of modernism. Their biting irony recalls the spirit of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) artists George Grosz and Otto Dix and typifies a more defiant German outlook. Likewise, one can cite the savagery of the Fluxus artists in Germany, who during the 1960s, renewed the Dada rebellion.

Probably the most significant new direction for Kiefer was offered by Joseph Beuys. After moving from Karlsruhe to Hornbach in 1971, Kiefer started to visit Beuys in Düsseldorf for critiques and discussions and continued to do so until late 1972 or early 1973. Kiefer describes Beuys as his teacher in the largest sense of the word.[7] Even as Beuys was synthesizing ideas of Process, Conceptual, and Performance

Plate 1
German Line of Spiritual Salvation,
1975
Deutsche Heilslinie
Watercolor on paper
9 7/16 x 13 3/8" (24 x 34 cm)
Private Collection

Figure 4. Georg Baselitz (German, born 1938), *Different Signs* (*Verschiedene Zeichen*), 1965. Oil on canvas, 44⅞ x 35⅜ (114 x 90 cm). Collection of Hartmut and Silvia Ackermeier, Berlin.

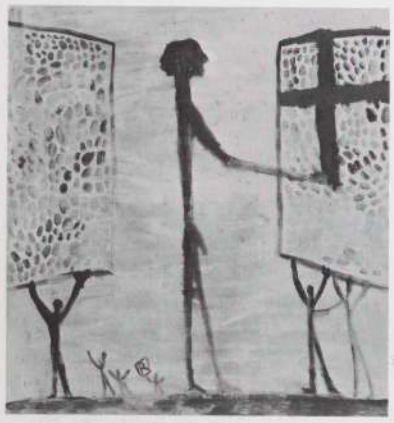

Figure 5. A. R. Penck (German, born 1939), *Method of Coping* (*Methode, fertigzuwerden*), 1965. Oil on canvas, 58⅝ x 51½" (149 x 131 cm). Collection of Siegfried Adler, Hinterzarten, West Germany.

Figure 6. Joseph Beuys (German, 1921–1986), *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, 1965. Photograph of a performance work. © Ute Klophaus

art, Italian Arte Povera, and primitivism, he was achieving a unique voice (see fig. 6). Most important was his exploration of the dialogue between art and life. For Beuys, art was at the pinnacle of a pyramid containing all the spiritual, historical, scientific, and psychological matter of humanity. Art was a beacon amidst the tottering and corrupt society surrounding him; with it, he felt able to initiate a "healing process."[8] Beuys freely employed the myths, metaphors, and symbols of various cultures, and created his own from the wrenching personal experiences he had endured in World War II. No material or approach was anathema to him. Perhaps most important, Kiefer learned about conscience and integrity from Beuys,[9] and he undoubtedly gained from him an enormous sense of mission and ambition, that is, the wish to grasp great regions of human history within the boundaries of his art.

Kiefer's book *You're a Painter* (fig. 3) announced the new impetus and dedication in his art. Instead of unemotionally advancing a preexistent, stylistic mode, he began to use art to explore his own psyche and that of his countrymen. The title of the work is an exhortation to himself and to the figure on the cover: to create ideals, shape the world, and, above all, seize his destiny as a painter and vehemently take action. It is only after one learns that the sculpture depicted on the cover of this book is by one of the Nazi-approved artists (possibly Josef Thorak) that one begins to sense the ambiguity of Kiefer's approach. If he, like the Nazis, wants to jettison international art so as to explore his own roots, is he, then, a Nazi heir at heart?

Kiefer went much further in investigating this difficult territory when, in the summer and autumn of 1969, he took a series of photographs during several trips abroad. Instead of repeating his earlier voyages as a German novice eager to experience new cultures, he assumed the identity of the conquering National Socialist. In the fashion of Conceptual art, he made a series of "manipulated" images, that is, he photographed staged events rather than preexistent situations such as are associated with traditional photography. Starting with the image on the front page (fig. 7) of "Occupations," as the series came to be known,[10] Kiefer immediately challenges the viewer to ponder once again the incomprehensible horror of the Nazi era; in the flamboyance of the Nazi *Sieg heil* he spares neither the viewer nor himself since he serves as the model for the saluting figure. Turning to the first two pages one momentarily loses one's bearings. Here (fig. 8), he repeats the gesture, and although it is still ceremonial and public, the trappings of official sanction and convention are absent. The figure strikes his pose in the privacy of a dishevelled apartment. Standing in a bathtub, he seems to walk on water, but the setting demythologizes this "miraculous" act. The prominently placed wine bottle hints at the source of the figure's delusions of grandeur, and reinforcing the ludicrousness of the image is an old joke that Hitler could not swim.

Two pages later, in a picture taken in Montpellier (fig. 9) , Kiefer suggests another layer of meaning for the Nazi salute. Facing us, with his head slightly tilted and his curly hair in silhouette, Kiefer resembles a Roman warrior striking a characteristic pose. Relating the Nazi salute to the gesture of the ancient Roman is like the effort of earlier Germans who sought to link both societies in a single historical continuum. He pursues his series of occupations in Arles, where the gesture is once more related to Rome, in this case in a Roman graveyard.

The Nazi removes his jacket to "occupy" the beach in Sète (fig. 10); then he moves on to Italy, to Paestum (fig. 11), where he chooses to invade the modern city, along with the well-known ruins. His sense of an historical quest continues on the following page, when he "gloriously" occupies the Roman Colosseum (fig. 12). That a figure is seen walking away, unconcerned and uninterested in the saluting figure, adds to the comical character of the action and demonstrates the lack of respect with which it is now regarded. By means of the ruined grandeur of the Colosseum, Kiefer shows that once-meaningful symbols of power and obedience can lose their content altogether.

On the final page (fig. 13), Kiefer draws the various strands in the book together. He stands on water (although clearly on a rock), the illusion of his special power revealed. Whether mimicking the Romans or the Nazis, he faces the sea as if to consecrate his actions. Arrogantly imbued with the importance of his military mission, he perhaps even wishes to challenge the authority of nature. On this last page, Kiefer calls forth the ghost of a German era long preceding the Nazi period, for the image closely resembles Caspar David Friedrich's early nineteenth-century painting *Wanderer above the Misty Sea* (fig. 14), in which the contemplation of nature is paramount. In imbuing his photograph with the memory of how Germany *was*, Kiefer offers a

Figures 7–13. Anselm Kiefer, pages from "Occupations" ("Besetzungen"), 1969. From *Interfunktionen* (Cologne), no. 12 (1975).

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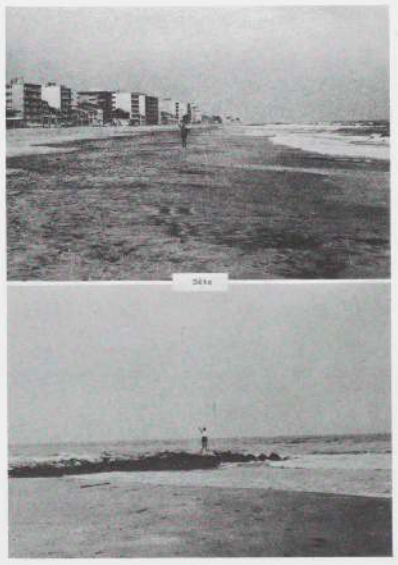

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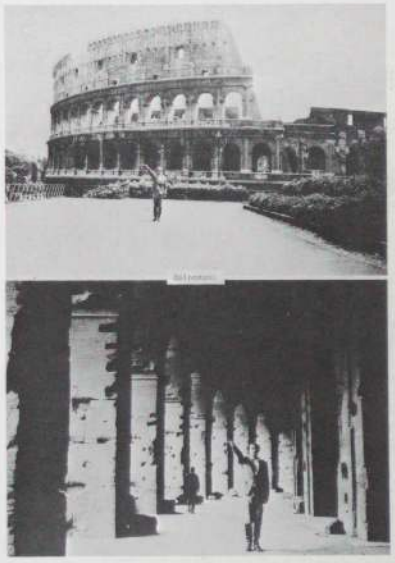

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Figure 14. Caspar David Friedrich (German, 1774–1840), *Wanderer above the Misty Sea* (*Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer*), c. 1818. Oil on canvas, 37⅜ x 29½" (94.8 x 74.8 cm). Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

Plate 2
Every Human Being Stands beneath His Own Dome of Heaven, 1970
Jeder Mensch steht unter seiner Himmelskugel
Watercolor and pencil on paper
15¾ x 18⅞" (40 x 48 cm)
Private Collection

15

Figure 15. Anselm Kiefer, double-page photographic image with foldouts from *The Flooding of Heidelberg* (*Die Überschwemmung Heidelbergs*), 1969. 11⅞ x 8½ x ⅞" (30.2 x 21.7 x 2.3 cm) (bound volume). Private Collection.

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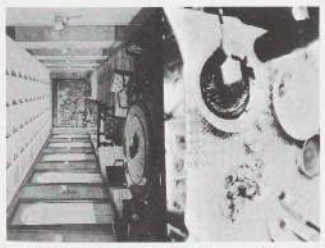

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Figures 16–18. Anselm Kiefer, double-page photographic images from *The Flooding of Heidelberg* (*Die Überschwemmung Heidelbergs*), 1969.

critique of what it became in the 1930s and 1940s: what had been humble respect for nature in an earlier world has been replaced by strident pomposity in our own century.

Kiefer's initial impetus for examining the Nazi era may, in part, have derived from the 1960s spirit of revolt and its revulsion toward the legacy bestowed by earlier generations. But there is much about "Occupations" that recalls, too, the late 1960s international Conceptualist movement in art, particularly the overly synthetic approach of that outlook. Here, he arranges a series of photographs for a publication; elsewhere, he binds a similar sequence together to create a unique book. As in Conceptualism, personal narrative is also of great importance. His appearance in the series of staged tableaux recalls, too, the manifestations of performance art and happenings of that period. Evidence of the artist's hand is constantly present, manipulating expectations and viewpoints and juxtaposing real and historical time. Yet, Kiefer's activities were not only proposals in an ongoing, hermetic debate on the nature of art; in a sense, he attempted to shock and assault the taboos of German society. His bitter sarcasm about the realities and delusions of the Führer and his followers could only stir up already disturbed feelings, for Kiefer continually tries to make certain that half-buried memories are not left peacefully at rest.

"Occupations" signaled the direction Kiefer's work would take in the following decade: he endeavored to use his vocation to explore his own identity and heritage. The nineteenth-century Romantic poet Friedrich Hölderlin, whom Kiefer admired enormously, proposed such a path, saying that one must master what is innate in order to achieve great heights.[11] Sensing the presence of World War II everywhere in contemporary Germany, Kiefer found its resonance powerful and inescapable, and felt compelled to confront this reality almost daily. Although he was born in the year the war concluded, he accepted and embraced the event as a touchstone of the inherently German cosmography, a framework that he, regardless of inclination, must accept. Hence, by adopting the identity of the Nazi, he sought to "transpose history directly into . . . [his] life."[12] However, unlike the figure on the cover of *You're a Painter*, Kiefer is, in fact, an anti-hero, incapable of throwing off the chains of his countrymen and their memories. His painful feelings of guilt are not diminished through these endeavors, he explains,[13] but his knowledge about the period is increased.

In two books of 1969, both titled *The Flooding of Heidelberg*, Kiefer created an imaginary incident, the bursting of a dam on the river Neckar, which causes the inundation of the city. Although the apocalyptic event is announced by the title on the cover, it is only alluded to, in the middle of the books (fig. 15), by the views of the city seen from the Heidelberg castle, high above it. This position must be that of the perpetrator of the disaster, who stands above the city to trigger the flood just as Nero watched the burning of Rome from a hillside. Kiefer had read the French writer Jean Genet at the time this work was conceived,[14] and, like him, created the figure of an Existential gangster who knows what is "needed" and cold-bloodedly carries out a horrible event. "I do not identify with Nero or Hitler," Kiefer has said, "but I have to reenact what they did just a little bit in order to understand the madness. That is why I make these attempts to become a fascist."[15]

Near the beginning of the book, Kiefer establishes the character of the protagonist who invents the flood by juxtaposing views of his own studio, then in Karlsruhe, with photographs of Third Reich buildings (fig. 16).[16] The painter's environment is prosaic and filled with the tools of his trade, but from these unidealized beginnings emerge the illusions that an artist creates, such as the horrific *Flooding of Heidelberg*. By contrast, the government buildings that are reproduced are symbolic of the power that could actually carry out this destruction. Kiefer intermingles the worlds in unexpected ways; for example, the overbearing force of the National Socialist government manifests itself at one point in a group of toy soldiers shown near the hand of a Nazi-approved sculpture symbolizing the Aryan ideal (fig. 17). The image suggests that the power of the government is built on such illusions and that art is employed to make them appear as real as possible. Toward the end of one of the volumes, a soldier stands in contemplation and perhaps admiration of his accomplice, the sea (fig. 18). Both books conclude with a series of painted black pages.

When Kiefer presented *The Flooding of Heidelberg* to his class for criticism, his colleagues were horrified, a reaction that did not bother the artist but rather convinced him that he had discovered something important. Kiefer relates that he was seeking not to shock but to expand the boundaries of art.[17] When his fellow students asked about the fate of the citizens

Figure 19. Page from the Ashburn Manuscript, 14th century. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence. Ms. Laur. Ashb. 1166, cc. 16v, 17.

Figure 20. Anselm Kiefer, *Untitled (Ohne Titel)*, 1971. Oil on canvas (in two parts), each 86⅝ x 39⅜" (220 x 100 cm). Collection of Dr. Günther Gercken, Lütjensee, West Germany.

of Heidelberg, the artist, misleadingly, replied that they were of no concern.[18] In *The Flooding of Heidelberg*, as well as "Occupations," Kiefer tries on the pose of inhuman cruelty, plunging into a state of spiritual darkness in which he can coolly and almost dispassionately ponder one of the most difficult terrains anyone can explore, the character of evil. In a very fundamental sense, Kiefer's investigation is traditionally religious, for implicit in it is an inquiry into the existence and nature of the Supreme Being, and by extension, the possibility of redemption.

In many societies, a deluge indicates the moment when humanity returns to the watery state from which it came; subsequently, a new era is begun.[19] In these myths, mankind is not extinguished by the water, but rather, there is a "temporary reintegration into the formless . . . followed by a new creation, a new life or a new man."[20] In *The Flooding of Heidelberg*, Kiefer, too, attempts a sort of theoretical renewal for Germany, a purging of the existent sin for the good of the country. Just as Nero and Hitler might have imagined that their acts followed the pattern established by various gods, Kiefer carries out a theoretical flood. For him this mock ritual is not the perpetuation of a horror but a new moment in an ongoing cycle.

Kiefer's investigations were carried out, too, in the medium of watercolor, where his almost precious involvement with materials becomes evident. He is especially fond of painting watercolor scenes of nature, for example *Every Human Being Stands beneath His Own Dome of Heaven*, 1970 (pl. 2), in which the medium serves to reveal certain delicate, poetic qualities. The saluting figure with the limited viewpoint imposed by the dome is set within a larger cosmos;[21] his pose is pretentious, even silly, compared to the enormity of the earth. Nevertheless, the Nazi, or Roman, would have implicitly believed that the "dome of heaven" he concocted corresponded to a celestial vault, such as has been imagined in various religions.[22] Kiefer's comparison of spaces shows that true transcendence can only occur by passing beyond, or in the terms of Indian philosophy, by "shattering" this roof.[23] Still, however arrogant, destructive, isolated, and limited, the figure has his world view with which he understands and affects the universe.

The contemporaneous *Winter Landscape* (pl. 3) is the first of Kiefer's works in which he treats human suffering rather than the perpetrators of such occurrences. From the neck of an anonymous figure, who has apparently transcended the limitations of a dome, blood spews forth over the snow. This martyr is the personification of the land, now stained by the events of human history.

At the time of his marriage in 1971, Kiefer created two watercolors to celebrate the event. In *Reclining Man with Branch* (pl. 4) he lies on the ground, holding a branch; a dedication, "Anselm für Julia" is written beneath the figure. This work is related to an image in the fourteenth-century Ashburn Manuscript (fig. 19), indicating the beginning of an alchemical influence in Kiefer's art. The medieval image is concerned with rebirth following death;[24] by using it, Kiefer might symbolically be offering marriage as another kind of transformation. Although Kiefer's branch does not grow directly from the genitalia as it did in the manuscript illustration, the correspondence to the alchemical image is clear; indeed, a double entendre may be suggested by the dedication. The figure in the second watercolor, *Julia* (pl. 5), wearing an evening dress and holding a marble heart, is treated more conventionally than her husband.[25] However, the large funnel shape behind her was inspired by Kiefer's new interest in the principle of yin and yang, a concept known in many cultures as well as in alchemy.[26] This principle has to do with the distinctions throughout nature between male and female, which are often symbolized by up- and down-turned triangles.

Kiefer also examined the yin-and-yang principle in several landscapes of the "I-Thou" series in 1971.[27] He and his wife had, in that year, moved to the remote village of Hornbach, in the region of the Oden Forest, and from then onward his work reverberated with echoes of the neighboring landscape. In some of the works in the "I-Thou" series, down-turned, funnel-shaped areas of sky meet horizon lines in forests or plowed areas in the shapes of up-turned triangles, or both. Kiefer introduces himself within a rectangular patch in the upper reaches of the forest in an untitled painting of the same year (fig. 20). Here again he may be referring to the yin-and-yang principle, for the male-yang is light and has origins in the heavens; the female-yin is dark, passive and earthly. In effect, Kiefer is putting himself *in* the landscape in a sexual sense, which mirrors the nature of the yin-and-yang principle.

Plate 3
Winter Landscape, 1970
Winterlandschaft
Watercolor on paper
16 15/16 x 14 3/16" (43 x 36 cm)
Private Collection

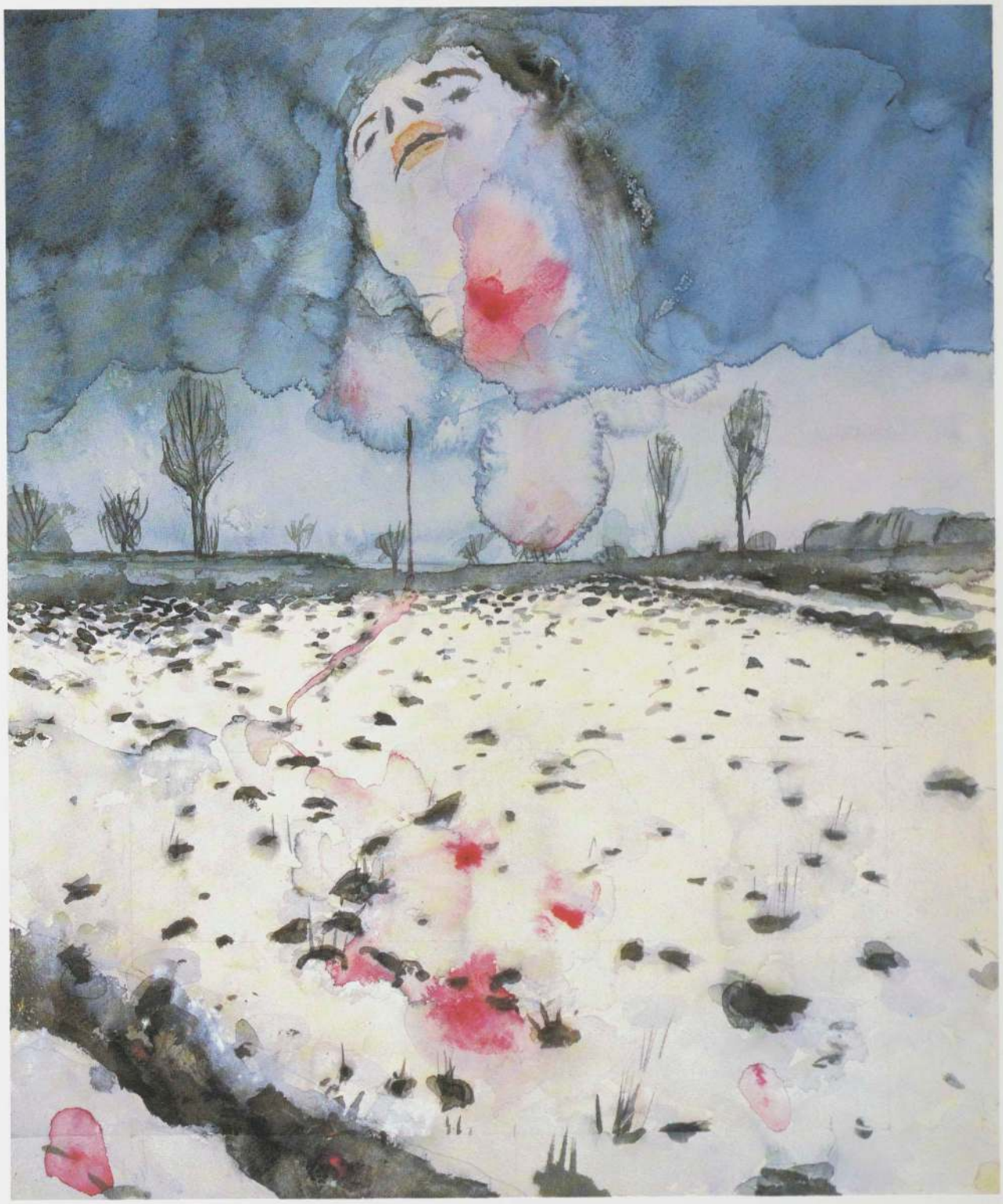


Plate 4
Reclining Man with Branch, 1971
Liegender Mann mit Zweig
Watercolor on paper
9 7/16 x 11" (24 x 28 cm)
Private Collection

Plate 5
Julia, 1971
Watercolor and pencil on paper
18 11/16 x 14 3/16" (47.5 x 36 cm)
Private Collection

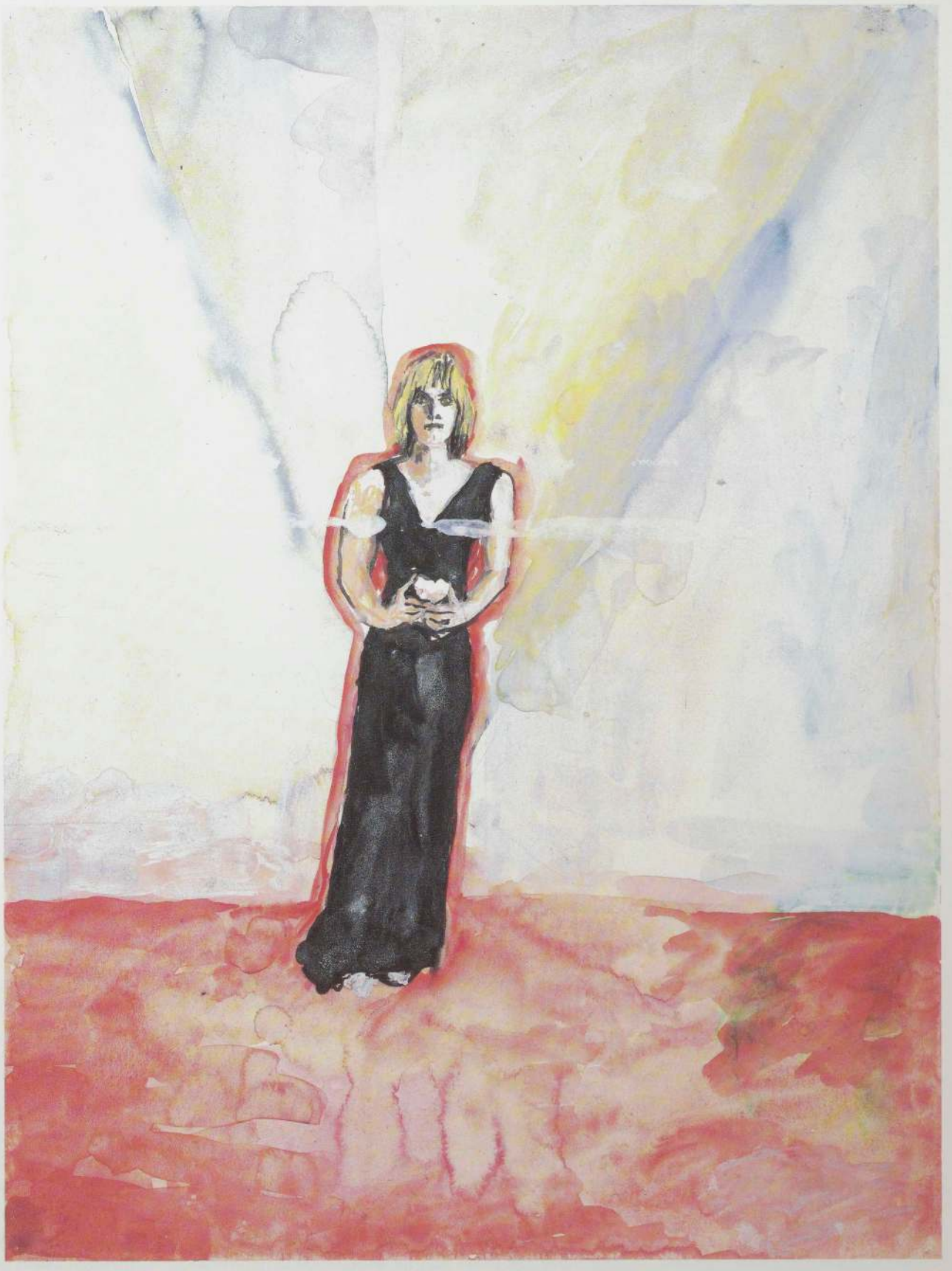


Figure 21. Page from *Speculum veritatis*, 17th century. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome, Cod. lat. 7286, f. 2.

Figure 22. Anselm Kiefer, *Quaternity* (*Quaternität*), 1973. Charcoal and oil on burlap, 118⅛ x 171¼" (300 x 435 cm). Collection of Georg Baselitz, Derneburg, West Germany.

Figure 23. Anselm Kiefer, *Father, Son, Holy Ghost* (*Vater, Sohn, heiliger Geist*), 1973. Oil on burlap, 65 x 61½" (165 x 156 cm). Collection of Dr. Günther Gercken, Lütjensee, West Germany.

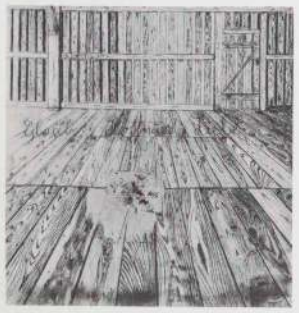


Figure 24. Anselm Kiefer, *Faith, Hope, Love* (*Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe*), 1973. Charcoal on burlap, with cardboard, 117⅜ x 110⅝" (298 x 281 cm). Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

These landscapes of 1971 culminate with *Man in the Forest* (pl. 6). Kiefer had placed himself before a forest in a book of 1969 called *Heroic Allegories*,[28] and held a tree branch in *Reclining Man with Branch*. But in *Man in the Forest*, he transforms himself into an allegorical figure dressed in an angelic gown and surrounded, almost embraced, by an all-pervasive forest of seemingly infinite height. It is perhaps most significant that the branch is now aflame. Is the figure coming to light the way in the forest or to ignite an inferno? From this time forth, Kiefer would make fire and its powers of creation and destruction an integral part of his art. Divine and demonic at once,[29] fire is treated with extraordinary reverence among diverse cultures (see, for example, fig. 21). For Kiefer, fire is an archetype, one of several that echo almost constantly within his work. As with the others, including the artist of *The Flooding of Heidelberg*, ambiguity is the only absolute quality one can discern.

In 1972 and 1973, Kiefer turned from the forest, taking up the physical surrounding of his studio as his central motif. The painting *Resurrexit*, 1973 (pl. 7), marks this transition. Whereas the forest was an inescapable presence in *Man in the Forest*, it is delimited in *Resurrexit*. The viewer has distance from it and can perhaps comprehend its character. While the figure in the earlier picture stands in a kind of clearing, in *Resurrexit* there is a man-made division or path, a suggestion perhaps that the forest has even been in part clear-cut. Tree stumps and stones lead into the distance, meeting a down-turned cone of sky. Amidst the broken branches lies a snake that seems not only to repeat the movement toward a distant vanishing point but also to flatten out and stretch upward as well. Just as its spatial function is ambiguous, so its meaning is multilayered. The snake is a threat to the archetypal male and female, Adam and Eve paradigm set up by the yin-yang triangles of the lower composition,[30] for it will defile and subvert this wintry "paradise." The snake that appears at the foot of the Cross is a precedent, too, for although it brought about the human fall, it is powerless to prevent the final Resurrection of the Body.[31] In another painting, *Quaternity* (fig. 22), Kiefer specifically names the snake as Satan, but by his title adds it to the idea of the Trinity, as if Satan were an inherent part of any spiritual equation.[32] In this guise, the snake may be understood in *Resurrexit* to be at home in the forest, having caused the devastation there. Yet Kiefer suggests more, for the steps appearing above, which form a third cone shape, are clearly provided for none other than the snake. Will it achieve resurrection or, conversely, is it a threat to the preserve above the landscape? Among the diverse meanings with which the snake or serpent is endowed, two are alluded to by the title *Resurrexit*: regeneration and eternity.

The interior and exterior realms in *Resurrexit* are visually and theoretically related. Both are essentially wooden, and a few of the trees continue into the upper portion, joining the two sections of the painting. Like the principle of yin and yang, the opposing forces symbolized by the triangles of each canvas section are but components of a single idea. Still, whereas the perspective of the forest leads into an earthly distance, the progression of steps directs the eye upward toward the threshhold introduced by the door, which is, in fact, the entryway to the artist's attic studio. Both the word "Resurrexit" and the door powerfully convey a sense of transition to another, peaceful world.

In 1973, Kiefer created a series of works showing the woodgrained studio of his home, a converted schoolhouse. As in a theater of few stage sets, Kiefer's attic became the focus for a range of themes. Indeed, the setting itself may often seem to be the subject of the 1973 series, as for example, in *Father, Son, Holy Ghost* (fig. 23), *Nothung* (pl. 8), and *Faith, Hope, Love* (fig. 24). Although the studio remains constant, the words placed there by the artist are different, establishing a new context each time. The attic environment is a singular world where much may be considered. This place, or world, is a hand-hewn interior in which the wood possesses a living presence suggestive of its origins in the forest. Not unlike the floorboards of van Gogh's room at Arles, the wood of the studio seems to breathe and have an all-pervasive quality. Given the subjects depicted, one may understand the attic as the setting for the beginning of time, when religious and ethical values are created and tested. At this moment, good and evil, and the possibility of salvation and redemption, are considered.

The studio is Kiefer's own "dome of heaven," subsuming all aspects of his world view. It is a metaphysical place where the artist attempts to understand complex ideas and themes and then integrate them into his physical surroundings. This place is the mind itself, at once malleable and steadfast, a filter through which concepts are pondered, invented, buried, or transformed. Secret rites are performed there, and history is reordered; all is possible.

Plate 6
Man in the Forest, 1971
Mann im Wald
Oil on muslin
68½ x 74⁷⁄₁₆" (174 x 189 cm)
Private Collection

Plate 7
Resurrexit, 1973
Oil, acrylic, and charcoal on burlap
114 3/16 x 70 7/8" (290 x 180 cm)
Collection Sanders, Amsterdam

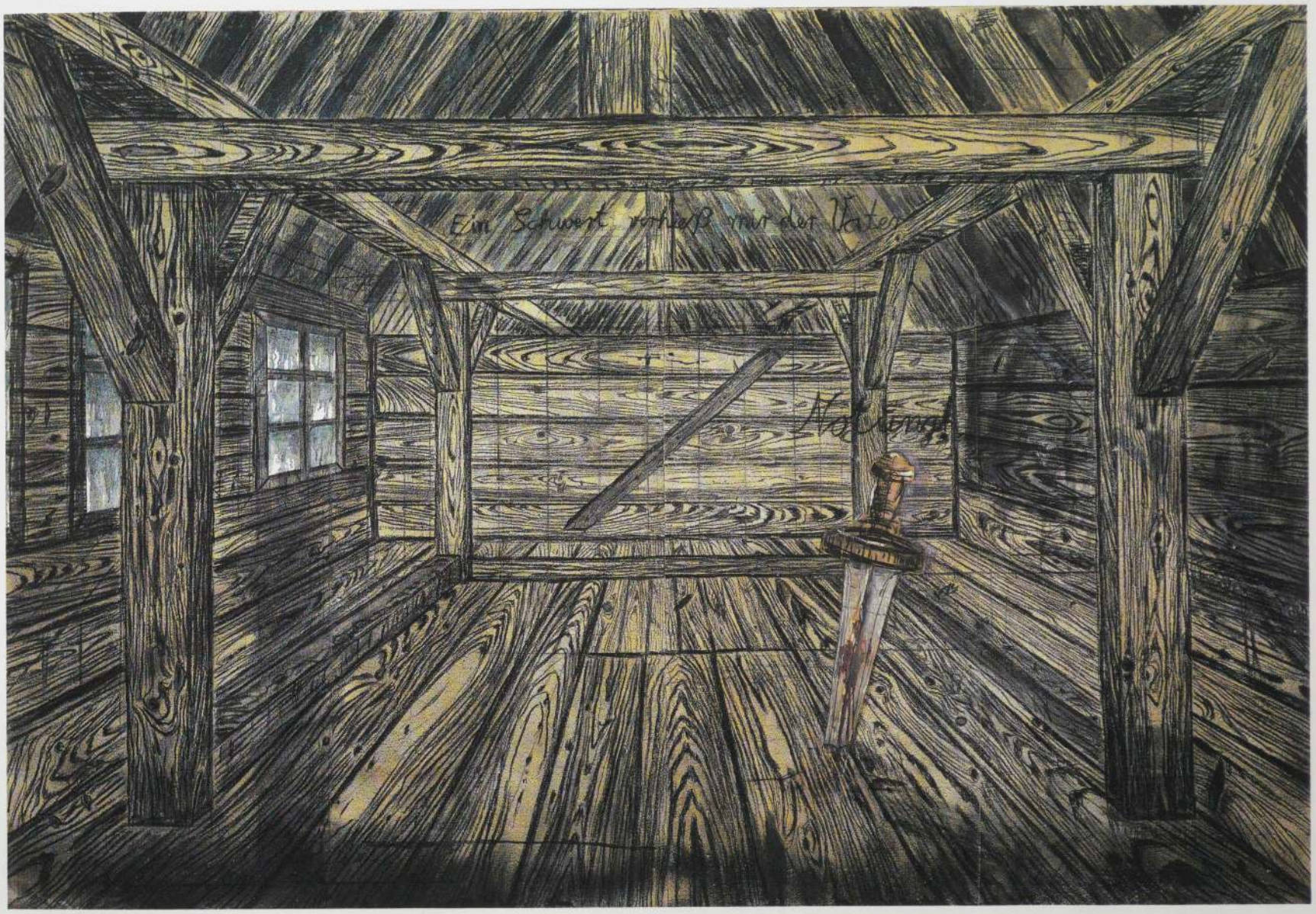


Plate 8
Nothung, 1973
Notung
Oil and charcoal on burlap, with
oil and charcoal on cardboard
118⅛ x 170″ (300 x 432 cm)
Museum Boymans–van
Beuningen, Rotterdam

Figure 25. Anselm Kiefer, double-page from *Heroic Allegories* (*Heroische Sinnbilder*), 1969. Photograph on cardboard, with pastel and pencil, 26 x 19⅝ x 4" (66 x 50 x 10 cm) (bound volume). Private Collection.

Kiefer attempts to picture the Holy Spirit in word and symbol in a second version of *Father, Son, Holy Ghost*, 1973 (pl. 9). He proposes in the painting that from the experience of the forest emerges thoughts about the existence of a divinity, which become words or symbols. The process is thoroughly theoretical, hence the forest is an abstract one of rigidly horizontal branches. In the continuum, three chairs appear as symbols, but these finally go up in smoke. Wood, of course, is always in danger of burning, and ideas are constantly threatened as well; whether religious or ethical, values are all vulnerable. Only art is left, or the mind that invented these ideas, or the mind that comes along afterward to review them. There is irony in the fact that such apparently elevated subjects should appear in these humble surroundings, but the named subject of *Father, Son, Holy Ghost* demonstrates Kiefer's fundamental interest in the possibility of redemption. He is preoccupied with systems of thought that presume there is good in the world and offer hope if not salvation from the real evil that has existed throughout human history. Kiefer has said, "I think a great deal about religion because science provides no answers."[33]

Landscape with Head, 1973 (pl. 11), possesses a similar, self-reflective, analytical cast. Two worlds are again juxtaposed; one is the woodgrained studio, the other a landscape. The red lines that emanate from the staring eyes of Kiefer's grandmother, with whom he lived for several years in his childhood and whose portrait he had made as a teenager and was now reusing, extend into the landscape and beyond, joining these realms. The painting depicts her as physically and psychologically distant from the subject, near the woodgrained studio, whence she can view and contemplate nature. Kiefer describes the left side of the painting as "closed" and the right as "open"; he says that, in a certain sense, she looks into the future.[34] The form of *Landscape with Head* is suggestive of an artist's palette, made rectilinear (although Kiefer's preoccupation with this object was not to begin until a year later). Just as the physical opening at the thumbhole of a palette allows penetration, the eye, likewise, is the point on the human body where sensations enter the mind.

Prominent among the themes on which Kiefer has focused are those of Richard Wagner. The nineteenth-century opera-going audience had perceived Wagner as an artistic radical; the composer subsequently came to have nonmusical associations because of Hitler's reverence for him.[35] Kiefer is fascinated by the use and misuse, understanding then disdain, that history accords such figures. He also shares much with the composer, believing in the power of the artist and art to perform redemptive acts. Like Wagner, Kiefer has been especially interested in treating myths from the Edda, a body of ancient Icelandic literature that remains a major source of German mythology. From 1973 onward, Kiefer's work had the scale and theatricality that are associated with Wagner. Employing a few very meaningful props—for example, the sword—the painter conveys complex narratives.

The most monumental work of 1973, and the last of this important series, is *Germany's Spiritual Heroes* (pl. 10). On six strips of burlap sewn together, Kiefer drew perspective lines to form a deep, theatrical space. The viewer is placed at the entrance of the cavernous room, slightly off center, engulfed by the wooden beams. At home in his studio again, Kiefer considers historical figures instead of fictional or religious personages. They are mostly Germanic artists and writers of the nineteenth and twentieth century,[36] and are similar to a grouping that appeared earlier, on a page in *Heroic Allegories* (fig. 25), and would occur again in later works. None of these groups ever has an obvious organizing principle. Although one would assume that each individual is of considerable interest to the artist, all are joined, like members of the Trinity, into the overall concept announced at the top of the painting.

The interior is at once a memorial hall and crematorium. Eternal fires burn along the wall as if in memory of the individuals, but the lower edge of the painting is darkened in a manner that suggests it has been singed. This highly flammable wooden room is perpetually in danger of burning, and with it Germany and its heroes will be destroyed. The similarity of this situation to the Valhalla of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, and, preceding that, the Twilight of the Gods of the Edda, is certainly intended. Just as the Edda, itself a compilation of many sources, was subsequently adapted by Wagner for his purposes, Kiefer has come along to reformulate Valhalla. In his case, the "gods" are those historic individuals whom Kiefer has recognized as crucial to his concept of Germany. Heroes, who are gods, are everywhere apparent in the Edda and the *Ring*; however, they continuously "fall," in a cycle that has a very natural and predestined pattern about it. Indeed, the hall in which they burn is built of the branches of the World

Plate 9
Father, Son, Holy Ghost, 1973
Vater, Sohn, heiliger Geist
Oil and charcoal on burlap
114 x 74¾" (290 x 190 cm)
Private Collection, Amsterdam

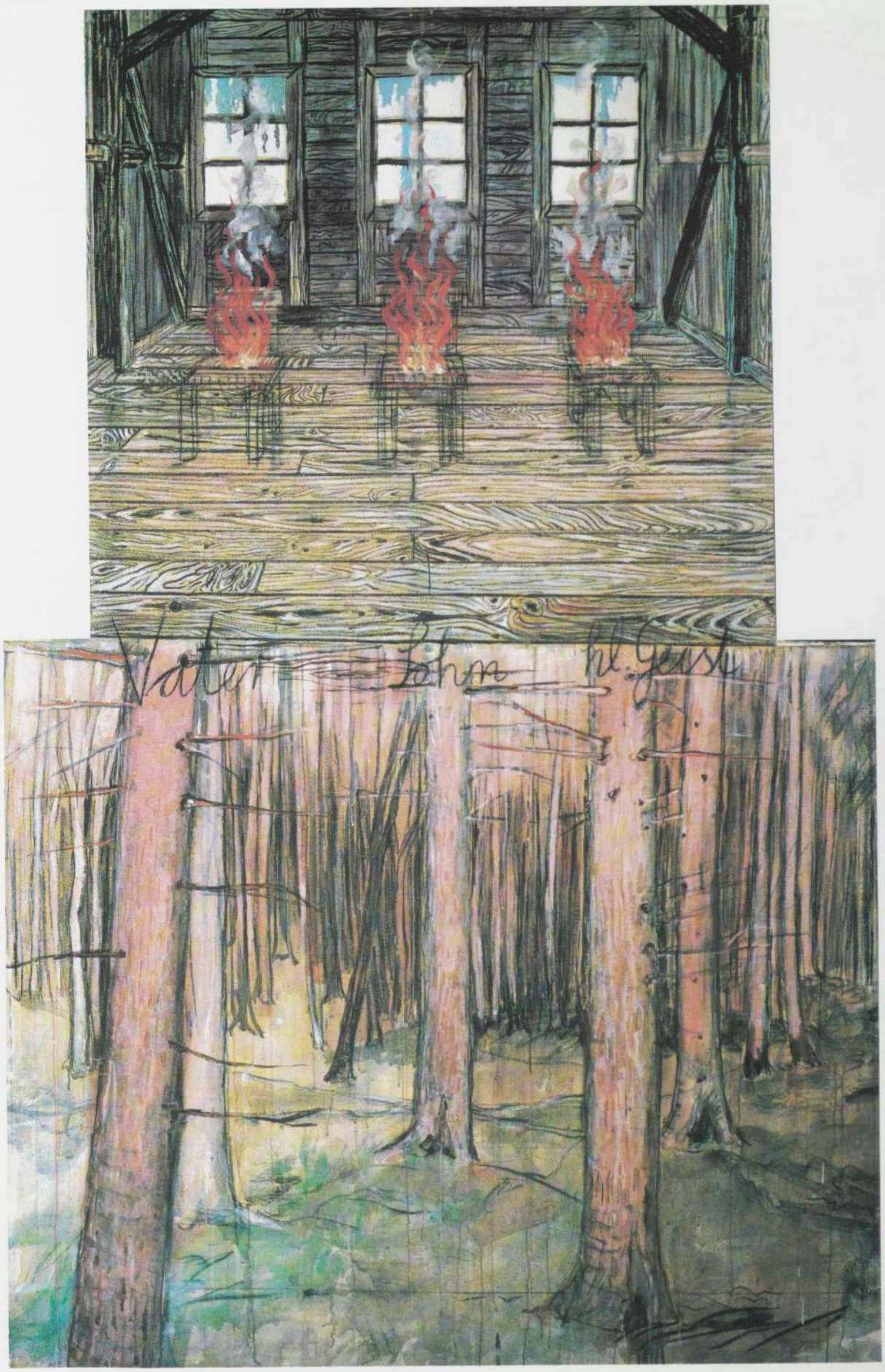


Plate 10
Germany's Spiritual Heroes, 1973
Deutschlands Geisteshelden
Oil and charcoal on burlap,
mounted on canvas
120⅞ x 268½" (307 x 682 cm)
Collection of Barbara and Eugene
Schwartz, New York


Lands Geisteshelden.

Ash, a tree that is constantly being gnawed yet survives to grow additional rings. Its cyclical quality reinforces and restates the characteristic replacement of one set of heroes by another, an event brought about by fire in Kiefer's iconography.

Kiefer's attitude about a Germany whose spiritual heroes are in fact transitory and whose deeply felt ideals are vulnerable is not only ambivalent but also sharply biting and ironical. The title itself, taken from an elementary school text, is pedantic and ultimately comical. These great figures and their achievements are reduced to just names, recorded not in a marble edifice but in the attic of a rural schoolhouse. In Wagner and the Edda, most heroes are in reality power-hungry and deceitful, and if they do stand for ideals, their legacy is a cloudy one. The analogy leads to Kiefer's implicit question: In whose hands will Germany be held when the rule of these gods is over? Certainly the future of Kiefer's nation is not clearly stated in *Germany's Spiritual Heroes*. The philosopher Martin Heidegger, to whom Kiefer dedicated one of his books in 1975, writes of the passage into a destitute time, when the day of the gods is ended.[37] In Heidegger's discussion as in Kiefer's art since 1973, a spiritual and historical darkness has descended.

Notwithstanding Kiefer's links to Conceptual art, his paintings of the early 1970s could hardly be less in tune with those of his contemporaries in the art world. At a time when painting was said in avant-garde circles to be dead, and spatial concerns and subject matter an anathema, Kiefer offered canvases that possessed emotionally charged themes in more or less naturalistic spaces. In spite of the tendency toward an international outlook, Kiefer emphasized chauvinistic concerns. Although his position can be likened to certain contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic, nevertheless, his work *looked* altogether different. Focused on various moments in the past, he hardly nodded to contemporary civilization.

Plate 11
Landscape with Head, 1973
Landschaft mit Kopf
Oil, distemper, and charcoal on
burlap, with charcoal on
cardboard
82 11/16 x 94 1/2" (210 x 240 cm)
Private Collection

On Being German and an Artist: 1974 to 1980

Figure 26. Anselm Kiefer, *There Is Peace upon Every Mountain Peak* (*Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh*), 1973. Watercolor on paper, 12⅜ x 18⅞" (31.5 x 48 cm). Private Collection.

Figure 27. Albrecht Altdorfer (German, c. 1480–1538), *The Battle of Alexander* (*Die Alexanderschlacht*), 1529. Oil on panel, 62⅜16 x 47¼" (158 x 120 cm). Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

At the conclusion of the Edda and *The Ring of the Nibelung*, there is a transition from the reign of the gods to the time of man's domination. In 1974, Kiefer made a similar transition in his subject matter from the realm of myth to an increasingly historic, profane human world. The setting of his work shifted, too, from the arena of his studio to the land, where historical events might occur. Many series of works began to emerge from 1974 onward, each based on an independent theme. As in the pages of one of his books, a progressive unfolding took place in a series, for Kiefer shaped the viewer's experience by changing vantage points and examining the various details and characteristics of his theme. Kiefer had little interest in a precise rendering of events; instead, he often focused on an unlikely motif to signify the particular meaning of his subject. A series represented a major touchstone in Kiefer's world view; each was a totem and may even have possessed a certain moral lesson for him. A hermetic iconography is the basis for this body of art, for the series are linked by the repetition of certain motifs and symbols, as well as by the landscape itself, and a canvas may even exhibit one subject and the memory of a second painted earlier.

An archetypal landscape began to dominate Kiefer's imagery: the earth was often dark in tonality, the event or scene seemed to occur at night, the horizon was almost always too high to allow for escape, and there was usually a reference placing the landscape in Germany. In these works, we experience the earth as if our faces were pushed close to the soil and, at the same time, as if we were flying above the ground, but close to it.[1] *Cockchafer Fly*, 1974 (pl. 12), is an example of Kiefer's new landscape, quite different in feeling from works of the previous year, such as *There Is Peace upon Every Mountain Peak* (fig. 26). *Cockchafer Fly* is a depiction of a specific place and time in history, while the earlier painting shows a generalized world in which nature can be a safe environment and in which the individual might even achieve a form of symbolic transcendence.

Written across the upper edge of *Cockchafer Fly* are the words of a German nursery rhyme, which in translation read:

Cockchafer fly,
Father is in the war,
Mother is in Pomerania,
Pomerania is burnt up.[2]

We have already seen how Kiefer's use of words locates an image. By referring to the region of Pomerania—once part of Germany and now mainly in Poland—the artist makes the landscape archetype specific. In this regard, one might compare Kiefer's technique to that of Albrecht Altdorfer, who in *The Battle of Alexander* (fig. 27) established its locale by placing a message prominently in the sky. This arbitrary sign of the artist's hand is likewise the technique employed here so unselfconsciously by Kiefer to indicate place. Altdorfer, whom Kiefer admires enormously,[3] was, like Wagner, rediscovered by the Nazis and then similarly discredited in the postwar world. Kiefer's fascination with Altdorfer has to do not only with his merits as an artist but also with his later reception, as well as with his origins in the Danube valley, Kiefer's own region of Germany.

Pomerania was one of the areas lost to Germany after World War II, but the pathos of the poem has to do not with that loss but with the sacrifice of life. In *Cockchafer Fly*, Kiefer became a kind of war poet, and the blackened, scorched earth his central motif, his Mont Sainte Victoire, as it were, showing the province of the landscape to be human suffering, not the glory of nature. Rising from the earth, the smoke suggests the fires of hell, just as is seen in the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch. The willful destruction of the land, whether by outsiders or by inhabitants attempting to render the earth useless for occupation troops, recalls Kiefer's own gesture in *The Flooding of Heidelberg* (figs. 15–18).

The blackness of the burnt landscape is Kiefer's characteristic tonality. Kiefer claims that only the French use a range of colors, and that he, belonging to the German people, is unfamiliar with such practice.[4] In this regard, Kiefer's 1974 landscapes might be compared to a frottage of 1925 (fig. 28) by another German-born artist, Max Ernst, whose technique of rubbing black lead over a sheet of paper placed on a textured surface gives that sense of being both close to and above the ground at once. Both Ernst and Kiefer employed the transformation of the land as a metaphor for human suffering. The effect of tree rings that appears in Ernst's drawing also occurs extensively in Kiefer's work beginning in 1978.[5] A

Plate 12
Cockchafer Fly, 1974
Maikäfer flieg
Oil on burlap
86⅝ x 118⅛" (220 x 300 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

Plate 13
March Heath, 1974
Märkische Heide
Oil, acrylic, and shellac on burlap
46½ x 100″ (118 x 254 cm)
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven,
The Netherlands

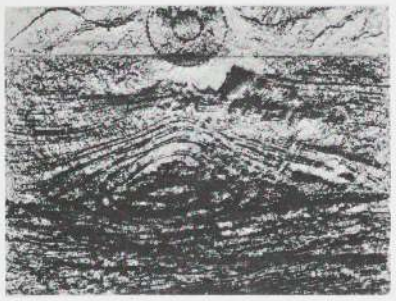


Figure 28. Max Ernst (French, born Germany, 1891–1976), Untitled, 1925. Pencil on paper, 8⅞ x 12″ (22.5 x 30.3 cm). Collection of Hans Bolliger, Zürich.

Figure 29. Anselm Kiefer, *Operation Winter Storm* (*Unternehmen "Wintergewitter"*), 1975. Oil on burlap, 47¼ x 59″ (120 x 150 cm). Private Collection.

relationship to Spanish art, too, might be suggested, for like Goya, Kiefer has gradually made himself a master of blacks and also, like the Spaniard, is consumed with the horrors of human events.

March Heath, 1974 (pl. 13), follows Kiefer's landscape prototype, that is, it has a kind of melancholy light, high horizon, and sense of claustrophobia—although a road is carved out of the helter-skelter natural growth, signaling a human action or habitation, a significant break from the formless surrounding expanse. Kiefer writes across the middle of the painting, "märkische Heide" (March Heath), touching a nerve for Germans. The words are a message. The March Heath belongs to the Brandenburg region, located in East Germany southeast of Berlin. The area is happily recalled for many Germans in Theodor Fontane's *Walking-Tours through the Brandenburg March*, written in the nineteenth century; but the Brandenburg territory has had great importance in Prussian history since the early seventeenth century, and the Brandenburg March became a frequently fought-over prize, which in this century was lost first to Russia and later to East Germany.[6] At first Kiefer's title and the birch trees at right establish a Fontane-like context of nature resplendent, waiting to be enjoyed in peaceful contemplation. But Kiefer, who has never visited the region,[7] chose to represent the heath as barren; the road, then, may signify the events of history, not the idyllic tour of Fontane. Once filled with positive, national importance, this territory has become a sad memento mori of the Nazi experience and the separation of Germany. Adding to the multiple associations of the painting is that "Märkischer Heide, märkischer Sand," an old patriotic tune of the region, became a marching song for Hitler's army.

