

**Architectural Lessons from Anselm Kiefer: La Ribaute and the Space of Dramatic
Representation**

Stephen Alexander Wischer

School of Architecture
McGill University, Montreal
December 2020

A thesis submitted to McGill University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

© Stephen Wischer 2020

Table of Contents

List of Figures	iii
Abstract	xi
Acknowledgements	xv
Introduction: Anselm Kiefer and the Context of Architectural Representation	1
Chapter 1 La Tourette and La Ribaute: Depth and Translation in Architecture	17
Chapter 2 Anselm Kiefer and the Tradition of Theoretical Projects in Architecture	98
Chapter 3 Anselm Kiefer and Daniel Libeskind: The Limits of Architectural Representation	152
Chapter 4 Anselm Kiefer and John Hejduk: The Poetic Image and Kiefer's Architectural Language	190
Chapter 5 Anselm Kiefer and Frederick Kiesler: Endlessness and Ritual in Architecture	230
Conclusion: Anselm Kiefer and the Future of Theoretical Architecture	284
Bibliography	293

List of Figures

Chapter One

Figure 1.1	Le Corbusier, <i>Still Life</i>	23
Figure 1.2	Sainte-Marie de La Tourette.....	23
Figure 1.3	Sainte-Marie de La Tourette, hall towards chapel	23
Figure 1.4	Sainte-Marie de La Tourette, courtyard.....	23
Figure 1.5	Sainte-Marie de La Tourette, chapel.....	23
Figure 1.6	The property at La Ribaute, Barjac, France	27
Figure 1.7	House for painting, La Ribaute	27
Figure 1.8	Subterranean corridor, La Ribaute	27
Figure 1.9	<i>Shevirat Ha-Kelim</i> pavilion, La Ribaute	28
Figure 1.10	View into tunnel at La Ribaute.....	28
Figure 1.11	Amphitheatre at La Ribaute	28
Figure 1.12	<i>The Morgenthau Plan</i> pavilion, La Ribaute	30
Figure 1.13	Straw in Amphitheatre, La Ribaute	30
Figure 1.14	<i>The Morgenthau Plan</i>	30
Figure 1.15	<i>Margarete</i>	30
Figure 1.16	<i>Ash Flower</i>	34
Figure 1.17	<i>The Remains of the Sun</i>	34
Figure 1.18	View from crypt, La Ribaute.....	37
Figure 1.19	Tunnel at La Ribaute	37
Figure 1.20	Subterranean space, La Ribaute	37
Figure 1.21	Lead chamber, La Ribaute	38

Figure 1.22	Subterranean chamber, La Ribaute.....	38
Figure 1.23	<i>Shulamith</i>	45
Figure 1.24	The crypt, La Ribaute	45
Figure 1.25	Scaffold walkway, La Ribaute	46
Figure 1.26	Tectonic intersection, La Ribaute.....	46
Figure 1.27	Earthwork, La Ribaute.....	46
Figure 1.28	Towers, La Ribaute	48
Figure 1.29	Concrete, rebar and lead sculpture in glass house, La Ribaute.....	48
Figure 1.30	Lead books in glass house, La Ribaute.....	50
Figure 1.31	Detail of <i>A Snake in Paradise</i>	50
Figure 1.32	Stage set for Opera <i>Electra</i> , Madrid	58
Figure 1.33	Towers with sunflowers in field at La Ribaute	58
Figure 1.34	<i>Sternen-Lager IV</i>	65
Figure 1.35	Solarium of the Beistegui apartment (Le Corbusier).....	65
Figure 1.36	<i>Zweistromland – The High Priestess</i>	69
Figure 1.37	<i>The Breaking of Vessels</i>	69
Figure 1.38	<i>Monumenta 7</i> , Grand Palais.....	72
Figure 1.39	<i>Chute d'étoiles (Falling Stars)</i> at <i>Monumenta 7</i> , Grand Palais	72
Figure 1.40	Pavilions and sculpture, <i>Monumenta 7</i> , Grand Palais	72
Figure 1.41	<i>Isaac Abravanel: das Gastmahl des Levithan</i>	76
Figure 1.42	<i>Velimir Khlebnikov: Fates of Nations: The New Theory of War</i>	76
Figure 1.43	<i>Occupations</i>	80
Figure 1.44	<i>To Genet</i>	80

Figure 1.45	<i>You're a Painter and Germany's Spiritual Heroes</i>	80
Figure 1.46	<i>I Hold All Indias In My Hand</i>	84
Figure 1.47	Frontispiece from Robert Fludd's <i>A Metaphysical, Physical, and Technical History of Both Worlds, the Greater and Also the Lesser</i>	84
Figure 1.48	<i>Iconostase</i> from Le Corbusier's <i>Poème de l'Angle Droit</i>	84
Figure 1.49	<i>Modular Man</i> (level A.3) from Le Corbusier's <i>Poème de l'Angle Droit</i>	84
Figure 1.50	<i>The Famous Order of the Night</i>	85
Figure 1.51	<i>Starfall</i>	85
Figure 1.52	Mitrailette roof lights, Sainte-Marie de La Tourette	88
Figure 1.53	Interior lighting, Sainte-Marie de La Tourette	88
Figure 1.54	Aperture in subterranean space, La Ribaute.....	88
Figure 1.55	Cave with <i>The Women of the Revolution</i> , La Ribaute	88
Figure 1.56	Crypt and tunnel, La Ribaute	90
Figure 1.57	Concrete stairway, La Ribaute.....	90
Figure 1.58	Sculptural towers and stairs, La Ribaute.....	90

Chapter Two

Figure 2.1	Main corridor, <i>Walhalla</i> , White Cube Gallery, London	100
Figure 2.2	<i>Walhalla</i> vitrines	100
Figure 2.3	Piranesi, <i>Carceri d'Invenzione</i> , Plate VII.....	103
Figure 2.4	Piranesi, <i>Carceri d'Invenzione</i> , Plate X	103
Figure 2.5	Piranesi, <i>Carceri d'Invenzione</i> , Plate XIV (1743-1745).....	112
Figure 2.6	Piranesi, <i>Carceri d'Invenzione</i> , Plate XIV (1761)	112
Figure 2.7	<i>Walhalla</i> painting	115

Figure 2.8	Detail of <i>Walhalla</i> painting	115
Figure 2.9	<i>Seven Heavenly Palaces</i> , Hangar Bianca, Milan.....	119
Figure 2.10	<i>Böse Blumen</i>	119
Figure 2.11	<i>Gehäutete Landschaft</i>	120
Figure 2.12	<i>Philemon in stasis</i>	120
Figure 2.13	<i>Walhalla</i> , detail.....	120
Figure 2.14	<i>Emanation</i> (1986).....	122
Figure 2.15	<i>Emanation</i> (2000).....	122
Figure 2.16	<i>Emanation</i> , Museum Goslar, Germany	122
Figure 2.17	<i>Emanation</i> , vitrine at <i>Walhalla</i>	122
Figure 2.18	<i>Sersum Corda</i> room.....	123
Figure 2.19	<i>Lilith's Daughters</i>	123
Figure 2.20	<i>Steigend, steigend, sinke nieder</i>	131
Figure 2.21	Main corridor, <i>Walhalla</i>	132
Figure 2.22	<i>Rorate Caeli desuper</i>	132
Figure 2.23	<i>March Heath</i>	134
Figure 2.24	<i>Iron Path</i>	134
Figure 2.25	<i>San Loreto</i> room, <i>Walhalla</i>	137
Figure 2.26	<i>Interior</i>	137
Figure 2.27	Boullée, <i>Metropolitan Basilica au temps des Ténèbres</i>	141
Figure 2.28	<i>To The Supreme Being</i>	141
Figure 2.29	Boullée, <i>Cénotaphe de Turenne</i>	144
Figure 2.30	<i>Osiris and Isis</i>	144

Figure 2.31	<i>Awake in the Gypsy Camp and the Desert Tent, Sand Runs Out of Our Hair</i>	145
Figure 2.32	<i>Sand from the Urns.....</i>	145

Chapter Three

Figure 3.1	Libeskind, <i>Micromegas</i> drawing.....	156
Figure 3.2	Libeskind, <i>Micromegas</i> drawing.....	156
Figure 3.3	<i>The Elegant Universe</i>	156
Figure 3.4	<i>Ramanujan Summation.....</i>	158
Figure 3.5	<i>The Veneziano Amplitude</i>	158
Figure 3.6	Detail, <i>String Action</i>	159
Figure 3.7	Libeskind, <i>Chamber Works</i> drawing.....	159
Figure 3.8	Libeskind, <i>Chamber Works</i> drawing.....	159
Figure 3.9	Jewish Museum, Berlin	163
Figure 3.10	<i>Heliogabal</i>	163
Figure 3.11	Spatial Void, Jewish Museum, Berlin	163
Figure 3.12	<i>Arsenal</i> room, <i>Walhalla</i>	167
Figure 3.13	<i>Sternen-Lager</i>	167
Figure 3.14	E.T.A. Hoffmann Garden (Garden of Exile and Emigration)	170
Figure 3.15	Stelae in the E.T.A. Hoffmann Garden (Garden of Exile and Emigration)	170
Figure 3.16	Holocaust Void, Jewish Museum, Berlin.....	170
Figure 3.17	Lead beds, main corridor, <i>Walhalla</i>	173
Figure 3.18	Lead film reels in <i>Arsenal, Walhalla</i>	173
Figure 3.19	<i>Nuremberg</i>	181
Figure 3.20	<i>Nubes Pluant Ustem</i>	181

Figure 3.21	<i>Morgenthau-das goldene Zeitalter</i> , vitrine.....	182
Figure 3.22	<i>Shulamith</i>	182
Chapter Four		
Figure 4.1	Hejduk, sketches of main court for the <i>Lancaster-Hannover Masque</i>	193
Figure 4.2	Hejduk “Objects” and “Subjects,” <i>Lancaster-Hannover Masque</i>	193
Figure 4.3	Hejduk, “Objects,” <i>Lancaster-Hannover Masque</i>	193
Figure 4.4	<i>Women of the Revolution</i> , Mass MoCA	197
Figure 4.5	<i>Thor</i> vitrine, <i>Walhalla</i>	197
Figure 4.6	<i>Hortus philosophorum</i> vitrine, <i>Walhalla</i>	197
Figure 4.7	<i>Germany’s Spiritual Heroes</i>	199
Figure 4.8	<i>Brünhilde</i> bed, <i>Walhalla</i> corridor.....	199
Figure 4.9	<i>Heroic Symbols</i>	204
Figure 4.10	<i>To Genet</i>	204
Figure 4.11	<i>The Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen IV</i>	204
Figure 4.12	<i>Markische Sand IV</i>	204
Figure 4.13	<i>Zweistronmland – The High Priestess</i>	205
Figure 4.14	Book 36 from <i>Zweistromland – The High Priestess</i>	205
Figure 4.15	<i>Väinämöinen such die drei fehlende Buchstaben</i>	207
Figure 4.16	Detail, <i>Väinämöinen such die drei fehlende Buchstaben</i>	207
Figure 4.17	Detail, <i>Right Wing, Left Wing</i>	207
Figure 4.18	Hejduk, <i>Victims</i> , site plan.....	211
Figure 4.19	Hejduk, <i>Victims</i> , “Objects” and “Subjects”	211
Figure 4.20	<i>Jericho</i> installation, Royal Academy Courtyard	222

Figure 4.21	Interior of <i>Jericho</i> tower.....	222
Figure 4.22	<i>Rapunzel</i>	222
Figure 4.23	Hejduk, <i>Studio of a Musician</i>	223
Figure 4.24	Hejduk, <i>Studio of a Musician</i>	223
Figure 4.25	Hejduk, <i>The Collapse of Time</i> drawings	223
Figure 4.26	Hejduk, <i>The Collapse of Time</i> , Bedford Square, London	223

Chapter Five

Figure 5.1	Kiesler, <i>Us, You, Me</i>	234
Figure 5.2	Kiesler, <i>Bucephalus</i>	234
Figure 5.3	Kiesler, <i>Space Stage</i>	234
Figure 5.4	Kiesler, interior of Endless House.....	235
Figure 5.5	Kiesler. Endless House model	235
Figure 5.6	<i>Sol Invictus</i>	237
Figure 5.7	<i>Man under a Pyramid</i>	237
Figure 5.8	<i>I Hold All Indias In My Hand</i>	237
Figure 5.9	<i>To Robert Fludd</i>	237
Figure 5.10	Kiesler, <i>City in Space</i>	239
Figure 5.11	<i>Chute d'étoiles (Falling Stars)</i> , <i>Monumenta 7</i>	239
Figure 5.12	Sculpture and fragments, <i>Monumenta 7</i>	239
Figure 5.13	<i>Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot</i> , White Cube Gallery, London	241
Figure 5.14	Vitrines from <i>Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot</i>	241
Figure 5.15	Sleeping quarters, La Ribaute.....	250
Figure 5.16	Tunnel connecting studio and living spaces, La Ribaute	250

Figure 5.17	Interior of tunnel, La Ribaute	250
Figure 5.18	Studio areas, La Ribaute.....	251
Figure 5.19	Still from Sophie Fiennes' <i>Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow</i>	251
Figure 5.20	<i>In the Beginning</i> , Opera Bastille, Paris	280
Figure 5.21	<i>In the Beginning</i> , Opera Bastille, Paris	280

Abstract

This dissertation examines the architectural significance of Anselm Kiefer's situated art practice at his studio La Ribaute, in conjunction with works and spaces from a number of the artist's installations, showing how it involves a self-conscious involvement between spatiality and its representation. The intent is to show how Kiefer's creations allow us to explore the *representational capacity of architecture*, whereby the act of working sets the tone for thinking about architecture as poetic translation rather than the direct transcription of information. Because Kiefer's creations accentuate how material and mind, physical and psychical worlds interweave through various tools and modes of production is why it reveals new lessons for the pedagogy and practice of architecture that have not previously been considered. This dissertation aims to bridge this gap, exploring how his work significantly enriches our understanding of the processes used to conceive architectural atmospheres that involve linguistic, expressive, and indeed spiritual possibilities that have continued unabated in Kiefer's productions.

To unpack this hypothesis, a number of kindred architects are used as sounding boards to demonstrate how Kiefer's creations offer lessons to architects that go beyond other architecture. My hypothesis is that Kiefer's work belongs with other Western architects which in the last two hundred years have produced critical/theoretical projects of great importance and I explain Kiefer's contributions using these works as a foil. Because Kiefer's work partakes from the same abstraction and autonomy of representation commonly used in the construction of ideas about form and space in the education and practice of architects, his work allows us to consider our own approaches to the discovery and generation of meaningful plots and stories through the incarnation of space, time, memory and imagination, which remains intrinsic to architecture. The space of participation opened up by Kiefer's creations thus allows us to consider his work as a

model of architectural representation which reveals new insights into the prospective role that representations may play as a work of architecture in and of themselves, and as tools for unfolding possibilities in design that avoid reductive applications. The claim is Kiefer's work is architectural. The modes by which he creates are here understood as being as intrinsic to architectural discourse in the twenty-first century as it has been to reflection and commentary on art over the last fifty years.

Résumé

Cette thèse examine la signification architecturale de la pratique artistique *in situ* d'Anselm Kiefer dans son atelier La Ribaute, en conjonction avec les œuvres et les espaces de plusieurs installations de l'artiste, en montrant comment elles impliquent l'émergence d'une relation consciente entre l'espace et sa représentation. Les créations de Kiefer sont ainsi capable de nourrir une réflexion sur la capacité de représentation de l'architecture, où l'acte de travailler donne lieu à une traduction poétique plutôt que l'enregistrement sec d'information. Parce que les créations de Kiefer accentuent la façon dont les mondes matériel et mental, physique et psychique, s'entremêlent par l'entremise de divers outils et modes de production, elles révèlent de nouvelles leçons pour la pédagogie et la pratique de l'architecture jamais envisagées auparavant. Cette thèse vise à combler ce fossé, en explorant comment son travail enrichit de manière significative notre compréhension des processus utilisés pour concevoir des atmosphères architecturales qui impliquent des possibilités linguistiques, expressives et même spirituelles telle que poursuivies sans relâche par Kiefer.

Afin de mieux explorer cette hypothèse, une comparaison avec le travail de certains architectes dont la pratique offre des analogies au travail de Kiefer, servira à démontrer comment les créations de Kiefer permet aux architectes d'en tirer leçons qui vont bien au-delà de ce que l'architecture comme telle puisse offrir. Mon hypothèse est que le travail de Kiefer doit être classé avec celui d'autres architectes occidentaux qui, au cours des deux cents dernières années, ont produit des projets critiques / théoriques d'une grande importance et qui peuvent jeter une nouvelle lumière sur les contributions de Kiefer. Parce que ces dernières relèvent de la même abstraction et autonomie de représentation couramment utilisées dans la construction d'idées sur la forme et l'espace dans la formation et la pratique de ces architectes, son travail nous fait

réfléchir à comment intrigues et histoires peuvent s'incarner dans l'espace, le temps, la mémoire et l'imaginaire, tous domaines intrinsèques à l'architecture. L'espace de participation ouvert par les créations de Kiefer nous permet donc de considérer son travail comme un modèle de représentation architecturale, justement parce que la représentation est elle-même architecture, en tant qu'outils de déploiement de mondes possibles, tout en évitant les applications réductrices. La thèse générale est que le travail de Kiefer est proprement architectural. Ses œuvres, de par leurs modalités, sont autant intrinsèques au discours architectural du XXI^e siècle qu'elles le sont à celui de l'art des cinquante dernières années.

Acknowledgements

Much gratitude to Anselm Kiefer for the lessons his work offers to the future history of architecture and human dwelling. Many thanks also to Eva König and Waltraud Forelli at the Atelier Anselm Kiefer who arranged my tour of Kiefer's studio and for granting permissions for images in earlier publications leading up to this study.

I am also deeply indebted to the many scholars of Kiefer's work that have allowed specific lessons to emerge across the disciplinary bounds of art history and architecture. Thanks to Danièle Cohn, the Director of Philosophical Aesthetics at the Panthéon-Sorbonne, for meeting with me in a Paris Café during the early stages of this research, and whose writing has allowed entry into the world of Kiefer's studios. Much gratitude also to Michael Auping, curator of the MoMA in Fort Worth Texas, whose fresh approach to writing about Kiefer's studio inspired my interdisciplinary approach, and through whom my contact with Atelier Kiefer was made possible. Deep gratitude also to the numerous authors that make up the bibliographic references in the back of this volume. Specifically, the work of the late art historian Daniel Arasse has provided penetrating insight into the patterns and developments in Kiefer's oeuvre that has been essential for convergences with architecture and its dramatic form of representation.

Most essential are the many debts owed to mentors in the History and Theory of Architecture Graduate Program at McGill University, Montreal. First and foremost, deepest gratitude to my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Alberto Pérez-Gómez, whose world-changing teaching and writing has provided the best possible guidance over a long journey of research and whose insight continuously reveals the enigmatic intertwining of Architecture and life. Many thanks also to the many visiting critics to the History and Theory of Architecture program. Specifically, feedback from Juhani Pallasmaa, Marco Frascari and David Leatherbarrow, as well

as Louise Pelletier, Louis Brilliant, Michael Jemtrud, Torben Berns and Marc Neveu at the beginning of my study allowed the contours of this work to form through insightful bibliographic suggestion. Members of my committee, Lisa Landrum and Ricardo Castro, have provided encouragement as well as important advice regarding the methodological framework of the work that has been invaluable to the process. A special thank you is also deserving to Martin Bressani for the careful translation of my Abstract into French. My experience at McGill continues to be a real privilege, affording the time and space necessary to deepen my understanding of the interdependence of history and theory on all my teaching and artistic endeavors.

I would also like to thank my many students and colleagues in the Department of Architecture at North Dakota State University, who have allowed the reciprocity between thinking and doing, teaching and learning, to emerge. Regular conversations with David Bertolini, Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science, have provided continuous encouragement. I have also benefitted from interaction with my many talented students, specifically with regard to their creation of artefacts for their Graduate thesis projects, where the relationship of theory and practice so central to the spirit of this study have been tangibly realized. Foremost, is the dialogue and continuous support of my former student, now architect and teacher, Niloufar Alenjery whose commitment to critical architecture is deeply inspiring. Last but not least, much thanks to the librarians and staff at both McGill and NDSU for their diligent aid that has allowed this research to continue.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my family and closest friends for providing the atmosphere necessary to continue this work. Thanks to partners and friends for the adventures. To Kourtney, Leo and Stephanus, who are a continuous source of day-to-day inspiration and support. To Amy Trimble, for the insight of amity and the gift of friendship.

Most importantly, deepest gratitude to my parents, Steve and Maureen Wischer, to whom I dedicate this dissertation, and whose continuous support and life-long encouragement taught me the value of artistic creation, craftsmanship, hard work and human dwelling long before my academic studies.

Introduction: Anselm Kiefer and the Context of Architectural Representation

To understand the lessons Anselm Kiefer offers to the contemporary context of architecture, this dissertation draws upon the critical hermeneutics proposed by architectural historian and theorist Dr. Alberto Pérez-Gómez, whose life-long work within the field shows deep resonances with Kiefer's creations when understood as a critical alternative to the reductive working methods of most contemporary practice. In our current context, the representational tools employed by Kiefer thus carry important parallels with Pérez-Gómez' discussion of the crucial role of representation on the task of architectural thinking and doing, stemming from his critique of the increasing rise of "the functionalization" of architectural theory and practice and bifurcations between thinking and doing that gained ascendancy towards the middle of the seventeenth century. This study not only situates Kiefer's work within these larger developments but draws from such insight to bring about an important awareness of a prereflective ground for framing meaningful tasks that involves both personal and broad cultural foundations to orient action.¹ This is an approach informed by the process of making, never reducible to transparent technical tasks. Rather it seeks to understand the historical background from which these practices arise and uses such knowledge as orientation.² The methodology of this dissertation is itself inspired by this approach, seeking resonances between Kiefer's work and architecture in a dialogical way. Here, the artist's creations are examined as a critical counterpoint to the

¹ Making visible what the German philosopher Hans Georg-Gadamer describes as "the contemporaneous relationship of past and present," the critical argumentation established by Pérez-Gómez' provides a crucial foil through which to draw valuable insight from Kiefer's creations, examining ways in which they transcend any system of aesthetics born from seventeenth century rationalism, the reduction of art to categorical ideas, or the assumption of linear perspective arising from the Enlightenment. Clarifying the legitimate role of art and architecture until the seventeenth century, Pérez-Gómez reminds us how traditional creations always existed in relation to larger cultural narratives and never in relation to formal analogies or discipline-specific applications alone. In the modern context, following scientific models which pose a distinction between past and present, inside and outside, subjective and objective terms, such insight allows us to consider Kiefer's creations as a work that incites an intersubjective exchange that does not assume history to be beyond the reception of his work.

² Peter Olshavsky, "Foreword: The Untimely Thinking of Alberto Pérez-Gómez" in *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*, vol. 1 (Montreal: Right Angle International, 2016), XXIX.

reductive tendencies of formalist and functionalist modern art or architecture in the sense that they provide a layering of meaning over the world of perception in critical, poetic, architectural terms.

In 2014, Anselm Kiefer himself, well-known for his emotionally powerful atmospheric creations, provided poignant statements about relationships between work done at his former home and studio La Ribaute (1993-2008) outside Barjac France and architecture in similar terms.³ During discussion about his retrospective at the Royal Academy of Art in London (2014), intended to be a “concentration of Barjac,” Kiefer responded to comparisons of his work with “the larger phenomenon of gigantism in contemporary art, manifest in everything from Anish Kapoor’s Olympic Tower to various Tate Modern installations,” stating, “What you’re talking about is public art, art that is part of architecture. What I do has nothing to do with that.”⁴ Considering Kiefer’s integrated acts of painting, sculpting and building it is easy to see why he rejects the inappropriate categorization of his work with other typically large, abstract, modernist sculptures made for government or corporate plazas and atriums as well as most “public art.” Instead, Kiefer’s work opens dialogue with eternal questions of existence that interrogate the very possibility of finding a place in the world amid the situation of modern humanity. Recently, in 2020, Kiefer has gone so far as to instruct his galleries not to exhibit his work in global art fairs such as Frieze, stating passionately: “They destroy art. They destroy it.”⁵ Of the ever larger paintings he produces, Kiefer says, “I like them because they are so big that nobody can show

³ Anselm Kiefer’s La Ribaute is located outside the small town of Barjac, France. The compound remains private, still a part of his artistic practice and one in a series of studios. My visit to Kiefer’s studio occurred on May 17, 2014, in a small group that was guided through certain areas by one of Kiefer’s assistants.

⁴ See Mark Hudson, “Anselm Kiefer on life, legacy and Barjac: ‘I have no style, I’m not a brand,’” *The Telegraph*, September 2014, [telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-features/11109299/Anselm-Kiefer-on-life-legacy-and-Barjac-I-have-no-style-Im-not-a-brand.html](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-features/11109299/Anselm-Kiefer-on-life-legacy-and-Barjac-I-have-no-style-Im-not-a-brand.html).

⁵ See Sean O’Hagan’s article “Anselm Kiefer: When I make a truly great painting, then I feel real,” *The Guardian*, November 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/nov/25/anselm-kiefer-when-i-make-a-truly-great-painting-then-i-feel-real>.

them ... I have placed myself outside of the art market.”⁶ All such comments point to an inherent skepticism Kiefer holds towards the institutionalization and aestheticism of art; a position aligned with critical discourse regarding the diverse forms of more or less gratuitous formalism in contemporary architectural practices.

More encouraging are comments given by Kiefer in a conversation with Michael Prodger (also in 2014), which included Kiefer’s own description of his studio as a form of “reverse architecture.”⁷ This not only recalls Kiefer’s symbolic play with paradox, or the way he has “reversed” typical construction processes in the violent excavations and crumbling sculptures at La Ribaute, but also the stream of metaphors that have long been associated with the creation and experience of his art, deemed to be “an archeology in reverse,” whereby layering and burial presents a “dialectical wedding between exhuming and entombing.”⁸ Importantly, an encounter with Kiefer’s work is also *reversible* in the sense that it challenges our pre-established ideas of space as a homogenous (geometric) entity and time as linear; two notions inseparable from modern-day aesthetics and the standard treatment of space in architecture, each prefaced on separation from the spatial and narrative structure of embodied reality. Being atmospheric, Kiefer’s work in fact seems poised to confront architecture precisely because it disrupts spatial and temporal perspectives that are typically considered normal. Indeed, something far more pervasive occurs within the ambiguous mixtures of materials and themes at Kiefer’s studio that is never merely seductive or “interactive.” Opening pathways between us and the world his

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See Michael Prodger’s article “Inside Anselm Kiefer’s Astonishing 220-acre art studio,” *The Guardian*, Sept. 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/sep/12/anselm-kiefer-royal-academy-retrospective-german-painter-sculptor>.

⁸ Donald Kuspit has focused on “archeologism” as a distinctive trait in Kiefer’s art, since it involves a “free combination of numerous historical styles and references in a single work.” Cited in Daniel Arasse’s *Anselm Kiefer* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001), 291. See also Donald Kuspit’s discussion of Kiefer’s “palimpsest of styles and themes” in *The New Subjectivism: Art in the 1980s* (Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1988), 531-37.

creations reveal the space of the world to be thick and endowed with dimensions because it shows us that vision is not homologous to “three-dimensional” pictures in Cartesian space. In other words, his work consistently transforms the neutrality of quantifiable space into the qualitative specificity of place and encounter. As Mark Hudson suggests: “Once you’ve immersed yourself in the fractured, densely encrusted surfaces of Kiefer’s work you find yourself noticing the textures of the world around you with greater intensity.”⁹ It is the degree to which Kiefer envelops us in the material layers of paintings, sculptures or all-encompassing environments that defies classification with other arts (and certainly most architecture) since it includes the emotions and minds of the spectator in an experience that is never disinterested or purely intellectual. When the uncertain mood of Kiefer’s work comes over us, emotions and thoughts seem to be mirrored in the work in front of us and this instigates an awareness of an in-between of reality often presupposed to be dualistic in the way space is understood as separate from the act of perceiving. As Kiefer suggests, it accomplishes this by situating itself outside the specialized aims of contemporary aesthetics and most architecture. In so doing, it provides crucial insights into the potential impact our own creations might have on human life.

To explore this potential, my dissertation interprets the architectural significance of Kiefer’s situated art practice through work done at his former home and studio at La Ribaute, showing how it involves a self-conscious involvement between spatiality and its representation. The intent of this study is to show how Kiefer’s creations allow us to explore the representational capacity of architecture; not only because of its ability to move us in ways that other works of art or architecture cannot, but because this is intrinsically entwined with a process of discovery whereby Kiefer’s acts of working (the work itself) sets the tone for thought. Because the diverse modes of his creations accentuate how material and mind, physical and psychical worlds

⁹ Hudson.

interweave through various tools and modes of production is why it reveals new lessons for the pedagogy and practice of architecture that have not previously been considered. This dissertation aims to bridge this gap, exploring how his work significantly enriches our understanding of the processes used to conceive architectural atmospheres that involve linguistic, expressive, and indeed spiritual possibilities that have continued unabated in Kiefer's productions. Thus, while it is generally agreed that Kiefer is one of the most extraordinary living artists, my position is that his creations provide lessons for architects, and a few words are needed to contextualize this approach.

Because architects today rarely build the buildings they design but are rather concerned with creating artefacts used to communicate ideas about architecture, it seems obvious that the tools and approaches we use deeply affect the processes and outcomes of designing. What we think affects what we do, and, in turn, what we do affects how and what we think. Amid the current practice of architecture, often reduced to the production of visual images or the novel creation of form, Kiefer's work poses a vital challenge to the typical expectations of architectural representations that involve either projections of spatial volumes created *before* construction or ones aimed at accurately narrowing the gap between the conception and realization of an architectural work. Like other works of art, multi-media installations and film, Kiefer's creations involve a different use of projection that emerges from the same historical situation and works of modern art that sought to "transcend dehumanizing technological values (often concealed in a world we think we control) through the incorporation of a critical position," aimed at *augmenting reality* rather than reducing it.¹⁰ And yet, because Kiefer's work is so apt to confront, envelop and implicate us beyond aestheticized experience is also why it goes further than other arts to

¹⁰ Alberto Pérez-Gómez, "The Historical Context of Contemporary Architectural Representation," in *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*, vol. 2 (Montreal: Right Angle International, 2016), 209.

show the primacy of a fully tactile, sensuous and embodied perception over conceptual constructions as a foremost aspect to the creation of architectural work. Considering how Kiefer's atmospheres engage and transform, my dissertation identifies the way the space opened up *between dimensions* of his painting, sculpting and construction of environments emphasize how the things we use to think about architecture are never neutral. Through an analysis of work done at La Ribaute, along with works and spaces that occur at a number of Kiefer's installations, I will show how his work reveals the importance of the role of making on thinking, and how this transmits a new awareness about the impact our own creations might have on our perception of the world.

The reason Kiefer's many modes of representing and constructing space are important for architects is not only because they move us in a visceral way but also because they produce images and tell stories that arise within the various registers of his work. Much of this study is devoted to showing how his creations not only convey sensation and emotions but also allow cognitive meanings to emerge through the materials, settings and the event of the work itself.¹¹ Indeed, the difference between Kiefer's work and many other arts is that whereas other forms of painting and sculpture can be misinterpreted to be decorative, preserved in museums, or placed in public settings as aesthetic objects, the work Kiefer creates is "occupied" poetically (often physically entered) and this promotes a deeply affective, often disturbing engagement that gives rise to thoughts about the world and its history. It is Kiefer's involvement with "the primacy of materiality, craft and temporal human participation in building" that invigorates a relationship

¹¹ Alberto Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement: Architectural Meaning after the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2016), 23.

between spatial interaction and thought (theory and practice) that is of interest to architects in a number of ways.¹²

Firstly, Kiefer's work is already very much like works used by architects, always mediated in some way, through models, drawings, written and spoken language that we use to communicate ideas about architecture. In fact, much of Kiefer's work is architectural in a literal way because it depicts places, various architectural structures and monuments, and uses written names or references to point back to the world. More importantly, Kiefer's work is of value to architecture since these same creations do something *differently* than the methods typically employed by architects. Undeniably, the often unnerving historical references and stories for which Kiefer is well-known are unlike the seamless images produced by our machines that allow us to conceive a picture of the world within our computers, or ones which demand a perfectly coordinated set of projections judged from a detached, intellectual perspective. Rather, the incongruent activity opened up in the intense material facture and gaps formed within the hollows of space-time in the various registers of his work is what confronts and implicates the viewer showing how the senses interact with thought. In other words, Kiefer's creations are never direct. They require a struggle in both the creation and reception of the work that is always in conflict with preconceived ideas. And, precisely because his creations are murky, dense, and ambiguous, is also why they involve a necessarily emotional, kinesthetic and multi-sensorial dimension of communication that is far less abstracted from our experience of the world than the technical images and means of construction employed in most architecture. Like the awareness one has in a conversation that comes with all the inflections and insinuations one might sense in spoken or gestural language, or as with the experience of music, which moves us at a level well beneath analytical thought, we feel in Kiefer's creations the need to communicate and this has as

¹² Pérez-Gómez, "The Historical Context of Contemporary Architectural Representation," 208.

much do with the physical act of making the work as it does with the many associations and historical paths one can take when reading into them. It will thus be argued that it is Kiefer's unprecedented ability to recombine forms and references which produce striking images within us that most demonstrates its capacity to function as an *architectural model* that sponsors a re-description and transformation of the space of the world we occupy and the reality we often take for granted.

Therefore, the central issue in Kiefer's work is that unlike the standardized approaches to architectural representation which imparts objective information towards descriptive documentation, depiction or construction, Kiefer's work is always relational in another way. Like metaphor, it maintains an enigmatic distance between the reality of the world and its projection. Almost exactly like a poem, Kiefer's creations are renewed every time we return to them, and the ambiguous mixtures of objects, materials and gestures allows his work to gather various stories from collective culture. Both works of art and architectural models, his creation of work gives the impression of endless columns of possibility that may enhance the task of translating meaning in architecture.

The claim then is that Kiefer's work is architectural. That might seem a stretch to some, since clearly his concerns have nothing to do with housing or sustainable cities. Yet, his use of tools and modes of representation partake from the same abstraction of architectural representation commonly used in the construction of ideas about form and space in the education and practice of architects.¹³ In the hands of Kiefer, these same tools pose essential challenges to the modes of making that often curtail a deeper inquiry because they involve an interpretive

¹³ Of his creation of the amphitheater at La Ribaute, Kiefer states laughing, "This is a kind of architecture, without architects." When asked if he would want to design a building, Kiefer responds that he creates "skins" around his paintings but admits that he knows nothing about "security and all that stuff." See "Art is Spiritual," Anselm Kiefer in Conversation with Tim Marlow, a recorded conversation held in advance of Kiefer's exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, Apr. 2, 2014, YouTube video, 50:17, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlm5tgistqA>.

relationship that emerges in the act of creating work. Never reducible to a fixed concept or singular meaning, I examine how such work poses a challenge to the assumption of the tools accepted as a standard for conceiving architecture that is inherently unable to combine different structures of reference. Unlike the ridged and homogenous space often taken for granted in architectural design, the “reversals” that occur in an encounter with Kiefer’s creations involve the retrieval of the spectator’s prereflective understanding of the space we occupy, always dependent upon a co-emergent relationship between body, mind and world. This is a fundamental condition for an awareness of the primacy of qualitative *place* in being, and thus for the appearance of genuine architectural meanings.

Kiefer’s well-known ability to tell stories in his work also relates to the traditions of architecture in a more direct way since it is predicated on a participation of individuals and the reinterpretation of broad cultural grounds. Granted, Kiefer’s works are critical, skeptical, and impossible to occupy in the everyday world. But, unlike formal or functional art or architecture, it is also *hermeneutic* in the sense that it affects an active overlapping between ourselves and historical material that is always about tradition and innovation. Among the first to reinvigorate the narrative capacity of art in the postwar context, Kiefer’s productions continue to dramatize historical and mythical themes in paintings, sculptures, books and installations as much as in his creation of pavilions, towers and tunnels in the sense that all are spaces that can be “emptied and filled with different memories and ideas.”¹⁴ Understood in relation to our current techniques for representing, developing and fabricating architecture, such work reveals how our relation to the world is always *mediated* and that artefacts used to communicate ideas about architecture are essential to creating atmospheres that may point beyond themselves, providing sites of existential

¹⁴ Markus Brüderlin, “The Exhibition ‘the Seven Heavenly Palaces’ Passages through Worlds and Cosmic Spaces,” in *Anselm Kiefer: the Seven Heavenly Palaces 1973-2001* (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2001), 33.

orientation. For this reason, Kiefer's work allows us to consider our own approaches to the discovery and generation of meaningful plots and stories through the incarnation of space, time, memory and imagination, which remains intrinsic to architecture.

To unpack this hypothesis, I will make use of a number of kindred architects as sounding boards to demonstrate how the work done at La Ribaute, as well as a select series of Kiefer's public installations, offer lessons to architects that go beyond other architecture. My hypothesis is that the consideration of Kiefer's work belongs with that of other Western architects which in the last two hundred years have produced critical/theoretical projects of great importance, and I intend to explain Kiefer's contributions using these other characters, their books and works as a foil. While rare, critical projects have launched a "resistance" to the reduction of architecture to instrumental attitudes, and close comparisons with such bodies of work help draw Kiefer into a closer proximity with architecture while allowing Kiefer's insight to emerge. The following is a summary of the chapters of this dissertation, which frame Kiefer's work as being as intrinsic to architectural discourse in the twenty-first century as it has been to reflection and commentary on contemporary art over the last fifty years.

In the first chapter, the works of Le Corbusier, well-known to have drawn influence from his creation of paintings in the design of buildings such as La Tourette, allow inquiry into the space of translation between Kiefer's own paintings and the spatial experience of La Ribaute to emerge in distinctly architectural terms. Seen through changes that occur at remarkably similar intervals across their respective careers, I examine how the transition away from perspectival representations in their works produce labyrinthine experiences of depth not reducible to a Cartesian understanding of space or time. Here, I go so far as to suggest that the participation opened up between the various registers of Kiefer's work is a primary reason La Ribaute can be

considered to be a part of great paradigmatic, spiritual works of twentieth century architecture in the same manner as La Tourette. Similarities exist because the metaphoric space of collage in Kiefer's work allows us to participate with tense combinations of materials and forms that both separate and join together references in architectural experience.¹⁵ A main emphasis of this chapter is an examination of how Kiefer's work is also potentially richer than Le Corbusier's practice (his quotidian "plastic experimentation") as a form generator for architecture. It shows more directly how artistic processes are translated into material, architectonic forms that make possible an inherent questioning of the reduction of a work of art or architecture to an aestheticized object. Although Kiefer's work is obviously different from Le Corbusier's in the sense that it sits outside conventional architectural concerns ("bracketing" considerations such as architectural program) this insight is crucial in the pedagogy and processes of producing work that may yield to good architecture because it speaks empathetically to inhabitants through haptic qualities. Examining how Kiefer effects an interaction with materials that allow images to arise in-between acts of painting, sculpting and building, through the resistance of matter at the level of making, opens a space for meaning to arise that is not separate from its representation.

It is precisely at this level, as a form of *architectural representation*, that the work done at La Ribaute provides a crucial challenge to a world more and more deliberately conceived in functionalistic or aesthetic terms or in the intangible abstractions of cyberspace since it forces a participation of the embodied observer for its completion in opposition to the 'passivity' of the cybernetic or aesthetic subject. In a context where architecture is often reduced to instrumental applications employed towards "innovation" and "progress," Kiefer's exploration of twentieth-century materials, forms and symbols, and their relationship to spiritual possibilities, provides a contemporary example that is fully dependent on the creative transformation of historical traces.

¹⁵ Pérez-Gómez, "The Historical Context of Contemporary Architectural Representation," 232.

Concluding portions of this chapter examine Kiefer's use of history (and time itself) as a "material," investigating the self-referential and critical stance his work poses to the everyday world which most differentiates his work from other architecture. This shows more directly the ecumenical value of modern spirituality in art and emphasizes how Kiefer's combinations of representation and technology may influence the conceptualization of building processes as something open to physical change and transformation. Comparisons with La Tourette thus allow us to see Kiefer's La Ribaute as a poetic work in modern/contemporary architecture that employs technology towards building in a profoundly spiritual way.

The second chapter further explores such possibilities, situating Kiefer's work within the tradition of theoretical projects in architecture first initiated by Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Considering the autonomy and self-referential quality of Kiefer's work, situated outside contemporary buildings and sites, I examine how the abstraction implicit in modern architectural representation is employed by Kiefer in ways that imply that architecture may indeed appear in representations themselves and how this is intrinsic to the critical and poetic character of his work. Because Kiefer's 2017 *Walhalla* exhibition integrates all the representational modes employed across his career, this installation is used to demonstrate how Kiefer critically "reverses" the tools often used by architects to open a space of fiction and poetic imagining. Comparisons drawn between Kiefer's work and Piranesi's *Carceri d'Invenzione* (1745, 1761) and, more circuitously, to work by Jean-Laurent Legeay, Étienne-Louis Boullée and the writings of Johann Heinrich Lambert, help show ways in which Kiefer's work is linked to a tradition of architecture that embodies symbolic intentions in representations as an alternative to the dominant technological values and the representation of architecture as isotropic space. Specifically, associations drawn to the labyrinthine quality of represented space in the second

state of Piranesi's *Carceri* etchings show how Kiefer's critical use of perspective and montage goes further to restore symbolic intention to both unbuilt *and* built work. Contrary to our common understanding of Cartesian space as the "real" space of human encounter, the depth of Kiefer's paintings *and* his full-scale environments show how our thinking about space might benefit from a concern for the reciprocity between inner thoughts and emotions entwined with metaphors and atmospheres made possible by the external environment. Bringing Kiefer's creations into closer proximity with the tradition of autonomous representations arising from the eighteenth century allows us to reflect upon the role that representations may play in telling stories and construing fiction that effectively reshapes our sense of reality.