Kiefer's depictions of landscape are somewhat shocking in the context of German idealism and sentimentality about *das Land*. Unlike the German Romantic attitude of *Sehnsucht*, an aching and longing after nature that continues even to the present day, Kiefer's approach is unrelentingly realistic. He accepts what has happened to his country. This cold, even distant, attitude renders him a kind of pariah with regard to the traditions of his countrymen; he plays with their idealistic notions about the land, denying it as a preserve from human events.

During this period, Kiefer turned increasingly to Nazi World War II military subjects in paintings such as *Operation Hagen's Movement*, *Operation Winter Storm* (fig. 29), *Operation Barbarossa*, and *Operation Sea Lion*, all of 1975. As with "Occupations" (figs. 7–13), which he published in that year, Kiefer immersed himself in the more difficult aspects of his German heritage, depicting disturbing subjects that his audience could not fail to understand.

Operation Sea Lion I (pl. 14) typifies his subject matter. During the summer of 1940, Hitler had approved a misguided plan to invade England by sea named "Operation Sea Lion." The German army, which conceived the idea, was enthusiastic, but the navy had almost no involvement in the planning and was rightfully skeptical. It was assumed that the navy could prepare for this mission in just a month, starting on August 15; that it would have no difficulty in conveying thousands of troops across the English Channel (although little appropriate equipment existed); that the British Royal Air Force would be defeated and the navy neutralized by the time of the attack; and that the sea would be free of mines.[8] According to the plan, troop movements would be carried out with a primitive armada of barges pushed by tugboats. This physically inadequate equipment would be manned by the inexperienced German navy, which would transport several thousand horses for use upon landing.[9] From this distance, Hitler's concept, which in the end was never attempted, seems almost whimsical; but as a serious military operation, it must be considered irrational and even reckless. Kiefer's choice of this subject, like that of the equally ill-conceived invasion of the Soviet Union (Operation Barbarossa), shows his audience that German dreams of invincibility and strength were nothing more than madness.

Kiefer's use of toys to depict Operation Sea Lion is not fanciful, for a tradition existed within the German military of employing toy soldiers as a means of teaching military strategy and planning actions. In the case of Operation Sea Lion, it is known that the military thinkers actually used tubs and model boats to conceive their invasion.[10] Ludicrous as this activity

Figure 30. Joseph Beuys, *Bathtub* (*Badewanne*), 1960. 39⅜ x 39⅜ x 17¾" (100 x 100 x 45 cm). Private Collection. © Ute Klophaus

Figure 31. Anselm Kiefer, *The Lake of Gennesaret* (*See Genezareth*), 1974. Oil, emulsion, and shellac on burlap, 41¼ x 67" (105 x 170 cm). Private Collection.

seems, it nonetheless shares something with art: both are involved with play and with the representation of reality by models of it.[11] Hitler, himself, perhaps had a confusion in this regard, for he wanted to be an artist at one time.

The zinc tub, which Kiefer had earlier provided as a podium for the saluting Nazi in "Occupations" (fig. 8), was apparently in use in virtually every home in Germany during the 1930s and 1940s, an allocation by the National Socialist Party to insure a minimum standard of hygiene in daily life.[12] *Bathtub* was also the title of one of Beuys's most important early works (fig. 30); while having possessed personal meaning for Beuys, the tub also alludes to both birth and death.[13] Likewise, water has contradictory associations of life and death for Kiefer. The destructive potential of water suggests that the Nazis' tub, like the English Channel, would become a tomb for the ill-fated German military;[14] hence, the encircling figures are mourners. But as in another painting, *The Lake of Gennesaret* (fig. 31), the body of water also might suggest a contrasting theme, the pool or lake as the origin of life.

In *Operation Sea Lion I*, Kiefer creates two planes of existence, much as he had done in *Father, Son, Holy Ghost* (pl. 9) and *Resurrexit* (pl. 7). In the lower realm is human life, with its fantasies and mad desire to conquer; it is a world of soldiers subjected to the illusions of those who plan the future with a bathtub full of toy boats. Above the figures, as if seen from their viewpoint through a clear-glass sheet, are three chairs, which in *Father, Son, Holy Ghost* had been used to symbolize the Trinity. Hence, while Kiefer suggests that the Nazis believed their God stood behind or above them in silent support, he is unwilling to grant their idea of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost any more dignity than their dreams of military victory. Each realm is represented rather unceremoniously by everyday objects. Kiefer makes a joke of the Germans' heavenly plane where, presumably, concepts and spiritual notions prevail, by painting a trompe-l'oeil illusion of shadows behind the chairs as if the Nazis must insure the "reality" of their gods by a seemingly literal representation of the symbols. The effort is as rational and worthwhile as the method shown of planning an invasion of England.

Operation Sea Lion I and the books devoted to this subject (see pl. 15) can be understood as a kind of history painting, but the results are much more complex than the retelling of a narrative. Kiefer examines the psychological makeup of his forebears and questions their sanity, hence rendering the theme mythic in a comic and derisive sense. Acting as a synthesist, he shows history colliding with its representation and with the practice of art.

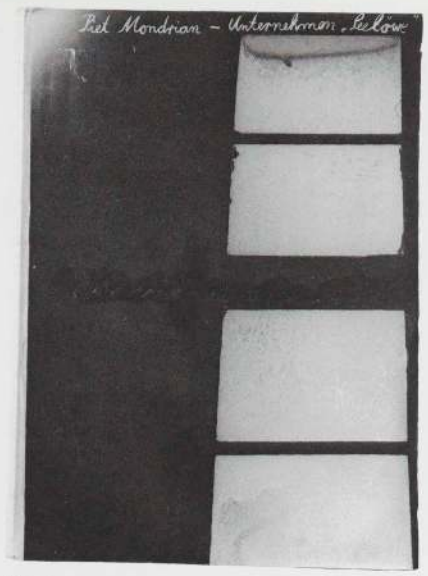
Kiefer carried this synthetic approach further in a series of books entitled *March Sand*, of 1977 and 1978 (see pl. 16). As many as five volumes on this subject exist, all differing in length. Each begins with a photographed landscape, named for a town in the Brandenburg March. In the following pages, tanks often appear in the same setting. Next, sand is added to the landscape photographs; at first it restates the composition, but then, on subsequent pages, it appears in increasing amounts until it covers the photographs completely.

The title alludes to the song "Märkischer Heide, märkischer Sand," which once appropriated by Hitler's army caused the Brandenburg March to become an accomplice to its acts. But by bringing the viewer close to the very substance of the landscape, as it were, Kiefer emphasizes the primacy of the land before meanings were attached to it. That a blanket of sand has the effect of dousing flames, such as burned in Kiefer's other landscapes, represents the restorative function of the sand for the lost cities of old Prussia. The use of sand also provides a momentary glimpse into the future of Kiefer's art, for he would again and again use this material on the surfaces of his paintings. His integration of tangible substances with photographed or painted images at once unites means, subject, and content into an intensely physical presence.

Kiefer's ongoing interest in subjects of a thoroughly German character continued, and in 1978, he created a book titled *Hoffmann von Fallersleben auf Helgoland*.[15] Hoffmann von Fallersleben, protagonist of the volume, was a nineteenth-century poet and patriot who sought unification of the various German lands and a democratic program emphasizing freedom and equality.[16] His idealism was not welcomed, and he was exiled to the North Sea island of Helgoland.

Plate 14
Operation Sea Lion I, 1975
Unternehmen "Seelöwe"
Oil on canvas
86⅝ x 118⅛" (220 x 300 cm)
Collection of Norman and Irma
Braman, Miami Beach

Plate 15
Piet Mondrian — Operation Sea Lion, 1975
Piet Mondrian — Unternehmen "Seelöwe"
Thirty-four double-page photographic images, mounted on cardboard and bound
22 7/16 x 16 1/2 x 2" (57 x 42 x 5 cm) (bound volume)
Collection of Marian Goodman, New York



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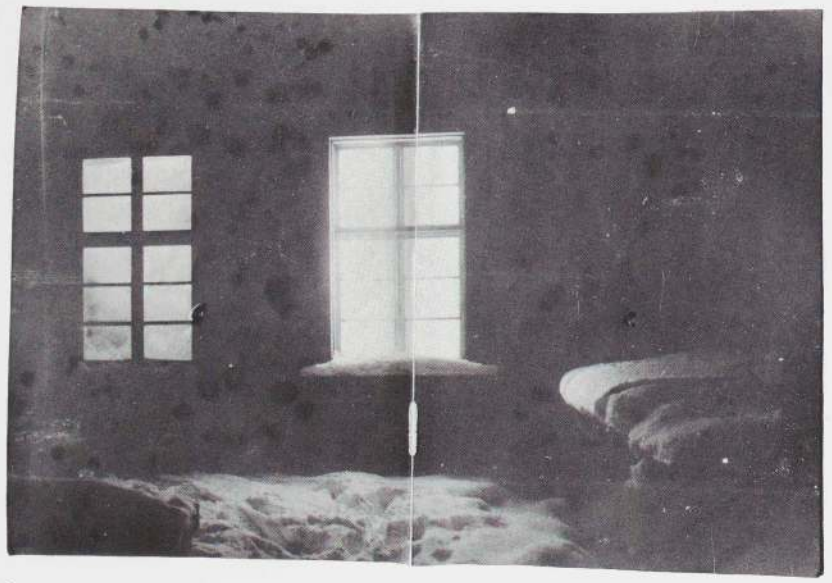
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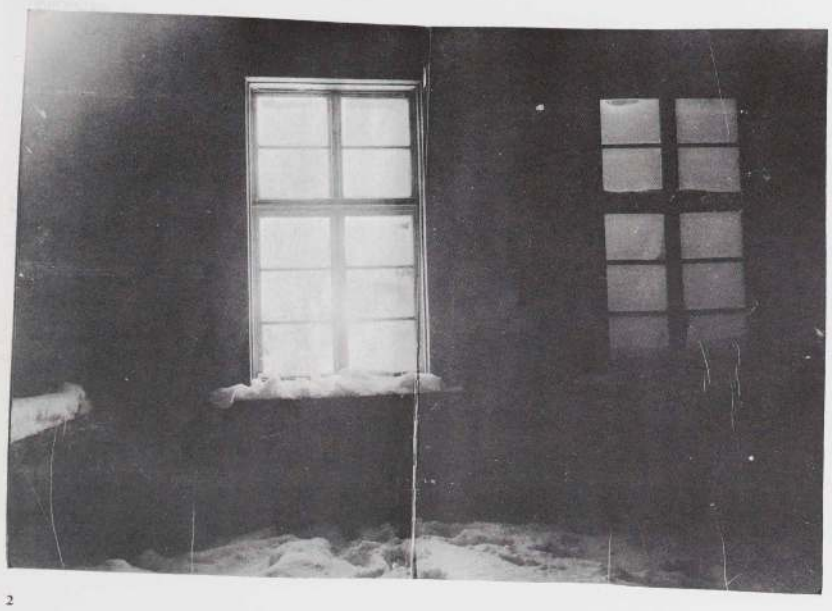
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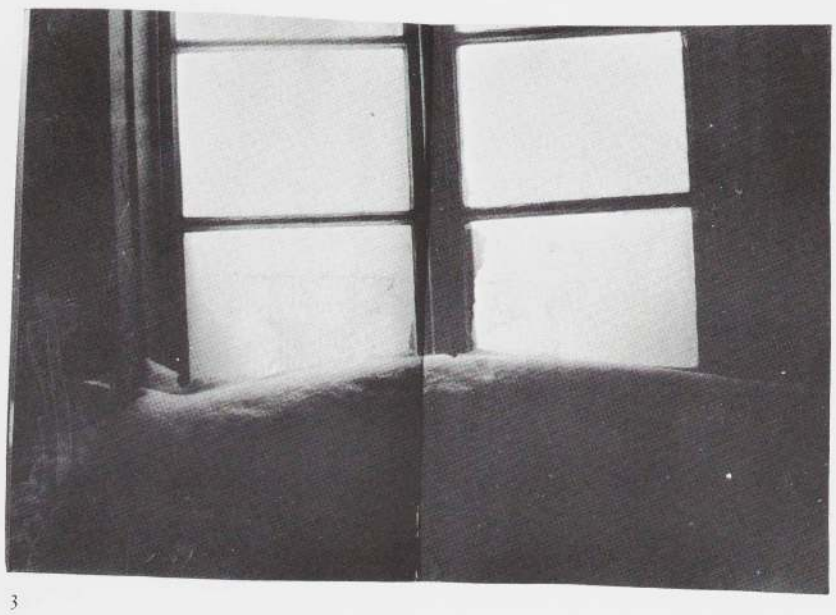
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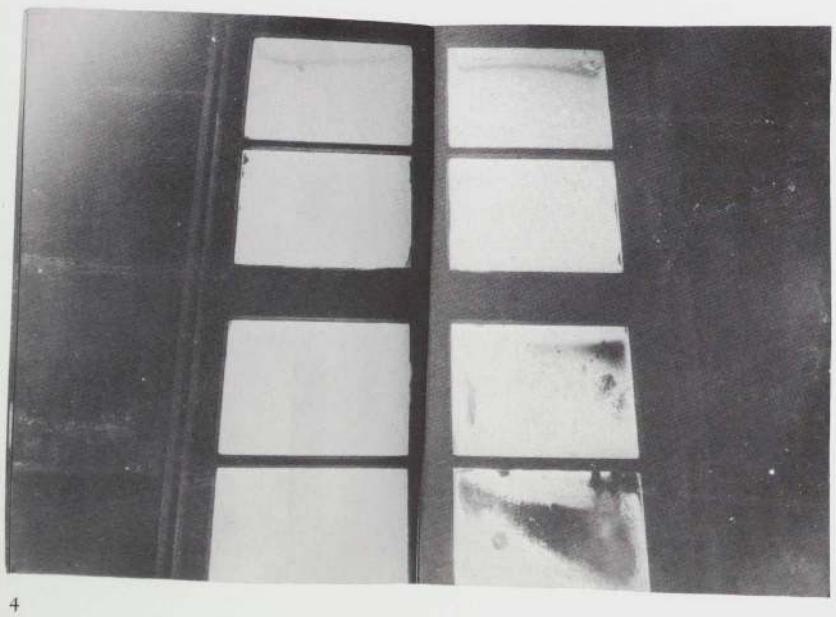
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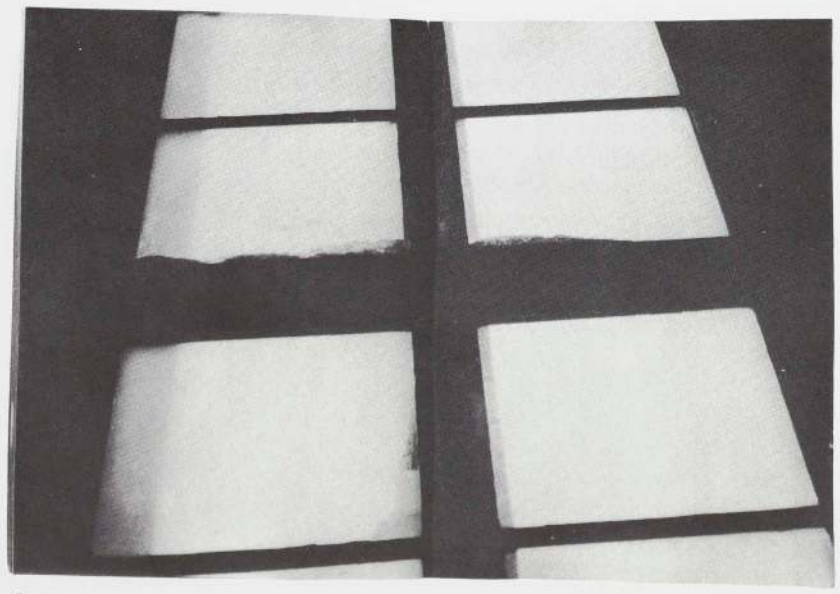
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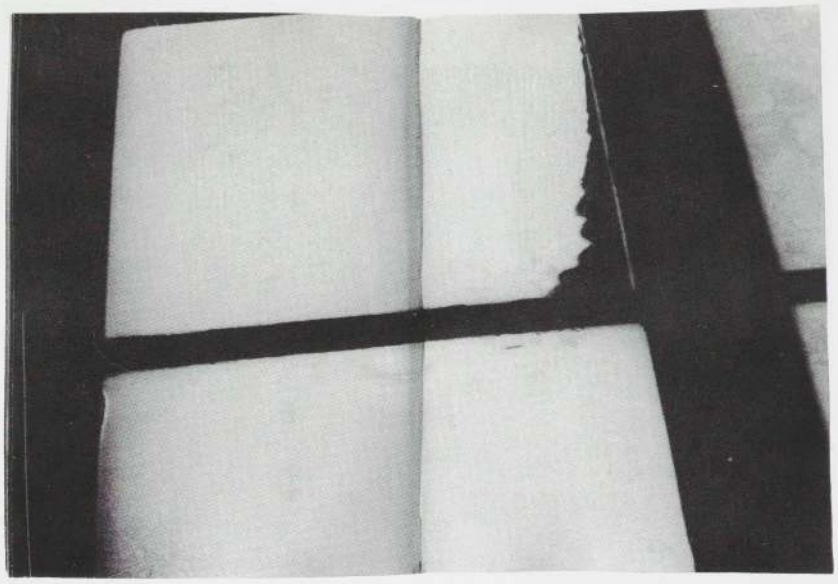

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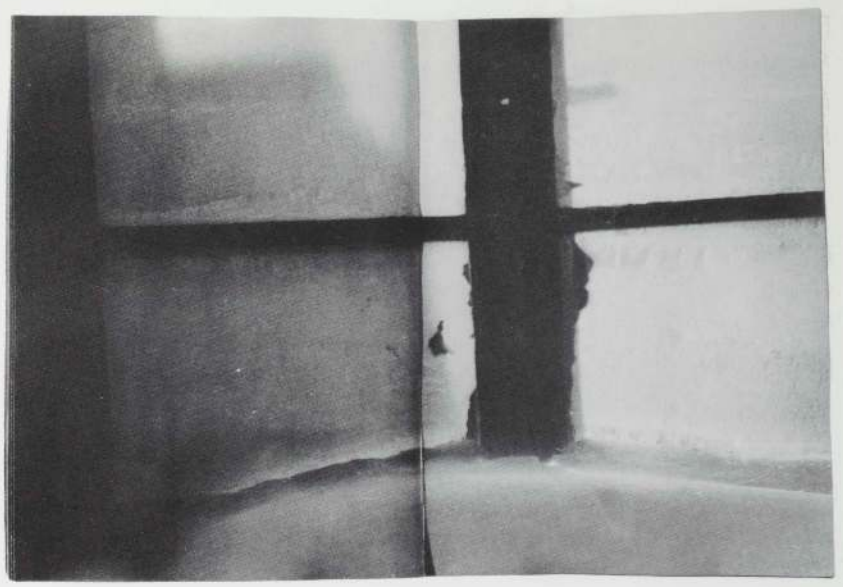

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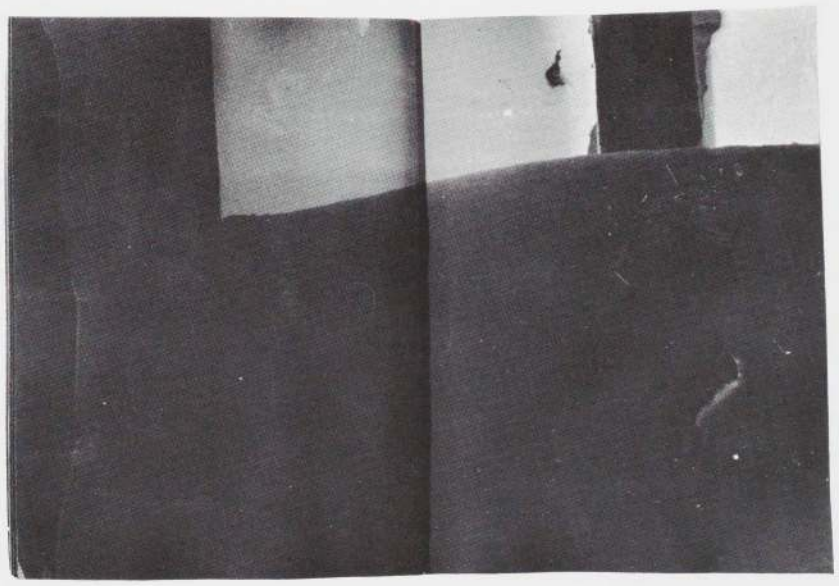

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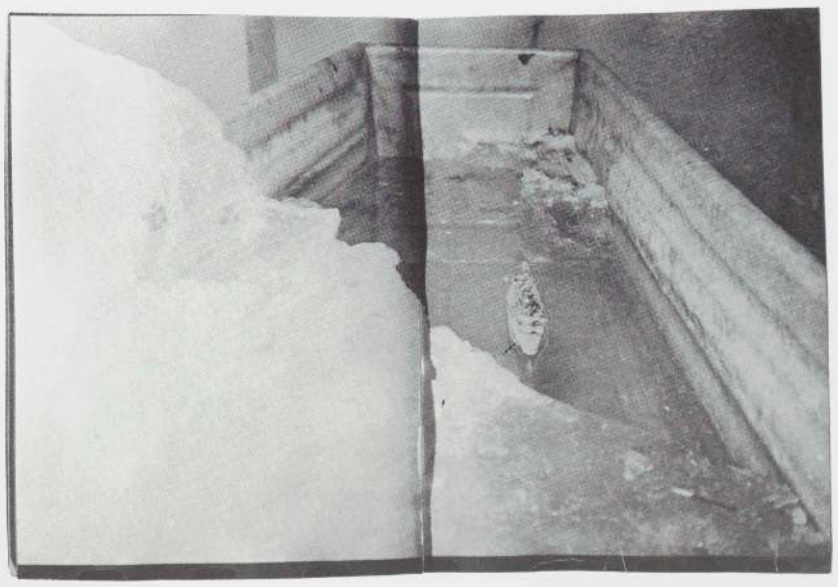

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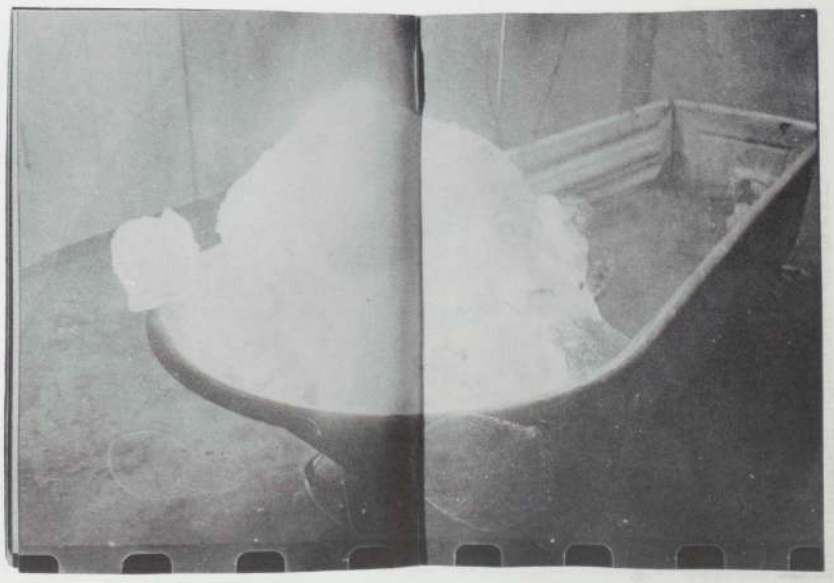

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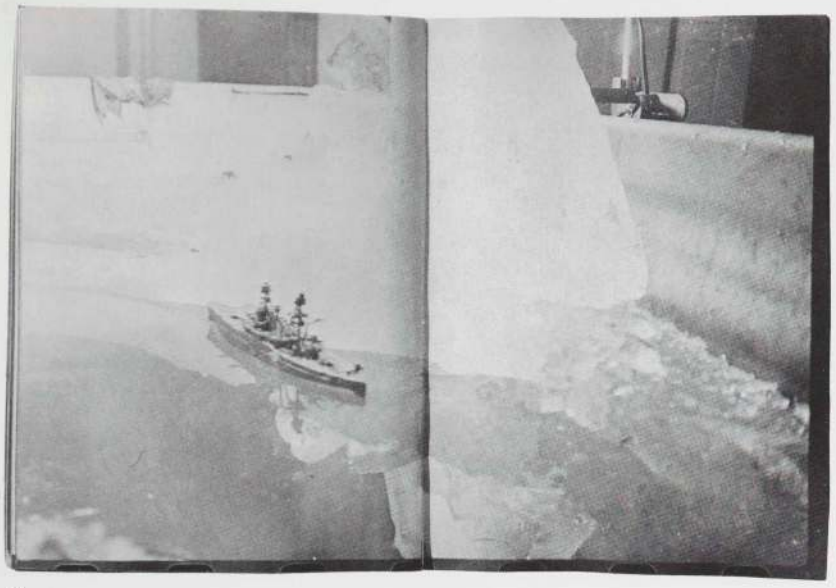

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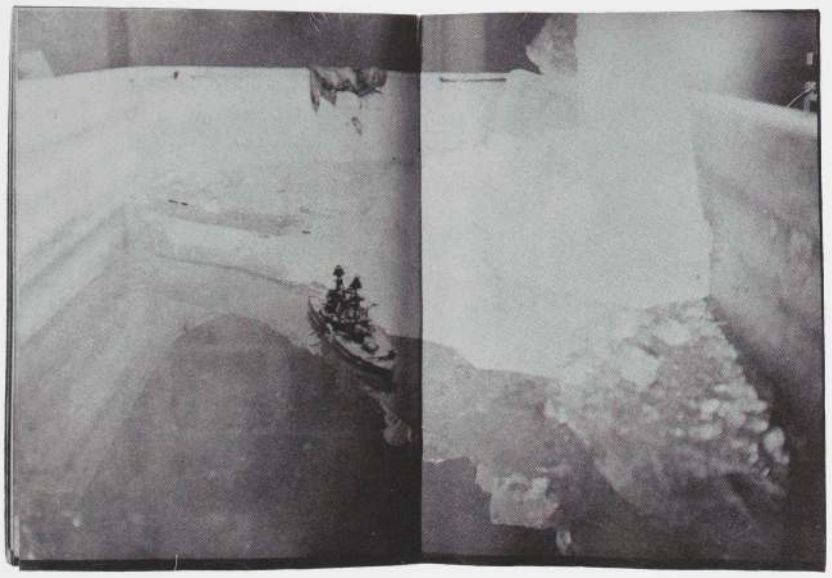

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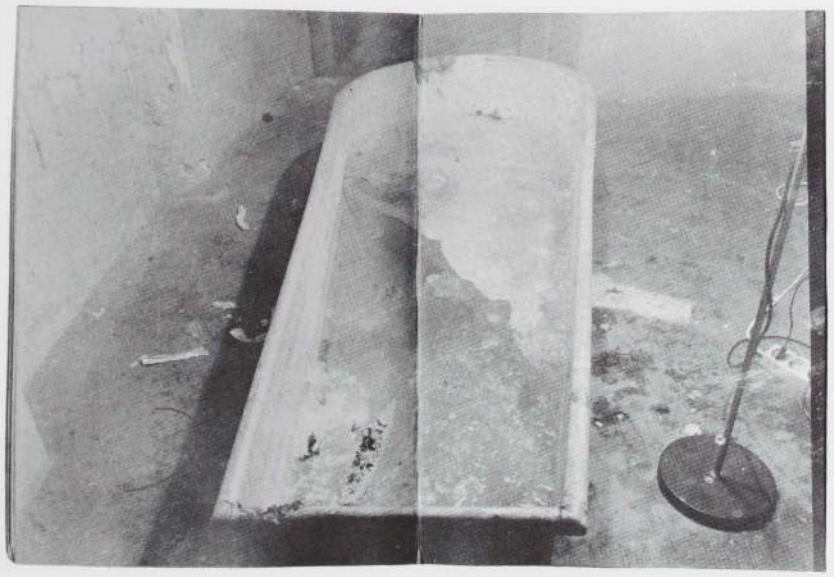

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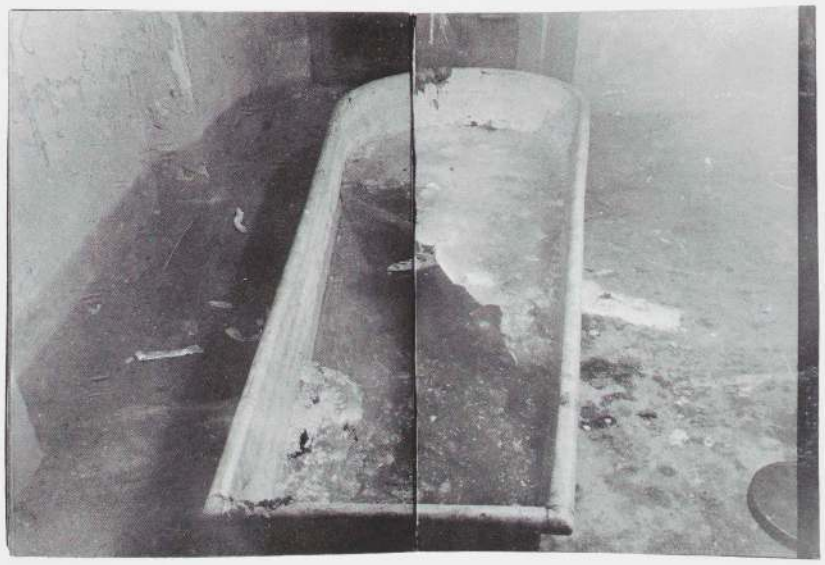

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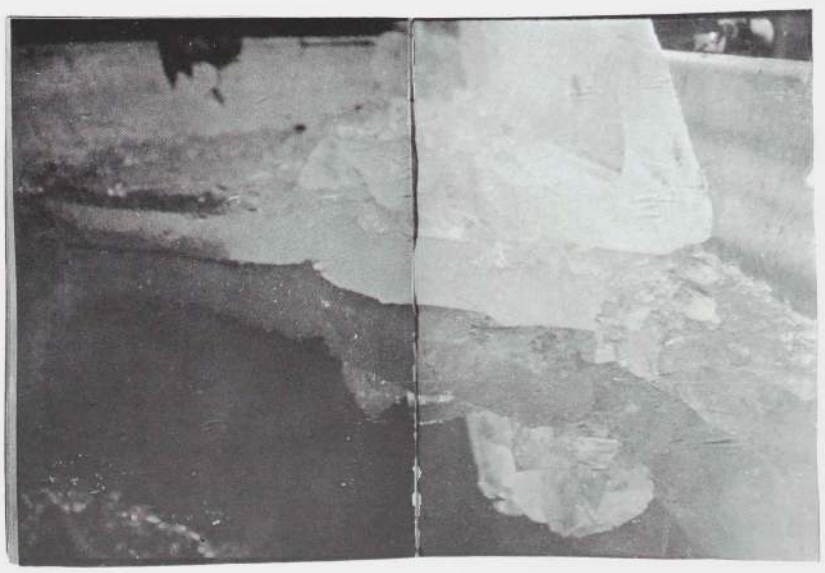

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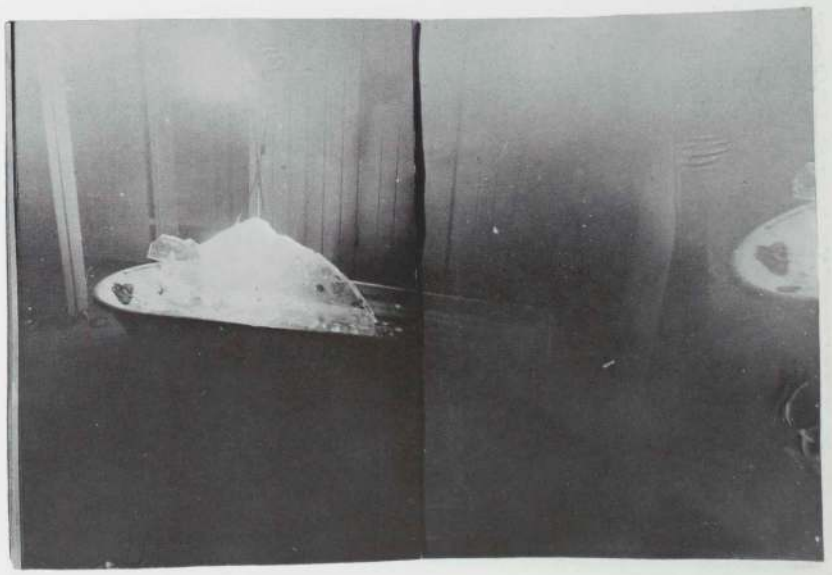

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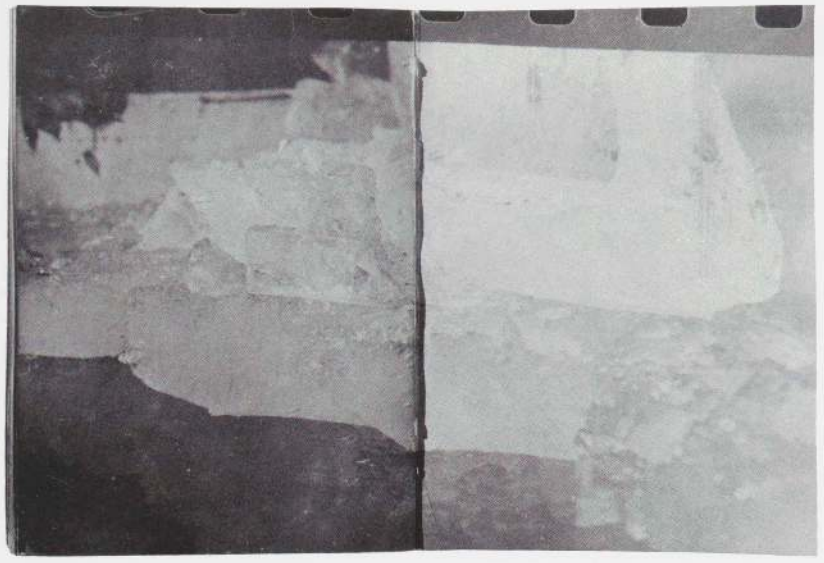

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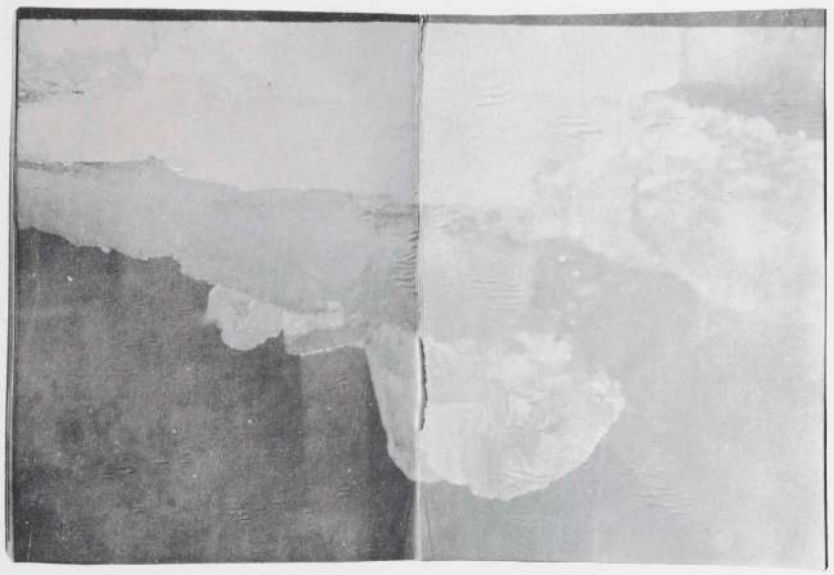

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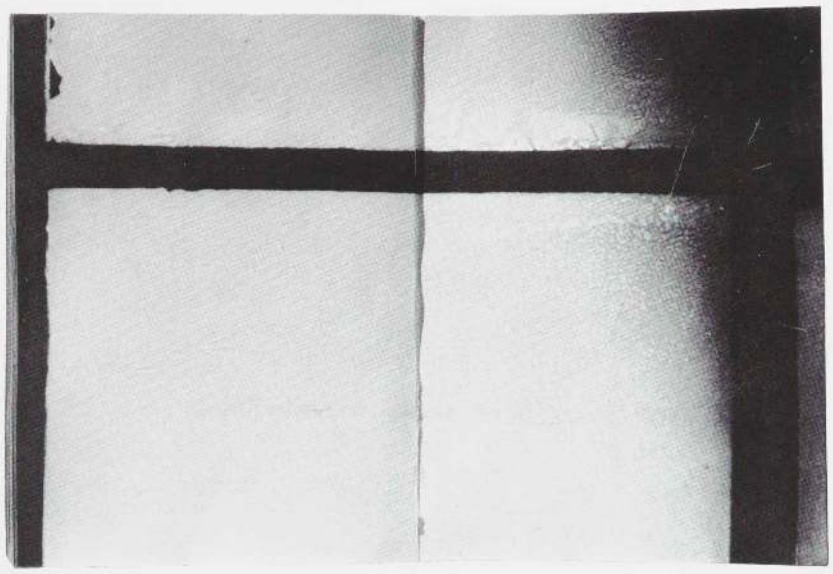

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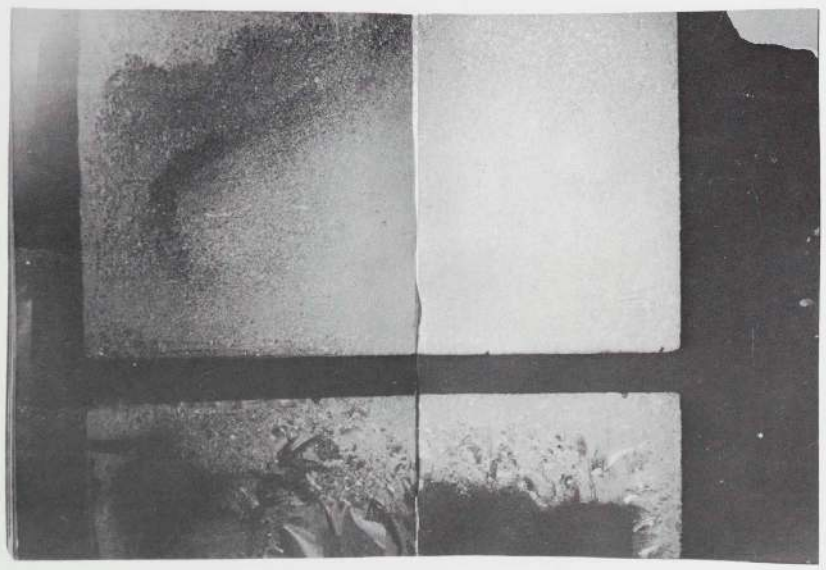

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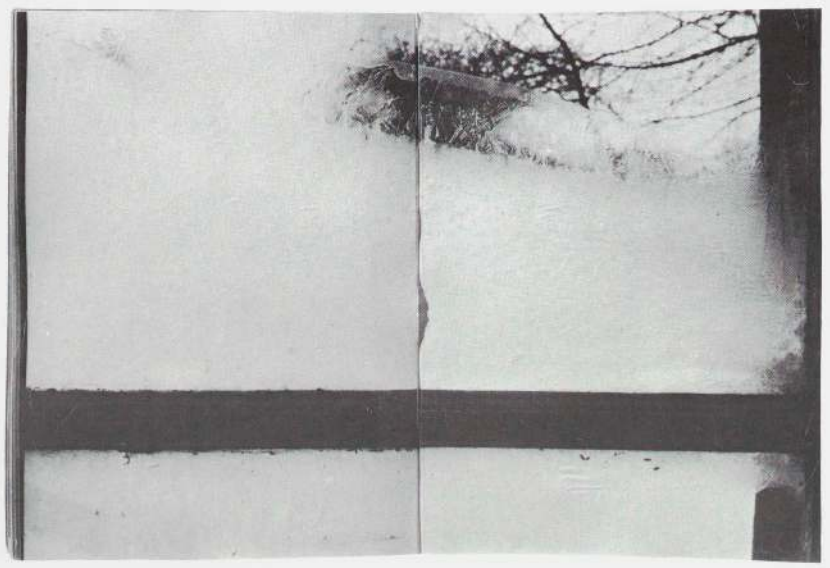

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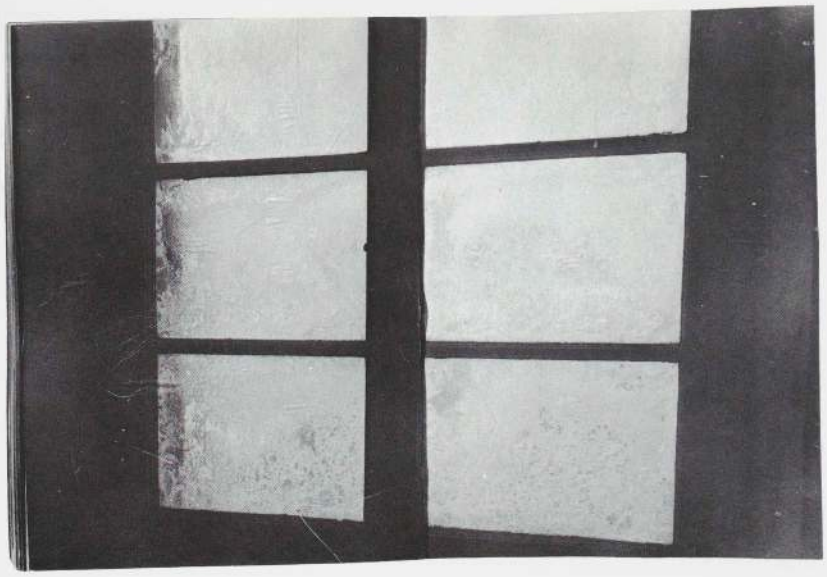

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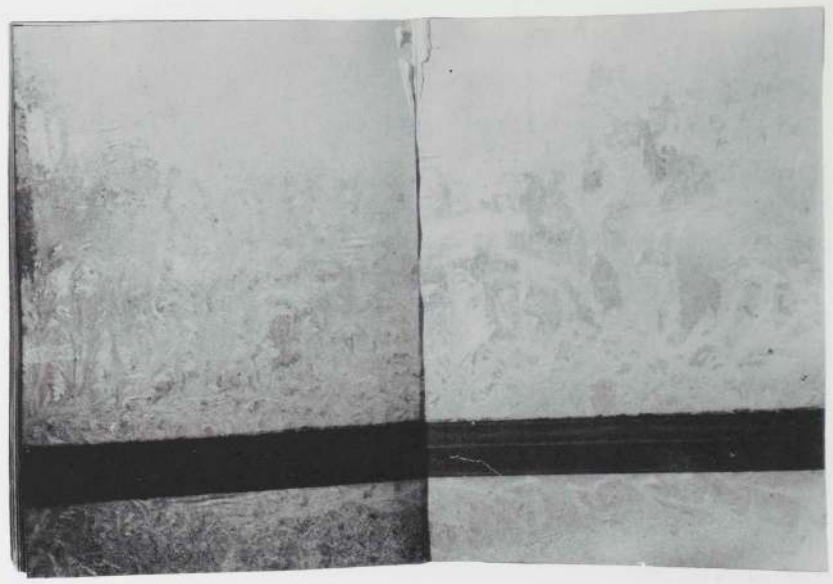

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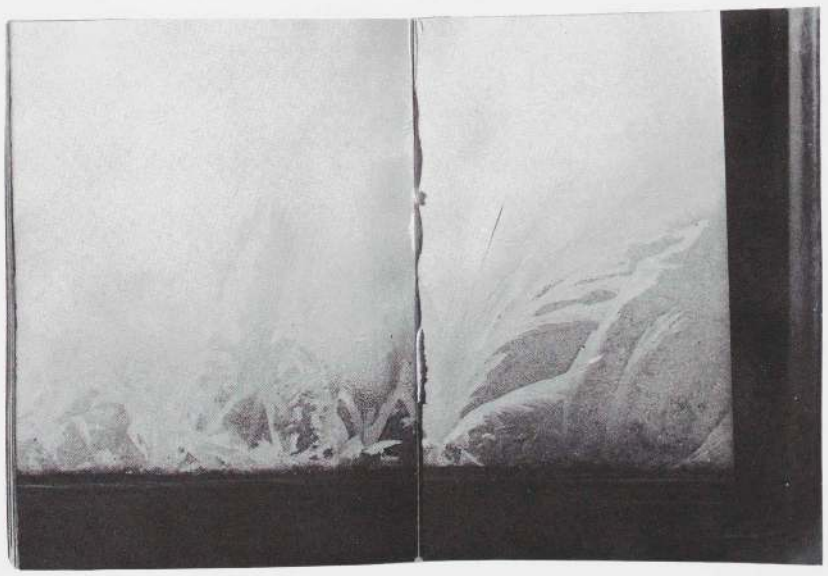

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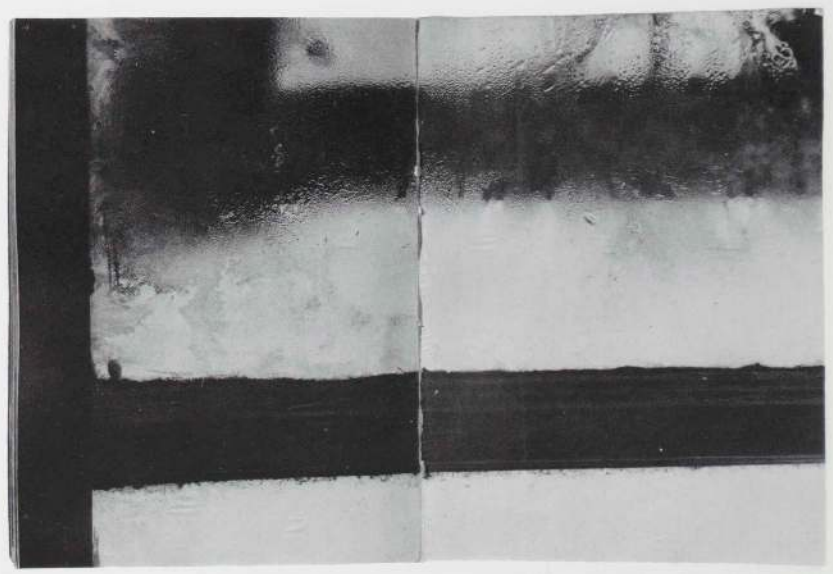

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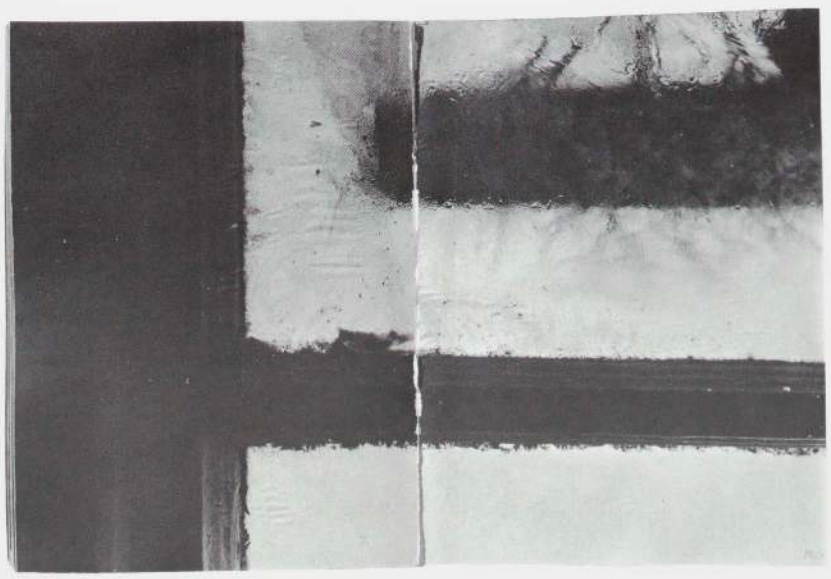

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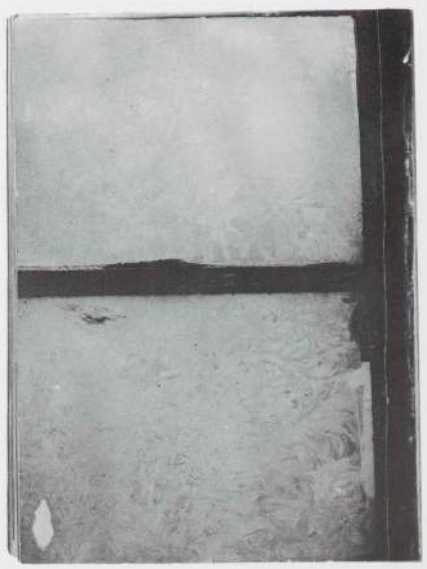

Back cover

Plate 16
March Sand V, 1977
Märkischer Sand V
Twenty-five double-page photographic images, with sand, oil, and glue, mounted on cardboard and bound
24⅜ x 16⅝ x 3⅜" (62 x 42 x 8.5 cm) (bound volume)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Saul, New York


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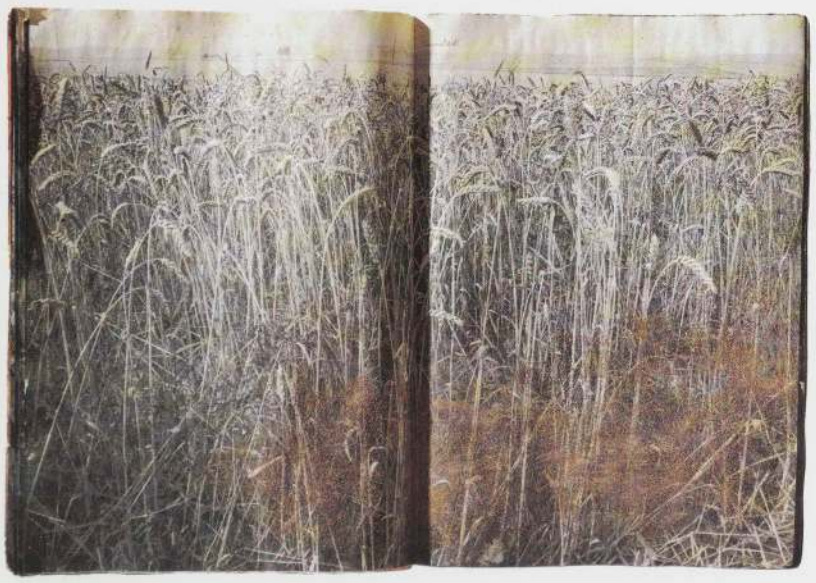
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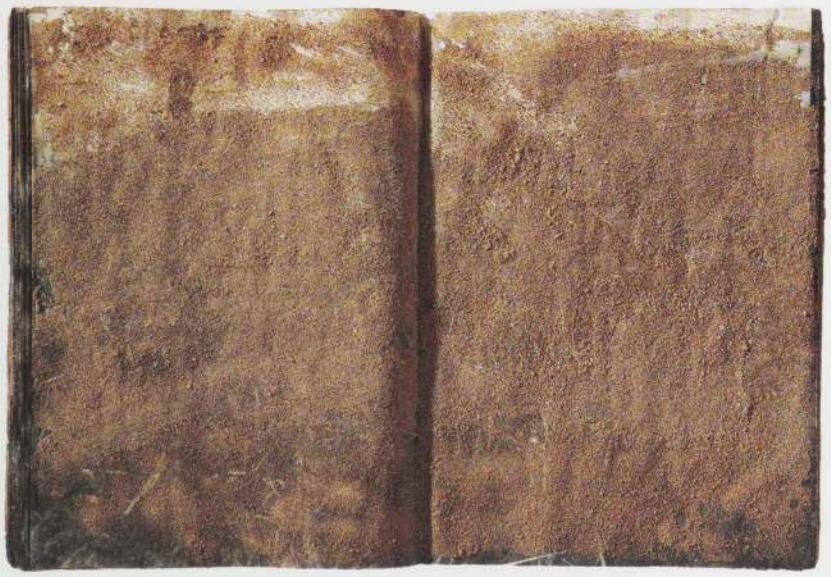

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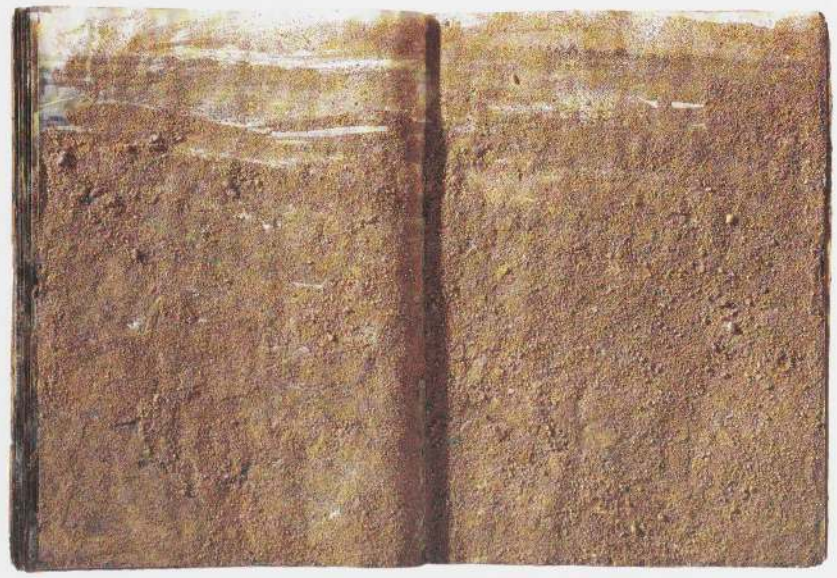

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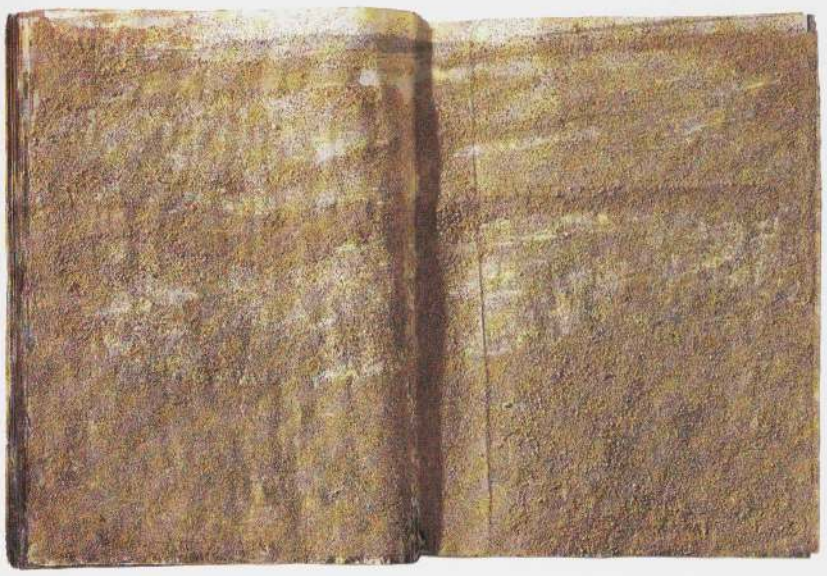

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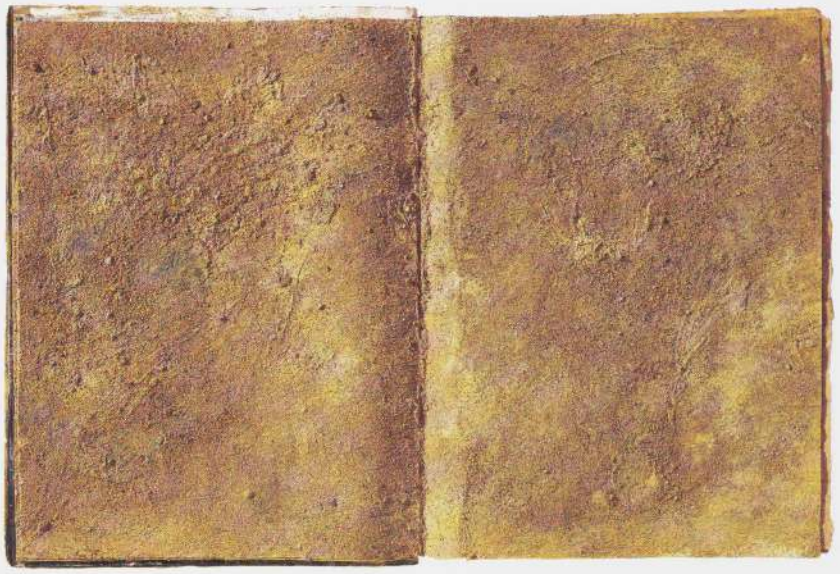

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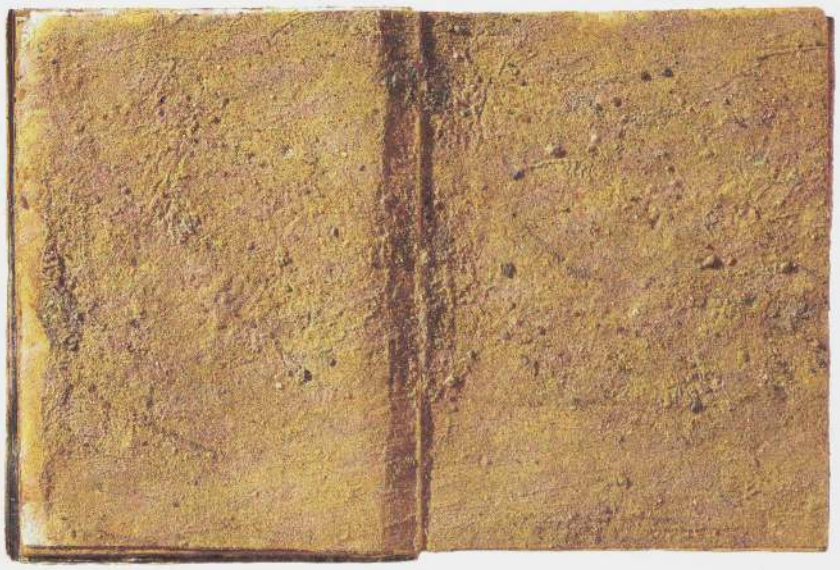

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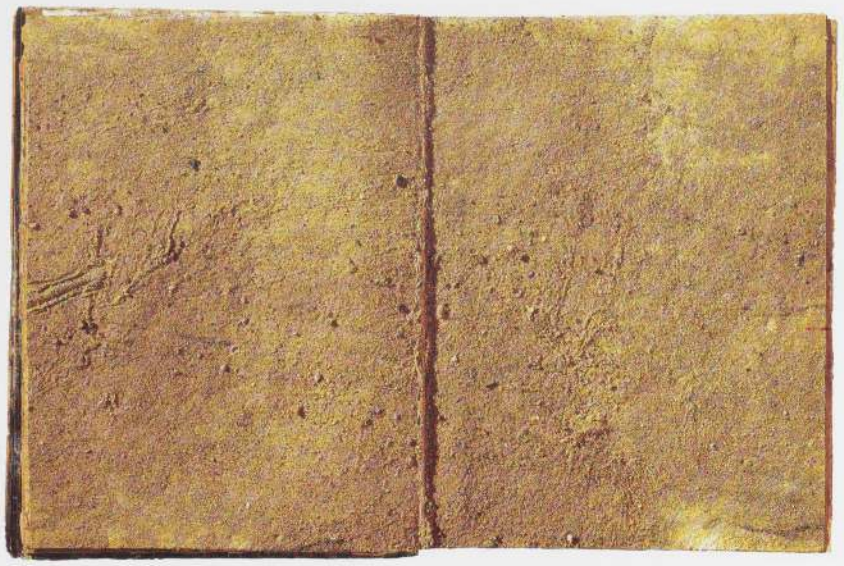

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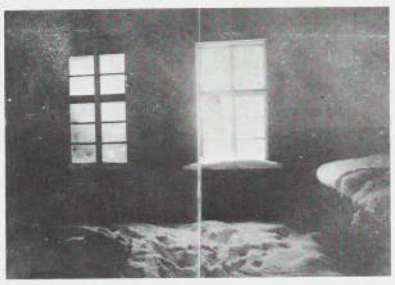

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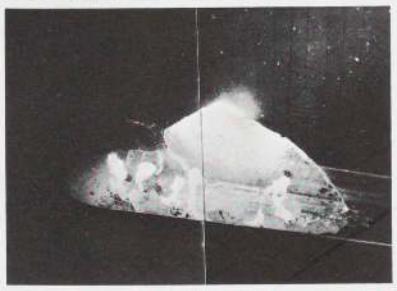

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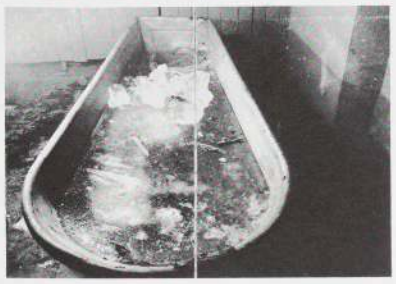

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Figures 32–37. Anselm Kiefer, double-page photographic images from *Hoffmann von Fallersleben auf Helgoland*, 1978 (Groningen, 1980). 11⅞ x 8½ x ½" (30.2 x 21.6 x 1.3 cm) (bound volume). Private Collection.

The first of the forty-one double-page photographic images (fig. 32) is a view of a nondescript structure that one imagines to be von Fallersleben's "prison." The inside of the building appears in the next pages, with images of snow on the floor and windowpane (fig. 33). Then, a large chunk of ice is explored at close range, after which the camera's "eye" pulls back, and we see the ice in pieces, lying on the floor (fig. 34). Close-up views return, revealing windows in the background like those in the attic paintings and glimpses of hanging wires. Next, flames are ignited and ice is burning and melting in a tub of water (fig. 35). A toy boat suddenly appears in the tub with the ice, as if the scene were the far North; on the following spread, three boats are turned over in the water and the ice has broken up (fig. 36). In the next few pages, Kiefer focuses on the surrounding, cellarlike room; we see the glare of light bulbs—a joke about the source of illumination in this play world—and return once more to the hanging wires (fig. 37). The final images offer a reprise of the block of ice, the burning of it, and the boat "at sea," overturned in the bathtub.

The title indicates that von Fallersleben is in exile, no doubt pondering the nature of the universe as well as the character of his Germanic civilization. But the world represented is reminiscent not of the nineteenth century but of a much earlier time, perhaps the Muspell era in the Edda, when rivers turned to ice and fire was everywhere.[17] In this "first world," the fundamental elements—earth, air, fire, and water—are omnipresent, as are the oppositions they establish, such as hot and cold and dry and wet. The inclusion of the toy boats in the National Socialist bathtub, however, also directs the story forward in time. Kiefer's juxtaposition of the early Norse world, the nineteenth-century personage of the title, and the more recent Nazi tub and warship suggests his theme to be the ongoing unity of German civilization, but von Fallersleben's story itself indicates the contradictory turn of events that have occurred during this history.

While in exile, von Fallersleben wrote the poem "Deutschlandlied," a cry for the democratic unification of the German states, which later became celebrated as the German national anthem. But as "Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles," it was used by the Nazis to incite another kind of nationalistic fervor; hence it too has fallen into disrepute. Helgoland has a similarly paradoxical history, starting with its use as a major naval base in World War I. After the facility was demolished, the island became a resort, but the Nazis again turned it into a naval stronghold. Following the war, Helgoland was once more transformed, first into a bombing range by the British, then into a preserve for the study of birds by West Germany.

Although we cannot ignore the possibility that Kiefer identifies with von Fallersleben to some extent,[18] the artist has little interest in penetrating his character in the book. Von Fallersleben, the poet-patriot who was despised, punished, misunderstood, and misused, is revived as a totem for German history and mores. Kiefer once again synthesizes history with his personal notions of a subject through the power of art. Indeed, the apparatus of art is all-pervasive in the book: the cellar-studio, light bulbs, wires, symbols, and hand of the artist are prominent throughout, strongly persuading us that we are witnessing a set of manipulated impressions.

While considering Nazi themes, Kiefer drifted further back in German history, to the archetypal moment of German independence. In A.D. 9, when three legions of Roman soldiers under the command of Quintilius Varus were marching through the Teutoburg Forest, they were ambushed and massacred by a Germanic tribe led by a chieftain named Arminius (Hermann). In *Varus*, 1976 (pl. 17), Kiefer represents the action-filled narrative in linguistic terms by simply juxtaposing the names of Varus, Hermann, and Hermann's wife, Thusnelda, at the base of a trail in the forest, like the one seen before in *March Heath* (pl. 13). A network of spidery lines connects this bloody starting point to other names taken from later German history, thereby tying the German national heritage together into one comprehensible whole. The linear construct becomes a kind of chart of heredity, linking all parts inextricably. While wood is still dominant, this scene of national unity shifts from the great hall of *Germany's Spiritual Heroes* (pl. 10) to the land itself.

Several of those named among the trees did, in fact, reflect on the events in the Teutoburg Forest. During the time of Napoleon's threat to German sovereignty, the poets Christian Dietrich Grabbe and Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock wrote plays about the battle of Arminius; each represented the tale somewhat differently, but both saw it as a moment of German liberation worth restating in the context of the current threat. The National Socialists, whose outlook is

Plate 17
Varus, 1976
Oil and acrylic on burlap
78¾ x 106⅝" (200 x 270 cm)
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven,
The Netherlands

Figure 38. Anselm Kiefer, double-page from *Germany's Facial Type (Charcoal for 2000 Years)* (*Das deutsche Volksgesicht [Kohle für 2000 Jahre]*), 1974. Charcoal on paper, with woodcut, 22 7/16 x 17 3/4 x 2 3/8" (57 x 45 x 6 cm) (bound volume). Private Collection.

Figure 39. Anselm Kiefer, *Heliogabalus* (*Heliogabal*), 1974. Watercolor on paper, 11 3/4 x 15 3/4" (30 x 40 cm). Collection of Fredrik Roos, Switzerland.

represented by the names of Hölderlin and Stefan George, two authors whose ideas were used by the Nazis, employed the Arminius totem to incite hatred for foreign influences.[19] Thus Kiefer presents a fabled historical moment and its subsequent, divergent interpretations all by means of signposts in a forest landscape. With the painting, the artist demonstrates how the notion of historical accuracy collapses upon scrutiny of its sources.[20]

Soon after painting *Varus*, Kiefer considered the theme again in *Ways of Worldly Wisdom*, 1976–77 (pl. 18). Much the same cast is present,[21] but rather than naming the personages of his synthetic moment, Kiefer now painted their faces. Nevertheless, the works are equally conceptual. In *Varus*, the narrative suggested by the blood-stained clearing in the forest is undercut by the lettered names of individuals, a linguistic rather than a pictorial device. In *Ways of Worldly Wisdom*, Kiefer reversed the situation, placing pictures of the personages along with their names in a schematically rendered forest. Hence, neither painting can be termed narrative, as such, but rather, each is a highly artificial construct. The vines and branches tying the figures together in the later picture emanate from a pile of burning logs at the "Hermanns Schlacht" (Arminius's battle) in the center of the picture. Flames and smoke infuse the entire scene with a feeling of hell.

Kiefer's interest in countenances is first evident in *Germany's Facial Type* (*Charcoal for 2000 Years*), a book made in 1974 (fig. 38). Peasants' faces emerge from the linear patterns of woodcuts,[22] with the effect that their features are thoroughly one with the land. In *Heliogabalus*, of the same year (fig. 39), Kiefer creates a pattern of lines to connect the central figure of the Roman emperor Heliogabalus and the names of the women who raised him,[23] a composition like that in *Ways of Worldly Wisdom*. Although there is a certain insight into character about the portraits in the 1974 works, in *Ways of Worldly Wisdom* and the subsequent graphics on the theme, the heads are simplistic and wooden. Taken from either dictionaries or books about the Third Reich,[24] they render the subjects only slightly more fully than does the citation of names in *Varus*. Kiefer's depictions recall Gerhard Richter's "48 Portraits" series of 1971–72 and Andy Warhol's many celebrity portraits from the 1960s onward.[25] Like the American artist, Kiefer looks at the heroes of his country in a deadpan way; the result is a kind of jingoism in which these individuals take on the character of gods. The portrayals by both Warhol and Kiefer leave their subjects slightly hollow, all surface and no inner core. When they burn in Kiefer's paintings, we do not witness the incineration of flesh and blood but the cremation of icons.

According to Kiefer, he borrowed the title *Ways of Worldly Wisdom* from an apology for Catholicism written in 1924 by a Jesuit, Father Bernhard Jansen, in which many philosophical systems are used to rationalize the Catholic religion.[26] The nature of this source suggests that for Kiefer each of the personages cited uses his own argument to make a common Germanic point.[27] In this regard, Kiefer's outlook may be compared to that of Stefan George, whose "Closing Chorus" begins:

God has put his path before us,
God has linked us to the land,
God has called us to his combat,
God has ringed us with his wreath.[28]

George unites God's path and the land with combat, which ultimately leads to death. His compelling yet fatalistic tone is duplicated in Kiefer's pictures, where each figure offers essentially the same lesson and the claustrophobically rendered space provides no alternative to the one-dimensional, German "wisdom" afforded by the single path seen in the landscape.

Kiefer continued this theme between 1978 and 1980 in a number of graphic images entitled *Ways of Worldly Wisdom—Arminius's Battle* (see pl. 19), maintaining the device of the log fire in the forest joined with personages of German history. These were his first large-scale woodcuts, and in them he greatly increased his rogues' gallery while flattening the space of his depictions. With the graphics, he further emphasized wood and trees as backdrop and as an essential component of his imagery. The cycles of nature, indicated by tree rings, overlay the patterns of thought symbolized by the figures, so that human history and the land are closely intertwined. Paint has been added to some of the woodcuts, but the effect is always grimy. Even as Kiefer synthesizes time periods, the only authentic moment occurs when the work is created and the ink is smeared.

Kiefer's method is to make unique works by grafting together various woodcut sheets, each holding a "standard" portrait. According to the artist, each

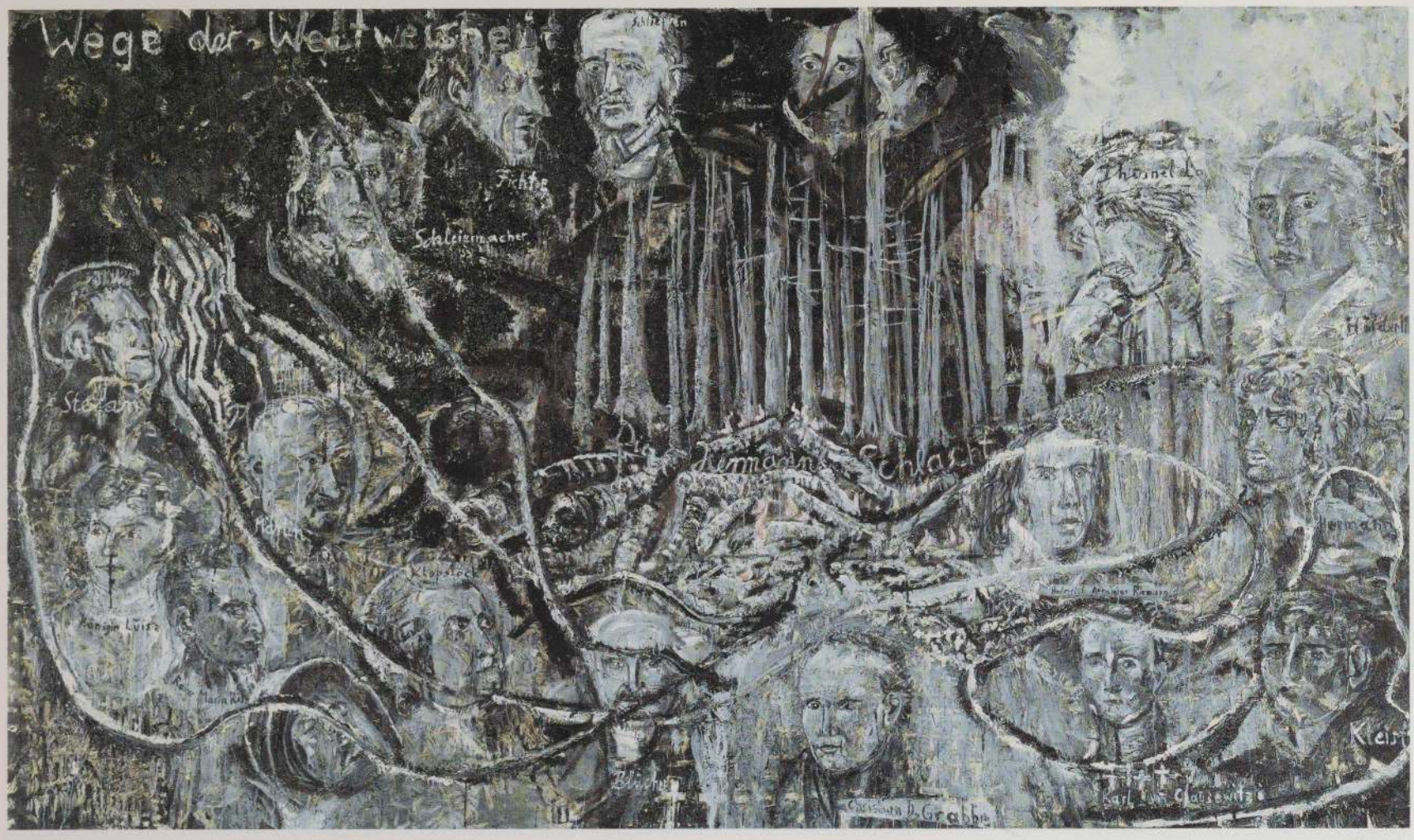


Plate 18
Ways of Worldly Wisdom, 1976–77
Wege der Weltweisheit
Oil, acrylic, and shellac on burlap,
mounted on canvas
120 x 196⅞" (305 x 500 cm)
Collection Sanders, Amsterdam

Plate 19
Ways of Worldly Wisdom—
Arminius's Battle, 1978–80
Wege der Weltweisheit—die
Hermanns-Schlacht
Woodcut, with acrylic and shellac,
mounted on canvas
126 x 196⅞" (320 x 500 cm)
The Art Institute of Chicago.

Wirt D. Walker Fund and
Restricted Gift from Mr. and Mrs.
Noel Rothman, Mr. and Mrs.
Douglas Cohen, Mr. and Mrs.
Thomas Dittmer, Mr. and Mrs.
Lewis Manilow, Mr. and Mrs.
Joseph Shapiro, and Mr. and Mrs.
Ralph Goldenberg

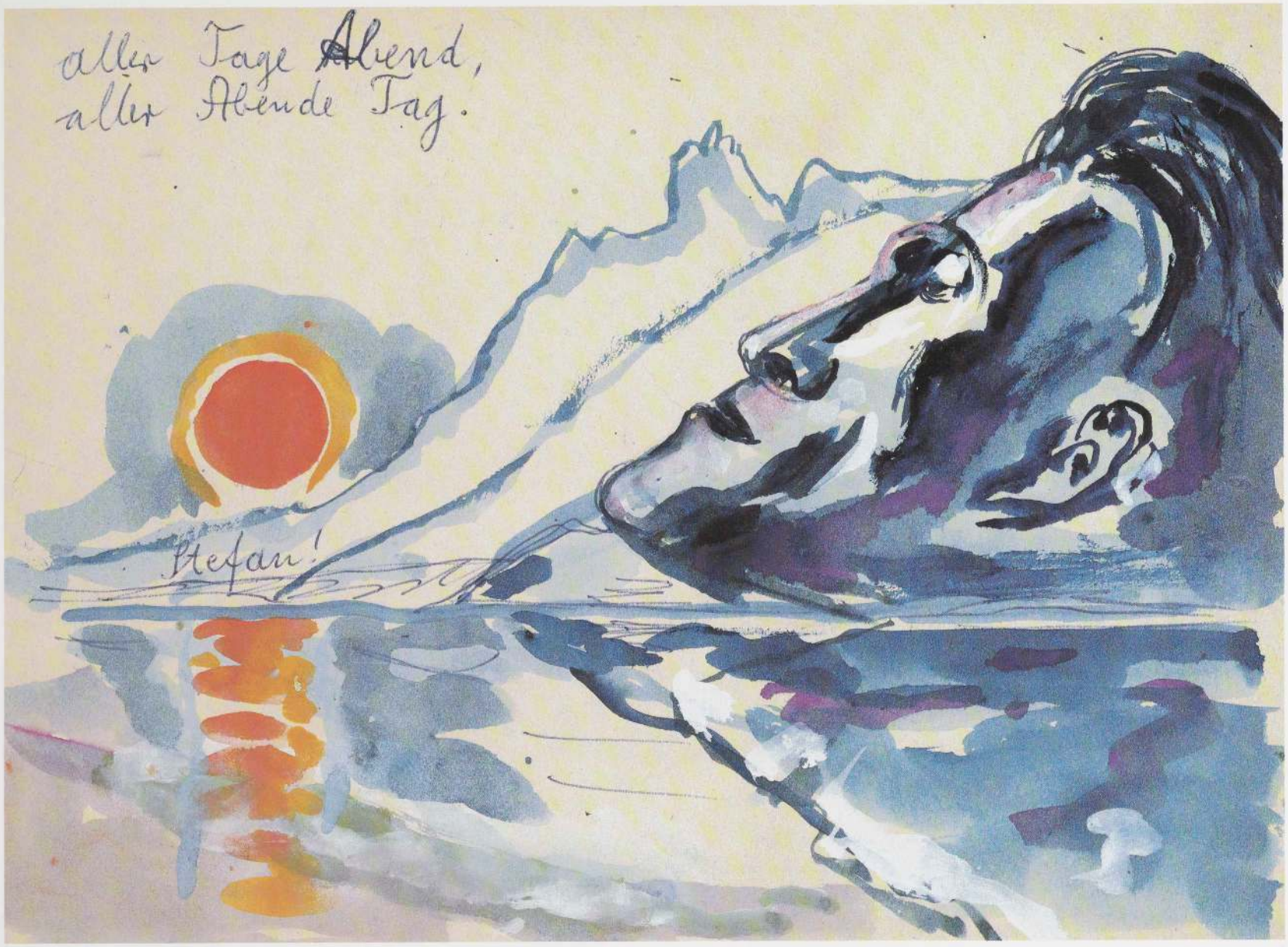


Plate 20
Stefan!, 1975
Watercolor and ball-point pen on paper
8 1/16 x 11 1/4" (20.5 x 28.5 cm)
Collection of Johannes Gachnang, Bern

Figure 40. Anselm Kiefer, *Siegfried Forgets Brunhilde* (*Siegfried vergisst Brünhilde*), 1975. Oil on canvas, 51⅛ x 67" (130 x 170 cm). Family H. de Groot Collection, Groningen, The Netherlands.

grouping is arrived at in an intuitive manner and does not necessarily reflect a new outlook. Rather, his selections are based on making unlikely linkages of individuals from different periods.[29] Political poets and military men predominate,[30] along with individuals whose credibility was damaged by Nazi approval or by their sympathy with that regime. Each person is a phenomenon rather than a cliché according to Kiefer:[31] "I choose these personages because power has abused them."[32] Yet, notwithstanding his seeming desire to restore the reputations of various individuals, Kiefer delights in the arbitrariness of his process and in the fact that the people involved cannot defend themselves; he wants to demonstrate that no one truth exists and new histories can be created at will.[33] Hence, by the unsympathetic, wooden quality of the portrayals he renders the figures subject to the twists and turns in the path of human history and fodder for the fire that burns at the center of each woodcut.

Just as tree rings are inevitably and inexorably present in Kiefer's art, so is the ceremonial fire. It will consume and perhaps serve to cleanse, in the way that fire functions in the forest. Nevertheless, it is perhaps no coincidence that these German sources of wisdom are being subjected to the same treatment that many Jews were given by the National Socialists. Does Kiefer seek a form of revenge? Is Kiefer, in the same fashion as the Germans whose perverse idealism led them to slaughter humans in order to "purify" their race and to acquire *Lebensraum* (space for living), burning away the memory of these individuals in the hope that regeneration can occur? The model of tribal cultures might be considered in this context. Certain groups performed ritual human sacrifices to regenerate the land, worshiping their victims and regarding them as sacred.[34] Perhaps Kiefer, too, feels the need for a cult dedicated to the worship of the victims of Germany's actions.

Although many themes recur often in Kiefer's art, the place of "Ways of Worldly Wisdom" is most prominent. Its repetition is like a mantra, in which he calls forth the ghosts of German civilization. Kiefer seems to dare his German viewers to look without idealism at their past and to recall that the histories of these often admirable figures together formed a path leading to the events of the twentieth century. In this way, he implies that "wisdom" is bankrupt. There will always be new "ways" and heroes, and the past, including the seemingly dead trees, must be burned away if there is to be a new start. Sadly, the truly valuable treasures of the German civilization will perish as well. It is this situation that Kiefer inventories, and tries to understand and dominate, if not transcend.

Whereas "Ways of Worldly Wisdom" is about the nature of universal knowledge and apparently verifiable perceptions, Kiefer's "Brunhilde" series, based on Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, is concerned with an obsessive emotion, love. From the moment at the beginning of the story when Alberich steals the Rhinegold from the Rhine maidens and curses love, a dichotomy is established. The women symbolize goodness and purity, but the men are willing to surrender love if it interferes with their ambitious goals. Wotan himself relinquishes love in exchange for gold and other worldly pleasures, in the process sacrificing his relationship with his daughter Brunhilde. Yet she is honorable, brave, and steadfast in her love.

When Siegfried first penetrates the ring of fire surrounding Brunhilde and wakens her from a magic sleep, we witness the rapture and purity of their love. Subsequently, Brunhilde is idealistic and willing to make sacrifices: she foregoes her identity as a Valkyrie and casts off her supernatural powers. Siegfried falls victim to a passion for adventure and fame. Eventually, he is tricked into taking a potion that causes him to forget the vows he made to her, and at that moment, the formerly admirable heroes assume new characterizations. Siegfried is weak and prone to ambition; Brunhilde becomes revengeful, for her sacrifice has been wasted.

In Kiefer's first versions of the theme, in 1975 (fig. 40), he simply etched "Siegfried vergisst Brünhilde" (Siegfried Forgets Brunhilde) in a snowy field, the words invoking yet another human drama that has occurred in nature.[35] It is as if this ineffable, powerful subject, like the Trinity, cannot be reproduced in narrative form or with humble paint; it requires the suggestive potential of words. The names remind us of a great, idealistic love, and the moment of forgetting emphasizes a subsequent period of emotional suffering, disillusionment, and loss. This subject is totemic and archetypal for Kiefer and is, perhaps, another means through which he seeks to examine his own life.

Figure 41. Anselm Kiefer, *Brunhilde's Death (Brünhildes Tod)*, 1976. Oil on canvas, 46½ x 57" (118 x 145 cm). Private Collection.

Figure 42. Anselm Kiefer, *Poland Is Not Yet Lost II (Noch ist Polen nicht verloren II)*, 1978. Oil on canvas, 67 x 51⅛" (170 x 130 cm). Private Collection.

In representing the Brunhilde story the following year, Kiefer turned from words to objects, painting mushrooms and bottles to suggest the reason for Siegfried's loss of memory.[36] Not surprisingly, he utilized fire, too, in a watercolor[37] and oil (fig. 41) of 1976; in these, a small bonfire is meant to evoke the tragedy of Brunhilde who, unlike Siegfried, never forgets her vow. Fire is present at two important moments in Brunhilde's tale. First, early in the story, a ring of fire protects her as she sleeps atop a mountain. Later, at the end of *The Ring of the Nibelung*, when she learns of Siegfried's death and that the two of them had been deceived, she has a funeral pyre erected for him, and rides her horse, Grane, into the flames. This fire quickly ignites another in heaven, burning Valhalla and bringing about an end to the rule of the gods.

Kiefer did not return to the subject until 1978, when he joined it to a theme of the intervening period, variously titled *Poland Is Not Yet Lost* (fig. 42) and *Ride to the Vistula*. Both subjects concern Hitler's march into Poland in 1939. The first title recalls a Polish hymn to freedom; the second refers to a river that played a prominent role in the history of the region as a trade route and therefore as a means of expansion. At the time of the German invasion, Poland's only defense was its cavalry. The horse represents Poland in the paintings,[38] and although possessed of a certain primitive spirit, the animal has little hope for success in a struggle against tanks.[39] In one work of the series,[40] Kiefer repeats the snowy landscape found in the first "Siegfried Forgets Brunhilde" paintings, and in this and another in the sequence,[41] a group of heads, reminiscent of those in *Ways of Worldly Wisdom*, is laid over the destruction of Poland.

Kiefer's method of combining motifs prepares us for his most powerful renderings of the Siegfried and Brunhilde theme in 1978. Although variously titled *Brunhilde's Death*, *Brunhilde—Grane* (pl. 21), and *Grane*, the essential components of each woodcut are the same. An iconlike horse stands in the middle of a flaming inferno, its ribs resembling tree rings. The horse represents Grane, which according to Brunhilde is "sacred"; it must symbolize for Kiefer, too, an important and eternal moral lesson that will not be consumed in the fire, a lesson having to do with Brunhilde's character and perhaps concomitantly with Poland's heroic defense.[42] Yet, the horse, like the heads in *Ways of Worldly Wisdom*, is wooden and perhaps somewhat dull-witted. Thus Kiefer renders the suicidal sacrifices of Brunhilde and Poland into something pathetic and deeply sad. Although he might value certain principles, he sees the underlying danger of following them to their logical conclusion. Finally, when he combines the heads of Germans with a horse in *Grane*, 1980,[43] Kiefer shows that even after turning back from "wisdom" and resorting to the primitive means of the horse or the emotional ideal of love, history and literature offer the same lesson: all will be consumed by an eternal fire.

Apparently, Kiefer wants to test love, to reflect on its existence and consider whether anyone measures up to the indescribably idealistic notions attached to this emotion. And if there is loss of memory, as it were, he is eager to discover the meaning of that as well. Indeed, about forgetting, Kiefer notes that it is impossible to hold everything in one's consciousness all of the time and, furthermore, that forgetting is sometimes necessary.[44] One wonders whether the artist might yearn to apply this thought to German history as well.

Two different portrayals of Kiefer's archetypal woman appeared in 1980. In *Ride to the Vistula* (pl. 22), he juxtaposes the head of a horse with that of his wife Julia; between them is a twisting river and a running horse that is aflame. This woman is full of vitality and a driven, fighting spirit; she inspires men, in the form of the horses, to fight on. For her, war is a spiritual battle, as it obviously would have been for the Poles. In a work titled *Brunhilde Sleeps* (pl. 23), Kiefer depicts Brunhilde in a somnolent, magical state. Although the title refers to an earlier moment in the narrative, the image suggests the final, peaceful sleep of Brunhilde and her ideals.

Kiefer offers art as a theoretical antidote for the terror of human history and the failure of mythic figures. It had served a similar function for Beuys, who had imagined it to have enormous, restorative power: "Only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the deathline."[45] Earlier in the century, Wassily Kandinsky, too, had predicted that art would, in effect, lead people away from a corrupt society.[46] The idealistic notion is that while art belongs to the realm of men and women, it *seems* to exist on a loftier plane than mere history, representing the most elevated and positive ambitions of humanity.

Plate 21
Brunhilde—Grane, 1978
Brünhilde—Grane
Woodcut, with oil
95½ x 76" (242.5 x 193 cm)
Private Collection (courtesy
Sonnabend Gallery, New York)

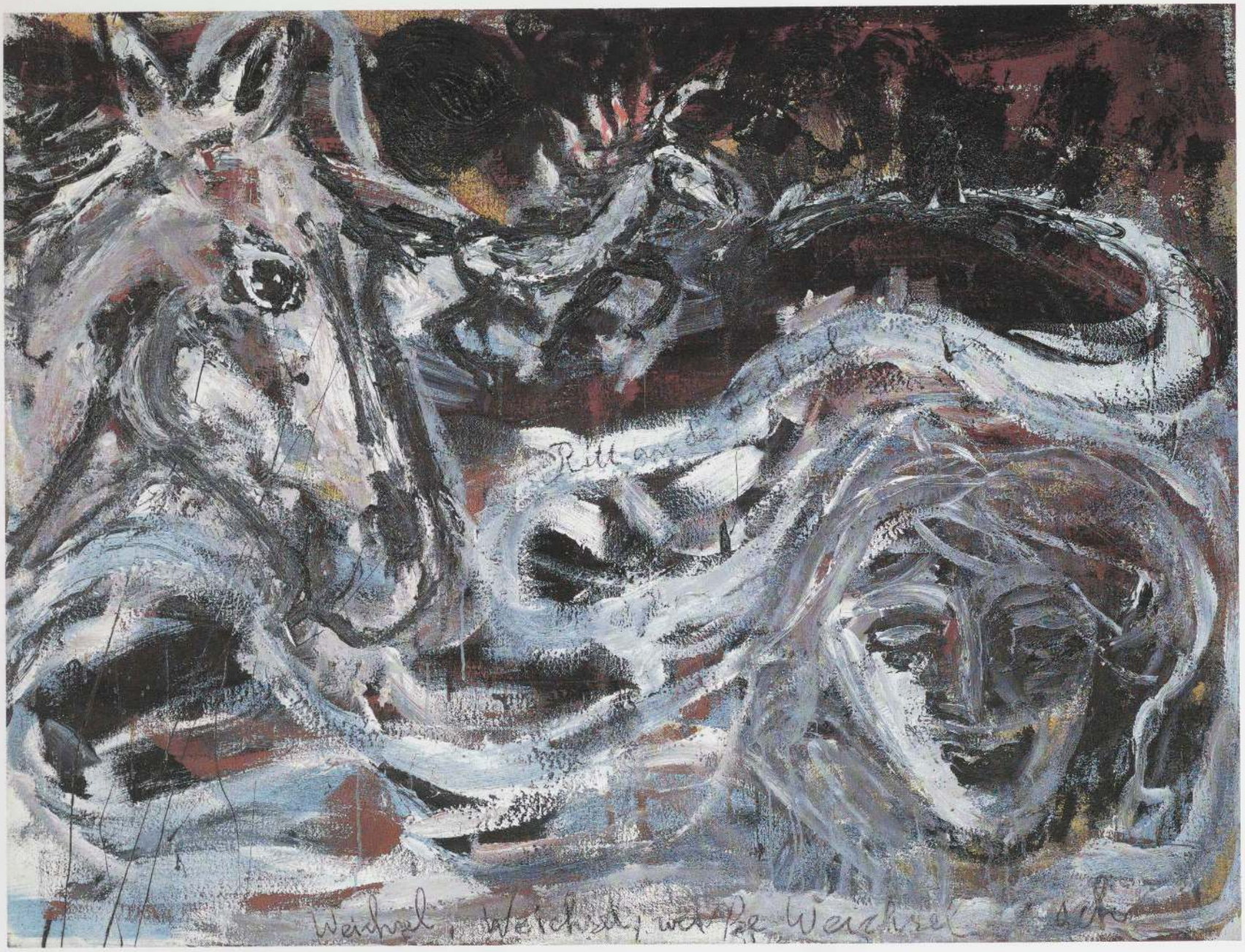


Plate 22
Ride to the Vistula, 1980
Ritt an die Weichsel
Oil on canvas
51 3/16 x 67" (130 x 170 cm)
Collection of Werner and Elaine
Dannheisser, New York

Plate 23
Brunhilde Sleeps, 1980
Brünhilde schläft
Photograph (1969), with acrylic and emulsion, mounted on cardboard
23 x 32 11/16" (58.5 x 83 cm)
Private Collection

Figure 43. Anselm Kiefer, *Heaven—Earth* (*Himmel—Erde*), 1974. Oil on canvas, 26¾ x 29⅛" (68 x 74 cm). Visser Collection, Bergeyk, The Netherlands—Retie, Belgium.

Figure 44. Anselm Kiefer, *Painting of the Scorched Earth* (*Malerei der verbrannten Erde*), 1974. Oil on burlap, 37⅜ x 49¼" (95 x 125 cm). Private Collection.

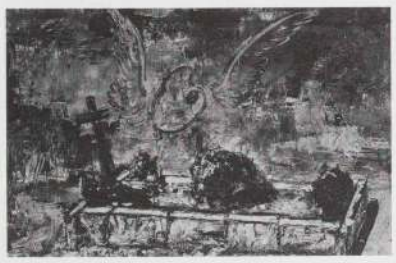


Figure 45. Anselm Kiefer, *Resumptio*, 1974. Oil, emulsion, and shellac on burlap, 45¼ x 70⅞" (115 x 180 cm). Private Collection.

By using art, Kiefer can initiate a dialogue with history and civilization. Moreover, he feels that art can reconcile the disillusionment of life. He explains that themes such as Siegfried and Brunhilde demonstrate a dismaying conflict between idealism and reality, but in art the two poles can be synthesized. Moreover, solutions can be proffered. Using art, he can even approach the worst subjects and make them beautiful. On another occasion, however, he would only say that art exemplifies just another promising but questionable alternative: Can it or can it not solve the problems of life?[47]

The symbol Kiefer applied to art's task was the palette. In *Nero Paints* (pl. 24) and *Painting = Burning* (pl. 25), both painted in 1974, Kiefer builds on the example of his *Flooding of Heidelberg* (figs. 15–18), showing the artist's corrective measures to be quite aggressive in character. Through the title and image of a palette lying over a small village in the former, he compares Nero's act to that of a painter. The title *Painting = Burning* also likens the activities of the artist and the dictator, the latter causing the landscape to be scorched. As if on a sacred mission, these maniacal egoists destroy in order to create what they consider to be a better world.[48] Kiefer is characterizing the painter and political leader as deluded seekers after immortality. They take possession of a place that they consider either contemptible or beyond their sphere, in chaos as it were, and transform it by burning into a component of their world. In the case of the artist, Kiefer has spoken of the figurative need to burn away the efforts of his predecessors in order to create something new and important.[49] In these works, it is the tradition of landscape painting that is confronted and reinvented.

Kiefer moved from a theoretical to a literal act in a work of 1975 entitled *Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen* (pl. 28). He carbonized a number of paintings, then cut them up to form a series of coal-black pages that he bound into eight volumes. This act of aggression on his earlier art produced a clean slate on which the artist could, in principle, state a revised vision of painting. The region of Buchen referred to in the title is the site of a military installation where large quantities of benzine are stored.[50] The danger that this presents to the surrounding area is literally evoked by the artist, using the transforming agent of fire.

The formal motif of the palette inscribed over a landscape reappears with other meanings in *Heaven—Earth* (fig. 43) and *Painting of the Scorched Earth* (fig. 44), both of 1974, as well as *Operation Hagen's Movement* and *Operation Winter Storm* (fig. 29), of the following year. In these almost didactic works, the palette lives high above the land where it can, in effect, look, depict, measure, interpret, and transform the subject. It is an emanation of the human mind, will, and subjective inner life; in form it is similar to a head with a Cyclopean eye. Even in juxtaposition to a landscape, the palette is shown to have the capacity to include and inhabit both realms. Perhaps, it can, in Kiefer's iconography, mediate between the anecdotal and sublime: "The palette represents the art of painting; everything else which can be seen in the painting—for example, the landscape—is, as the beauty of nature, annihilated by the palette. You could put it this way: the palette wants to abolish the beauty of nature. It is all very complicated, because it actually does not become annihilated at all."[51]

Through the palette, Kiefer establishes an antagonistic I-Thou relationship with his subject, for he uses the palette narratively to destroy whatever he chooses. It even becomes a personification in the statement "the palette wants to abolish the beauty of nature." This artistic instrument grants him liberation from the servitude imposed by nature and the past, allowing him to enter mythic time and create history. Although Kiefer's idealism about art exceeds expectation, he is not without irony on the subject. The palette often has no more reality than the toys with which the German military played.

To Paint, 1974 (pl. 26), hints at the symbolically male character of Kiefer's palette. With it, he can "love" the earth, covering and fertilizing her with his seed.[52] This union, like that of Siegfried and Brunhilde, or yin and yang, has both physical and spiritual connotations. Painting is made a joyous, generative act, one that not only blots the scarred landscape and the road carved into it but also restores the earth. Kiefer demonstrates the healing effect of the cool rain on the seared land so that he and his palette now play the beneficent, metamorphosing role. Yet Kiefer hopes to destroy the domination of nature, too; hence, the rain may also be seen as a kind of hail of bullets, assaulting or inundating the landscape. "Love," then, is once more an imperfect state.

Kiefer shows the sacred character of the palette in *Resumptio*, of the same year (fig. 45). The title may refer to the rebirth of painting following its demise

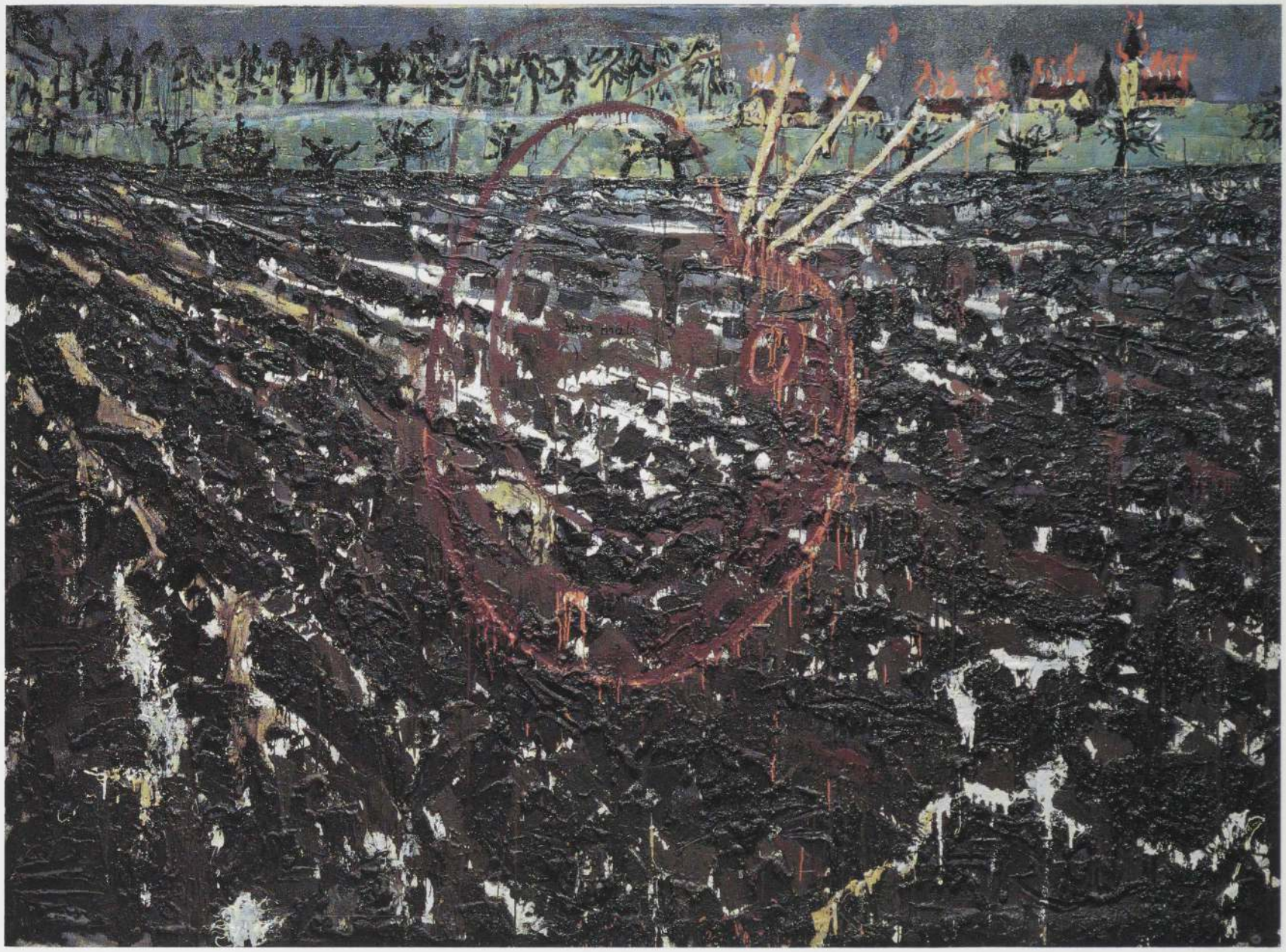


Plate 24
Nero Paints, 1974
Nero malt
Oil on canvas
86⅝ x 118⅛" (220 x 300 cm)
Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst,
Munich. On loan from the
Wittelsbach Settlement Fund,
Prince Franz von Bayern
Collection

Plate 25
Painting = Burning, 1974
Malen = Verbrennen
Oil on burlap
86⅝ x 118⅛" (220 x 300 cm)
Collection of Jerry and Emily
Spiegel, Kings Point, New York

Plate 26
To Paint, 1974
Malen
Oil and shellac on burlap
46½ x 100″ (118 x 254 cm)
Family H. de Groot Collection,
Groningen, The Netherlands

Plate 27
Horror Vacui, 1979
Watercolor, gouache, and graphite
on paper
16½ x 22″ (42 x 56 cm)
Private Collection

Plate 28
Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen, 1975
Ausbrennen des Landkreises Buchen
Oil, charcoal, and glue on twenty strips of burlap, bound
23⅝ x 16½ x 3⅛" (60 x 42 x 8 cm) (bound volume)
Private Collection

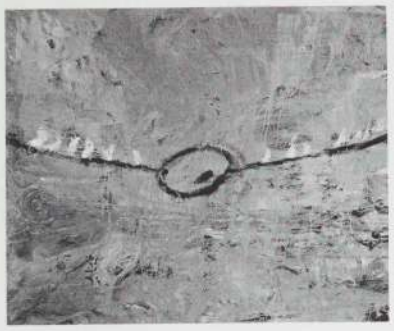


Figure 46. Anselm Kiefer, *Palette on a Rope* (*Palette am Seil*), 1977. Oil, emulsion, and shellac on canvas, 51⅛ x 63" (130 x 160 cm). Private Collection.

Figure 47. Anselm Kiefer, *Herzeleide*, 1979. Watercolor and charcoal on paper, 19 x 14" (48 x 36 cm). Private Collection.

Figure 48. Anselm Kiefer, *The Three Norns: Urd, Werdandi, Skuld* (*Die drei Nornen: Urd, Werdandi, Skuld*), 1979. Oil on canvas, 98½ x 59" (250 x 150 cm). Collection of Judy and Harvey Gushner, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

during the 1960s and 1970s, when Conceptualist modes prevailed.[53] But the placement of the palette over the casket echoes images of Christ's Resurrection, too. In this regard, the ascendance of the spiritual palette out of an earthly body is comparable to the role of art in relation to history and such containers as the zinc tub discussed earlier.[54] This exhilarating moment further establishes the now mythic and legendary status of the palette in Kiefer's art, for although originating in the same human realm as history itself, the palette offers a God-like possibility.[55]

There are intervals in the mythic life of art when it is in a weakened state. The title of *Sick Art*, 1975 (pl. 30), suggests this condition, underscored by the red forms in the landscape, which have been identified as suppurating sores.[56] Since a central ambition for Kiefer was to abolish the beauty of nature, we might conclude that his art is "sick" because it has been unable to modify or completely obliterate the splendor of the Norwegian landscape. Yet, Kiefer notes that the title is based on the Nazis' notion of "degenerate" art, which for him is spurious. Art exists or it does not, but art cannot be ill.[57] Nonetheless, Kiefer willingly joins the company of the despised degenerate artists by intentionally making the landscape appear to be sick; his art is thereby perverted.