The last three chapters examine Kiefer's work in precisely these terms, as a *model of architectural representation* that flaunts autonomy and self-referentiality in ways that reveal new insights into the prospective role that representations may play as a work of architecture in and of themselves, and as tools for unfolding possibilities in design that avoid reductive applications. In the third chapter, comparisons of Kiefer's creations with works by Daniel Libeskind emphasize the act of making itself as the most important part of the mutual relationship of theory and practice, thinking and doing, in a generative process of architectural creation. Using Libeskind's early drawings and his design of the Jewish Museum, Berlin (2001), as a foil I not only examine how Kiefer engages a similar socio-political context at some of his exhibitions but emphasize how he employs a poetic approach in the act of translating ideas that provides manifold possibilities for the production of architecture today. Exploiting the self-referential character of his own work in ways not possible in conventional architectural practice, Kiefer's layering, interweaving and reworking of themes goes beyond other models by establishing an indeterminacy between represented and constructed space that is incredibly particular to the way

he plays with depth. Because Kiefer is so skilled at converting stories into space, mood and material presence, is why his work shows us how our own creations may speak a poetic form of language tied to the generation and expression of meaning in architecture. Building upon the influence of Paul Celan's poetry on Kiefer's approach to assembly and collage, this chapter reveals how a direct involvement with materials is crucial to revealing discoveries in the physical act of fabricating work even at the scale of a building. Going further than his predecessors to adapt factory-like production towards poetic work, Kiefer's creations are valuable for architecture because they reestablish a body-world continuum by working with tools typically employed towards instrumental ends and reductive material control. Concluding portions of this section focus on the way Kiefer's fragmentary approach to representation shows itself to be a new model for architectural consideration, of value to designers concerned with bringing forth an imaginative, embodied engagement, wherein stories are constructed in the process of creating work, and how this involves ties between materiality, representation and language.

Chapter four examines further this potential, emphasizing ways in which Kiefer's work operates metaphorically to open reality to forms of fiction and feeling. In this chapter I accentuate the fundamental interrelationship of language and synesthesia essential to the participation evoked by all of his work. Here, relationships between language and the deep structure of perception in the works of John Hejduk serve as a foil because they embody a fictive mode of participation similar to Kiefer in the sense that they remain dissociated from standard classifications of art and architecture. Because Hejduk's later Masques so profoundly show how poetic images emerge between pictures and words, they help foreground ways Kiefer has gone further to show how poetic meanings may also emerge in the physical manipulation of materials that convey and dramatize the narrative structure of reality. Examined in conjunction with

aspects of the eighteenth-century theoretical work of Claude-Nicholas Ledoux, comparisons with Hejduk will also address architectural program as an essential part of the architectural design task, allowing us to further query the appropriateness of Kiefer's work as a model for architecture. Although Kiefer avoids social and utilitarian aspects that are intrinsic to our discipline, I explore how his creations also go further than his predecessors to deconstruct, twist and ultimately demystify the tools of technology through story-telling and poetic fiction. Because whole atmospheres are dedicated to the metaphorizing of materials and meanings, I elucidate how Kiefer brings his very existence into the *language* of his creations. My working premise is that Kiefer's translational acts, which involve an emergent connection between the material, spatial and linguistic imagination, are especially relevant considering the current trajectory of parametric design and the fabrication of architecture through increasingly reductive means.

The final chapter of this dissertation compares Kiefer's work with the enigmatic, theoretical creations of Frederick Kiesler, the only architect with explicit connections to Surrealism and whose critical position regarding the functionalization of architecture holds many resonances with my interpretation of Kiefer's approach. Comparisons of Kiefer's La Ribaute with the many fragments of painted, written and exhibited work that make up Kiesler's life-long project for the Endless House allow us to examine how Kiefer provides critical alternatives to the contemporary infatuation with aesthetic ideals in art and architecture that have only increased since early modernity. Along with the Endless House, Kiesler's concept of "Correalism" also allows us to draw important conclusions as to the way Kiefer expands upon the tradition of theoretical projects in architecture, foregrounding the immense impact that the environment has on our interaction with the world and the centrality of ritualized actions for the emergence of

architectural meanings. Indeed, the very fact that Kiefer lives in atmospheres dedicated to achieving endless interconnection allows us to see his work as a model for poetic adaptation that provides multiple lessons regarding a process of making in specifically architectural terms. Inherent differences between Kiefer and Kiesler also allow us to summarize some of the central lessons from earlier chapters, emphasizing how Kiefer goes further to offer an infinite number of workable possibilities for architecture related to the psychological health of human beings. This includes a fuller examination of the hermeneutic emphasis of Kiefer's work and his acceptance of the modern situation (with all its instrumental processes and inherent reductions) as an approach that might offer unforeseeable possibilities for recollecting memories and merging stories today.

Concluding portions of this chapter summarize the lessons Kiefer offers to the history and future of architecture, suggesting ways we may emulate such approaches in our own methods of contextualizing and creating work. Drawing connections between Kiefer's work and architectural origins associated with the Greek theatrical arts, I suggest that the space of participation opened up by Kiefer remains relevant for architects who are motivated to engage meaningful change in the contemporary world. My overall intent is to frame Kiefer's work as a model that embodies the very nature of significant architecture. More than ever, this depends upon the preservation of a middle ground of human thinking and doing, whereby the act of translation may still offer possibilities to fill the spaces of our contemporary world with creations attuned to poetic imagining based on the critical translation of themes. My position ultimately suggests that Kiefer's work is an important model for architects that may wish to engage spiritual dimensions (beyond theological dogmas) in the realm of everyday life.

Chapter One: La Ribaute and La Tourette: Depth and Translation in Architecture

Although the influence of the Monastery of Sainte-Marie de La Tourette on Anselm Kiefer has been noted from an art historical perspective, there is no comprehensive study that examines intersections between Le Corbusier and Kiefer in relation to architecture. From within the specialized context of contemporary architecture it may be difficult to comprehend relationships between Kiefer's artistic creations at his former home and studio, La Ribaute, and the influential work of Le Corbusier, well-known to have altered the conception of architecture in the twentieth-century. Due to aesthetic categorizations, it may also be difficult to reconcile Kiefer's immense artistic output and historically potent topics and Le Corbusier's artistic work, so different in style and often considered subsidiary to the architect's practice. Yet, following his influential stay at La Tourette in 1966, Kiefer's ambivalent approach to performance, painting, sculpture and installation reemerge in the architectural environments of La Ribaute in ways that show important resonances with Le Corbusier's later approach. The interchange between art and construction at Kiefer's studio home also presents important differences when compared to Le Corbusier's artistic and architectural practice that dramatically expand upon the permeability between the arts at a level of making.¹ Considering the interpretive spacing inherent to their productions and the way in which they contact the world, the often dark, morose and paradoxical features of Kiefer's creations raise questions regarding the intrinsic "limits" and fundamental task of architecture as well as its ability to affectively influence the everyday lives of inhabitants. Considered at the level of making, close comparisons of Kiefer and Le Corbusier thus reveal timely lessons that are of immense value to the practice of architecture today.

¹ Whether or not Kiefer was directly influenced by Le Corbusier, his approach to representation, materiality, and construction, as well as his use and transformation of historical themes, took similar turns at parallel points in their respective careers.

To disclose the significance of the work done at La Ribaute in the context of architectural thinking and doing, first parts of this chapter compare Le Corbusier's artistic creations and his construction of La Tourette with Kiefer's synthesis of painting, sculpture and architecture that occur during the time he lived and worked at the Barjac studio, between 1993 and 2008.² Along with Le Corbusier's *Le Poème de l'Angle Droit*, I explore how the paintings ritualistically produced by Le Corbusier serve as an important foil for the study of collage-like tensions that also comprise the integrated environments of Kiefer's studio. In this section I suggest that Kiefer's modes of painting and building, which involve a dramatic transfer of meanings from one medium to the next, provide an important extension to the spiritual capacity of architectural work at the level of material making. Certainly, Kiefer's engagement with historical themes, insular references, and linkages between words and objects reveals a transformative agency that is very different than Le Corbusier's work and its intentional aims. Yet, the accelerated tensions between representation, materiality and construction at La Ribaute also provide ways of thinking and doing that are of value to architecture since they invite inhabitation and activate the life of the imagination through haptic qualities. Questioning the degree to which Kiefer's work either transcends or remains part of the aesthetic tradition of the arts, later sections examine the interchange of Kiefer's creations with the world beyond his studio through several important public installations that reveal a very different sense of time, memory, and interaction in relation to everyday life. Considered in relation to the "restorative" potential of the "fragment," apparent within Le Corbusier's work, Kiefer's ambivalent and paradoxical creations indeed teeter between

² Anselm Kiefer was among the first of his generation to reactivate the narrative potential of art, questioning what and how to remember in the aftermath of WWII. The artist's concern for layering diverse themes (in his early book creations, paintings, gouaches and woodcuts) eventually contributed to transatlantic debates between avant-garde formalism and the return to representation in the quest for a broader content for art. In the context of my research Kiefer's challenge to formalism carries obvious parallels to a critique of self-referential approaches to architectural creation ultimately based on "the functionalization" of architectural theory and practice and bifurcations between thinking and doing that gained ascendancy towards the middle of the seventeenth century.

a space of participation essential for architecture and the aesthetic detachment of much contemporary art. Concluding portions of this chapter examine the interwoven narratives and stories that form around the work at La Ribaute, showing how the spiritual potential of Kiefer's creations relate to the tradition of theoretical projects in architecture explored in the following chapters.

To begin, it is worthwhile emphasizing just how much Kiefer's three week stay at La Tourette in 1966 left a profound, life-changing impact on the artist. After participating in the daily rituals of the Dominican Brothers and "thinking quietly—about larger questions," Kiefer's visit had a prodigious effect on his decision to leave his studies in law and turn his energies fully towards art.³ Not only did this lead to his enrollment at the University of Freiburg and his introduction to Joseph Beuys at the Düsseldorf Academy but the penitent life of the Dominican brothers obviously influenced Kiefer's solitary approach to life and art. This meditative approach to living and working is witnessed in the secluded locations of his subsequent studios at Buchen, Höpfingen, Marais and Croissy, as well as La Ribaute, which is located outside the small town of Barjac in the Ardèche Region of southern France.

Built up from an initial placement of rocks to mark out the position of buildings, and his refurbishing of a nineteenth century silk moth factory that became the main living quarters on the site, the work at La Ribaute will be shown to reveal a palimpsest of forms, spaces and ideas, that consists of a continuous reassembling of old works into new ones and which involve a consistent broadening of interests that parallel much of Le Corbusier's own thinking during the time he was designing La Tourette. Thematically, such intersections are most evident in Le Corbusier's *Poeme de l'Angle Droit* (1955), a book of color lithographs meant to be read back-and-forth in

³ Michael Auping, *Anselm Kiefer: Heaven and Earth* (Fort Worth: Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth in association with Prestel, 2007), 29.

relation to the *iconostase* at the front of the volume and which presents eternal questions of human dwelling, desire and building based in hermetic knowledge and alchemical-like transformations. Based on a similar approach to the discovery and reconciliation of opposites, Kiefer's own statements during his time at La Ribaute, "to bring together what has been separated," reveals a similar desire for interconnection that was implied early on in the titling of Kiefer's 1987 exhibition *Bruch und Einung (Breaking and Unification)*, which became a major topic for the study of continuities and differences within his oeuvre and its shifting from Mesopotamian to Jewish myths. In spite of changes in thematic emphasis, from a focus on the tragedies of the Second World War in his earlier work towards ever-broader concerns, his reference to the myth of Osiris and Isis in 1987 encapsulates both the separation and unifying tendency of metaphor that has remained a central feature of all of Kiefer's work.

Indeed, even the physical movement through La Ribaute presents to us names, places and stories that involve a purposeful hide and go seek that embraces the very foundation of revealing and concealing in human perception best epitomized by metaphor. As with our steadily accumulating knowledge of the world, the experience of various spaces, sculptures, paintings, installations and book creations reveal to us how things must go missing in order to be reclaimed, renewed and restored meaningfully in perception. Importantly, this relates to the processes that underlie the creation of Kiefer's work in the sense that it shows us how an approach to making need not be based on ideas conceived through an operation conceptually understood beforehand but rather ones discovered in an interaction with time, space and materials, which is of incredible value for architects. Thus, even beyond differences of "style" that may initially draw attention to differences between Kiefer's work and the "Purism" of Le Corbusier's earlier work, the chasm-like environments, collections of fragments and elemental

materials at La Ribaute embody a similar sacred, theatrical quality as the architect's monastery that is inherently intertwined with the processes of creating their work.⁴ For both Kiefer and Le Corbusier this entails an accumulation of decades of respective developments and insights accrued through the ongoing practice of painting, sculpture and building that transcend functionalized or aestheticized approaches. Indeed, even while comparisons have been drawn between Le Corbusier's paintings and his preoccupation with a "machine aesthetic," well-known to correspond with his earlier architectural projects, such interpretations often reduce the influence of his artistic practice on architecture to visual comparisons of featured shapes that appear in architectural plans or sections. More thorough studies of Le Corbusier's oeuvre show that his approach is not reducible to formal terms, and that a purely visual analysis cannot account for the richness of the translations. As we will see, parallels between Kiefer and Le Corbusier's artistic and architectural creations are better understood as a sustained, life-long approach to poetic making, concerned with translating the depth and temporality of their artistic work into an embodied experience of architecture.

To understand relationships between Kiefer and Le Corbusier at this level of architectural making, in terms of the translation between one mode of production and another, it is important to first note parallels that have been drawn between Le Corbusier Cubistic work and the experience of various architectural works created by the architect, including La Tourette. As suggested by Alberto Pérez-Gómez, works such as *Still Life* (1920) (Figure 1.1) reveal an important transition away from perspectival imagery used in his earlier design thinking, towards representations that pressurize or "squeeze out" pictorial space.⁵ Composed of fragmented views of everyday objects—bottles, a guitar, a table and doorway, depicted as rectangular or curved

⁴ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 134-35.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 344.

geometric shapes from several vantage points—the visually protruding and receding planes in the painting produce tensions that occur between simultaneous views given, which evoke a dramatic push-pull effect that invites the viewer to actively reform the planes and remake the pieces. No longer restricted to a refined “machine aesthetic,” the forms and spaces that make up the atmosphere of La Tourette certainly draw from such explorations, producing a spatial experience based on a similar cacophony of bizarre juxtapositions wherein the collage-like quality of Le Corbusier later drawings and paintings became central to his “struggle to find equivalent modes of *presencing* in the visual/erotic space of architectural situations.”⁶ Translated over thirty years of practice, and tempered for the particular use and rituals of the Dominican Brothers, the first-hand experience of the monastery reveals how the “functions” of the building are enveloped in a perpetual interplay of tense, intersecting oppositions. It is this montage-like quality that has garnered an almost unanimous consensus regarding the monastery’s significance to twentieth-century architecture due to an enigmatic participation that evokes both individual and collective experience.

An encounter with the monastery begins with the contrast between the horizontal layers of the main building, which form a tight juxtaposition with the vertical volume of the Church (Figure 1.2). Its combination of simple geometries, partly anchored to (and partly hovering above) the ground on piers, sets up a dramatic series of tensions that only increase in the interior. As mentioned by William Curtis, La Tourette involves “the play of mass against void, and light against shade, which transfer larger relationships to minor key, and smaller ratios and intervals of varying depth, texture and transparency that carry through into smaller parts that become

⁶ Ibid., 347. Following Duchamp’s work with “delay” in works like *Large Glass* or *étenat donées*, Le Corbusier’s paintings and axonometric representation on a canvas provide a “new possibility of embodied depth beyond perspective, transcending its earlier applications as reductive architectural space.” See Pérez-Gómez, 135.



Figure 1.1 Le Corbusier, *Still Life* (1920). Oil on canvas, 80.9 x 99.7 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York, from <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79312>



Figure 1.2 Approach to Sainte-Marie de La Tourette, from <https://oltjikko.com/journals/couvent-de-la-tourette/>



Figure 1.3 Hall along “ondulatoires” towards chapel, La Tourette.



Figure 1.4 View into courtyard, Sainte-Marie de La Tourette, from <http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/conway/0b044050.html>

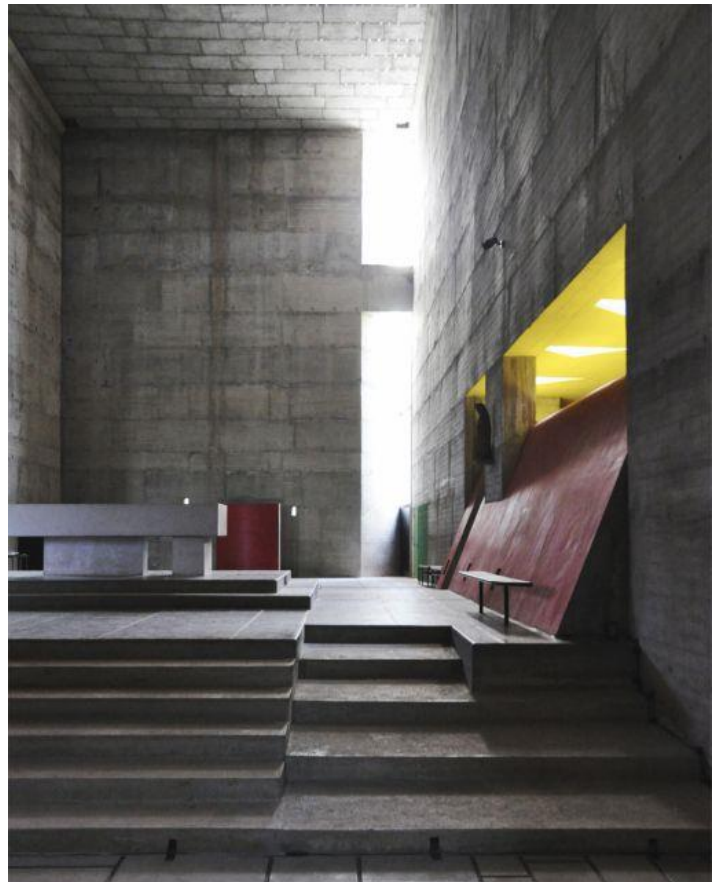


Figure 1.5 Interior chapel, Sainte-Marie de La Tourette, from <https://architecturalvisits.com/en/la-tourette-le-corbusier/>

fundamental to perceived changes upon movement through the building.”⁷ Indeed, the interplay between light and shadow, and views given or cut off is apparent in corridors that stop immediate views out to the landscape, and tensions build as one moves along the *ondulatories* of the procession, which “dramatize the actual movement behind them and ripple into sculptural action as one passes by” (Figure 1.3).⁸ Approached from an angle, the receding planes of light and shade create a peculiar effect of transforming daylight into twilight, and the entire building is perhaps best understood as a “crystallization of a sort of musical notation,” where depth itself takes on a “mysterious quality,” likened to “the interiority communicated by speech, poetry and musical harmony.”⁹ “Closing upon itself,” this interplay of showing and concealing is dramatically continued in collections of contrasting elements such as the pyramidal roof set on top of a rectangular box of the Oratory and the diagonal of the atrium (Figure 1.4), itself set off against a flurry of rectangular forms that comprise areas of the Chapter House.

Amid a complex interaction between traditional rituals enveloped within modern architectural materials, tensions are felt in a harmonious collection of contrasts that reform again in the interior chapel (Figure 1.5). In the Sacristy, the horizontal impressions of formwork combine to configure the ascending verticality of the church box. For those who have visited this place, what is unforgettable is the constellation of simple orthogonal objects, including an altar made of white stone set off from other areas by the polished floor and the raised block of the dais.¹⁰ From within the atmosphere of grey concrete, the red confessional at the end of the aisle establishes contrasts that are accentuated by the asymmetrical placement of the cross, and all of

⁷ William J. R. Curtis, *Le Corbusier: Ideas and Forms* (London: Phaidon Press, 1986), 184.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁹ Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1997), 363-365.

¹⁰ Flora Samuel, *Le Corbusier in Detail* (Burlington MA: Architectural Press, Elsevier Ltd., 2007), 63.

these features have been related to the overall resonance of the monastery, described as embodying a critical contrast to “the light of classical metaphysics and theology” due to its pervasive “darkness and interiority.”¹¹ Such juxtapositions certainly convey how tensions garnered from Le Corbusier’s earlier drawings, paintings, and writings are translated into a “new” way of framing the traditional practice of Catholic rituals manifest in the spatial-temporal experience of architecture. The difficult tensions of this monastery, felt in its uncomfortable and disorienting spaces and stark contrasts, has itself been understood as “an index of historical sedimentation” and a transformation of a monastic archetype which involves “a careful and thorough, if subversive, rewriting of traditional programs and rituals.”¹²

In spite of the obviously different motivations behind the creation of their respective work—which will be discussed in subsequent pages—Kiefer’s *La Ribaute* reveals an orchestration of works and spaces that present a similar, albeit dramatically accelerated, series of tensions. These emerge between diverse works of art and varieties of construction and at different scales throughout the Barjac compound.¹³ Indeed, the “conjoined opposites” so central to the translations of painting into the design of *La Tourette* can be said to underwrite Kiefer’s individual works of painting, book creations, sculpture, and the combinations of built and painted environments since these too depend on a pressurization of forms, spaces, materials and variant scales of work that both separate and join together experiences as one moves throughout the complex.

Perhaps the largest site work ever attempted by a sculptor, *La Ribaute* encompasses approximately 35 hectares of land (Figure 1.6), and is perceived along pathways which connect

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 367.

¹² Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 363.

¹³ My tour of *La Ribaute* by invitation occurred on May 17, 2014, when I and a group of guests were guided through Kiefer’s complex by one of his assistants.

modern structures that “house” paintings and sculptures (Figure 1.7) to mine-like causeways (Figure 1.8) that are revealed either from within punctures within the pavilions or from initially hidden tunnel entries (Figure 1.9 & Figure 1.10). Passing through the circuit of “Houses,” tunnels, chambers, and amphitheater (Figure 1.11), reveals the complex to be fashioned as much above as below the ground, and made as much by excavation as by additive construction. The digging downwards for tunnels that form lateral corridors intersect with vertical columns of space that connect to the pavilions above, and all this corresponds to a range of bodily movements—up, into, above and below the hill—around which the complex is fashioned. The intensity of such juxtapositions are also recast in paintings and installations that recall the textures and layered construction of the architectural spaces and reciprocally seem to be informed by them. Made as much from modern materials and right angles above, simple, modern pavilions give way to primitive assemblies and quarried earth below and these experiences combine to suggest a dense interplay of opposites reminiscent of Le Corbusier’s monastery. Yet, here the similarities end. Instead of translating works of art into spaces tempered by particular rituals and specific constraints of client, site, and program, La Ribaute seems to exist purely for the purpose of blurring thresholds between one mode of production and another, between various times and diverse themes. Certainly, the more time one spends moving about Kiefer’s complex the more difficult it becomes to distinguish differences between various modes of making due to the fusion of artistic practice with architectural space.

One might have anticipated Kiefer’s integrated approach to art and construction considering previous discussion about the artist, and comments given by Kiefer himself, which promote *ambivalence* to be the only constant feature of his work.¹⁴ This quality has given

¹⁴ The ambivalence of Kiefer’s work has been a primary topic for many authors on Kiefer, all of which garner legitimization from an interview between Kiefer and Donald Kuspit in *The New Subjectivism: Art in the 1980s*.



Figure 1.6 The property at La Ribaute, Barjac, France, from Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.



Figure 1.7 “House” structures for paintings at La Ribaute, from <http://www.philippechancel.com/albums/anselm-kiefer/>



Figure 1.8 Subterranean corridor at La Ribaute, from Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.



Figure 1.9 *Shevirat Ha-Kelim* pavilion at La Ribaute, from Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.



Figure 1.10 View into tunnel at La Ribaute, from Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.

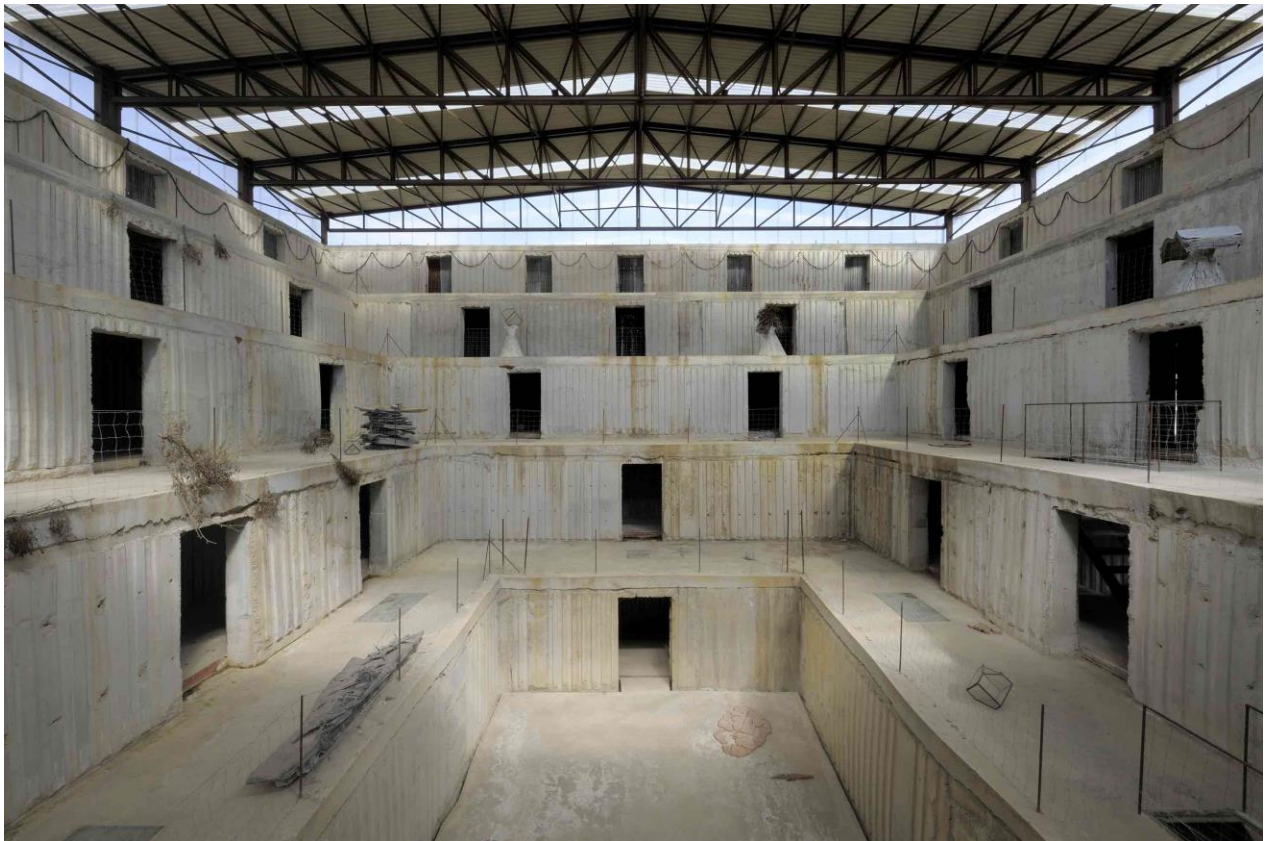


Figure 1.11 Amphitheatre at La Ribaute, from Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.

Kiefer's work claim to the analogy of the labyrinth, which has also been recognized as epitomizing the experience of La Tourette and its relation to architectural origins.¹⁵ At first, the analogy is particularly incisive, especially considering the disorienting feeling experienced at La Tourette and the dizzying integration of spaces and themes at La Ribaute, which are always paradoxical. However, a closer examination of Kiefer's networking of themes reveals important differences between Kiefer's creations and Le Corbusier's monastery that involve crucial implications for architecture.

For instance, the series of paintings and installations grouped under the title *The Morgenthau Plan* can be used to characterize the complex exchange of meanings that typically underlie descriptions of Kiefer's creations, helpful for distinguishing differences between artist and architect. A well-known installation and cycle of paintings shown at foremost European and American galleries between 2012 and the present, an iteration of the *Morgenthau Plan* also appears in different settings and various media at La Ribaute. Not only do the hayfields that appear in one of the pavilions (Figure 1.12) simulate the installation of similar work found at the Gagosian Gallery in Paris (2013) but piles of hay also reemerge in the amphitheater at the center of the complex (Figure 1.13).¹⁶ On top of reemerging in paintings and architectural space, such places are also informed by thematic interconnections that reach backwards and forwards across Kiefer's career. For example, the series of paintings and installations at La Ribaute or in public

¹⁵ The experience of La Tourette is related to the mythical origins of western art and architecture epitomized by the labyrinth in Alberto Pérez-Gómez's and Louise Pelletier's *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge* (1997), 362-63. Several years later, Daniel Arasse was first to link Kiefer's processes with the labyrinth and Kiefer himself to both Daedalus and the Minotaur in the book *Anselm Kiefer* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers), 19-22.

¹⁶ Various iterations of *The Morgenthau Plan* have been exhibited at the Gagosian Gallery (2013), the Le Bourget in Paris (2012), Gallery Thaddeus Ropac, the White Cube in London and New York, among other major European and American Galleries. For the installation at both Gagosian locations Kiefer planted an entire wheat field and encased it within a steel cage 16-feet high. The title of the various installations and creations associated with this body of work directly reference Henry Morgenthau Jr. who was Roosevelt's U.S. Secretary of the Treasury and who proposed to turn Germany into a pre-industrial, agricultural state after the end of the war.



Figure 1.12 *The Morgenthau Plan* pavilion at La Ribaute, from <https://www.alejandradeargos.com/index.php/en/artp/41713-anselm-kiefer-barjac>



Figure 1.13 *Straw in Amphitheatre*, photograph by S. Wischer.



Figure 1.14 *The Morgenthau Plan* (2012), acrylic, emulsion, oil, shellac, metal, plaster, gold leaf, and sediment of electrolysis on photograph mounted on canvas, 330 x 560 x 45 cm. From <https://gagosian.com/exhibitions/2013/anselm-kiefer-morgenthau-plan/>



Figure 1.15 *Margarete* (1981), oil and straw on canvas, 280 X 380 cm. From the Saatchi Gallery collection.

exhibitions feature, pictorially or actually, golden fields of wheat that recall Henry Morgenthau's political plans that involved turning Germany agrarian after the war (Figure 1.14). For those familiar with Kiefer's work, the newest of these paintings include thick impasto depictions of flowers and wheat in what appear to be pre-industrial landscapes amid blue skies and patches of ominous greys that seep up from the underpainting to conjure a treacherous mixture of beauty and tragedy. Such works further recall Kiefer's earlier "Straw Cycle" paintings in 1980s, such as *Margarete* (1981) (Figure 1.15), which includes straw appended to the surfaces of the canvas and which relates the German landscape with the straw-blond hair of an idealized Germanic beauty. First inspired by Kiefer's encounter with the poem *Todesfuge* by Paul Celan—based on tensions that emerge between couplets such as black and milk, Jews and hounds, and between German and Jewish cultures epitomized by the names Margarete and Shulamith¹⁷—these historical associations reemerge in the manicured fields of hay in the pavilion, in the piles of straw, and in painted landscapes found throughout the compound.

Indicative of much of Kiefer's work, which revisited difficult memories of Nazism in the postwar context, it is indeed significant that such meanings are transformed in various settings.

In the pavilion, the material of hay adheres the nightmarish racial policies of Nazism with

¹⁷ In Paul Celan's *Todesfuge* Margarethe is the one to whom the German guard writes his love letters and whose golden hair evokes her Aryan identity. By contrast, Shulamith is the Jewish woman, whose hair is "ashen from burning." As discussed by John Felstiner, participation with dreadful events to do with concentration camp victims are conjured through the "constant changes between first and third-person," adding to a cadence of fragmentation within the poem. Following Hans-Georg Gadamer's analysis of Celan's poetry, I understand the pressures of the spoken poem as analogically similar to the tensions between diverse media and scales at La Ribaute. In a similar way that Kiefer's work disorients to reorient, Celan's poem also disrupts the common use of speech inducing openness "to the strangeness or Otherness of things, materiality and space" by affecting a deeper corporeal "listening to language." See John Felstiner's *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*, (New York: Norton and Company, Inc., 2001), 30-31, and Gerald L. Burns, *Gadamer on Celan: Who am I and Who are You? And Other essays*, trans. Bruce Krajewski (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 5-7. For the most in-depth analysis of the "correspondence" Kiefer holds with Celan and various "Celian intermediaries" see also Andréa Lauterwein's *Anselm Kiefer/Paul Celan: Myth, Mourning, and Memory* (New York: Thames & Hudson; First Edition, 2007).

Morgenthau's plan to one's experience of the amphitheater, where straw appears stored away in a space shaped like a freight container reminiscent of the type one finds on trains. This setting brings about earlier images of references to the transportation of Jewish people to the death camps, also implicit to Celan's poem. Such a cacophony of experiences further combines with the proposed death of German culture, implicit to Morgenthau's plan to turn the country agrarian, and thus to the absurdity of political power more generally which is a topic in much of Kiefer's work. Because these relationships are at each time given differently, the meanings both carry through and convert into other things depending upon particular settings. This type of interconnection is never-ending, especially considering the immensity of themes built up over Kiefer's fifty-year career. It is precisely this inexhaustible quality that has given Kiefer's oeuvre associations with the labyrinth, discussed by Daniel Arasse as "a web of interconnected themes and titles that have been worked and reworked and then reprised again years later ... where no single thread of unity can be seen to bind all the parts together."¹⁸

Although such work is dependent upon tensions that initially seem similar to Le Corbusier's work, crucial distinctions must also be addressed in the way such works deliver their meanings. Initially intended to stir up collective memories in the postwar German context, the tensions between many similar and opposing experiences in Kiefer's work are nested within a system of historically specific themes, linguistic tropes, and semiotic meanings, colored by the prodigious amount of art historical writing about the artist.¹⁹ This is profoundly different than La Tourette, where labyrinthine qualities have been discussed less in relation to encoded meanings than to an immeasurable, corporeal experience that is fundamental to the spatial-temporal

¹⁸ Arasse, 19-22.

¹⁹ Daniel Siedell has put forward a similar critique of Kiefer's work, raising important questions pertaining to the first-hand experience of the work versus historically determined readings by others. See Daniel Siedell, "Where Do You Stand? Anselm Kiefer's Visual and Verbal Artefacts," *Image Journal*, issue 77 (2013), accessed June 15, 2020, <https://imagejournal.org/article/where-do-you-stand/>.

ambiance of the monastery. Discussed as an experience of “permanent disorientation,” La Tourette has been regarded as labyrinthine precisely because its experience never adds up to “a final clarification of the ‘idea’ of the building.”²⁰ Unlike many readings of the interlinked references in Kiefer’s work, which by focusing on its visually stunning qualities have also been primarily understood through a decoding of specific historical allusions, the experience of La Tourette “flaunts all logical assumptions” because it disrupts preconceived understandings in order to reawaken meaningful participation with rituals in lived time and space. Seen from the perspective of typical art historical readings, Kiefer’s works are not typically understood at the same level of bodily interaction as the monastery. For the purposes of our architectural focus it is important to recognize that, like La Tourette, Kiefer’s work cannot be reduced to a homogenous understanding of space nor to preconceived historical linkages. To query the experience of La Ribaute at a comparable level, and to better enable new lessons from Kiefer, it is necessary to return to a closer examination of parallels and disjuncture between their artistic and architectural creations in order to distinguish Kiefer’s contribution to the production of significant architectural places.

Just as Le Corbusier’s work in architecture had been informed by modes of drawing and painting that eventually moved away from “three-dimensional” representations towards work that embraced the “modern space” of cubistic or surrealistic influence, the paintings created by Kiefer in the mid-1990s display a remarkably similar shift in emphasis only a few years before the enormous building projects began at La Ribaute. Unlike works such as *Germany’s Spiritual Heroes* (1973), or *Interior* (1981), which characterize the deep perspectival imagery used to emphasize alienating Nazi subject matter, paintings such as *Ash Flower* (1997) (Figure 1.16), or *Remains of the Sun* (1997) (Figure 1.17), disrupt the centralized perspective that characterize

²⁰ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*, 363.



Figure 1.16 *Ash Flower* (1983-1997), acrylic, emulsion, ash, soil and sunflower on canvas, 380 x 760 cm. From <https://www.themodern.org/collection/aschenblume/1155>



Figure 1.17 *The Remains of the Sun* (1997), emulsion, acrylic, shellac, burnt clay and sand on canvas, 380 x 560 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.

much of Kiefer's earlier work. Similar to Le Corbusier's move away from axonometry and isometry, the paintings produced at La Ribaute evidence changes that became pivotal to Kiefer's complete abandonment of perspectival representation between 1997 and 2016.²¹ For instance, large canvasses such as *Ash Flower* (begun in the mid-1980s and "completed" at La Ribaute) disrupt the illusion of spatial depth with the placement of an oversized, dried sunflower appended to the canvas which blocks the view to the Nazi monument beyond and contradicts the illusory and "authoritarian effect" of the perspective underneath.²² Spanning the entire vertical height of the canvas, the obscuring of direct, perspectival space recalls the experience of various fragments and materials at La Ribaute which brings objects and textural materials into the real space of the complex. Likewise, *Remains of the Sun* (1997) or *The Square* (1997) depict brickyards and temples inspired by Kiefer's travels to India and South America where monumental architectural settings are presented either frontally or from a slightly exaggerated, asymmetrical and "bifocal" perspective. This "splits the gaze" and presses paint and materiality forward to create the illusion of massive impenetrable walls.²³ While overwhelmingly different in scale and subject matter, such a change recalls a similar shift in Le Corbusier's approach to representations which challenged the reduction of space to a static geometric entity by dramatically pressurizing pictorial depth. Like Le Corbusier's cubistic work, the "frontal" presence of works like *Remains of the Sun* implies a similar suspension of immediate views as do the interior spaces at the monastery or La Ribaute.

²¹ Le Corbusier's move away from projective drawing towards artistic approaches to painting incorporated axonometric representations into the constructions of cubistic depth. Influenced by El Lissitzky, Le Corbusier believed that the depth of cubism signaled a way towards an architectural synthesis that was not merely a question of applied arts but rather a transformation that affected sculpture and the spatial temporal dimension of architecture. As will be demonstrated, Kiefer's work functions similarly by piling references one on top of the other in ways that perpetually rearrange and recreate meanings.

²² Arasse, 180. Kiefer's painting *Ash Flower* is also inspired by the powerful imagery of Paul Celan's poem *I am Alone* from 1952.

²³ Ibid., 268.

As with movement through La Tourette, where “the clarity of transparent space threading *object types* through a subjective voyeuristic gaze is replaced by the experience of the labyrinth,”²⁴ homogenous spatial clarity is undeniably obscured by Kiefer, especially when visitors are met with “split views,” either into spaces above (Figure 1.18) or along corridors. Moreover, our pathways through the complex are often switched from trench-like concrete passageways to ones made from corrugated steel pipes (Figure 1.19), and at no point are we given visual clues as to our position in the overall complex. Because one is unable to fully place oneself with vision, the suspension of immediate views partly underwrites the experience of disorientation at La Ribaute.²⁵ Indeed, even if one manages to catch a glimpse of a painting by peering through apertures in the tunnels or up into pavilions above, views are always only fragmentary and seen through openings that allow the materiality of a distant painting—textured surfaces filled with stars or fragments of pottery—to appear nearby an architectural surface. This not only recalls the way “the strip windows at the monastery establish different relationships between what is near and far,” but also resemble the deeply chamfered windows on the main façade at Le Corbusier’s chapel at Ronchamp, where openings in the façade skew our perception of the thicknesses of the main wall.²⁶ In fact, such experiences recall many of Le Corbusier’s spatial formats and even the architect’s use of pivoting windows or the massive bronze panel door at La Tourette that leads from the monastery into the Church. Set within the larger door, the smaller door “makes its overall scale seem even more disproportionately large,” an effect that is exaggerated by crouching and stepping through the frame or grasping the inner leaf of the door

²⁴ Ibid, 362.

²⁵ I reference this experience to evoke links with Le Corbusier’s artistic forms, which function similarly to collage by emphasizing the primacy of synesthetic perception (including constant motion, binocular vision, and tactile perception) that cannot be reconciled with an increasingly reductive, geometric representation of the visual world.

²⁶ This connection is inspired by Flora Samuel’s description of the chamfered windows on the main wall of Notre Dame de Haut Ronchamp, which appear to give various depths to the perception of the singular wall which also distorts the perspectival gaze. See Samuel, 117.



Figure 1.18 View from crypt, La Ribaute. Photograph by S. Wischer.



Figure 1.19 Tunnel at La Ribaute. Photograph by S. Wischer.



Figure 1.20 Subterranean chamber at La Ribaute. Photograph by S. Wischer.



Figure 1.21 Lead chamber at La Ribaute. From Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.



Figure 1.22 Subterranean chamber at La Ribaute. Photograph by S. Wischer.

to open it. An awkward experience, it has been described by Flora Samuel as one that “perplexes and confounds, impenetrable yet inviting contemplation, it adds greatly to the drama of the route to which it is integral.”²⁷

Proceeding through the tunnels at La Ribaute one encounters a dramatic increase of tensions that continue to confuse common expectations by engaging even more directly our bodily effort in navigating the subterranean paths. At first, the exterior surfaces of paintings in the pavilions are felt in the rough-textured interiors of the tunnels and eventually one is either physically pressed closer to thick textures or through entryways so small that one needs to reposition their body in order to pass through (Figure 1.20). In these creviced openings, things such as temperature or the smell of the dank environment become more acute due to this interiority, as if entering a mine or cavern. This is further exaggerated upon an encounter with a room made completely of lead (Figure 1.21) wherein peripheral sounds, typically used to orient the body, become so muffled that the dependency on external sound is heightened due to the silence of this place. Here, tarnished, oxidizing lead and algae in water which has been purposefully flooded into the room convey death, single-cellular life and transmutation.

In a more direct manner than the monastery Kiefer over-exaggerate blockades. Raw earth cascades through doorways and passages are truncated by jambs that frame beginnings of further excavations (Figure 1.22). Such features produce a feeling that the construction at La Ribaute is, like Kiefer’s paintings, a meandering series of interconnected pathways that are part of endless transformations set up to reveal relationships between material presence and immaterial ideas. Exaggerating collage-like tensions, the path taken through La Ribaute produces metaphoric

²⁷ Ibid., 141.

tensions that cannot be understood via static perspectival views for the very fact that such connections are revealed temporally, as one turns corners, climbs stairways and traverses space. If Kiefer's earlier paintings can be understood as the germ of an artistic conception that explored remote places of history and myth through layers of materials, objects, and themes, La Ribaute is a place to lay those spaces out in terms of real *presence*, in fully developed, site specific environments. It is precisely in this sense that, like Le Corbusier, Kiefer allows us to pass from "spatialized ideas" to "spatializing space" since the studio restores a sense of depth beyond Cartesian reductions of space to breadth and height, or to direct, visual pictures; two notions that have become the most popular means of conceiving and executing architectural work today.²⁸

And yet, even though this disruption to our standard expectation of space is similar to the labyrinthine experience of La Tourette since each undermine the dominance associated with clarity of vision, Kiefer is not beyond offering specific views towards his own particular "object-types." Just as Le Corbusier is known to have accumulated a "stockpile of forms" in his paintings that had continuously enriched his architecture, the objects found in Kiefer's paintings or throughout the spaces of the compound remain a chief characteristic of the experience of La Ribaute. When considered in relation to architecture, the purpose of these "object-types" are indeed quite different than Le Corbusier's objects. Whereas Le Corbusier's forms were used to inspire an approach to making that could be taken up in translations in architecture but were not necessarily tied to specific historical meanings, the appearance of hay and straw, along with man-made meteorites, shards of glass, broken vessels, clay palettes, plant parts, and a trove of other fragments at La Ribaute all relate to particular historical themes. As with *Ash Flower*, wherein the real materials of the dried sunflower and ash obscure the view of the Nazi shrine

²⁸ See Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (New York: Routledge, 2012), 283-347.

beyond, when our attention is called towards these physical, literal objects stored away in rooms and tunnels at La Ribaute, such pieces depend upon earlier references for their combined meanings. In other words, while spatial qualities and historical references become actualized at La Ribaute, they also maintain continuity with other works by referring to meanings nested somewhere else, in paintings, sculptures or assemblage, that always relate to other things—historical, mythical, literary or otherwise.

Therefore, while the experience of La Ribaute unfolds in an environment that evokes internal “consonances and dissonances” similar to La Tourette, it is also true that unlike the immediate atmospheres of Kiefer’s studios or the spaces of La Tourette, specific meanings are ascertained only after referring to some or another literary source, and only when these are related to aberrations of objects well-known to feature different meanings in other works. The feeling that specific meanings are a prerequisite for understanding Kiefer’s work is also heightened by his use of written names, titles and quotations from poems and novels that appear inscribed across canvasses, onto glass vitrines, or along the walls of his studios or exhibitions. Unlike Le Corbusier’s *Poème*, which provides glimpses into the way his artworks accumulate significance in works like La Tourette, many of the words in Kiefer’s art and architectural spaces have been seen to circumvent the richness of their otherwise layered meanings because of this directness. Thus, whereas La Tourette does not depend upon specific literary reference for its meanings, since it reframes a recognizable program for the *action* of its inhabitants, Kiefer attempts to maintain a degree of historical specificity with precise linkages between names, objects and themes.²⁹ Said differently, if the atmospheres of La Tourette amplify an

²⁹ Kiefer’s use of text indeed activates multiple layers of interpretation. Yet, the effort it takes to close the distance between an initial encounter with his work and the reflective, historical meanings is typically so great that it tends to comprise a secondary, semiotic layer. Made up of the artist’s personal notes about day-to-day experiences, Kiefer’s

interconnection of thought and action, between “inner and outer dimensionalities of consciousness” made present here and now, the historically laden objects and written words in Kiefer’s work reinforce the impression of an otherworldly place, where historical and mythical subjects have become the inspiration for building.

And yet, even while the work at La Ribaute obviously veers in directions that explore the personal cosmos of the artist that do not fulfill the intentional aims of an architectural program, the assortment of work we find within Kiefer’s studio does tell us a lot about the generative capacity of our own creations in terms of the conception and realization of architectural space. Being brought so closely together, Kiefer’s works and spaces are in some ways much richer than Le Corbusier’s practice because they show more directly how artistic processes are translated into material, architectonic forms that make possible an inherent questioning of the reduction of a work of art or architecture to an aestheticized object. Kiefer’s creations are thus valuable when considered from within the context of architectural representation because they show even more directly how the continuous discoveries we associate with artistic making do not perish with new additions but are circulated within the experience of his work, culminating in architectonic constructions. This insight is crucial in the pedagogy and processes of producing work that may yield to good architecture because it speaks empathetically to inhabitants through haptic qualities. Indeed, the atmospheres at La Ribaute, made up of combined spaces, objects and paintings, call for a different type of participation not only by walking around the work or looking at it, but in an encounter with a material layering that quite forcibly involves the emotions and minds of the spectator. For Kiefer, achieving such integration has been related to

Notebook Volume I: 1998-1999 includes important descriptions of his work with materials as well as thoughts about art, natural phenomena, and architecture, which is addressed more thoroughly in the final chapter of this dissertation.

the reciprocity of creation and destruction arising from an “alchemical” transformation of materials.

I have suggested that paintings like *Ash Flower* (1983-1997) and *Remains of the Sun* (1997) analogically relate to the meandering experience of La Ribaute, and how words and phrases written into books, onto walls and paintings allude to the complex narrative dimension of Kiefer’s work. Yet, it is the increased material presence in canvasses produced in the mid-1980s that most reveal an interaction with the material imagination that occurs through the resistance of matter at the level of making. After Kiefer’s introduction to the poetry of Paul Celan, the acclaimed Jewish poet, whose work dealt with the historical nightmare of the holocaust (and whose tense use of language evokes a sense of corporeal listening in works such as *Todesfuge*) Kiefer’s work underwent fundamental changes associated with a more systematic approach to assembly and collage as well as the introduction of heterogeneous materials which coincide with the material “thickness” that began to pervade his canvasses.³⁰ This shift not only afforded him a step away from the illusionism associated with some of his earlier work but also results in the tense interaction of materials in specific assemblies and construction techniques that are intrinsic to the architectural atmospheres at La Ribaute.

Such relationships are dramatically felt in the material facture of paintings like *Shulamith* (1983) (Margarethe’s Jewish counterpart in the poem *Todesfuge*) (Figure 1.23) and the diverse materials and modes of construction at Barjac. Comprised of layers of photography, black paint,

³⁰ Mark Rosenthal was among the first to suggest that Kiefer’s work underwent fundamental changes that coincided with a series of paintings inspired by *Todesfuge* by Paul Celan. For the relationship between Celan’s *Todesfuge* and shifts in the material character of Kiefer’s work see Rosenthal’s essay “A Formal Breakthrough: 1980 to 1982,” in *Anselm Kiefer*, The Art Institute of Chicago and Philadelphia Museum of Art (New York: Neues Publishing Company 1987), 76. In alignment with the program of continuous change evident in his work, Kiefer has embraced the transformative aspects of real materials, which are consistently changing over time. For instance, his paintings develop cracks and fissures, which deepen the textures of the works, and fragments of plant parts fall off or dust is known to accumulate under his sculptures. This use of materials has been to the dismay of gallery curators who try to preserve the fragile qualities of the paintings.

emulsion and ash, with the addition of a Menorah to the center of the room, the painting transforms the original image of a building designed to commemorate German soldiers into a memorial for the Jews. More often than not interpretations of paintings from this period have been associated with “cryptological” metaphors pertaining to a repressed memory of the holocaust in the context of postwar Germany. And yet, from an architectural perspective, movement up or down stairways, across lateral causeways, under towers, through installations and into tomb-like environments also evince divisions of space and time that analogically relate to the material layering in such paintings. Made of modern steel and smooth concrete in the upper levels, exposed formwork and concrete mixed with earth further down, and spaces that appear to be made from primitive forms of building in the lowest regions (Figure 1.24), a cross-section through the center of the hill at La Ribaute would reveal a comparable process of layering, burial, and exhuming that is congruent with the archeological metaphors often associated with paintings like *Shulamith*. At La Ribaute, Kiefer imbues hardened, rough and brittle concrete with the liquid-like impressions made from the weight of earth impressed into concrete columns in the crypt, and such an experience stands out against the middle and upper levels, which are comprised of modern materials and construction techniques that resemble temples, bunkers, or industrial buildings (Figure 1.25 & Figure 1.26). Tectonic intersections between lower and upper levels also consist of dramatic clashes between rough concrete slab construction and protuberant angular forms that are neatly seamed with smooth concrete, moist earth, and even sand (Figure 1.27). Like *Shulamith*, where ash, straw, layers of paint and the photographic image of the Hall of Soldiers simultaneously differentiate and unify various meanings in the overall facture of the painting, the tectonic separations between the upper and lower levels “cleave together” different materials and atmospheres as one moves along the



Figure 1.23 *Shulamith* (1983) oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac and straw on canvas, 290 x 370 cm.
From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.



Figure 1.24 The crypt at La Ribaut. From Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.



Figure 1.25 Interior walkway at La Ribaute. Photograph by S. Wischer.



Figure 1.26 Tectonic intersection at La Ribaute. Photograph by S. Wischer.



Figure 1.27 Earthwork at La Ribaute. Photograph by S. Wischer.

scaffolding and encounters various spaces. The layering begun in earlier paintings like *Shulamith* has also continued in newer paintings found in the pavilions at La Ribaute, themselves made of a sedimentation of various images and materials including photographs, acrylic paints, emulsion, shellac, plant parts, mud, resins, ash and sand. Moving through the pavilions, tunnels and chambers, works and spaces that initially seem separate recombine in an astonishing morphology that fuses various qualities and meanings. It is this type of cross-contamination that opens up a space for meaning to arise that is not separate from Kiefer's acts of painting or building. Such experiences certainly transform the standard expectation of space by allowing layers of materials embedded in paintings *and* architectural environments to function like memory, permitting many associations to intersect and overlap.

If ash and dirt were applied to ever more massive canvases raised by mechanical hoists to initiate crumbling patinas that convey the passage of time, this is also similar to the archaizing effect of using industrial augers to bore holes into the earth, filling these with concrete, and then excavating them with bulldozers to become spaces that resemble some form of troglodytic cathedral. Likewise, lifting precast concrete into precarious positions for his towers (Figure 1.28) and allowing these assemblies to fall down for other sculptures or framing relatable ruins in the glass houses at the compound (Figure 1.29) shows how Kiefer dramatically exploits concrete's most fluid and brittle qualities. Sometimes gigantic lead books, squeezed in between the levels of the towers act as a sort of equalizing joint whereby the liquid property of the lead stabilizes the massive yet fragile concrete forms, expressing both monumentality and instability. Balanced to create the towers in the adjacent field, or restacked like modern shipping containers (seen to symbolize both industrial and spiritual transport), these concrete forms have also been thrust into the realm of the earth to create the mouths of tunnels that are reclaimed by the darkness of the



Figure 1.28 Towers at La Ribaute. From Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.



Figure 1.29 Concrete, rebar and lead sculpture in glass house at La Ribaute. From Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.

soil.³¹ What Matthew Biro has described as “the push and sweep of the brush felt in the liquid clay applied to his canvasses which splits and cracks open in the natural drying processes” is unmistakably present in tunnel walls and concrete columns that resound with the miasma of subjects in his work. Here, themes of ends and beginnings in paintings that depict architectural monuments which have partially succumb to downward dragging force of time are physically enacted in the edification and tumbling down of Kiefer’s own architectural constructions.³² Unlike direct references conjured in his words and objects, Kiefer’s use of materials involve a corporeal engagement with the material imagination. Binding substances to the narrative dimension of his art, and these to entire environments, the external world of the studio indeed affects the internal world of the body. This raw approach to the use of materials permeates the entire atmosphere of La Ribaute and becomes central to the cohesion of his paintings, sculptures and the themes of his work.

Such integration is most emphatically felt in Kiefer’s use of lead, a material that has more and more become associated with his work from the mid-1980s until the present day. Being light and dark, a colour and non-colour, lead has been linked with the central ambivalence of the artist’s productions, not only for its ambiguous physical characteristics (which can be both fluid and fossil-like) but also because of the manner in which it has been employed. Used for the creation of massive tomes (Figure 1.30), heated to a silver lustre and used like paint on canvasses (Figure 1.31) it has also been used for the construction of a subterranean room at La Ribaute and

³¹ The verticality of Kiefer’s towers is inspired by the story of the Merkaba in the *Sefer Hechaloth*, which refers to the crossing of seven buildings towards heaven. In Ezekiel 1:4-26, the Merkaba are described as winged creatures that move in “any of the four directions.” Kiefer’s towers suggest a similar “omnidirectional” movement, somewhere between traditional and modern, mythical and rational, simulated and real. See my essay “The Architecture of Anselm Kiefer: La Ribaute and the Space of Dramatic Representation,” in *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 7, ed. Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2016. 2016), 316-317.

³² Matthew Biro, *Anselm Kiefer and the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 198-220.



Figure 1.30 Lead books in glass house, La Ribaute. From Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.



Figure 1.31 Detail of lead and paint on canvas from *A Snake in Paradise*, (1991-2017). Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, from <https://www.trebuchet-magazine.com/anselm-kiefer-god-death-and-seven-tons-of-lead1/>

has garnered many allegorical associations: to nuclear fallout, due to its impermeability to light and radiation, and to alchemy, for its transformative characteristics.

Important to note is that even the process of applying lead to his canvasses and sculptures is an action that allows the physical struggle and transformation of various materials to become intrinsic to the various interpretations of his work. When heated, lead is poured from caldrons onto canvases where paint hisses, crackles and smokes. This is followed by plumes of steam when doused with water that occurs during the process of cooling and solidifying the thick materials, which take on various mineral-like patterns. As with his use of concrete, such processes introduce an element of conflict and tension at a material level, as “if he had to fight the material, as if the fight—idea versus matter—became the art.”³³ In the same way Kiefer has left paintings outside to be weathered for many years, or has hidden his work away in gigantic shipping containers to be found later on, his working with materials depends upon a transformative process whereby various ideas may go missing or be completely altered in order to be reclaimed or renewed meaningfully in his works. As with our movement through the variety of spaces at the compound, this shows how ideas need not be conceived through an operation conceptually understood beforehand but may emerge in an interaction with material, discovered as we interact with it, allowing meanings to form.

Certainly, Kiefer’s involvement with the expressive capacity of materials recalls aspects of Le Corbusier’s own changing perception of materiality that informed the construction of La Tourette. Unlike earlier projects that favored white-washed surfaces, which strove to rid his buildings of dark corners in order to affect hygienic benefits associated with “efficient living,”

³³ See Karl Ove Knausgaard’s “Into the Black Forest with the Greatest Living Artist,” *The New York Times*, February 12, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/12/magazine/anselm-kiefer-art.html>.

Le Corbusier's perception of concrete is known to have shifted from a "fixed material" associated with pristine finishes "to one of the same rank as stone, wood or baked earth," capable of emotionally affecting inhabitants at a subliminal level.³⁴ This is evidenced in the labyrinthine experience of La Tourette, which is fully imbued with a material thickness intrinsic to its overall mood and sense of place. Throughout the monastery, textures, sounds and shadows that form across modern concrete harken back to earlier monasteries and more ancient sacred spaces that embody the architect's later description of concrete as "reconstructed stone." And yet, even amid such similarities it must be noted how Kiefer's work with materials such as lead also work differently than Le Corbusier by not only imposing its visual and material weight upon our bodies but also by repelling touch altogether. This is partly due to the fact that many of his sculptures or lead books are too heavy to be lifted, but also because of the well-known poisonous property of the material.³⁵ For instance, because Kiefer sees books and buildings as "containers" and "transmitters of knowledge," the inaccessibility to his books or the lead chamber conjoin with the material property of lead to create an overtly hermetic and tomb-like quality that has been linked to the loss of traditional knowledge in the contemporary context.

At one level, Kiefer's dense interplay of material meaning is thus reminiscent of Le Corbusier's La Tourette, which, while embracing the spiritual program of the Dominicans, also recast traditional relationships to evoke a more universal, contemporary spirituality. The unusable spaces and objects at La Ribaute certainly recall the mostly inaccessible ground and sky-cloisters at La Tourette, as well as the pathways through the structure that do not end in a

³⁴ Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre Complete, Volume 5, 1946-1952* (Zurich: *Les Editions d'Architecture*, 1995), 191. Cited in Samuel, 18.

³⁵ For the most comprehensive account of historical associations linked to Kiefer's use of lead see Armin Zweite's essay in the monograph *The High Priestess* (London: Abrams in association with Anthony d'Offay Gallery 1988), 90-91. The section entitled "Lead" in Daniel Arasse's book *Anselm Kiefer* (2001) also provides a brilliant exposition of the importance of lead and its poetic properties in relation to the thematic changes and working methods that characterize Kiefer's practice after his move to La Ribaute.

complete circumambulation.³⁶ On the other hand, Kiefer's use of lead seems to embody a further engagement and perhaps critique of the very principles that Le Corbusier felt to be intrinsic to architecture. The inability to lift or open his lead books, for example, directly contradicts Le Corbusier's motif of the open book, witnessed in the adjoining open hands in Level F.3. of the *Poème*. For Le Corbusier, "Touch is a second kind of sight" and this relates to a primary, embodied experience, whereby "sculpture or architecture, when their forms are inherently successful, can be caressed" and our "hands are impelled towards them."³⁷ This welcoming principle which intended to invite the inhabitant to actively connect with his environments is critically reversed at La Ribaute. Dramatized to the point of futility, Kiefer's lead books (as with the studio itself) are closed-off, sealed and even dangerous. Likewise, Kiefer's depiction of ancient monuments or his creation of concrete towers are always derelict. Even impressions of earth on concrete in the crypt are different in this same way because unlike like the concrete pisé at La Tourette, which show the symbolic potential for reconnection with fundamental resources of the earth, Kiefer's inaccessible chambers or a layer of gold made to appear as a geological deposit in his tunnels (also shown to be artificially painted on) seem to contradict "the ascetic, humble and honest connection to the environment and the guests" that is fostered at La Tourette.³⁸

Not only does Kiefer's manipulation of materials push the absurdity of construction to the extreme, his work at La Ribaute also paradoxically exaggerates aspects of Le Corbusier's collaborative approach to construction. As mentioned, the inaccessibility and hermetic expression of Kiefer's work indeed contradicts the approaches taken by Le Corbusier but at the same time Kiefer's employment of assistants and workmen also recalls Le Corbusier's process of

³⁶ Ibid., 365.

³⁷ Samuel, 45.

³⁸ Ibid., 32.

working with assistants, often on life-sized models or on chalkboards, whereby he “sculpted the architecture with thought processes moving from the interior to the exterior, very much with inhabitation in mind.”³⁹ Having more leeway at his private complex, Kiefer further dramatizes “coincidental discoveries” made possible through wide-ranging modes of construction, where the close proximity of painted, sculpted, and architectural work accelerates tensions in the act of creating his work. For instance, whereas after the design process had finished, Le Corbusier embraced “the distance that separates him from the craftsmen,” releasing the project to teams of workers to fulfill particular tasks, Kiefer collapses the space between various modes of his productions. Moving from one area to the next, the artist himself operates or directs forklifts, bulldozers, and massive industrial drills which are as much responsible for the creation of La Ribaute as is paint, canvas, and assemblage. Kiefer has also had apprentices burning books to produce ash for his paintings, an Algerian seamstress creating lead dresses for his *Starfall* paintings, and assistants helping to mix plasters, paints and resins. As a fully active studio, the activity of painting and sculpting existed side-by-side with work done by cranes, hoists, metalworking and excavating machinery used in ways that leave blunt, indexical qualities on architectural surfaces in a manner similar to his paintings.⁴⁰ Turning machines that traditionally have been seen as replacements of artistic skill back into an extension of the meanings in his work maintains a give and take, push, pull process that extends the mind and the hand into the methods of discovering and realizing both artistic and architecturally constructed work.⁴¹

A collagist, painter, architect and construction manager, Kiefer thus goes further to show how combinations of materiality and representation may influence the conceptualization of

³⁹ Ibid., 65.

⁴⁰ For the most in-depth discussion of Kiefer’s use of modern technological processes in relation to historical and mythical themes see the section “Art and Technology” in Matthew Biro’s *Anselm Kiefer and the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, 193-252.

⁴¹ Christopher Bardt, *Material and Mind* (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press 2019), 186.

building processes as something open to physical change and transformation. When discussing his process of painting, Kiefer states: “Starting is just to be in the material ... To do something that is not so controlled ... Then I have something in front of me that I can ask questions to [but] I have to do it myself. I cannot trust that another can take out the spirit [of the materials].”⁴² As with his painting, Kiefer’s approach to building likewise proceeds with some kind of resistance to or derailing of intent that occurs through material interaction, when, for example, materials provide unforeseen reactions that necessitate an imaginative interpretation of how to proceed. Indeed, no matter the tools or scale of work, Kiefer’s approach provides lessons for architects by demonstrating how the material world may speak back to us, and how every moment is liable to disclose connections between inward vision and externalized work. In fact, the environment at La Ribaute directly shows how playing with materials and various modalities of representation, even deliberately disturbing the planning a design task, might put us in a better position to represent human action. For Kiefer, this occurs by using tools typically employed to reduce lived space to a mere geometric entity into the creation of formal and spatial connections that arise from a receptiveness to the physical interaction with the material world. An architecture that unsettles rather than settles, Kiefer’s multilayered universe reveals how working through materials may reveal a deeper complexity of ideas in space.

It is obvious how such an approach offers a valuable challenge to traditional boundaries between the arts since it is open to coincidental discoveries during the production of work. Very different than typical architecture, the representational complexity and increased material presence in paintings, sculpture and assemblage at La Ribaute offers much to the generative capacity of architecture because they involve a corporeal, poetic connectivity that allows for

⁴² See Kiefer’s interview with Tim Marlow at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art entitled “Anselm Kiefer: Art is Spiritual,” January 20, 2015, YouTube video, 12:40, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlm5tgistqA>.

revelatory moments to yield particular qualities in given situations.⁴³ In fact, it is precisely because La Ribaute makes this process so “self-conscious,” that it raises important questions with regards to the representational boundaries and *limits* between the arts. Emphasizing permeability between scales and modes of production, Kiefer’s unyielding experimentation accentuates how material and mind, physical and psychical worlds interweave through various tools and modes of representation. Indeed, whatever the scale of work or tools he employs we get the sense that materials and meanings depend on direct experience. It is the same for those who encounter his work since we too are invited to follow along with the traces and material layers of such creations as we seek out particular meanings.

Additionally, part of the reason Kiefer’s work offers so much to the exploration of architectonic form is that the materials he uses are themselves motivated by explicit cultural meanings. For example, Daniel Arasse recognizes how the straw used for Margarethe’s blond hair “does not simply represent hair but also recalls wheat fields, and thereby the cult of the German *land*, represented by the monotonous landscape to which the straw is fixed.”⁴⁴ Likewise, the charcoal used for the shadows of *Shulamith* relates ash to dark hair and the holocaust since it is a material derived from burning. In a more convincing manner than his incorporation of words, Kiefer’s materials link cultural meanings to linguistic imagination in ways that correspond with deeply held experiences that extend beyond the individual who encounters them. These types of “form-content” relationships bolster deep connections in the work while at

⁴³ Many of Kiefer’s sculptures and installations seem to attain a status similar to Le Corbusier’s experiments with one-to-one scale models, which he felt to be intrinsic to his explorations of architecture. The 2014 BBC documentary film, *Anselm Kiefer: Remembering the Future*, provides evidence of Kiefer’s receptivity to coincidental discoveries that arise in his processes of making. During an interview, Kiefer discusses the way he had poured concrete between shipping containers for the construction of the tiered amphitheater and tunnels at La Ribaute, accepting accidental relationships that turned up unforeseen convergences in its production. Significantly, this emphasizes how the circumstances of particular situations reveal discoveries *during* the production of paintings, sculpture, installation and the creation of architectural structures/space.

⁴⁴ Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*, 231.

the same time seem to motivate Kiefer's suggested interpretation of a chosen theme.⁴⁵ For instance, it is because Kiefer has taken lead from Cologne Cathedral, the tallest medieval structure in Germany, that the act of melting, forging, and burying it in the earth, simultaneously returns the metal to a geological position, challenges particular religious associations, and sets up correlations with its traditional use as a lining for coffins and boxes used for the interment of hearts. In other contexts, such as some of his paintings and sculptures, lead is also spatial, "as if liberated from the burden of the ground," becoming "celestial, light and mobile."⁴⁶ Whatever the case may be, it is the mixture of intentionality and discovery in his approach to and use of tools that allows materials to transform into immaterial associations, granting Kiefer's work its associative depth.⁴⁷

For example, even the mouldable and brittle property of concrete at the compound epitomizes the continuously shifting meanings in his work.⁴⁸ Inside the tunnels and the amphitheatre walls have been cast in whole or in part between international Intermodal Shipping Containers (ISOs), the type one finds on trains or lorries.⁴⁹ Left with the reversed impression of these mass-produced items the units carry a profound significance with the overall experience of La Ribaute because they adapt to various locations and thereby "transport" meanings back-and-forth between spaces. Underground, they form the walls of the tunnels which carry the body to and from various exits and entries. They are also stacked for the tiered amphitheatre, itself a stage-set designed by Kiefer for the *Opera Electra* in Madrid (2003) (Figure 1.32). The cast units

⁴⁵ Ibid., 231.

⁴⁶ See Danièle Cohn, *Anselm Kiefer: Studios* (Paris: Flammarion Publishers, 2014), 28.

⁴⁷ Armin Zweite, *The High Priestess*, 90.

⁴⁸ One senses Kiefer's immense and diverse use of concrete even before entering the compound. Pacing off the perimeter I encountered massive piles of concrete refuse that had been discarded at the edges of the property, behind a chained link fence that encircles the compound. This nebulous mass of hardened and crumbled concrete is so continuous that it seems to form the base of the hill around which the home, studio, and pavilions are fashioned.

⁴⁹ These concrete units carry the impression of formwork that have been cast in part or whole from durable closed steel boxes, mostly of either 20 or 40 ft. (6m or 12m) standard length by 8 feet 6 inches (2.6 m) and 9 feet 6 inches (2.9 m) known as a "High Cube" format.



Figure 1.32 Anselm Kiefer's stage set design for *Opera Electra*, Madrid (2003). From https://seenandheardinternational.com/2011/10/madrid_elektra_bychkov_grueber_jmirurzun_jflaurson/



Figure 1.33 Towers with sunflowers at La Ribaute.
Photograph by S. Wischer.

are also piled one on top of the other in half or quarter-sections for the precariously balanced towers that fill the Eastern field of the property (Figure 1.33). Resembling stacked tombs, church spires, barbicans from Nazi camps or industrial buildings on the outskirts of cities, these towers show how a variety of meanings are made to appear in the transformation of a recognizable, standardized forms and materials taken from the everyday world. Walking amongst the towers, one may be called to remember the inevitable effects of time, war, or natural disasters that pair human aspirations for raising up towers with a sense of tumbling down over time.⁵⁰ This not only relates to the ongoing quest for transcendence in human experience (which Kiefer relates to the movement between heaven and earth in Biblical passages from Ezekiel) but also evokes “deliberately crude architectural elegies of a once-secret path towards God and heaven.”⁵¹ Always “symbolizing and undoing its symbolization,” implicit paradoxes are further expressed in the absent tensile steel from which they are cast. When considered in relation to “spiritual transport,” the illusory combination of breakable concrete and the absent more malleable metal used for the initial casting lends a peculiar air of suspicion to the meanings in Kiefer’s work by drawing up an account of things no longer present. Unlike Le Corbusier’s “spiritual use of concrete” at the La Tourette, which, while employed in a raw and difficult manner still respects “the fullness of reality,” providing a framework for the rituals of the monks, Kiefer’s approach to spirituality seems to consecrate a succession of paradoxes that depend upon instability between many possible meanings.

Not without an uncanny sense of coincidence, one’s movement along the formworks at La Ribaute even recalls Le Corbusier’s Modular concrete, which has been said to send

⁵⁰ Simon Schama, “In Mesopotamia” in *Anselm Kiefer: Karfunkelfee and The Fertile Crescent* (London: White Cube, 2009), 29.

⁵¹ Auping, 44.

“messages from the soles to the eyes.”⁵² His repetitive use of recognizable concrete forms indeed allows our bodies to experience similar proportions in various environments where two or more places seem to appear in a singular location. In part, this resembles Le Corbusier’s earlier aspirations of the Modulor, which referred to a belief in universal standards that when adjusted could be used as a common rule for transferring meaning. Yet, the experience of changing meanings that occurs when moving from one location to the next in Kiefer’s studio also recalls the architect’s later view of the Modulor in the *Poème* that changed from a conceptual understanding linked to numerical proportions to one based on the experience of place.⁵³ Because the concrete units become part of many works and places, Kiefer shows a profound grasp of the narrative capacity of material and his ability “to structure the rhythm of architectural experience beyond aesthetic voyeurism.”⁵⁴ Considering Kiefer’s use of materials to unify the experience of opposites such as creation and destruction, dark and light, past and present themes and ideas, his work goes far to celebrate flaws and discovery as much as intentionality to present an ecumenical spirituality, which was also intrinsic to Le Corbusier’s work and the emphasis he placed on resonances felt in art over dogmatic religion. As Kiefer’ suggests,

Art is spiritual yes, because it makes a connection between things that are separated. It makes a connection that we don’t have anymore. Science is very specialized; it separates things out. So the only way to have some context is art⁵⁵

⁵² Samuel, 63.

⁵³ While earlier “in Le Corbusier’s *The Modular* [1948] the new measure is posited as arithmetic, this relationship in the *Poème* [1953] can no longer be reduced to one of aesthetic formalism or *tracés regulateurs*.” La Tourette embodies the changing understanding of the modular as related to musical harmony and “the need for the architect to provide a script for life that may structure the rhythm of architectural experience, beyond aesthetic voyeurism ... where architecture had to be disclosed in temporal terms distinct from that of aesthetic objects of the modernist tradition.” See Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 360.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 360

⁵⁵ See comments given by Kiefer in the interview with Tim Marlow at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art entitled “Anselm Kiefer: Art is Spiritual,” January 20, 2015, YouTube video, 12:40, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8h11-Jm4-s&t=15s.

Indeed, the vast combinations of materials and intersections of potential meanings in Kiefer's work show how La Ribaute is similar to La Tourette in the sense that each represent a "culmination" or summary of the artists' respective oeuvres, existing as paradigmatic examples of architecture in the tradition of spiritual works.

Still, even in spite of such similarities it is the inaccessibility of La Ribaute, its insular repetition of themes, and Kiefer's rather non-intentional approach to building (in the sense that it does not relate to an architectural program) that raises fundamental questions regarding the representational boundaries and *limits* of architecture. This is an aspect of his work that will be central to the following chapters that seek to frame the lessons Kiefer offers for architects in our contemporary world. One of these lessons being that by collapsing relationships between representation and construction, La Ribaute offers a valuable trajectory for architecture regarding the generative potential of architectural making entwined with the spiritual potential of modern technology. Not fully predetermined, the competing complexities of various scales and building practices at Barjac indeed point to manifold possibilities for manifesting meaningful environments with contemporary processes. Using modern machinery, including electrical and mass-media technologies, Kiefer manages to draw up relationships with the fundamentally transformative aspect of the many mythic themes in his works.⁵⁶ Moreover, the increased material presence found at multiple scales throughout La Ribaute makes "self-conscious" a critical position "that architecture may 'be' its representation ... a critical operation, justifiable by the cultural conditions of modernity."⁵⁷ Certainly, this will be a central discussion in the next

⁵⁶ Many of Kiefer's working methods at La Ribaute can be seen to echo Heidegger's closing statements in "The Question Concerning Technology," where (with reference to Friedrich Hölderlin's poetry) he suggests that the saving power is not the rejection of technology but rather a working through technology. See Martin Heidegger's *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954) in *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers), 34.

⁵⁷ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 216.

parts of this study, but before we explore this crucial approach more methodically it is first necessary to determine differences between Kiefer's work and the central task of architecture, which by necessity demands the creation of attuned settings for everyday life. When compared with the culturally grounded situations at La Tourette, Kiefer's acceleration of ironic meanings and his integration of representation and building continues to teeter between modern artistic creation and the space of participation fundamental to architecture. With the previous lessons in mind, we question the degree to which Kiefer's work transcends or remains part of the aesthetic tradition of the arts by examining more closely Kiefer's motivation for building as well as several public manifestations of his work.

Taken together, the aforementioned examples seem to suggest that Kiefer's integration of representation, materiality, and diverse construction techniques at La Ribaute relate as much to architecture as it does to any understanding of contemporary art. If, as many authors suggest, Kiefer's paintings include an abstract expressionist musculature, remnants of the tradition of landscape painting, French Conceptualism or object-like additions that recall Art Pauvre (and many other formal and conceptual innovations developed over the course of the modern era), La Ribaute also brings cubistic and surrealistic tendencies to bear on architectural experience by involving an experience of space and time in ways that resonate with the traditional task of architecture. Yet, when compared to the poetic participation evoked by Le Corbusier's deeply grounded practice, Kiefer's processes of building reveal further discrepancies when tested against questions of appropriateness and attuned architectural atmospheres.

For instance, whereas it is characteristic of both Kiefer and Le Corbusier to query architecture based on the depth of collage across a variety of media, which has inevitably altered their work over time, Kiefer's creations also carry a transformative agency that is profoundly

different. One example being that whereas Le Corbusier embraced “the distance between conception and execution,” Kiefer’s work thrives on a constant renewal of historical passageways generated in spatial relations set up by the studio itself.⁵⁸ Unlike La Tourette, La Ribaute is not designed for any particular ritual from the external world but rather exists as inseparable from the conception and generation of Kiefer’s own art. This crucial difference is most apparent when considering the rituals that underlie the production of their creations and how such work is brought into contact with everyday life.

Recently described by Danièle Cohn as “a living archive, where places from the world are stored-up in the studio,” Kiefer’s processes at La Ribaute are said to involve diurnal and nocturnal working habits that could be seen to contrast with Le Corbusier’s “patient search,” where day to day, and across his career, his writing and painting practice in the morning opened onto architectural practice in the afternoon. If Le Corbusier maintained an interpretive distance that could turn up various discoveries between long intervals of time, which after a period of incubation would suddenly reemerge and be “birthed” in his drawings, painting, or in an idea about architecture, the work at La Ribaute is specifically tethered to actions that link parts to whole in a way that seems to vouchsafe its own unity.⁵⁹ This is not only evidenced in the proximity of paintings, objects and installations at La Ribaute but also in the vast stores of materials that the studio collects. The large painting *Sternen-Lager IV* (1998) (Figure 1.34) is particularly significant in this regard since it depicts the massive cellar at Barjac, where made-to-order objects such as dried plants, hair, chipped paint, photographs, and even manufactured teeth, are all carefully ordered via classification numbers and stored for the reincorporation into other

⁵⁸ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 368.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 345.

works.⁶⁰ This supply of materials is constantly rearranged in new works and is kept incredibly well-ordered. It is also of such a vast and varied assortment that it seems to defy classification. Integrated into diverse forms of painting and construction, Kiefer's approach to making at La Ribaute has been linked to the history of the silkworm nursery on the site and to the symbol of the silkworm itself, which "encloses 'itself within, weaving itself a palace.'"⁶¹ The difference here being that, unlike the monastery, designed for the particular rituals of the monks who open their doors to visitors from all walks of life, Kiefer admittedly denies access to La Ribaute, stating: "Barjac is only for research and not for public exhibition ... it is my brain."⁶² Of visiting his studios, Kiefer comments, "You are there where works are assembled from diverse materials, where ideas inherited from past centuries circulate and, at the point at which they intersect, produce a sort of crystallization called Art."⁶³ In other words, upon entering Kiefer's studio, there is a collapse of the projective distance of represented, indexical forms wherein one receives the impression that all the work, materials, and even the spaces themselves have been collected as pure potential for recombination. In his workplaces, things stored away emerge by rediscovery, sink back into the earth, or end up scuttled in another studio.⁶⁴ Similar to Le Corbusier since this allows revealing and concealing, emergence and disappearance to become a central aspect to his process of discovery, La Ribaute is also profoundly different when queried in relation to the everyday world. Such discrepancies are best understood when Kiefer's studios are compared more obliquely with the poetic participation apparent in Le Corbusier's earlier Beistegui apartment of 1929-1931.

⁶⁰ Arasse, 147, 150.

⁶¹ Auping, 43.

⁶² See Owen Hopkins, "Kiefer and Chipperfield talk space and creativity," Royal Academy of Arts. November 19, 2014, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/kiefer-and-chipperfield-talk-space>.

⁶³ Cohn, 243.

⁶⁴ See Christoph Ransmayr's essay "The Unborn or Anselm Kiefer and the Tracts of the Heavens, in *Anselm Kiefer: The Seven Heavenly Palaces 1973-2001* (2001), 22.

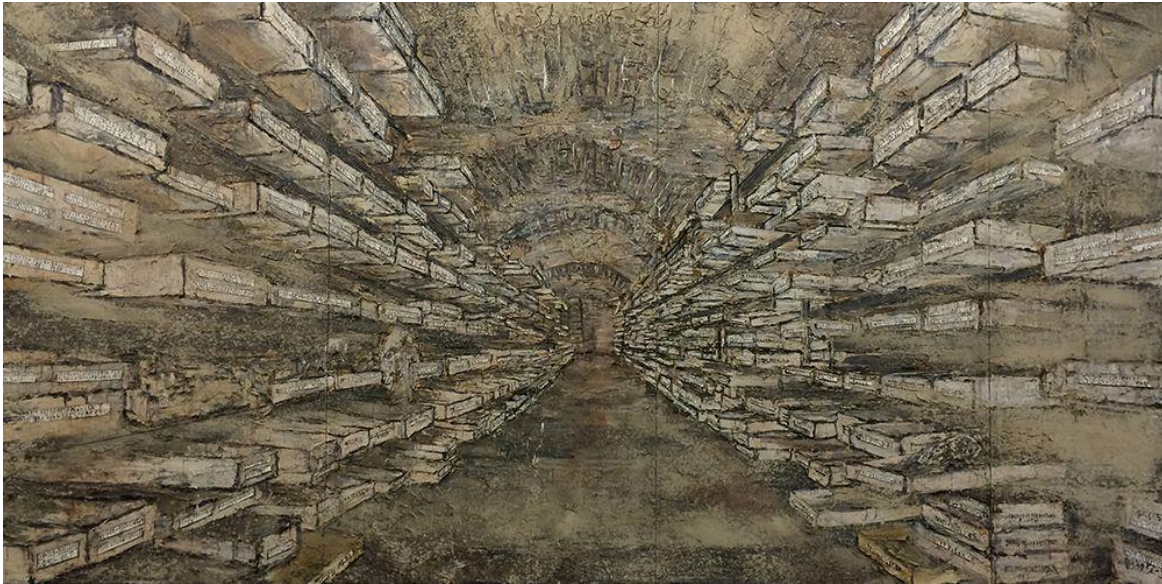


Figure 1.34 *Sternen-Lager IV* (1998), acrylic, shellac, emulsion, sand and soil on canvas 465 x 940 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.



Figure 1.35 Le Corbusier, solarium of the Beistegui apartment (1929-1931). From https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Le-Corbusier-Beistegui-Apartment-external-terrace-on-the-4th-and-last-floor-from-Le_fig8_330113518

In high-contrast to the traditional setting of the Champs-Élysées, the Beistegui apartment includes a solarium on the roof that on one hand resembles the layered experiences of past and present themes at La Ribaute (Figure 1.35). This similarity exists in the sense that it is “treated simultaneously as an open space and a closed interior [that loops] the carpet of the grass on the ground and the openness of the space to the sky to the first of these meanings [and] the furniture and the fireplace in the back wall to the second.”⁶⁵ Yet, if individual elements at the Beistegui “play the role of metaphorical fragments that reveal the situational character of the dwelling in the context of a room, city, or nature,” Kiefer’s juxtapositions of above and below, inside and outside, and past and present themes, while more layered, do not reference the larger context of the setting they are in, at least not in the same way.⁶⁶ For instance, one needs to research quite deeply to uncover the fact that Kiefer’s turn to Kabbalistic themes at La Ribaute may relate to the upsurge of Kabbalism that occurred in the same location of Provence in the fourteenth-century.⁶⁷ Likewise, while aspects of Kiefer’s constructions recall nearby geological formations at Aven d’Ornagac or the Caves at Lascaux, the collection of items found throughout the compound or hidden away in zinc chests in the vaulted cellar (including Catalpa blossoms, hair, stuffed or dried animals, stones or shells) all exist in tensions with other objects Kiefer has found on trips to India and China, Tibet, Nepal, Indonesia or Japan. Certainly, the fragments and spaces at La Ribaute conjure such vast associations that they constitute less a concern with their immediate context than the “storing-up of the world” within the studio. Thus, instead of evoking what Dalibor Vesely describes as a “restorative dimension” to fragments that could awaken “latent connections in the situation of the world,” Kiefer restores various connections

⁶⁵ Dalibor Vesely, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 344.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 342-46.

⁶⁷ See Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1941, 1954) and *Origins of the Kabbalah*, ed. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, trans. Allan Arkush. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

metaphorically but these tend to exist in a circular relation within his own private complex. Even in the case where Kiefer's use of ISO containers refers to recognizable objects from the world, the difference here being that they are detached from the actions and experiences of the everyday world precisely because they remain memories "stored" in the studio environment, "within himself."