A powerful contrast to the red sores in *Sick Art* are the brilliantly colored, multiple suns in *North Cape* (pl. 31), painted about the same time. Kiefer compares the summer sun of Norway to art, writing in the sky: "die Kunst geht knapp nicht unter" (art doesn't just disappear). Yet one wonders whether he is being ironic about the enduring quality of art. Is it "pretty" landscape painting that will never be extinguished? If this approach to art is like the summer sun, it will, in fact, disappear,[58] and thus, the siren song of nature cannot survive for long in Kiefer's view.

The theme of the palette in danger occurs in *Palette on a Rope*, 1977 (fig. 46),[59] where it is threatened with extinction by twelve flames. This image is derived from the description of a tightrope walker found in the preamble of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.[60] The palette is under attack from more prosaic forces in the series of paintings on the subject of the Iconoclastic Controversy, in which tanks aim their fire at a large, central palette (see pl. 35, fig. 61). Finally, in *Herzeleide*, 1979 (fig. 47), a peasant woman, the mother of Parsifal, contemplates a skull-shaped palette; as befits a memento mori, it can be assumed that Kiefer's palette will have immortality, too.

Kiefer created a variation on the theme of art juxtaposed with nature in *Piet Mondrian—Arminius's Battle*, 1976 (pl. 32). He isolated several of the trees from *Varus* (pl. 17) and at the upper reaches superimposed a rectilinear network of lines. The image and title suggest that art can exist side by side with history; however, the poles are linked in *Faith, Hope, Love*, also of 1976 (pl. 29), in which the palette has a tree-stump-like existence and is the origin for a group of trees. Then, in a series of 1977–78, Kiefer attached a lead palette to a painted tree. Whereas earlier a schematically rendered palette was simply laid over the landscape, *Tree with Palette* (pl. 33) exhibits a heightened sense of drama. The palette has an animated presence as an object, appearing both to cling to and to hang from an omnipresent tree trunk.

The tree trunk joins the all-pervasive wood of the attic paintings and the general ambience of the forest that have filled Kiefer's work. As the tree rings were becoming a prominent motif in his graphics, Kiefer produced a series of works on various aspects of the mythic Yggdrasil tree,[61] which is the immediate source for *Tree with Palette*. In this story, as described by Mircea Eliade, "Yggdrasil is a cosmic tree *par excellence*." Its roots are deep in the earth "where hell and the kingdom of the giants are to be found." Two miraculous fountains are nearby; at one, a spring of knowledge and wisdom, the gods meet to deliver justice. The three Norns, or Fates (see fig. 48), use water from the second fountain to revive the youth and vigor of the tree. Various animals live on the branches, including an eagle which must daily battle the viper Nidhogg, who tries to destroy the tree by gnawing at its roots; this struggle symbolizes the opposition between light and dark, or the sun and the underworld. During the world cataclysm in the Edda, the Yggdrasil shakes and endures considerable pain, but does not fall.[62]

The concept of the sacred tree of life exists in a number of myth systems, as well as in the Scriptures, and there are many similarities in its treatment. The tree is usually thought to stand at the center of the

Plate 29
Faith, Hope, Love, 1976
Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe
Watercolor and charcoal on paper
36⅝ x 24½" (93 x 62 cm)
Private Collection

Plate 30
Sick Art, 1975
Kranke Kunst
Watercolor on paper
$7^{11}/_{16}$ x $9^{1}/_{2}$" (19.5 x 24 cm)
Collection of Howard and Linda
Karshan, London

Plate 31
North Cape, 1975
Nordkap
Watercolor on paper
9⅜ x 7¾" (23.8 x 19.8 cm)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London

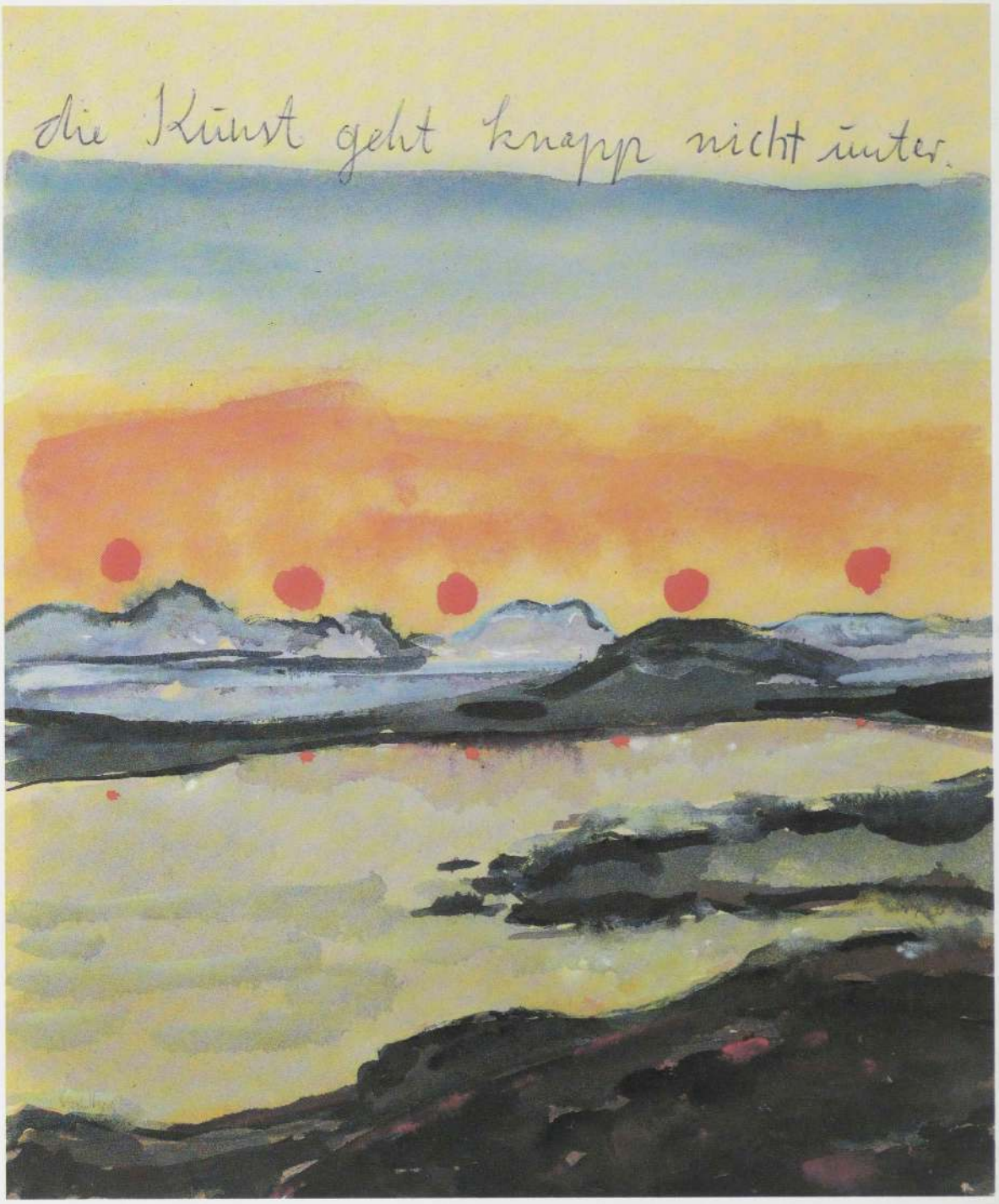


Plate 32
Piet Mondrian—Arminius's Battle, 1976
Piet Mondrian—Hermannsschlacht
Oil on canvas
96½ x 44¼" (245 x 112.5 cm)
Visser Collection, Retie, Belgium

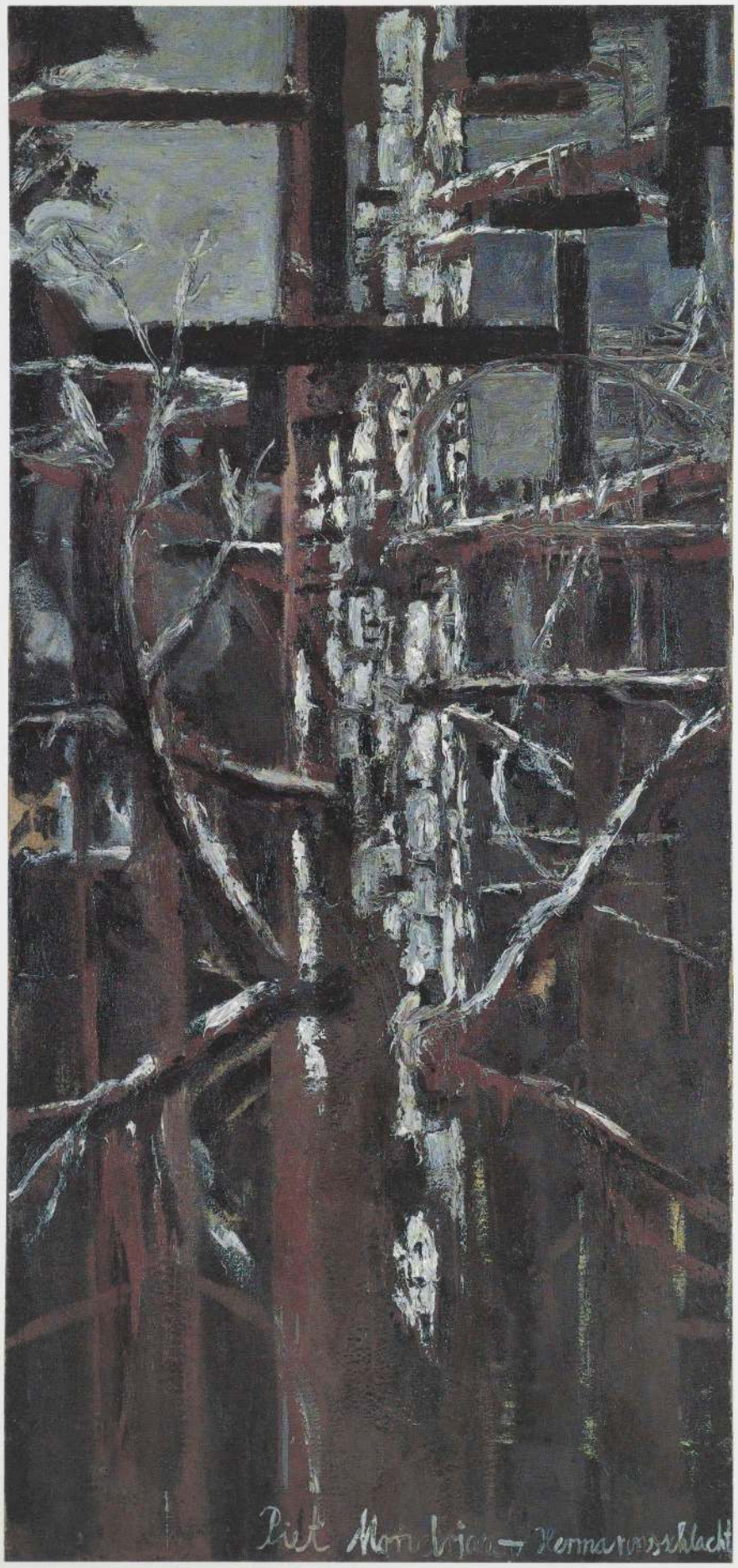


Plate 33
Tree with Palette, 1978
Baum mit Palette
Oil on canvas, with lead
108¼ x 75⅜" (275 x 191.5 cm)
Private Collection (courtesy
Sonnabend Gallery, New York)

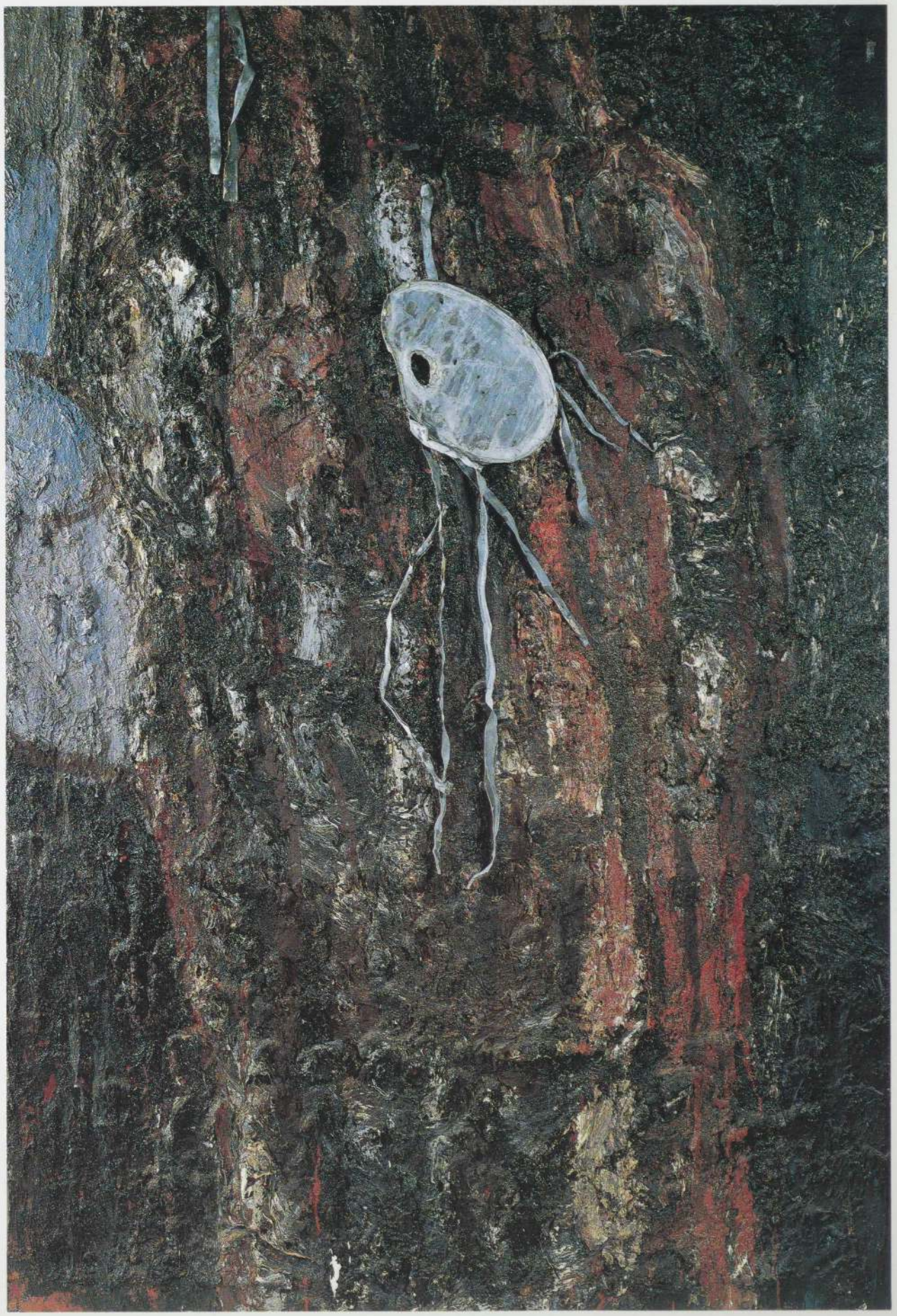


Figure 49. Anselm Kiefer, *The World-Ash*, 1982. Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and straw on photograph, mounted on canvas, with wood, 110¼ x 149⅝" (280 x 380 cm). Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

universe, linking the realms of heaven, earth, and hell.[63] Often, an initiation rite exists for a potential hero; he must slay a guardian snake in order to gather the fruit of immortality.[64] In 1982 Kiefer titled one work *The World-Ash* (fig. 49), which is yet another variant of the World Tree and Yggdrasil. At the end of the reign of the gods, known as Ragnarök, Thor, the son of Odin, battles the World Snake, which has been gnawing at the roots of the World Ash.[65] The ash of this tree is said to be replete with fertilizing power.[66] The World Tree concept provides Kiefer with something that is preeminently of this world yet has qualities possessed only by the gods.[67] It is at once an image and symbol of the cosmos, equally associated with growth and decay.[68] Kiefer shows that the rings of the tree unite the cycles of vegetal and human evolution. The tree holds sacred values, too, and thus is fought over by the forces of good and evil.

Given the earlier myths and the character of the tentaclelike appendages on the palette, it can be understood in part as possessing the identity of the serpent Nidhogg. Clinging to the tree and gnawing away at its strength, the palette represents Kiefer's prototypical view of art, which attempts to destroy the beauty of nature. Adhered as it is, the palette also has sexual connotations; that is, the male palette impregnates nature with his seed, or the human palette grafts itself into the cycles of nature. By attaching the palette to a tree trunk, Kiefer likens it, too, to the swords of Odin and Wotan, whose trophies were thrust into mythic trees and possessed extraordinary power.[69] In Kiefer's terms, the analogy to the magical swords is just, for art exerts an exceptional power over both nature and history.

We have seen that the palette has human attributes. In this vein, just as Kiefer shows it hanging from a tree, he paints heads over the all-pervasive trees in the precisely contemporaneous series entitled "Ways."[70] Perhaps he intends a symbolic death for both the palette and the spiritual heroes similar to that of Odin, who was hung from the Yggdrasil tree in an initiation rite,[71] and Christ, who was crucified on a wooden cross; their situations resulted respectively in special knowledge and transcendence. By the juxtaposition of the motifs in *Tree with Palette*, then, Kiefer manipulates two key elements of his world view—art and nature—and suggests that the sacred tree is the most elevated context for the palette.

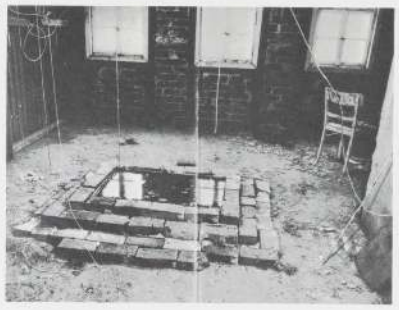
During the 1970s, Kiefer was, in effect, creating moments in the sacred life of the palette (we have already seen its adulthood and "resumptio"[72]). The "birth" of the artist's attribute is presented in a book of 1978 entitled *Die Donauquelle* (The Source of the Danube), in which the source of the river is the locale for this immaculate conception. But whereas the location is ceremoniously personified by Thusnelda in an earlier painting of the same title,[73] in the book, a rather filthy pool of water is photographed. This unprepossessing scene is made the great natural fountainhead not only for the Danube, but for the rise of the palette.

The first two pages offer an interior view of the artist's studio (fig. 50), in which we see the familiar attic space, windows, and chair from the 1973 paintings, the toy boat and tank from the historical subjects, hanging cords everywhere, and a wooden palette leaning against the wall. Only after introducing the setup does Kiefer initiate the sequence of moments concerned with the pool of water. It is surrounded by bricks, as if not only a birthplace but also a funeral pyre (fig. 51). The electrical wires, hanging near the water, would seem to present a great hazard, but the combination of elements could cause the figurative spark of life as well. Page by page, we are brought closer and closer to the water (fig. 52), and as this occurs, the imagery becomes increasingly abstract; Kiefer seems to revel in the possibilities of the watery, pictorial plane. Suddenly, a light pattern of rings appears (fig. 53), which subsequently becomes coincident with the shape of a palette seen just beneath the surface of the water. The rope, which had been on the edge of the pool, is now submerged, as if to rescue the palette, or as if an umbilical cord connecting the palette to a heavenly mother. For several pages, the object has an evanescent quality, suggesting that it is perhaps only a mirage. Finally, it begins to float to the surface, like a giant, craggy, one-eyed animal, surrounded by leaves (fig. 54).

Then, with an explicitly artificial glow, the palette "levitates," rising out of the water (fig. 55). Its "resurrection," like that of the Nazi who walks on water in "Occupations" (fig. 8), is obviously and overtly staged; the palette is held up by a pole. The shabby yet dramatic theatricality of this instant is im-

Figures 50–57. Anselm Kiefer, double-pages from *Die Donauquelle* (*The Source of the Danube*) (Cologne, 1978). 11⅞ x 8 x 7/16" (30.2 x 20.3 x 1.1 cm) (bound volume).

50



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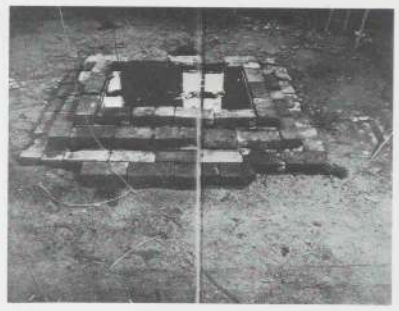

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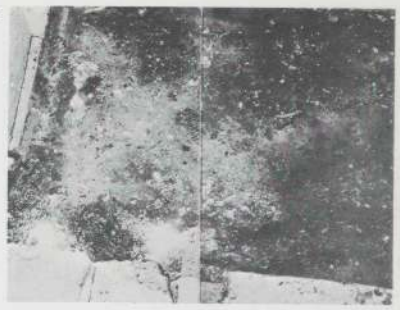

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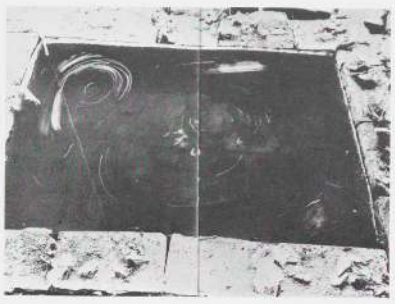

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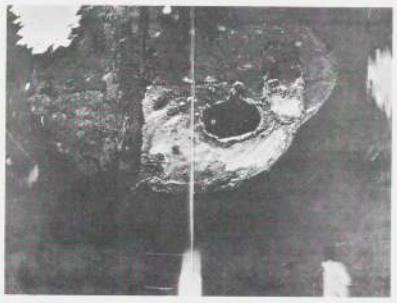

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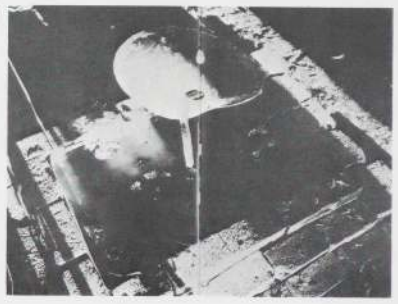

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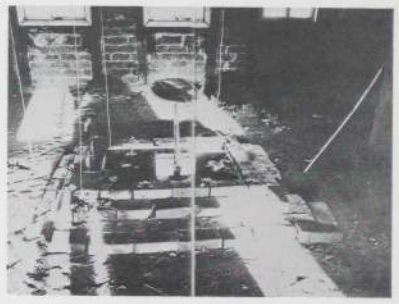

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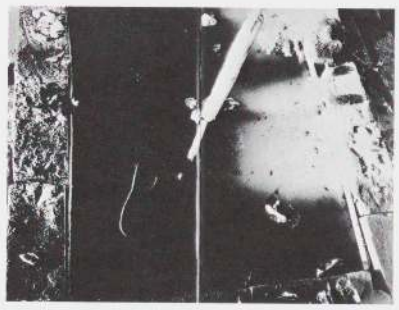

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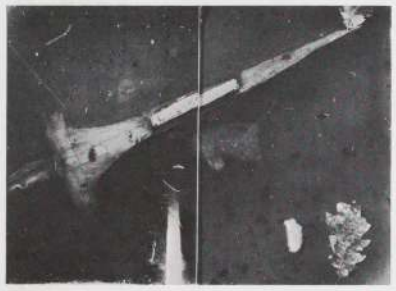


Figures 58–60. Anselm Kiefer, double-pages from *Nothung* (Baden-Baden, 1977). 11¼ x 7⅝ x 3/16" (28.6 x 19.4 x .5 cm) (bound volume).

mediately undone on the next page by the camera's "eye" pulling back further to reveal more of the junk-strewn studio. But Kiefer begins the melodrama once more on the following pages, in which light enters from the three windows (fig. 56), these now even more suggestive of the Trinity. Still, a forest of hanging wires and ropes surrounds the stepped pool. In the final pages, a mood of dark gloom settles over the scene, and the camera, as if located in a secret place in the forest by the river's edge, low to the ground, surprisingly focuses on the stick that holds the palette (fig. 57). The hot, glowing quality of this rod is, perhaps, cooled in the water.

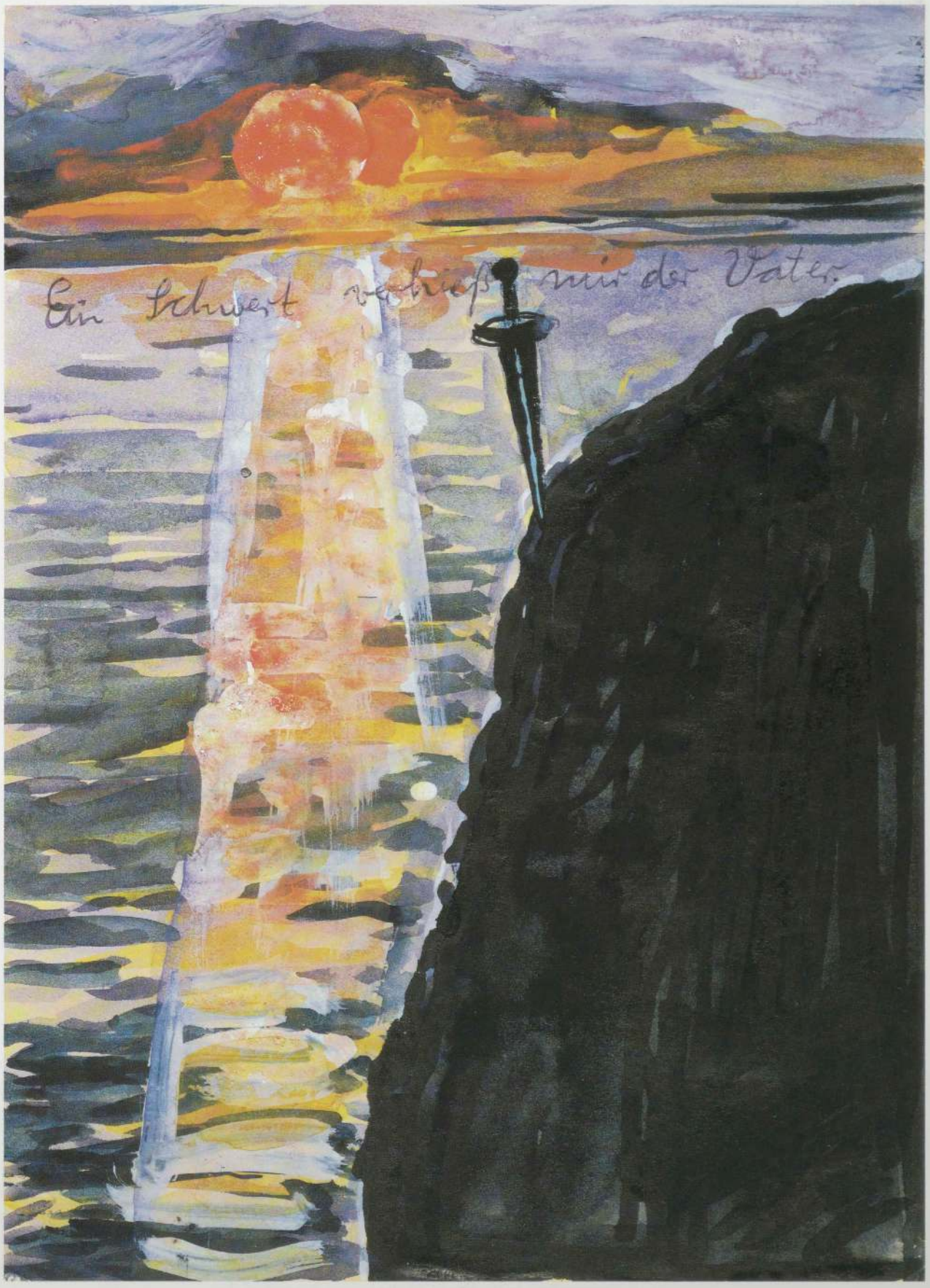
The effect of Kiefer's book is remarkably paradoxical. The setting is so humble as to suggest an ironical approach to a sacred event; yet, as at the birth of Christ, a thoroughly ordinary situation is required. Kiefer is playfully theatrical yet serious, dogmatically interested in showing the paraphernalia from which the images are created as well as an altogether dramatic sequence of events. As an allegory on the source of the Danube, this work is perverse; it turns the overly ceremonious, possibly pompous, pretensions of a nation into a sad, unseemly joke.

Kiefer's love for Baroque art, which he finds "macabre, earthly, and spiritual at once," and possessed of the combination of realism, illusionism, and death motifs,[74] is especially apparent in his books. There, in similar fashion, the ragged, extremely realistic, studio setups are a microcosm for the most elevated themes. When, at the end of *Die Donauquelle*, Kiefer rather distractedly focuses all his attention on the glowing handle, he is emphasizing a similarly macabre and exaggeratedly pragmatic detail.

Many of the themes already noted in Kiefer's art can be seen in this book. That he should once again focus on water is not surprising. Water causes the destruction of *The Flooding of Heidelberg* (figs. 15–18), Nazi generals and admirals play with boats in bathtubs in *Operation Sea Lion I* (pl. 14), and water is the primal starting point in *The Lake of Gennesaret* (fig. 31). At the opening of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, a golden treasure is taken from beneath the water, whereupon the base motives of men overcome their ethical natures and the reign of the gods begins to decline. At the conclusion of the tale, a golden ring is returned to its place beneath the water. These associations with birth and death, destruction and regeneration, establish a context for the watery setting in which the palette arises. Kiefer's hanging wires formally recall the all-consuming, surrounding forest and trees in *Man in the Forest* (pl. 6). But he explains that the three Norns who protect the Yggdrasil tree also sit above the world, knitting the thoughts of human beings; these thoughts hang down on wires. Furthermore, he relates the cords to the roots of heavenly trees, as well as to theatrical ropes.[75] Thus, the birth of the palette is just the first stage of life. The cords hanging everywhere indicate that its future evolution is preordained, and that an even greater glory exists beyond these dingy surroundings.

In the book *Nothung* (figs. 58–60), of 1977, Kiefer had used precisely the same context and a similar sequence of images to unveil a sword in a pool. Both sword and palette are powerful, male weapons (compare pl. 34); they emerge from a watery realm that can be termed female, if we recall that Kiefer had depicted Thusnelda as the source of the Danube in 1976.[76] The title, *Nothung*, is the name of Wotan's sword, which was thrust into the World Ash. In the story, only a person who is youthful, brash, impudent and without fear can take possession of the mighty sword.[77]

Plate 34
My Father Promised Me a Sword,
1974
Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater
Watercolor on paper
11 3/16 x 8" (28.4 x 20.4 cm)
Private Collection



A Formal Breakthrough: 1980 to 1982

Kiefer's art reached maturity in the early 1980s. Whereas earlier, content had dominated the viewer's perception of it, now the physical materiality and visual complexity of its surfaces became major sources of interest. Kiefer began to employ an almost bewildering variety of materials including, in addition to oil, lead, photographs, woodcuts, sand, and straw. The vast scale and complexity of the paintings gave them a forceful presence, and the abstract quality of many of the canvases was highly pronounced. Kiefer had, in effect, integrated his ongoing thematic concerns with the outsize proportions of Abstract Expressionism and the modernist insistence on the literal qualities of the object.

The breakthrough in Kiefer's art was in part the result of his working on books. There, in contrast to his paintings of the 1970s, his Conceptualist bent and unconventional approach to materials were most in evidence. The books were based on photographs, the apparent truth of which was constantly undercut by the obviously manipulated and invented circumstances of their creation. Usually, each image was taken from a setup situation Kiefer created in his studio, using toys, as well as clay, lead, and metal miniatures that he made himself to depict tanks, soldiers, and palettes, with sand strewn on the floor to represent desert locales and small branches and twigs to indicate forestation. Starting with these photographs, Kiefer would often elaborate on them, applying paint or other materials or gluing additional photographs to the images;[1] in this manner he created multiple and sometimes conflicting "realities," with the result that a powerful air of fantasy and even delusion became everpresent. All the while, he insisted on objecthood: the books are manifestly literal, tempting us to turn the pages and thereby participate in their actualization. Thus these very real objects contain invented situations founded on photographed "lies."

During the early 1980s, Kiefer incorporated such paradoxical qualities into his paintings as well. The work that best announces the new pictorial character of his art is appropriately titled *Iconoclastic Controversy* (pl. 35). As in the creation of one of his books, the artist started with the photograph; first he glued an enlarged image, taken in a studio setup, to an epic-size canvas, after which he added oil paint, shellac, emulsion, sand, and sheets of paper printed with woodcut images. Although he had followed a similar procedure in his books of the 1970s, his use of the various media became much more complex in this painting. Each element is applied in such a way as to reinforce or echo another and to serve the composition as a whole: for example, the long, painted, black lines extend the cracks in the photographed palette; the painted black shape to the right of and below the palette represents a knot in the woodcut floorboards, and it is as well an opaque rhyme of the crater in which the palette rests and a thumbhole of the painted palette. The large painted ring echoes the palette's shape, but because of its wood veneer, it may also be identified as a tree stump. The white, painted flames narratively burn the graphic, wood-grained interior; these will, figuratively, be doused by the actual sand that serves as a barrier to the palette. This intricate mixture of tactile media and photographed image is made all the more ambiguous by the spatial alignment of the elements and their differing light qualities. By introducing these subtleties in the surface plane, Kiefer has adopted the Cubist collagists' sleight of hand.

Kiefer's interest in the central issues of the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy had been evident in his art at least since 1973, when he named rather than pictured the personages of the Trinity. His act recalled the medieval debate as to whether the painter-monks should be allowed to depict Christian personages. The Byzantines held that images were more than mere representations—that they became emanations of the deity; hence image worship was fraught with associations of magic. However, the Iconoclasts held that religious art ought not to exist at all; they proposed to replace it instead with secular subjects such as hunting scenes, abstract decoration, and historical narratives. The obduracy of the Iconoclasts was such that they not only argued against the painting and worship of images, they also reinforced their edicts militarily; painter-monks were imprisoned, murdered, and exiled. In 726 Emperor Leo III ruled that the cult of worshiping pictorial images should end. Empress Irene restored but amended the practice in 787 at the Second Council of Nicaea, which allowed the veneration of images. That edict lasted only until 815, however, and further changes in the laws ensued. In 843, the proponents of icons finally won out, and veneration of the images was sanctioned.[2]

In his own version of the Iconoclastic Controversy, Kiefer extends the debate to the modern-day technique of photography, rhetorically questioning whether a photographed image can be relied upon.[3]

Plate 35
Iconoclastic Controversy, 1980
Bilder-Streit
Oil, emulsion, shellac, and sand
on photograph, mounted on
canvas, with woodcut
114⅛ x 157½" (290 x 400 cm)
Museum Boymans–van
Beuningen, Rotterdam

Plate 36
Ways: March Sand, 1980
Wege: märkischer Sand
Acrylic and sand on photograph,
mounted on burlap
100⅜ x 141¾" (255 x 360 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

Figure 61. Anselm Kiefer, *Iconoclastic Controversy II* (*Bilderstreit II*), 1978. Oil on burlap, 78¾ x 118⅛" (200 x 300 cm). Museum Folkwang, Essen.

Figure 62. Anselm Kiefer, *Ways: March Sand* (*Wege: märkischer Sand*), 1980. Oil, emulsion, shellac, and sand on photograph, mounted on canvas, 110¼ x 149⅝" (280 x 380 cm). Saatchi Collection, London.

In theory, this may be the case, but the photographs in Kiefer's work have a strong air of unreality. Indeed, in *Iconoclastic Controversy*, the palette is almost otherworldly; it is of indeterminate size and lies in a superterrestrial landscape. By extension, it might be assumed that history may be allied with the representational implications of the photograph; both are presumed to be objective. But Kiefer's position is clear on both history and the photograph: each offers locales and narratives that are of questionable veracity. Interestingly, except for mock situations, Kiefer himself prefers not to be photographed, suggesting that he would agree with Donald Kuspit in stating that the photograph's capacity to appropriate and penetrate existence "destroys our otherness . . . the very source of our naturalness."[4] Thus, even while employing the photograph, Kiefer joins Leo III in fearing the power of the image.

Kiefer had painted two versions of the *Iconoclastic Controversy* in 1976–77,[5] in which he named some of the key figures in the historical debate and juxtaposed a large palette, such as had dominated the 1974 landscapes, with a cluster of challenging tanks. Although the names refer to the medieval struggle, the presence of the World War II tanks telescopes history. Perceived as a continuing threat by belligerent societies, art was in more recent times attacked by the Nazis. Kiefer's frequent references to Mondrian in the 1970s can be understood in light of his interest in the Iconoclastic Controversy for the Dutchman was a twentieth-century painter-monk, struggling to preserve religious values in art. In titling a book *Piet Mondrian—Operation Sea Lion* (pl. 15), and a painting *Piet Mondrian—Arminius's Battle* (pl. 32), Kiefer sets the forces of art and history in opposition, much as he had done by juxtaposing the palette and tanks in the "Iconoclastic Controversy" series, and implies that art's obsession with the spiritual may be at odds with the character and desires of political leaders. When Kiefer turned again to the Iconoclastic Controversy theme in 1978, painting four more versions (see fig. 61), he removed the names of the participants and placed the palette close to the ground, like a dead tree trunk abandoned to the elements.

The 1980 depiction (pl. 35) was the culmination of two years' work, in which time the artist gradually related the palette to the tree.[6] Both represent eternal values that may prove menacing to society. In this depiction, three tanks take aim at a segmented palette. A second confrontation takes place between black and white. According to Kiefer's usage in the earlier versions of the subject, white is usually the color of the Iconophiles and black, of the Iconoclasts. If Kiefer has deliberately maintained this color symbolism in the 1980 *Iconoclastic Controversy*, then the fires and the sand may be interpreted as forming a protective barrier around the palette, in the same way a ring of fire protected Brunhilde while she slept.

Art and history have a complex and uncomfortable relationship in Kiefer's world, not unlike the interaction between art and nature. For example, in this work the tank can be understood as male and the palette as female; the former, representing history, impregnates and fertilizes art with source material. But the relationship is also hostile, and as the events of the Iconoclastic Controversy and Hitler's reign demonstrate, art can appear to be too independent and, therefore, a threat to established order. Put another way, paint may serve a narrative or be free altogether. The artist can hope to supersede the dictates of history, the fraudulent authenticity of the photograph, and the seductive qualities of materials by unsentimentally manipulating them to form a newly imagined world picture.

Kiefer's preoccupation with the Iconoclastic Controversy in 1980 coincided, although apparently without intention,[7] with actual events in his own life. His art was the subject of a retrospective exhibition at the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale that year, an event that provoked heated critical attacks from his countrymen. Kiefer was seen as "flaunting his Germanness" and "flirting with the ghosts of the Fatherland."[8] Kiefer's subject matter, whether historical or literary, uncovered taboos in a German society that preferred current issues and events to those from the past. Remarkably, some even accused him of being a neo-Nazi, as if his probing of these subjects was itself a regressive display. Hence, even in 1980, art continued to be a troublesome thorn in the side of society, much as it had been during the Byzantine period.

Iconoclastic Controversy may be compared with the two versions of *Ways: March Sand* of the same year (pl. 36, fig. 62); together these works demonstrate Kiefer's method of using similar materials and metaphors in treating more than one subject. Again, photographs were glued over the entire expanse of the canvases

Figure 63. Anselm Kiefer, *Falling Angel (Fallender Engel)*, 1979. Oil and acrylic on photograph, mounted on canvas, 74 13/16 x 67" (190 x 170 cm). Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands.

before painting was begun. Beside the photographs and words, several other types of "reality" are offered, including the tactile ones suggested by paint and actual sand. In the lower left corner of one of the 1980 paintings (fig. 62), a photographed tank appears within a group of painted rings, the latter a recollection of all rounded representations in Kiefer's imagery, whether palette, tree trunk, field, or body of water. Great areas of swirling sand cover the right section of the photographed landscape, and are continued compositionally by a painted black curve that creates a larger ring. All is aflame as if this were the end of the world, but the real sand is theoretically a cooling element, countering the painted fires. The sand nearly obliterates, and perhaps figuratively destroys, a scarcely visible tank in the lower right, and narratively "rains" in the upper center to fertilize the photographed field.

Yet another visually complementary work is *Icarus—March Sand*, 1981 (pl. 37). Kiefer elaborates on his legend of art by identifying the palette flying over the Brandenburg territory with the lonely idealism and impractical dreams of Icarus, the classical figure who tried to reach great heights with his wax wings. However, Icarus ignored the advice of his father, Daedalus, and flew too close to the sun; his wax wings melted and he fell to earth and his death. Although his adventure was inherently doomed, the young, foolhardy Icarus was filled with a mission in life. The identification of the artist with flight and Icarus is predictable. Paul Klee, for example, had understood the aspiration of art as an attempt to achieve a heightened or transcendent viewpoint. For him, art was a human endeavor, but it was one comparable to that of the gods in its level of ambition.[9] Kiefer, too, shows art is a striving for the infinite; flight is the natural metaphor for such an enterprise and Icarus is the perfect alter ego of the artist.

Kiefer first explored the theme of the flying palette in *Resumptio* (fig. 45), in 1974, and the subject of Icarus in a work of 1976 in which Icarus is a heroic winged palette striving for the sun.[10] In subsequent works, Kiefer would attach lead wings to trees, but like Icarus's wax wings they are flawed in that their weight prevents sustained flight. The eerie *Falling Angel*, 1979 (fig. 63), also suggests the Icarus personage who strives for the sun but fails. When Kiefer returned to the theme in 1981, he at first combined it with the subject of *Poland Is Not Yet Lost*,[11] but then simplified the depiction to show the creature simply flying over the devastated March Sand.

In *Icarus—March Sand*, the head of the winged creature takes the shape of a palette, its eye the thumbhole of the object. Icarus's body casts a shadow on the ground, far below, and echoes a black cloud above. The fires burning in the Brandenburg territory lick at the body, so that the ash-black wings seem to have suffered greatly even before approaching the realm of the sun. Indeed, the sun, the goal of the flying man-bird-palette, is absent, and the high horizon defines a claustrophobic world in which historical and earthly events dominate. The problem for Kiefer's Icarus is this: Can art as a spiritual quest heal the decayed land and ascend to a higher plane as well? This mangy Icarus is a sad symbol of the power of art.

Kiefer created many flying palettes in the period from 1980 to 1982, including *Palette with Wings*, 1981 (pl. 38),[12] and *Kyffhäuser*, 1980 (pl. 39), the latter an overpainted photograph like a page taken from one of his books. In these the winged palette appears in a dingy cellar. Notwithstanding the surroundings, the white, flowerlike palette seems to enjoy a certain freedom; compared to the landscape and the historical events implied in *Icarus—March Sand*, the cellar represents a preserve. It is a haven, the safe refuge of a dreamer rather than the realm of a man of action. The title *Kyffhäuser* refers to the mountains where Germans believed that the twelfth-century Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I, also known as Barbarossa, slept, waiting for the people to summon him. His supposed vigil and the name of Kyffhäuser came to be identified in the nineteenth-century Romantics' mind with a dream of national unity.[13] According to Kiefer, when Germany is in terrible difficulty, it looks to a Barbarossa to find the magic sword Nothung and save the nation.[14] Kiefer depicts the hideaway of Barbarossa as an incongruously dank place of enchantment. However, in a contemporaneous book also entitled *Kyffhäuser* (pl. 40), Kiefer shows the palette acting in the world, as if Barbarossa had seized Nothung and entered the fray. Having left the realm of the studio to struggle with history, the Barbarossa figure becomes identified on one page as a helmeted soldier-artist.

Plate 37
Icarus—March Sand, 1981
Ikarus—märkischer Sand
Oil, emulsion, shellac, and sand on photograph, mounted on canvas
114 3/16 x 141 3/4" (290 x 360 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

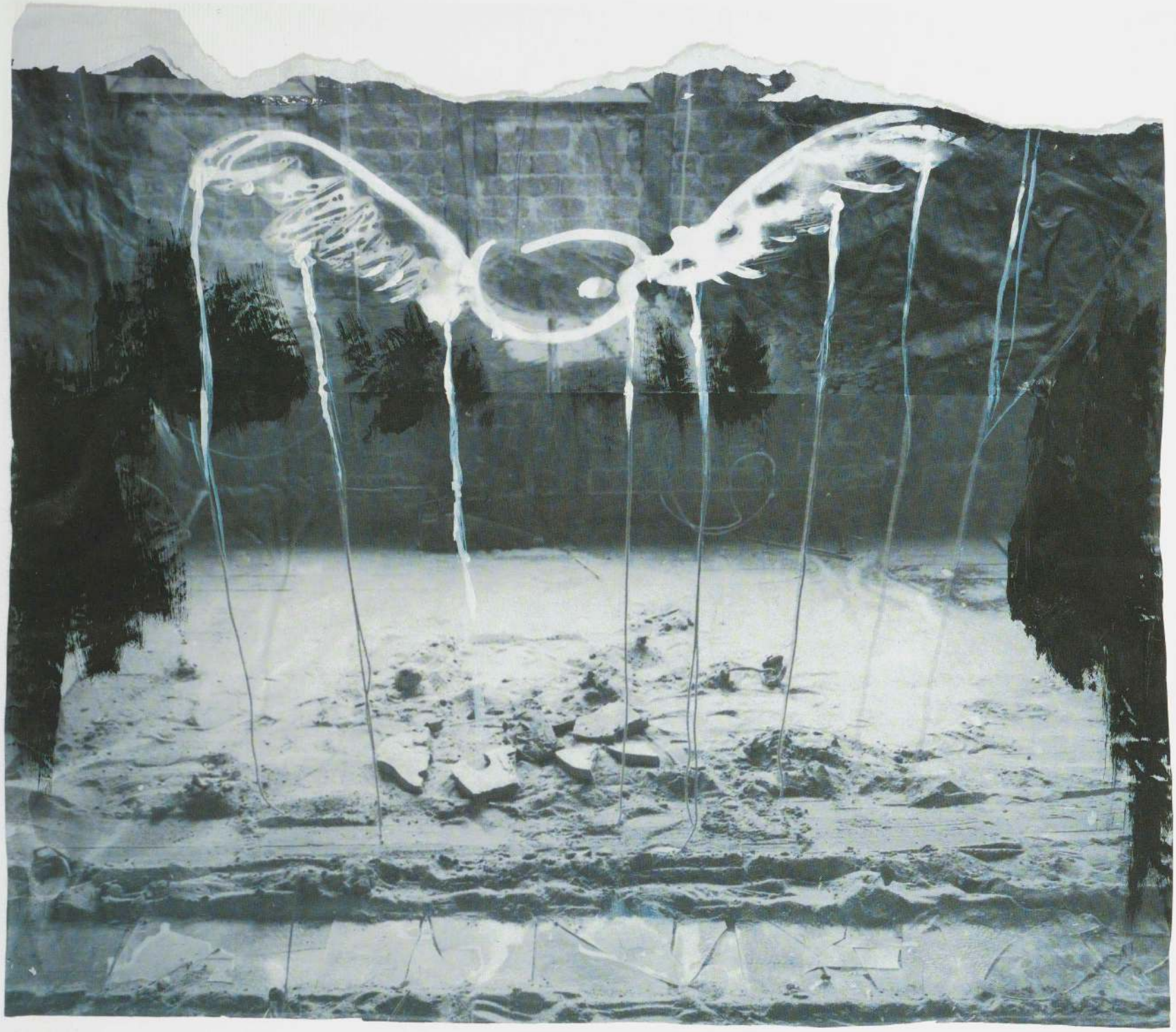
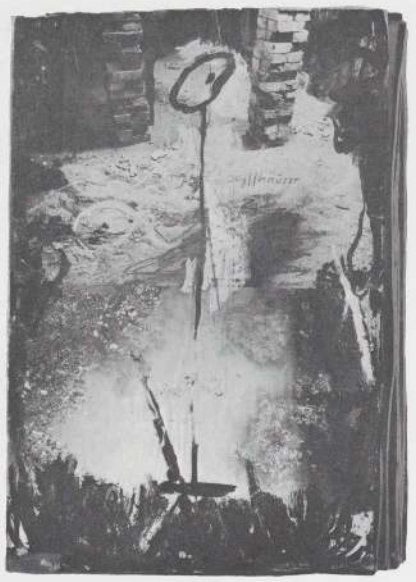


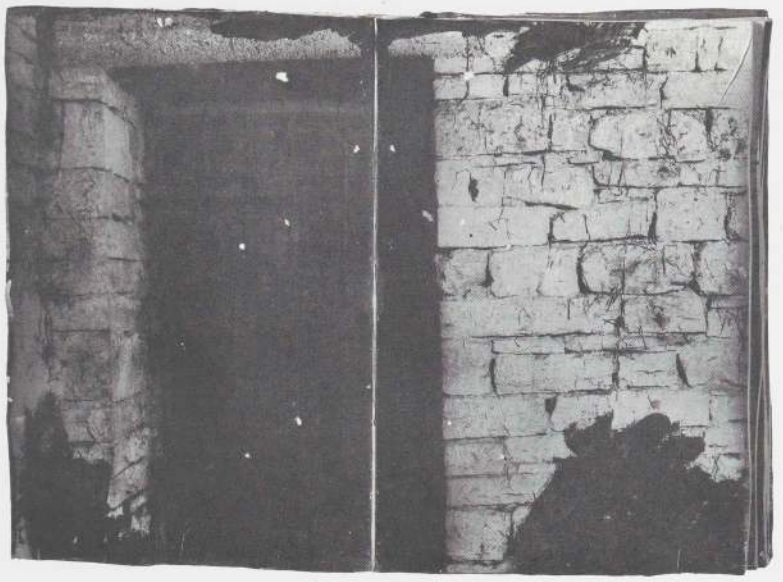
Plate 38
Palette with Wings, 1981
Palette mit Flügeln
Photograph, with oil
25 3/16 x 28 3/4" (64 x 73 cm)
Collection of David and Eileen
Peretz (courtesy Marian
Goodman Gallery, New York)

Plate 39
Kyffhäuser, 1980
Photograph (1975), with acrylic and emulsion
22⅝ x 16½" (57.5 x 42 cm)
Collection of Emy and Jacques Cohenca, New York

Plate 40
Kyffhäuser, 1980–81
Twenty-three double-page photographic images, with oil and emulsion, mounted on cardboard and bound
23¾ x 16½ x 3¼" (60 x 42 x 8 cm) (bound volume)
Collection of Francesco and Alba Clemente, New York



Front cover



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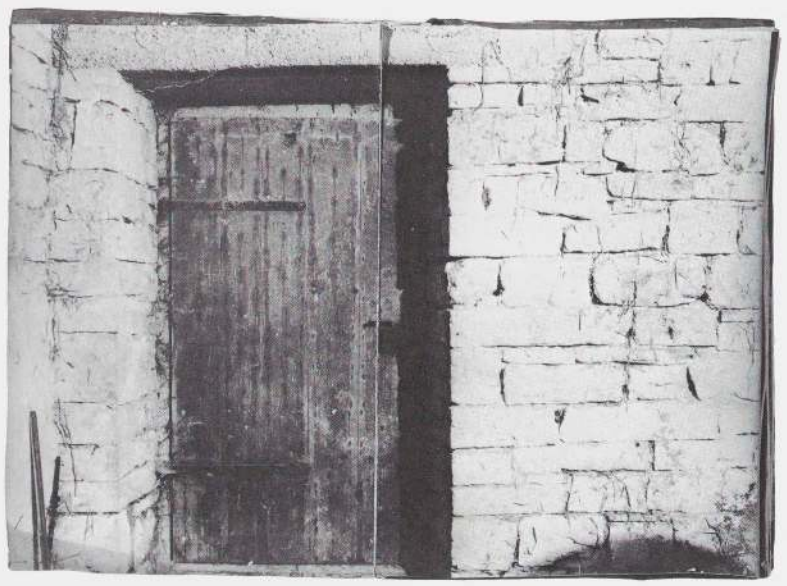