It is for this reason that La Ribaute affects the experience of time differently than La Tourette. And, this temporality, intrinsic to its mood, raises important questions regarding Kiefer's work and how it relates to the fundamental task of architecture in the sense that his work is exaggeratedly self-referential and posits a critical view of the everyday world. If we recognize how Kiefer's newer works are "still forming superpositions" with older ones, and we are swept away by its succession of themes and paradoxes, Le Corbusier's monastery does the opposite by gathering thought and actions together in particularly resonant moments. As with the Beistegui Solarium, where each meaning refers to another in the context of Paris, opening relationships between "the *Arc de Triomphe* and the ornate fireplace, between grass and carpet and between the ceiling of the room and the sky," the cosubstantiality of light and darkness in the textures of concrete at La Tourette recall ancient sacred spaces precisely because they arise in the situational structure of the setting itself and from within pre-given cultural conditions that enable shockwaves to form *through* history.⁶⁸ This does not come from knowledge of the past but through *present* experience. Conversely, because Kiefer's search involves "symbols that move in all directions," the remote is made present but is also immediately drawn into other distances that lead us away from the things themselves. This quality aligns with Daniel Arasse's suggestion

⁶⁸ See Ross Anderson's essay "All of Paris Darkly: Le Corbusier's Beistegui Apartment. 1929-31" in *Le Corbusier, 50 years later, International Congress* (2015). Here, Anderson is referring to Le Corbusier's "The Exterior is Always an Interior" in Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells, (London: J. Rodker, 1931), 191-94.

that “rather than the unique appearance of distance, no matter how close the object may be [Benjamin], the aura emanating from Kiefer’s work marks the disappearance of something close however distant it may be.”⁶⁹ If, as Armin Zweite suggests, “Everything comes together in the lead library of *Zweistromland*,” (1985-1989) (Figure 1.36) or the *The Breaking of Vessels* (1990) (Figure 1.37) (also at La Ribaute) “from whence, if one could only open the books, it might all emerge again,” Kiefer’s “omnidirectional” creations seem to edge ever more closely towards chance because they are not dependent upon a particular and resonant situation in the recognizable context of the world. While it is true that “a particular work can be read in all others, just as all others can be read in a singular one,” where even Kiefer’s studios at Buchen, Höpfingen, Barjac, Marais and Croissy can be seen to “each contain the next,” the quality of having no distinct beginning or end may guarantee the continuance of works but it could also be seen to forego the possibility of their restorative function because they do not link particular experiences with the larger world in the everyday sense. Counter to the situational relationship of fragments discussed by Dalibor Vesely, much recent analysis promotes the hermetic circularity of Kiefer’s works and themes. This is epitomized by Danièle Cohn, who states:

The temporality of a singular work, its history, is to be read solely in the general picture presented by the studio. Thus is maintained the circular conception of time that Kiefer—with Michelet—espouses, promotes against linear history. Within the confines of the world that is the studio, circularity guarantees the continuity of works. The Work is never completed: an open totality, it continues⁷⁰

Thus, although Kiefer’s work is a paradigmatic example of the possibility of wholeness appearing through fragments, which emerge through a deep exploration of materials in space,

⁶⁹ Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*, 221. Because of this “double distance,” I read Kiefer use of symbols in relation to Paul Ricoeur’s suggestion that “a symbol works because it is bound to its content and, through its primary content, to its secondary content [...as well as] to the two rigorously inverse uses of symbols, which each have a function of absence and a function of presence: a function of absence because to signify is to signify ‘vacuously,’ it is to say things without things, in substituted signs; a function of presence because to signify is to signify ‘something’ and finally the world.” See Paul Ricoeur’s, *The Symbolism of Evil* (New York, London: Harper and Row Publishers, 1967), 12.

⁷⁰ See Cohn, 245, 228.



Figure 1.36 *Zweistromland – The High Priestess* (1985-1989), 196 lead books in two steel bookcases, with glass and copper wire, 455 x 816 x 180 cm. From <https://www.afmuseet.no/en/work/2108>.



Figure 1.37 *The Breaking of Vessels* (1990) approximately 41 lead books in a steel bookcase, with lead, iron, glass, copper wire, charcoal and Aquatec, 378.5 x 836.9 x 518.2 cm. Saint Louis Art Museum, from <https://publicdelivery.org/anselm-kiefer-vessels/>

because neither the architecture or the paintings, nor the objects or the themes can be fully comprehended, nor feel complete without other parts, the work requires a constant reforming of memory, which dramatically enhances a circular feeling of time.⁷¹

Unlike his lead books, turning the pages of one of Kiefer's more accessible "book-objects" is helpful for elucidating such differences. The sound of leafing through the sand-covered pages in a book in one of the pavilions recalls the coarse textures of paintings or walls of the tunnels and even the temporal rhythms of walking through the network of spaces. Synechdochic fragments of hair or photographic images set within pages covered in sand emerge, dissolve, and reappear in a series of escalating revelations that recall the reappearance of physical fragments in the atmospheres at La Ribaute. Always repeating themselves with a difference, the rerunning of themes in books (or movement through the compound) align with Kiefer's emphasis on memory which is well-known to characterize his work. Indeed, even as his themes have broadened the re-emergence of subjects always assures that earlier ones return. But, if Le Corbusier's practice necessitates that things forgotten be remembered at the right time, translated in the right situation for a particular *use*, it is possible for the visitor to La Ribaute to be so caught up in the constant cycling of themes that no one subject stands out more than another, at least not in a way that points up a distance between practical use and the larger world here and now.⁷² Consequently, in spite of the ability of Kiefer's work to "speak about something," which shows its capacity to "transcend self-referential games,"⁷³ the physical remoteness of La Ribaute as well as "the books, mythical references, the words about death and

⁷¹ Following Dalibor Vesely, I challenge the closed circle of Kiefer's studios, promoted in much previous writing, in order to foreground the potential of Kiefer's work to bring "the latent world of common existence into our awareness, not only in the domain of art but also in everyday life." See Vesely, 342-46.

⁷² Critics like Daniel Siedell have recognized something similar, suggesting that much of what has been written "wraps the work in a fatalistic, cyclical cloak that deprives it of its capacity to speak otherwise to the viewer, to declare something beyond the way things are." See Siedell's essay "Where Do You Stand? Anselm Kiefer's Visual and Verbal Artefacts," *Image*, Issue 77, 2013, <https://imagejournal.org/article/where-do-you-stand/>.

⁷³ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 340-68.

rebirth and the cyclical nature of history,” also appear to be “self-referential” and remarkably out of touch with the “reality” of the world as lived.⁷⁴ When this relationship is considered more carefully, specific limits between art and architecture certainly emerge. Considered architecturally, such differences reveal pertinent lessons regarding two modalities of architecture, its representation as it relates to actualized construction, as well as the relevance of architecture as the representation itself in the modality of theoretical projects, a topic which is addressed in subsequent chapters.

It must also be remembered that as much as La Ribaute was a place to orchestrate the transfer of meanings between various media and scales, Kiefer’s practice also involves the physical transportation of work from and back to La Ribaute on occasion of public exhibitions. Considered from this perspective, Kiefer’s creations can be understood to involve a “diastolic/systolic” rhythm that absorbs aspects from the larger world: from his travels, from history, and from his other studios. Transporting things in and out can in fact be understood to constitute a fundamental part of the “program” of La Ribaute as well as the growth and continuity of Kiefer’s oeuvre more generally. For instance, at the *Monumenta 7* installation at the Grand Palais in 2007 (just a year before Kiefer’s move from La Ribaute to Paris) we find fragments from Barjac reformed in the public (Figure 1.38). Entailing seven, fifty-foot long, sky lit, cube-shaped galleries, set alongside three impending concrete towers, we find paintings, sculptures and assemblage created at La Ribaute reassembled in a building originally constructed for the 1900 Universal Exhibition. Housed within the newly renovated building, the ruinous sculptures and tower conjure associations with the origins of capitalist culture and have been

⁷⁴ While Kiefer’s works are not comparable to La Tourette in terms of inhabitation in the world, later chapters of this dissertation examine how Kiefer’s creations align with the tradition of critical and theoretical projects in architecture begun by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Etienne-Louis Boullée, and Claude-Nicholas Ledoux, and continued in the purposeful “self-referentiality” of works by Frederick Kiesler, John Hejduk and Daniel Libeskind in the twentieth century. See Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 98.



Figure 1.38 *Monumenta 7*, Grand Palais (2007). From <https://2012.monumenta.com/en/a-unique-concept/>



Figure 1.39 *Chute d'étoiles (Falling Stars)* at the *Monumenta 7* exhibition, Grand Palais (2007). From <http://kosmopolis.cccb.org/en/sebaldia/post/reverberacions-academiques-en-lobra-de-w-g-sebald/>



Figure 1.40 Pavilions and sculpture at *Monumenta 7*, Grand Palais (2007). From <https://www.paris-art.com/monumenta-2007-chute-detoiles-3/>

associated with the critique of nineteenth-century world exhibitions critically addressed in Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* (1927-40).⁷⁵ Likewise, the dried sunflower in *Ash Flower* reappears as a multitude of burnt stocks fixed into the corners and openings of the sculpture *Chute d'étoile* (*Falling Stars*) (Figure 1.39). In the pavilions, combinations of battleships on canvasses from *Für Chelbnikov* are also incorporated into piles of crumbled concrete that resemble other installations at La Ribaute (Figure 1.40). The ruinous atmosphere, complete with rebar sticking out of pulverized concrete forms, creates tensions with the steel and glass construction of the Grand Palais, originally dedicated to the glory of French art. Along with broken terracotta vessels, a palm tree, palm leaves attached to layers of paint, fragments of poetry by Paul Celan and Ingeborg Bachman, and a copy of Ferdinand Céline's famous novel *Journey to the End of the Night* (1932), features from the larger world that had been altered at La Ribaute are here worked together to create an experience of rebounding meanings in an intensely critical fashion.⁷⁶

It is in such a setting that differences between Kiefer and Le Corbusier most readily emerge. Taken out of everyday time, no longer used or touched in the same way as Le Corbusier's monastery, Kiefer's exhibitions might be seen to self-consciously reveal the very difference between aestheticized objects and the fundamental task of architecture. Even while Kiefer shows incredible similarities with Le Corbusier, the difference is that the architect's work at La Tourette conveys experiences that exhibit genuine interest in traditions leading up to an appropriate solution for *use* by others. Following his *savoir habiter*, an integral part of Le Corbusier's practice was to draw attention to "the small but highly significant acts of everyday life that make people conscious of their meanings." In the words of André Wogenscky, Le

⁷⁵ See Gary Faigan, "Anselm Kiefer at Grand Palais Paris – July 2007," <http://www.garyfaigan.com/art-reviews-blog/anselm-kiefer-at-grand-palais-paris-july-2007>.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Corbusier sought to design “an envelope around man and woman ... encompassing all their gestures, their movements and their acts, their thoughts.”⁷⁷ Thus, while it is true that Kiefer’s work consistently impacts the life of his viewer, where “concentrated physical force and ironic self-distancing meet the spectator head-on” at his installations, his creations also leave the everyday world seeming a bit emptier precisely because of this impact.⁷⁸ Kiefer may be inspired by everyday occurrences, which he often references in interviews or in his own writing found within his *Notebooks* (which will be discussed in a later chapter) yet it is the grandiose, turbulent themes and symbols that linger on, pointing up what is missing (for better or worse) from the modern world. This feeling of loss has to do with the historical content of the work, the tragedies of historical progression, the holocaust, and the decline of historical grounds for cultural production and lack of poetic participation in contemporary society more generally. Yet, it is also this focus on absence and loss that does not allow the everyday world with all its ordinary habits and routines to “shine forth” in a manner comparable to La Tourette. Carrying with it an aura of changing meanings that have built-up in the saturated atmospheres of his studios, when the work comes to the public, the environment so much a part of the work during its creation feels all the more absent when we are met with reified objects divided from the context in which they were fashioned. Granted, Kiefer has explicitly challenged the setting of museums and galleries, either by transforming them, or making work that is often difficult to display, but from an architectural perspective his work continues to verge on precarious boundaries between the aestheticism of art and the necessary task of architecture since it does not quite transcend its circular nature by becoming part of everyday life.

⁷⁷ From Le Corbusier’s *The Decorative Art of Today* (1925) as cited in Samuel, 111.

⁷⁸ Klaus Honnef, “Writing/Painting: A Central Aspect in Anselm Kiefer’s Work” in *Memorabilia* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2012), 25.

Considering the ambivalence of Kiefer's work, it is fitting that there would be exceptions and more paradoxes. Certainly, one of the most redeeming qualities of Kiefer's work for architecture rests precisely within its remoteness. Set apart from the everyday world it maintains its mystique by providing a mechanism through which to critically contemplate aestheticism in urban environments as much as in institutions of art. If this aspect was incorporated into the context of inhabitable space his creations could serve as a potent model that might transcend institutional boundaries which treat history as "vestiges of the past preserved for visiting tourists" by becoming "living testimonies, incorporated into the life of the present and enabling a future."⁷⁹ From this perspective, his work could be perceived as a challenge to a reductive understanding of architecture, showing how alternative forms of representation could be further translated into appropriate environments for living human beings.

It should also be noted that some of Kiefer's public works do break the standard format of typical exhibitions by edging their way into the everyday world and establishing a powerful sense of place. The large glass vitrine holding suspended lead submarines entitled *Velimir Khlebnikov: Fates of Nations, the New Theory of War*, installed in the Royal Academy courtyard (2011-2014), not only rouses connections with the history of naval warfare in the country but by bringing lead warships from his canvases (Figure 1.41) into public space they intersect our cone of vision so that the aesthetic spectacle contained within the giant aquarium cannot be perceived independently from the space it is in (Figure 1.42).⁸⁰ Unavoidable are the changing reflections of oneself, others, and the surrounding environment brought to life when moving about the installation. Moreover, comments from Kiefer regarding his critique of the Berlin Wall, for which he hypothetically proposed a gigantic void that could be accessed by the citizens of the

⁷⁹ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 193.

⁸⁰ For this comparison I draw analogies with Pérez-Gómez's description of Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass* (1915-1923). See Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 371.



Figure 1.41 Isaac Abravanel: *das Gastmahl des Levithan* (2004). Oil, emulsion, acrylic on canvas with lead boats, 380 x 560 cm. From https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/german_art_2665jsp/



Figure 1.42 Kiefer, Velimir Khlebnikov: *Fates of Nations: The New Theory of War. Time, Dimension of the World, Battles at Sea Occur Every 317 Years or Multiples Thereof, Namely $317 \times 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 \dots$* (2011-2014), the Royal Academy courtyard.

city as a permanent reminder, or his humorous reference to a Nazi monument that had been protected from demolition because small creatures had transformed it into an “ecological niche,” suggest that Kiefer’s thinking has turned towards participatory interventions in public life that align with a transformative vision necessary for critical architecture today.

As opposed to some of his exhibited work, I have also tried to show that La Ribaute cannot be understood as a fully detached aestheticized experience, even for others. At the very center of the complex, in its underground passageways, an encounter with a milky amber-orange material smoothed inside the entire length of one of the tunnels provides evidence to this effect. Upon entry, the odor of the material spreads forth with the color to form an atmosphere that is powerfully disorienting. Just as works in Kiefer’s public exhibitions tend to feel alien in relation to the larger external world, the change from the deeply textured, melancholic atmospheres found throughout the rest of the compound to one made of pure color and smell leaves the impression that while this work is within La Ribaute it is not from Anselm Kiefer. Wolfgang Laib, a German artist known for filling entire exhibition spaces with pollen methodically extracted from plants, transformed the catacomb-like space by using beeswax as plaster applied to all surfaces of the hall. Tranquil in feeling, the emptiness of the space acts as both an integument inside the hallway and a minimal surface to which Kiefer’s dense historical themes seem to return. Here, one realizes before being told, that Kiefer has opened La Ribaute to use by other artists, allowing it to become a framework into which others can create. Having moved on from Barjac as his primary studio, Kiefer has in a way ensured that La Ribaute will continue to set “the tone for thought and action,” where an order of making based on “entanglement” will invariably persist.⁸¹

⁸¹ Cohn, 50.

Although it is uncertain if La Ribaute will ever become truly public, what is common between Kiefer, the future artists at Barjac and even the Dominican Monks is the influence of environments on the way they live, work, worship, or create. The resonant atmosphere of La Tourette, which incites a deep interchange between the external environment and the internal world of the body is indeed central to the approach that Kiefer has adopted. Although Le Corbusier has let the larger world and particular rituals inform appropriate architectural translations, and Kiefer restores memories that are more buried in the contemporary context, because Kiefer's environments are as much a part of the process of creating his work as the individual works themselves, the atmosphere of the compound plays a central role in the creation of memory, which has been central to Kiefer's work since its very beginning. Because the former condition of previous works always informs the latter, Barjac involves a program of intentions to be revealed in time, through a process of making, and this allows memory and imagination to grow and develop rather than being contained to a preconceived idea. In this sense, La Ribaute is an important model of a relational domain that exemplifies "a particular mode of coupling with an environment."⁸² Additionally, by placing works of art and architecture together, where one thing presences something else, Kiefer's process of making is based on the free discovery of coincidences across vastly different scales and projects. This is itself a lesson of immeasurable value for architects because it foregrounds settings as an imaginative vehicle for thinking about architecture that awakens an interwoven relationships of past, present and future. Linking thought to action, the particular with the universal, the work done at La Ribaute distinctly recalls Le Corbusier's concluding statements in *The New World of Space* (1948), which reads:

⁸² Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 143.

When the inexplicable appears in human works, that is, when our spirit is projected far from the narrow relation of cause and effect ... to the cosmic phenomenon in time, in space, in the intangible ... then the inexplicable is the mystery of art⁸³

With the aforementioned comparisons in mind, it is helpful to conclude with a brief discussion of how history is itself used in Kiefer's work and how this relates to his processes of making in architectural terms. As with his work with other materials Kiefer's work with history involves an ambivalence and tension, and its transformation is always based in resistance. Kiefer himself has stated, "History is a material. It can form, like a sculpture. In this way history becomes less catastrophic because you can do something with it. You can reform it."⁸⁴ Testament to the use and transformation of history in Kiefer's work as it relates to architecture is again clarified when understood in relation to the work of Le Corbusier.

Interestingly, it was only three years after his stay at La Tourette that Kiefer drove across Europe enacting the Hitler salute in front of various monuments and landscapes for his controversial *Occupations* performances of 1969 (Figure 1.43). Among other locations, the salute was performed in Arles, on the beach of Sète, in front of the ruins of Paestum and at the Roman Colosseum. Orchestrating photographs from the performance as well as other images and text into a series of books such as *To Genet* (Figure 1.44), *You're a Painter* or *Heroic Symbols*, (Figure 1.45) (1969), he drew links between Nazi kitsch art, Roman grandeur, Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer's above the Misty Sea* (1818) and even Donald Judd's minimalist sculptures. Performance and books alike, the connections drawn to the Nazi past are made dubious because the act of giving the Seig Heil is immediately contradicted due to a shaggy-haired Kiefer in his father's uniform, standing alone in the photos without the official

⁸³ Cited in Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*, 349. Originally from *Le Corbusier, Architect of the Century*, ed. Susan Ferleger Raeburn and Muriel Walker (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1987), 246.

⁸⁴ See Kiefer's interview with Tim Marlow at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art entitled "Anselm Kiefer: Art is Spiritual," YouTube video, 12:40, Jan 20, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8h11-Jm4-s&t=15s.

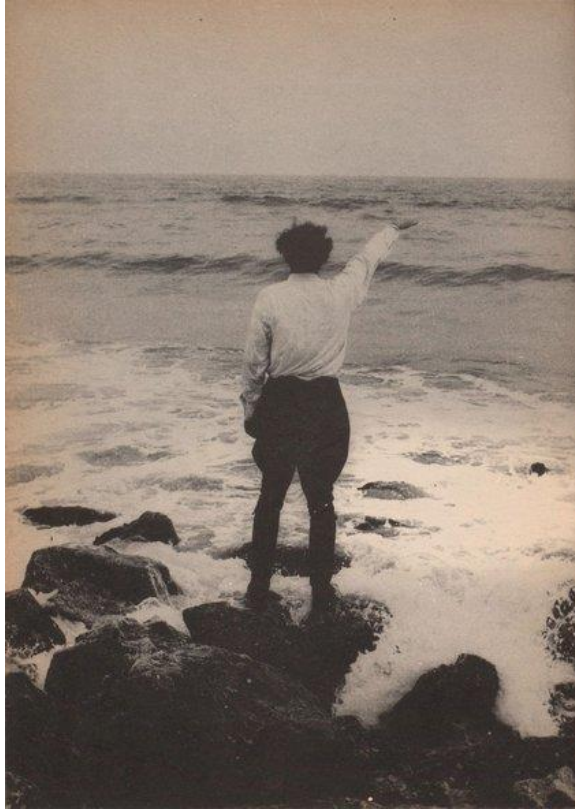


Figure 1.43 *Occupations* (1969), *Interfunktionen* (Cologne), no. 12 (1975). From <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/heroic-symbols-anselm-kiefer/difficult-reception-occupations>

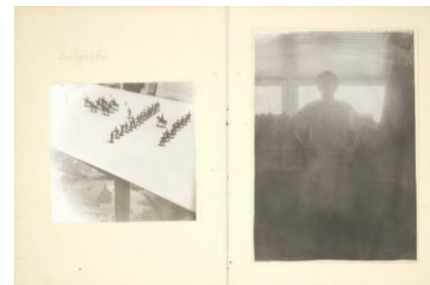


Figure 1.44 *To Genet* (1969). Photographs, human hair and watercolor on cardboard, 70 x 50 x 8 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.

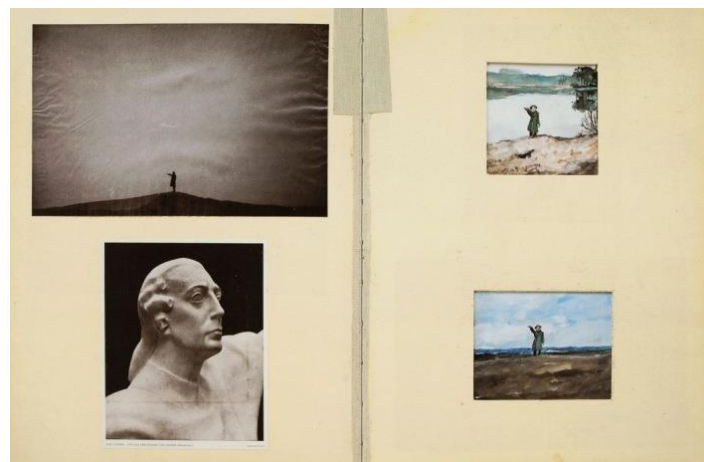
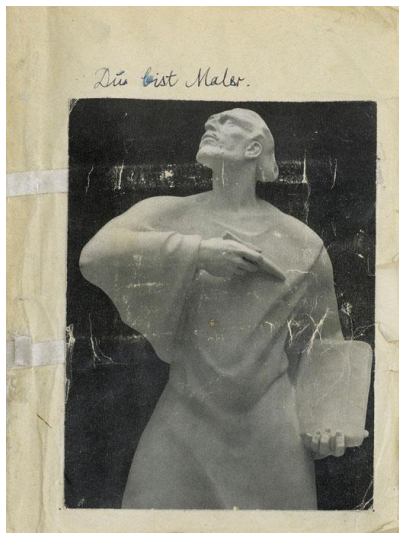


Figure 1.45 Pages from *You're a Painter* and *Heroic Symbols* (1969). *You're a Painter* is a 220-page book with black and white photographs, ink on paper, 250 x 190 x 10 mm., and *Heroic Symbols* is a 46-page book with watercolor on paper, graphite, with photographs, postcards and linen strips mounted on cardboard, 664 x 510 x 85 mm. From <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/heroic-symbols-anselm-kiefer/artist-books>

endorsement of National Socialism. In combination with the particular settings and details in the photographs—walking on water in a bathtub in his private studio or ignored by a passerby in front of the statue of a Roman soldier in Montpellier—the works are open to a series of ironic, conflicting interpretations, obviously intended to stimulate debate. Placing viewers in an awkward position, Kiefer’s early work invites us to adjudicate between the incomprehensible horror of the Nazi era and the staged atmospheres that demythologize Kiefer’s transgressive act. In so doing, these early works convey an essential *ambivalence* based on tense, embodied interactions that has remained central to all his work.⁸⁵

Much more layered after thirty years, and brought into material explorations that are more recognizably architectural, previous parts of this chapter have shown how similar tensions emerge from the resistance of material making that pervade the atmospheres at La Ribaute, whereby meanings bound, rebound, and “slide into unaccustomed contexts.”⁸⁶ Unlike his earlier work that emphasized subjects that were still fresh in modern collective memory, Kiefer’s turn towards more “global themes” after his move to France are further stratified and enveloped in the all-encompassing atmospheres of his studios that protect the works and the acts involved in creating them. Initially inspired by the “theatrical” atmosphere of La Tourette, and his participation in monastic rituals, the carefully staged environments at La Ribaute continue Kiefer’s approach of understanding history “through the body,” in the sense that something tangible gives access to history.⁸⁷ Yet, differently than his earlier work (or Le Corbusier’s monastery), La Ribaute appears more shrouded in distance from the contemporary world. This palpable feeling of distance cannot be fully explained by the shifting of Kiefer’s themes nor the

⁸⁵ Biro, 273.

⁸⁶ Thomas McEvelley, *Anselm Kiefer: Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom* (London: Anthony d’Offay Gallery, 2002), 22.

⁸⁷ Roberto Andreotti and Federico de Melis, “With History under His Skin,” in *Anselm Kiefer: Merkaba*, (Milan: Edizioni Charta, 2006), 48.

secluded location of the studio. It is rather the fundamental mood that pervades the integration of art and architectural environments at La Ribaute that sets the unmistakable tone of the place. Turning “history into an archive of memory, whose contents are available for continually new combinations,” Kiefer’s use of history both creates and is effected by the spatial setting at La Ribaute. It is this quality in particular that continues to reveal important lessons for architecture.⁸⁸

The most remarkable intersections pertaining to similarities and differences regarding the transformation historical references in the works of both artist and architect are evident after Kiefer’s *Twenty Years of Solitude* exhibition in 1993, when, by turning away from Germanic themes, he began to engage a deeper, “geological history.”⁸⁹ This involved increased reference to Rosicrucianism, Lurianic Kabbalah, Hindu mysticism, the Platonic demiurge, Robert Fludd and Alchemy, as well as an assortment of esoteric literary and poetic fragments, both ancient and modern, implicit to the broadening of his concerns. Such changes demonstrate a profound interplay with subjects continuously explored by Le Corbusier who over his career in painting, published writing and architecture was fascinated by Orphism, ancient Greek philosophy, the Kabbalah, versions of Gnosticism, Cervantes, Apollinaire and Platonic androgyny.⁹⁰ The most precise connections are witnessed in Le Corbusier’s *La Poeme de l’Angle Droit* (1955) and paintings produced by Kiefer between 1993 and 2000, just before his large scale constructions

⁸⁸ Arasse, 19.

⁸⁹ Kiefer’s comments regarding changes in his work from “proportions that were existential ... to a more global, or perhaps more geological, history,” are given in Laurie Attias’ article, “Anselm Kiefer’s Identity Crisis” in *ARTnews* vol. 96, Issue 6. (1997). Likewise, authors such as John Hallmark Neff have compared Kiefer’s work to the earlier “unitary arts” of the Middle Ages, recognizing how Kiefer’s work relates to “encyclopedic correspondences” that have been central to artistic work for centuries. Confronting “eternal questions of existence, life, death, rebirth, God, and our place in the world,” Neff suggests that Kiefer “demonstrates how little we have changed over the past five thousand years.” See Neff, “Anselm Kiefer: Reading Kiefer: The Meaning of Lead” in *MoMA No. 49* (Autumn 1998). In this sense, Kiefer’s work clearly relates to the traditions of architecture which have always addressed questions of existential orientation in various manifestations over the course of Western civilization.

⁹⁰ Samuel, 3.

began at La Ribaute. Also created over a six-year period, between 1947 and 1953, and published during the design of the monastery in 1955, the *Poème* is considered to be the greatest synthesis of Le Corbusier's philosophical, poetic and practical beliefs about architecture. Even beyond representations of a labyrinth (in section A.4), towers of "variable masses rising and falling," (in B.2), illustrations of a serpent (D.3), or a palette-like blob (in E.2)—all of which also appear as featured themes or objects in Kiefer's work⁹¹—a striking convergence is the emphasis Le Corbusier placed on the relationship of the body (its posture and motility) as it relates to the world of experience and the act of building within it. After twenty-six years without figurative representation, Kiefer also returned to the representation of his own body in paintings like *I Hold All Indias In My Hand* (1995) (Figure 1.46) as if to set the stage for a new development after 1995 just as *Occupations* had done in 1969.⁹² Depicted standing upright, Kiefer's naked, aging body is encircled in forms resembling continents of the world that recall the Pythagorean harmony of spheres from the frontispiece of Robert Fludd's *A Metaphysical, Physical, and Technical History of Both Worlds, the Greater and Also the Lesser* (1617-1621) (Figure 1.47) as well as Le Corbusier's Modulor man who appears in relation to archetypal experiences both large and small atop the *iconostase* in level A.3 of the *Poème* (Figure 1.48 & Figure 1.49).⁹³ Just as movement between levels of the *Milieu (Environment)* and *Outil (Instrument)* percolate

⁹¹ For examples of Kiefer's use of the symbol of the snake see paintings such as *Resurrexist* (1973) or *Midgard* (1980-85) where even the position of the snake in the painting recalls its placement on page 115 of Le Corbusier's *Poème*. The shape of the graphic symbol on page 126 of the *Poème* also compositionally relates to the artist's palette in many of Kiefer's paintings that can furthermore be seen to symbolize an active bridging of man and world, above and below, which is ultimately the focus of Le Corbusier's *Poème*. For examples of paintings with the motif of the artist's palette, see *The Painting of the Scorched Earth* (1974), various versions of *To the Unknown Painter* (1980, 1982, 1983), the sculpture *The Book* (1985), and Kiefer's book creation *Kyffhäuser* (1980).

⁹² See Arasse, 251-255.

⁹³ In the frontispiece of Robert Fludd's *Utriusque cosmi maioris scilicet et minoris, metaphysica, physica atque technical historia*, or *A Metaphysical, Physical, and Technical History of Both Worlds, the Greater and Also the Lesser* (1617-1621) the human figure inscribed within circles upon circles of the universe carry with it reference to the Pythagorean harmony of spheres and "the cogitating human being that keeps it all turning and harmonizing." See Thomas McEvilley, *Anselm Kiefer: I Hold All Indias in my Hand: Communication and Transcendence in Kiefer's New Work: Simultaneously Entering the Body and Leaving the Body* (London: Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 1996), 9.



Figure 1.46 *I Hold All Indias In My Hand* (1995). Woodcut, shellac, and acrylic on canvas, 275 x 192 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.

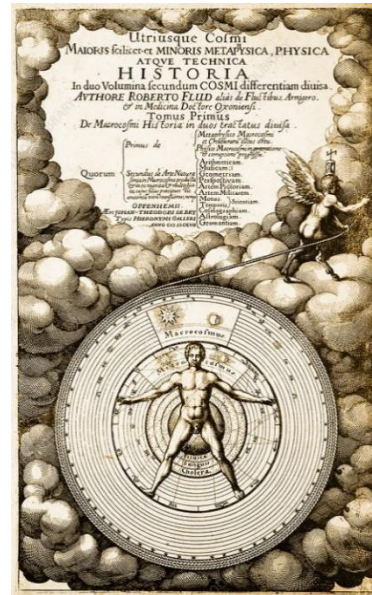


Figure 1.47 Robert Fludd, Frontispiece to *A Metaphysical, Physical, and Technical History of Both Worlds, the Greater and Also the Lesser* (1617-1621).

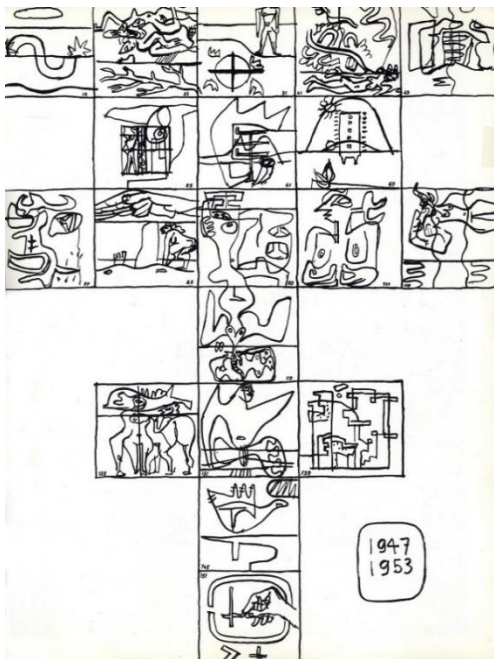


Figure 1.48 Le Corbusier, *Iconostase* from the *Poème de l'angle droit* (1955). Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 2012.

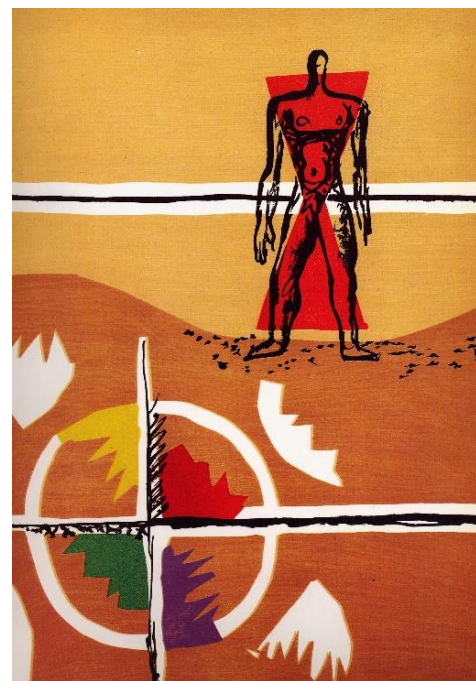


Figure 1.49 Le Corbusier, *Modulor Man*, level A. 3 from the *Poème de l'angle droit* (1955). Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 2012.



Figure 1.50 *The Famous Order of the Night* (1997). Acrylic, emulsion, and oil on canvas, 510 x 500 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.

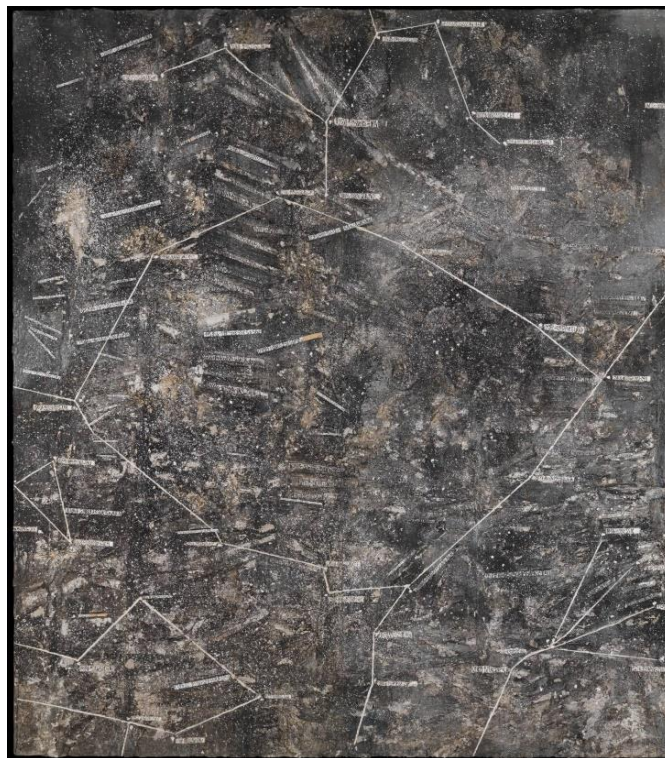


Figure 1.51 *Starfall* (1998). Emulsion, acrylic and shellac on canvas with broken glass, 465 x 530 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.

through subjects that link above and below, and the sacred with the profane, paintings such as *The Rose Gives Honey to the Bee* (1996) or *The Famous Order of the Night* (1997) (Figure 1.50) also show Kiefer in relation to the larger cosmos in ways that recall traditional analogies between microcosm and macrocosm. Many of Kiefer's *Starfall* paintings (a series begun in 1995) depict the artist lying under the vault of the night's sky filled with constellations numbered with glass fragments. Reminiscent of the reclining figure in levels A.4 and E.4 of the *Poème*, the "incomprehensible" view of the sky is made even more unfathomable in Kiefer's massive canvasses since it involves modern classificatory sciences and reference to the holocaust. While not always apparent, some of these paintings depict hypothetical constellations mapped with numbers from NASA star charts (used to map the temperature and distance of stars), while recalling tattoos on Jewish prisoners who found "graves in the sky" in Celan's poem *Todesfuge* (Figure 1.51).⁹⁴ Considered alongside the *Poème*, both Le Corbusier's colorful lithographs and Kiefer's massive, melancholic paintings show relationships to traditional associations that reconcile "extreme individuality, the work of the creator's imagination, with a given world, both natural and constructed, in the absence of positive theology or cosmology."⁹⁵

In the same way the *Poème* and Kiefer's paintings refer to an intertwining of past themes brought present, artist and architect have also recast traditional relationships in their architecture in ways that demonstrate different dispositions towards their use of historical inspiration. Indeed, movement between above and below and from dark to light are central features in the spatial flow at La Tourette and La Ribaute. At the monastery, the entire "promenade" has been understood as an "upward movement from ground to sky," related to the journey from ignorance

⁹⁴ Arasse, 152.

⁹⁵ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 350.

to knowledge in Gnostic literature and to Orpheus' journey from darkness into light.⁹⁶ Also linked to his sign for the 24-hour day and to Jacob's ladder as "a symbolic route from earth to heaven," the play of light and shadow throughout the building certainly allows "the inhabitant to experience rhythms of darkness and light on a continuous basis rather than as a climax on the main promenade."⁹⁷ As suggested by Samuel, Le Corbusier believed that "arriving outside on the roof was a destination too beautiful and distracting from religious life [and therefore] restricted access to the top of the building by creating sub-routes expressive of the inner turmoil and darkness of monastic existence."⁹⁸ These alterations allow the monastery to respond to changes in cultural grounds after the nineteenth-century by showing "a subversive rewriting of traditional programs and rituals."⁹⁹ Along with alterations to the traditional cloister, and views that "no longer express the infinity of God in the landscape," traditional relationships found in his *Poème* have been critically transformed for modern day Dominicans.¹⁰⁰

A similar interplay with traditional themes also appears in the architectural experience at La Ribaute, but with dramatically different effects. Indeed, the "Mitrailette" roof lights (Figure 1.52 & Figure 1.53), addressed in Le Corbusier's notes as "a mysterious hole cut into rock ... that allowed sunlight to appear to dazzling effect in the deepest recesses of the vault," appears as much as an analogy for the ambience of the Sacristy at La Tourette as for the openings between above and below in the corridors and chambers at La Ribaute (Figure 1.54 & Figure 1.55).¹⁰¹ While even the naming and effect of these roof lights (which refers to a machine gun poised towards the sky) recalls the familiar themes of war in Kiefer's work, consistent with Kiefer's

⁹⁶ Samuel, 74.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 129.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 363.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 363-65.

¹⁰¹ Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre Complète Volume 5* (1953), 30. Cited in Samuel, 86.



Figure 1.52 “Mitraillette” roof lights, La Tourette. From <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/79/11/af/7911af8a0fa62e1eb5f2e1280436ca1a.jpg>

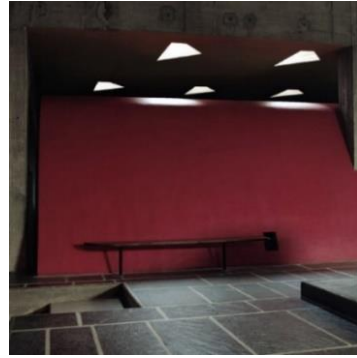


Figure 1.53 Interior lighting, La Tourette. From https://static.dezeen.com/uploads/2015/07/La-Tourette_Le-Corbusier_Alicja-Dobrucka_dezeen_468_8.jpg



Figure 1.54 Aperture at La Ribaute. Photograph by S. Wischer.

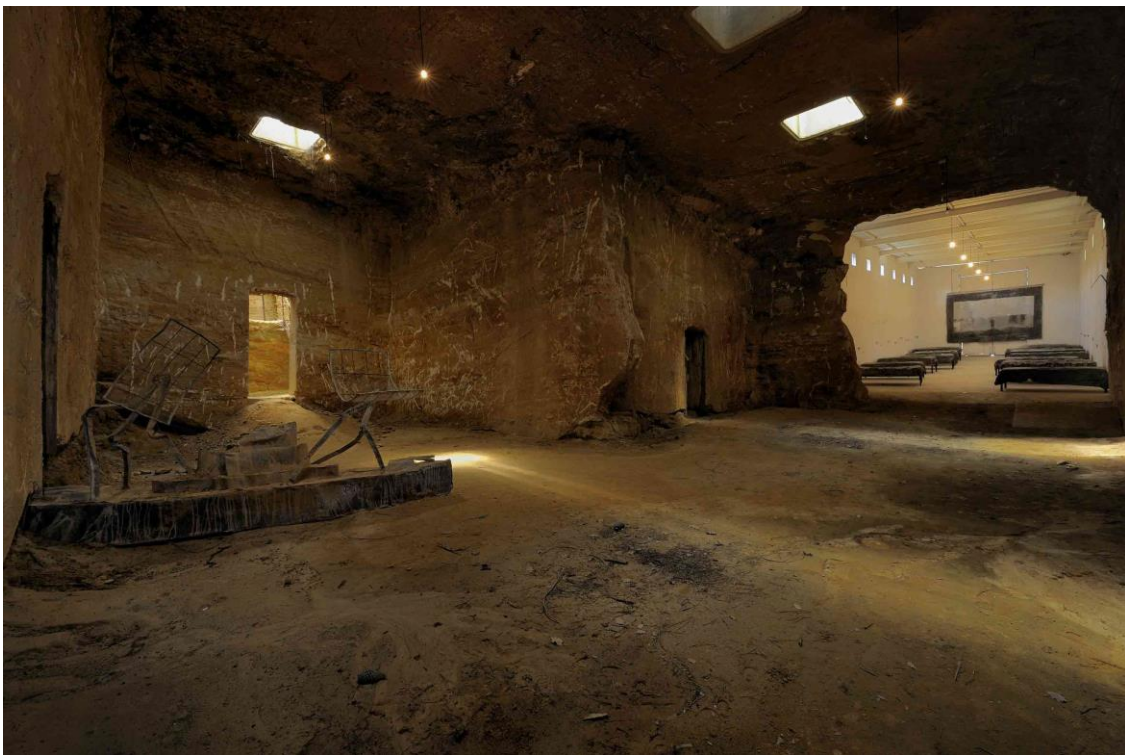


Figure 1.55 Cave with *The Women of the Revolution* chamber, La Ribaute. From Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.

ambivalent approach is the fact that wherever he has borrowed “a shaft of light from the sun,” vertical lighting is also contrasted with a comparable glow entering the spaces laterally down tunnels or through corrugated pipes.¹⁰² While the circular rims of these pipes catch light on their edges and vibrate as one moves past in a way that recalls movement along the *ondulatoires* at La Tourette, the uneasy lighting that forms in the central crypt also conveys important differences in the overall atmospheres of their respective spaces. Punctured vertically through the earthen roof, a corrugated steel pipe brings light onto one of the pathways made of a similar section of pipe half-buried in the ground (Figure 1.56). Illuminating the steel rims and surrounding dirt, such lighting produces a visceral response that resonates with an entire history of sacred spaces shown to involve “light as a metaphor for divine inspiration and knowledge.”¹⁰³ Nevertheless, while similar to the sacristy at La Tourette, which has been likened to the “pyramids and other sacred edifices that link man with the cosmos,” the lighting in Kiefer’s crypt also reverses this effect because the pipe used to illuminate the space is a type often associated with the efficient circulation of water or sewage in cities.¹⁰⁴ As with his *Occupations* performance, where the Nazi Salute immediately evokes conflicting interpretations, sacred light here conjoins with secular functions as a consequence of the object used to produce the effect. Such methods are consistent with Kiefer’s earlier works in art, which even while employing weighty themes always reveal an artificiality to the reconstructions.

Such ambiguous tensions are consistent with the poetic spacing found in work from La Ribaute more generally, which, by producing vast distances, simultaneously separate and join conflicting references. Just as Le Corbusier’s *Poème* is best characterized by metaphor, Kiefer’s creations also initiate the discovery and reconciliation of opposites by giving rise to a continuous

¹⁰² Samuel, 84.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 73-75.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 88.

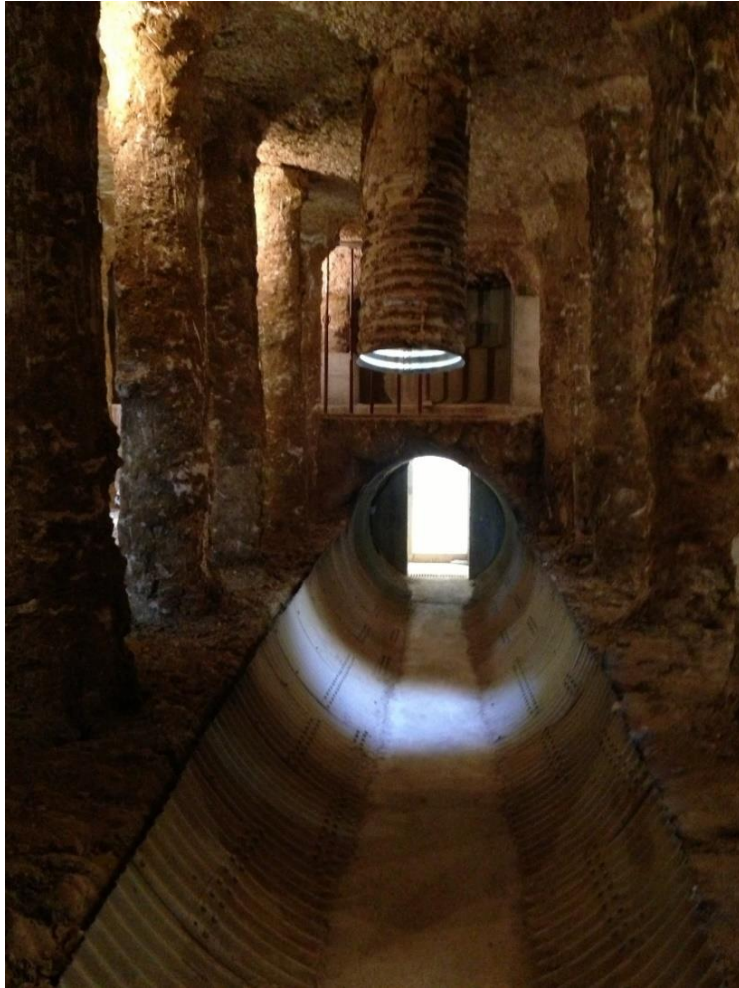


Figure 1.56 Crypt and tunnel at La Ribaute. Photograph by S. Wischer.



Figure 1.57 Concrete stairs at La Ribaute. From <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307848468/figure/fig4/AS:403320201072646@1473170437315/Figura-19-Anselm-Kiefer-torre-a-ossatura-in-acciaio-prototipo->



Figure 1.58 Sculptural towers and stairs, La Ribaute. Still from Sophie Fienne's film *Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow*, 2011, Amoeba films.

birth of associations, wherein themes appear, dissolve, and reappear in ways that simultaneously separate and bring things together. Yet, if the *Iconostase* of Le Corbusier's *Poème* shows how meaning is formed "at the crossing, in union through complementarity," Kiefer's work opens even more inexhaustible relationships that themselves align with and separate from principles intrinsic to Le Corbusier's approach.¹⁰⁵ Such variance is not only apparent in the overall atmosphere of the compound but at allegorical levels as well. As mentioned, the objects found in Kiefer's paintings appear as physical fragments that emerge in corridors and chambers, within the amphitheater, and glasshouses. Among these are numbered glass fragments, man-made meteorites, wings and propellers that, while having associations with spiritual transcendence and heavenly bodies, are also recast in modern forms made mostly of lead. No longer able to fly, angelic intermediaries that traditionally linked heaven and earth here exist as inoperable objects that suggest unimaginable disasters of war and the loss of traditional belief in larger symbols.¹⁰⁶ In and of themselves, such fragments recall the weight and materiality of Le Corbusier's massive bronze doors at La Tourette, also evocative of "military machinery—the wing of a plane or a wall of a tank."¹⁰⁷ Yet, unlike Le Corbusier's "defensive doors" that while difficult to open still grant entry into the church, the tanks, airplanes, and artist palettes (seemingly staged in battles throughout La Ribaute) remain unusable and always in disrepair.¹⁰⁸ Leaving Kiefer's compound, an encounter with massive concrete stairways laying on the hillside or resting precariously within a cage of rusted iron (Figure 1.57) reminded me that even the theme of Jacob's ladder, which had been treated with some reverence by Le Corbusier—in the overall movement through

¹⁰⁵ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 352.

¹⁰⁶ Auping, 41-45.

¹⁰⁷ Samuel, 140.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 140-41.

La Tourette or in its circular stair—is here reformed as one among many dilapidated symbols in Kiefer’s cosmos of “continual ruin” (Figure 1.58).¹⁰⁹

Just as particular meanings transform in various contexts, the experience of moving throughout Kiefer’s complex seems to emphasize how symbols themselves change their meanings over time. Pointing up differences between the traditional and modern world, the prevalent mood at La Ribaute is emphatically one of *absence* and loss. Quite differently, Le Corbusier’s monastery embodies the theme of the open hand and book from Level F.3. of the *Poème*, showing us how, while being critical of changes in culture, there may also be a sense of continuance manifest in *presence*. This differs from Kiefer’s creations in the sense that the traditional meanings he employs only exist as vestiges or in ruins. Spanning ever greater distances, Kiefer’s works of painting and architecture seem to call into question the very basis of traditional relationships by separating them from the everyday world and making them appear unstable. Instead of adjoining ancient myths such as Orpheus’ journey with Catholic rituals, which tie together religious traditions and metaphors that show us how the poetic principle (fundamental to myth and spiritual experience) persists even amid changes ushered in after the scientific revolution or amid disasters of war, Kiefer’s ambivalent creations may interconnect, but they do not welcome continuity in the same way.

This melancholic spacing (both literal and metaphorical) between the past and present is precisely what separates the outcomes and spiritual meaning in Kiefer and Le Corbusier’s masterpieces. While evoking a deeply corporeal response that may seem similar to La Tourette, the distances formed at La Ribaute also epitomize differences between modern day aesthetics in art and the space of participation fundamental to architecture. Since 1995, the increased production of empty lead books, large concrete ruins, and the “superposition” of themes to do

¹⁰⁹ Auping, 42.

with the holocaust have been said to involve “melancholy at the disappearance of ‘cosmic’ civilizations” and the concept of a messianic expectation of resurgence of meaning.¹¹⁰ Such determination promotes a transhistorical, mystical concept that can be seen to encourage an escape from the inevitable historicity of our contemporary situation. Closely associated with a critique of the Nazi realization of myth and “the outcome of historical philosophy,” Kiefer has remained skeptical of approaches taken by his mentor Joseph Beuys, who sought the “transformative power of ritualized action that might create an ambiguity between what is normally considered real and unreal.”¹¹¹ Preferring instead “strength in uncertainty,” and separation from the everyday world, Kiefer’s statement, “Art cannot save us,” suggests an uncharacteristically clear position in his otherwise ambivalent practice that reflects crucial differences between artist and architect.¹¹² Rather than seeing the everyday world as something to avoid, Le Corbusier remained hopeful that his work could affect the everyday person by introducing a “sense of the sacred” into everyday life. He recognized that this could not be “something imposed through a fabricated cosmology or imported from another time,” but had to emerge from the world of experience “without resentment, embracing all its contradictions.”¹¹³ Accepting the “necessary risk of interpretation,” Le Corbusier’s practice thus allowed for moments of wholeness and continuity to appear, and this provides a model for inquiry that exists beyond tyranny, anarchism, and hopelessness, precisely by maintaining contact with the world. As opposed to Kiefer’s use of history as a critique of itself, we can see how, as Pérez-Gómez suggests,

¹¹⁰ Arasse, 207, 215-222.

¹¹¹ See Doreet LeVitté-Harten, “Anselm Kiefer” in *NIKE* 29, (1982), 90-91. For further context please see her essay “Canticle for a God Unknown” in *Anselm Kiefer: Lilith* (New York: Marian Goodman Gallery, 1992).

¹¹² Noting Kiefer’s penchant for irony and his interplay with similar themes as Le Corbusier, several images from Kiefer’s *Occupations* performance (wherein a silhouetted figure of Kiefer’s is shown giving the Nazi Salute) seems a strikingly reverse image and parody of the upstretched arm of Le Corbusier’s Modulor man.

¹¹³ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 356.

La Tourette's architecture, despite its spiritual theme, does not pretend to refer us back to absolute origins or foundations, and yet is equally adamant against accepting a simplistic relativism and the expression of cultural 'difference' as its only options. It proposes architecture as a discovery of order in making, which is also self-making, invoking wholeness (and a holiness beyond all dogma) that may stand for all in our compressed planet, while yet remaining emphatically beyond tyranny and anarchy¹¹⁴

To the contrary, Kiefer has preferred to keep his influence at a distance from everyday action, stating early on:

The more you go back, under, the farther forward you can go ... I go in as deep as I can in order to get farther away, do you see? That's why I live out here ... I'm over the center, not in it ... I live in the distance¹¹⁵

Isolated from the larger world, Kiefer's acceleration of relationships between representation, materiality, and physical construction explores historical relationships and spirituality by spanning over barriers between thought and senses, producing a powerful synesthetic experience within its integrated environment. Yet, however similar we may find Kiefer's work to the atmosphere of La Tourette, the process of creating such work does not involve the same type transformation that drove Le Corbusier's practice, which was translated over a variety of different media and in different situations. Kiefer's employment of modern technological processes and themes side by side with mythical content indeed shows the weakness of modern "truths" in science and progress, further expressing the disrepair of a world no longer linked to larger symbols.¹¹⁶ Yet, the closeness of the productions that occur at La Ribaute and its insularity do not allow the world to become an active force in shaping particular

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 368.

¹¹⁵ Steven Henry Madoff, "A Call to Memory" in *Artnews*. 86.9, (1987), 128.

¹¹⁶ Likewise, the close proximity of modern technology and traditional practices in Kiefer's work may invite us to consider the action of cosmic forces in new ways and using new instruments: electrical and nuclear energy, modern forms of transport (ships or aircraft) and the latest means of communication which reveal the "weakness of truths we associate with political systems, technology and science," and which helps to "accelerate their demythification." See Pérez-Gómez, "Architecture and Public Space," in *Rites of Way: The Politics and Poetics of Public Space*, ed. Mark Kingwell and Patrick Turmel, (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009), 51. Yet, Pérez-Gómez reminds us, "If Le Corbusier embraced technology, he did so with a clear, critical mind, acknowledging the presence of a given ground." This was never for the sake of interconnection itself. See Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 354.

situations for others when seen from a conventional architectural standpoint. When compared to La Tourette, the lessons La Ribaute offers architects are indeed of a different order.

Specifically, Kiefer's work offers a space for the critical contemplation of the diverse modalities of architectural representation in the contemporary world. Even while being separated from action and embodied experience as it relates to others in a day to day sense, La Ribaute manifests the very "mystery of dimensionality" by translating the space of art into inhabitable space. Considered in the same manner as Le Corbusier's *Poème*, as a foil for architectural consideration, La Ribaute may indeed be seen to convey relevant approaches that foreground the discovery of unexpected relationships in the act of producing works that are typically overlooked in typical approaches to modern design. Understood as a *model* for further translation into appropriate environments, the emphatic material presence of Kiefer's work thus expands upon Le Corbusier's practice by allowing the linguistic, pictorial, and material imagination to resonate meaningfully with narratives that involve collective memory. Further radicalizing similar types of production, Kiefer shows how representations may influence the conceptualization of building processes that are themselves open to physical change and transformation. Foregrounding settings and objects as imaginative vehicles that permit an interchange of meanings from one creation to the next, when Kiefer's work is understood *as architectural representation* is precisely when it shows how memory and imagination may grow and develop in ways that are not contingent on preconceived ideas. The interchange of meanings that occur across the diverse modalities of his work could thus allow vital relations to form in the world if attuned to particular situations.

In a context where architecture is more and more reduced to instrumental applications employed for the sake of "innovation" and "progress," Kiefer's La Ribaute, like Le Corbusier's

monastery, provides a contemporary example that is fully dependent on the creative transformation of historical traces. Forged through the reintegration of old and new works, La Ribaute reminds us of history's "affinity with fiction," as well as the importance of memory in present action as a prerequisite for "cultural sustainability."¹¹⁷ Working with "history as a material," Kiefer's acts of creation furthermore reveal how we may "modify the terms of our relationship to historicity" to better place our actions for the future.¹¹⁸ In so doing, the vast store of works, materials, and architectural environments at La Ribaute convey how meanings may circulate at emotional and intellectual levels. This reinforces a necessary interrelationship between the creation of something that has beauty but which is also grounded in a broader context of knowledge.¹¹⁹ In so doing, La Ribaute is indeed one of the rare creations of the twenty-first century to foreground the interfusion of perception and environment so potently.

Such co-dependence is due to Kiefer's mastery of ambivalence and his creation of tension, which is central to his ability to evoke the quest for "a missing object," which, like all good plots, involves "something to be found or missed."¹²⁰ This closely aligns with the revealing and concealing embodied in the meandering choreography of the Labyrinth associated with the origins of drama, art, and architecture, previously evoked by Le Corbusier in the spaces between his paintings and the experience of La Tourette. While discussed as a "brain," the correlation of parts to whole at La Ribaute emphatically appear like a body—as an expressive, living entity—and an extension into which Kiefer's own body acts.¹²¹ While distanced from the everyday world

¹¹⁷ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 232.

¹¹⁸ Pérez-Gómez, *Hermeneutics as Architectural Discourse*, in *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture* Vol. 2, (Montreal: Right Angle International, 2016), 31.

¹¹⁹ Speaking of his interactions with Joseph Beuys, Kiefer has stated: "Art just cannot live on itself. It has to draw on a broader knowledge. I think both of us understood that at the time we knew each other." See Auping, 171.

¹²⁰ Pérez-Gómez, "Chora: The Space of Architectural Representation," *Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 1, ed. Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994), 9-16.

¹²¹ Following Maurice Merleau-Ponty's discussion of the prereflective involvement fundamental to human perception, I propose that La Ribaute itself appears "like the body, or all bodies where organs, hands, legs, play their

and even amid atmospheres that evoke a melancholic sense of loss, the distance and “emptiness” associated with Kiefer’s work reveals the “codependency” between environments and perception, whereby “nothing can be found that has an ultimate or autonomous existence.”¹²² If catching a glimpse of wholeness in the fragmentation of Kiefer’s work may itself appear to be uncertain, the experience of loss again folds over, revealing itself as a quest for wholeness, fully dependent on the space of desire reconciled and completed in the perception of those who encounter his work.¹²³ The most remarkable similarity between Kiefer and Le Corbusier then is that neither worked in a direct manner, preferring instead the space of metaphor to allow moments of discovery and connection to occur in the “blind spot,” the gap or delay between the visible and the invisible, which is the place where meaning is “granted to human life; a space that ‘precedes’ all linguistic models of signification.”¹²⁴ Amid tumultuous themes and paradoxes, La Ribaute is indeed a peculiar creation of architecture that retains the possibility of transformation for creator and visitors alike. It is in its questionable proximity to the “real world” that Kiefer’s work presents further convergences with architectural traditions that placed emphasis on the autonomy of representation in the creation of theoretical works.

part in a functional totality.” This is the case because relationships of part to whole (in our bodies or at La Ribaute) cannot be fully conceptualized. Like a given totality of the world, which “does not look back but draws up essential connections,” La Ribaute makes self-conscious the way things are reformed within the world, through perception. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (New York: Routledge, 2012), 197-198.

¹²² Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 231.

¹²³ Kiefer’s constant discussion of emptiness is understood by Trinie Dalton as “the fertile ground he locates in nullity,” and as “the “metaphysical void at the heart of his aesthetic that has sustained the longevity and depth of Kiefer’s artistic career.” See Trinie Dalton’s review *Punctuation: Anselm Kiefer’s Notebooks Volume 1: 1998-99*, Oct, 10, 2015, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/punctuation-anselm-kiefers-notebooks-volume-1-1998-1999/>.

¹²⁴ Pérez-Gómez, “Depth and Architecture: The Lesson of Merleau-Ponty,” keynote presentation at the *International Merleau-Ponty Circle Conference* (2009), 7.

Chapter Two: Anselm Kiefer and the Tradition of Theoretical Projects in Architecture

Beyond traditional oppositions between the “fine arts” and architecture, the distance that Kiefer’s work maintains from the scope and practice of conventional design shows its lessons most readily when understood in relation to the tradition of theoretical projects in architecture. Considered in terms of the expressive capacity of “autonomous” architectural representations, initiated within the cultural climate of the eighteenth century, Kiefer’s creations show significant parallels with rare works that preserve a space for the invisible in the contemplation and creation of architectural work. To understand Kiefer’s work within this tradition, the first part of this chapter examines the recombination of fragments from Kiefer’s oeuvre at his 2017 *Walhalla* exhibition in relation to the poetic expression of theory characteristic of Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Comparisons drawn between Piranesi’s *Carceri d’Invenzione* (1745, 1761) and, more circuitously, to work by Jean-Laurent Legeay, Étienne-Louis Boullée and the writings of Johann Heinrich Lambert help to show ways in which Kiefer’s work is linked to a tradition of architecture that embody symbolic intentions in representations as an alternative to the dominant technological values and the representation of architecture as isotropic space that still prevails in most standard approaches to design. To foreground what is truly new from Kiefer in the contemporary context of architecture I will consider Kiefer’s uses of abstraction, also inherent to modern architectural representation, and continue to explore the fictional capacity of Kiefer’s creations to evoke allusions to myth and history, across built and unbuilt work, in ways that consciously avoids the banality of the external world. Later sections of the chapter explore ways in which Kiefer’s work expands upon the challenge to perspective first witnessed in Piranesi’s engravings. Here, I discuss how combinations of painted and physically constructed space use the forceful illusion of perspective to overturn its own veracity, eliciting a critical experience of

depth, showing it to be unlike the banal 3-D space of the modern world identified with scientific vision. From this standpoint, Kiefer's work directly relates to central developments in architectural practice and critical discourse over the last two centuries, while also providing new lessons that become particularly clear when understood in relation to contemporary architectural practice. Comparisons between Kiefer's work and works created during the eighteenth century thus set the tone for the remaining chapters of this dissertation that each, with different emphasis, explore Kiefer's work as a *model of architectural representation* that relates to both the origins of autonomous representation and significant, contemporary work so as to foreground new methodological lessons in our current context.

To begin to understand relationships between Anselm Kiefer's oeuvre and the tradition of theoretical projects in architecture one need only to consider the specific context of the artist's 2017 *Walhalla* exhibition in the massive Bermondsey wing of the White Cube Gallery in London (Figure 2.1).¹ Anything but livable, the exhibition is structured physically and conceptually around a corridor lined completely with lead and filled with beds reminiscent of Kiefer's *Women of the Revolution* installations. Immersed in this gloomy environment one is inundated with themes of war, destruction and decay that emerge while passing through the horribly grey and dimly lit corridor reminiscent of a field hospital or deserted bunker. This experience is dramatically contrasted by movement into bright whitewashed galleries filled with paintings and sculptures adjacent to the central hall (Figure 2.2). As with the circuit through pavilions filled with paintings, subterranean tunnels, chambers, amphitheater and towers at La Ribaute, the thirty individual works of painting, sculpture and installation that make up *Walhalla* comprise a fully

¹ Anselm Kiefer's *Walhalla* exhibition was on display at White Cube Bermondsey in London from November 23, 2016 until February 12, 2017.



Figure 2.1 Main corridor, *Walhalla* (1992-2016). Lead, photograph on lead and mixed media, White Cube Gallery, Bermondsey, London (2016-2017). From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2016



Figure 2.2 *Walhalla* vitrines, mixed media, White Cube Gallery, Bermondsey, London (2016-2017). From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2016

integrated work that draws upon Kiefer's familiar themes pertaining to war, mortality, myth and stories that have been mostly forgotten.

While separated from the everyday world, *Walhalla* (a title referring to both the mythical afterlife of Norse folklore and a neoclassical monument) involves a distinctly architectural participation; not only because of the architectural themes, the monumental scale of the paintings, or the construction of entire environments, but because the work achieves a *self-conscious relationship between spatiality and its representation*. Moving from the lead-lined hallway toward the rich material layers of paintings and into rooms filled with found and fabricated objects, one is overwhelmed by the vast variety of work that challenges the way we think about history and correspondingly how we consider our own future; all made possible through a rigorous encounter with material, space and a different experience of time.

It is in fact impossible to overlook that almost everything at this exhibition is made of fragments from La Ribaute. The construction of the lead corridor takes on proportions of spaces from Barjac, towers physically constructed here return in paintings, and piles of objects as well as lead chambers allow one to feel as though they physically stepped into a Kiefer painting or across the English Channel into areas of the artist's former home and studio in southern France. Sifting through the materials and layers of these works reminds us that individual paintings as much as constructed environments are inspired by historical traces that here resurface in the London gallery. It is at this level, when something presented refers to something hidden, or when things over there appear over here, that Kiefer's work shows distinct relationships to the very beginnings of theoretical architectural projects critical of a world more-and-more dominated by pragmatic concerns and reductions of a purely objective mode of representing space. The fragments brought together in Kiefer's works—architectural structures, historic subjects, the vast

variety of objects and themes, all from different times and places—show resonant connections with the very origin of autonomous architectural representations, particularly with the *Carceri d’Invenzione* (1761) etchings of Giovanni Battista Piranesi.²

Understood as modes of representation that have spatial concerns as their commonality, even a cursory impression accounts for such correspondence. Aside from differences in scale and the diverse range of media in Kiefer’s works, the continuous hide-and-go-seek of themes at *Walhalla* recall the ascending and descending passageways and “spectral wandering” of figures in the second state of Piranesi’s *Invenzioni Capric di Carceri* (Figure 2.3 & Figure 2.4).³ The leaden corridor, described in the exhibition statement as “infirmary beds of a prison sanatorium” certainly resemble the carceral subject of the etchings and the eternal return of pain and suffering well-known to characterize the psychological dimension of Piranesi’s works. Said to achieve “no orphic enlightenment or salvation” the unending stairways and corridors in the engravings, wherein figures are said to climb, descend and roam “for several eternities,” also resemble Kiefer’s themes that express history as a cycle of repeated tragedies that seem endlessly renewed. When the *Carceri* are discussed by Erica Naginski as inciting “a hyperactive retinal consciousness [that by] shifting erratically between contradictory registers (pictorial illusionism on one hand and architectural reality on the other),” she could well be describing relationships between Kiefer’s paintings and the fully constructed environments at *Walhalla*, themselves

² What is unmentioned in many reviews about *Walhalla* is that the entire exhibition recreates various objects and spaces the artist had previously constructed at La Ribaute. The fragments presented—paintings, physical rooms, or objects such as Thor’s anvil, a wheelchair, books or a spiral staircase—all deal with themes that have been transported across various media and scales throughout various stages of Kiefer’s career. Combined in an atmosphere that raises the body to an awareness not typically evoked in architectural representations, my working premise is that even while Kiefer’s work could not be built and occupied in a world outside of La Ribaute, a public installation, or a gallery, it gives us a comprehension of depth far beyond its standard treatment in popularized approaches to architectural representation.

³ Piranesi’s *Carceri d’Invenzione* consists of 16 engravings done between 1745 and 1761. Of interest for this dissertation are the “second state” engravings which emerged at a time when greater emphasis was placed on the objectification of architectural representations. The second state in particular have been recognized as an important challenge to reductive modes of representation and the corresponding understanding of space that has become associated with “reality” in the contemplation of modern architectural production.



Figure 2.3 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Carceri d'Invenzione*, Plate VII (1761).

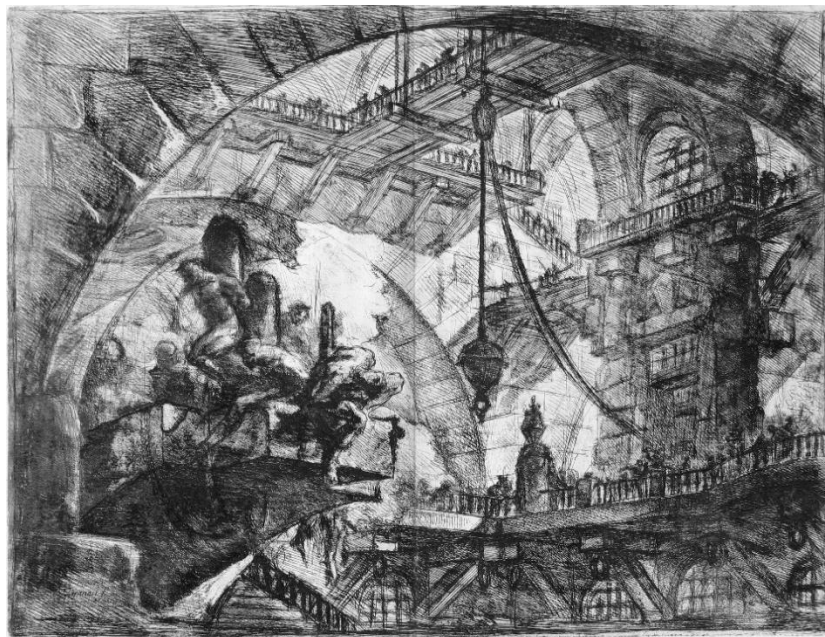


Figure 2.4 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Carceri d'Invenzione*, Plate X (1761).

forged with ambiguous materials and objects that conjure uncertain, shifting meanings. Wrought with fragments from Kiefer's oeuvre, the multiplicity of cultural and historical references all point back to the world while retaining a Piranesian ambiguity somewhere between dream and nightmare.

Just as Romantic commentators had recognized the challenge that the "visionary delirium" and "existential angst" of the *Carceri* posed to the rationalist imperative of the Enlightenment, Kiefer's painted and built works demand a reconsideration of the way space is perceived in the creation and contemplation of architecture today. Because the atmospheres Kiefer conjures involve such penetrating, synesthetic experiences, built or unbuilt, they enrich a conception of architecture as a mode of creation that may indeed construe fiction and reshape our sense of reality. Seen in relation to Piranesi's etchings, the dramatic transformation of time and space at *Walhalla* thus relate to key developments in architectural representation that have occurred over the last two centuries.

Indeed, the broad influence of Kiefer's work has previously drawn parallels with Piranesi's evocations of crumbling Roman ruins. As in the case of comparisons with Le Corbusier, authors have recognized aesthetic similarities by drawing approximations to Piranesi's use of montage and Kiefer's earlier work. However, no previous scholarship has fully considered such parallels in view of the radically critical scope of Piranesi's projects upon the discipline of architecture as a whole, wherein architectural representations aspired to become architecture itself, enacting a critique of changes occurring in an increasingly rationalized culture. It is from within a context drastically affected by the Scientific Revolution that Piranesi's work emerged as a critical response to the representation and creation of architecture.

Correspondingly, it is also from within this context that Piranesi's etchings can be seen to prefigure Kiefer's work and its lessons for architecture today.

Understood from within the broader continuum of human culture, the eighteenth-century saw a profound shift in the architectural task away from the poetic making of buildings to the making of "pictures of buildings," which is significant because reality was turned into a universe of representations. This meant that drawings themselves became key to transporting the idea of a building not yet created, as opposed to the performative creation of a building that previously demanded continual translation of a priori cultural values embodied in the act of construction. Such a shift is crucial because it produced two vastly divergent trajectories for the thinking and practice of architecture. The first, is the commonly held belief that the reason for producing architectural drawings is to obtain an accurate representation of a future building, wherein objective notations within a drawing is the entire function of its autonomous potential. This attitude has become standard in the predictive generation of buildings today, even though, quite paradoxically, such drawings have no bearing on the experience of said building whatsoever since they substitute an objective idea of space and time for an embodied experience of the architecture they intend to depict. The other possibility were projects that emphasized *architecture in representations themselves*. This became a necessary strategy for a meaningful construing of architecture, even if it could no longer be built in a world shifting toward systematized modes of production. It is from within this context that Piranesi's oeuvre emerged as a challenge to the developing standards of architectural representation, which thus foreshadows Kiefer's work.

One hundred and fifty years prior to the avant-garde movement in art, Piranesi anticipated a cubistic approach to spatial representation in engravings that forcefully broke with

the implementation of structural analysis and more systematic approaches to representation in the cultural climate of industrialization. Enthralled by archeological investigation and with an admiration for the technical construction of ancient Rome, it was in a context that posed increasing difficulties for engaging with a meaningful creation of buildings that Piranesi produced, for the first time in history, an architecture embodied in drawings.⁴ Creating a vast oeuvre of over one thousand engravings, much of his work can be considered architecture precisely because they invite us to reconsider how we perceive depth by way of reforming meanings in perception. For both Piranesi and Kiefer, the ambiguity of their work thus hinges upon the relation of their creations to what they depict and this points back to the body's relationship to things in the world. This consequently opens up a gap between their works and the tangible, rational world where the work of architecture is presumed to exist.⁵ The labyrinthine quality of represented space, specifically in the second state of the *Carceri* (1761), indeed beckons a profound participation; one which allows the etchings to be perceived as works of fiction, and certainly very different from architecture (built or drawn) that reduce the experience of space to three-dimensional, objective correlates. Making us "see the way we see," beholders of his work do not see images of buildings whose reality would be realized beyond the work, but rather work that embodies "symbolic intention."⁶ It is this imaginative response that most anticipates the representational spirit of Kiefer's work.

⁴ Despite efforts to realize translations of drawing into built architecture (Piranesi only realized one relatively minor commission for the apse and tribune of St. John Lateran, now persevered in a volume of drawings housed at the Avery Architectural library of Columbia University, New York) Piranesi considered himself to be an architect. And, despite his marginal success and acknowledgement in both art and architecture authors like Luigi Ficacci recognize that what remains of most value in Piranesi's work are "architectural ideas revealed through etched drawings." See Luigi Ficacci's "The Discovery of Rome out of the Spirit of Piranesi," in *Giovanni Battista Piranesi: The Complete Etchings* (Cologne: Taschen 2016), 13.

⁵ See Zubin Singh, "Inoculations: The Masques of John Hejduk." Ph.D. diss. (McGill University, 2016), 6.

⁶ Pérez-Gómez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1983), 257-258.

Also constructed from fragments, and situated far from the everyday world, the combined works from *Walhalla*, along with his creation of La Ribaute, show themselves to be positioned precisely within this tradition of autonomous, “theoretical” work.⁷ Considering Piranesi’s unwillingness to give up his quest for the sake of mainstream practice in a rationalized world, Kiefer too has expressed a marked dissatisfaction with the everyday modern world and with it the current state of aesthetics in art (and by extension architecture), stating:

A poor wretch, an outlaw, I am like all the human beings in my life, but I have given up life because it is not inhabitable, because it is an illusion. Only works by poets, musicians, and painters are real ... In my opinion, the real world does not exist, save through the artwork or poetry, entities categorically distinct from life⁸

Like Piranesi, who being disenfranchised with the lack of cultural influence on the popularized approaches to design of his time created an entire universe within his etchings, Kiefer has worked from one studio and exhibition to the next to continuously expand his own “world within the world.” Forged in the hidden environments of his studios, the agglomeration of almost five decades of work reappears at *Walhalla* showing an approach to making that dramatically expands upon the layering and fragmentation begun in Piranesi’s work. Not only can an analogy to be drawn between the reworking of subjects, motifs and anguished figures witnessed in the second state of the *Carceri* engravings, but by creating pictorial and spatial relationships that can only be realized in a private studio or a gallery, Kiefer shows a similar “bracketing of the real

⁷ Pérez-Gómez clarifies the fact that “During the eighteenth-century Piranesi’s engravings challenged a more-and-more reductive representation of architectural ideas. Since meaning could not be attained through conventional classical buildings, or the implementation of a geometry that imitated nature, the drawing or engraving was destined to become the embodiment of symbolic intention for architects who could no longer realize the poetic dimension of their visions.” See Pérez-Gómez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*, 257. In her essay “Romanticism’s Piranesi,” Erika Naginski suggests a similar challenge is found the *Carceri* etchings, stating: “For Piranesi pictorial expression, despite its two-dimensionality was destined to become architecture’s greatest avatar in the eighteenth century [because] the wealth, the whims and narrowmindedness of Roman patrons had silenced the architects of his century.” See Naginski’s “Romanticism’s Piranesi in *Built Surface*, vol. 1, *Architecture and the Pictorial Arts from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 240. Due to the shifting cultural climate, Piranesi himself had stated that “there seems to be no other recourse than for me or some other modern architect to explain his ideas through his drawings.” See Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s “Prima Parte,” in *Giovanni Battista Piranesi and etchings at Columbia University; an exhibition at Low Memorial Library* (New York: Avery Library, 1972), 118.

⁸ See Danièle Cohn, *Anselm Kiefer: Studios*, 143, 244.

world” wherein “reality and truth make, must make, common cause with artistic activity.”⁹ Made possible by the autonomous potential of representation initiated in the cultural climate of the eighteenth century, it is this critical approach that also shows an intense engagement with history that beckons further comparisons with Piranesi’s creations.

At the same time that representation had begun to require legitimation through an explicitly self-conscious, “theoretical” position, formerly pre-established and self-evident in culture, representations could also be seen to recover meanings no longer being actualized in the everyday prosaic world of industrializing Europe.¹⁰ Although several hundred years separate the work of Piranesi and Kiefer, such shifts are characterized by a similar dissatisfaction with regards to the use of history in their respective contexts. This results in a similar self-conscious dramatization of history (theory) in their works. In both cases, this historicity is a product of shifting views that developed out of the eighteenth century, wherein history itself was for the first time commonly seen as part of progressive human inspired change. Thus, while the autonomy of architectural drawing during the eighteenth century was mostly used for the predictive creation of buildings that sought a rational model in history, Piranesi’s historical engravings presented half-buried, decaying fragments of a mythical Roman past in a desperate attempt to reveal the meaning of an architecture that could no longer be built. The juxtaposition of fragments within many of his engravings often allude to poetic narratives, and his own description of his practice was that of an imaginative “restorer” of ancient pieces that “could

⁹ Ibid., 143.

¹⁰ While several hundred years separate Piranesi and Kiefer I suggest that they both partake of the relatively new-found necessity to express a theoretical position that had previously been an a priori part of culture. Whereas prior to the eighteenth century the performative act of building had not required a self-conscious expression through an explicit theory, nor the need to self-consciously dramatize historical referents, both Piranesi and Kiefer exist after the rise of positive science, a shift that increasingly excluded metaphysical speculation from “legitimate” thinking. The critical response to these changes given by architects such as Boullée, Ledoux and Piranesi (as much as by John Hejduk and in aspects of Daniel Libeskind’s work) can thus be seen to anticipate the expressive dimension of Kiefer’s creations.

produce wondrous, original artifacts.”¹¹ That history could therefore be understood as the self-conscious recombination of fragments made to appear in the ambiguous spaces of his engravings is precisely what anticipates the hermeneutic trajectory of Kiefer’s work.

Whereas Piranesi was inspired by wandering amidst ruins during his research into antiquity, even directly witnessing the reconstruction of the Forma Urbs, Kiefer had grown up amongst the physical wreckage and debris left in the wake of the Second World War.¹² In the context of postwar politics, the German Federal Republic had embarked on its own process of “reconstruction,” where an emphasis on progress and new symbols of transparency had aided in a forgetting of Germany’s traumatic past. Therefore, while the autonomy of architectural drawing could be used by Piranesi to evoke a self-conscious involvement with historical fragments to restore Rome, Kiefer’s career began by unearthing Germany’s buried past by dramatizing the narrative capacity of art through the excavation of cultural “ruins.” This was anything but popular in the context of post-war Germany and its official sanctioning of imported, formalist styles. During the early period of his career Kiefer confronted his German heritage along with the cosmography that led up to the war and ever since he has expanded the historical

¹¹ Piranesi’s conception of history is described in his writings on the “Magnificence of the Romans” and illustrated in his treatment of ornament in later works such as his *Diverse maniere d’adornare i Camini* (1769). Following Piranesi’s well-known work with fragmentation, Kiefer’s work also relates to contemporary architectural discourse as discussed, for example, by Marco Frascari in *Monsters of Architecture* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1990) (see his discussion of Spolia); Dalibor Vesely’s “The Origin of Fragmentation” in *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004); and the participation incited by the work of art or architecture in relation to Plato’s symbolon, summarized by Pérez-Gómez as evoking “a missing whole and an object of desire that is both present and absent.” Pérez-Gómez, *Built Upon Love: Architectural Longing after Ethics and Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006). 88.

¹² Just as I have postulated Kiefer’s material interaction as central to generating poetic meanings in his work, Kiefer’s own experience growing up in the ruinous material of war-torn Germany has affected his approach to the use and recombination of fragments in his artistic career. In fact, the argument could be made that not since Piranesi has there been an artist of ruins as prolific as Kiefer. Certainly, the recombination of works from Kiefer’s oeuvre at *Walhalla* is itself testament to this provenance. Like Piranesi’s etchings, Kiefer’s work is based on fragments, and a fragmentary use of perspective, which is deeply connected with specific developments in the history of representation, even while radically expanding upon them.

range and depth of his work to include continually shifting panoramas. In fact, just as Piranesi's attempt to recover the relics of Roman architecture are said to have "permanently altered how people emotionally perceive the ancient world, and the city that, in Piranesi's opinion, best represented it (Rome)," the tensions between collective memory and current society apparent in Kiefer's work is perhaps one of the most prolific examples of an artist involved with transforming traces from the past into potent, contemporary expressions. Of course, very different in the sense that Kiefer's works are inherently critical of German history, the greater similarity rests on the fact that in either case each are about succession (innovation and progress) and continuance (tradition) and for this reason each are prolific artists of ruins in their own right in the sense that they engage history through fragmentary, fictitious experiences. While from a different time, and with completely different emphasis, the reworking of ideas and motifs that use cultural ruins as an impetus for the creation of something new in Kiefer's work recalls Piranesi's quest "to restore pieces of a totally unknown world."¹³ It is this approach that shows the capacity of critical projects to resist an increasingly reductive view of history in modern culture, recasting it as essential to current life and society.

Closer comparisons with Piranesi in fact reveal what is most relevant about Kiefer's work for architecture; namely his use of abstraction to achieve a self-conscious involvement with history as he invites participation through poetic depth. I will therefore examine specific ties between Kiefer's *Walhalla*, his creations at La Ribaute and connections that emerge across his oeuvre in order to foreground ways in which his work may be seen as a model for the generative creation of architecture today. Close comparisons with other works from the eighteenth-century and more recent "theoretical" projects in the later chapters will also show how Kiefer dramatically expands upon this tradition by employing a reversibility of tools we often take for

¹³ Ficacci, 10.

granted in the creation of architecture. For Kiefer, as with his predecessors, this involves a critical questioning and evocation of relationships between representation, building, technology and language, qualities most clearly understood by beginning with Kiefer's challenge to the convention of perspective, which more and more became associated with an accurate (and reductive) representation of reality.

It is well-known that a characteristic feature that emerged between first and second states of Piranesi's *Carceri* was a movement away from the Galli Bibiena perspective system used in the first, to a disorienting use of perspective in the second (Figure 2.5 and Figure 2.6).¹⁴ In addition to added elements such as ropes, pulleys, lanterns, footbridges as well as an increase of dramatic shadows, Plate XIV, introduces a third, more articulated Gothic arch in the second state, which establishes an even more defined sense of spatial recession in the top half of the picture along the massive piers. At the same time as emphasizing solid stone and wood architecture, this recession is also dramatically contradicted by the angular staircase below, which places "the same piers in front of one another rather than side by side."¹⁵ Considered to be first to challenge developments in architectural representation that equated perspective to an accurate representation of geometric, objective space, authors like Naginski recognize how,

This orchestration of architectonic unrest aims straight at dematerialization, leading one to conclude that the edifice and its picturing have entered into a combative exchange whose outcome is the undoing of both ... The encounter between architecture and its pictoriality, it would seem, is wholly contentious¹⁶

¹⁴ As discussed by Pérez-Gómez, the Galli Bibiena perspective system, named after the Galli da Bibiena family of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "was used for interior renderings of the *scena per angolo* during the Baroque period and was mostly employed for stage set designs constructed according to the rules of perspective in Cartesian space." See Pérez-Gómez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*, 191.

¹⁵ Naginski, 242.

¹⁶ Ibid.

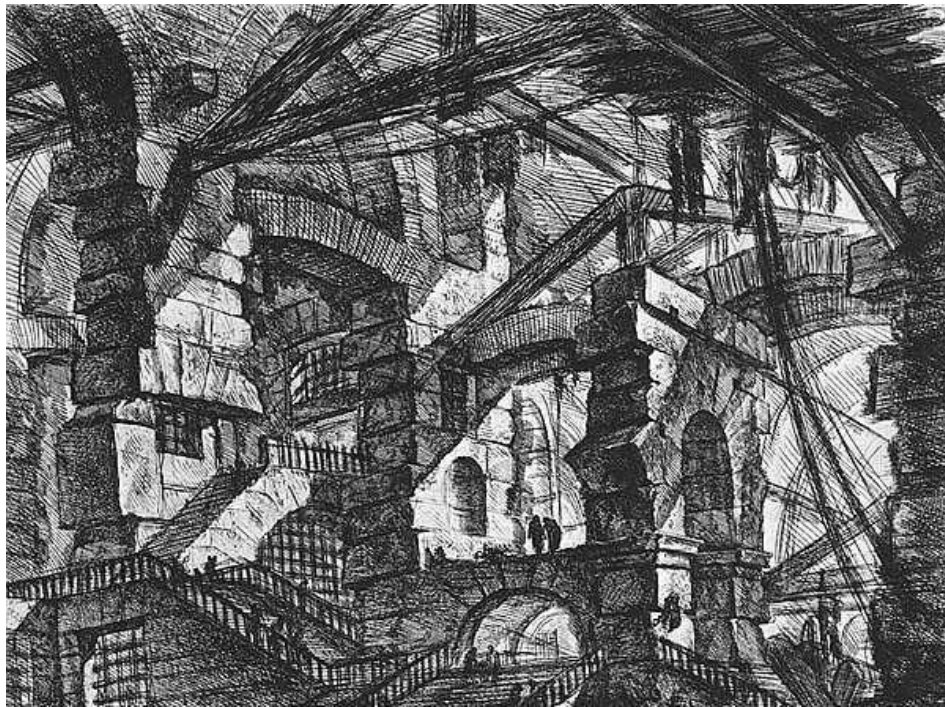


Figure 2.5 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Carceri d'Invenzione*, Plate XIV (1743-1745).