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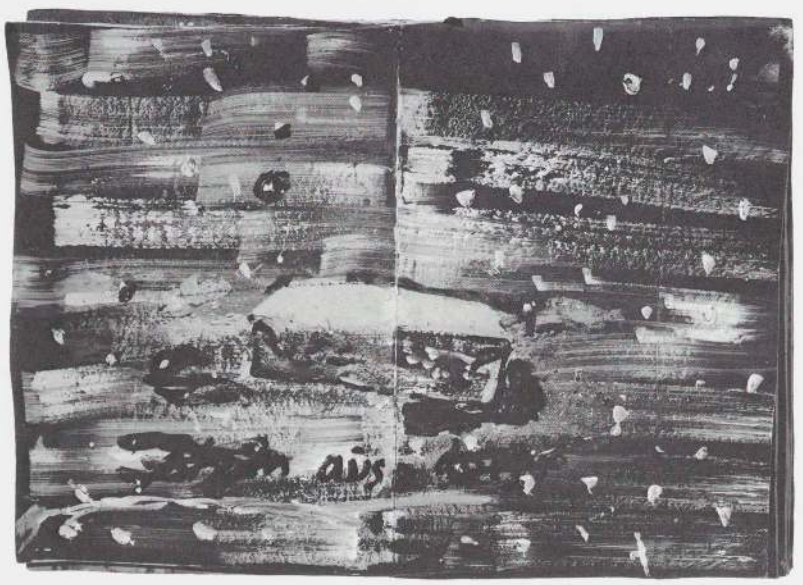

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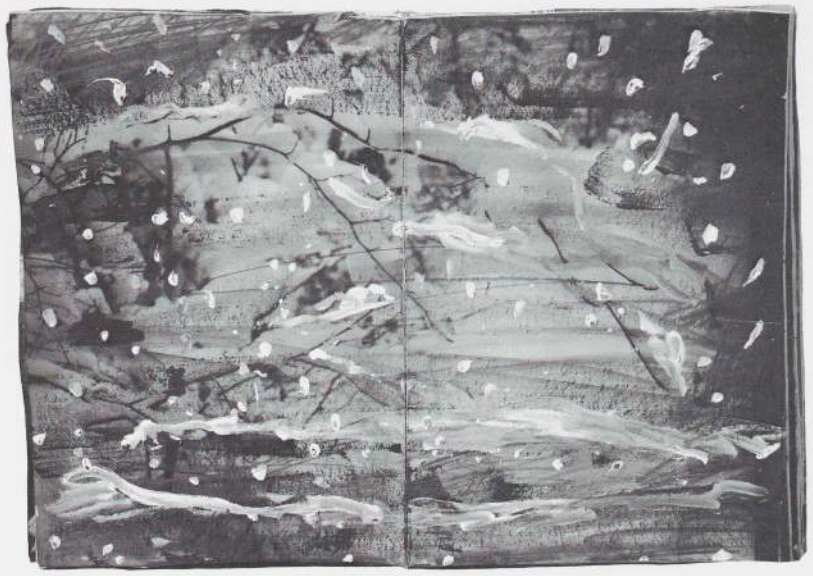

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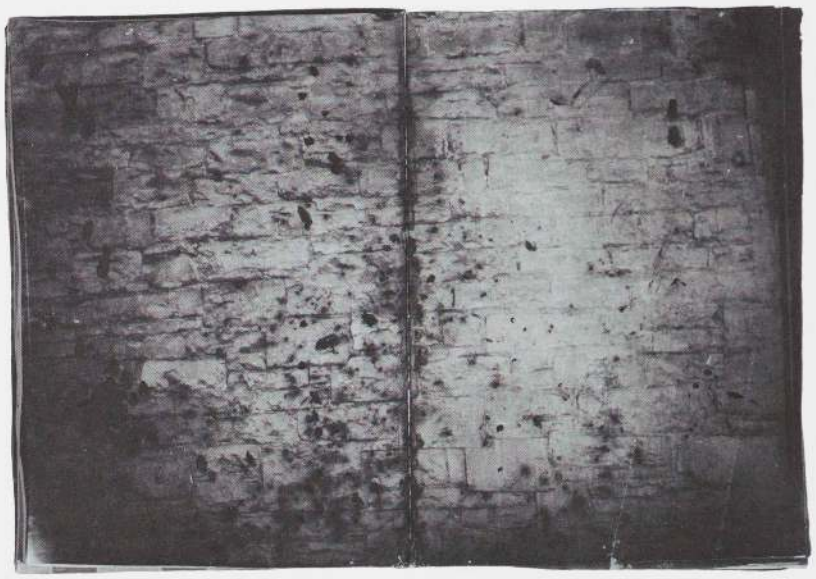

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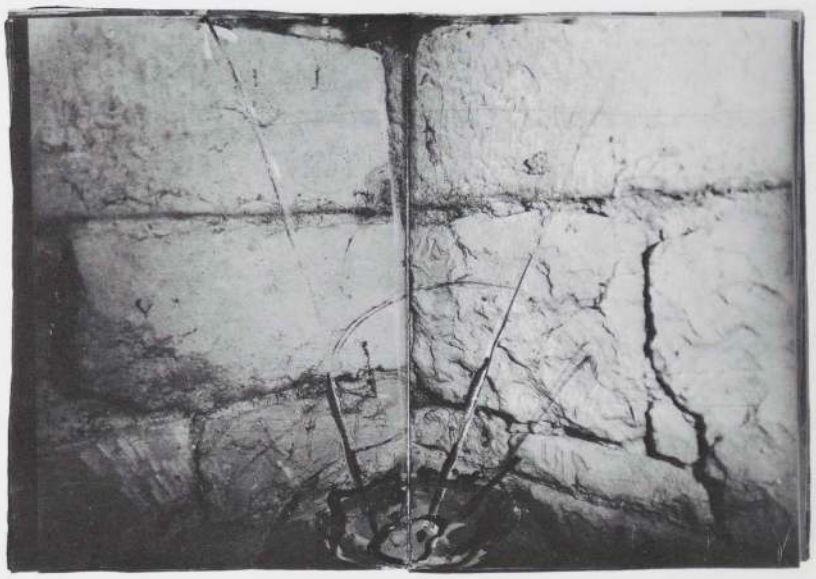

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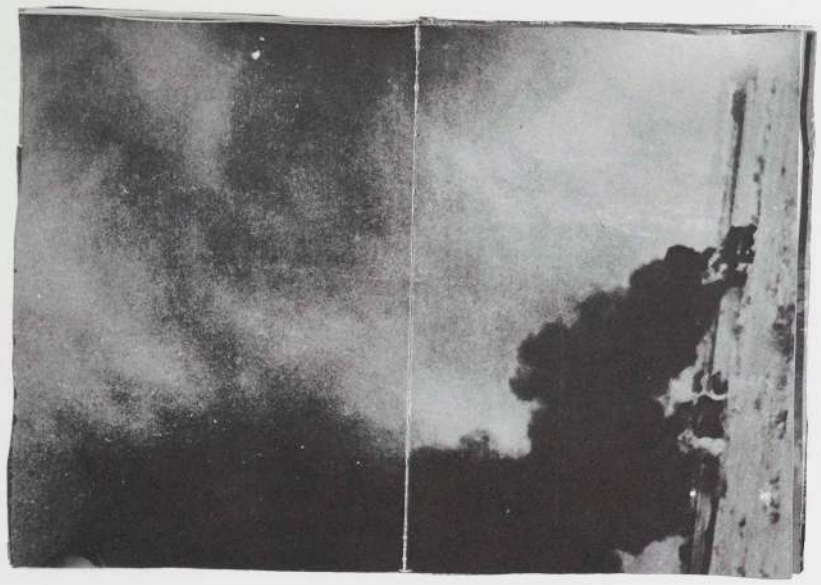

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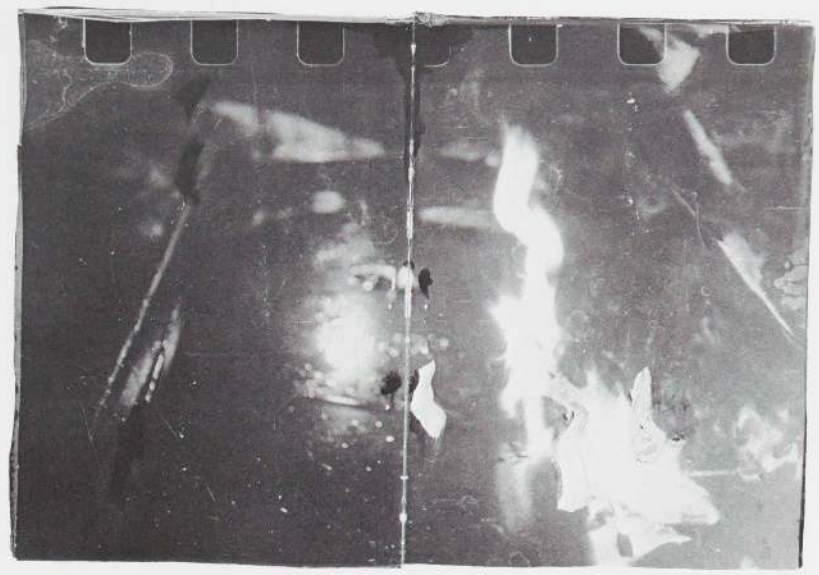

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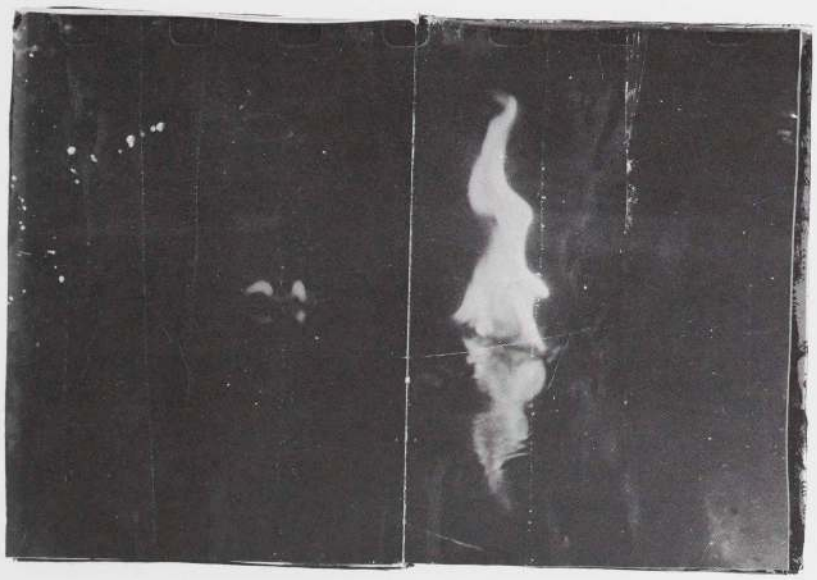

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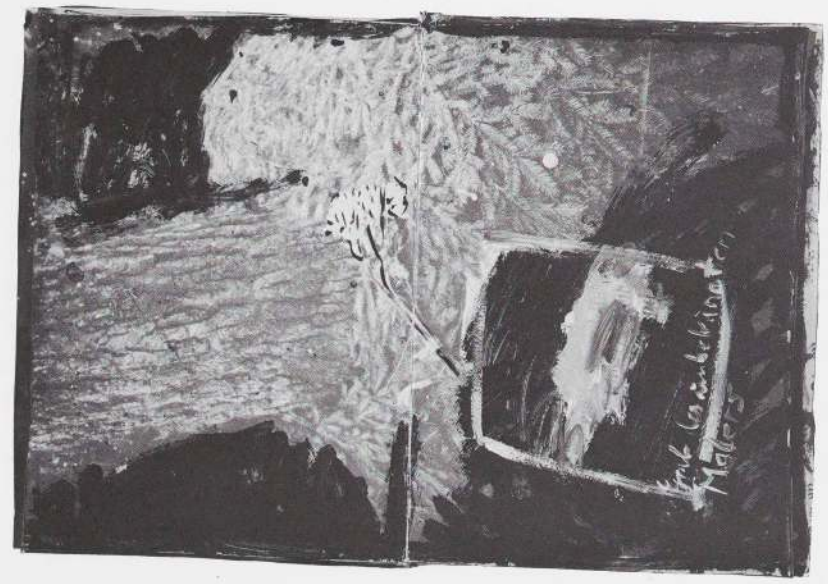

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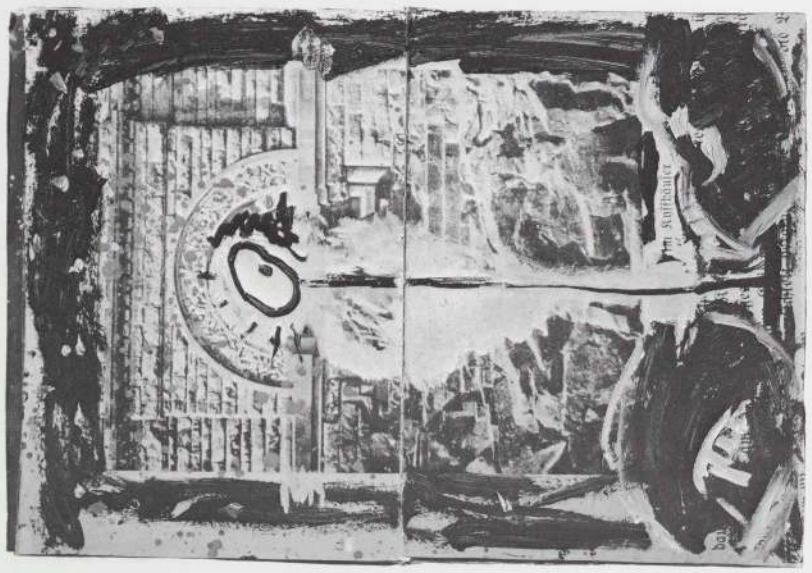

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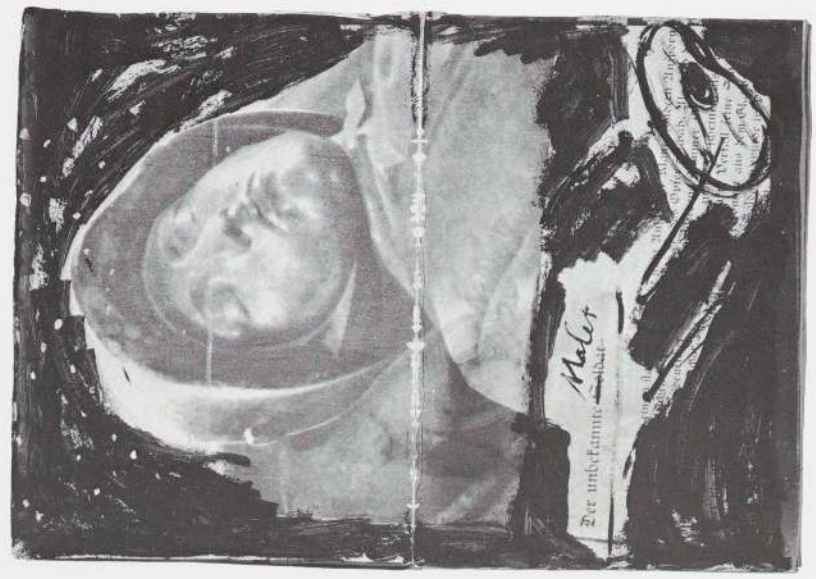

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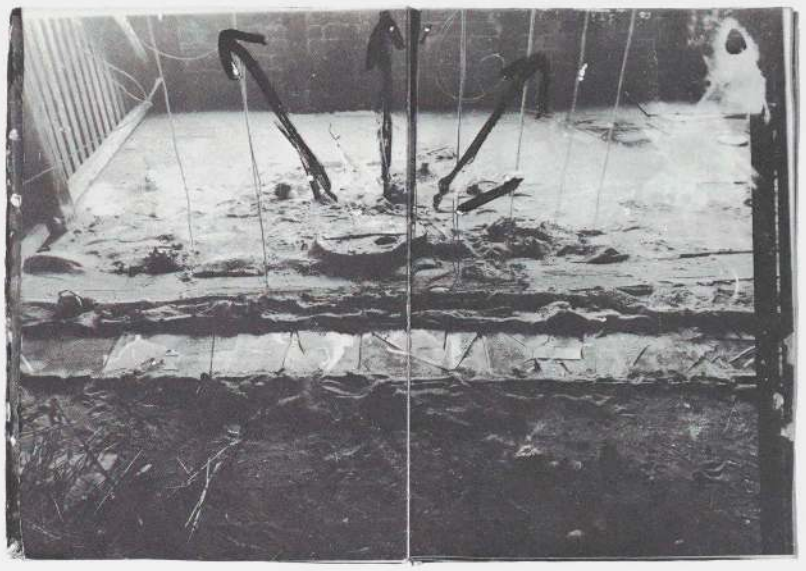

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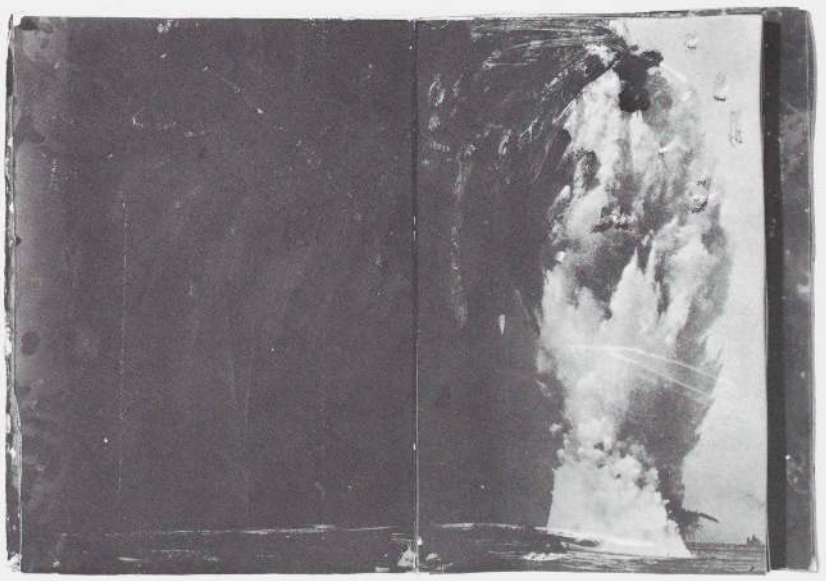

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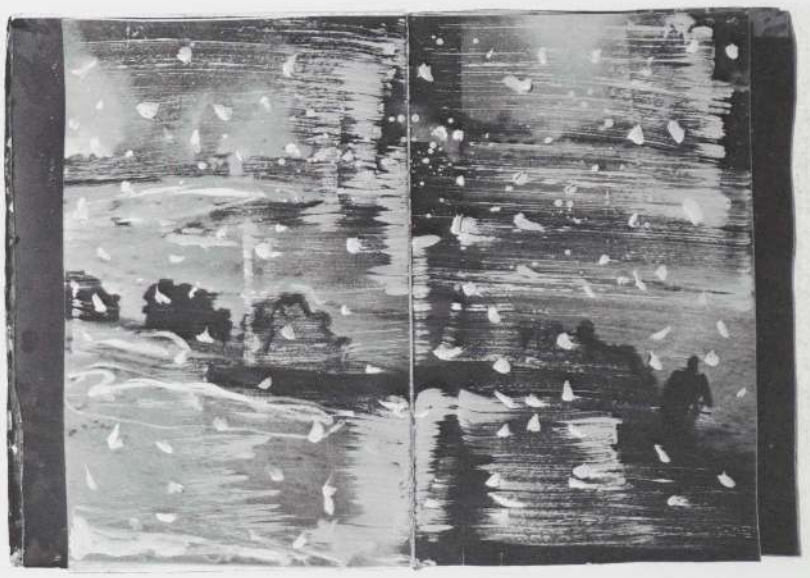

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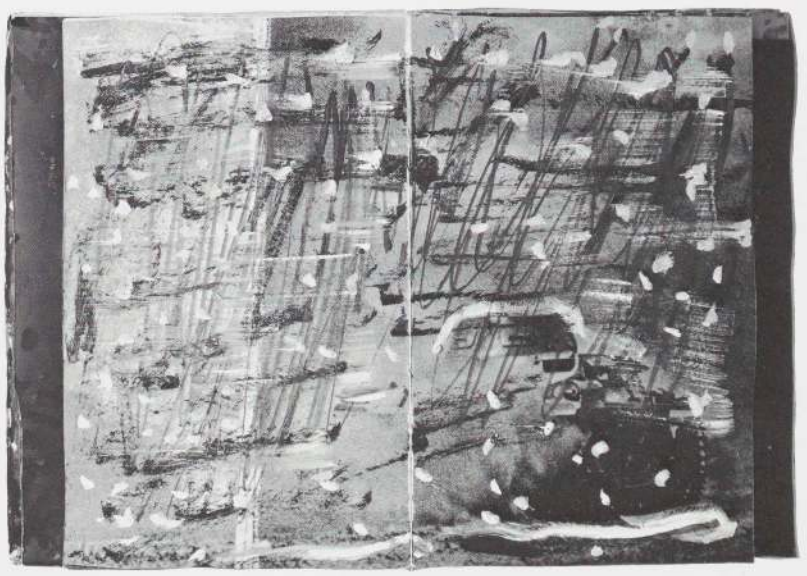

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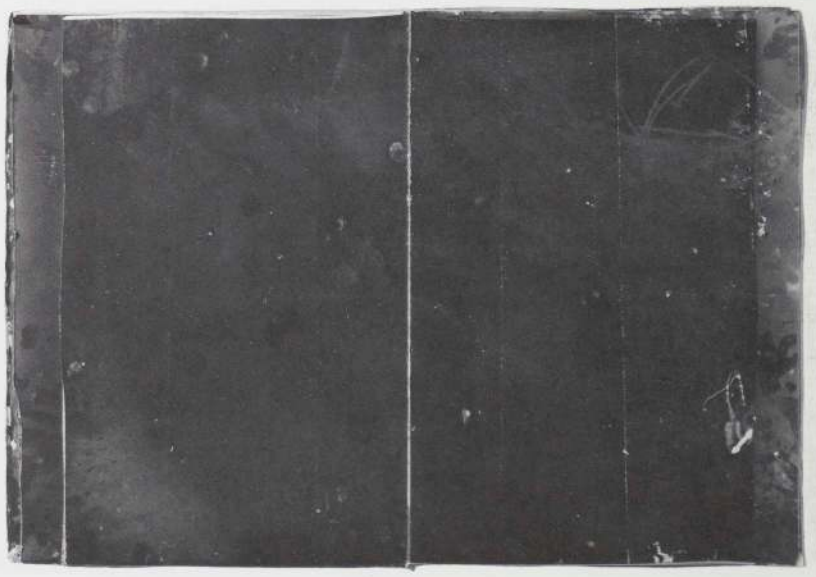

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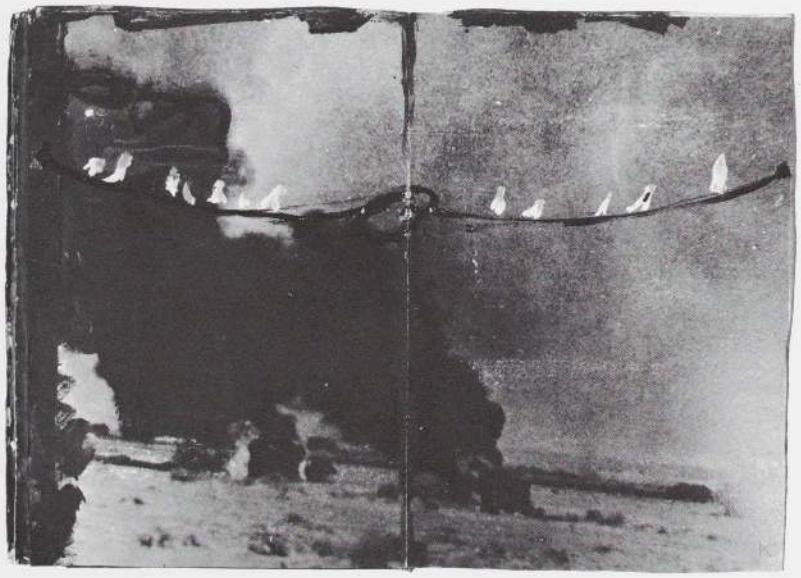

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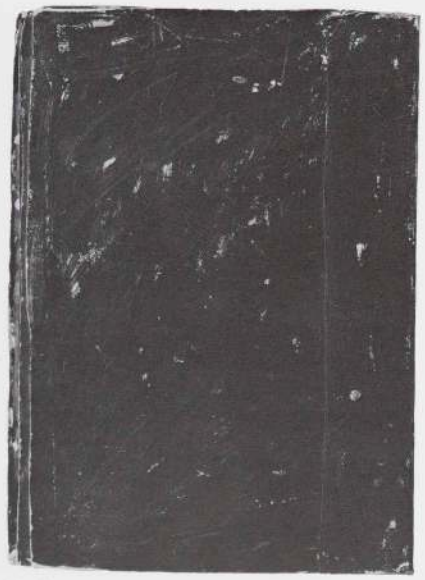

Back cover

The name of Barbarossa, as well as that of Hoffmann von Fallersleben, recalls the often divided condition of Germany, past or present,[15] a subject to which Kiefer also alludes in the many works on the Brandenburg region. However, Kiefer distinguishes between the stories of Barbarossa and von Fallersleben; the former represents a naive fairy tale to him, the latter a more realistic, political situation. Both, according to the artist, epitomize a kind of hubris in the German soul, but the first evokes the exaggeratedly timid, passive personality who expects a single leader to solve all problems, while the second suggests the overly proud, active German who seeks to solve them himself.[16]

In *The Starred Heaven*, 1980 (pl. 43), also an overpainted photograph, Kiefer presents himself with a palette for a heart, standing on a snake; an inscription states "der gestirnte Himmel über uns, das moralische Gesetz in mir" (the moral law is within me and the heavens are above).[17] His position is not unlike that of Icarus, especially in relation to the framing blackened shapes. Ironically, the Kiefer figure also recalls, in spirit, the characters in "Occupations" (figs. 7–13) and in *Every Human Being Stands beneath His Own Dome of Heaven* (pl. 2), all of whom were similarly sure of their own missions; indeed, the photograph in *Starred Heaven* dates from this earlier moment in Kiefer's career.

The Starred Heaven is related to two other works made from photographs taken in 1969 and overpainted in 1980, *Chuwawa/Gilgamesh* (pl. 41) and *Gilgamesh in the Cedar Forest* (pl. 42). Based on an ancient Babylonian tale, these reenact the story of Gilgamesh, a popular hero who enters the Cedar Forest in search of immortality at the Tree of Life (which is guarded by a serpent). Gilgamesh has many adventures, but throughout them all seeks only to learn the secret of life. This part human, part godlike character, similar to the other ambiguous heroes who fill Kiefer's art, betrays friendships, destroys the land, and acts in a despotic manner. On his return home from the forest, Gilgamesh must live with his failed, often dishonorable efforts. By placing himself in the role of Gilgamesh, Kiefer acts, as Mircea Eliade would describe it, as a religious man, that is, to make the everyday world more tolerable, he plunges into the realm of myth; taking transhuman models he imitates these legendary ancestors.[18] In effect, Kiefer is once more "trying on" a persona, one as paradoxical as the others in his cast of characters. Yet his action, in the terms described by Eliade, is poignant, and indicates the inherently spiritual outlook of one who seeks an improved world.

Another personage with whom Kiefer identifies is Wayland, the master smith of the Edda. Wayland's talents are so valued that the king of Sweden captures and cripples him, leaving him on an island to forge treasures for the court. But the smith gains revenge by murdering the sons of the king and presenting him with drinking cups fashioned from their skulls, and by raping the king's daughter. Then Wayland forges wings with which he escapes, leaving the earth behind.[19] The story epitomizes another hero in Kiefer's art, the noble individual who suffers at the hands of evil, then takes action and seeks revenge, even at the expense of innocents. As with Icarus and the winged palettes, flight is central to the story of Wayland, as a metaphor for escape and transcendence.

Kiefer made at least three works entitled *Wayland's Song* in 1982. In one, the tools of the smith are added to the painted landscape,[20] much as the artist's palette had been attached to painted trees. In each of the other versions (pl. 45; fig. 64), Kiefer attached a lead wing to the canvas, but distinguished these works by the heights of the horizons, degree of blackness in the landscape, and the character of the wings. In the first, the wing is dynamic, while in the second, it has a straggly look, hanging limply by a couple of threads over the black, barren landscape. Like those in *Icarus—March Sand*, the wings of Wayland cast large shadows on the ground, a device that combines vantage points that are close to and high above the earth. The tentacles attached to the wings are similar to those on the lead palettes (see pl. 33) and to the feathers of Icarus's body; they are typologically parallel, perhaps, to the hanging wires in Kiefer's books. Underlying one of the wings (pl. 45) is a great mass of burnt straw, which compositionally echoes the movement toward the upper left corner of the painting. The straw perhaps signifies the humble material with which Wayland's exploits were carried out. Although a triumphant peak, bathed in light, appears at the upper left, a darkening of the horizon occurs throughout much of the sky.

Plate 41
Chuwawa/Gilgamesh, 1980
Chuwawa/Gilgamesch
Photograph (1969), with acrylic and emulsion
31 x 23" (79 x 58.5 cm)
Private Collection (courtesy Lawrence Oliver Gallery, Philadelphia)

Plate 42
Gilgamesh in the Cedar Forest, 1980
Gilgamesch im Zedernwald
Photograph (1969), with acrylic and emulsion
39½ x 29″ (100.3 x 73.6 cm)
Private Collection (courtesy Lawrence Oliver Gallery, Philadelphia)

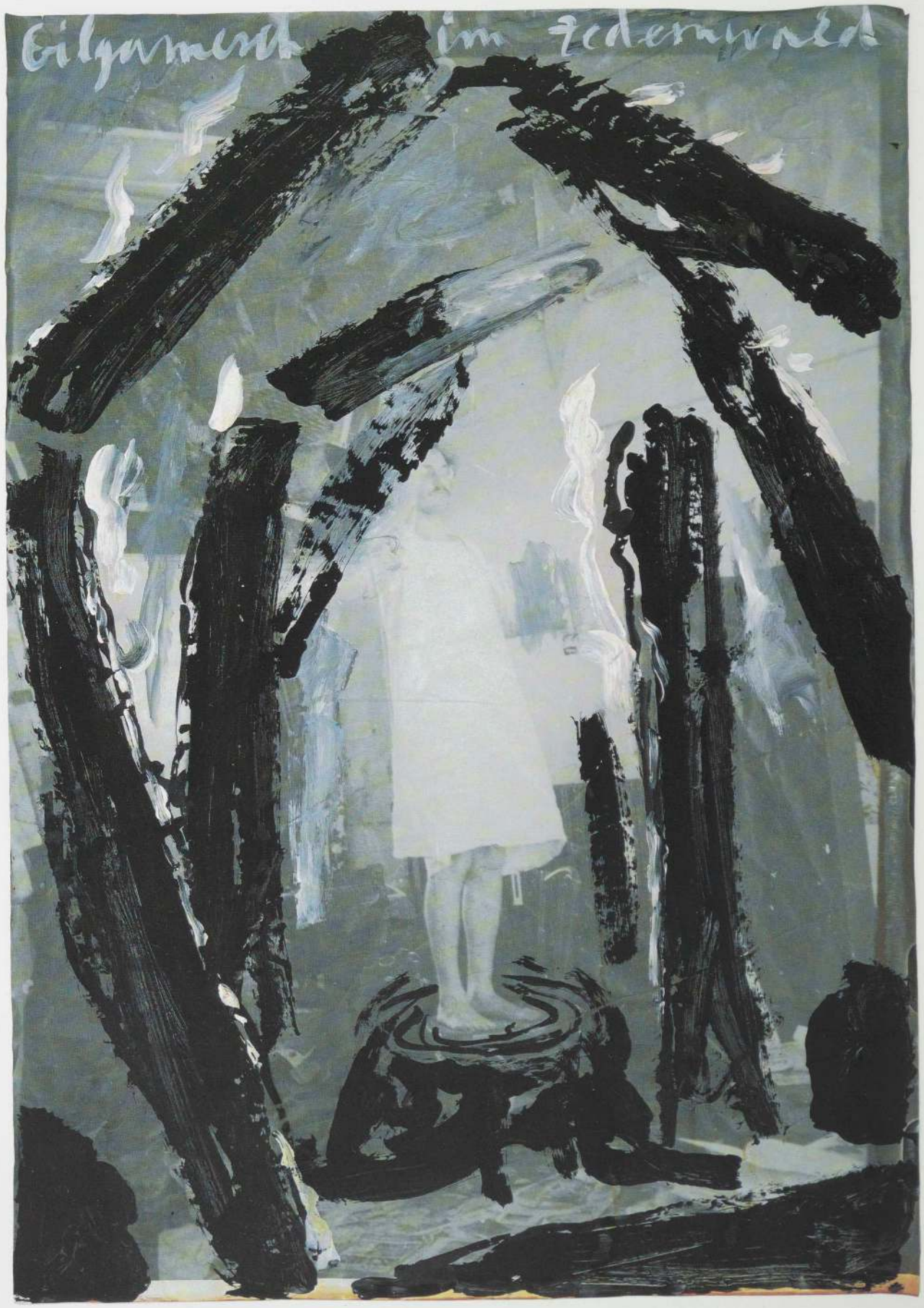

Plate 43
The Starred Heaven, 1980
Der gestirnte Himmel
Photograph (1969), with acrylic and emulsion
32⅞ x 23" (83.5 x 58.5 cm)
Collection of Eric Fischl, New York

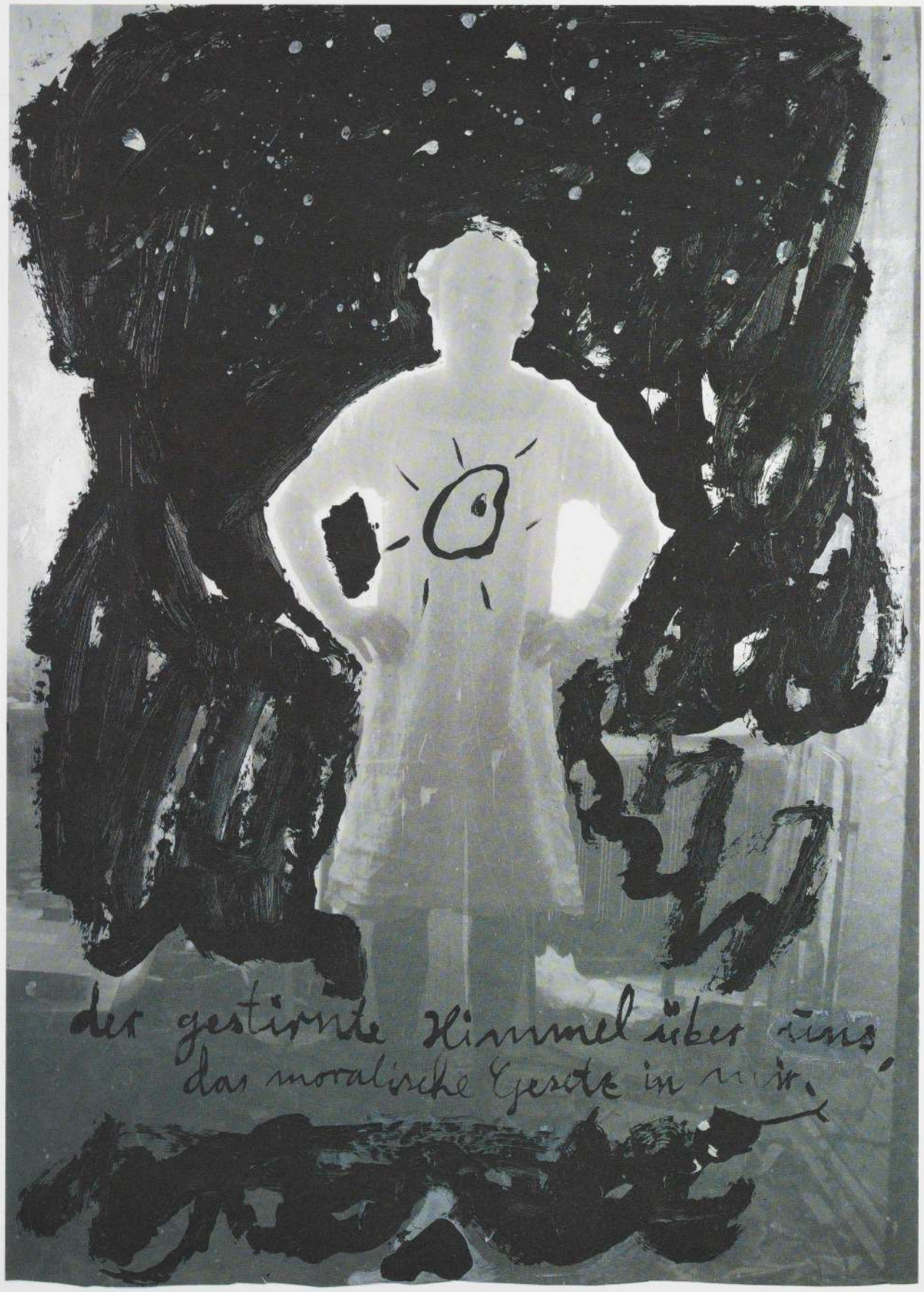

Plate 44
Broken Flowers and Grass, 1980
Gebrochen Blumen unde Gras
Photograph (1969), with oil, acrylic, and emulsion, mounted on cardboard
29⅛ x 22 13/16″ (74 x 58 cm)
Private Collection

Plate 45
Wayland's Song (with Wing), 1982
Wölundlied (mit Flügel)
Oil, emulsion, and straw on photograph, mounted on canvas, with lead
110¼ x 149⅝" (280 x 380 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

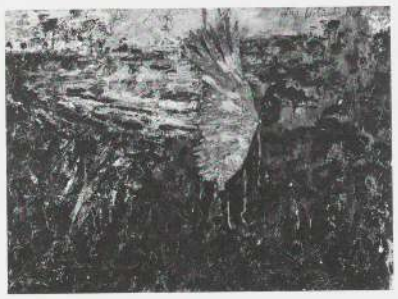

Figure 64. Anselm Kiefer, *Wayland's Song (with Wing) (Das Wölund-Lied [mit Flügel])*, 1982. Oil, emulsion, and straw on photograph, mounted on canvas, with lead, 110¼ x 149⅝" (280 x 380 cm). Saatchi Collection, London.

The smith is an artist, creating objects of value, but he is also an alchemist, forging these objects out of base materials and using fire to purify them. According to Kiefer, the Wayland tale shows that the artist is dangerous yet important to society, but notwithstanding the consequences, he will never serve society. Kiefer further emphasizes the fact that the story does not have a happy ending.[21] The title of this series stresses Wayland's "Lied," but in other paintings, Kiefer has sometimes deliberately confused the German words "Lied" and "Leid," the former meaning song, the latter, sorrow.[22] For Wayland, himself, the lyrical joy of revenge is thoroughly imbued with sadness.

The straw that adds actuality and content to many of Kiefer's canvases was first used significantly during 1981 and 1982. At first, he merely sketched with it,[23] but quickly realized that by incorporating straw into his work it would constitute a new painting type. Indeed, just as he often identifies his books not by title but by element (ice, sand, earth, fire), he would now refer to paintings by medium, as either straw, lead, or sand. Each has very specific properties when subjected to Kiefer's sacred fire. Straw is reduced to ash; lead is purified; and sand does not burn at all. Each designation, then, is a hallmark for a cluster of related subjects, and becomes a vehicle for Kiefer's explorations of their actual, physical implications.

Kiefer's approach to the use of materials can be compared, for example, to that of Joseph Beuys and a loosely knit group of Italians of the 1960s and early 1970s tied by the term Arte Povera. These artists employed unlikely media in a literal fashion. This had several, sought-after ramifications: the artists wanted to retain in their art the results of the effects of time, and any visual or chemical change was absolutely accepted as inherent to the work. If by accepting time's ravages the value of a work of art was diminished, that too was accepted as inevitable and perhaps even welcomed, for these Conceptualists were uncomfortable with the commodification process of the art market. The primary elements, which, after all, underlie all of life, became fundamental to the art object. While sharing these interests, Kiefer remained curious, too, about the symbolism of the materials he manipulated; for example, he thinks of straw as a kind of manure, that is, a form of energy that provides warmth in the winter. According to the artist, it eventually changes composition through a process similar to fermentation and is, thereby, "transfigured."[24]

Kiefer's straw paintings were a new version of the landscape in his art, providing a vulnerable stage set for human history and fire. Typically, he made his first straw painting without a specific theme in mind but after the appearance of straw had established a certain kind of "world," he assigned a meaning through words. Although not by design,[25] the straw works of 1981 and 1982 became vehicles for thoroughly German themes, including Nuremberg, The Mastersingers, Midsummer Night, Margarete, and Shulamite. Kiefer revealed that he felt an incredible despair in the creation of one of the works;[26] the story suggests that his feelings about the physical fragility of the material converged with his sense of the history and fate of Germany.

No theme has ever occupied Kiefer so deeply as Margarete and Shulamite. This subject is founded on an excruciatingly painful poem entitled "Death Fugue" (Todesfuge) by Paul Celan, written in a concentration camp in 1945 and published in 1952. Celan was the only member of his family to survive but committed suicide in 1970, at the age of forty-nine, after producing an extraordinary body of work.

Black milk of daybreak we drink it at sundown
we drink it at noon in the morning we drink it at night
we drink and we drink it
we dig a grave in the breezes there one lies unconfined
A man lives in the house he plays with the serpents he writes
he writes when dusk falls to Germany your golden hair
Margarete
he writes it and steps out of doors and the stars are flashing
he whistles his pack out
he whistles his Jews out in earth has them dig for a grave
he commands us strike up for the dance

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink in the morning at noon we drink you at sundown
we drink and we drink you
A man lives in the house he plays with the serpents he writes
he writes when dusk falls to Germany your golden hair
Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith [Shulamite] we dig a grave in
the breezes there one lies unconfined.

He calls out jab deeper into the earth you lot you others
sing now and play
he grabs at the iron in his belt he waves it his eyes are blue
jab deeper you lot with your spades you others play on for
the dance

Figure 65. Anselm Kiefer, *Your Blond Hair, Margarete* (*Dein blondes Haar, Margarethe*), 1981. Oil on canvas, 59 x 63" (150 x 160 cm). Collection of Edwin L. Stringer, Q.C., Toronto.

Figure 66. Anselm Kiefer, *Your Ashen Hair, Shulamite* (*Dein aschenes Haar, Sulamit*), 1981. Oil on canvas, 67 x 51⅛" (170 x 130 cm). Private Collection.

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at noon in the morning we drink you at sundown
we drink and we drink you
a man lives in the house your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith he plays with the serpents

He calls out more sweetly play death death is a master from Germany
he calls out more darkly now stroke your strings then as smoke you will rise into air
then a grave you will have in the clouds there one lies unconfined

Black milk of daybreak we drink you at night
we drink you at noon death is a master from Germany
we drink you at sundown and in the morning we drink and we drink you
death is a master from Germany his eyes are blue
he strikes you with leaden bullets his aim is true
a man lives in the house your golden hair Margarete
he sets his pack on to us he grants us a grave in the air
he plays with the serpents and daydreams death is a master from Germany

your golden hair Margarete
your ashen hair Shulamith[27]

Celan rhythmically varies a single image, that of the inhabitants drinking black milk and digging graves in the sky, while a certain, blue-eyed "master from Germany" plays with a snake and writes love letters. He demands that the Jews work and dance for him; after an increasingly claustrophobic environment is created, he finally strikes them with leaden bullets. Two figures are contrasted in the poem, and gradually become the central metaphor with which Celan concludes it. Margarete is the one to whom the German guard writes his love letters; like the blue eyes of the male, her blonde hair evokes the Aryan identity. By contrast, Shulamite is the Jewish woman, whose hair is black owing to her race, but ashen from burning.[28]

As Kiefer's series on Margarete and Shulamite evolved (see pls. 46, 47, and figs. 65, 66), he, like Celan, developed characterizations of the women that united them in certain ways.[29] Reminiscent of Pre-Raphaelite depictions, and the woman in *Ride to the Vistula* (pl. 22), both Margarete and Shulamite have luxuriant cascades of hair. Shulamite's black hair is usually painted, while Margarete's locks are described with straw (pl. 46). Donald Kuspit has pointed out that in the poem the two women are inseparable,[30] and Kiefer makes that point in the paintings as well, by implying the presence of the other, unnamed personage. Straw may be added to a painting of Shulamite on the one hand, and a painted black curve or straight lines may echo the shape of Margarete's hair on the other. In Kiefer's view, Germany maimed itself and its civilization by destroying its Jewish members[31] and so, by frequently alluding to both figures, he attempts to make Germany whole again. His action is certainly provocative, for some would contend that until very recently there was a virtual taboo in Germany against even mentioning the past existence of its Jews.[32]

Kiefer often juxtaposes Shulamite's naked body with an urban environment to suggest that the monstrous acts befalling her are those perpetrated by civilization against a defenseless victim. The painted words, "dein aschenes Haar Sulamit" (your ashen hair, Shulamite), have the effect of being uttered in horrified wonder at what has happened to her black hair. By contrast to Shulamite, who is almost always shown in representational form and is, therefore, a theoretically real human presence, Margarete has no figurative emanation. Only words and straw evoke her, and none of civilization's edifices is present. She is a naif or an ideal, then, who exists in nature, unaffected by the events of history.

Another way to view these works is as a very complex interaction of viewpoints. One is that of the racial purist, who envisions and glorifies Margarete. Formed by straw, Margarete symbolizes the old German's love of land, a spiritual philosophy that assumes a link between itself and Eastern thinking. Shulamite, however, exists in or near civilization and must, therefore, personify the Western, materialist outlook. But the second "voice" in these paintings belongs to Kiefer himself, who can be heard derisively parroting the fondly held views of Germany. He has, in his work, already rendered their outlook bankrupt, for he has shown that the land has long since been blackened and sullied, not the least by those who inherited Margarete's "idealism."[33] Hence, Margarete speaks to Germany's view of itself.

There is a terrible, though unintended,[34] irony in Kiefer's use of straw to depict the supposedly noble German soul, so tied to the land. The relationship of

Plate 46
Your Golden Hair, Margarete, 1981
Dein goldenes Haar, Margarethe
Oil, emulsion, and straw on canvas
51 3/16 x 67" (130 x 170 cm)
Collection Sanders, Amsterdam

Plate 47
Margarete, 1981
Margarethe
Oil and straw on canvas
110 x 149⅝" (280 x 380 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

the German to the Jews in Celan's poem is identical to the one in the Bible in which the Pharaoh Ramses, the master, forces the Jews to work, making bricks. When Moses asks him to grant the Jews their freedom, Ramses instead increases the task by commanding that, even while maintaining the same quota of bricks, the Jews now gather the straw binder for their production. As used by Kiefer, the straw will not bind anything at all, but will gradually disintegrate, if not burn.

Kiefer's Margarete, and perhaps Celan's as well, may be considered the latest manifestation of the German image of womanhood formed in part by Goethe. In *Faust*, Margarete, also known as Gretchen, exhibits a pure love of Faust and, at first, a completely ethical and religious view of life; her innocence is seemingly innate. But love leads Margarete to be deceitful to her mother and to kill her own baby; Kiefer points out, that in prison she lies on a bed of straw.[35] Meanwhile, as a result of the complications surrounding their relationship, Faust murders her brother. Margarete's perfect state is, therefore, ravaged by love.[36] Her tragic suffering is finally resolved at the conclusion of Part I when she is "redeemed"; Part II ends as follows: "Woman Eternal Draw us high."[37] Goethe depicts women as the sacred preservers of moral values, who are undone and destroyed by the male "us," but still can be redeemed and subsequently save "us." Goethe's vision of Gretchen, like the tragedy of Brunhilde, is a model to which Kiefer often refers, yet his work reveals an ambivalence about the implied purity of these women.

The concluding *Margarete* of 1981 (pl. 47) is a depiction of flourishing plant life, but small fires appear at the tops of the stems and slight, black shadows of the Shulamite counterpart are suggested at the right. Still, this rendering exudes the confident, ever exultant, albeit ignorant, outlook of the noble Margarete (Germany). Powerfully thick, straw stalks grow upward almost to the edge of the picture, in clear daylight and before an extremely low horizon. Margarete is pure and her vision is, apparently, clear. In this depiction, Germany is not so threatening; it is a land of high moral value and purpose, the "old" Germany in Kiefer's view.

The naive, male counterpart of Margarete is evoked in Kiefer's series on "The Mastersingers of Nuremberg," 1981–82. Wagner's opera, a favorite of Hitler, concerns a practice that flourished in Germany between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Men of a town competed in a singing contest that had very rigorous standards and methods of judgment. Although the practice preserved the love of music among a large populace, it typified, too, the overly rigid approach of the burghers. In the drama, Walther von Stolzing, a young knight, is in love with Eva, but her father promises her to the suitor only if he succeeds at the fest of the Mastersingers. In his song Walther demonstrates new artistic ideas but must struggle with tradition and convention. His brilliance as an artist-singer is not just technical but poetic and emotional, for love inspires him in the contest. Opposing Walther are young men who sing in a highly pompous manner and are not above deceit, although their plans to defeat him fail.

Like Goethe's story of Margarete, the Wagnerian tale offers much that typifies the German outlook. Old stately Nuremberg, with its appreciation of music and its flourishing culture, is a place to admire; moreover, the judge of the contest, a man called Hans Sachs, is a warm-hearted, vulnerable teacher who is capable of appreciating the best in art. Nevertheless, the burghers and Walther's fellow singers have a viciously conservative, narrow-minded character; notwithstanding the value of music and love, these vehicles cannot combat convention or jealous, bourgeois life.[38] The surface of *Nuremberg*, 1982 (pl. 48), is thick with straw, as if only with this luxuriance can the glorious story of the city and its traditions be depicted. Nevertheless, extensive areas of black beneath the straw suggest the city has a dark underside. Indeed, Nuremberg evolved into a highly visible symbol of Germany in its later "flowering," when it was famed for its large-scale Nazi rallies and pageantry.

Kiefer reports that he worked on *The Mastersingers*, 1981–82 (pl. 49), for a very long time, struggling with the color and abstract qualities. Only at the end did he add the numbers and title;[39] yet when he did, the object assumed its full meaningful proportions. Darkened, numbered stains, indeed, discolor the soil of a theoretically pure land. In another version of the subject, from 1981 (pl. 50), Kiefer numbered and made individual each singer. The German world is less resplendent in this painting; instead, each strand of straw is a fragile entity rising from a watery pool. The setting is nighttime, as if at a Nazi rally; flames and plumes of smoke make a frightening appearance.

Plate 48
Nuremberg, 1982
Nürnberg
Acrylic, emulsion, and straw on canvas
110¼ x 149⅝" (280 x 380 cm)
Collection of Eli and Edythe L. Broad, Los Angeles

Plate 49
The Mastersingers, 1981–82
Die Meistersinger
Oil, emulsion, and sand on
photograph, mounted on canvas
110¼ x 149⅝" (280 x 380 cm)
Private Collection

Plate 50
The Mastersingers, 1981
Die Meistersinger
Oil, acrylic, and straw on canvas
72 13/16 x 129 15/16" (185 x 330 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

Plate 51
The Mastersingers, 1981
Die Meistersinger
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, and straw on canvas
72 7/16 x 130" (184 x 330 cm)
Collection of Linda and Harry Macklowe, New York

Figure 67. Jackson Pollock (American, 1912–1956), *Blue Poles*, 1952. Oil, synthetic polymer paint, and aluminum paint on canvas, 83½ x 192½" (212 x 489 cm). Australian National Gallery, Canberra.

When compared to the other paintings on the same subject, one might surmise that in narrative terms, most of the straw has burned away, leaving just the thirteen singers, and even their time is limited. After the straw burns, there will only be ashes, although perhaps the water offers some respite. Certainly water is needed to wash away the bloodshed of modern Nuremberg.