Figure 2.6 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Carceri d'Invenzione*, Plate XIV (1761).

It is in this sense that spaces in the second series of the *Carceri* present a different quality of depth than perspective systems with an objectified “third dimension.” Turned against itself, such use of perspective appears throughout Piranesi’s oeuvre. Works such as his *Ponte Trionfale* or *Remains of a Magnificent Sepulchral Building* from *Le Antichità Romane* (1758) also employ multiple perspectival systems that disorient the viewer and subsequently imbue the visual field with a sense of mystery.¹⁷ Evoking a kaleidoscopic disorientation, the dense network of marks draw the viewer into pictorial atmospheres where “form gives way to obfuscation” and imagination arises within pictorial depth.

As mentioned, such a challenge to the depiction of space as a homogenous geometric entity is indicative of a rare grouping of projects from the eighteenth-century that sought to retrieve the depth of genuine vision in a context where perspectival images were more and more seen as homologous to the lived experience of depth. As with Piranesi, the architectural *fantasies* of Jean-Laurent Legeay (1785-90) are another example of works that brought together heterogeneous compositions of perspective spaces guided by multiple points of view that self-consciously challenged the convention of perspective that was assumed to be the truthful presentation of reality to human vision. It is now well-known that along with Piranesi, Legeay contributed to “a revolution in the presentation of architectural ideas by questioning the relationship between architecture and its representation, as well as between architecture and building.”¹⁸

In the present-day context, it is easy to see how this interplay of revealing and concealing became a precedent for much significant art, architecture and literature. And indeed, Kiefer’s oeuvre may be one of the greatest examples of a contemporary artist who, while borrowing from

¹⁷ Ficacci, 278.

¹⁸ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 100.

cubistic deconstructions and surrealist juxtapositions, also employs self-conscious tensions between built and unbuilt work. The incongruous gaps that form between the various registers and scales of his work has steadily increased since the mid-1980s not only due to his incorporation of real materials but also his challenge to the convention of perspective which accelerates linkages across painted and constructed environments. It is furthermore remarkable that the integrated character of Kiefer's work allows all modes by which his work can be seen to expand upon the firmly established assumption of their autonomy to be experienced at *Walhalla*.

Take, for example, the way in which individual paintings from the exhibition continue to challenge the illusionism implied in perspective by amplifying tensions between painted images of architecture and the material world. For instance, the stacking of individual containers that make up towers in the *Walhalla* paintings (Figure 2.7 & Figure 2.8) function similarly to the interiors of Piranesi's Plate XIV since they deceive the eye into believing in a degree of perspectival coherence but also undo the sense of logical spatial relations. While exhibiting combinations of axonometric and perspectival construction, the towers appear to be at impossible angles, are always teetering, while also being flat and two-dimensional. As with Legeay's *fantasies*, which present "a multitude of fragmentary worlds governed by different perspectival systems that invite viewers to explore every corner of the image," the flatness of Kiefer's painted towers incorporates multiple materials over every part of the surface that also demands the viewers' attention.¹⁹ Similar in intensity to the etched lines of his predecessors, yet drastically larger in scale, the painterly application of acrylic, emulsion, shellac, and especially lead, initiate a pressurization between material actuality and representational elements that "slip through the surface into fictive architectural space."²⁰ Examining qualities of paint and other

¹⁹ Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*, 222.

²⁰ See Matthew Biro's *Anselm Kiefer and the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, 105-107.



Figure 2.7 *Walhalla* (2016). Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac and clay on canvas, 380 x 570 cm. From <https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/anselm-kiefer-walhalla-white-cube-review-760685>



Figure 2.8 *Walhalla* (2015-2016). Oil, emulsion, shellac and lead on canvas, 470 x 760 cm. From <https://www.barnesfoundation.org/whats-on/kiefer-rodin>

materials, one continuously discovers an interplay between material reality and illusionism, between surface and space, which keeps the spectator's eye moving and unable to rest. What results is an expressive depth similar to his predecessors since neither make any real sense in terms of construction if it were coherent with orthogonal plans and elevations. As in Piranesi's Plate VII, where scaffolds extend between piers that do not cohesively join with adjacent walls, or where, in Plate IV ethereal passages almost completely dissolve, the towers at *Walhalla* maintain both a heaviness and an ephemeral, incommensurable quality due to the way they are rendered. Engaging a fictional character between presence and representation, Kiefer's increasing use of real materials can thus be seen to expand upon the initial challenges to architectural representation initiated by Piranesi that placed value on the symbolic intention embodied in representations while at the same time maintaining the autonomy necessary for the critical production of work. Inhabitable at various scales by the imagination, Kiefer's depiction of architectural ruins in fact enable us to grasp the erotic, emotional and inherently meaningful nature of human space while critiquing the possibility of conventional architectural practice by celebrating a split between architecture as representation and actualized building.²¹

Even beyond a similar use of montage that arises between materials and images in Kiefer's paintings, an obvious difference is that while tensions in the engravings by Piranesi or Legeay exist between things that appearing to be built, cannot, with Kiefer, things that look like they could not be built in some cases actually have. In other words, whereas Piranesi's

²¹ Just as drawing for Piranesi was no longer the symbol of an intention that would be fulfilled in the surreality of the building [as was the case in Baroque architecture], Jean-Laurent Legeay had also advocated for "the virtuosity of ideas over the buildable potential of projects" by actually promoting a split between building and architecture. Because of this, Legeay has been seen to inaugurate a tradition that would eventually lead to works of modernism in the form of theoretical projects. Along with Legeay's *fantasies* the architectural amalgams of Piranesi, Laurent Legeay, and Jean-Charles Delafosse have each been seen to respond to the "weakening of traditional cosmological analogies" by turning to the "deliberate use of the metaphoric power of fragments." This grouping of "architects" are here understood as important precursors for Kiefer since they are foremost to implementing surrealist juxtapositions and cubist deconstructions of Euclidean space. See Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 76-77, 221.

architectural interiors “preserved meaning at the expense of perspectival logic, wherein the beholder of his work becomes involved in a discontinuous space that invites inhabitation but ultimately awaits the rebuilding of its dislocated parts,” for Kiefer, the fictive dimension has, at times, been realized in built work. It is this strange extension into the physical realm of construction that dramatically expands upon Piranesi’s initial challenge by heightening tensions between architectural representation and the physical realization of built work.

Before proceeding through an analysis of this shift it is worthwhile noting that when looking back at Kiefer’s career we find three general types of buildings that appear in painted form. While Kiefer’s well-known Nazi pictures from the 1980s employed centralized perspective in the transformation of buildings that either never existed or have been destroyed, paintings created at La Ribaute between 1997 and 2009 show eclectic mixtures of actual ruins from the world. Comparatively, the *Walhalla* paintings are drastically different than these two previous types for the fact that they depict constructions that Kiefer has himself physically fabricated and which have become re-presented in paintings at the London Gallery. In other words, these paintings reveal to us the fact that after his move to France, Kiefer had indeed emerged as a builder. This change in emphasis is what both increases and unifies tensions between built and unbuilt work. At the same time as he was creating massive canvasses at La Ribaute he was also digging tunnels beneath the earth and casting concrete between shipping containers for the creation of various spaces at his compound. Kiefer also raised up these forms, balancing them in tottering positions to create towers that recall industrial ruins, barbicans from Nazi camps, as well as a whole range of historical and mythical fortifications and constructions. Transported to the Hangar Bianca, Milan, for the *Seven Heavenly Palaces* installation in 2006 (Figure 2.9), the hulking towers appeared with labels similar to their painted counterparts at *Walhalla*, bearing

names of the Sefirot, which refer to ten powers that make up the divine realm as in a ladder or tower in Jewish traditions. At *Walhalla*, the rung-like labels reappear with the names of important historical figures such as Albrecht von Wallenstein, Albrecht Dürer, Maurice Prince of Orange, Maarten Tromp or Ulrich von Hutten (Figure 2.10). In previous installations these towers had also garnered associations with the great castle of *Valhalla* (in Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*) and the long legacy of towers as symbols of higher knowledge, their raising up and inevitable tumbling down.²² Therefore, even though the sense of montage in Kiefer's paintings is similar to the disorienting effects of the *Carceri*, whereby imaginative inhabitation remain impenetrable to our bodies, Kiefer's creations have been brought into "real" space. In this way, Kiefer creates an architecture that grants new possibilities whereby the fictional aspects of unbuilt and *built* creations may serve as models for expressing qualities of poetic inhabitation.

In conjunction with tensions that arise between painted images of towers and their physical construction elsewhere, the sheer, wall-like scale of lead in the *Walhalla* paintings produce even more immediate tensions between painted and physically constructed objects and spaces. Because of the dramatic presence of lead, which at times curls and peels from the surface of the canvasses (Figure 2.11), these paintings may remind us of the crumpled lead sheets from beds in the initial corridor, books and other leaden objects that seem to have been extracted from Kiefer's paintings. Even entire rooms fashioned from the same material with more exacting measurements are recalled by the sheer scale of these works (Figure 2.12). In some cases, lead globs and pours pressurize relationships between foreground and background, squeezing the lead

²² In conjunction with *The Seven Heavenly Palaces* installation in Milan (2006), iterations of Kiefer's physical towers have appeared at *Monumenta 7* at the Grand Palais, Paris (2007), at the *Jericho Installation* in the forecourt of the Royal Academy, London (2007), and at the Opera *In the Beginning* at the Opera Bastille, Paris (2009), among other venues. Kiefer's towers have also appeared in numerous mixed-media works. Norman Rosenthal's short essay "Towards the Towers," in *Aperiatum terra* (2007), provides the most comprehensive survey of architectural associations raised in the experience of the towers first constructed at La Ribaute.

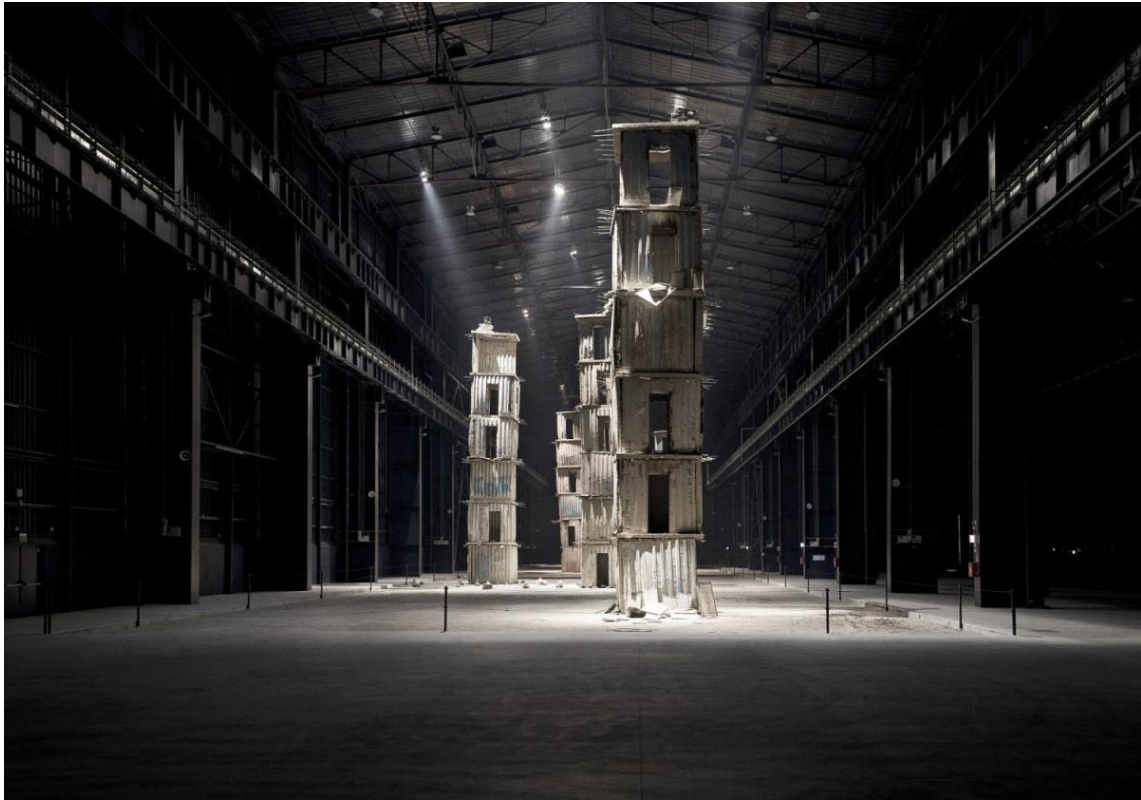


Figure 2.9 *Seven Heavenly Palaces*, Hangar Bianca, Milan (2006). From <http://www.nastymagazine.com/art-culture/anselm-kiefer-the-seven-heavenly-palaces/>



Figure 2.10 *Böse Blumen* (2016). Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac on canvas, 470 x 760 cm. From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2016



Figure 2.11 *Gehäutete Landschaft* (2016). Oil, emulsion, shellac and lead on canvas, 380 x 570 cm. From *Anselm Kiefer: Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.



Figure 2.12 *Philemon in stasis* (2016). Lead, water, glass and mixed media. From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2016



Figure 2.13 Detail of *Walhalla* (2016). From *Anselm Kiefer: Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.

out between the towers in the *Walhalla* paintings, or completely subsuming the represented image so as to become a sculptural feature in the space in front of the canvass (Figure 2.13). This not only links the physical properties of the paintings to other incorporations of lead but also dramatically expands upon the fragmented character of Piranesi's engravings by combining various places and meanings all at once.

For example, the superimposition of lead and towers at *Walhalla* not only combine the installation of hanging lead in one of the glass houses at Barjac with towers in the adjacent field but also involve two different representations of similar motifs across Kiefer's oeuvre. Just as the towers have been related to Biblical passages and Kabbalistic texts, vertical pours of molten lead in earlier paintings have also garnered associations to the pillar or cloud of God that followed the Israelites through the dessert in paintings such as *Emanation* in 1986 and 2000 (Figure 2.14 & Figure 2.15) as well as in an installation with the same name at the Mönchehaus Museum in Goslar in 1990 (Figure 2.16). Housing a vertical pour of melted lead in the vitrine entitled *Emanation* (2016) at *Walhalla* (Figure 2.17) furthermore relates to an entire lexicon of symbols employed by Kiefer, such as ladders, stairways, wings, propellers and even fabricated meteorites, each of which refer to ascending orders of beings and forms of passage between the material world and its immaterial or heavenly counterpart. However ironic it may appear that these angelic symbols are represented in crumbling towers or are created with the heavy material of lead and placed alongside objects like a wheelchair or the hospice-like beds that carry a sense of disease, such contradictions are typical of Kiefer's creations, which almost always convey melancholic feelings of loss regarding the symbols he employs.²³

Respective places and meanings from other parts of Kiefer's oeuvre are added to this experience upon entering *Sersum Corda*, a 9'x 9' room at *Walhalla* (Figure 2.18) wherein a

²³ Arasse, 231-232.



Figure 2.14 *Emanation* (1986). Oil, acrylic, wallpaper paste and lead on canvas, 410 x 279 cm. From <https://walkerart.org/collections/artworks/emanation>

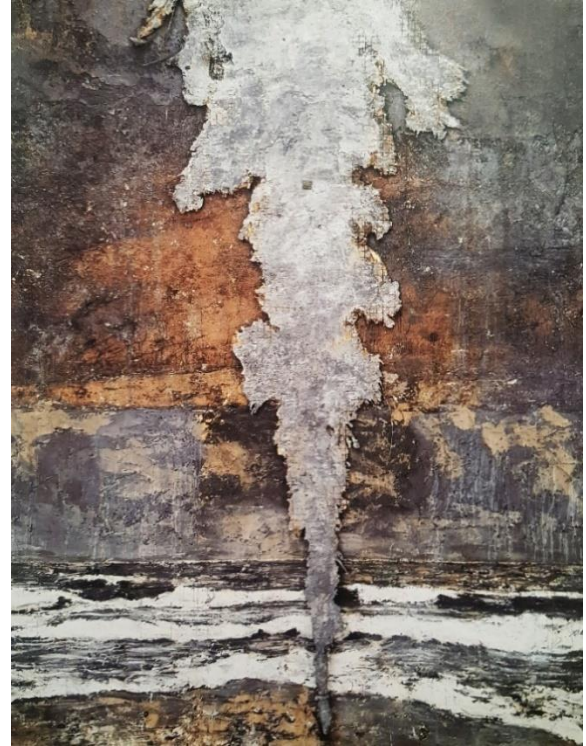


Figure 2.15 *Emanation* (2000). Oil, emulsion and shellac with lead on canvas, 940 x 510 cm. Private collection.

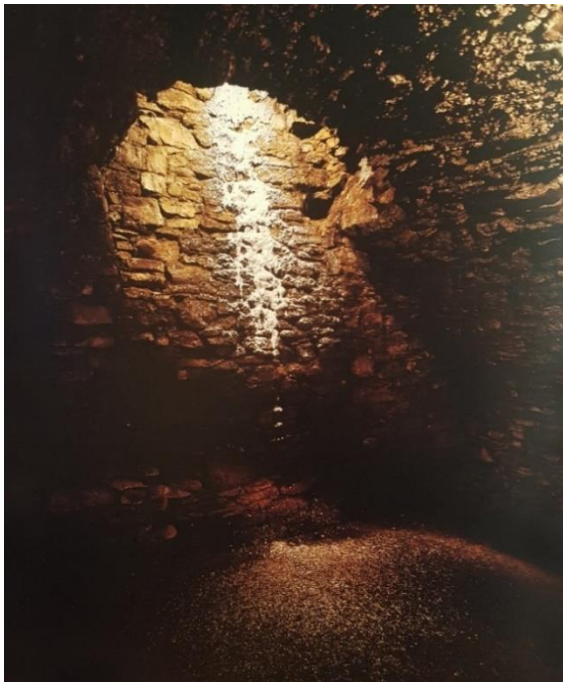


Figure 2.16 *Emanation* (1990). Museum Goslar, Germany. From Daniel Arasse. *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.



Figure 2.17 *Emanation vitrine*, *Walhalla* (2016). Glass, metal, clay and lead, 450 x 220 x 140 cm. From *Anselm Kiefer: Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.



Figure 2.18 *Sersum Corda at Walhalla* (2016-2017). Mixed media, 899 x 330 x 440 cm. From Anselm Kiefer: *Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.

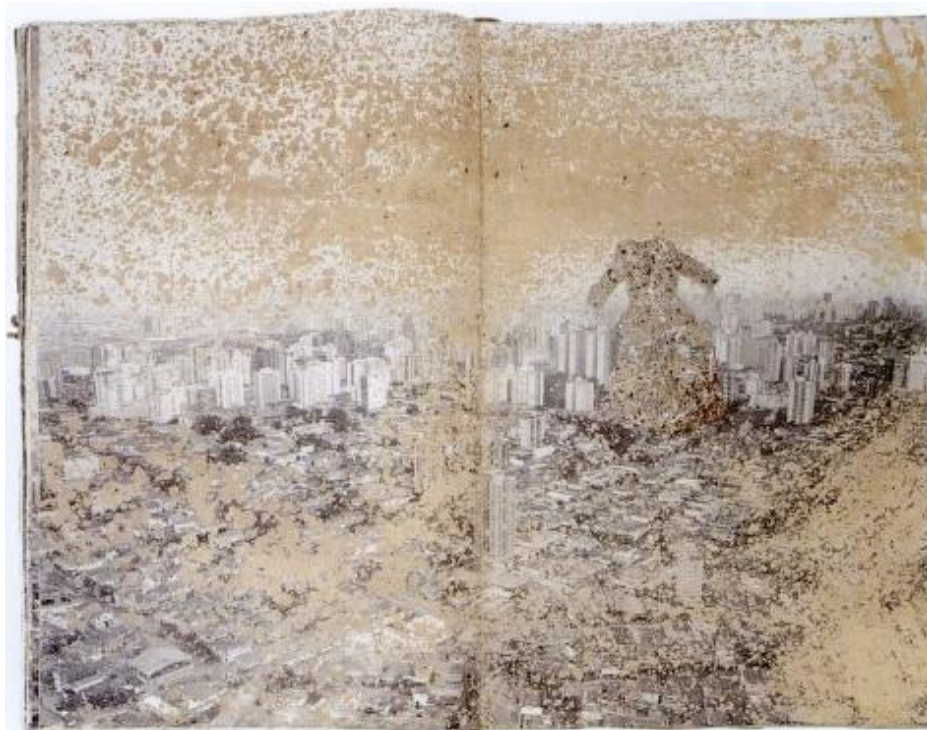


Figure 2.19 Book entitled *Lilith's Daughters* (1998). Clothes covered with sand, photographs mounted on cardboard, 127 x 80 x 5 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.

rusted spiral stairway, along whose railings are strung soiled dresses and lead film reels that rise almost thirty-six feet from floor to ceiling. The dresses, seemingly discarded along the climb, resemble garments placed against the background of modern cities in paintings such as *The Ladder of Heaven*, *Lilith at the Red Sea*, *Carbuncle Fairy (Karfunkelfee)* (from 1990), or books like *Lilith's Daughters* (1998) (Figure 2.19), which relate to the divine punishment of proud cities as foretold in Isaiah 34. Understood within the nested allegories of such a story, placing dresses of Lilith the she-demon of ruins and patron goddess of the profane world alongside movement of Valkyries to Valhalla indeed produces a sense of wariness with regards to any false promise of myth or victory. Continuously integrating associations from work to work, the rusted staircase of *Sersum Corda*, just as much as crumbling towers and stairways and clouds made of lead, resound with the traces of absent bodies suggested by robes or empty beds that seem to express just how much the sacred has withdrawn from the contemporary world. This feeling of loss has been seen to symbolize the impossibility of art to accomplish its task of symbolization in the modern context. Kiefer has said as much, stating, “The work in its failure—and it always fails—will still illuminate, however feebly, the greatness and splendour of what it can never accomplish.”²⁴

Framing his work in the tradition of theoretical projects in architecture, Kiefer has gone further than his predecessors to adjoin this accumulation of references across a variety of different scales and media. The effect of this being that even if we physically enter Kiefer's work, or feel as though we have arrived at spaces foreign to the time and place of the work in front of us, it is the movement between things that provides a space for themes to merge. It is indeed paradoxical that, even while by becoming “real,” Kiefer's work can still be seen to

²⁴ This statement is taken from Kiefer's acceptance of the Wolf Foundation Prize in Jerusalem in 1990, wherein he addressed the “saturnine melancholy” associated with his work, with explicit reference given to the Kabbalistic myths translated by Isaac Luria. See Arasse, 206, 222.

resemble the fictive spaces in the second state of the *Carceri*. In the context of modern architectural practice this fictive involvement is a necessary part of the architect's task to create narratives and plots for architecture in order to engage and transform architectural programs for participants. Creating towers and stairways that can "only be climbed with one's eyes," or transporting entire environments of lead well-known for its poisonous properties to a gallery, or even moving an entire city street to his Croissy studio, Kiefer employs a certain violence to conventional ways of building that allows its fictive dimension to arise as much in Kiefer's fully constructed rooms, paintings or sculpture as it does in the engravings of Piranesi or Legeay.

Just as it seems somewhat absurd that Kiefer's work would pursue the impossibility of symbolizing that which can no longer be symbolized, the sense of withdrawal pervasively felt in his creations is intrinsically tied to the fact that that which he constructs can also no longer be built, at least not in the everyday world of modern society. Setting aside prosaic utility, Kiefer's painted towers, their ninety-ton counterparts, and his construction of entire rooms at his installations transform into poetic images because, like his predecessors, "they deliberately challenge the logic of construction to explore the potential character of architectural space."²⁵ Therefore, whereas drawing, for Piranesi, was no longer the symbol of an intention to be fulfilled in a future building, even building, for Kiefer, is less about prosaic construction than a form of poetic interconnection brought together within the different registers of his work.

Self-consciously dramatizing expressive architectural relationships through *representations* that maintain an autonomous position outside the realm of the everyday world, Kiefer's creations emphasize the representational capacity of both unbuilt *and* built work. In so doing, his creations evoke a similar fascination with fictive construction in the *Carceri*, wherein "the traces of the human compulsion to build, the raising of winches, tackle, ladders and hoists

²⁵ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 227.

... left randomly to proliferate without clear purpose” resemble Kiefer’s constructions whose exact function can also never be pinned down. Working with industrial equipment or paint and canvass, the amassing of fragments at *Walhalla* form an interlocking network of themes. Yet, never in a room by Kiefer can we fully acclimate to the uneasiness of the environment and, precisely by emphasizing this unlivable quality, Kiefer returns the body to a relationship with environments and materials that work differently than architectural representations that are assumed to be equivalent to accurate representations of homogenous, geometric space. In other words, they retrieve the gift of significant human places, beyond semantic questions of symbolization.

By creating works at vastly different scales and in different mediums, which can be experienced at different times and places, the physical movement of the spectator becomes indispensable for Kiefer. Of course, the more we know of his oeuvre the more we see in respective works, yet, when painted towers are understood in relation to ones previously constructed, and when materials and meanings become “superimposed,” memory is called to move between works in a shocking and revelatory fashion. Said another way, unlike standardized architectural representations, which typically reduce the act of construction to direct associations presumed to exist in objectified time and space, Kiefer’s work demands interpretation from the position of a fully embodied consciousness. What results are atmospheric evocations that self-consciously blur distinctions between built work and painted image precisely by opening distances between them.

With Kiefer the process of reading one thing in terms of the next is always overdetermined. At one moment, we may be called to imagine the horrors of war, or be set to remember future catastrophes that have yet to occur. Consequently, even if we only care to see

the beauty of paint and other materials, towers filled with aspirations to ascend also seem to topple, becoming dust in front of our eyes. Because Kiefer's towers are nondescript as to particular times and places they may be interpreted to be as much about past catastrophes as some future apocalypse. It is by linking representations in this precise yet ambiguous way that Kiefer's dingy environments relate historical tragedies to the absurdity of current events, reanimating memories that much modern society seems content to neglect. Piranesi's *Carceri*, have been said to "confront ... the very darkness that humans cannot escape, at a time when Western culture had opted for the exclusive light of reason."²⁶ Likewise, Kiefer's weighty themes cast long shadows on modern optimism. The integration of Kiefer's works and dramatic themes in fact makes possible a meditation on brutal realities that still exist in the post-cosmological world wrought with the incomprehensible horrors as well as corrupt political and corporate power.

Moreover, Kiefer's works exemplify a process of discovery in the act of making work that is absolutely key to the creation of meaningful design. Like Piranesi's work, which existed between the worlds of art and architecture, Kiefer's creations can be seen as an important part of the tradition of modelling in architecture. Unlike the direct transcription of ideas to drawings and from drawings to building that characterizes the vast majority of architectural productions today, Kiefer's process of splitting references requires an act of translation between one mode of representation and the next. Arguably, this is more like an experience of architecture precisely by being nothing like architecture when treated as an abstract representation of objective three-dimensional coordinates. More like architecture also because by addressing our whole embodied perception, the work shows how our representational tools are certainly not neutral and how the things we create in fact make thoughts and feelings possible. Thus, Kiefer's unbuilt *and* built

²⁶ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 122.

work emphasizes the importance of translation over transcription, showing how “significant human images are constructions, metaphors, fictions, made by each of us as we literally construct our perceptions by acting in the world as a fully embodied consciousness.”²⁷ Both works of art and models, they are inhabitable by the imagination and lead to poetic revelation. In other words, because they always involve and imagining “as if,” they are relational in a way that involves a depth of experience that is other than a banal rendering of depth in optical perspective, and this is necessary for the consideration of Stimmung.²⁸

For these reasons Kiefer’s work also correlates with much meaningful work of the twentieth-century that incites a delay or gap between appearance and apparition.²⁹ Indeed, because each thing is delayed long enough to exist within or color the next is why each part is seamlessly integrated into the whole of our perception of his work. Moving about the works and spaces at *Walhalla* certainly reveals perception to be a synthetic act, where sight is integrated into the other senses, and gaps between things allow memory and imagination to reconstitute a “total meaning.” This shows us how, as difficult as it may be in a world of efficient formulas and “innovative” techniques, architects may work through their entire personality and not just pieces of objectified information. For those involved with the creation of artefacts to explore architectural ideas, Kiefer’s creations epitomize a model of working wherein the historical and cultural is interpreted through the whole self and not just as a singular effect. Understood in this way, Kiefer’s work reminds us that as architects we make creations for human beings who have a history and a future, who are beings who suffer, love and feel. Even if it is no longer possible to build architecture resonant with spirituality, or if it is very rare, Kiefer seems to suggest that to

²⁷ Ibid., 204.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ See Octavio Paz, *Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare*, trans. Rachel Phillips and Donald Gardner (1978, New York: Arcade, 1990), 94.

be meaningful our creations must engage us at this level. Thus, by overwhelming us at a sensual level, such work shows the possibility of our creations to open distances between things into which memories and imagination can leap. In so doing, one can indeed imagine further translations of such work that could lead to appropriate environments for human life.

Due to the obliqueness of his integrated approach Kiefer radically expand upon the fragmentation in Piranesi's oeuvre while at the same time remaining part of a tradition that emphasized the virtuosity of ideas over buildable forms. By emphasizing the representational capacity of such work his creations can in fact be seen as a new model of architectural inquiry that goes far beyond mere appearance and technological or aesthetic expectations. Indeed, the best examples from Kiefer show how the narrative capacity of our creations necessitate challenges to the abstraction taken for granted in modern architectural representation. This is especially the case when we examine more closely the critical use of perspective at *Walhalla*, which not only reveals further connections to the very origins of autonomous representation but continues to blur distinctions between painted and physically constructed space to reinvigorate a poetic experience of depth.

Whereas works by Piranesi and Legeay remained contained within the boundaries of a finite world, where the fragmented perspectival systems that achieved their disorienting effects remained within a frame, Kiefer further explodes the convention of perspective and replays it as a mode for collecting fragments across his entire oeuvre. In fact, just as the movement away from centralized perspective in paintings produced at La Ribaute informed the labyrinthine spatial experience of the Barjac compound (previously discussed), the forceful return of perspective at *Walhalla* paradoxically shows an equally poetic experience of depth.³⁰ It must be

³⁰ Before *Walhalla*, only in the 1980s did Kiefer's depictions of war-torn landscapes and Nazi ruins use the convention of perspective so frequently. The placement of the work *Steigend, steigend, sinke nieder* (2016) in front

emphasized that not for three decades had Kiefer employed centralized perspective with such critical virtuosity than at *Walhalla*. Indeed, the placement of the work *Steigend, steigend, sinke nieder* (2016) (Figure 2.20) in front of the large canvas entitled *Walhalla* at the exhibition distinctly recalls Kiefer's transition away from centralized perspective, demarcated in the painting *Ash Flower* in 1997. Itself a canvas begun earlier in 1983, the giant white, upside down sunflower placed on the central axis of an image of the Mosaic Hall of the Reich Chancellery, resembles the perspective created by the diminished scale of the towers in *Steigend, steigend, sinke nieder* since this is also obscured from the central position of viewing it.

At *Walhalla*, much of Kiefer's earlier work immediately returns in the perspective-like views given into the lead-lined central hallway, which is a procession exaggerated by the pictorial depth of an image of a soldier, back-turned and headed into a wintery landscape on the far wall of the corridor (Figure 2.21).³¹ A painted counterpart to this experience is apparent in the canvas *Rorat Caeli desuper* (Figure 2.22), wherein perspective is used to pull the viewer into a landscape with towers that flank the central view in the same way the positions of beds draw one into the initial hallway. Along with connecting pictorial illusion with actual space, this resurgence of perspective conjoins early and recent work with the effect of radically extending the metaphoric dimension of the exhibition.³²

of the large canvas *Walhalla* at the exhibition in fact recalls Kiefer's transition away from centralized perspective, demarcated in the painting *Ash Flower* in 1997. Itself a canvas begun earlier in 1983, the giant white, upside down sunflower placed on the central axis of an image of the Mosaic Hall of the Reich Chancellery is similar to the resin sunflower in the vitrine at *Walhalla* since the view given from the central position to the painting also blocks the forced perspective created by the diminished scale of the towers. This has a similar effect of obscuring centralized perspective witnessed in *Ash Flower*.

³¹ As is typical of Kiefer, the titles of his exhibitions are important to establishing a web of cultural references that open connections to other works from different periods of his oeuvre. The title "Walhalla" works in a similar way by referring to a mythical afterlife in Norse folklore as well as a neoclassical monument designed by King Ludwig I in 1842 to honor Germany's fallen soldiers. In the context of Kiefer's larger oeuvre, "Walhalla" and its reference to the myth Valhalla also establishes relationships to many of the (built or unbuilt) buildings designed in the austere neoclassical styles of Albert Speer, Wilhem Kreis and Paul Ludwig Troost.

³² See Arasse, 79.



Figure 2.20 *Steigend, steigend, sinke nieder* (2016). Glass, metal, lead, clay and resin sunflower, 450 x 259 x 140 cm. From Anselm Kiefer: *Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.



Figure 2.21 Main corridor, *Walhalla* (1992-2016). Lead, photograph on lead and mixed media. From <https://arrestedmotion.com/2016/12/showing-anselm-kiefer-walhalla-white-cube/>

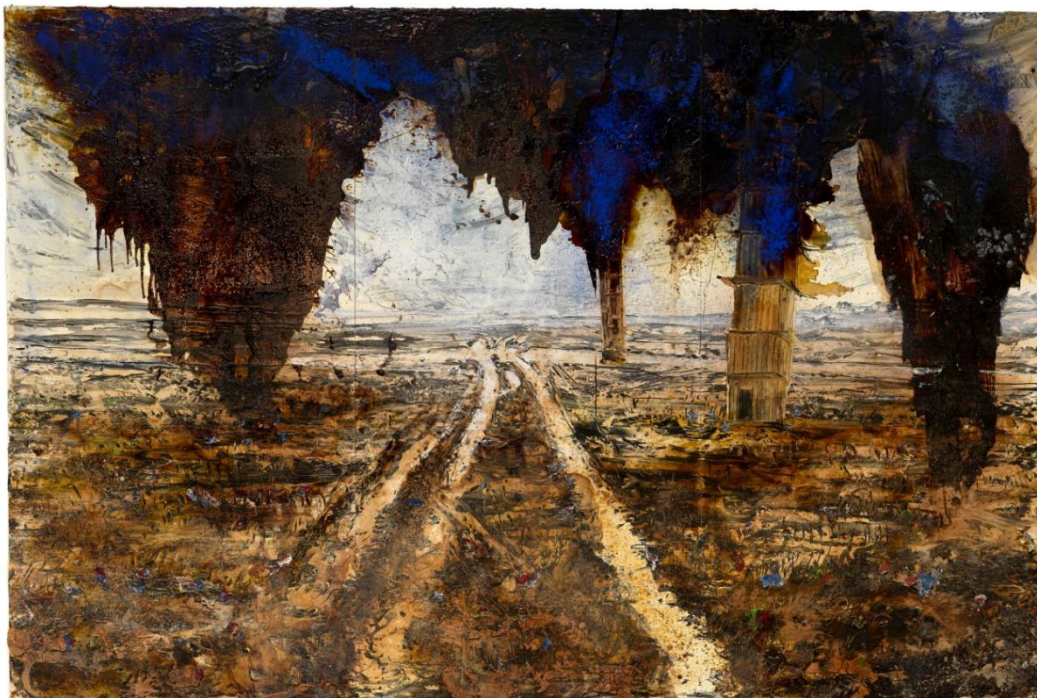


Figure 2.22 *Rorate Caeli desuper* (2016). Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac and clay on canvas, 380 x 570 cm. From *Anselm Kiefer: Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.

For instance, as much as the image of the soldier at the end of the first corridor conjures memories of some of Kiefer's earliest imagery, specifically evoking his 1969 "Occupation" of the French coastline—a parody of both the Nazi salute and the romantic figure in Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above a Sea of Mist* (1818)—the lower half of *Rorat Caeli Desuper* also recalls many of his earlier landscapes from as far back as 1974, such as *March Heath* (Figure 2.23), *Nero Paints, Painting = Burning*, or *To Paint*, each of which press views into grounds scarred with history.³³ Looking at the *Walhalla* paintings one can't help recall many of the paintings mentioned above which often combined black paint with physical burning to evoke the scorched earth policies of the Third Reich and by extension associations between the artist's activity and the dictator who causes the landscape to be torched (destroying to create a better world). The forced perspective in *Rorat Caeli Desuper* also resembles a number of other canvases such as *Iron Path* (1986) (Figure 2.24), *The Princess of Siberia* (1988), or *Lot's Wife* (1990) (to name only a few), all of which feature train tracks leading into distant stretches of land once filled with positive nationalistic connotations that were transformed into a sad memento mori of the Nazi experience and the separation of Germany.³⁴ Equally bleak and desolate, *Rorat Caeli Desuper*, contains echoes of this solemn and contemplative emptiness. Yet, because we are assaulted with explosions of lead globs that appear as smoke from bombs or clouds of ominous weather systems, earlier landscapes seem to be infused with a sense of urgency that for many commentators reflects our own contemporary climate constantly under the threat of war. Partly perceived in front of us, partly recalled from earlier work, the fictional capacity of Kiefer's work

³³ Images of Kiefer's *Occupations* performance of 1969 were published as "Occupations" ("Besetzungen") in *Interfunktionen* (Cologne), no. 12, (1975). Other books created by Kiefer that use photographic documentation from the *Occupations* performance include *To Genet* and *Heroic Symbols* from 1969.

³⁴ Indeed, Kiefer himself has suggested that "Everything that makes German philosophy and poetry interesting to the world is a combination of Germany and Judaism. One thing is that Germans committed the immense crime of killing Jews. The other is they amputated themselves." Michael Auping thus suggests that "Kiefer's interest in ancient Jewish culture should not be explained away simply as guilt for his country's persecution of Jews but rather a matter of 'reassembling.'" See Michael Auping's *Anselm Kiefer: Heaven and Earth*, 45.



Figure 2.23 *March Heath* (1974). Oil, acrylic and shellac on burlap, 118 x 254 cm. From Mark Rosenthal, *Anselm Kiefer*. The Art Institute of Chicago and Philadelphia Museum of Art. New York: Neues Publishing Company, 1987.

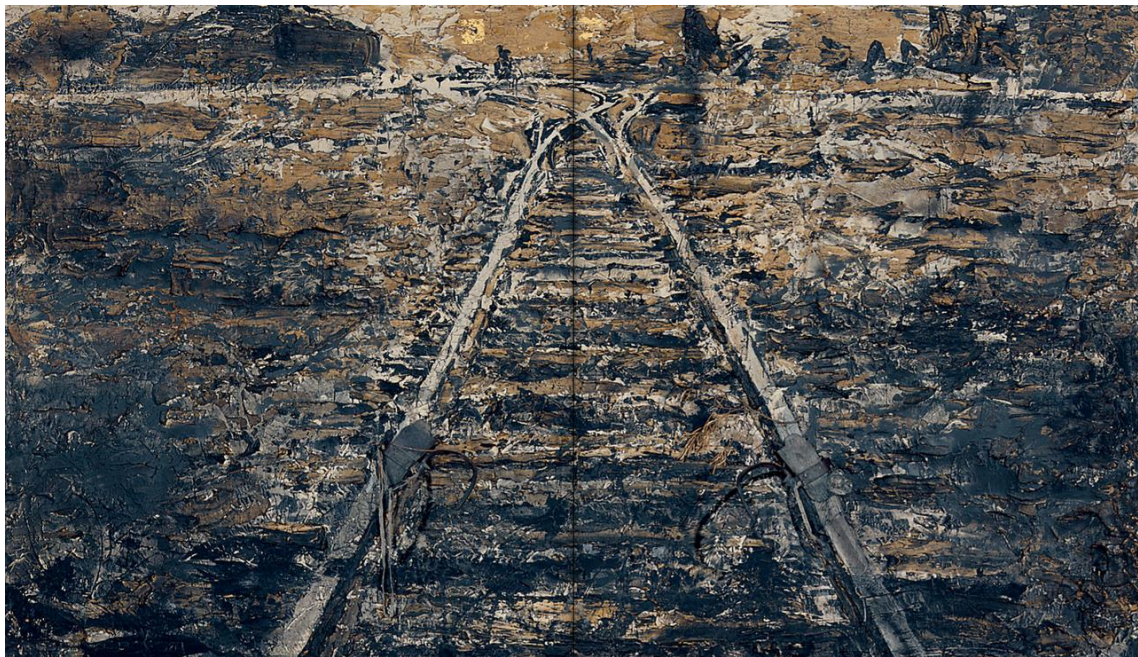


Figure 2.24 *Iron Path* (1986). Oil, acrylic, emulsion, and gold leaf on canvas, with lead strips, crampons and olive branches, 220 x 380 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.

thus plays a central role at constructing complex images that interiorize the passed-on memories of a German past that most of us have only known second hand.³⁵ In paintings, or in views constructed to make us feel as though we have entered paintings, the convention of perspective is employed as a mechanism for constructing space that links past works to contemporary warnings.

Addressing the critical use of perspective in his earlier paintings, Kiefer has stated:

I tell stories in my pictures to show what's *behind* the story. I make a hole and go through. I use perspective to draw the viewer in like a bee to the flower. But then I want the viewer to get by that, to go down through the sediment, so to speak, and get to the essence³⁶

Amplified at *Walhalla* due to the reverberation of painted and constructed environments, Kiefer's work can be seen to expand upon challenges initiated by Piranesi since perspective is employed against itself to point back to the world of perception. Moreover, by allowing the perspective of paintings to resonate with the spatial arrangements of the gallery, Kiefer's work further recalls theories from the Swiss polymath Johann Heinrich Lambert, who by the eighteenth century had already acknowledged the accepted equivalency between lived space and geometric space as a necessary condition for the self-conscious manipulation of perspective for expressive purposes. For Lambert, this meant that "in a context where perspective had become understood to accurately describe the lived space of the world, the convention could also be used

³⁵ There are parallels to be drawn between Henri Bergson's ideas of "memory images" and Kiefer's work in the sense that "any memory image that is capable of interpreting our actual perception inserts itself so thoroughly into it that we are no longer able to discern what is perception and what is memory." From Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 106. First published in *Matière et mémoire: Essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit*, 1896. Cited in Christopher Bardt's *Material and Mind*, 225.

³⁶ Speaking about the illusory nature of perspective, Kiefer has also stated of the painting *Märkischer Sand* (1980): "But, you see, that is the point of illusion—to draw people in. There's a connection to Warhol in this, even if you don't see it. He was so superficial in such a precise way that he went very deep. It's the same with me. This painting is very superficial with the perspective, with the illusion, to get you into the layers of the image, to the conceptual part, to the idea of the land and what has happened there. The more you go back, under, the further forward you can go." See Steven Henry Madoff's "A Call to Memory," *October* (1987), 128.

as a formal tool for the poetic imagination.”³⁷ As with Piranesi, who had worked *through perspective* to enliven poetic depth in his engravings, Kiefer goes further by pairing the perspective of paintings with installations to allow the “real” experience of space to become a fundamental access point for his themes. Unlike its instrumental use in most approaches to design, this use of perspective is never without a symbolic dimension and is anything but the Enlightenment’s understanding of perspective that became synonymous with an objective perception of externalized space.

As with the central corridor, entering the room Kiefer has called *San Loreto at Walhalla* even goes so far as to transform some of his earlier subjects through perspectival constructions (Figure 2.25). Not only does this room recall the subterranean lead chamber at La Ribaute but also a whole trove of earlier architectural canvasses such as *Interior* (1981) (Figure 2.26), *To the Unknown Painter* (1982-1983), *The Five Foolish Virgins* (1983), or *Athanor* (1983-84). Common to each of these paintings is that viewers are placed in a visually enclosed space formed by perspective. Being confronted with spaces that “we know to be memorial halls but which appear more like abandoned prisons” such paintings are retroactively enriched by the physical construction of rooms at *Walhalla* in the sense that they actualize palpable, claustrophobic feelings. There is an unmistakable shock that connects us with such earlier works within an instant of being present at *Walhalla* since built and painted interiors transmit memories back and forth between these works. Cut off from the outside world and surrounded completely by lead, the materiality of these environments dramatically affects the mood of the space, even amplifying the sound of footsteps, allowing us to feel as if we had physically entered some of his painted interiors. By contradicting the sense of exteriority typically expected by perspectival constructions, submerging us within these rooms adds to the expression of interiority central to

³⁷ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 215.



Figure 2.25 *San Loreto, Walhalla* (2017). Lead and mixed media. From <https://rev-ma.com/2016/12/18/anselm-kiefer-walhalla-whitecube-bermodnsey/>

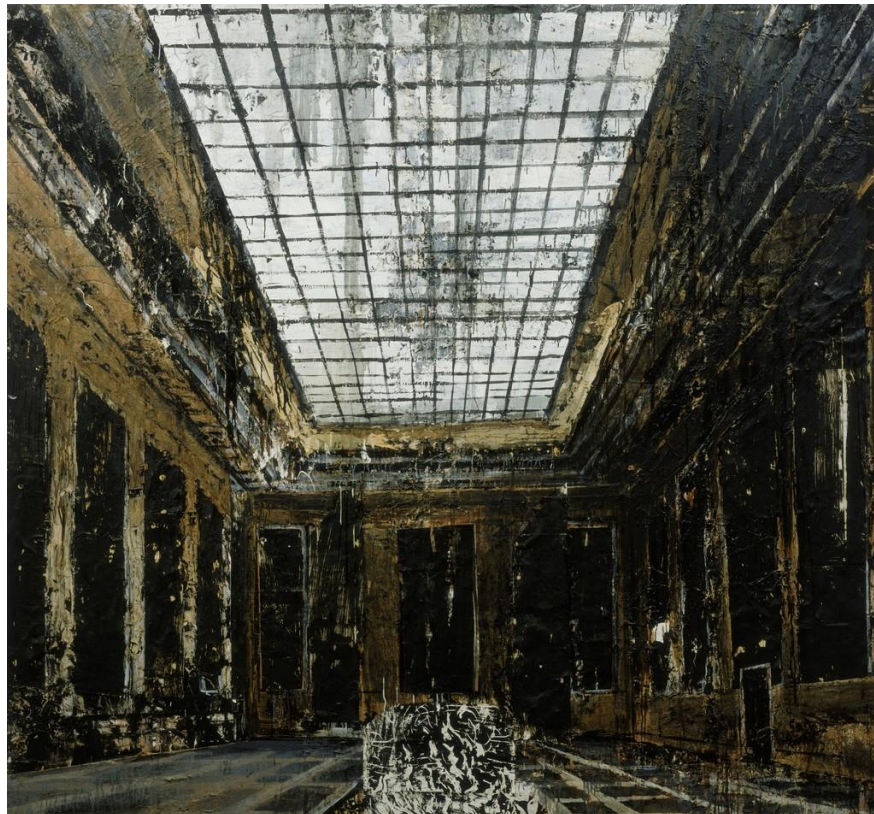


Figure 2.26 *Interior* (1981). Oil, acrylic, shellac and emulsion on canvas, 287 x 311 cm. From <https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2014/august/26/understanding-anselm-kiefer-s-interior/>

the work because even the sound this place becomes indivisible from the space and materials in various representations. A dramatic contrast to the vertical towers, stairways and other symbols of ascension is the apparent material weight of this setting, further exaggerated by a bed crushed under a massive boulder with lead wings in the center of the room that itself resembles the placement of objects set in the halls of many of Kiefer's paintings. Remembering that Kiefer's earlier images of Nazi architecture are not composed of buildings that have been turned to ruins over time or by war but rather become ruins in his representations, the paintings, as much as the full-scale environments of *Walhalla*, show how Kiefer's "representation of architecture as representation," indeed engage a similar fictive quality since it creates "memorials of things that are no longer there or which have never existed."³⁸ Thus, Kiefer's linking of physical and pictorial space partakes of parts of Lambert's theory while drastically expanding upon the perceptual confusion in the *Carceri* since each work is preceded by detours into a vast variety of recognizable objects, materials and themes. As if on a sculptor's turntable, Kiefer work seems to be based on revolving meanings that interconnect decades of production that emerge on other sides of different works. Folding relationships back and forth between painted and physically constructed environments is thus an immensely important, critical operation that returns *perspectiva artificialis* to *perspectiva naturalis*, showing the hinge between them.

³⁸ See Arasse, 237-238. Even while there is no direct reference to Kiefer's earlier depictions of Nazi Architecture at *Walhalla*, the essence of these earlier works are unmistakably present. The re-manifestation of similar types of spaces begun in his earlier Nazi paintings aligns with Kiefer's belief that it is better to transform buildings erected during Nazi reign rather than to completely obliterate them. Because his work with images of Nazi architecture can be seen to subvert and transform the original meaning of the buildings he depicts, this transformation also includes a subversion to the Theory of Ruin Value (*Ruinenwerttheorie*) proposed by Albert Speer, which suggested that even upon the eventual collapse of a building the use of natural materials would remain aesthetically pleasing without any maintenance at all. An extension of Gottfried Semper's view regarding the use of natural materials in buildings, such an idea was supported by Adolf Hitler, who saw value in the continued symbol of greatness in buildings constructed during the Third Reich.

In addition, the critical use of perspective at *Walhalla* also relates to work from other architects from the late 1700s whom used perspective to emphasize the expressive character of their representations. While Kiefer's work is widely understood to synthesize many different styles and themes, what is unmentioned in previous scholarship is how many of his painted interiors from the 1980s bear some resemblance to the monumental architectural representations of Etienne-Louis Boullée (1728-1799). Like Piranesi, Boullée self-consciously employed perspective in the representation of ruins to express meaning that could no longer be taken from a tradition. A student of Legeay, Boullée sought a critical expression of architectural ideas that remained distinct from the functionalizing tendencies in architecture just before the French Revolution, even recognizing his representational work as more significant than projects he had actually built.³⁹ For instance, works such as his *Metropolitan Basilica au temps des Ténèbres* (Bibliothèque Nationale) (1781), (Figure 2.27) epitomize his attempts to inspire awe and admiration in the immensity of interior space, and it is indeed possible that some of these austere and unrealizable buildings may have inspired the grandeur of built and unbuilt Nazi projects which, being passed on as symbols of doom in the post-war context, became a prodigious, fictionalized subject in much of Kiefer's work. Speaking of his Nazi architecture paintings, Kiefer has alluded to such connections, stating:

Speer thrived on the revolutionary architecture of Boullée, Ledoux, etc., ... I completely transform architecture. The architecture I use in my paintings is already in pieces, completely destroyed ... Where the symbols of the Third Reich are visible, I always make them ambiguous, contradictory. For example, I painted a building and on the canvas I wrote 'Monument to the unknown painter.' Obviously, it's an illusion to the unknown soldier of the Arc of Triumph. But, at the same time, it represents something ambiguous and absurd because normally the names of painters are known. It's only an

³⁹ See Pérez-Gómez, *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*, 159. The frontispiece to Boullée's *Essai sur l'art* states, "Ed ioanche son pittore," which translates into "I am also a painter," indeed echoes the expressive potential of architectural projects that did not fit into the new, essentially prosaic world of industrial society.

example to show you that I never use symbols in a self-evident way. They are always in pieces⁴⁰

Even Kiefer's choice of the title *To The Supreme Being* for a painting he completed in 1983 (Figure 2.28) refers to the context of the eighteenth century and the deistic cult slated to become the official religion of the new French Republic established by Maximilien Robespierre. Of most importance however, are crucial differences in the representation of similar types of architectural spaces which help to emphasize Kiefer's critical response to changes in the conception and representation of space over the last two centuries.

For instance, whereas Boullée's desire to ally greatness with beauty and transcendent presence depended upon the use of receding perspective to link infinity with eternity in the Newtonian cosmology, Kiefer's use of perspective represents neither an infinite space traditionally associated with transcendent theological meanings (such as a deistic God for Boullée), nor a static homogenous entity (today assumed to be an accurate representation of reality). Rather, perspective itself operates as a *critical hinge* for his subversive imagery. Oppressive and foreboding, the expressive effect of Kiefer's perspective can even be seen to account for much of the controversy his work has provoked due to the visual power of the images that continue to disturb many of his viewers. Just as Piranesi is known to have celebrated the optical splendor of the *veduta* tradition in painting, and Boullée used "sheer vastness to reconcile human rationality with the finite dimension of life," critics like Andreas Huyssen recognize how "the seductive imagery and material grandeur" of Kiefer's work "reawakened the aesthetic lure of Nazism" in order to confront us with the fact that we may not be immune to what our reason rejects. Described as "monuments to the demagogic

⁴⁰ See the interview between Kiefer and Roberto Andreotti and Federico De Melis in *Anselm Kiefer: Merkaba*, 48-49.

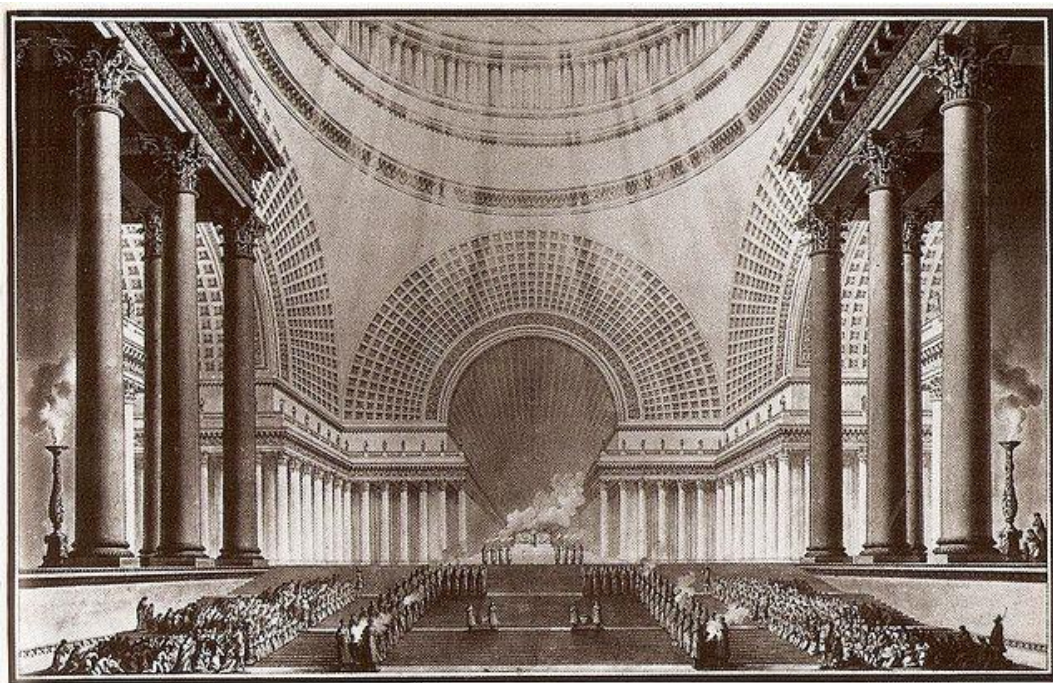


Figure 2.27 Etienne-Louis Boullée, *Metropolitan Basilica au temps des Ténèbres* (1781).

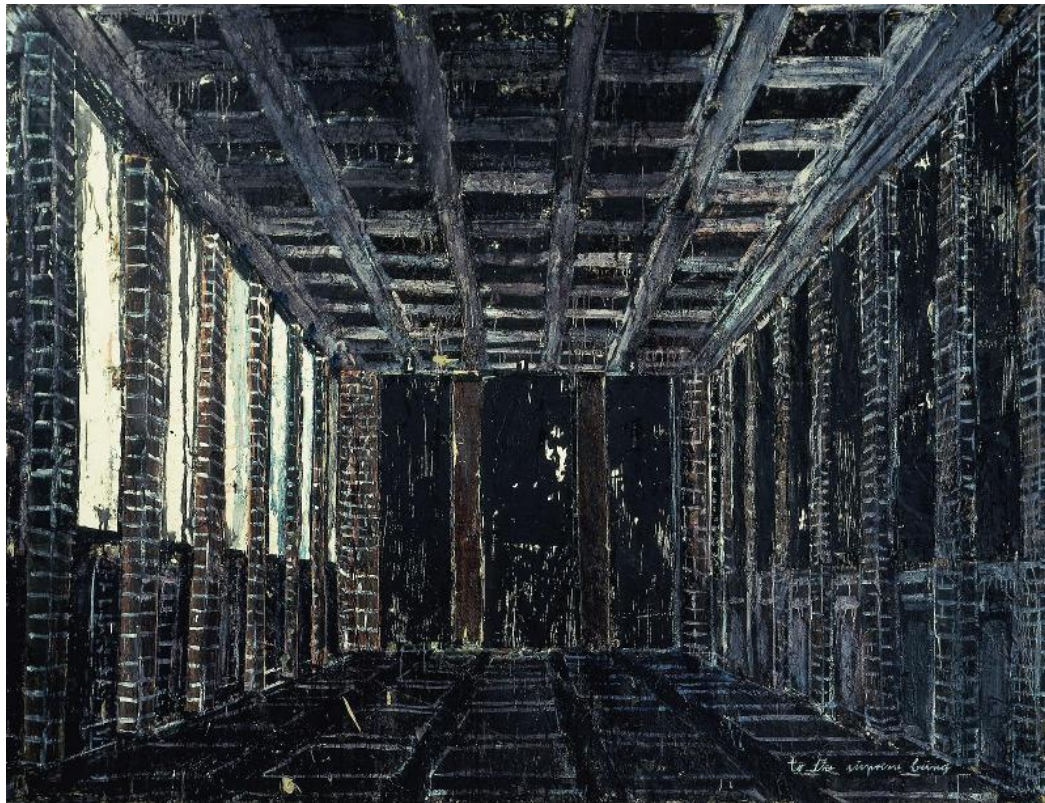


Figure 2.28 *To The Supreme Being* (1983). Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, straw and pieces of a woodcut on canvas, 278 x 368 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.

representation of power [and] the power of representation that modernism has done so much to undo,” the self-conscious use of perspective found at the very beginning of autonomous architectural representations is thus intrinsic to the ambiguity of Kiefer’s “painted ruins” and “part of the dangerous game he plays with the power of images that were previously exploited by Nazism.”⁴¹ In fact, the eerie associations that form between Kiefer’s paintings and the atmospheric depth of the *Walhalla* rooms certainly link the manipulation and control of political contexts with the use of perspective itself. As with his earlier paintings, which typically employ blown-up, one-point perspectives, often enhanced by the grid-like articulation of walls, floor and ceiling, views given into leaden rooms or the initial corridor at *Walhalla*, have, first and foremost, a tremendous sway over the perception of the spectator.⁴² Linked to feelings of alienation and control, political and commercial power as well as the illusory power of these images is implicitly questioned by Kiefer’s use of perspective.

In other words, what is most fascinating about an installation like *Walhalla* is not only that Kiefer first shows the power of perspective to influence our bodily response, but that he is also able to use the forceful illusion of perspective to overturn its own veracity by evoking a critical experience of depth more and more being lost in a world identified with scientific vision. This occurs precisely because at the same time the illusion of perspective may draw us into pictorial space and the materials of the paintings push forward into the space of the gallery, the daunting perspectival views allow painted and built spaces from different times and places to emerge and recede when one peers at individual paintings or when we move from one room to the next. Very different from Boullée, who, by working with the expressive power of autonomous representations attempted to reconcile human rationality with transcendent meaning,

⁴¹ Andreas Huyssen, “Anselm Kiefer: The Terror of History and the Temptation of Myth” in *October*, MIT Press. 48, (1989): 38-39.

⁴² Biro, 104-107.

Kiefer's use of perspective challenges the veracity of space as three-dimensional, showing us how truth is *not* revealed from a singular vantage point or fixed position. Dramatizing tensions between painted works and physically constructed spaces, Kiefer effectively reverses the assumption that the appearance of the world can be accounted for by an optical image. This insight alone is of fundamental importance for architectural designers usually obsessed by the production of seductive images. Indeed, because tensions between painted and built works are constituted at such an overwhelming level, the work implicitly references the potential delusion of perspectival constructions that became a hallmark of power and manipulation in the modern world.⁴³ The experience of *Walhalla* implies that the temptation to equate reality to the illusion of perspective is itself part of the danger of such images.

Even in cases where similar subject matter is employed, Kiefer's representation of ruins functions differently than Boullée's since they engage a critical dimension to the way in which history is engaged. Compare, for example, Boullée's *Cénotaphe de Turenne* (1786) (Figure 2.29) with the pyramids and temples in Kiefer's *Osiris and Isis* (1985-87) (Figure 2.30), *Remains of the Sun*, *The Square*, or *Awake in the Gypsy Camp and the Desert Tent, Sand Runs Out of Our Hair* (from 1997) (Figure 2.31). Although the enormous scale and subject-matter of such paintings recall Boullée's view that "A temple erected in honor of divinity should always be vast [and] should offer the greatest and most astounding image of existing things [and] if possible, it should resemble the universe," Kiefer's work does not build upon a transcendent natural order but rather points back to cultural narratives that are always transformed within the work. Such a

⁴³ Kiefer's use of perspective thus recalls aspects of Johann Heinrich Lambert's writings in *Anlage zur Perspektive* (1752), for the very fact that the foundation of his perspective theory called upon "a distinction between the tactile reality of the world and potential visual delusion." Kiefer indeed evokes a crucial reversibility of projections that deliberately opens a delay between presence and representation. This furthermore recalls the later philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche, specifically his discussion of Twilight Vision, and Merleau-Ponty's more contemporary concept of Flesh and Depth. See Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 193.

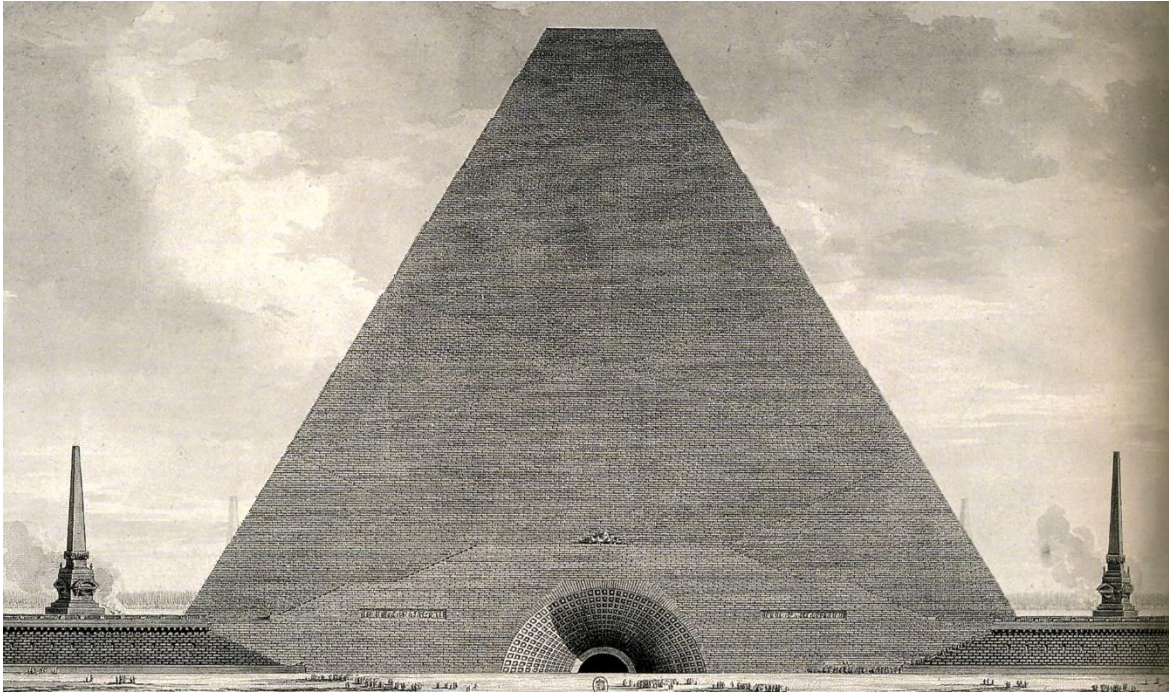


Figure 2.29 Etienne-Louis Boullée, *Cénotaphe de Turenne* (1786).

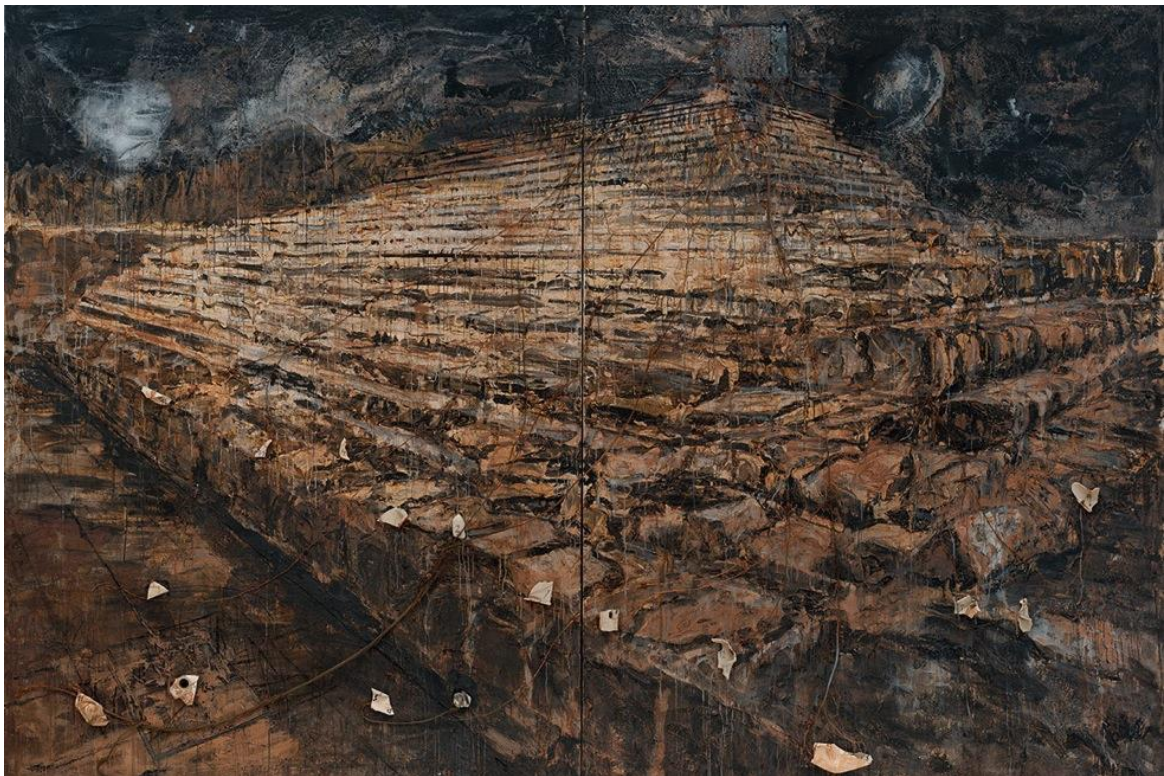


Figure 2.30 *Osiris and Isis* (1985-87). Oil, acrylic, emulsion, clay, porcelain, lead, copper wire, and PCB on canvas, 379.7 × 561.3 × 24.1 cm. From <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/anselm-kiefer-osiris-und-isis>



Figure 2.31 *Awake in the Gypsy Camp and the Desert Tent, Sand Runs Out of Our Hair* (1997). Emulsion, acrylic, shellac, burnt clay, sand and iron on canvas, 280 x 560 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.



Figure 2.32 *Sand from the Urns* (1997). Emulsion, shellac, acrylic, clay and sand on canvas, 280 x 560 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.

distinction is crucial because whereas Boullée's work is said to "present the last possibility of an architecture of imitation in the original Greek *mimesis*, [where] geometric solids could still be seen as symbols of a transcendent order representing ethical, aesthetic and religious values that revealed a pre-established harmony between man and world," Kiefer's recombination of fragments create ambiguous relationships that emphasize the impossibility and dangers of making such connections today. In *Osiris and Isis* an ancient pyramid crumbles into the earth. Made of thick, textured paint, the image is combined with fragments of smashed porcelain and copper wire which place the archetype in relation to threats of current technology and even nuclear war. Likewise, the depiction of utilitarian brickyards from India, pyramids from Egypt or South America (sometimes placed alongside one another) in works like *Pope Alexander VI: The Golden Bull* (1996), *Remains of the Sun* or *Sand from the Urns* (1997) (Figure 2.32) provide both "a sort of spectral hallucination of ancient monumental architecture" and "allegories of disappearance" that produce a melancholic feeling regarding "the desacralization of the world."⁴⁴ As with his Nazi canvasses, which worked through the optical recession of space, these mid-career paintings show how monumental architectural experience is simultaneously reinforced and undermined by the building up of multiple materials and meanings that ultimately belie their monumental nature.⁴⁵ The vastness of scale that Boullée attempted to evoke in his architectural paintings that sought to relate grandeur with beauty by evoking connections with nature are thus both dramatically referenced and reversed in Kiefer's oppressive environments. Because works from *Walhalla* blur various times and places, across both painted and constructed work, is why Kiefer's work more closely resembles and builds upon the very different relationship to history found in Piranesi's work. Be it an Albert Speer building covered in ash, a blood-stained Mexican

⁴⁴ See James Wilkes' online article "Remains and Remnants," *Studio International*, October 31, 2009, <https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/remains-and-remnants--anselm-kiefer-the-fertile-crescent>.

⁴⁵ Arasse, 265, 277.

pyramid, or his depictions of massive brick yards which themselves deplete and replenish fundamental units of architectural construction, Kiefer states:

Each of these buildings has a history created by its own fiction and the need to demonstrate its philosophy of existence. That fiction is part of the debris of history. My images connect with that debris. They attempt to connect with the beginning or the end, with a deep lost memory between here and there⁴⁶

Works from *Walhalla* are likewise so weighted with stuff from the world and overrun with references that any hope to initiate a nostalgic relationship to transcendent presence would starkly contrast with Kiefer, whose work emphasizes a self-conscious relationship between the historical and fictional and makes us aware of seeing these layers. Again, more akin to the *Carceri* in this regard, such creations are vital examples of work that restores an understanding of depth as much more than an equivalency of three-dimensional breadth and height. Even while linking perspective with “real” space, none of Kiefer’s work is based on a homology between represented and actual space. What is given in the experience of Kiefer’s work is therefore anything but a naturalization of geometric space that has become characteristic of “reality” in the modern age. This is the case because, wherever photographs or perspective constructions are used, Kiefer’s mixtures of various scales and meanings obscure the linearity associated with these constructions. Because the space of paintings or installations circle back and fold into other spaces and references we see how perspective is used as a critical “hinge” of representation for Kiefer.⁴⁷ Always referring to a reality that is not perceptible straight away, and thus, working against the reduction of reality to the world of pictures, Kiefer shows us how when objects and spaces change place their being is modified and this evokes a qualitative dimensionality where depth is primary.⁴⁸ Building upon a similar spatial depth as the *Carceri*, Kiefer’s work shows

⁴⁶ Auping, 41.

⁴⁷ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 129.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 130-135.

how the metaphoric space of montage may constitute a potential model for appropriate architectural creation and reception. Precisely because Kiefer almost always gives us something that needs to be reclaimed, the object of desire becomes something else, and this leads us into an inexhaustible network of relationships whereby there appears to be no beginning or end to any work. Because it is impossible to locate an incipit, the work ignites a palpably circular feeling to time.

Of course, such an effect on the experience of time and space are by no means new to contemporary works. Even by the eighteenth-century Lambert had recognized how “conventions of perspective often distort the assorted qualities of embodied perception by presenting space as emancipated from time and thus falsifying its character by freezing it or accelerating it.”⁴⁹ From the time of Piranesi onward, many critical works of art, literature, and, more recently, film, have challenged the linearity implied in a reductive use of the perspectival convention. What is new from Kiefer for architecture however is the way his work allows time to be experienced as vertiginous and spiraling even while employing a convention often associated with linearity and illusion. What is more is that this is accomplished in representations that blur painted and physically constructed work. As with a film, the visitor to *Walhalla* experiences a dynamic process of emergence and assembly of images between different forms of creation. Like film, this allows us to consider architecture and space as it has been or could be in other situations in the world.⁵⁰ This invisible dimension, which is a *projection of the imagination*, thus works

⁴⁹ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 216.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 376-77.

beyond conventional boundaries of Renaissance painting, sculpture, and architecture by subverting the instrumentality of traditional perspective from within.⁵¹

Finally, by integrating painted and built work via this critical use of perspective, Kiefer shows us just how much sight is dependent on the other senses in order for us to make sense of the world. Bringing themes from painted works into the real space of galleries, in different media and at different scales, allows our senses to translate one another, revealing how the lived perspective that we actually perceive is not a geometric or photographic one.⁵² When entering Kiefer's leaden rooms we must admit that even the sound of such environments moves us towards the content and subject-matter in these and other works. Consequently, we are more readily drawn towards different localities that allow the present surroundings to exist. Very much in tune with avant-garde tendencies that stem from nineteenth century Romanticism, such work evokes an irreducible dimension between metaphorical space and the creative experience of the spectator who have more and more become involved with moving through his creations. As with the filmic temporality often associated with Piranesi's work, the dynamic succession of emerging and receding images "invite inhabitation and activates the life of the imagination."⁵³ Indeed, we can't help but experience depth as primary and feel the curve of time as works and spaces reinvest the act of perceiving with a self-conscious participation to recreate particular meanings ourselves.

It is in our current context that such lessons show immense value for architecture. This is especially the case seeing as Kiefer's work exists after the world-wide acceptance of descriptive geometry. Whereas Piranesi worked amid the disintegration of the traditional world, during the

⁵¹ As discussed by Pérez-Gómez, such work "makes us look at the way we see, at the generative power of the eye that lies at the origin of *perspective naturalis* and *perspective artificialis*, forcing the spectator to act as a participant, witnessing a counterprojection of binocular vision." See Pérez-Gómez, Pelletier, 371.

⁵² See Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 235.

⁵³ See Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Sense* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; Revised edition, 1942), 4.

period when the modern conception of space was slowly being disseminated, Kiefer works at a time when descriptive geometry has become the world-wide standard in the conception of architectural space. After the writings of Jean-Nicholas-Louis Durand (published between 1800-1810), and specifically after his *Précis des Leçon d'Architecture* (1802), this assumption has influenced all modern architectural endeavors and ultimately gave rise to computer modeling that has “more and more reduced the translation of drawings into buildings through systematized operations.”⁵⁴ The problem is not only that the digital space can be mistaken for the spatiotemporal reality of the lived world but that the technological framework of the computer unwittingly steers the creator towards designs that exclude the participant by setting them apart from the object being represented. Therefore, it is within today’s context of architectural production that the immersive interiors of Kiefer’s many paintings, installations and studio environments establish a very different relationship to time and space. Drawn in by perspective into layer upon layer of materials in his paintings or into threatening, albeit poetic, environments we become conscious of the difference between a dualistic conception of Cartesian space and the lived spatiality of embodied consciousness. Opening a space between these dimensions, such work points to the illusory nature of perspective and the optical dependency on instrumental architectural notations, emphasizing these as conventions that only exists at the level of thought, not at the level of interactive presence.⁵⁵ Because Kiefer’s work evokes a participation with the perceived world rather than a world of conceptual projections is why his creations are emblematic of a contemporary critique of representational tools that manipulate the eye as if it was a passive receptacle rather than the means for genuine symbolization based on active engagement and interpretation of the world. Regardless of the melancholy and pessimism evoked

⁵⁴ Pérez-Gómez, *Architectural Representation and The Perspective Hinge*, 84.

⁵⁵ Pérez-Gómez, “The Historical Context of Contemporary Architectural Representation,” in *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*, Vol. 2 (2016), 208.

by themes of war and decimation, Kiefer delivers a sobering example of the generative capacity of architectural representation that is dramatically different from the high-speed proliferation of images today. Using the power of projections to engage and transform, his work shows us how we too may find confidence in the ability to discover significant strategies to produce meaningful atmospheres for poetic inhabitation across an enormous variety of work. In so doing, Kiefer shows us how the narrative generated across a variety of artefacts may employ tools typically used to reduce lived space to a mere geometric entity into possibilities for engaging stories in architecture through the act of its own representation.

Chapter Three: Anselm Kiefer and Daniel Libeskind: The Limits of Architectural Representation

It is within the present-day context that architectural lessons from Kiefer most clearly emerge, especially when considered in relation to rare works from contemporary architects that also cross conventional boundaries between the arts to engage a fully emotional world. Involving technological production, yet grounded in the creative transformation of historical traces, Kiefer's creations expand upon challenges begun by Piranesi, showing further intersections with works by Daniel Libeskind, John Hejduk, as well as the life-long theoretical work of Frederick Kiesler. In the next three chapters we will use these alternative forms of architectural creation by such modern and contemporary architects as a foil to discuss Kiefer's contributions; showing how they reveal new representational possibilities and new modes of participation which are instructive for architectural design and pedagogy. I will argue that Kiefer's creations go even further than other architects producing theoretical projects to allow a contemplation of the artefacts used to think about architecture; revealing how the modes by which we create are indeed never neutral and need not only represent something external to itself (as in buildings that have been or will be constructed). Rather, this chapter seeks to show how the act of making itself is the most important part of the mutual relationship of theory and practice, thinking and doing, in a generative process of architectural making. My working premise is that Kiefer's translational acts, which involve emergent connections between the material, spatial and linguistic imagination, are especially relevant considering the current trajectory of parametric design and the fabrication of architecture through increasingly reductive means.

Bringing lessons from Kiefer to the present context of design is certainly made more intelligible when considered alongside the work of Daniel Libeskind, an architect renowned for

having challenged the very limits of representation in a world more and more dominated by educational and monetary utopias. This correlation is particularly significant considering our previous exploration of Kiefer's work and the challenges Libeskind has offered regarding the representational capacity of both built and unbuilt work; as a critical response to the positivistic, Cartesian conception of space as the "real" space of our contemporary world. Such challenges are presented in Libeskind's numerous writings and projects, many of which deny objective expectations of space and shelter, perhaps best epitomized by his belief that:

Contemporary culture is infected by the same thinking that led to the Holocaust. They are not two different things. By 'the same thinking,' I mean a certain kind of rationalism, organization, bureaucracy and administration. One cannot isolate them and say, in one case they are good and in another bad. I do not believe in an architecture that complies with certain functions and constraints¹

Connecting theoretical work with designs realized in the world, many of Libeskind's projects resound with Kiefer's creations since neither can be reduced to categories such as function, style or fashion. Rather, the intense treatment of space in projects such as Libeskind's Jewish Museum, Berlin (2001), resonate with the process of remembering in a context of forgetting also well-known to characterize Kiefer's work. Moreover, because Libeskind's career is not only based on the creation of buildings but a process made up of modeling, drawing, poetry and the collection and interpretation of ephemera he sees as central to spiritual growth, the epic productions of this architect show a similar concern as Kiefer for constructions (both built and unbuilt) that elicit an affective participation from those who encounter them.

Also similar is Kiefer's well-known transformation of mythic icons and images that led up to the war, which gained potency in a context characterized by an absence of adequate images to deal with collective memory in the post war context. In fact, like Kiefer's creations,

¹ Daniel Libeskind quoted in Alois Martin Muller, "Daniel Libeskind's Muses," *Daniel Libeskind, Radix-Matrix*, (Munich, New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1997), 117.

Libeskind's Jewish Museum involves a transformation of space and materials that provide a multistory, primary involvement with meaning which show how representational tools are capable of engaging stories that allow us to participate with the history that carries us forward. And yet, I will argue that Kiefer's transformation of landscapes, historical buildings, interiors, and the trove of ruins borrowed from our shared cultural tradition go even further to show how memory and imagination come to bear on material transformations that make us aware of the difference between the binary space of Cartesian geometry, also the space of computers, and the real space of embodied consciousness situated in the world. While obviously different than the intentional translations necessitated by the architectural program of works such as the Jewish Museum, comparisons with a range of Libeskind's early work help clarify how Kiefer reveals new insights into the prospective role that representations may play, both as works of architecture in and of themselves, and as valuable tools for unfolding possibilities in design that avoid reductive applications.

Before addressing new representational lessons from Kiefer that emerge from a similar engagement with the historically potent territory as the Berlin Jewish Museum, parallels should first be drawn between Kiefer's work and Libeskind's early *Micromegas* (1979) (Figure 3.1 & Figure 3.2) and *Chamber Works* drawings (1983) for the fact that each employ architectural conventions in ways that disclose the enigmatic nature of depth. Even in spite of differences in style, media, and visual content, Kiefer's paintings and the graphic complexity of Libeskind's drawings each employ technical devices associated with architecture in ways that discover something mysterious about the space of the world we inhabit. In fact, around the same time Kiefer was dramatizing the use of perspective in works such as *Heliogabal* (1974-90), *Interior* (1982), *To The Supreme Being* or *Urd Werdande Skuld* (*The Norns*) (1983), Libeskind was using

architectural projections to disrupt standard expectations typically associated with the conception and realization of architecture. Of his *Micromegas* drawings Libeskind himself has suggested that “they conjure both delay and fulfillment that occurs between the intuition of geometric structure as it manifests itself in a pre-objective sphere of experience and the possibility of formalization which tries to overtake it in the objective realm.”² Indeed, the lines, grids, and curlicues of the *Micromegas* bear resemblance with Kiefer’s stacking of perspectival spaces at installations like *Walhalla* (or his repetitive use of the convention more generally) since each involve viewers in the act of synthesizing fragments that disintegrate and reform in fluid transition.³

For instance, when we consider how the *Micromegas* shift our perception, “exploding” or “recasting” the linguistic instruments of drawing to achieve an “unprecedented perspective,” they can even be seen to resemble work from Kiefer’s recent exhibition *Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot* (2019-2020) (again at White Cube Gallery in London) since these canvases collect views, pieces, materials and themes from across the artist’s oeuvre (Figure 3.3). Although the overwhelming size and media of Kiefer’s work is drastically different (the biggest of Kiefer’s work at this exhibition is over 665 cm tall and others 900 cm in width), such paintings resemble the way Libeskind’s drawings are said to “project onto paper an infinite multiplicity of dark spaces made from the fragmented yet singular vocabulary of technical architectural notations.”⁴ Because each operate at “the point of transition from actual to imaginary space,” at the hinge between “the space of real possibilities to the space of possible realities,” is why they engage a

² See Daniel Libeskind’s “End Space: An exhibition at the Architectural Association” (London: Architectural Association, 1980), 22. See also Dalibor Vesely’s *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation*, 21.

³ See Pérez-Gómez, *Built Upon Love: Architectural Longing after Ethics and Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 106.

⁴ Francesca Serrazanetti and Matteo Schubert, *Daniel Libeskind, Inspiration and Process in Architecture*, (Italy: Moleskine SpA, 2015), 24.