Kiefer's outlook is founded on a notion that is akin to original sin: a "blemish" exists on the soul of humanity, especially the German nation, and this is very nearly impossible to remove. If any emotion is to be connected with his position, it is despair. A state of spiritual anxiety prevails; perhaps a form of chaos is imminent. Therefore, Kiefer is uncomfortable when his art is positive or perceived to be so, for he believes that this attribute is not sensible or realistic given history and the present world situation.[40]

Comparison of two versions of *The Mastersingers* (pls. 50, 51) and *Margarete* (pl. 47), all painted in the same year, provides insight into Kiefer's working method and iconography. He complements the thirteen straw males with more or less the same number of female stalks, in compositions that are reminiscent of Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles*, 1952 (fig. 67). *Margarete* is about the female persona of Germany, which is noble, idealistic, and of the daylight realm; fire scarcely threatens life in her world. *The Mastersingers* is a male realm, a sometime night world in which fire is a very real danger. Although men and women can be distinguished in significant ways, the similarity of the compositions and the use of straw suggest that Kiefer is making a further observation: regardless of the character imparted by sexual identity, these individuals are all German.

Another theme of the period in which straw is integrated with Kiefer's thoughts on the character of the German civilization is Midsummer Night. As Kiefer depicts it in *Your Golden Hair, Margarete—Midsummer Night*, 1981 (pl. 52), the beauty and horror of German life are combined in a dreamy night scene of rich, yet portentous blackness. The subject refers to the birthday of Saint John the Baptist on June 24, which coincides with the summer solstice, celebrated as Midsummer Night in Germany; hence Christian and pagan rites are combined. At this event, wheels of fire are traditionally placed on tops of hills. Hitler chose this day in 1941 to begin his invasion of Russia, thereby adding a military connotation to the celebration,[41] and to join once more his efforts with a holy time and become a contemporary of the gods. By making the highly flammable medium of straw the central vehicle for these events, Kiefer suggests a kind of suicidal impulse at this orgy of German culture.

The straw paintings are among the most magical and beautifully poignant in Kiefer's art. As a series, they introduce a remarkable diversity, range, and even fecundity to his work. Both literal and metaphorical, the straw is the most apt symbol he employs for the range of emotions he feels about the German character and the history and future of his country.

Plate 52
Your Golden Hair, Margarete—
Midsummer Night, 1981
Dein goldenes Haar, Margarethe—
Johannis-Nacht
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, and straw
on canvas
51⅛ x 63″ (130 x 160 cm)
Private Collection, New York

Visions of a New World: 1980 to 1987

Figure 68. Albert Speer (German, 1905–1981), Mosaic Room in the Reich Chancellery, Berlin, 1939. From *Neue deutsche Baukunst* (Berlin, 1943).

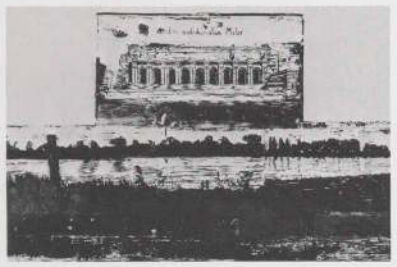

Figure 69. Anselm Kiefer, *The Rhine* (*Der Rhein*), 1980. Woodcut, with oil, mounted on canvas, 96 x 156" (244 x 396 cm). Private Collection (courtesy Sonnabend Gallery, New York).

Figure 70. Wilhelm Kreis (German, 1873–1953), model for the Hall of Soldiers, Berlin, c. 1939. From *Neue deutsche Baukunst* (Berlin, 1943).

Between 1980 and 1983, Kiefer gradually turned from the land and made architecture his primary stage set. Just as he had transmuted the events of German history before, he now appropriated designs for Nazi architecture to create memorials to various personages, especially the artist. This appropriation was but the latest in a long line of usages to which classical styles had been put. By creating a new step in the evolution, Kiefer showed that architectural conventions are but hollow containers, little more than superficial stylizations by which a culture celebrates its heroes.

The watercolor *To the Unknown Painter*, 1980 (pl. 53), is the first in a long series. In delicately applied tones, Kiefer establishes a new setting for the "risen" palette, which was seen earlier in his book *Die Donauquelle* (figs. 50–57) and in contemporaneous images. Instead of placing the palette in the ramshackle cellar, Kiefer creates a dignified room with the squared columns favored in National Socialist architecture. The setting where Hitler and his associates had once been celebrated now houses a memorial to a victim of the regime, perhaps one branded "degenerate" and banned by the Nazis, or one compelled to produce works in an official style.

In two watercolors of 1982 on the subject of the unknown painter (pls. 54, 55), the fragile palette on a pole holds a central position within a Nazi building. Both the focal point and *raison d'être* for the architecture, the palette is also, perhaps, a starting point for a newly imagined society that celebrates art. In discussing the placement of an object on a stick, Kiefer has noted that during the Russian Revolution, decapitated heads were impaled on sticks for display.[1] This precedent gives Kiefer's apparently placid renderings a particularly morbid undertone; furthermore, these treatments suggest that the soul of the one commemorated has, in effect, been transferred to the building, which is the new "body" of the hero.[2]

A specific National Socialist building is the setting for *Interior*, 1981 (pl. 57). The pattern of squared ceiling panes, which is repeated on the marble floor of a great hall, is copied precisely from photographs of Hitler's Chancellery, designed by Albert Speer (fig. 68).[3] However, that light-filled space has been rudely intruded upon. Kiefer has attached fragments of black, woodcut sheets to the surface throughout, including one in the foreground depicting a fire, that notorious instrument of National Socialist power. As Valhalla had been depicted in 1973 (pl. 10), here again a ceremonial room has been blackened with smoke and desecrated; the stained interior space is a direct descendant, too, of the burned landscape.

In a series of woodcuts called "The Rhine," Kiefer joined the theme of the unknown artist with the fate of Germany itself. In an early version dating from 1980 (fig. 69), he creates a composition reminiscent of *Resurrexit* (pl. 7), in which a landscape supports a smaller, architectural image; this woodcut coincidentally marks the transition in Kiefer's subject matter from the landscape back to the building as the setting for historical events. The backdrop is Wilhelm Kreis's Hall of Soldiers, c. 1939 (fig. 70), a weighty distortion of classical architecture. Kiefer writes across the top "dem unbekannten Maler" (to the unknown painter), yet titles the work *The Rhine*, thereby conflating the most profound symbol of his country, the river Rhine, with an architectural manifestation of its lowest point in history and the memory, as well, of its lost artistic genius.

Kiefer returned to the subject in 1983 (pl. 60), adding the hell fire or memorial flame seen in *Interior* (pl. 57) and a grove of trees that screens the view of the ceremonial building. The artist employs certain oppositions, however ambiguous, to elaborate further on the subject matter. Nature, as represented by the Rhine, has been subverted by human civilization, which has settled on the river's shores. If the fire is a memorial, then the power of the water suggests that even memory will be extinguished, but if the flames symbolize destruction, then the water will have a cleansing effect. The trees echo the columns seen in the distance, and in composition recall the stalks of *Margarete* (pl. 47). They are also reminiscent of the hanging wires or rays that appear in Kiefer's books, but according to the perspective of *The Rhine*, these plants must be understood as truly immense, like a stand of Yggdrasil trees that may shake but will not be destroyed by the events occurring nearby. These "cosmic pillars"[4] reach to the heavens and counterbalance the earthly manifestations in the picture.[5] Kiefer's juxtapositions of archetypal motifs in "The Rhine" series make it an icon for the contemplation of the fate of Germany and its citizens.

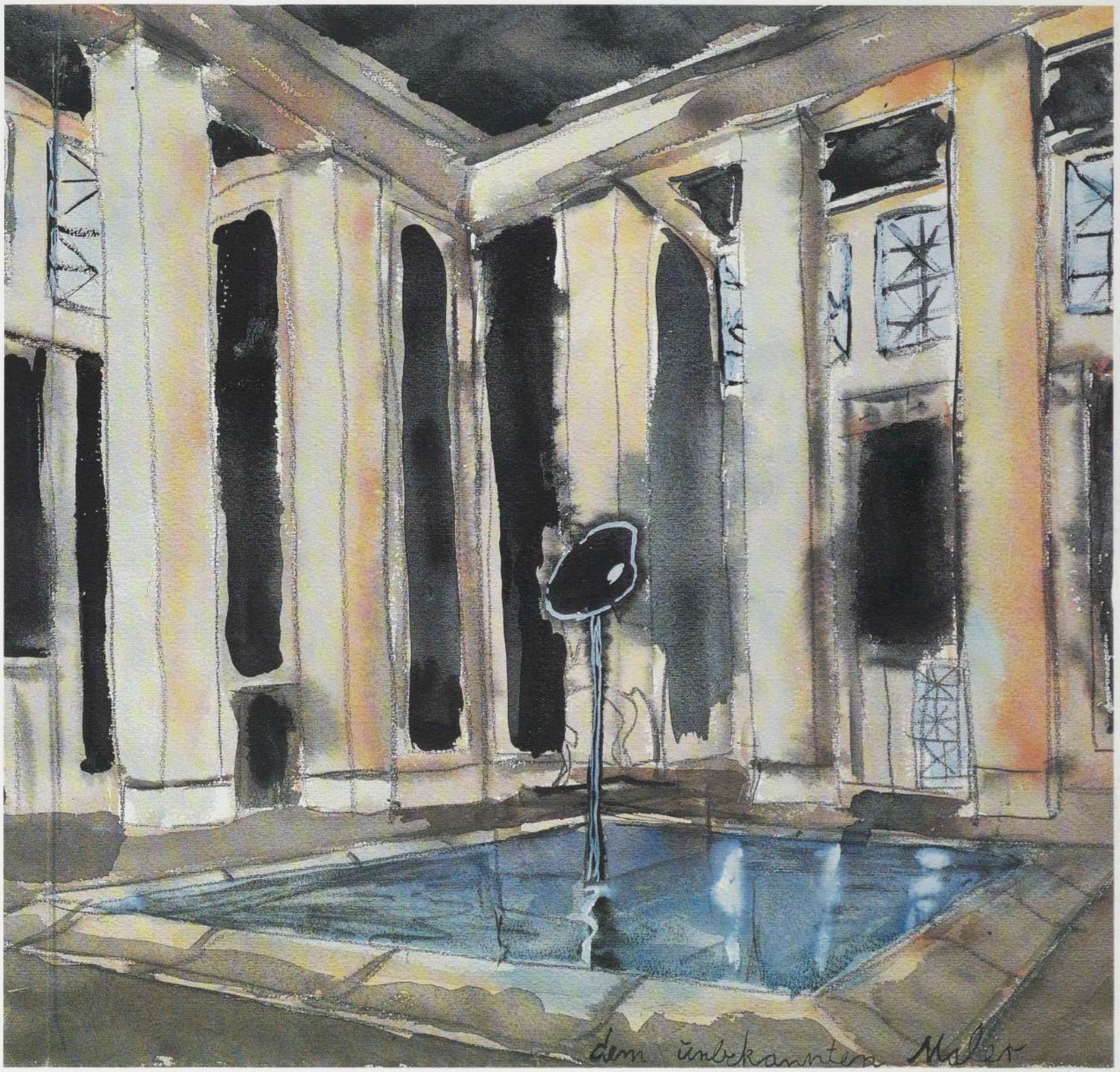

Plate 53
To the Unknown Painter, 1980
Dem unbekannten Maler
Watercolor on paper
18½ x 19½" (47 x 49.5 cm)
Collection of Antonio Homem,
New York

Plate 54
To the Unknown Painter, 1982
Dem unbekannten Maler
Watercolor and pencil on paper
25 3/16 x 52 3/8" (64 x 133 cm)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London

Plate 55
To the Unknown Painter, 1982
Dem unbekannten Maler
Watercolor and pencil on paper
34⅝ x 21⅝" (88 x 55 cm)
Collection of Mrs. Mel Morris, London

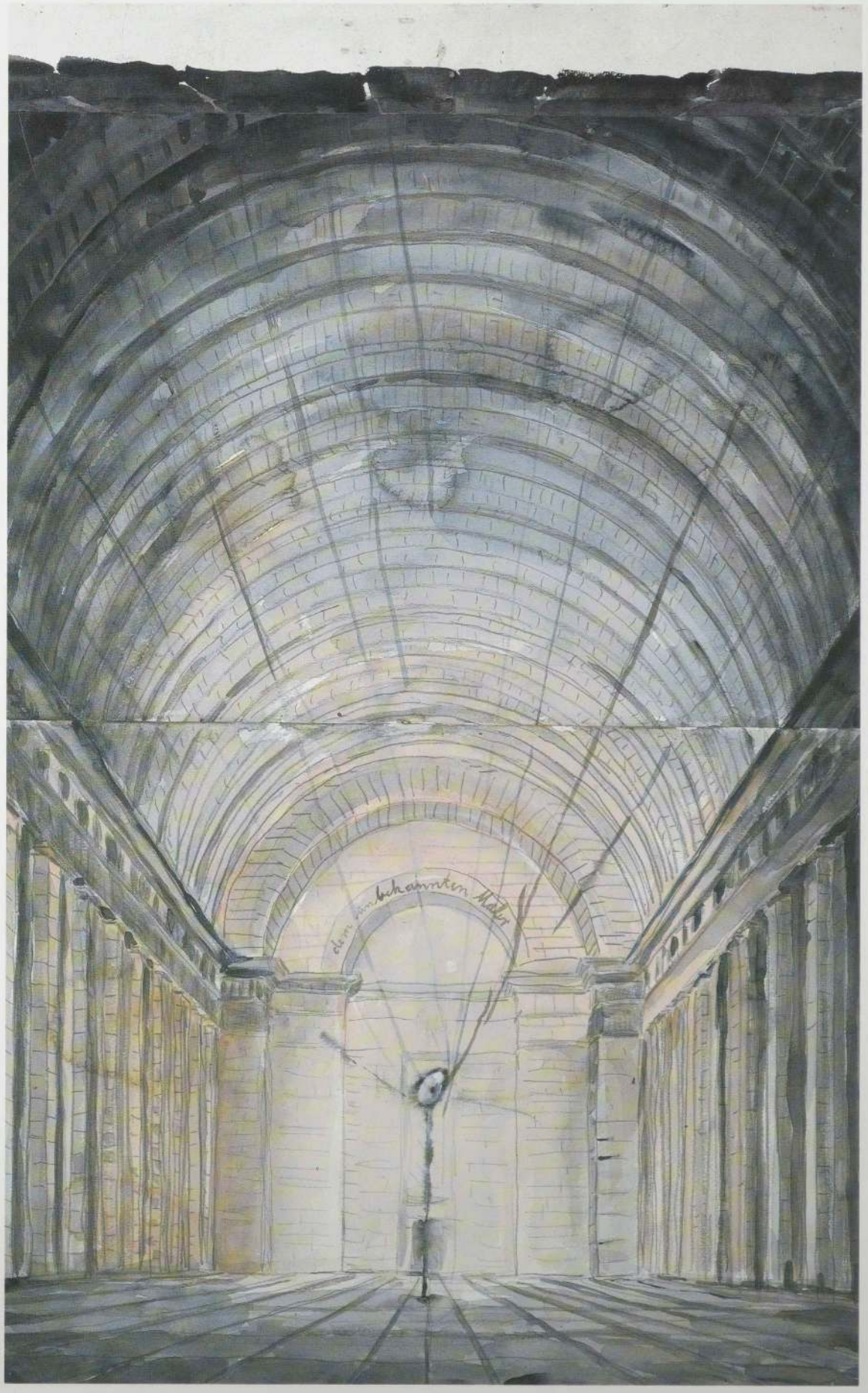

Plate 56
The Stairs, 1982–83
Die Treppe
Oil, emulsion, and straw on photograph, mounted on canvas
130 x 72⅞" (330 x 185 cm)
Private Collection

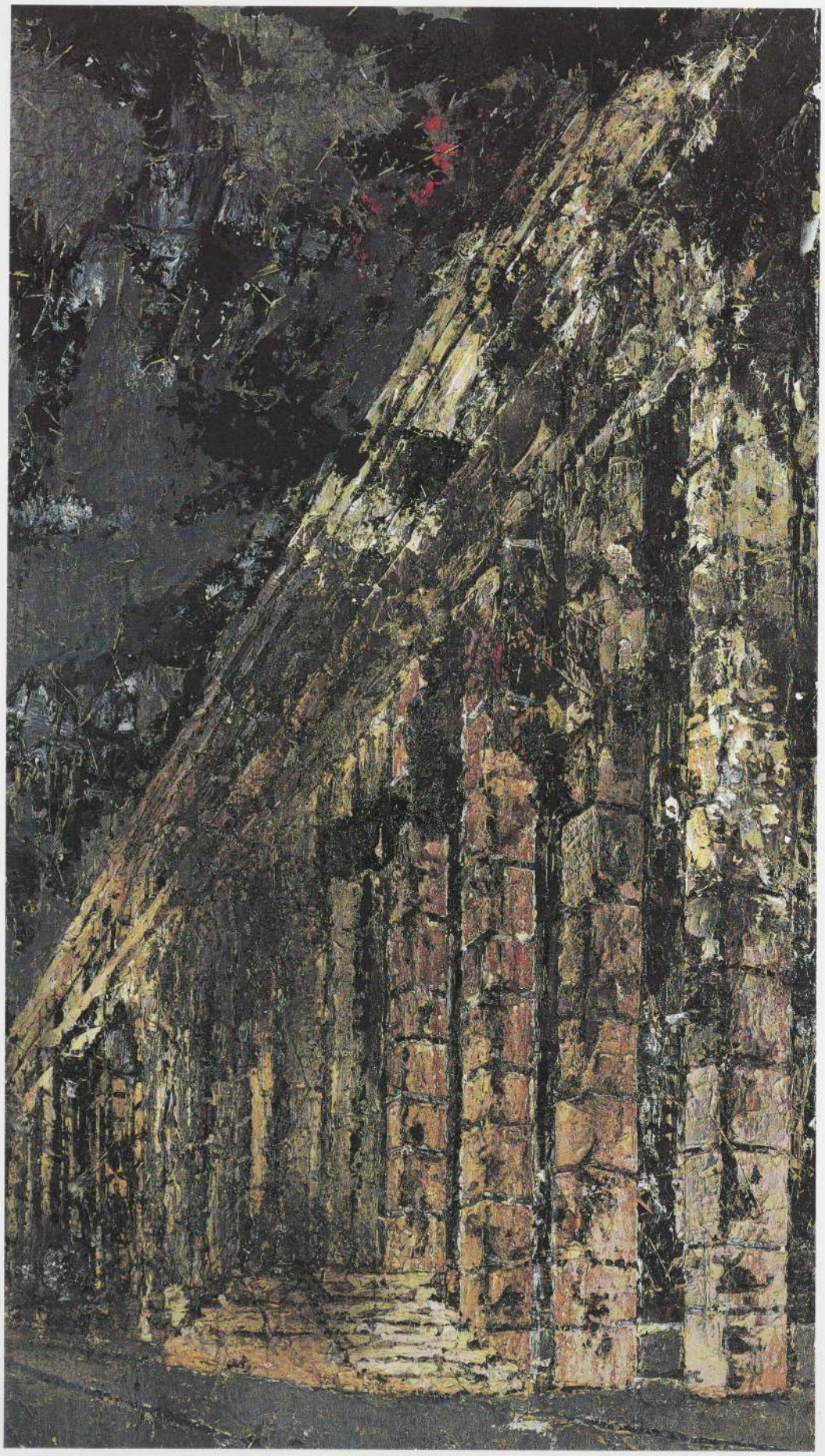

Plate 57
Interior, 1981
Innenraum
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, straw, and
shellac on canvas, with woodcut
113 x 122 7/16" (287 x 311 cm)
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

Plate 58
The Painter's Studio, 1980
Des Malers Atelier
Photograph (1971), with oil,
acrylic, and emulsion
23 x 26¾" (58.5 x 68 cm)
Collection of Dr. Rolf H. Krauss,
Stuttgart

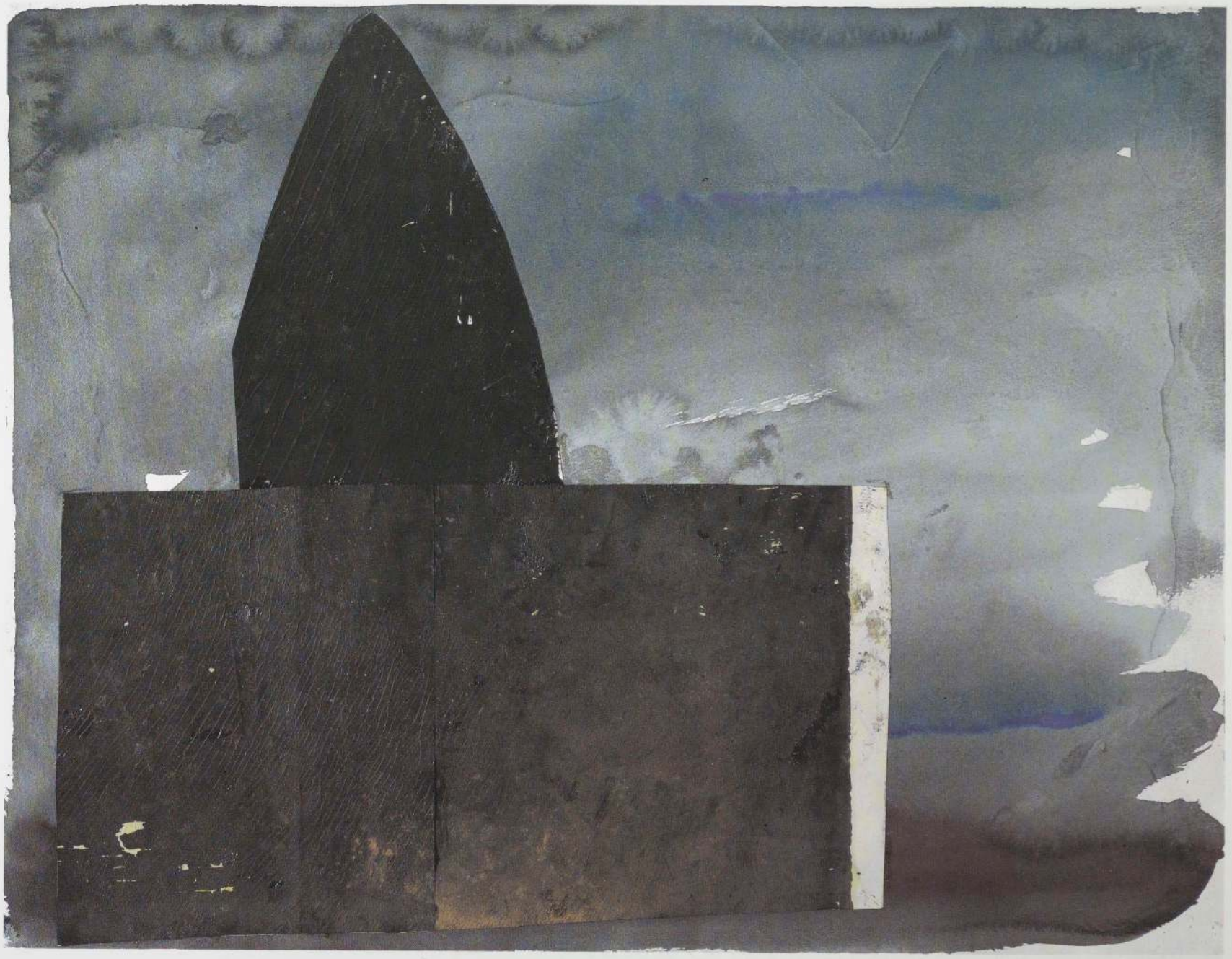

Plate 59
Bunker, 1982
Watercolor on paper, with
woodcut
19½ x 25 3/16" (49.5 x 64 cm)
Private Collection, New York

Plate 60
The Rhine, 1983
Der Rhein
Woodcut, with oil, acrylic, and shellac, mounted on canvas
110¼ x 110¼" (280 x 280 cm)
Collection of Céline and Heiner Bastian, Berlin

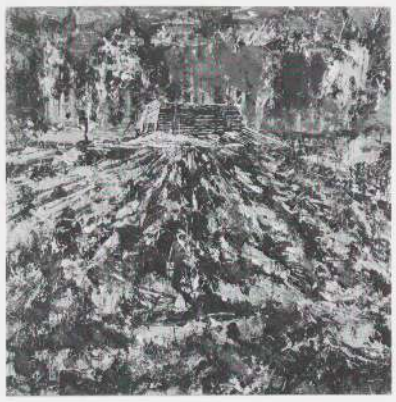

Figure 71. Anselm Kiefer, *To the Unknown Painter* (*Dem unbekannten Maler*), 1983. Oil, emulsion, shellac, latex, and straw on canvas, with woodcut, 110¼ x 110¼" (280 x 280 cm). Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. Gift of Richard M. Scaife and A. W. Mellon Acquisition Endowment Fund.

Figure 72. Wilhelm Kreis, design for Soldiers' Memorial. From *Neue deutsche Baukunst* (Berlin, 1943).

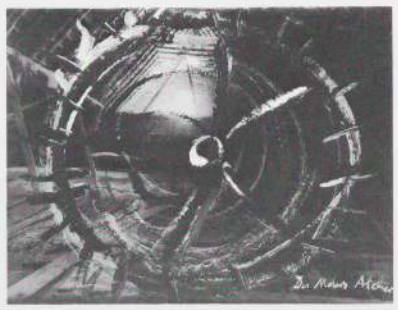

Figure 73. Anselm Kiefer, *The Painter's Studio* (*Des Malers Atelier*), 1980. Acrylic and emulsion on photograph, 23 x 32¼" (58.5 x 82 cm). Location unknown (courtesy Galerie Sigrid Friedrich, Munich).

The lost artist is further celebrated in a series of paintings from 1983 (see fig. 71) in which fortresslike structures are set off in the distance across great landscape plains. In composition, these works echo Kreis's design for a soldiers' memorial (fig. 72). Like the architects of the Nazi era, Kiefer conflates a variety of Egyptian and primitive sources to universalize the archetypal tomb of the unknown painter. His frequent identification of the artist with the soldier, whose professions are conventionally opposed, suggests that he considers both to be men of action who fight for ideals; hence the building in *Bunker*, 1982 (pl. 59), may be where both at times reside.

With a pair of closely related works, Kiefer further elaborates on the character of the artist. The settings of *To the Unknown Painter*, 1983 (pl. 61), and *Athanor*, 1983–84 (pl. 62), seem to be based on the same outdoor courtyard designed by Speer for Hitler's Chancellery. In the former, Kiefer installs his palette where ceremonial sculptures might stand. Just as the cone shapes met in *Resurrexit* (pl. 7), once more a symbolic meshing of worlds takes place, here of the earth and sky—mortal and divine realms—with the palette serving as a bridge between the two. Although the fundamental visual premise of *To the Unknown Painter* is carried over in *Athanor*, the physical conditions have deteriorated. It is as if a fire has literally been applied to the surface, for the doorways on the left and right are partly disintegrated, and many burn spots appear, revealing the underlying canvas. Some of these occur in the sky, suggesting, too, that the "dome of heaven" has been stained.

The title of *Athanor* explains the source of the fire. Athanor is a "digesting furnace used by the alchemists,"[6] individuals who are in touch with "a hidden reality of the highest order" and who transmute the ordinary into gold. To do so, the alchemist must be a master of the four elements,[7] most especially the "secret fire," in which a substance is placed to be transformed.[8] Although the goal of the alchemist is physical, the transformation of substances represents a spiritual quest by which the soul achieves perfection in heaven and becomes one with God.[9] But the alchemist's process of hastening physical change is so unnatural that this trade is sometimes thought to derive from an evil deity, the "Master-Smith of Hell."[10]

In *Athanor*, Kiefer made one of his first, overt references to alchemy; however, the subject had been of great interest to him for a number of years. In Kiefer's outlook, the act of painting resembles that of alchemy; both involve physical processes, including purification, filtration, and concentration.[11] Kiefer had earlier made reference to the artist's studio as a place in which fires burned. In *The Painter's Studio*, 1980 (fig. 73), for example, he displays a wheel of fire similar to those burned on Midsummer Night; in *The Painter's Studio*, 1981,[12] there is a great fiery cauldron like a furnace, with black rocks burning everywhere. These studios closely resemble the athanor of the alchemist in that fire appears as the crucial tool. Like an alchemist, Kiefer believes in his power as an artist to transmute events, as he had done by turning a Nazi stronghold into a monument for artists. His interest in the fundamental elements and his own physical manipulation of lead indicate the degree to which he identifies with the alchemist or smith.

We have seen before that Kiefer views the artist as a man of action, who may be a destructive force. This potentially dangerous side of the artist's character echoes the notion that the alchemist has links to the devil. Indeed, *Athanor* has a second level of meaning. The title written across the Nazi building is descriptive of an oven; as if utilizing an alchemical approach, Nazis pathologically believed that in burning the Jews they were involved in a "purifying" process. Kiefer's meaning is so black that one cringes, first, at the pretense of the National Socialist, then at the artist, a German, too, who is filled with the demons of his occupation and his nation.

Taking Kreis's design for the Funeral Hall for the Great German Soldiers in the Berlin Hall of Soldiers (fig. 74) as a source,[13] Kiefer reassigns the dedication of the building in *Shulamite*, 1983 (pl. 63). The name of the ashen-haired Jewish woman in the Celan poem is written across the frontal plane of this deep space created in one-point perspective, so that we are ushered into the room with the knowledge that this is a memorial to a people who were murdered. Kiefer's structure seems to have had an earlier function, however, for the darkened roof indicates that a great fire burned there, as if the building had been an oven. Now, the hell fire is confined to a seven-flamed memorial candelabrum at the end of the room and to the fires in the stands at the edges, the latter represented by woodcuts adhered to the canvas. Although the cryptlike building now appears somewhat civilized, the blackened ceiling and the scrawled name suggest that the transformation has been

Plate 61
To the Unknown Painter, 1983
Dem unbekannten Maler
Oil, aquatex, latex, emulsion,
shellac, and straw on canvas
81⅞ x 150″ (208 x 381 cm)
Collection of Céline and Heiner
Bastian, Berlin

Plate 62
Athanor, 1983–84
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac,
and straw on photograph,
mounted on canvas
88½ x 149⅝" (225 x 380 cm)
Collection Sanders, Amsterdam

Plate 63
Shulamite, 1983
Sulamith
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac,
and straw on canvas, with woodcut
114 3/16 x 145 11/16" (290 x 370 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

Figure 74. Wilhelm Kreis, Funeral Hall for the Great German Soldiers, in the Hall of Soldiers, Berlin, c. 1939. From *Neue deutsche Baukunst* (Berlin, 1943).

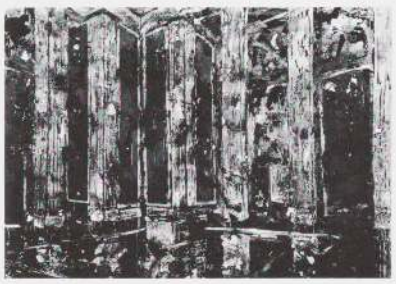

Figure 75. Anselm Kiefer, *The Five Foolish Virgins* (*Die fünf törichten Jungfrauen*), 1983. Oil, emulsion, and shellac on photograph, mounted on canvas, with glass, 94½ x 133⅞" (240 x 340 cm). Collection of Céline and Heiner Bastian, Berlin.

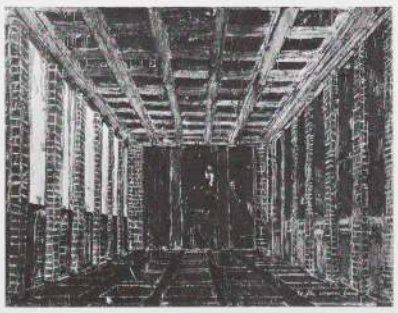

Figure 76. Anselm Kiefer, *To the Supreme Being*, 1983. Oil, aquatex, latex, emulsion, shellac, and straw on canvas, with woodcut, 109⅞ x 144⅞" (279 x 368 cm). Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

hastily arranged and is not altogether complete. Kreis's interior has become a claustrophobic space in which the end is closed and the windows are blackened through the addition of more woodcut fragments. By this metamorphosis, Kiefer has subverted the building's original, public function and revealed the indecent secrets of the society that first built this monument.

By 1983 Kiefer had become far more elaborate in his manipulation of the surfaces of his paintings, and his use of straw and his application of carefully cut graphics to substitute for the painted windows in *Shulamite* are the strategies of the Cubist. The real is used for representational as well as symbolic purposes, and identity is constantly and playfully contradicted. Only the actual staples protruding from the surface have an unambiguous nature, revealing the hand and method of the artist.

As architectural settings began to dominate Kiefer's work, he largely concentrated their meaning on either the artist's studio, a memorial to the artist, or the Rhine fortress. But in 1983, he assigned still more identifications to his renderings of Greek-Roman-National Socialist buildings, titling works, for example, *Heliogabalus* and *The Five Foolish Virgins* (fig. 75). Just as each attic space of 1973 and each of the subsequent landscapes had been given a distinct connotation, he invented new identities for these architectural settings. His method disputes the conventional notion of conveying ideal, universal meaning through formal means, for Kiefer is unceremonious and even ironical in this regard, dedicating one painting, for example, *To the Supreme Being* (fig. 76). These transformations suggest a process of birth, death, and rebirth of the vehicle itself, just as the land had undergone continuous change in Kiefer's iconography. By his manipulations, he implies that the landscape or building achieves meaning only through the human events that occur there. In an archaeological sense, one could theoretically uncover layer after layer of human activity in each of Kiefer's landscapes or structures. Somewhere deep below is virgin territory; however, Kiefer offers little hope of his ever reaching that level.

Within Kiefer's overall iconography, the buildings of the 1980s represent a different aspect of history than the 1973 interiors and subsequent landscapes. At first, wood dominated his environments as if the themes were still associated with a "primitive" stage of evolution. Architecture was, in the 1973 works, concerned with enclosure and ceremony, but it was of the land. The buildings of the 1980s are without wood and are, therefore, lacking that presence of nature. More than simple clearings in the forest, they are destinations, focal points, having that sense of aspiration and symbolic presence found in Roman temples and Christian churches. Although each of Kiefer's buildings preserves the memory of some passing thought—an artist, idea, or deity—the structures as a whole are lifeless. The viewer is isolated from nature, and even light, and is left only with a monument, however lyrical in its appearance.

Although the setting of *Women of the Revolution*, 1986 (pl. 64), is not architectural, it too conveys the idea of the memorial. Each figure is named and celebrated by a lead-framed flower,[14] all but one a lily of the valley (only Marie Antoinette is memorialized with a rose, a cliché that Kiefer thought appropriate for her).[15] In this pattern of frames, which freeze memories, Kiefer has created an all-female substitute for the "Ways of Worldly Wisdom" portraits, but here he is reluctant to picture the faces. As in a rendering of the Trinity, the individuals possess greater dignity in Kiefer's world when the faces are unseen and the names alone appear. A wooden garden implement, used to dig holes for planting, hangs with its holder amidst the frames; it can figuratively return the flowers and women to the earth. The trowel-like shape is also a phallic form, and in Kiefer's iconography it is perhaps the stereotypical male (recall Siegfried and Faust) who causes the sad demise of the martyrs.

When Kiefer introduces a new material, he likes to reflect on its various connotations. He notes, for example, that the lily of the valley is employed in certain heart medicines and, therefore, may refer to the cycle of life and death; furthermore, its fragrance is powerful but short-lived. Beside its other meanings, lead has the capacity to "protect" the lilies, just as a lead shield serves as protection in the x-ray process. According to Kiefer, the lead frames hold the flower "corpses" or the spirits of the women, or both, which have been dispersed into the world.[16]

In appearance, *Women of the Revolution* is a dramatic departure. Kiefer's use of a large sheet of lead as an abstract pictorial surface is continued in a number of smaller works of 1986, to which plant material and photographs are attached (see pls. 82–84). He em-

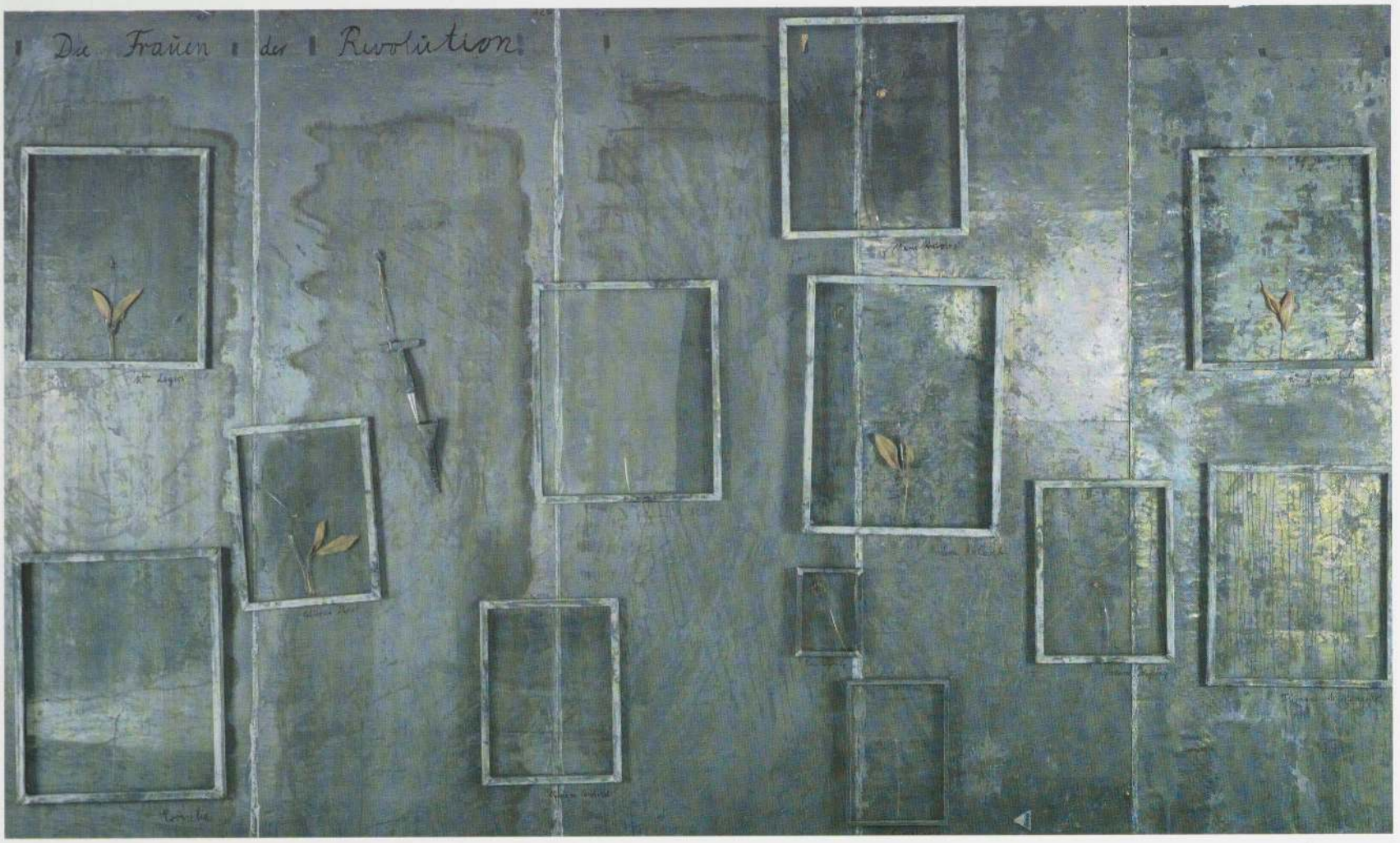

Plate 64
Women of the Revolution, 1986
Die Frauen der Revolution
Emulsion and crayon on lead,
mounted on chipboard, with lilies
of the valley, rose, lead, and glass
110¼ x 185″ (280 x 470 cm)
Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

Figure 77. Joseph Beuys, *Eurasian Staff*, 1967. Photograph of a performance work. © Ute Klophaus

ployed water and hydrochloric acid to modify the surfaces, creating subtle variations on the picture plane. The isolation of images and objects on the lead field has an evocative, Symbolist quality.

Having transmuted history by turning Nazi buildings to more worthwhile uses, Kiefer began to create works that depict the coming of a New World. He painted mythic events of extraordinary importance and dramatic transitions in historical time. Because Kiefer's mission is so large, he exhibits a deep disdain for current events, preferring the realms of mythic, eternal, and sacred time. He feels that by focusing on these spheres, it is possible to reinvent himself and history.[17] Beyond this lies redemption and a mythical heavenly land, the goal of the artist. Kiefer's irony and pessimism are thus tinged with a profound idealism and faith in a better world. He longs for a paradise where the "blemish" will be removed.

After his trip to Israel in 1984, Kiefer took the Old Testament story of Exodus as an important source.[18] In contrast to the events of the recent German past, Exodus is a powerful totem of the triumphant success of the Jews. At the momentous departure from Egypt, the lives of the Jews were permanently altered, for they left an era of servitude and suffering to begin another, of liberation.[19] Kiefer believes the idea of an archetypal exodus to be fundamental to all people.[20] It may also be significant to Kiefer personally, for he himself suffers greatly in historical time, but in his portrayals of a New World he achieves a kind of liberation from the past.

A photograph of a desert was the starting point for *Departure from Egypt*, 1984–85 (pl. 65). Although the border between the upper and lower spheres is distinct, a painted cloud drips from the heavens, as if giving a sign to the inhabitants below, an allusion to the Exodus story, in which the God of Israel presents Himself to His people in a pillarlike cloud.[21] Kiefer is fond of creating typological parallels, so that the pillar of God in the desert is comparable to the fertilizing rain of *To Paint* (pl. 26) and to a lead emanation that subsequently appears in his art. In each situation, he carefully distinguishes between the heavenly and human realms, and suggests a flowing down from above.

In examining the Exodus drama, Kiefer concentrates not on Moses, its major protagonist, but on Aaron.[22] For two large paintings on the subject (pls. 67, 68), he creates desert landscapes that nonetheless echo his earlier, German settings.[23] A lead "rod of Aaron" is the focal point for both canvases, appearing in one with a group of vertical staffs that symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel. This perhaps refers to the biblical story in which the Lord, favoring the tribe of Levi, causes Aaron's rod to sprout ripe almonds, a warning to the other tribes against rebelliousness. The similarity in shape between these vertical elements and the snakes in *The Miracle of the Serpents*, 1984–85 (pl. 66), and the straw shoots in *Margarete* (pl. 47) suggests the imperfect or perhaps evil identity of all.

Aaron and his staff are not without taint, however. In contrast to Moses, who is unwaveringly loyal and spiritual, Aaron is a troubled and troublesome figure. The differing positions of the two in the hierarchy of biblical personages are symbolized by the nature of their staffs. That of Moses is identified as a "rod of God"; with it, Moses makes serpents appear, parts the Red Sea, and strikes the rock to obtain water.[24] In the Zohar, a book of Jewish mysticism, the rod of Moses is considered more sacred than Aaron's, which was defiled by contact with those of the Egyptian magicians.[25] Aaron's questionable character is revealed when he rebels against Moses by creating the Golden Calf and encouraging the Jews to worship it. Thus, notwithstanding his role as founder of the Jewish priesthood, Aaron is clearly an ambiguous figure.

One cannot help but wonder whether Kiefer feels a certain identification with Aaron. To begin with, in creating the calf, Aaron is an artist, his act somewhat similar to that of the painter-monks persecuted during the Iconoclastic Controversy; both Aaron and Kiefer possess magical attributes, the staff and palette respectively. But Aaron's character flaws and their source, explained in the texts as due to his being close to the Egyptians in kind,[26] may hold a kind of unhappy fascination for Kiefer, too. In a sense, each suffers because of an accident of birth.

Even while representing the melodrama of Aaron, the staff is an instrument of transformation, a variation on such archetypal props in Kiefer's repertoire as the burning branch, Wotan's sword, and the palette. Kiefer was familiar with what Joseph Beuys termed the "Eurasian Staff" (see fig. 77), an object with which he hoped to forge a unity between Eastern transcendence and Western materialism.[27] The presence of Aaron's rod, which is Eastern, in a land-

Plate 65
Departure from Egypt, 1984–85
Auszug aus Ägypten
Acrylic, charcoal, and photograph, mounted on cardboard, with string
42½ x 33″ (108 x 84 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Denise and Andrew Saul Fund

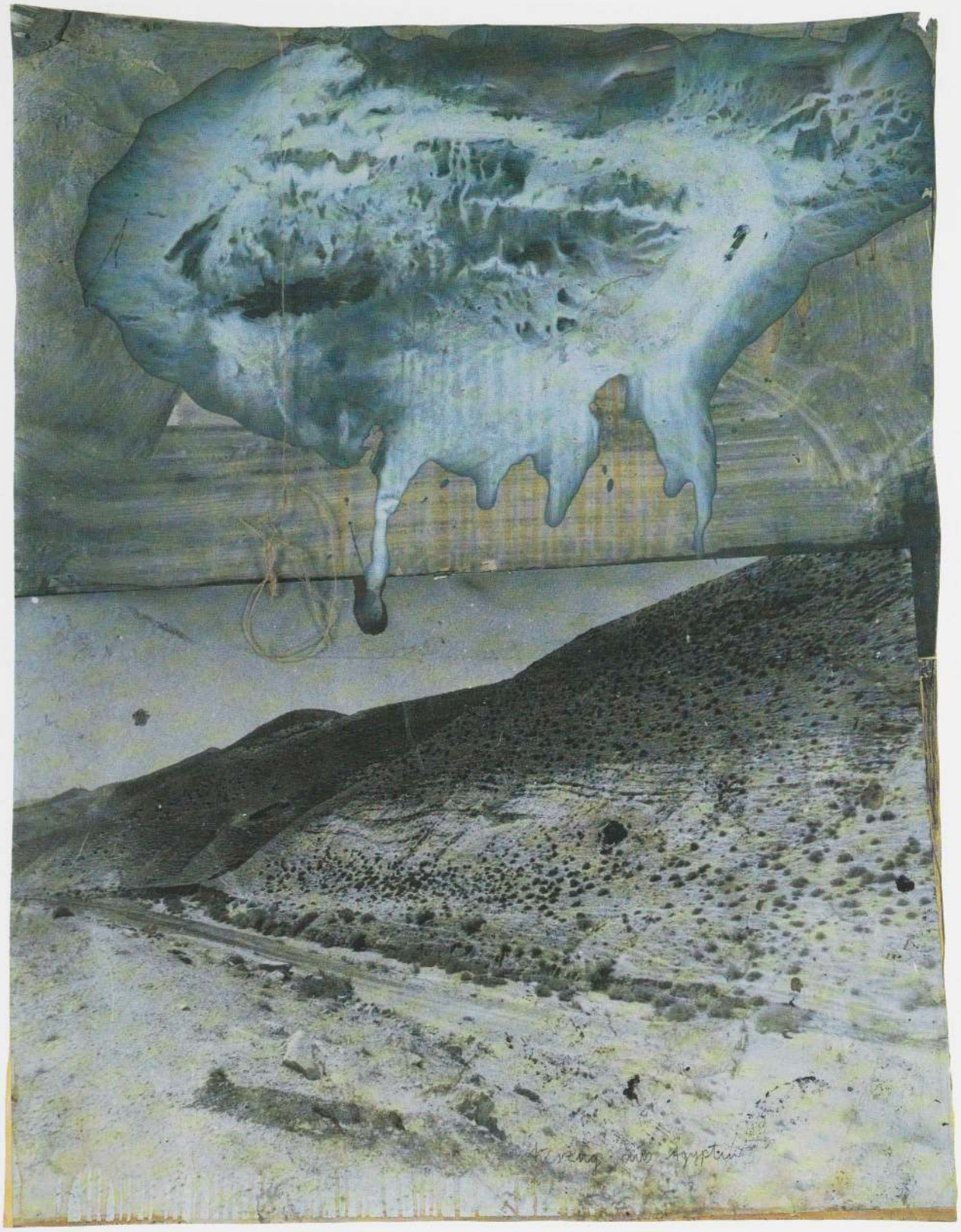

Plate 66
The Miracle of the Serpents,
1984–85
Das Schlangenwunder
Shellac and photographs on
projection paper
22 13/16 x 32 11/16" (58 x 83 cm)
Collection of Dr. and Mrs.
Konrad M. Weis, Pittsburgh

Plate 67
Aaron, 1984–85
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, and shellac
on canvas, with lead, woodcut,
and cardboard
130 x 196⅞″ (330 x 500 cm)
Collection of Norman and Irma
Braman, Miami Beach

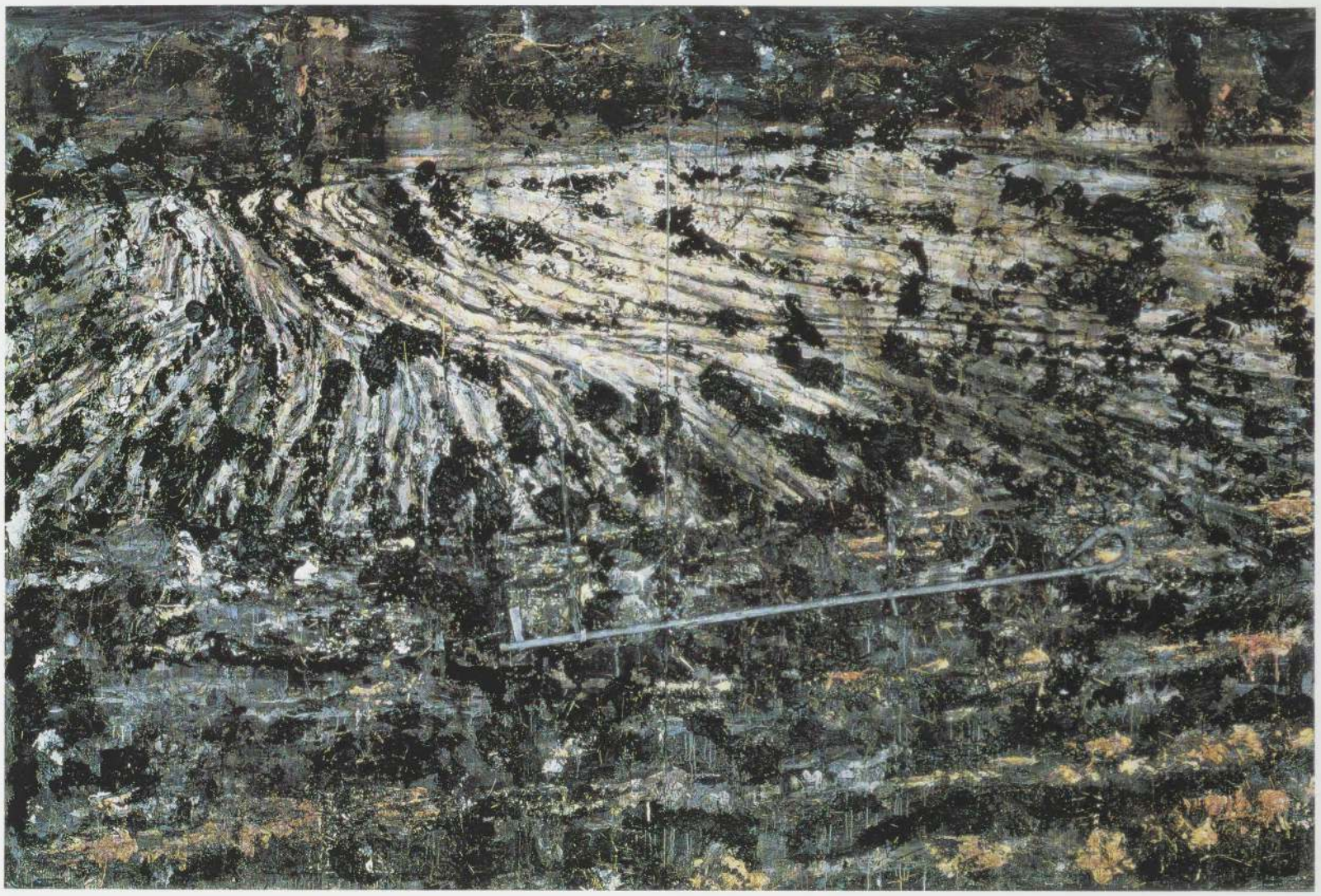

Plate 68
Departure from Egypt, 1984
Auszug aus Ägypten
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and straw on canvas (in two parts), with lead
149½ x 221" (379.7 x 561.3 cm)
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Purchased with funds provided by Douglas S. Cramer, Beatrice and Philip Gersh, Lenore S. and Bernard A. Greenberg, Joan and Fred Nicholas, Robert A. Rowan, Pippa Scott, and an anonymous donor

Plate 69
The Red Sea, 1984–85
Das rote Meer
Oil, emulsion, and shellac on photograph, mounted on canvas, with woodcut and lead
109¾ x 167⅜" (278.8 x 425.1 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Enid A. Haupt Fund

scape strongly derived from Kiefer's own earlier German settings suggests his knowing identification of Aaron's rod with that of Beuys,[28] and his desire for a miraculous restoration.

Kiefer brings the Exodus tale into a German context in *The Red Sea*, 1984–85 (pl. 69). The connection is forged by the carryover of the National Socialist bathtub from the "Operation Sea Lion" series (pls. 14, 15), likening the folly of the Nazis and the Pharaoh by this comparison. The tub full of red liquid also links two biblical events, the first plague in Exodus, when Aaron turned water to blood with his rod,[29] and Moses's parting and closing of the sea with his staff, each a divinely instigated, punishing, and bloody blow for justice.[30] Kiefer has transmuted the image of the tub, offering a new meaning for the formerly debased plumbing fixture. Now it is a place of figurative baptism or of new beginnings for the Jews, the blood a sacrifice for *their* future well-being. As in *Operation Sea Lion I* (pl. 14), events are divinely controlled. A glass plate like the one that held the chairs of the Trinity aloft (pl. 9) appears above the earth holding a white "pillar of cloud."

The New World that succeeds historical time in Kiefer's art consists of a series of momentous, even cataclysmic, events and a dramatic shift in the order of the universe. Using mythic symbols and protagonists, Kiefer presents the earth at a time of apocalypse. It is a world deeply involved with alchemy, as seen in the painting *Nigredo*, 1984 (pl. 70), and it is one often characterized by the presence of lead and iron.[31]

Kiefer began *Nigredo* by covering almost the entire surface of a canvas with a photograph of a landscape. Then he painted a deep, receding space with perspective lines leading off to the horizon. The effect is reminiscent of *Germany's Spiritual Heroes* (pl. 10) and *Shulamite* (pl. 63), where the viewer is both surrounded by and included within the scene. According to Kiefer, he had been inspired by the sight of a field of peat moss in Ireland;[32] peat, being formed of decomposed and carbonized plant matter, signifies a major transformation in material. This occurs narratively in *Nigredo*, for the landscape is turned inside out and large rocks are shown rising to the surface. In an earlier state of the painting, a train moved across the lower section of the landscape; now there are large, black, collaged shapes and white lines, formerly the track, as part of the churned-up land. Above this dense, black section is more color, across the field, and a significant brightening in the sky. As Kiefer was painting *Nigredo*, he realized that he was, in effect, plowing the land and accelerating a natural process; he then thought of the title that appears in the sky.[33]

Nigredo is a stage in the alchemical process[34] known as the "magnum opus," by which the alchemist seeks to transmute the ordinary, that is, to turn base matter such as lead, earth, or stone to gold.[35] But the gold is only symbolic of a larger achievement, that of "eternal perfection . . . Universal Redemption";[36] the alchemist perfects nature and himself at the same time.[37] Although he believes that all ores will eventually turn to gold, the alchemist seeks to accelerate the process by intervening in their natural or cosmic rhythms.[38] The moment called *nigredo* is a critical, first plateau of achievement. An egg is placed in the athanor furnace, where a symbolic sexual union occurs; the hot, solar male and cold, lunar female interact. This event is filled with pain, rage, killing, and putrefaction;[39] matter is destroyed;[40] and opposites dissolve into the liquid *nigredo*. "This darkness darker than darkness, this 'black of blacks,' is the first sure sign that one is on the right path."[41] The *nigredo* phase is filled with associations of a return to a "pre-cosmological chaos," preceding the moment of rebirth.[42] The phase ends with "the appearance on the surface of a starry aspect,"[43] in which a glow begins to be seen in the sky.[44] This lightening occurs, as well, in Kiefer's *Nigredo*.

For Kiefer the alchemist, the world is a physical entity, requiring a philosophy in which reflection and action are joined. Although perhaps dismayed by the frightening vengefulness of Wayland and by Wotan's evil fascination with gold, Kiefer, like them, wanted a more forceful relationship with materials than he had ever had before. While earlier he had depicted a mythic palette, in the early 1980s he became obsessed by a yet more literal vision of art, in which energetic manipulation of matter is fundamental.[45] After making specific reference to alchemical process in *Nigredo*, Kiefer began, literally, to carry out this activity. He subjected paintings to burning and melting, exploring the physical-cum-spiritual character of his materials. The canvas became a fetishistic object for this alchemist-painter, from which a New World could emerge, notwithstanding the alchemical potential for "'terrible' and 'sinister' experiences of 'blackness,' of spiritual death, of descent into hell."[46]

Plate 70
Nigredo, 1984
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac,
and straw on photograph,
mounted on canvas, with woodcut
130 x 218½" (330 x 555 cm)
Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gift
of the Friends of the Philadelphia
Museum of Art in celebration of
their Twentieth Anniversary

Detail opposite

Plate 71
Midgard, 1980–85
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, and shellac on photograph, mounted on canvas (in three parts)
141¾ x 237¼" (360 x 604 cm)
The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. Museum purchase with funds from Kaufmann's, the Women's Committee of the Museum of Art, and the Fellows of the Museum of Art

Although Kiefer vehemently argues against being characterized as a landscape painter, and in a literal sense he is not one, he does use landscape as the basis of much of his art. Many of his subjects are quite obviously derived from the fields neighboring his studio in Buchen, and he is, indeed, a keen observer of the surroundings. Landscape is the central motif by which he expresses a disintegrating, violated, or suffering condition of Germany; for much of his career, the blackened, burnt landscape has dominated his subject matter. In contrast, for example, to Caspar David Friedrich, who had a transcendent view of the land, Kiefer focuses his attention directly and literally on the earth. But in the persona of the alchemist, he transforms the land in *Nigredo* and gives a positive meaning to the earlier "blackness." Having made it "suffer," as it were, he now symbolically restores its vital functions. Thus, *Nigredo* depicts one of those momentous, New World events, when the earth triumphs. Kiefer may thus be seen as an artist who places his work in the context of landscape painting, only to leap over its familiar conventions and create a new vision of this tradition.

Kiefer created a pair of new starting points for the world in *Midgard* (pl. 71) and *The Book* (pl. 72), both completed in 1985. In *Midgard*, he places a large, cracked palette, like the one in *Iconoclastic Controversy* (pl. 35), at the center of the painting, by the seashore. Compositionally united with the fractures of the land, it is completely earthly in orientation. This massive form is approached by a snake, which seems to threaten its very existence. Barely visible in the sky are flecks of gold. Kiefer's gray sea was inspired by Gustave Courbet's paintings of similar subjects,[47] but whereas the latter depicted a specific place, Kiefer is interested in establishing an eternal seashore, where events of enormous significance occur. Water, in the form of the Red Sea, is a place of renewal for the Jews; it is a source of life for many religions;[48] and it is an infinite formless, homogeneous mass for Kiefer himself.[49] The sea replaces the land and architecture, providing an appropriate context for a momentous series of events.

Kiefer presents a variation on the Midgard story as given in the Edda, where it is told that during the reign of the gods, the world began to come undone as a result of wars and earthquakes. As the sea lashed the land, the gigantic serpent Midgard, which encircled the earth beneath the water, writhed in fury and came ashore. At this time of great tumult, the gods held an assembly and Thor was elected to battle the invading creature. Thor succeeded in vanquishing his opponent, but not before having been poisoned himself; shortly after the struggle, he died as well.[50] This and subsequent events led to the twilight of the gods, whereupon fire was everywhere and a blackness prevailed; from this came a new beginning.[51]

Notwithstanding the narrative in the Edda, Kiefer sees the snake as having positive attributes, symbolizing intelligence. For him, the serpent's coming represents the triumph of the scientific world, which breaks down the old, mythic interpretations of reality as evoked by the palette.[52] He has modified his earlier symbolism, for now he questions the sustaining value of the palette. To be reinvigorated, it "needs" the serpent's knowledge. In this New World, Kiefer celebrates the serpent; instead of being malevolent, it has the divine lineage of a seraphic angel. Thus, at this moment of freshly imagined beginnings, gold appears in the sky, much as a lightening was seen in *Nigredo*. Kiefer's image is apocalyptic, for the power of evil, in the form of the Satanic serpent, has been transmuted. And yet, Kiefer's love of myth and its potential for bringing about revenge against the inequities of life,[53] his mistrust of historical time (which would by extension include scientific innovations), and his faith in art all underlie *Midgard* as well. In other words, the earthly snake, even while destroying the rule of gods, can offer only the modern world as an alternative, with all its questionable attributes. Kiefer's interpretation of the Edda tale is thoroughly ambiguous and, as usual, his heroes are a confusing breed.

In *The Book*, 1979–85 (pl. 72), instead of depicting a figure before the sea, as in Friedrich's painting (fig. 14), Kiefer presents a tangible manifestation of the human being—a forged, lead book—before an illusionistic concept of the infinite. Notwithstanding Kiefer's skeptical attitude toward "wisdom," he presents the book as heroic, as inheritor of a great tradition of profoundly held prophecy and human thought. Like Wotan's sword or the palette, the book is a richly evocative, theatrical prop for Kiefer; but rather than being the vehicle of action, it now portends an event. It may be that in Kiefer's New World by the seashore, art in the form of the palette and literature in the guise of the book reach an apotheosis. Just as Kiefer "saved" neoclassical architecture from the Nazis, he redeems the arts from Hitler as well. Not only did the Führer declare the degeneracy of modern art, he also ordered the burn-

Plate 72
The Book, 1979–85
Das Buch
Acrylic, emulsion, and shellac on canvas (in two parts), with zinc and lead
130 x 218½" (330 x 555 cm)
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Thomas M. Evans, Jerome L. Greene, Joseph H. Hirshhorn, and Sydney and Frances Lewis Purchase Fund

Plate 73
Palette with Wings, 1985
Palette mit Flügeln
Lead, steel, and tin
110¼ x 137¾ x 39⅜" (280 x 350 x 100 cm) (approximate)
Private Collection

Plate 74
The Order of the Angels, 1983–84
Die Ordnung der Engel
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and straw on canvas, with cardboard and lead
130 x 218½" (330 x 555 cm)
The Art Institute of Chicago. Restricted gift of the Nathan Manilow Foundation and Lewis and Susan Manilow, and Samuel A. Marx Fund

Figure 78. Anselm Kiefer, *Seraphim*, 1983–84. Oil, emulsion, shellac, and synthetic resin on canvas, with woodcut, 130¼ x 126⅜" (331 x 321 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Purchased with funds by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew M. Saul.

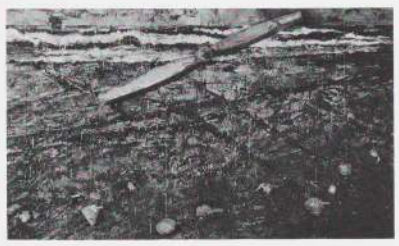

Figure 79. Anselm Kiefer, *The Order of the Angels* (*Die Ordnung der Engel*), 1984–86. Oil, emulsion, and shellac on photograph, mounted on canvas (in two parts), with lead and cardboard, 130 x 218½" (330 x 555 cm). Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Walker Special Fund, 1987.

ing of many thousands of books. It is through the vehicle of alchemy that Kiefer's act of redemption can be explained, for by the creation of this giant book, Kiefer supersedes the intellectual and theoretical character of a traditional object with a very physical presence. In the second phase of alchemy, white replaces black as the primary color, lead takes the place of the earth, and a resurrection or new consciousness is formed.[54]

Kiefer had been forging large winged palettes and books since about 1976, but without a clear idea of what he wanted to do with them. Except for the lead palettes attached to the painted tree trunks of the 1970s, and the wings in the "Wayland" series and related works, the lead objects remained unseen.[55] But after completing *The Book*, he began to exhibit these objects as free-standing sculptures and to create new versions, including *Palette with Wings*, 1985 (pl. 73). Recalling Icarus, the wings are often rather sorry looking and the weight of the lead is, narratively, a difficult load to carry. Hence, even at these triumphant moments, there are hints of impending doom and of the need for further evolution of the magnum opus.

In *The Order of the Angels*, 1983–84 (pl. 74), Kiefer sets forth several of his primary motifs of the mid-1980s. On a blackened landscape with rocks upturned like those in *Nigredo*, a divine, even ecstatic, event occurs. Filled with bolts of lightning, and a sense that the world is beginning, the painting centers on the description by Dionysius the Areopagite, the first-century Greek convert to Christianity who is named in the upper-left-hand corner, of God's setting forth of a celestial hierarchy. There are nine orders: angels, archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim, in ascending order of closeness to God. As usual in Kiefer's paintings, numbers are important; in this case they enumerate and rank the angelic categories. The seraphim and cherubim, at the summit of significance, are represented by snakes.

According to Kiefer, there is a long tradition of identifying snakes with angels, and he himself does so in *Seraphim*, 1983–84 (fig. 78), and several related paintings. But this identification calls forth the ambiguous character of the angels themselves. According to Dionysius, whereas angels are conventionally thought of as pure, they are also close to humans in kind, and make known to us "the things of the world"[56] as well as higher matters.[57] In other words, angels, like Aaron and Satan, operate between man and God; for this reason, Kiefer enjoys making use of the serpent to represent the angels.[58] The snake in *Midgard* (pl. 71) likewise partook of two worlds, one immediately recognizable as evil, the other in part derived from Dionysius's description of the seraphim, that is, beings who give new life and dispel darkness.[59] By assigning to the elevated seraphim angel the identity of a serpent, Kiefer unveils his own version of Dionysius wrestling with the concept of evil and of Faust struggling with Mephistopheles. Kiefer's situation is equally bewildering and difficult.

To symbolize the essence of the angelic beings, Kiefer locates each order in a rock,[60] considered sacred in many traditions.[61] The alchemist also believes that stones came from heaven and are therefore to be venerated;[62] indeed, in speaking about the rock in another version of *Midgard*, Kiefer reported that it had just landed, as if, like the angels, it had been dispatched from heaven.[63]

Kiefer had earlier altered words to convey multiple meanings, and here he assigns the name "Aeropagite" instead of "Areopagite," to Dionysius. In this case, the explicit intention of the game is to emphasize one of the elements not already dealt with in his art. We have seen Kiefer considering earth, fire, and water rather extensively, but not air. Now, with the title and subject, Kiefer brings this element to the fore. First, angels reside in the air. Second, "Aero" is a play on the French words *aérer*, meaning to ventilate or renew the air, and *aérien*, aerial, celestial, or living in the air; also recalled are words beginning with *aéro*, referring to airplanes.

Kiefer carries the joke much further in later works, also entitled *The Order of the Angels* (see fig. 79). In each of these, he attaches to the canvas surface an airplane propeller, which he forged.[64] Although the viewer may associate it with military operations, Kiefer thinks of it as an object moving through history and time in a spiral motion, finally arriving on the surface of his painting.[65] The lead rocks hanging from the propeller, symbolize the spiritual-meteorite material, that is, the heavenly substance, of this angelic being. But Kiefer also acts as a playful Cubist might, creating a witty portrayal of an angel-winged, air spirit; albeit heavenly, it is a ridiculous creature.

Kiefer's interest in the order of angels parallels other of his concerns, including the relationship of Aaron

Figure 80. Anselm Kiefer, *Pouring* (*Ausgiessung*), 1984–85. Oil, acrylic, emulsion, and synthetic resin on canvas, with ferns and lead, 130 x 218½" (330 x 555 cm). Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark. Partial gift from The NY Carlsberg Foundation.

to Moses and the ten *sefiroth*, a hierarchical construct from Jewish mysticism that defines the divine being and the dissemination of His attributes.[66] Each ranking presupposes a level closer to or farther from God. A related concept is present in *Yggdrasil*, 1985 (pl. 76), and in two works called *Emanation*, from 1984–85 (pl. 77) and 1984–86 (pl. 75), in which the heavenly is made manifest and meets the earthly in a rapprochement of seemingly great significance. In *Yggdrasil*, the ancient tree[67] grows upward to meet the down-turned, flowing, sliver of lead. In the second *Emanation* (pl. 75), an enormous canvas more than thirteen feet tall, the lead "ray" is altogether present, but instead of meeting land, it touches the water. While *Emanation* recalls the "pillar of cloud" discussed earlier, its narrative is more charged and active. Implicit is the idea that the hot lead, descending from a devastated, flaming sky, will be cooled in the water. The cycle is renewed at the bottom, where flames appear in a photograph. A continuum is thus established, perhaps based on the concept that God exists in everything, and all elements flow out from and back to Him.

A flowing from heaven to earth is described both in Jewish mysticism and in the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite. In the latter, the heavenly hierarchy is invisible to man until the appearance of the "Divine Ray,"[68] the light that comes down and "restores us again . . . to a higher spiritual condition."[69] Likewise, the sixteenth-century Jewish mystic Isaac Luria describes God's emanation; the outpouring of His attributes, as given in the ten *sefiroth*, are revealed as divine lights flowing into a primeval space. As the lights rain down, humanity attempts to catch them in vessels and thereby gain the benefit of these divine characteristics; evil, however, is included amidst the good. The vessels are understood to be flawed, and in the end there are more lights than the bowls can hold. The vessels shatter, loosing good and evil on earth. With the "Breaking of the Vessels," there come still other worlds.[70]

In *Pouring*, 1984–85 (fig. 80), the cloud from heaven is dark and painted. It is juxtaposed with a lead funnel, a form that Kiefer derived from the point of a propeller, both representing to him an endless spiral.[71] But the funnel must also be understood as a vessel that has been shattered. The funnel theoretically receives material from above but it also serves as a conduit upward—like a loudspeaker, Kiefer says;[72] in Jewish emanation theories, too, there is a double movement on the part of God.[73]

The cyclical theory of becoming, dissolution, and becoming and the interdependence of heavenly and earthly spheres underlie an untitled triptych of 1980–86 (pl. 78). The lead fragments seem about to move through the funnel on the right side of the work, but if the action were to continue after the breaking of the vessel, the lead might flow across and up through the left panel, taking the form of the rocks. These are now in a "risen" condition, as if the earthly lead has attained a spiritual state. In an alchemical sense, this development corresponds to the forging of the philosopher's stone from previously inert matter. Kiefer also relates the drama presented to the theories of the second-century Gnostic philosopher Valentinus, who in describing the end of the world wrote that particles will be collected and sent back to heaven. According to the artist, the upper center of the painting may be understood as a mass of atomized particles, which will become material that descends, yet again, on the right panel.[74]

The circularity of movement is restated in another fashion in the central panel of the triptych, in which a snake and ladder appear. The serpent's identity is ambiguous: Is it the seraphic angel, having just descended the ladder from heaven, or the Satanic creature writhing at the foot of the ladder used in Christ's crucifixion?[75] Indeed, it is clear that in the view of Kiefer, as well as Dionysius the Areopagite, these characterizations are intertwined. Such is the ever-changeable character of the serpent that it raises questions about other aspects of the painting. For example, might not the rocks on the left be meteorites coming down to earth, where they will be sifted and forged through the funnel to form the fragments that appear above on the right? Perhaps the painting "begins" with the snake, which upon reaching the height of the ladder, causes the movement of particles. One could also interpret the rocks as manifestations of angels heading earthward to become snakes. Although a religious viewpoint is concerned with the restitution of an ideal order, Kiefer's own outlook is never completely resolved. It is, perhaps, for this reason that he found it impossible to give this painting a title, for in it he wrestles, once again, with the nature of a divine order. Just as Dionysius determined that God cannot easily be named or comprehended,[76] so Kiefer posits that we are finally left with this thoroughly multivalent symbol, the serpent.

Plate 75
Emanation, 1984–86
Oil, acrylic, and emulsion on canvas (in three parts), with lead
161⅜ x 110¼" (410 x 280 cm)
Collection of Céline and Heiner Bastian, Berlin

Plate 76
Yggdrasil, 1985
Acrylic, emulsion, and shellac on photograph, with lead
40½ x 32⅞" (102.9 x 83.5 cm)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen H. Frishberg, Radnor, Pennsylvania

Plate 77
Emanation, 1984–85
Shellac on photograph, mounted
on cardboard, with lead
22½ x 32″ (57 x 81 cm)
Collection of Jerry and Emily
Spiegel, Kings Point, New York

Plate 78
Untitled, 1980–86
Ohne Titel
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac,
and charcoal on photograph,
mounted on canvas, over canvas
(in three parts), with lead and steel
130 x 218½" (330 x 555 cm)
Collection of Gerald S. Elliott,
Chicago

Further exploring a New World and the process of transmutation, Kiefer produced *Jerusalem* in 1986 (pl. 79). An altogether mesmerizing work, the painting seems to have gone through many states of life and suffering, not unlike the city of Jerusalem itself. What remains is a scarred terrain, composed of encrusted, burned, and barren sections. Large remnants of lead are ripped and splattered across the surface. Floating over it is a pair of iron skis, which were forged to the artist's specifications, each pointing in a different direction; lead strips are attached to both, and a rock is placed on the left, upturned, ski. Kiefer explained that he first created a "landscape painting," then covered large areas with hot lead and more paint. Several months later, he peeled off a good deal of the lead,[77] taking color away and leaving patches, and partly pulled up other sections of lead revealing color on the underside, as seen in the upper right.[78] The effect is of skin that has been violently torn away in a fetishistic or even maniacal activity.

By contrast, the skis have a shadowy, yet whole, unviolated identity. With the bits of lead and rock—refuse from the old, underlying order—attached, the iron skis emerge as part of a New World. It is as if they represent the latest, still coherent, conception of this badly scarred landscape. Beside the development out from the surface of the painting, a further, horizontal differentiation of realms may be discerned, according to the artist.[79] There is the lower, earthly world in which stubble remains. As symbolized by the skis, the center has both an upward and downward orientation, like the double movement of particles and lead in earlier canvases. Above, Kiefer depicts the celestial realm with bits of gold leaf.

This vision of Jerusalem clearly belongs to the alchemist-artist. We see first the process by which he replaces the narratively burned land with lead; then, this material is manipulated; and finally it is superseded by the world of iron, in the skis. Kiefer explains that for him iron has cosmic origins; having first come to the earth in the form of meteorites, it was subsequently employed by humanity in the Iron Age.[80] Kiefer is no longer depicting stages in alchemy but, in a very literal sense, is becoming an alchemist, who attempts to work the materials of the earth into new formations. He has created his own system of elements, consisting of sand and straw, which can be used as found, and lead and iron, which require great heat to be forged.

The designation *Jerusalem*—which is not named on the canvas—signifies the ultimate landscape in a Kiefer world, a holy city that has undergone thousands of years of struggle and change. Jerusalem epitomizes a universal, eternal, religious ideal; as a pilgrimage site and promised land, it is a source of spiritual sustenance. The invocation of this name even suggests the restitution of a perfect, paradisiacal state, which existed prior to the "blemish."[81] Although Kiefer is ironic in rendering the city in such a degraded state, it is in fact a place in transition. And in his hands, Kiefer adds yet another layer of myth and history to it, for Jerusalem becomes the yearned-for heaven for the alchemist as well.

Iron Path, 1986 (pl. 80), also takes up the task of approaching a higher plane of existence. Adapted from a photograph he made in Bordeaux, Kiefer's composition reverses the pattern of *Emanation*. Now, the vertical effort begins in the human, earthly realm and rises compellingly toward a horizontal. The railroad track separates near the top, approaching a pair of glowing, gold-leaf orbs above the horizon. But for Kiefer, all movement is essentially variable. Thus, like the skis in *Jerusalem*, the railroad tracks emphasize both the idea of moving across the land and a vertical posture. The tracks may be understood, too, as coming down from above. Attached to the painted rails are iron climbing shoes, normally used for ascending electrical and telephone poles. Forged by a specialist,[82] both shoes are adorned with olive branches, and a lead rock is hung on the one to the right. This combination of shoes and track suggests horizontal and vertical movement at once.[83]

Kiefer at first called this painting *Heavenly Jerusalem*, but his new title accords better with the image in emphasizing the way, rather than the goal. Indeed, the "path" (*Steig*) in the title and the track in the composition are variations, respectively, on the "way" in *Ways of Worldly Wisdom* (pls. 18, 19) and the road in *March Heath* (pl. 13), all proposing an approach toward some absolute state. In this case, iron is the key to producing a concrete manifestation of the "path." By literally forging fundamental materials, it is apparently possible to surmount the given, horizontal movement and take an ascendant, vertical path. Following the long, black night depicted earlier in his career, the artist-alchemist is showing that gold and a New World may, indeed, be attained.

Plate 79
Jerusalem, 1986
Acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and
gold leaf on canvas (in two parts),
with steel and lead
150 x 220½" (380 x 560 cm)
Collection of Susan and Lewis
Manilow, Chicago

Detail opposite

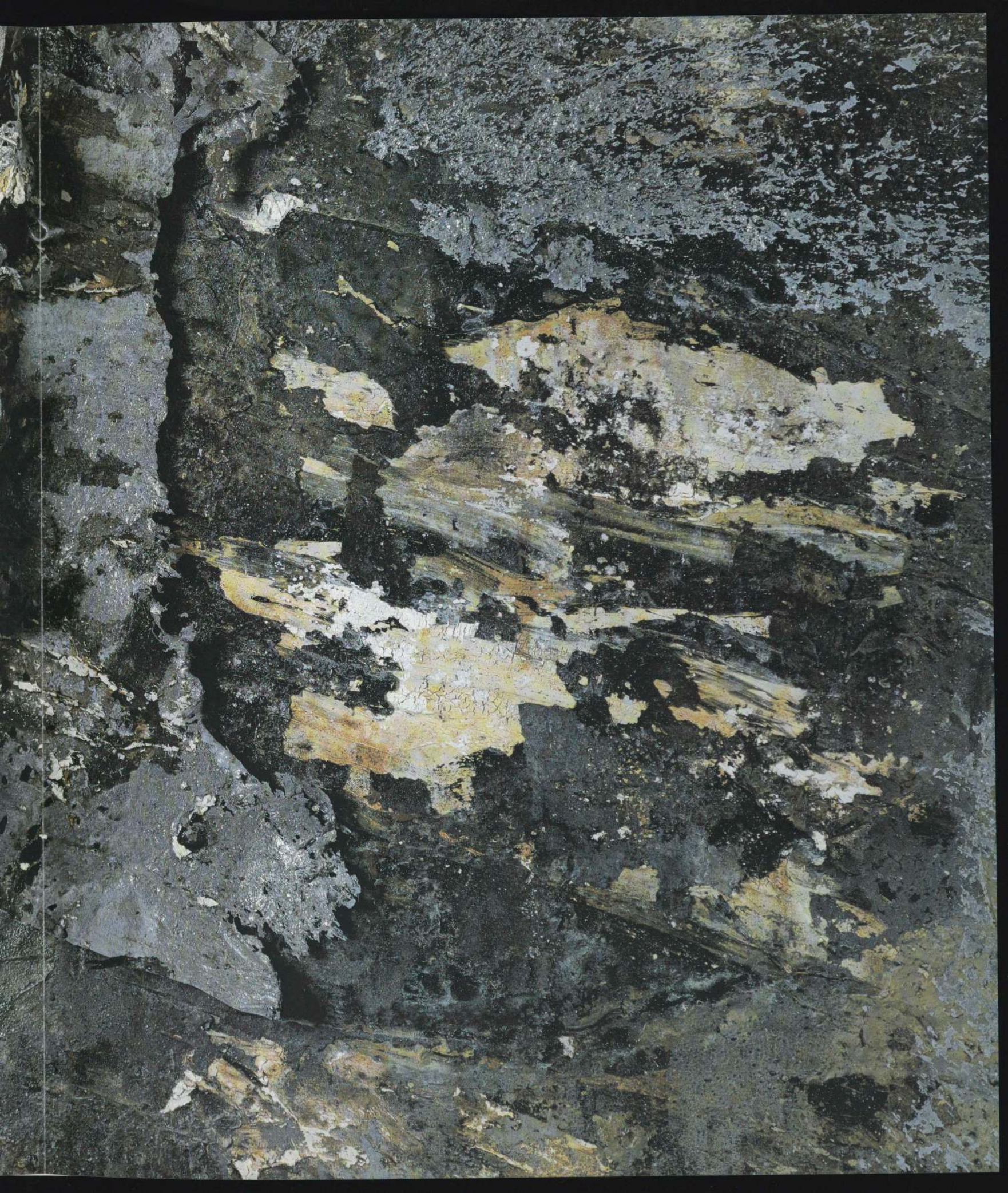

Plate 80
Iron Path, 1986
Eisen-Steig
Oil, acrylic, and emulsion on canvas, with olive branches, iron, and lead
86⅝ x 149⅝" (220 x 380 cm)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. David Pincus, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

Plate 81
Osiris and Isis, 1985–87
Osiris und Isis
Oil, acrylic, and emulsion on canvas (in two parts), with clay, porcelain, lead, copper wire, and circuit board
150 x 220½" (380 x 560 cm)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Purchased through a gift of Jean Stein, by exchange, the Mrs. Paul L. Wattis Fund, and the Doris and Donald Fisher Fund

Plate 82
Fallen Pictures, 1986
Gefallene Bilder
Emulsion and photograph on
cardboard, mounted on lead
$40^{13}/_{16}$ x $55\frac{1}{2}$" (102 x 141 cm)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. David
Pincus, Wynnewood,
Pennsylvania

Plate 83
Midsummer Night, 1986
Johannisnacht
Acrylic, emulsion, and shellac on cardboard, mounted on lead, with fern, steel, and glass
39⅜ x 55½" (101 x 141 cm)
Private Collection

Plate 84
Isis and Osiris, 1986
Isis und Osiris
Acrylic, emulsion, crayon, and photograph on cardboard, mounted on lead, with steel and glass
39¾ x 55½" (101 x 141 cm)
Promised gift of Marion Stroud Swingle to the Philadelphia Museum of Art

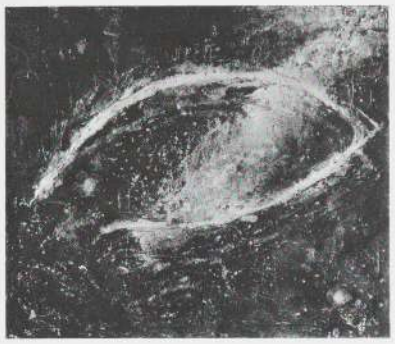

Figure 81. Anslem Kiefer, *Astral Serpent* (*Astralschlange*), 1986. Oil, acrylic, emulsion, and shellac on canvas, 74 ¾ x 86 ⅝" (190 x 220 cm). Private Collection.

Death and resurrection is the ostensible subject of the myth of Osiris and Isis (pl. 81; see also pl. 84). According to Egyptian mythology, Osiris was murdered by his brother Set, who dismembered his body into fourteen parts and spread these throughout the world. Isis, wife and sister of Osiris, scoured the earth, recovering all of the parts but one, the penis, and joined them together so as to restore him to eternal life. During the time of the Roman Empire, many temples were devoted to Isis, goddess of fertility, who by immaculate conception gave birth to Horus; at Pompeii, for example, sacred rites were performed on a high platform at the top of a flight of steps. Kiefer approached the subject of Osiris and Isis (pl. 81) in a highly synthetic and arbitrary fashion. Starting with an image of a Roman ruin he had seen in Israel, he created an immense, stepped pyramid; the steep, rapidly rising perspective places the viewer on the first landing. He attached a circuit board, removed from a television, to the painting, near the top of the building; from it emanate copper wires leading to seventeen ceramic fragments.[84] To complete the scene, Kiefer created a night sky like that of van Gogh, filled with swirling clouds and heavenly orbs, and added great quantities of clay powder to the surface of the canvas.[85]

At the time of *Osiris and Isis*, Kiefer was absorbed with the subject of nuclear energy, and in a grouping of works shown in 1987, which included this painting, he elaborated on a number of parallel aspects.[86] Both the Egyptian myth and nuclear energy are involved with processes of becoming, in which matter changes form. The creative and spiritual force by which the reunification of Osiris's body is achieved can be equated with nuclear fusion; the sun, as a preeminent energy source, is an important model in each context. The hanging wires serve as a vehicle through which energy is transmitted, just as the control or uranium rods are used in nuclear reactors. Isis's tears, shed at the summer solstice, fill and regenerate the Nile; large quantities of water also are important for a reactor to function properly. In *Osiris and Isis*, Kiefer anachronistically combines pyramid and circuit panel, thereby likening the mission of diverse cultures, with the vibrant, energetic sky offering the possibility of universal inspiration and insight. Recalling the gold flecks seen in earlier paintings, the color of the wires suggests the level of accomplishment depicted. Whereas earlier, architecture served a primarily memorial and passive function in Kiefer's art, he now utilizes the model of a building in which rites are performed or nuclear reactions are carried out. In this setting, an archetypal spark will be ignited, and the dismembered aspects of life saved from chaos and restored to wholeness.

Kiefer depicts a "heaven" in the form of outer space in several works, including *Astral Serpent* (fig. 81), in which his familiar reptile has floated skyward, where it approaches the pose of eternality by biting its tail. In *Saturn Time*, 1986 (pl. 85), Kiefer explores a space that has no earthly perspective but is, for him, both cosmic and inner at once. The lead pieces discussed earlier also depict this kind of universal field. Replacing the land, architecture, and the sea, this new stage set exists both above and below ground, and it is a kind of heavenly room.[87]

At this time in his career, Kiefer often does not include words in his paintings. In depicting these miraculous moments, his ever-present urge for the symbol, shown in an increasingly abstract, pictorial world, takes precedence over his desire to make explicit references. Kiefer locates a fern at the center of *Saturn Time*, and adds photographs of fires on the branches, recalling the burning bush in *Man in the Forest* (pl. 6). In the corners, lead fragments frame or orient the fern, and a pair of lungs is drawn on the stem to indicate the beginning of life.[88]

The fern has existed almost since the beginning of the physical world, according to the artist. The fern forest is associated with a period preceding the ice age, and from the fern came early forms of energy, including coal and wood. For Kiefer, the second important reference of the fern is to Midsummer Night; at the summer solstice in Germany when the sun is at its highest point, the seeds of ferns are collected for use in rituals that have to do with invulnerability and invisibility.[89] The fern, then, is an archetypal element of life that, nonetheless, has been given various, abstruse meanings by Kiefer's forebears. He seeks to remove it from its German association and, as befits his more alchemical or physically oriented interests, narratively reunite the material with its original context. By placing the fern in an astral space where it will burn forever, Kiefer reveals it as a symbol or emanation of the Divinity, which instituted life and which, perhaps, has been the goal of his search.

Plate 85
Saturn Time, 1986
Saturnzeit
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac,
crayon, and photographs on
canvas, with ferns and lead
110¼ x 130″ (280 x 330 cm)
Private Collection

Postscript

Kiefer's art can be thought of as an attempt to synthesize the great artistic traditions of the recent and more distant past, and to go beyond them, as well. He has certainly considered and utilized the conventions of history painting, its rhetorical ambition, need for a suspension of disbelief, operatic presentation, and theatrical techniques. Indeed, his work offers an odyssey through German history. But unlike traditional history painters, Kiefer always mingles viewpoints and presents conflicting interpretations, even while seeking the grand, all-encompassing statement characteristic of this tradition. We have seen that his approach to landscape painting is, also, deeply considered; in fact, he wants, in some sense, to do away with it. But his focus on the blackened landscape ought to be compared to Cézanne's emphasis on Mont Sainte Victoire, for each artist employs a landscape subject to express profound feelings.

Kiefer has looked thoroughly at what it means to be an avant-garde artist in the twentieth century, specifically admiring Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol for having taken art to the distant edge of its possibilities.[1] By the provocative and ironical nature of his work, it is evident that Kiefer accepts and embraces the notion of the modern artist who stands outside society, taunting it, its history, norms, taboos, myths, and ideas about art and craft. Because of these concerns, he is content to make a thoroughly and obviously German art, of native subjects, values, and symbols. In this sense, his work may find two spheres of sensitive viewers. His insistence on opening emotional wounds and emphasizing losses to the culture is troubling for his countrymen, who do not want to suffer any longer or be informed that their society is still accountable for the sins of the past. An international audience, too, may be disturbed by being faced with the old signs of a detested regime.

Notwithstanding his provocations, Kiefer retains the sense of idealism and spirituality that is so characteristic of much art of this century, and creates a hermetic approach to subject matter and symbolism that typifies this period. He shares in the early twentieth-century German impulse to balance pessimistic feelings and apocalyptic themes with transcendental urges. But Kiefer has, especially in recent years, embraced as well the adventuresome formal spirit and completely willful approach to subject matter and pictorial means of the great Cubist pioneers.

We have seen the degree to which Kiefer derived his thinking from and remains linked to the Conceptual movement. His use of unlikely materials, photography, personal narrative, and language all tie him closely to the amorphous forms of this 1960s movement, as does his structuralist approach to context, meaning, and methods of knowing, his overly casual emphasis on the process of making, and his desire to synthesize as much as possible in the art work, even at the risk of arbitrariness. Kiefer's feelings about Minimalism are quite different, however, and are epitomized in the title of one of his books: *Donald Judd Covers Brunhilde*. He cannot abide an art form which, he imagines, lacks the powerful impulse of life experience.

When talking about the large canvases he has made since 1982, Kiefer will often laughingly recall that a "Jackson Pollock" lies beneath.[2] By this description, he means a nonobjective, coloristically sumptuous painting. When Kiefer searched for models of the largely abandoned tradition of painting, he looked at the American Abstract Expressionist for muscular, large-scale work. Having grappled with Pollock's vision of art, Kiefer has brought forth his summation of how a new art might be formed, producing canvases that have considerable pictorial complexity owing to the visual tension between the two-dimensional plane and three-dimensional space.[3] These tensions are representative of one of the largest issues in his art, the attempt to unite the scale and visual richness of Abstract Expressionism with meaningful subject matter; in other words, to unite the poles of form and content, the concrete and the ideal, and art and life. The best of Kiefer's paintings are epic elegies to the human condition, which pulsate with profoundly felt emotions, complex thematic subtlety, and extraordinary surface excitement.

Notes

Introduction

1. Axel Hecht and Werner Krüger, "L'Art actuel Made in Germany: Anselm Kiefer, un bout de chemin . . . avec la démence," *Art Press* (Paris), no. 42 (November 1980), p. 15. The artist further amplified upon this in an interview with the author in December 1986 (hereafter referred to as Interview, December 1986; other interviews will be similarly designated).
2. Felix Klee, *Paul Klee: His Life and Work in Documents*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1962), p. 8.
3. Interview, December 1986.
4. Ibid.
5. See Donald Kuspit, "Diagnostic Malpractice: The Nazis on Modern Art," *Artforum* (New York), vol. 25, no. 3 (November 1986), pp. 90–98.

Developing an Outlook: 1969 to 1973

1. Hecht and Krüger, "L'Art actuel," p. 14.
2. Ibid.
3. For additional insight into this subject, see Berlin, Nationalgalerie, *1945–1985, Kunst in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (September 27, 1985—January 21, 1986).
4. Kiefer reports that American Pop art dominated thinking at the Karlsruhe Academy and that such manifestations as Fluxus were little known (Interview, December 1986).
5. Johannes Gachnang, "Painting in Germany 1981," in Pittsburgh, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, *1985 Carnegie International* (November 9, 1985—January 5, 1986), pp. 28–29.
6. Johannes Gachnang, "German Paintings: Manifestos of a New Self-Confidence," in Germano Celant, *The European Iceberg: Creativity in Germany and Italy Today* (Toronto, 1985), p. 64.
7. Interview, December 1986.
8. Quoted in Caroline Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys* (New York, 1979), p. 21.
9. Hecht and Krüger, "L'Art actuel," p. 15.
10. According to the artist (Interview, December 1986), after taking individual photographs in 1969, he named these "Occupations" ("Besetzungen") and incorporated a number of them into the 1969 book *Heroic Allegories (Heroische Sinnbilder)*. About two years later, he arranged the photographs in the sequence subsequently published as "Besetzungen 1969" in *Interfunktionen* (Cologne), no. 12 (1975), pp. 133–44.
11. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hymns and Fragments*, trans. Richard Sieburth (Princeton, 1984), p. 14.
12. Quoted in Hecht and Krüger, "L'Art actuel," p. 15.
13. Interview, April 1986.
14. See fig. 1 and Hecht and Krüger, "L'Art actuel," p. 15.
15. Quoted in Axel Hecht and Werner Krüger, "Venedig 1980: Aktuelle Kunst Made in Germany," *Art: Das Kunstmagazin* (Wiesbaden), June 1980, p. 52.
16. Ibid., p. 51. Kiefer has explained that the photographs were taken from the periodical *Kunst im Dritten Reich*, published from 1937 to 1944.
17. Interview, December 1986.
18. Hecht and Krüger, "L'Art actuel," p. 15.
19. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religions*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York, 1958), p. 210. Such a model can also be related to the story of Noah and the Flood. I have made extensive use of Eliade's writings in the belief that Kiefer consciously and unconsciously draws considerable sustenance from the recurring, symbolic patterns of tribal and religious art. The other writer who has relied on Eliade in examining the artist's work, although to a much lesser extent, is Katharina Schmidt, "Anmerkungen zum Werk von Anselm Kiefer," in Bernau / Schwarzwald, West Germany, Hans-Thoma-Museum, *Anselm Kiefer* (September 18—November 1, 1983), n.p.
20. Eliade, *Patterns*, p. 212.
21. Anne Seymour discusses the influence exerted on this work by the Austrian writer Robert Musil (1880–1942), known for his novel *The Man without Qualities*, in *Anselm Kiefer: Watercolours 1970–1982* (London, 1983), no. 1.
22. See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1959), pp. 118–21.
23. Ibid., p. 177.
24. Stanislas Klossowski De Rola, *Alchemy: The Secret Art* (New York, 1973), pl. 39.
25. See Seymour, *Watercolours*, no. 5.
26. See Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, trans. Stephen Corrin, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1978), p. 36.
27. Bonn, Kunstverein, *Anselm Kiefer* (March 17—April 24, 1977), pl. 1.
28. Selected pages illustrated in Düsseldorf, Städtische Kunsthalle, *Anselm Kiefer* (March 24—May 5, 1984), pp. 150, 166.
29. See Eliade, *Forge*, p. 40. In alchemy, the most important tool is fire, with which nature is transmuted (p. 170). Moreover, the alchemist is called a "master of fire" (p. 79), and is often shown bearing the flaming lamp as seen in figure 21. In addition to alchemists, other specialists of sacred fire are shamans and smiths (p. 81), as well as both Jesus and the devil (p. 107). In the Old Testament, the Burning Bush of Moses signifies the deity, whereas the fire of hell is an equally powerful and longstanding image, reflecting the work of the devil. In classical mythology, Prometheus, the bearer of fire, was also construed in contradictory terms as both hero and avenger. In the Edda, Surt, the guardian of Muspell, described as the first world, held a flaming sword (*The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson: Tales from Norse Mythology*, trans. Jean I. Young [Berkeley, 1954], pp. 32–33). The initiating light offered by the man in the forest recalls, too, the first words of the Old Testament, when "In the Beginning," God said, "Let there be light." This light is a breakthrough, a first moment of creation.
30. The composition is discussed by Jürgen Harten, in Düsseldorf, 1984, p. 28.
31. George Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols in Christian Art* (New York, 1954), p. 13.
32. Discussed by Wolfgang Max Faust and Gerd de Vries, in *Hunger nach Bildern: Deutsche Malerei der Gegenwart* (Cologne, 1982), p. 80.
33. Quoted in Axel Hecht, "Macht der Mythen," *Art: Das Kunstmagazin* (Wiesbaden) (March 1984), p. 33.
34. Interview, January 1986.
35. Kiefer discussed this phenomenon in a statement published in Pittsburgh, 1985–86, p. 160.
36. The figures, from left foreground into the room, are German composer Richard Wagner (1813–1883), Joseph Beuys (1921–1986), Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840), Frederick the Great (1712–1786), Musil, and German painter Hans Thoma (1839–1924). On the right are German lyric poet Richard Dehmel (1863–1920), Austrian poet Josef Weinheber (1892–1945), Austrian novelist Adalbert Stifter (1805–1868), Swiss painter Arnold Böcklin (1827–1901), German mystic Mechthild von Magdeburg (c. 1212–c. 1280), Austrian poet Nikolaus Lenau (1802–1805), and German poet Theodor Storm (1817–1888).
37. Martin Heidegger, *Existence and Being*, intro. Werner Brock (London, 1968), pp. 190–93.

On Being German and an Artist: 1974 to 1980

1. Discussed by Sanford Schwartz, "Anselm Kiefer, Joseph Beuys, and the Ghosts of the Fatherland," *The New Criterion* (New York), vol. 1, no. 7 (March 1983), p. 2.
2. "Maikäfer flieg, der Vater ist im Krieg, die Mutter ist in Pommerland, Pommerland ist abgebrannt."
3. Evelyn Weiss compares the Altdorfer painting to Kiefer's landscapes, in Bonn, 1977, n.p. Kiefer has confirmed his admiration for the work of this artist (Interview, April 1986).
4. Interview, April 1986.
5. Kiefer's relationship to Ernst is discussed further by Helmut Draxler, "Verbrennen und verholzen: Feldwege einer deutschen Mythologie (Max Ernst—Joseph Beuys—Anselm Kiefer)," *Kunstforum International* (Mainz), no. 87 (January–February 1987), pp. 170–86.
6. Discussed by Tilman Osterwold in Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein, *Anselm Kiefer* (September 18–October 26, 1980), p. 4.

7. Harten, in Düsseldorf, 1984, p. 46.
8. Walter Ansel, *Hilter Confronts England* (Durham, North Carolina, 1960), pp. 142–49.
9. Peter Fleming, *Operation Sea Lion* (New York, 1957), pp. 241–49.
10. Mentioned by Peter Schjeldahl, "Anselm Kiefer," in *Art of Our Time: The Saatchi Collection* (London, 1984), vol. 3, p. 17.
11. Joseph Beuys had used toy trains in his work *Flag*, 1974 (Tisdall, *Beuys*, fig. 339). According to Kiefer, he has on occasion based the boats on those in the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich (Interview, April 1986).
12. Interview, April 1986.
13. Tisdall, *Beuys*, p. 10.
14. Kiefer used the tub for a tomb in *Tutein's Tomb*, 1981–83 (Düsseldorf, 1984, repro. p. 137).
15. One of only three books that Kiefer published in editions, *Hoffmann von Fallersleben auf Helgoland* was issued in Groningen, The Netherlands, in 1980; the others are *Die Donauquelle* (Cologne, 1978) and *Nothung* (Baden-Baden, 1983). In addition, two works have been published in other contexts, "Occupations" (discussed above) and *Passage through the Red Sea* (in this volume).
16. Interview, January 1987.
17. *Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson*, p. 33.
18. Interview, January 1987.
19. Faust and de Vries (*Hunger*, p. 76) have noted that Kiefer's work symbolizes a transition from Germany's initial struggle for its own freedom to its wars of conquest, which resulted in the loss of freedom for others.
20. This point is made by Günther Gercken, in Groningen, The Netherlands, Groninger Museum, *Anselm Kiefer* (November 28, 1980—January 11, 1981), n.p.
21. Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher (1742–1819), Prussian field marshall during the Napoleonic Wars, is replaced by the Prussian general Karl von Clausewitz (1780–1831); Varus's name is absent; and an unidentified soldier is present at the bottom (Harten, in Düsseldorf, 1984, p. 79). Kiefer remembers that the change in the cast of characters was an important decision at the time, although he does not recall his reason (Interview, December 1986).
22. Kiefer first made charcoal drawings of the individuals, then cut lines in pieces of wood, which he printed on these drawings (Interview, December 1986).
23. For additional discussion, see Seymour, *Watercolours*, no. 7.
24. Interview, January 1987.
25. Kiefer places Andy Warhol and Marcel Duchamp on a certain pinnacle in the history of art (Interview, April 1986).
26. Interview, December 1986.
27. Gercken (Groningen, 1980–81, n.p.) relates the German title, *Wege der Weltweisheit*, to Heidegger in *Holzwege*; however, according to Kiefer, the similarity in title is a coincidence (Interview, December 1986).
28. *The Works of Stefan George*, trans. Olga Marx and Ernst Morwitz (Chapel Hill, 1974), p. 346.
29. Interview, April 1986.
30. In *Germany's Spiritual Heroes* (pl. 10), along the rainbow, Kiefer records the names of Georg Hegel (1770–1831), German philosopher famed for his dialectical system of understanding history; Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872), German philosopher and moralist, who had great influence on Marx; and Karl Marx (1818–1883), German revolutionist, economist, and sociologist. From left to right on the ground level are Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), German philosopher and metaphysician; Wagner; Carl Jung (1875–1961), Swiss founder of analytic psychology; Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), German figure in Existentialism; and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), German philosopher and cultural critic.

The first version of *Ways of Worldly Wisdom* (pl. 18) includes the names of Stefan George (1868–1933), German lyric poet who unhappily saw his ideas reflected in Nazism; Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926), Austro-German poet known for his associations with artists; Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803), German poet remembered for his utopian patriotism; Christian Dietrich Grabbe (1801–1836), German playwright known for his cynicism; Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811), German patriotic dramatist; Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843), German lyric poet; Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), German philosopher and patriot; Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher (1768–1834), Romantic philosopher and theologian; and Heidegger. Also depicted are the political and military figures Count Alfred von Schlieffen (1833–1913), army commander; Louise of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, queen of Prussia (1776–1810), known for her loyalty and bravery; von Blücher; von Clausewitz; Hermann (Arminius), first-century A. D. German tribal chieftain, who emerged victorious over the Romans; and Thusnelda, Hermann's wife.

In the graphic version of *Ways of Worldly Wisdom—Arminius's Battle* (pl. 19), the individuals are, row one, from top to bottom: Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874), German political poet; Horst Wessel (1907–1930), writer of a famed patriotic hymn; Queen Louise; and Stefan George. Row two: Hermann; Jean Paul (1763–1825), popular German novelist and political progressive; Hölderlin; Alfred Krupp (1812–1887), famed German munitions maker; and von Kleist. Row three: Fichte; von Clausewitz; Grabbe; and Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810–1876), German poet and revolutionary. Row four: Heidegger. Row five: Georg Herwegh (1817–1875), German political poet. Row six: von Schlieffen. Row seven: Helmuth von Moltke (1800–1891), Prussian officer; Jakob Böhme (1575–1624), German mystic; Walter Flex (1877–1917), German poet known for his wartime diary; Joseph Freihen von Eichendorff (1788–1857), German Romantic poet and political dramatist; Stifter; and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), German philosopher. Row eight: Johann Ludwig Uhland (1787–1862), German political poet; Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898), founder and first chancellor of the German Empire; Matthias Claudius (1740–1815), German Romantic poet; Annette von Droste-Hülshoff (1797–1848), German poet; and Gottfried Keller (1819–1890), Swiss political poet. Row nine: Albert Leo Schlageter (1894–1923), German World War I resistance fighter against the French; von Blücher and Stefan George; Klopstock; Karl Maria von Weber (1786–1826), German composer; and Wiprecht von Groitzsh, eleventh-century German prince who colonized Eastern Europe and was later celebrated by the Nazis. (I am grateful to Hans Dickel for his help in unraveling the identities of these figures and correcting information published earlier.)
31. Interview, December 1986.
32. Quoted in Hecht and Krüger, "L'Art actuel," p. 15.
33. Interview, December 1986.
34. Eliade, *Patterns*, pp. 341–45.
35. Weiss (Bonn, 1977, n.p.) states that a *Nibelunglied* manuscript is in the castle at Donaueschingen, near Kiefer's home.
36. Illustrated in ibid., pls. 19, 20; and Saint Louis, The Saint Louis Art Museum, *Expressions: New Art from Germany* (June–August, 1983), p. 110.
37. A second version appears in Seymour, *Watercolours*, pl. 14.
38. Illustrated in Düsseldorf, 1984, p. 84; Bern, Kunsthalle, *Anselm Kiefer* (October 17—November 19, 1978), pls. 32, 33, 35, 37, 38; Essen, Museum Folkwang, and London, Whitechapel Art Gallery, *Anselm Kiefer* (October 30—December 6, 1981, and March 3—May 2, 1982), p. 29; *Art of Our Time*, vol. 3, pl. 31.
39. Discussed by Gachnang, in Bern, 1978, p. 4.
40. Ibid., pl. 35.
41. Ibid., pl. 37.
42. With regard to the horse, Kiefer expresses a keen interest in John Steinbeck's short story *The Red Pony* (Interview, April 1986).
43. Groningen, 1980–81, pl. 5.
44. Interview, April 1986.

45. Beuys's statement appears in his work *Directional Forces*, 1974; quoted in London, Institute of Contemporary Art, *Art into Society, Society into Art* (October 30—November 24, 1974), p. 48.
46. Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, The Documents of Modern Art, vol. 5 (New York, 1966), p. 26.
47. Interviews, April, December 1986.
48. For additional discussion of *Nero Paints*, see Rudi H. Fuchs, "Kiefer Paints," in Venice, West German Pavilion, Thirty-ninth Biennale, *Anselm Kiefer* (June 1—September 28, 1980), pp. 57–59.
49. Discussed by the artist, in Pittsburgh, 1985–86, p. 160. Kiefer, in a letter to the author (1986), has also expressed admiration for the work of Gordon Matta-Clark, the American artist who destroyed sections of building walls and photographed the effects.
50. Interview, December 1986.
51. Kiefer, in Pittsburgh, 1985–86, p. 160.
52. See Eliade (*Forge*, pp. 21, 39) for concepts of the earth being feminine and the rain, masculine.
53. Discussed by Weiss, in Bonn, 1977, n.p.
54. Faust and de Vries (*Hunger*, pp. 75–76) suggest that the title refers to the Assumption of Mary.
55. The palette is the source for a holy ghost or spirit in *Send Forth Your Spirit*, 1974 (see Freiburg, Kunstverein, *Anselm Kiefer* [September 18—October 18, 1981], n.p.).
56. Seymour, *Watercolours*, no. 10.
57. Interview, December 1986.
58. Kiefer cites Theodor Adorno on this subject: that art which is too beautiful will, in effect, sink (Interview, April 1986).
59. In this regard, compare the series on the theme *In hoc signo vinceris*, discussed by Seymour (*Watercolours*, no. 19).
60. Harten, in Düsseldorf, 1984, p. 72.
61. See Bern, 1978, pls. 45–48.
62. Eliade, *Patterns*, pp. 276–77. In the Edda, Yggdrasil means "Ygg's horse," Ygg being another name for Odin (John Arnott MacCulloch, *The Mythology of All Races*, vol. 2, *Eddic* [New York, 1964], p. 43). Hence, Kiefer's convergence of Grane with the tree rings may subsume the horse of Odin as well.
63. Eliade, *Patterns*, p. 299. In alchemy, a snake is closely associated with the tree of life (De Rola, *Alchemy*, p. 16). Volva, in the Voluspa section of the Edda, narrates a story of the World Tree, which like the Yggdrasil, is guarded by the fates and shakes when the demise of the gods occurs; again, a wise eagle resides atop the tree (MacCulloch, *Mythology*, vol. 2, pp. 331–34). The latter detail must fascinate Kiefer, who is ever vigilant for linkages between the early heritage of Germany and its twentieth-century manifestations, such as the extensive use of the eagle in the decorative schemes of the Nazis. Near Michelstadt, in Kiefer's own region of the Oden Forest, there is a well-known, two-thousand-year-old tree that is black and extremely hard; it has existed since the time of the Romans, who lived in this area.
64. Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 149.
65. Winifred Faraday, *The Edda*, Popular Studies in Mythology, Romance & Folklore, nos. 12–13 (London, 1902), vol. 1, pp. 29–30.
66. This notion is the basis of the Maypole ceremony, in which wood is cut and burnt, symbolizing the regenerative process that occurs in the spring (Eliade, *Patterns*, p. 311).
67. Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 149.
68. Eliade, *Patterns*, p. 267.
69. In the Odin myth, the hero thrusts his sword into a tree in order to destroy the serpent. Wotan's sword was forged from a branch of the World Ash, then wedged into a tree; the only individual able to retrieve it was Siegfried.
70. Bern, 1978, pls. 25–31.
71. This idea was proposed by David Tulissio in a paper for Bryn Mawr College, 1986, entitled "Kiefer and Icelandic Myth."
72. In *The Painter's Guardian Angel*, 1975 (Düsseldorf, 1984, repro. p. 71), Kiefer even shows a kind of protector who cares for the young, fledgling palette.
73. Ibid., repro. p. 85.
74. Interview, April 1986.
75. Ibid., December 1986.
76. Eliade (*Forge*, p. 41) notes that a spring is symbolically feminine.
77. Hölderlin mythologized the source of the Danube, where he imagined, according to Sieburth, restoring a "dialogue between Occident and Orient, between present and past" (Hölderlin, *Hymns*, p. 257). Kiefer was not aware of this work, but was familiar with Hölderlin's poems about the Rhine (Interview, January 1986).

A Formal Breakthrough: 1980 to 1982

1. Various other artists, including Robert Rauschenberg and Arnulf Rainer, have painted over photographs.
2. Among the results of the Iconoclastic Controversy was a schism between the East and West; adherents in the West disagreed vehemently with the iconoclastic emperors.
3. In this regard, Kiefer refers to *La Chambre claire: Note sur la photographie* by Roland Barthes (Paris, 1980) (Interview, December 1986).
4. Donald B. Kuspit, "Flak from the 'Radicals': The American Case against Current German Painting," in Saint Louis, 1983, p. 51.
5. Düsseldorf, 1984, repro. p. 89; Bern, 1978, pl. 14.
6. We have already seen intimations of this in *Faith, Hope, Love* (pl. 29) and *Tree with Palette* (pl. 33). In *Tree with Tanks*, 1977 (Bern, 1978, pl. 16), a large, Yggdrasil-like tree replaces the palette in the prototypical confrontation. Subsequently, in the "Poland Is Not Yet Lost" series, Kiefer shows tanks attacking tree rings and horses, but in the second of the series (fig. 42), the rings are given a palette-like shape and are held aloft exactly as angels carry palettes in Kiefer's imagery. At this point, the identification between palette and tree rings is virtually complete.
7. Interview, December 1986.
8. See Schwartz, "Fatherland," p. 3.
9. Mark Rosenthal, "The Myth of Flight in the Art of Paul Klee," *Arts Magazine*, vol. 55, no. 1 (September 1980), pp. 90–94.
10. Bonn, 1977, pl. 24.
11. Achille Bonito Oliva, *Trans Avant Garde International* (Milan, 1982), repro. p. 59.
12. One is simply termed *Wing* (Saint Louis, 1983, repro. p. 121), another, more prophetically, *Phoenix* (Essen and London, 1981–82, repro. p. 31). A third refers to the subject of *In hoc signo vinceris* (Seymour, *Watercolours*, no. 19), in which a burning flag carries the sign of a palette. Seymour shows that it is based on two legends, which Kiefer combined to form a new myth concerning the eternal suffering and victorious qualities of art.
13. Düsseldorf, 1984, p. 126.
14. Interview, December 1986.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., January 1987.
17. Harten (Düsseldorf, 1984, p. 124) states that the quote is based on Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*.
18. Eliade, *Sacred*, pp. 87–89.
19. Faraday, *Edda*, vol. 2, pp. 5–8.
20. *Art of Our Time*, vol. 3, pl. 45.
21. Interview, December 1986.
22. Kiefer plays on this word pun again in *Nibelunglied* and *Herzeleide*.
23. Interview, April 1986.
24. Ibid., December 1986.
25. Ibid., January 1987.
26. Ibid., April 1986.
27. Paul Celan, *Poems*, trans. Michael Hamburger (New York, 1980), pp. 50–53.
Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken sie abends
wir trinken sie mittags und morgens wir trinken sie nachts
wir trinken und trinken
wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lüften da liegt man nicht eng
Ein Mann wohnt im Haus der spielt mit den Schlangen der schreibt
der schreibt wenn es dunkelt nach Deutschland dein goldenes Haar Margarete
er schreibt es und tritt vor das Haus und es blitzen die Sterne er pfeift seine Rüden herbei
er pfeift seine Juden hervor lässt schaufeln ein Grab in der Erde
er befiehlt uns spielt auf nun zum Tanz

Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken dich nachts
wir trinken dich morgens und mittags wir trinken dich abends
wir trinken und trinken
Ein Mann wohnt im Haus der spielt mit den Schlangen der schreibt
der schreibt wenn es dunkelt nach Deutschland dein goldenes Haar Margarete
Dein aschenes Haar Sulamith wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lüften da liegt man nicht eng

Er ruft stecht tiefer ins Erdreich ihr einen ihr andern singet und spielt
er greift nach dem Eisen im Gurt er schwingts seine Augen sind blau
stecht tiefer die Spaten ihr einen ihr andern spielt weiter zum Tanz auf

Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken dich nachts
wir trinken dich mittags und morgens wir trinken dich abends
wir trinken und trinken
ein Mann wohnt im Haus dein goldenes Haar Margarete
dein aschenes Haar Sulamith er spielt mit den Schlangen

Er ruft spielt süsser den Tod der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland
er ruft streicht dunkler die Geigen dann steigt ihr als Rauch in die Luft
dann habt ihr ein Grab in den Wolken da liegt man nicht eng

Schwarze Milch der Frühe wir trinken dich nachts
wir trinken dich mittags der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland
wir trinken dich abends und morgens wir trinken und trinken
der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland sein Auge ist blau
er trifft dich mit bleierner Kugel er trifft dich genau
ein Mann wohnt im Haus dein goldenes Haar Margarete
er hetzt seine Rüden auf uns er schenkt uns ein Grab in der Luft
er spielt mit den Schlangen und träumet der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland

dein goldenes Haar Margarete
dein aschenes Haar Sulamith

28. Schjeldahl (*Art of Our Time*, vol. 3, p. 16) identifies Shulamite as "the loved one in the Song of Solomon."
29. The earliest versions of *Margarete* date to 1980 (Seymour, *Watercolours*, pls. 22, 24, 25).
30. Donald Kuspit, "Transmuting Externalization in Anselm Kiefer," *Arts Magazine* (New York), vol. 59, no. 2 (October 1984), pp. 84–86.
31. Interview, April 1986.
32. See Y. Michael Bodemann, "Die 'Überwölbung' von Auschwitz," *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* (Berlin), no. 56 (November 1984), pp. 43–48.
33. See Eberhard Sens, "Vom Wald," ibid., pp. 73–88; and H. Peter Obladen, "Waldsterben im 19. Jahrhundert," ibid., pp. 89–97.
34. Interview, December 1986.
35. Ibid.
36. In *Faust*, "chopped straw" is spread in front of the door of a whore who later marries the father of her child; this detail signifies a "broken agreement" (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, trans. Charles E. Passage [Indianapolis, 1965], p. 125). This point was made to me by Sid Sachs.
37. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, trans. Walter Arndt, ed. Cyrus Hamlin (New York, 1976), p. 308.
38. *The New Kobbe's Complete Opera Book*, ed. The Earl of Harewood (New York, 1976), pp. 232–53.
39. Interview, April 1986.
40. Ibid., November 1985.
41. Dorothea Dietrich, "Anselm Kiefer's 'Johannisnacht II': A Text Book," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* (New York), vol. 15, no. 2 (May–June 1984), p. 44.

Visions of a New World: 1980 to 1987

1. Interview, January 1987.
2. Eliade, *Forge*, p. 31.
3. This comparison was made by Schwartz, "Fatherland," p. 2.
4. Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 34.
5. In the book entitled *The Rhine*, 1983, Kiefer turns the single tree into a variant of Barnett Newman's "zip"; he had done the same thing on the cover of *Die Hermanns-Schlacht*, a book of 1981.
6. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "athanor."
7. De Rola, *Alchemy*, p. 7.
8. Ibid., pp. 17, 10.
9. Ibid., p. 14.
10. Eliade, *Forge*, pp. 81–82. Both Jesus and the devil are considered to be "masters of fire" (p. 107).
11. Interview, January 1987.
12. Düsseldorf, 1984, repro. p. 165.
13. Cited by Harten, in ibid., p. 167, and Schjeldahl, in *Art of Our Time*, vol. 3, p. 17.
14. The three names at left are, from top to bottom, M^dme^ Legros (who was awarded a prize for virtue by the Academy for securing the release from the Bastille of the long-imprisoned Jean Latude), Catherine Théot (1725–c. 1795, who believed she was the mother of God and acquired an influential following during the Revolution), and Cornelia (a founder of the Jacobin Club). To the right of the garden implement are Madame de Staël (1766–1817, Swiss-born French woman of letters and political propagandist) above Madame Condorcet (1764–1882, whose home was a salon for revolutionists). The next four are, top to bottom, Marie Antoinette (1755–1793, queen consort to Louis XVI), Madame Roland (1754–1793, who influenced the policies of the moderate Girondists), Rose Lacombe (1748–c. 1794, spokesperson for the rights of women), Garcia Viardot (1821–1910, better known as Michelle Viardot, a French mezzo-soprano). To the right is Madame Duplay (in whose home Robespierre lived from 1791), followed by M^lle^ Louise Gély (second wife of Danton) above Théroigne de Méricourt (1762–1817, one of the leaders in the assault on the Bastille). (I am grateful to Amy Ship for locating these individuals in the French histories written by Jules Michelet. Hans Dickel referred us to Roland Barthes's *Michelet, par lui-meme* [Paris, 1965], in which the women are described in terms of lilies and roses [pp. 110–11].)
15. Interview, December 1986.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., April 1986.
18. Kiefer points out that, in fact, the Exodus had been of interest to him at least since he painted *The Lake of Gennesaret* (fig. 31) in 1974, and that he had painted a work entitled *Aaron* in the 1970s as well. But he had never, until the 1980s, dealt with the subject of the Departure from Egypt (Interview, December 1986).
19. See Gudrun Inboden, in Cologne, Galerie Paul Maenz, *Anselm Kiefer* (March 11—April 19, 1986), pp. 17–18.
20. Interview, December 1986.
21. Exodus 13:21.
22. Kiefer relates *Man in the Forest* (pl. 6) to the theme of Aaron (Interview, January 1987).
23. Suzanne Landau argues that *Aaron* (pl. 67) and *Departure from Egypt* (pl. 68) show the Judean desert and hills ("Landscape as Metaphor: Anselm Kiefer's 'Aaron,'" *The Israel Museum Journal* [Jerusalem], vol. 4 [Spring 1985], p. 63).
24. Exodus 4:2–4, 14:16–28, 17:1–6.
25. When the Egyptians turn their rods into serpents, Aaron's staff, which has already become a snake, devours the others (*The Zohar*, trans. Harry Sperling, Maurice Simon, and Paul P. Levertoff, vol. 3 [London, 1933], p. 92).
26. Ibid., p. 96.
27. See Tisdall, *Beuys*, pp. 127–33; see also the Arunta tribe and its pole, discussed by Eliade (*Sacred*, p. 33).
28. Kiefer says that although Beuys's staff was not the fundamental source for his painting, he was certainly aware of it. He describes the object as an "energy stick," which belongs to all civilizations (Interview, January 1987). In alchemy, the sacred union of male and female is symbolized by the spade, as phallus, tilling the land, which is the earth mother (Eliade, *Forge*, pp. 143–44).

29. At the command of the Lord, Aaron stretches his rod over the waters of Egypt, whereupon the seas become blood, which is drunk by the Egyptians (*Zohar*, vol. 3, pp. 94–95).
30. Ibid., p. 95.
31. While Kiefer's use of lead can be related to the work of Richard Serra, he seems to have been attracted to this material because of its importance in alchemy.
32. Interview, April 1986.
33. Ibid.
34. *Athanor* was titled after *Nigredo* (Interview, December 1986).
35. Coincidentally, gold was the prize in *The Ring of the Nibelung*. After it was removed from its rightful place beneath the sea, the world was thrust into darkness.
36. De Rola, *Alchemy*, p. 7.
37. Eliade, *Forge*, p. 47.
38. Ibid., pp. 50–52, 75.
39. De Rola, *Alchemy*, p. 11.
40. Eliade, *Forge*, p. 149. There is, as well, a Christian level to alchemy, in which the suffering of matter is likened to the Passion of Christ (pp. 149–52).
41. De Rola, *Alchemy*, p. 11.
42. Eliade, *Forge*, pp. 153–56.
43. De Rola, *Alchemy*, p. 11.
44. An indecipherable inscription in the sky of *Nigredo*, on the right, may have started as *helios* (sun).
45. Beuys, too, was very much involved in this process (Tisdall, *Beuys*, p. 23).
46. Eliade, *Forge*, p. 161.
47. Interview, April 1986.
48. Eliade, *Patterns*, p. 188.
49. Interview, December 1986.
50. *Edda of Snorri*, pp. 86–88.
51. Ibid., pp. 88–93. An allied tale relates that the world begins when and where a snake is killed; a yearly ritual to reenact this "paradigmatic act of the divine victory" will effectively renew the world (Eliade, *Sacred*, pp. 48–49, 54–56, 70–78).
52. Interview, January 1987.
53. Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York, 1969), see chapter 3, "Kabbalah and Myth," pp. 87–117.
54. Eliade, *Forge*, p. 162.
55. Interview, January 1987.
56. Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite*, trans. John Parker (London, 1894), p. 34.
57. Ibid., pp. 41–42.
58. Kiefer says: "I work with symbols which link our consciousness with the past. The symbols create a kind of simultaneous continuity and we recollect our origins" (Hecht and Krüger, "L'Art actuel," p. 15).
59. Dionysius the Areopagite, pp. 27–28.
60. Compare *Cherubim and Seraphim*, 1983 (Düsseldorf, 1984, repro. p. 133).
61. Eliade, *Patterns*, pp. 217–31.
62. Eliade, *Forge*, pp. 19–20.
63. Interview, January 1987. He was discussing *Midgard* (Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, *Anselm Kiefer* [December 20, 1986—February 8, 1987], pl. 20). Furthermore, one speaks, in alchemy, of a philosopher's stone, which is perfected from common ores (De Rola, *Alchemy*, p. 10). The alchemist declares: "Transform yourself from dead stones into living philosophic stones" (Eliade, *Forge*, p. 158).
64. According to Kiefer, Dionysius's theory of orders takes the form of a spiral; together with the propeller, it symbolizes perpetual movement (Interview, December 1986).
65. Interview, January 1987. Kiefer also compares the spiral to an invention by Leonardo.
66. Kiefer says that his interest in the cabala began at the time of his first visit to Israel, in 1983 (Interview, December 1986).
67. The photograph used for this work was taken by the artist in Pittsburgh.
68. Dionysius the Areopagite, p. 15.
69. Ibid.
70. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, p. 112.
71. Interview, April 1986.
72. Ibid.
73. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 107–8.
74. Interview, December 1986.
75. "Before descending into this world the spirit ascends from the earthly Paradise to the Throne which stands on four pillars. There it draws its being from that Throne of the King, and only then does it descend to this world" (*Zohar*, vol. 3, p. 40).
76. Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, trans. John D. Jones (Milwaukee, 1980), p. 113.
77. These pieces of lead were then used for *Inflammation*, 1986 (Amsterdam, 1986–87, pl. 25).
78. Interview, December 1986.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Kiefer mentioned to Amei Wallach that Blake's poem "Jerusalem" partly inspired the title of this work.
82. The "JH" etched on each of the shoes are the initials of the craftsperson who made them. Beuys employed very similar shoes (Tisdall, *Beuys*, figs. 195–97).
83. Interview, December 1986.
84. Kiefer explains that he started this work by creating a painting based on the Roman ruin he had seen, then contemplated it for a long time before deciding on what the image could become, that is, a monument to Osiris and Isis (Interview, May 1987).
85. Kiefer had explored the subject of a teapot shown whole and in fragments in a book of 1969 entitled *Fragments* (Scherben). A photograph from this volume, showing a string of ceramic pieces, appears in the background of one of the images of "Occupations" (fig. 8).
86. The works were shown in 1987 at the Marian Goodman Gallery in New York and at Documenta in Kassel. Together they formed an overall theme that Kiefer termed "Bruch und Einung" (Break and Fusion). Because the name of Osiris evokes the first of these words and Isis the second, he put the names in that order when titling his painting (Interview, May 1987).
87. Interview, December 1986.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.

Postscript

1. Interview, December 1986.
2. Interviews, April, December 1986, January 1987.
3. Discussed by Charles Harrison, "Importance: Kiefer and Serra at the Saatchi Collection," *Artscribe* (London), no. 60 (November–December 1986), pp. 50–55.

Selected Exhibitions

* Indicates that a publication accompanied the exhibition

1969

One-man
Galerie am Kaiserplatz, Karlsruhe. "Anselm Kiefer."

Group
Kunstverein, Hanover. "Deutscher Künstlerbund 17: Ausstellung." June 7—July 27.*

1973

One-man
Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne. "Nothung." April–May.
Galerie im Goethe-Institut / Provisorium, Amsterdam. "Der Nibelungen Leid." August 24—October 13.

Group
Staatliche Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden. "14 mal 14." March 16—April 22.*
Galerie im Goethe-Institut / Provisorium, Amsterdam. "Bilanz einer Aktivität." December 1, 1973—January 15, 1974.

1974

One-man
Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne. "Malerei der verbrannten Erde." April 1–29.
Galerie Felix Handschin, Basel. "Alarichs Grab."
Galerie 't Venster / Rotterdam Arts Foundation, Rotterdam. "Heliogabal."*

1975

One-man
Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne. "Bücher." July 7–31.

1976

One-man
Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne. "Siegfried vergisst Brünhilde." March 15—April 15.

Group
Kunstverein, Frankfurt am Main. "Beuys und seine Schüler." November 6, 1976—January 2, 1977.*

1977

One-man
Kunstverein, Bonn. "Anselm Kiefer." March 17—April 24.*
Galerie Michael Werner, Cologne. "Ritt an die Weichsel." October 25—November 19.
Galerie Helen van der Meij, Amsterdam. "Anselm Kiefer." November 25—December 23.

Group
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark. "Pejling af tysk kunst." February 26—April 17.
Museum Fridericianum, Kassel. "Documenta 6." June 24—October 2.*
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. "10e Biennale de Paris." September 17, 1977—January 11, 1978.*

1978

One-man
Galerie Maier-Hahn, Düsseldorf. "Anselm Kiefer: Wege der Weltweisheit—Hermannsschlacht." May 12—June 16.
Kunsthalle, Bern. "Anselm Kiefer: Bilder und Bücher." October 7—November 19.*

Group
Teheran Museum of Contemporary Art. "The Book of the Art of Artists' Books."*

1979

One-man
Galerie Helen van der Meij, Amsterdam. "Anselm Kiefer: Bücher." March 7—April 3.
Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands. "Anselm Kiefer." November 9—December 10.*

Group
Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe. "Malerei auf Papier." July 24—September 16.*

1980

One-man
Kunstverein, Mannheim. "Anselm Kiefer." May 4—June 1.*
West German Pavilion, Thirty-ninth Biennale, Venice. "Anselm Kiefer: Verbrennen, verholzen, versenken, versanden." June 1—September 28.*
Galerie und Edition Sigrid Friedrich–Sabine Knust, Munich. "Bilder und Zeichnungen." August 25—November 8.*
Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart. "Anselm Kiefer." September 18—October 26.*
Groninger Museum, Groningen, The Netherlands. "Anselm Kiefer: Holzschnitte und Bücher." November 28, 1980—January 11, 1981.*
Galerie Helen van der Meij, Amsterdam. "Anselm Kiefer." November 29—December 24.

Group
Neue Galerie / Sammlung Ludwig, Aachen. "Les Nouveaux Fauves / Die neue Wilden." January 19—March 21.*
Musée d'Art et d'Industrie, Saint-Etienne, France. "Après le classicisme." November 21, 1980—January 10, 1981.*

1981

One-man
Galerie Paul Maenz, Cologne. "Anselm Kiefer." January 9—February 7.*
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. "Anselm Kiefer." March 21—April 11.
Galerie und Edition Sigrid Friedrich–Sabine Knust, Munich. "Anselm Kiefer: Bücher." May 14—June 27.
Galleria Salvatore Ala, Milan. "Anselm Kiefer." June 3—July 15.
Kunstverein, Freiburg. "Anselm Kiefer: Aquarelle 1970–1980." September 18—October 18.*
Museum Folkwang, Essen. "Anselm Kiefer: Bilder und Bücher." October 30—December 6.* Traveled to Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. March 26—May 2, 1982.

Group
Royal Academy of Arts, London. "A New Spirit in Painting." January 15—March 18.*
ARC / Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. "Art allemagne aujourd'hui." January 17—March 8.*
Suermont-Ludwig Museum und Museumsverein, Aachen. "Tendenzen der modernen Kunst: Sammlung Ingrid und Hugo Jung." February 15—April 26.*
Société des Expositions du Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels. "Schilderkunst in Duitsland / 1981 / Peinture en Allemagne." May 27—July 12.*
Museen der Stadt, Cologne. "Westkunst: Zeitgenössische Kunst seit 1939." May 30—August 16.*

1982

One-man
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. "Anselm Kiefer." April 13—May 7.
Galerie Paul Maenz, Cologne. "Anselm Kiefer." June 4—July 17.*
Galerie Helen van der Meij, Amsterdam. "Anselm Kiefer." October 5–30.
Mary Boone Gallery, New York. "Anselm Kiefer." November 6–27.

Group
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. "'60 '80: Attitudes / Concepts / Images." March 9—July 11.*
Studio Marconi, Milan. "La nuova pittura tedesca." March 16—April 27.*

Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva. "De la catastrophe." March 27—May 31.*
Mura Aureliane da Porta Metronia a Porta Latina, Rome. "Avanguardia transavanguardia." April–July.*
Groninger Museum, Groningen, The Netherlands. "Kunst van nu in het Groninger Museum: Aanwinsten 1978–1982 / Kunst unserer Zeit im Groninger Museum: Neuerwerbungen 1978–1982." May.*
Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart. "Vergangenheit, Gegenwart, Zukunft: Zeitgenössische Kunst und Architektur." May 26—August 22.*
Galleria Christian Stein, Turin. "Anselm Kiefer, Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz." From June 3.
Marlborough Gallery, New York. "The Pressure to Paint." June 6—July 9.*
Museum Fridericianum, Kassel. "Documenta 7." June 19—September 28.*
Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. "New Paintings." June 23—July 25.
Musée d'Art et d'Industrie, Saint-Etienne, France. "Myth, drame, tragédie dans la transavant-garde." Summer.*
Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf. "Bilder sind nicht verboten." August 28—October 24.*
Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin. "Zeitgeist." October 16, 1982—January 16, 1983.*
Milwaukee Art Museum. "New Figuration from Europe." November 11, 1982—January 30, 1983.*

1983

One-man
Sonja Henie–Niels Onstad Foundations, Oslo. "Anselm Kiefer." May 19—June 19.
Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. "Anselm Kiefer: Paintings and Watercolours." May 25—July 9.*
Hans-Thoma-Museum, Bernau / Schwarzwald, West Germany. "Anselm Kiefer: Bücher und Gouachen." September 18—November 1.*

Group
Frederick S. Wight Art Gallery, University of California at Los Angeles. "New Figuration: Contemporary Art from Germany." January 18—February 13.*
Kunstmuseum, Basel. "Neue Zeichnungen aus dem Kunstmuseum Basel." January 29—April 24.* Traveled to Kunsthalle, Tübingen, May 21—July 10; and Neue Galerie, Kassel, August 13—September 24.
Kunsthaus, Zürich. "Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk." February 11—April 30.* Traveled to Städtische Kunsthalle und Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, May 19—July 10; Museum Moderner Kunst, Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Vienna, September 10—November 13; Orangerie des Schlosses Charlottenburg, Berlin, December 22, 1983—February 19, 1984.
Central House of Artists, Moscow. "Mensch und Landschaft in der zeitgenössischen Malerei und Graphik." March 18—April 18.* Traveled to Central Exhibition Hall, Leningrad. Organized by Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf.
Espace Lyonnais d'Art Contemporain, Lyons. "Adamah: La Terre." June 14—September 18.*
The Saint Louis Art Museum. "Expressions: New Art from Germany." June 25—August 21.* Traveled to The Institute for Art and Urban Resources, P.S. 1, Long Island City, New York, September 25—November 20; Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, December 6, 1983—January 22, 1984; The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, December 8, 1983—January 22, 1984; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, February 3—April 1; Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California, April 19—June 10; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., June 30—August 26, 1984.
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark. "Tysk Maleri Omkring 1980: Den Nye Ekspressionisme." September 10—October 9.* Traveled to Nordjyllands Kunstmuseum, Alborg, Denmark, October 21—December 4.
The Tate Gallery, London. "New Art at the Tate Gallery, 1983." September 14—October 23.*
The Art Museum of the Ateneum, Helsinki. "Ars 83." October 14—December 11.*
Kunsthalle, Hamburg. "Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst." November 11, 1983—January 8, 1984.*
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. "The First Show: Paintings and Sculpture from Eight Collections, 1940–1980." November 20, 1983—February 19, 1984.*
Museum Folkwang, Essen. "Die Sammlung Fer / The Fer Collection." December 9, 1983—January 22, 1984.*

1984

One-man
Galerie Paul Maenz, Cologne. "Anselm Kiefer." January 14—February 11.
Städtische Kunsthalle, Düsseldorf. "Anselm Kiefer." March 24—May 5.* Traveled to ARC / Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, May 11—June 21; and The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, July 31—September 30.
Musée d'Art Contemporain, Bordeaux. "Anselm Kiefer: Peintures 1983–1984." May 19—September 9.*

Group
Palais des Beaux-Arts, Charleroi, Belgium. "Références." February 11—March 18.*
Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin. "Deutsche Landschaft heute." March 10—April 22.*
Kunstmuseum, Winterthur, Switzerland. "Une Collection imaginaire." April 1—May 27.*
Centre Cultural de la Caiza de Pensions, Barcelona. "Origen y visión: Nueva pintura alemana." April 5—May 6.* Traveled to Palacio Velázquez, Madrid, May 21—July 29.
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. "The Fifth Biennale of Sydney: Private Symbol, Social Metaphor." April 11—June 17.*
Schloss Lörsfeld, Kerpen, West Germany. "Paravents." May 5—June 18.*
Williams College of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts. "The Modern Art of the Print: Selections from the Collection of Lois and Michael Torf." May 5—July 16. Traveled to Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, August 1—October 14.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. "International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture." May 17—August 19.*
Villa Campolieto, Herculaneum, Italy. "Terrae Motus." July 6—December 31.*
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh. "Creation: Modern Art and Nature." August 15—October 14.*
Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Düsseldorf. "Von hier aus." September 29—December 2.*
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. "Content: A Contemporary Focus 1974—1984." October 4, 1984—January 6, 1985.*
Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, The Netherlands. "Little Arena: Drawings and Sculptures from the Collection of Adri, Martin and Geertjan Visser." October 13—November 25.*
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. "La Grande Parade: Highlights in Painting after 1940." December 15, 1984—April 15, 1985.*

1985

One-man
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. "Anselm Kiefer: Auszug aus Ägypten, Departure from Egypt, 1984–1985." April 12—May 11.*

Group
Villa Vauban, Luxembourg. "Raum und Mythos: Six Peintres allemands." February 15—March 18.*

Grande Halle du Parc de la Villette, Paris. "Nouvelle Biennale de Paris." March 21—May 21.*
Galerie Beyeler, Basel. "Schwarz auf weiss: Von Manet bis Kiefer." April–May.* Traveled to Galerie Wolfgang Wittrock, Düsseldorf, June–August.
Museum für 40 Tage, Hamburg. "Museum? Museum! Museum." June 3—July 15.*
Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst, Munich. "Deutsche Kunst seit 1960: Aus die Sammlung Prinz Franz von Bayern." June 20—September 15.*
Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London. "Unique Books." September 4—October 2.
Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin. "1945–1985: Kunst in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland." September 27, 1985—January 12, 1986.*
Royal Academy of Arts, London. "German Art in the 20th Century: Painting and Sculpture 1905–1985." October 11—December 22.* Traveled to Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, February 8—April 27, 1986.
Moore College of Art, Philadelphia. "Memento Mori." November 8—December 18.*
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. "1985 Carnegie International." November 9, 1985—January 5, 1986.*
Castello di Rivoli, Turin. "Ouverture."*

1986

One-man

Galerie Paul Maenz, Cologne. "Anselm Kiefer." March 9—April 19.*
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. "Anselm Kiefer: Bilder 1986→1980." December 20, 1986—February 8, 1987.*

Group

Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. "A Drawing Show." January 4—February 1.
The Queens Museum, Flushing, New York. "The Real Big Picture." January 17—March 19.*
The Tate Gallery, London. "Forty Years of Modern Art 1945–1985." February 15—April 27.
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. "Wild Visionary Spectral: New German Art." February 28—April 20.* Traveled to Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, May 8—June 15; and National Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand, July 11—August 24.
Kunsthalle, Basel. "Joseph Beuys, Enzo Cucchi, Anselm Kiefer, Jannis Kounellis." March 23—May 4.*
Museum Ludwig, Cologne. "Europa / Amerika: Die Geschichte einer künstlerischen Faszination." September 7—November 30.*
Phoenix Art Museum. "Focus on the Image: Selections from the Rivendell Collection." October 5, 1986—February 7, 1987.* Traveled to Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman, April 25—August 30, 1987; tour continues.
The Saatchi Collection, London. "Anselm Kiefer—Richard Serra." September 12, 1986—June 1987.
Kettle's Yard Gallery, Cambridge, England. "Turning over the Pages: Some Books in Contemporary Art." November 2—December 7.*
Neue Berliner Galerie im Alten Museum, Berlin, East Germany. "Positionen: Malerei aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland." October 31—November 30. Traveled to Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, December 10, 1986—January 12, 1987.
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. "Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945–1986." December 10, 1986—January 10, 1988.*

1987

One-man

Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. "Anselm Kiefer." May 12—June 6.

Group

ARC / Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. "L'Epoque, la mode, la morale, la passion: Aspects de l'art d'aujourd'hui, 1977–1987." May 21—August 17.*
Museum Fridericianum, Kassel. "Documenta 8." June 12—September 20.*

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Nothung. Baden-Baden, 1983.

Monographic Publications

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum. *Anselm Kiefer: Bilder 1986→1980.* December 20, 1986—February 8, 1987. Text by Wim Beeren.
Anselm Kiefer: Auszug aus Ägypten, Departure from Egypt, 1984–1985. New York, 1985.
Bern, Kunsthalle. *Anselm Kiefer: Bilder und Bücher.* October 7—November 19, 1978. Texts by Johannes Gachnang and Theo Kneubühler.
Bernau / Schwarzwald, West Germany, Hans-Thoma-Museum. *Anselm Kiefer: Bücher und Gouachen.* September 18—November 1, 1983. Text by Katharina Schmidt.
Bonn, Kunstverein. *Anselm Kiefer.* March 17—April 24, 1977. Texts by Dorothea von Stetten and Evelyn Weiss.
Bordeaux, Musée d'Art Contemporain. *Anselm Kiefer: Peintures 1983–1984.* May 19—September 9, 1984. Text by René Denizot.
Cologne, Galerie Paul Maenz. *Anselm Kiefer.* March 11—April 19, 1986. Edited by Paul Maenz and Gerd de Vries. Text by Gudrun Inboden.
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Eindhoven, The Netherlands, Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum. *Anselm Kiefer.* November 9—December 10, 1979. Text by R. H. Fuchs.
Essen, Museum Folkwang, and London, Whitechapel Art Gallery. *Anselm Kiefer.* October 30—December 6, 1981 [Essen] and March 3—May 2, 1982 [London]. Texts by Zdenek Felix and Nicholas Serota.
Freiburg, Kunstverein. *Anselm Kiefer: Aquarelle 1970–1980.* September 18—October 18, 1981. Text by R. H. Fuchs.
Groningen, The Netherlands, Groninger Museum. *Anselm Kiefer.* November 28, 1980—January 11, 1981. Texts by Carel Blotkamp and Günther Gercken.
Mannheim, Kunstverein. *Anselm Kiefer.* May 4—June 1, 1980. Text by R. H. Fuchs.
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Stuttgart, Württembergischer Kunstverein. *Anselm Kiefer.* September 18—October 26, 1980. Text by Tilman Osterwold.
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Checklist of the Exhibition

Every Human Being Stands beneath His Own Dome of Heaven, 1970
Jeder Mensch steht unter seiner Himmelskugel
Watercolor and pencil on paper
15¾ x 18⅞" (40 x 48 cm)
Private Collection

Winter Landscape, 1970
Winterlandschaft
Watercolor on paper
16⁵⁄₁₆ x 14³⁄₁₆" (43 x 36 cm)
Private Collection

Man in the Forest, 1971
Mann im Wald
Oil on muslin
68½ x 74⁷⁄₁₆" (174 x 189 cm)
Private Collection

Julia, 1971
Watercolor and pencil on paper
18¹¹⁄₁₆ x 14³⁄₁₆" (47.5 x 36 cm)
Private Collection

Reclining Man with Branch, 1971
Liegender Mann mit Zweig
Watercolor on paper
9⁷⁄₁₆ x 11" (24 x 28 cm)
Private Collection

Landscape with Head, 1973
Landschaft mit Kopf
Oil, distemper, and charcoal on burlap, with charcoal on cardboard
82¹¹⁄₁₆ x 94½" (210 x 240 cm)
Private Collection

Resurrexit, 1973
Oil, acrylic, and charcoal on burlap
114³⁄₁₆ x 70⅞" (290 x 180 cm)
Collection Sanders, Amsterdam

Germany's Spiritual Heroes, 1973
Deutschlands Geisteshelden
Oil and charcoal on burlap, mounted on canvas
120⅞ x 268½" (307 x 682 cm)
Collection of Barbara and Eugene Schwartz, New York

Cockchafer Fly, 1974
Maikäfer flieg
Oil on burlap
86⅝ x 118⅛" (220 x 300 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

To Paint, 1974
Malen
Oil and shellac on burlap
46½ x 100" (118 x 254 cm)
Family H. de Groot Collection, Groningen, The Netherlands

My Father Promised Me a Sword, 1974
Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater
Watercolor on paper
11³⁄₁₆ x 8" (28.4 x 20.4 cm)
Private Collection

German Line of Spiritual Salvation, 1975
Deutsche Heilslinie
Watercolor on paper
9⁷⁄₁₆ x 13⅜" (24 x 34 cm)
Private Collection

Sick Art, 1975
Kranke Kunst
Watercolor on paper
7¹¹⁄₁₆ x 9½" (19.5 x 24 cm)
Collection of Howard and Linda Karshan, London

North Cape, 1975
Nordkap
Watercolor on paper
9⅜ x 7¾" (23.8 x 19.8 cm)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London

Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen, 1975
Ausbrennen des Landkreises Buchen
Eight bound volumes, each oil, charcoal, and glue on twenty strips of burlap
23⅝ x 16½ x 3⅛" (60 x 42 x 8 cm) (each)
Private Collection

Piet Mondrian—Operation Sea Lion, 1975
Piet Mondrian—Unternehmen "Seelöwe"
Thirty-four double-page photographic images, mounted on cardboard and bound
22⁷⁄₁₆ x 16½ x 2" (57 x 42 x 5 cm)
Collection of Marian Goodman, New York

Piet Mondrian—Arminius's Battle, 1976
Piet Mondrian—Hermannsschlacht
Oil on canvas
96½ x 44¼" (245 x 112.5 cm)
Visser Collection, Retie, Belgium

Faith, Hope, Love, 1976
Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe
Watercolor and charcoal on paper
36⅝ x 24½" (93 x 62 cm)
Private Collection

Ways of Worldly Wisdom, 1976–77
Wege der Weltweisheit
Oil, acrylic, and shellac on burlap, mounted on canvas
120 x 196⅞" (305 x 500 cm)
Collection Sanders, Amsterdam

March Sand V, 1977
Märkischer Sand V
Twenty-five double-page photographic images, with sand, oil, and glue, mounted on cardboard and bound
24⅜ x 16⅝ x 3⅜" (62 x 42 x 8.5 cm)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Saul, New York

Tree with Palette, 1978
Baum mit Palette
Oil on canvas, with lead
108¼ x 75⅜" (275 x 191.5 cm)
Private Collection (courtesy Sonnabend Gallery, New York)

Brunhilde—Grane, 1978
Brünhilde—Grane
Woodcut, with oil
95½ x 76" (242.5 x 193 cm)
Private Collection (courtesy Sonnabend Gallery, New York)

Horror Vacui, 1979
Watercolor, gouache, and graphite on paper
16½ x 22" (42 x 56 cm)
Private Collection

Ways of Worldly Wisdom—Arminius's Battle, 1978–80
Wege der Weltweisheit—die Hermanns-Schlacht
Woodcut, with acrylic and shellac, mounted on canvas
126 x 196⅞" (320 x 500 cm)
The Art Institute of Chicago. Wirt D. Walker Fund and Restricted Gift from Mr. and Mrs. Noel Rothman, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dittmer, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Manilow, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Shapiro, and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Goldenberg

Ways: March Sand, 1980
Wege: märkischer Sand
Acrylic and sand on photograph, mounted on burlap
100⅜ x 141¾" (255 x 360 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

Ride to the Vistula, 1980
Ritt an die Weichsel
Oil on canvas
51³⁄₁₆ x 67" (130 x 170 cm)
Collection of Werner and Elaine Dannheisser, New York

Kyffhäuser, 1980
Photograph (1975), with acrylic and emulsion
22⅝ x 16½" (57.5 x 42 cm)
Collection of Emy and Jacques Cohenca, New York

To the Unknown Painter, 1980
Dem unbekannten Maler
Watercolor on paper
18½ x 19½" (47 x 49.5 cm)
Collection of Antonio Homem, New York

The Starred Heaven, 1980
Der gestirnte Himmel
Photograph (1969), with acrylic and emulsion
32⅞ x 23" (83.5 x 58.5 cm)
Collection of Eric Fischl, New York

Brunhilde Sleeps, 1980
Brünhilde schläft
Photograph (1969), with acrylic and emulsion, mounted on cardboard
23 x 32 11/16" (58.5 x 83 cm)
Private Collection

Broken Flowers and Grass, 1980
Gebrochen Blumen unde Gras
Photograph (1969), with oil, acrylic, and emulsion, mounted on cardboard
29 1/8 x 22 13/16" (74 x 58 cm)
Private Collection

The Painter's Studio, 1980
Des Malers Atelier
Photograph (1971), with oil, acrylic, and emulsion
23 x 26 3/4" (58.5 x 68 cm)
Collection of Dr. Rolf H. Krauss, Stuttgart

Chuwawa / Gilgamesh, 1980
Chuwawa / Gilgamesch
Photograph (1969), with acrylic and emulsion
31 x 23" (79 x 58.5 cm)
Private Collection (courtesy Lawrence Oliver Gallery, Philadelphia)

Gilgamesh in the Cedar Forest, 1980
Gilgamesch im Zedernwald
Photograph (1969), with acrylic and emulsion
39 1/2 x 29" (100.3 x 73.6 cm)
Private Collection (courtesy Lawrence Oliver Gallery, Philadelphia)

Midsummer Night IV, 1980
Johannisnacht IV
Thirty-two double-page photographic images, with acrylic, emulsion, and graphite, mounted on cardboard and bound
23 1/8 x 16 1/2 x 4 5/8" (59 x 42 x 12 cm)
Collection of Marian Goodman, New York

Kyffhäuser, 1980–81
Twenty-three double-page photographic images, with oil and emulsion, mounted on cardboard and bound
23 3/4 x 16 1/2 x 3 1/4" (60 x 42 x 8 cm)
Collection of Francesco and Alba Clemente, New York

Icarus—March Sand, 1981
Ikarus—märkischer Sand
Oil, emulsion, shellac, and sand on photograph, mounted on canvas
114 3/16 x 141 3/4" (290 x 360 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

Your Golden Hair, Margarete, 1981
Dein goldenes Haar, Margarethe
Oil, emulsion, and straw on canvas
51 3/16 x 67" (130 x 170 cm)
Collection Sanders, Amsterdam

Interior, 1981
Innenraum
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, straw, and shellac on canvas, with woodcut
113 x 122 7/16" (287 x 311 cm)
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

Palette with Wings, 1981
Palette mit Flügeln
Photograph, with oil
25 3/16 x 28 3/4" (64 x 73 cm)
Collection of David and Eileen Peretz (courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York)

Iconoclastic Controversy II, 1981
Bilderstreit II
Twenty double-page photographic images, with oil, mounted on cardboard and bound
22 7/8 x 17 x 3 1/8" (58 x 43 x 8 cm)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. David Pincus, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

The Mastersingers, 1981–82
Die Meistersinger
Oil, emulsion, and sand on photograph, mounted on canvas
110 1/4 x 149 5/8" (280 x 380 cm)
Private Collection

Wayland's Song (with Wing), 1982
Wölundlied (mit Flügel)
Oil, emulsion, and straw on photograph, mounted on canvas, with lead
110 1/4 x 149 5/8" (280 x 380 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

Nuremberg, 1982
Nürnberg
Acrylic, emulsion, and straw on canvas
110 1/4 x 149 5/8" (280 x 380 cm)
Collection of Eli and Edythe L. Broad, Los Angeles

Bunker, 1982
Watercolor on paper, with woodcut
19 1/2 x 25 3/16" (49.5 x 64 cm)
Private Collection, New York

To the Unknown Painter, 1982
Dem unbekannten Maler
Watercolor and pencil on paper
25 3/16 x 52 3/8" (64 x 133 cm)
Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London

To the Unknown Painter, 1982
Dem unbekannten Maler
Watercolor and pencil on paper
34 5/8 x 21 5/8" (88 x 55 cm)
Collection of Mrs. Mel Morris, London
(Los Angeles and New York only)

The Stairs, 1982–83
Die Treppe
Oil, emulsion, and straw on photograph, mounted on canvas
130 x 72 7/8" (330 x 185 cm)
Private Collection

Shulamite, 1983
Sulamith
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and straw on canvas, with woodcut
114 3/16 x 145 11/16" (290 x 370 cm)
Saatchi Collection, London

The Rhine, 1983
Der Rhein
Woodcut, with oil, acrylic, and shellac, mounted on canvas
110 1/4 x 110 1/4" (280 x 280 cm)
Collection of Céline and Heiner Bastian, Berlin

The Rhine, 1983
Der Rhein
Eighteen double-page woodcuts, with oil, mounted on cardboard and bound
23 3/16 x 16 9/16 x 2 15/16" (59 x 42 x 7.5 cm)
The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. Leisser Art Fund

The Rhine I, 1983
Der Rhein I
Twenty double-page woodcuts, mounted on cardboard and bound
23 1/2 x 16 1/2 x 3 1/2" (60 x 42 x 8.7 cm)
Private Collection

The Order of the Angels, 1983–84
Die Ordnung der Engel
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and straw on canvas, with cardboard and lead
130 x 218 1/2" (330 x 555 cm)
The Art Institute of Chicago. Restricted Gift of the Nathan Manilow Foundation and Lewis and Susan Manilow, and Samuel A. Marx Fund
(Chicago only)

Nigredo, 1984
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and straw on photograph, mounted on canvas, with woodcut
130 x 218 1/2" (330 x 555 cm)
Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gift of the Friends of the Philadelphia Museum of Art in celebration of their Twentieth Anniversary
(Philadelphia only)

Departure from Egypt, 1984
Auszug aus Ägypten
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and straw on canvas (in two parts), with lead
149½ x 221" (379.7 x 561.3 cm)
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Purchased with funds provided by Douglas S. Cramer, Beatrice and Philip Gersh, Lenore S. and Bernard A. Greenberg, Joan and Fred Nicholas, Robert A. Rowan, Pippa Scott, and an anonymous donor
(Los Angeles only)

The Book, 1979–85
Das Buch
Acrylic, emulsion, and shellac on canvas (in two parts), with zinc and lead
130 x 218½" (330 x 555 cm)
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Thomas M. Evans, Jerome L. Greene, Joseph H. Hirshhorn, and Sydney and Frances Lewis Purchase Fund

The Red Sea, 1984–85
Das Rote Meer
Oil, emulsion, and shellac on photograph, mounted on canvas, with woodcut and lead
109¾ x 167⅜" (278.8 x 425.1 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Enid A. Haupt Fund

The Miracle of the Serpents, 1984–85
Das Schlangenwunder
Shellac and photographs on projection paper
22 13/16 x 32 11/16" (58 x 83 cm)
Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Konrad M. Weis, Pittsburgh

Departure from Egypt, 1984–85
Auszug aus Ägypten
Acrylic, charcoal, and photograph, mounted on cardboard, with string
42½ x 33" (108 x 84 cm)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the Denise and Andrew Saul Fund

Emanation, 1984–85
Shellac on photograph, mounted on cardboard, with lead
22½ x 32" (57 x 81 cm)
Collection of Jerry and Emily Spiegel, Kings Point, New York

Palette with Wings, 1985
Palette mit Flügeln
Lead, steel, and tin
110¼ x 137¾ x 39⅜" (280 x 350 x 100 cm) (approximate)
Private Collection

Yggdrasil, 1985
Acrylic, emulsion, and shellac on photograph, with lead
40½ x 32⅞" (102.9 x 83.5 cm)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen H. Frishberg, Radnor, Pennsylvania

Untitled, 1980–86
Ohne Titel
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and charcoal on photograph, mounted on canvas, over canvas (in three parts), with lead and steel
130 x 218½" (330 x 555 cm)
Collection of Gerald S. Elliott, Chicago

Emanation, 1984–86
Oil, acrylic, and emulsion on canvas (in three parts), with lead
161⅜ x 110¼" (410 x 280 cm)
Collection of Céline and Heiner Bastian, Berlin

Jerusalem, 1986
Acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and gold leaf on canvas (in two parts), with steel and lead
150 x 220½" (380 x 560 cm)
Collection of Susan and Lewis Manilow, Chicago

Iron Path, 1986
Eisen-Steig
Oil, acrylic, and emulsion on canvas, with olive branches, iron, and lead
86⅝ x 149⅝" (220 x 380 cm)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. David Pincus, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

Saturn Time, 1986
Saturnzeit
Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, crayon, and photographs on canvas, with ferns and lead
110¼ x 130" (280 x 330 cm)
Private Collection

Fallen Pictures, 1986
Gefallene Bilder
Emulsion and photograph on cardboard, mounted on lead
40 13/16 x 55½" (102 x 141 cm)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. David Pincus, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

Midsummer Night, 1986
Johannisnacht
Acrylic, emulsion, and shellac on cardboard, mounted on lead, with fern, steel, and glass
39⅜ x 55½" (101 x 141 cm)
Private Collection

Isis and Osiris, 1986
Isis und Osiris
Acrylic, emulsion, crayon, and photograph on cardboard, mounted on lead, with steel and glass
39¾ x 55½" (101 x 141 cm)
Promised gift of Marion Stroud Swingle to the Philadelphia Museum of Art

Osiris and Isis, 1985–87
Osiris und Isis
Oil, acrylic, and emulsion on canvas (in two parts), with clay, porcelain, lead, copper wire, and circuit board
150 x 220½" (380 x 560 cm)
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Purchased through a gift of Jean Stein, by exchange, the Mrs. Paul L. Wattis Fund, and the Doris and Donald Fisher Fund

Thorough-Glow, 1985–87
Durch-Glühen
Twelve double-page photographic images, with clay, shellac, copper wire, lead, and porcelain, mounted on cardboard and bound
27½ x 20 x 3¼" (70 x 50.5 x 8.4 cm)
Private Collection

Siegfried Forgets Brunhilde, 1987
Siegfried vergisst Brünhilde
Seven double-page lead sheets, with clay and graphite, mounted on cardboard and bound
27½ x 14¾ x 1½" (71 x 50 x 4 cm)
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Resnick, Newtown Square, Pennsylvania

The Birth of the Sun, 1987
Die Geburt der Sonne
Nineteen double-page photographic images, with clay, acrylic, silver, copper, porcelain, and ink, mounted on cardboard and bound
27½ x 19¾ x 6" (70 x 50 x 15 cm)
Collection of Thomas and Shirley Davis, Woodside, California

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