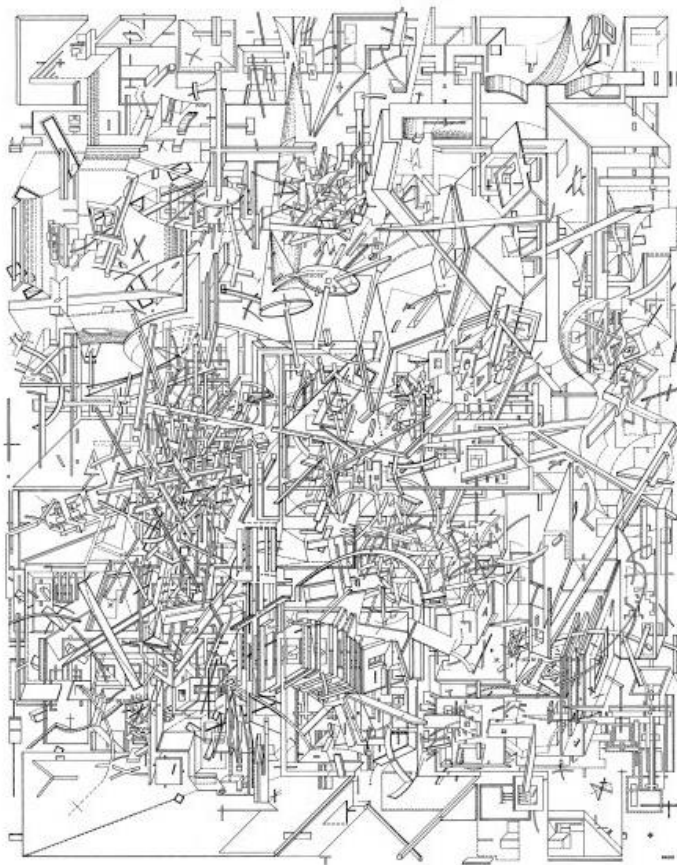


Figure 3.1 Daniel Libeskind, *Micromegas* drawing (1979). From <https://libeskind.com/work/micromegas/>

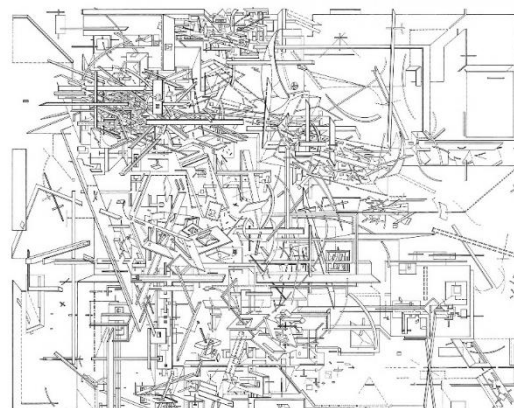


Figure 3.2 Daniel Libeskind, *Micromegas* drawing (1979). From <https://libeskind.com/work/micromegas/>



Figure 3.3 *The Elegant Universe* (2019). Emulsion, oil paint, acrylic and wood on canvas, 380 x 380 cm. From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2019

similar “shifting of the parameters” of how reality is perceived. Drawing our perceptions into environments that surround us, the *Micromegas* drawings or Kiefer’s paintings provide moments that more closely relate to the complexity of the real space we inhabit, never directly reducible to a singular vantage point. Be it the shifts, tilts and density of the marks in Libeskind’s drawings, or the layering of views, materials and objects in Kiefer’s paintings, such work forms a coherent place in the imagination that has “nothing to do with the practical or with ‘real’ spaces” but something more similar to what happens in the impossible constructions of Escher or the labyrinthine prisons imagined by Piranesi.”⁵

Even the title *Micromegas*, taken from Voltaire’s philosophical tale, wherein a giant “eight leagues tall” from the planet Sirius “ends up investigating the nature of the microscopic inhabitants of Earth,” resembles the convulsive tensions between Kiefer’s pictured landscapes and their tangled, embattled, chaotic surfaces. Said to knit “classical myth with contemporary physics,” the largest of Kiefer’s paintings at this exhibition encumbers one’s ability to stand in a position other than that of the ideal vantage point due to his impending use of perspective. Yet, at the same time the paintings have the peculiar effect of drawing us in, close by to materials such as branches, mud and paint in *Ramanujan Summation* (2019) (Figure 3.4) or through “tangled coils and curvy grids of space-time” in *The Veneziano Amplitude* (2019) (Figure 3.5), which seem to recall “the surgical dissection of microparticles of the real” in Libeskind’s drawings.⁶ Amid “the devastated nowhere” entangled beneath jutting branches in *Der Gordische Knoten*

⁵ Ibid., 24.

⁶ See Jonathan Jones online article “Anselm Kiefer review terrifying odyssey through a cursed world,” *The Guardian*, November 15, 2019, <https://secrets-1.com/whats-happening-now/anselm-kiefer-review-terrifying-odyssey-through-a-cursed-world/>. As with Kiefer’s earlier Nazi architecture, paintings at the *Superstrings* exhibition are contrasted with physical materials. On top of reference to Norse mythology and a multitude of cross-references to recent theoretical physics, one might also discover landscapes ravaged by climate change or nuclear apocalypse. Whatever we may find, “A single vast current of living sympathy—whether for good or evil, happiness or suffering is not relevant—unites all space.” See Thomas McEvelley’s essay, “3. The Slippage” in *Anselm Kiefer: Let A Thousand Flowers Bloom*, (London: Anthony d’Offay Gallery, 2009), 22.



Figure 3.4 *Ramanujan Summation* (2019). Emulsion, oil paint, acrylic, shellac and wood on canvas, 660 x 665 cm. From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_20

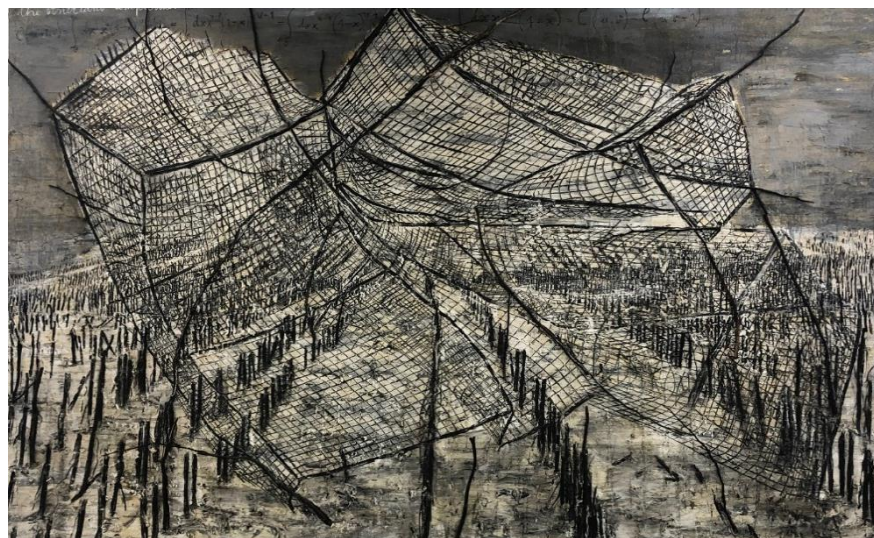


Figure 3.5 *The Veneziano Amplitude* (2019). Emulsion, oil paint, acrylic, shellac and wood on canvas, 470 x 760 cm. From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2019



Figure 3.6 Detail, *String Action* (2018). Emulsion, oil paint, acrylic, shellac and straw on canvas, 470 x 560 cm. From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2019

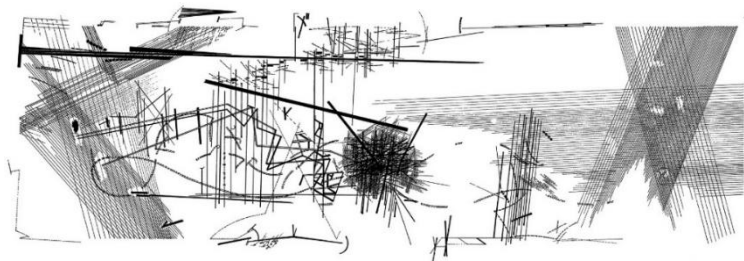


Figure 3.7 Daniel Libeskind, *Chamber Works* drawing (1983). From <https://libeskind.com/work/chamber-works/>



Figure 3.8 Daniel Libeskind, *Chamber Works* drawing (1983). From <https://libeskind.com/work/chamber-works/>

(2019) or the horrible wire traps in *String Action* (2018) (Figure 3.6) such mixtures resemble the “formal chaos” of the *Micromegas* as well as Libeskind’s second series of drawings, *Chamber Works*, *Architectural Meditations on Themes from Heraclitus* (1983) wherein we become lost in patterns and lines that eschew the relationship between visual representation and “resemblance” (Figure 3.7 & Figure 3.8). Like a “telescope directed at different registers of the mark,” the *Chamber Works* have been defined by Aldo Rossi as “intellectual, mathematical and speculative elements” woven together. Seeing as these drawings were intended to explore the way “music and architecture converge in the mind,” the intense physical vibration one receives in front of Kiefer’s paintings likewise confirm how architectural representations need not simply refer to something external to itself—as in buildings that have or will be constructed—but are themselves creative work. In each case, these creations make us aware of the difference between the assumptions of visual dominance (ultimately the binary space of Cartesian geometry) and the real space of embodied consciousness situated in the world.

Interwoven with this interest in the limits of conventional representation, it may not be surprising to find that both Kiefer and Libeskind have spent the greater part of their careers physically constructing spaces that challenge the typically neutral settings of museums and galleries. For Libeskind, this has involved the design of entire museums, and for Kiefer, the transformation of preexisting museum and gallery spaces world-wide. That Libeskind’s Jewish Museum, Berlin (1998-2001) (Figure 3.9), has been understood as a complex that “embodies and contains memory,” whereby “space itself becomes the focus of art,” indeed shows parallels with many Kiefer installations. Similarities exist not only because Kiefer’s works are often realized in such large formats that they have demanded the renovation or addition of special exhibition spaces but because they entail a challenge to the aesthetic detachment expected from such

venues. Much more than a receptacle for objects or a space for their display the environments designed by Libeskind or the ones overhauled by Kiefer allow space itself to become part of the content and intended experience.⁷ In fact, such places show how Kiefer's paintings and Libeskind's early drawings relate to their creation of full-scale architectural settings since each disrupt the standard way space and even history is experienced. Just as the language and technique of Libeskind's drawings have been related to his "fundamental re-valuation of the processes of designing and shaping museums," Kiefer's painted and built work combine to awaken the inherently spatial character of narrative that allows us to connect on the deepest level with human perception and imagination.

Such comparisons are bolstered by the fact that both Kiefer's work and the Jewish museum are born out of an incredibly personal engagement with a similar socio-historical context. As mentioned, Kiefer, a German, born in 1945 into the aftermath of the Second World War, has spent the greater part of his career unearthing cultural mores and difficult memories that led up to the disaster—a political undercurrent that has been continuous in his work. Libeskind, born a year later in Poland, and of Jewish descent, had tragically lost much of his family to the Holocaust and felt personally invested with "representing the unrepresentable" through the program of the Jewish Museum. Taken into the atmospheres of an installation like *Walhalla*, the anonymity of Kiefer's earlier images and his refusal to depict the suffering of particular individuals also relate to Libeskind's design partially because the "difficulty" of navigating the museum never adds up to a total understanding of the space. Exploiting a sense of "tragic incompleteness," visitors to the museum also transport meanings between spaces and objects that are acoustically, materially, and architecturally quite different from typical

⁷ For an insightful summary of the challenge Libeskind's museum poses in the contemporary context see Anthony Vidler's essay "Building in Empty Space: Daniel Libeskind's Museum of the Voice," in *Daniel Libeskind: The Space of Encounter*, ed. Richard Olsen (New York: Universe Publishing 2000), 222.

exhibition spaces. Between the darkness of the museum's voids and its sky-lit galleries, as with our movement through the gloomy environments of *Walhalla* towards brightly lit paintings, the disjointed spaces and violently punctured windows give off the sense that history has been inflicted with great tragedy and that its remains are, at each turn, recombined in ways that create new possibilities. Linking current experience to various contexts of loss, whereby "physical form and space give substance to things that exist beyond the visible," visitors are invited to recall, through traces, what remains lost and disseminated in historical progression. Indeed, even the "spatial voids" of Kiefer's earlier painted interiors (Figure 3.10) have a similar effect as the empty spaces of the Jewish Museum since each draw us into gigantism and melancholy wherein only the residue of human suffering remains (Figure 3.11). In each case inhabitants or viewers alike are involved with a peculiar interaction with absence and loss, even for those who grow up unknowingly in its shadow.⁸ It is for these reasons that the Jewish Museum and works by Kiefer expand upon the autonomous possibilities of representation begun in the eighteenth century because even while being physically accessible creations in the world they retain an identity apart from the everyday common world that surrounds them.

While it is undeniable that such works are part of a tradition of projects that evoke the invisible through visible, material creations, what is new from Kiefer for architecture is how he radically exploits the autonomy and self-referential character of his work in ways that go beyond boundaries typically allotted by most architecture. As suggested, it is Kiefer's further bracketing of the "real world" that reveals an approach to hermeneutic making which is of unique value for architects. This is partly due to the fact that his creations adhere the historical subjects and images used to a process that shows the history of its own production to a much greater degree

⁸ Kurt Forster, "Mildew Green is the House of Forgetting," in *Daniel Libeskind: Radix-Matrix: Architecture and Writings* (Munich, New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1997), 7.



Figure 3.9 Daniel Libeskind, Jewish Museum, Berlin (1998-2001). From <https://world.pulse.rs/daniel-libeskind-i-never-gad-a-goal/>



Figure 3.10 *Heliogabal* (1979-90). Oil, emulsion, woodcut, shellac, acrylic and straw on canvas, 280 x 280 cm. From https://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/anselm_kiefer_15.htm



Figure 3.11 Spatial Void, Jewish Museum, Berlin. From <http://compendium.kosawese.net/term/framing-narrative/framing-narrative-in-narrative-environment-design/>

than conventional design processes. Indeed, the layering, interweaving and reworking of themes in Kiefer's work show an indeterminacy between represented and constructed space that is incredibly particular to the way he plays with depth.⁹ As discussed, it is the merging of painted and physically constructed work, from different times and places, that does not allow one to clearly distinguish where distinct modes of representation end or begin. Understood from within the context of theoretical projects in architecture it is this density and ambiguity that most implicates autonomous possibilities for architectural representation today.

As we have seen, Kiefer has gone to unfathomable lengths to achieve this type of integration. Even reconstructing entire areas of museums within his studios before moving these back to the public for exhibition.¹⁰ No matter scale or medium, Kiefer's process involves a recombination of references, images, materials and titles that disrupt the presumed linearity of time by effectively transposing one space and theme onto the next. Just as the evolution of the Jewish Museum can be detected in Libeskind's early drawings, which later joined with the hundred-letter thunder words from Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* to become the *Line of Fire*

⁹ The similarities drawn between Kiefer's *Walhalla* and Libeskind's museum are formulated in part by the observations made by Kurt Forster in his short essay "Mildew Green is the House of Forgetting" wherein he states, "In contrast to the self-sufficing act of building, architecture reveals the contours of an idea which goes beyond concrete forms. What this idea represents is usually obscured from immediate view ... There are hardly any buildings, with the exception of the *Carceri d'Invenzione* by Piranesi, which bear this double burden of representing both actual buildings and mental structures, and which therefore have to submit to being measured by both standards: the durability of their ideas and the imaginative faculty of their designer." See Forster, 7.

¹⁰ In a recent interview Kiefer has stated, "At my place in Croissy [his studio in the Seine-et-Marne region], I prepared the show's hanging with life-size models and reproductions of the works at their actual size." See Judith Benhamou-Huet, *Judith Benhamou-Huet Reports*, "The Confessions of Anselm Kiefer, the Star of Painting," accessed, June 13, 2020, <https://judithbenhamouhuet.com/the-confessions-of-anselm-kiefer-the-star-of-painting-today/>. Further testament to the concern Kiefer holds for the overall set up and atmosphere of his exhibitions is witnessed by the fact that he recently disavowed a showing of his work at a Beijing museum because it was organized without his consent. In a statement issued by his studio, Kiefer protested that, "Throughout my career I have been heavily involved in all my major exhibitions, and it is a matter of deep regret and frustration that the organizers of my first show in China have seen it fit to exclude me from the process." This statement was released during the installation of *Walhalla* at the White Cube Gallery in London. See Amy Qin, "Chinese Museum Mounts an Anselm Kiefer Show, Over the Artist's Objections," Nov. 22, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/22/arts/design/chinese-museum-mounts-an-anselm-kiefer-show-over-the-artists-objections.html>.

installation for the UN Headquarters in Geneva (1988), Kiefer develops his work through a layering and intersecting of motifs, materials and constructions that cross and intersect over many years. As suggested, the installation of work done for the *Monumenta* exhibition in the main hall of the Grand Palais in Paris (2007) exemplifies the wide-ranging physical and conceptual layers of Kiefer's all-encompassing representations. Transferring lorries of work to the nave of the palace, the exhibition included photographs, paintings, books, prints, sculptures, as well as the construction of houses and concrete towers brought into the vaulted space originally constructed for the 1900 Universal Exhibition.¹¹ On top of the many works from La Ribaute transported to this or other installations, Kiefer has even moved an entire street from Paris to his studio, and reconfigured work done at Barjac into his four-hundred-thousand square foot Croissy studio in Paris, which is comparable in size to all of the galleries of the Louvre combined. Even the smallest of Kiefer's productions such as books, watercolors or his fragile, anatomical-like sculptures provide pathways into a continuously evolving flow of ideas that are often hidden in typical, more linear design approaches.

Along with the initial corridor at *Walhalla*, the room entitled *Arsenal* is a prime example of the way various media and scales recombine to link Kiefer's processes of making to an institutional setting (Figure 3.12). Based on a cellar space from La Ribaute, *Arsenal* has been described as an "archive" of objects and images "transplanted" from his studios to await further transformation.¹² Similar to the *Walhalla* tower paintings that depict constructions Kiefer has

¹¹ The significance of the *Monumenta* exhibition in relation to the architecture of the Grand Palais is mentioned in Richard Prouty's "Notes on Anselm Kiefer at the Grand Palais" (2007). This article connects the installation with Walter Benjamin's critique of nineteenth-century world exhibitions, who linked the Grand Palais to the origins of capitalist culture and the beginnings of the pleasure industry. Prouty also discusses *Sonnenschiff* (*Sunship*) (one of the main sculptures in the installation) in relation to "the Baudelairean fascination with decay and ruin," and as "a melancholic reaction to urban phantasmagoria with its promise of change as progress." Richard Prouty, "Notes on Anselm Kiefer at the Grand Palais," May 31, 2007, <https://onewaystreet.typepad.com>.

¹² See John-Paul Stonard's essay "Walhalla," in *Anselm Kiefer: Walhalla* (London: White Cube Gallery,

previously built, this space is not only a physical reconstruction of the lead room at Barjac but also the subject of an earlier painting *Sternen-Lager* from 1998 (Figure 3.13), which depicts shelves with classification numbers that recall NASA star charts or numbers tattooed onto arms of Holocaust victims. The only time that Kiefer employed a pronounced, dictatorial perspective after his Nazi paintings in the 1980s, before its dramatic return at *Walhalla*, the space of the earlier painting combines with the lead room to further “imprint the memory of Auschwitz on architecture.”¹³ In addition to the carefully ordered shelving system, which holds made to order objects—dried plants, hair, paint chips, as well as diverse literary fragments of myth and folklore—the glass found on the floor beside burnt books and a military uniform recalls Kristallnacht. And, where glass and stars are adjoined, locks of black hair also exist beside the names of Jason and his slain Argonauts, Nester and the Valkyries, which provide further clues to other connections in the exhibition’s vitrines and paintings. That this formation of interlocking references is found within in a room that itself appears like an artist's studio certainly reveals some of what occurs within his actual studios, specifically the way Kiefer imagines his work to be “an unbroken continuum ... where what has been preserved, used, and worn is repeatedly

2016), 54. As mentioned by Stonard, the *Arsenal* room presents Kiefer’s “freighted symbols” and exists as an “archive within an archive” of objects and images. Included in the room are “Not only sunflowers but tulips, chrysanthemums, gladioli, poppies, dried seeds and mushrooms, wilting yellow leaves, borage, mint, snapdragons, cornflowers, foxgloves, asters, images of the Sahara, of Hiroshima, of Tibet, of winter woods and rivers and seas; a spare anvil for Thor, a spare bullet-hole-ridden wheelchair for Amfortas, bicycles for the Valkyries and lead pillows and blankets for the hospital beds ... As a dense accumulation of symbols, images and objects, *Arsenal* is an epitome of Kiefer’s work as a whole, an armoury of truth, waiting, like the warriors in Valhalla, for a moment of transfiguration.” Like much of Kiefer work, the objects in *Arsenal* seem to be affected by great destruction “like the German cities destroyed in firestorms after bombing raids in World War II, in a mighty conflagration.” “Valhalla,” Stonard says, “is all these things: an archive, a dreamworld, a memory, a myth.” And, like the myth, the exhibition and the room can be seen to function like a “battery,” a term used by Kiefer, since it has a “pull, an attraction, something waiting for a concept.” See Anselm Kiefer, *Anselm Kiefer Notebooks, Vol 1: 1998-1999*, trans. Tess Lewis, Seagull Books, London, New York, 2015), 327.

¹³ Arasse, 150.

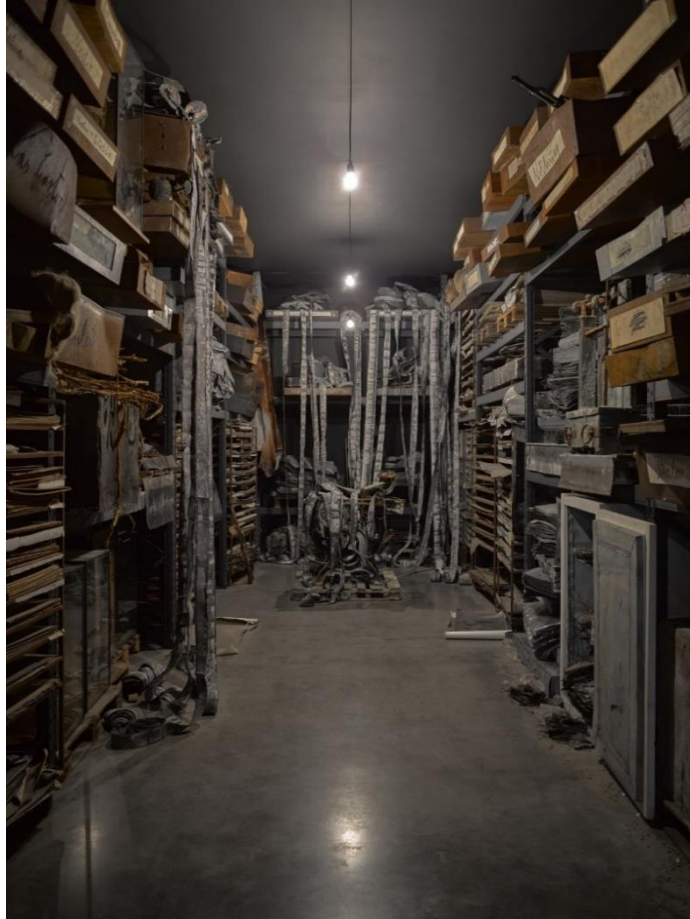


Figure 3.12 *Arsenal room*, *Walhalla*, White Cube, Bermondsey, London (2016-2017). Lead and mixed media. From <http://www.redbrickartmuseum.org/collection/>



Figure 3.13 *Sternen-Lager* (1998). Acrylic, shellac, emulsion, sand and soil on canvas 465 x 940 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.

renewed, reused, reemployed and reconfigured” so that memory can gather it all together.¹⁴ The very fact that *Arsenal* is a room constructed from a painting that was previously a room, itself used to collect fragments from earlier and more recent work, shows how authors like Markus Brüderlin suggest that:

The cohesion of Kiefer’s works adumbrates a basic cosmological structure in which spaces enclose each other like Russian dolls [where] from a center—the ‘black hole’—everything appears spatially discrete and yet is simultaneously available for experience: the microcosm is reflected in the macrocosm; inside becomes outside, and vice versa. This simultaneity of the non-simultaneous, this concentration of space in a single space, is the true—and it must be said—metaphysical nucleus of Kiefer’s artistic impulse¹⁵

What this means for architecture is that while spaces, objects and themes are certainly transported between studios and paintings, and to exhibitions and back, there is no apparent movement that follows in a linear fashion from one mode of representation to another. Rather, the translations that occur always alter their associations across various works. This provides a unique view into a process of making that is *unlike* transparent operations typically employed by architects that have become standard to transcribing objectified information into a building. The difference being that the incongruences and gaps that form between various materials and scales of work necessitate an imaginative response in the process of making and experiencing such creations that promotes a transfer of meanings across dimensions. As suggested, such participation is only made possible by suspending objects, paintings, and the act of building itself in the realm of representation, by exploiting its autonomous potential.

Remarkably, even while being and architectural project realized in the “real world” of economics and politics, Libeskind’s museum provides important, comparable moments. The *E.T.A. Hoffmann Garden (Garden of Exile and Emigration)* and *The Holocaust Void* are closest

¹⁴ Cohn, 13.

¹⁵ Markus Brüderlin, “The Seven Heavenly Palaces, Passages through Worlds and Cosmic Spaces,” in *Anselm Kiefer: the Seven Heavenly Palaces 1973-2001*, 34.

to the feeling of the *Walhalla* rooms because the uses of these spaces are themselves thrown into question. Moving through the stelae of Libeskind's garden (Figure 3.14) produces a feeling very much like Kiefer's rooms since they confuse expected use or meanings. Entering the garden, one encounters the "Promised Land," not as a paradise but as an immense emptiness left by victims of the Holocaust. This solemn experience is accentuated by angled stelae that, rising akimbo from the ground above our heads, makes the surface we walk on feel tilted, creating a palpable sense of unease (Figure 3.15). Just as Kiefer brackets the prosaic function of objects or entire rooms to evoke powerful, disturbing emotions, *The Holocaust Void* is another example of a comparable space, said to be "the most ambiguous, affective and expressive device in the museum" (Figure 3.16).¹⁶ "Charged only with the presentation of absolute absence, and harbored at the spatial and metaphorical center of the museum," this void allows visitors to occupy an angular concrete room that extends twenty-seven meters above our heads with only a sliver of light connecting the space to the hum of the city above. As with many of Libeskind's theoretical proposals (such as his unbuilt Sachsenhausen concentration camp) the experience of this space, in conjunction with the labyrinthine passageways, results in an architecture that provides glimpses of hope while being "checked by the gravity of history." It is difficult to occupy, and for this reason is profoundly spiritual.¹⁷

While similar to the *Walhalla* rooms for being undefinable in a prosaic sense, an obvious difference is that the many combinations and registers of Kiefer's works never reach a "dead end" or "closure of history." Although the museum's voids have been linked to "the tragic failure of the Enlightenment project, simultaneously with the memory of its human victims," and while indeed similar to Libeskind's conviction that "emptiness should not be a-voided," Kiefer's

¹⁶ Naomi Stead, "The Ruins of History: Allegories of Destruction in Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum Extension to the Berlin Museum," *Open Museum Journal*, vol. 2, (2000): 5.

¹⁷ Pérez-Gómez, *Built Upon Love*, 106.



Figure 3.14 Daniel Libeskind, E.T.A. Hoffmann Garden (Garden of Exile and Emigration). From <https://greatacre.wordpress.com/2014/03/23/jewish-museum-berlin-architecture/>



Figure 3.15 Stelae in the E.T.A. Hoffmann Garden (Garden of Exile and Emigration). From <https://greatacre.wordpress.com/2014/03/23/jewish-museum-berlin-architecture/>



Figure 3.16 Holocaust Void, Jewish Museum, Berlin. From <https://www.world-architects.com/en/studio-libeskind-new-york/project/jewish-museum-berlin>

transformations involve “a more archeological construct whereby one thing is built on top of another, with all the layers showing through the miasma.”¹⁸ Kiefer’s work is more akin to the fragmentary character of Libeskind’s early drawings in this sense since it perpetuates a continual layering of historical and mythical themes that are also more cyclical.¹⁹ In his own words, his oeuvre is intended as an “un-closed dynamic totality [where] making means transforming, because there is no end, and to prevent there being an end,” to the memories and the process.²⁰ The continual immigration of images and anagoges in Kiefer’s creations thus depend upon opening channels through which to send his many themes (Gilgamesh, Shulamith, Osiris and Isis, Nazi architecture, etc.) back and forth in time. Thus, while both the museum and *Walhalla* can be understood as “self-contained and self-fulfilling objects, withdrawn deliberately and defensively from the outer world in order to stand for another imaginary,” the network of associations in Kiefer’s work address emptiness and absence through the continual transformation of material constructions. This allows distant connections to slip back and forth between various registers of work, amplifying its uninhabitable themes.²¹

For instance, upon entering the initial corridor at *Walhalla*, we immediately encounter a hinge between physical and mental processes as much as between spaces and objects that initiates a sense of both integration *and* withdrawal. This occurs when visitors receive a sheet of paper warning viewers not to touch any of the works due to the poisonous property of lead. An incredibly seductive material, the undulating surfaces of the leaden beds, or the dull yet

¹⁸ Quoting Jose Luis Gonzalez Cobelo, Stead suggests that Libeskind’s voids are devoted specifically to absence and that the museum’s proposal itself is dedicated to evoking “an absence more than a presence: the unnamable of the voice of God, but also absence as an accusing form of presence of an incinerated culture and community, in whose cremation modernism was burned as well.” See Jose Luis Gonzalez Cobelo’s “Architecture and its double: idea and reality in the work of Daniel Libeskind,” in *El Croquis* vol. 80, (1996): 37.

¹⁹ Both Libeskind and Kiefer have been inspired by the Kabbalistic concept of the Shevirat Ha-Kelim, a process of the creation of the world based on the doctrine of TzimTzum (contraction and withdrawal) and Tikkum (restoration) which they have used to account for the sense of emptiness/absence in their works and their processes of creation.

²⁰ Cohn, 23.

²¹ Vidler, 222.

shimmering walls of Kiefer's rooms, call to our touch but also remain out of reach (Figure 3.17). Such a disturbance to our typical understanding of inhabitable environments combines with claustrophobic sensations produced by views into the hallway or paintings, which together form the alienating atmosphere of the exhibition. Comparable to the rawness of the museum's voids, which, without heat or air-conditioning, conjure fully synesthetic experiences, the material property of lead here vibrates with the impressions of absent figures in the beds and the wall-like scale of the material in his paintings which invites visitors' bodies to range over and dwell within these murky depths. Because such work always entails a working back into Kiefer's paintings, books and sculptures, across various scales and through materials, there exists a strange disharmonious, harmony that forms in the overall atmosphere of the installation.

Such an experience may in fact be closer to what Libeskind imagined for the Jewish museum, which is certainly different than the museological program that since 2001 fundamentally shifted the architect's vision of the project. To the dismay of Libeskind who would have preferred to leave the museum empty (and thus closer to a theoretical project) objects such as plates, clothing, travel documents as well as references to Jewish music, literature and art found throughout the museum produce a cluttered, eclectic feel. This is different than the items at *Walhalla*, which resist their transformation into direct signs due to their proximity to other items that portray a further inaccessibility and "distancing of meaning."²² Indeed, the form-content relationships present in the materiality of Kiefer's work "emanates from the close bond between the theme represented and the mode of representation all the more because Kiefer's reason for producing them is solely to render meaning, and the possibility of representing it,

²² Remnants of surviving religious objects and artifacts that were used in the day to day life of Jewish citizens are currently placed throughout the Jewish Museum and are intended to serve as reminders of the people that had once used them in Jewish rituals. The most astounding example is the Gedenkbuch, a manuscript that includes all the names, dates and places of death of Europe's Jewish communities.



Figure 3.17 Beds in *Walhalla* corridor (1992-2016). Lead and mixed media. From <http://www.ianthearchitect.org/anselm-kiefer-in-london-and-fort-lauderdale/>



Figure 3.18 Film reels in *Arsenal* (2016). Lead and mixed media. From *Anselm Kiefer: Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.

remote.”²³ For example, while we may find earlier towers remade in paintings, books, or photographed and transferred onto film reels, because the reels and books are themselves made of lead “what remains is only the mythic spectacle of a lost form of knowledge since they themselves cannot be read or seen (Figure 3.18).”²⁴ Just as Libeskind had intended to emphasize the expression of loss through an “absence of meaning and an absence of artefacts,” Kiefer produces an ongoing feeling of exile via “an experience of shock where the remote is made present but is immediately drawn into the distance.”²⁵ Like Kiefer’s well-known *Zweistromland-The High Priestess* (1989) sculpture, comprised of inaccessible lead tomes that express books as a form of lost knowledge, it is by placing fragments of myth, folklore and even more recognizable objects in tomb-like environments that *Walhalla* allows transformative meanings to rely not only on individual qualities but in the crossings of many potential meanings that open multiple distances between them.²⁶

Both Kiefer and Libeskind accomplish in their works an intense participation with multiple and varied histories that address a search for that which cannot be described. Yet, by further flaunting the autonomy of his representations Kiefer reveals an indeterminacy that more dramatically blurs distances between his representations and the representational capacity of building itself. Foremost to this is that the eerie, transformative quality of Kiefer’s work is brought into physical presence by enacting material connections and working across different scales in order to draw specific contexts together. His use of lead, for example, challenges the presumed relationship between architectural representation and building because instead of relying upon refined representations that give way to physical constructions (such as drawings

²³ See Arasse, 299.

²⁴ Stephen Barber, *Abandoned Images: Film and Film’s End* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), 50.

²⁵ Arasse, 221.

²⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, trans. Oliver Davis (New York: Routledge, 2008), 48.

that lay out specification for future buildings) his direct involvement with material reveals discoveries in the physical act of fabricating his work.²⁷

Unlike the optical lightness and transparency of images typically used by architects, Kiefer's materials thus work differently by capturing us in the "essence of what is represented." As Daniel Arasse suggests, "It is the work as a whole; a work which shows and includes the objects, materials and fragments, and whose real presence is palpable in the work, that maintains traces of the creator's physical presence as if immersed in them."²⁸ As with works like *Zweistromland*, the very presence of lead at *Walhalla*:

Conveys and actualizes memory of recollected ideas and juxtaposes these with its own material weight. It does this all the more effectively because its natural qualities lend themselves to many types of manipulation, while at the same time preserving traces of the transformations it has undergone²⁹

Emphasizing continual transformation, whereby the hermeneutic imagination emerges out of the act of making, Kiefer's work allows us see how architectural meaning may become entwined with representation, even at the scale of a building.

Therefore, even while it is true that homologies between body and building are upset by the Museum's metallic skin for the fact that it appears torn, ripped, and dangerously slashed, when we encounter Kiefer's landscapes of towers overlaid with explosive torrents of molten lead and then find the same material used to fashion entire rooms, pillows and even beds that carry a sense of bodily warmth and weight, we recognize how material production and immaterial ideas are extended more intimately. The difference here being that material properties in Kiefer's work can never be fixed to a determined idea or outcome. Reappearing across scales, and in different contexts, Kiefer's use of material in fact promotes the derailing of singular meanings or

²⁷ Arasse, 239.

²⁸ Ibid., 307.

²⁹ Ibid., 239.

definitive conclusions. His use of lead itself creates doubt in its mismatched and malleable forms by appearing in different contexts, and this generates new connections and discoveries that emerge through material interaction.³⁰ Such an encounter reveals to us how “experience cannot be isolated from its spatial/material contact and is in fact embodied in it.” It also shows us the way architectural modelling works more generally to transfer various meanings from the actual properties of materials into potential poetic expressions in the sense that the emergence of relations among things, more than the things themselves, is what gives rise to new meaning.³¹ Because we ourselves are invited to follow along with the traces and layers of fusion, coagulation, weathering and other procedures made present in in the many scales and situations of Kiefer work we too share in the sense of loss and discovery as we seek out possible meanings. In such circumstances, meaning itself is derived as much by the representation of content as by the form and material through which the work is created, whereby even the process of building can be imagined as something Other.

One need only to consider the massive machine-aided effort required in the production of the *Walhalla* rooms, or for the creation and transportation of various fragments to this or other exhibitions, to see how Kiefer’s reliance on industrial-technological methods that would typically lead to a diminishing of an architect’s involvement in the production of their buildings instead shows a direct physical experience not only represented but enacted. In fact, the entire evolution of Kiefer’s work from the 1980s has come to rely upon mechanized, factory-like productions that include a steadily increasing workforce (assistants, workmen, the use of construction equipment) which has ultimately influenced the technological character of his art-making. It is this quality in particular that provides continuous lessons for architects: Not only

³⁰ Christopher Bardt, *Material and Mind*, 14.

³¹ Ibid, 125-129.

because Kiefer deploys various technologies against ways they are typically intended to be used to flesh out unforeseeable connections but because the modes of discovery are embodied in the tools and systems he relies upon.

In other words, Kiefer's long track-record of producing massive sculptures, such as lead airplanes and bookcases, as well as ever-larger studio environments and atmospheric installations all show how historical and mythical themes are "lived through" by Kiefer. Most remarkable is the fact that even while he has become more reliant upon the industrial transformation of substances, he still enacts a form of discovery that opens a space for the imagination.³² Just as raising his arm during his early *Occupations* performances required a bodily enactment to make history palpable, the images that emerge in the thick materiality in his paintings or in the creation of his full-fledged environments strike a similar chord within our bodies.³³ In the same way that we can feel the process of his painting in the slashes of a blade against impastoed surfaces, the pouring of concrete into holes bored out of the earth with mechanical augers, the raising formwork for towers with cranes, or melting lead onto paintings, all show an essential involvement with the material imagination that "not only represents an idea but allows us to witness its physical concretion."³⁴ In each case Kiefer's work thus involves a resistance to direct manipulation and common expectation. That the material traces evident within such processes emphasize the play intrinsic to this activity is crucial because it involves the primacy of materiality and a temporal human participation woven into the very act and technique of building. In a world that tends to neglect material imagination and physical/bodily interaction in the conception and realization of architectural projects such work recovers the primacy of a fully embodied perception to our conceptual constructions. This shows us how materials may exhibit

³² Ibid., 226.

³³ Ibid., 221.

³⁴ Ibid., 247.

cultural associations along with powerful physical and psychological effects which oblige those who encounter them to recognize more than just objects or products of functional requirements.

Indeed, even Kiefer's largest projects maintain an outward expression of the artist's inner processes that allows his creations to speak to the very task of poetic building as a performative, translational act that brings potential meanings together. Rather than seeing imaginative projection as associated with an "immaterial, invisible system of casting information into the world," Kiefer shows a reliance on meanings built up from a sensual involvement with material, and this has become central to his process of seeking out images.³⁵ Such involvement with physical substances indeed accentuates how material and mind may interweave through various tools and modes of representation, which, in turn, provides insight into how meanings might arise within design processes through an immersion in physical materials. The primary difference to other architecture remains the fact that Kiefer's material investigation, while being "built" somewhere almost always promotes an inaccessibility that suspends standardized use. Even making self-conscious the repellent and poisonous properties of his materials, it is by continuously reshuffling our equilibrium that such work engages a liminal space between art and construction that dramatically expands upon the tradition of theoretical projects previously discussed.

Such lessons are made clear upon a final inspection of Kiefer and Libeskind's handling of the relationship between Jewish and German cultures inspired by their engagement with the poem *Todesfuge* by Paul Celan.³⁶ Regarded as one of the most translated poems of the twentieth

³⁵ Bardt, 308-337.

³⁶ Given in changing tenses, *Todesfuge* narrates a point of view from within a Nazi camp, where Jewish prisoners are tyrannized by a camp commandant. Identification with these events is opened through a broken semantic arising from the poem's sudden breaks and pauses and in fissures between strange couplets, such as: black-and-milk, graves-and-sky, Jews-and-hounds, and between the names of two women, Margarete and Sulamith. Margarete is the one to whom the German guard writes love letters and whose golden hair evokes her Aryan identity. By contrast, Sulamith is the Jewish woman, whose hair is "ashen from burning." Participation with these dreadful events is

century, Celan's poem has deeply affected both Kiefer and Libeskind, who have each in their own way taken *Todesfuge* through a series of complex transmutations that result in combinations of imagery, materiality and space.³⁷ For instance, just as the lines of Celan's poem are said to "stumble along through missteps, fissures and breaks towards silence," the halls of the Jewish museum eventuate upon six voids that cut into our pathway. As discussed, these voids remain purposely unfilled to emphasize what Libeskind describes as "an invisible matrix of connections [where] the reader-visitor encounters the historical rupture of the holocaust." Putting absence on display, this destabilization obfuscates our objective understanding of historical progression providing places of "terrifying silence." This reminds us of Celan's poem since such spaces allude to all that has been lost.³⁸ In addition to the interior voids, Libeskind has even dedicated an exterior alcove to Celan's widow, Gisèle Celan-Lestrange, between the *Holocaust Tower* and the *E.T.A. Hoffman Garden (Garden of Exile and Emigration)* to memorialize Kristallnacht. Following etchings produced by Celan-Lestrange, angular fragments appear to have fallen onto the ground of the courtyard from punctures in the building. Transforming this debris into stone, Libeskind memorializes an event that has been understood as the beginning of further political persecution of the Jews that eventuated in the Final Solution and the Holocaust.

conjured through the constant changes between the first and third person, adding to a cadence of fragmentation that stretches out over the poem. See Mark Rosenthal's *Anselm Kiefer* (Illinois, The Art Institute of Chicago/Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1987), 95-96.

³⁷ Eric Kligerman suggests that it was the generation of artists following Celan who were responsible for invigorating the participation that *Todesfuge* had initiated. The commercialization of the poem had become a concern for Celan who feared that the oversimplification of *Todesfuge* had replaced its task as "a sustained work of memory" as well as its ability to evoke a genuine engagement with the past. This occurred during trends towards formalism which had increased in the arts exponentially in the 1950s. Being suspicious of the historical tradition tainted by the National Socialist appropriation of themes, artists and critics alike began to favor a "non-historical," abstract and formalist approach to cultural productions since this avoided historical reference in its prohibition of direct content. In this context, much of the contemporary readings of *Todesfuge* favored only the euphony of the poem, which Celan believed avoided a genuine engagement with remembrance. Originally written in Romanian in 1944 and translated into German in 1948, reinterpretations of the poem by Kiefer and Libeskind have been foremost in rescuing *Todesfuge* from this type of popularization. See Eric Kligerman's *Sites of the Uncanny: Paul Celan, Specularity and the Visual Arts* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 20.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 256.

While such examples show how Libeskind has transformed Celan's poem into dramatic architectural experiences, the influence of *Todesfuge* on Kiefer's work is deeper and more confounding due to its more fragmentary and layered approach to material representation. In fact, the ongoing "correspondence" with *Todesfuge* begun in the early 1980s could still be seen as intrinsic to the overall atmosphere of *Walhalla* since the entire exhibition is structured around associations between landscape and architectural space that began in two earlier paintings, themselves inspired by relationships between two women—Margarete and Shulamith—in Celan's poem. Looking back, we see that Kiefer's painting *Nuremberg* (1982) (Figure 3.19) was first to transpose the lines "your golden hair Margarete" into mixtures of acrylic, emulsion, ash and straw; where straw becomes symbolic of the German landscape and the straw-blond hair of an idealized Germanic beauty. Just as Celan's poetics incite a certain "listening to language" through disjuncture, Kiefer pulls the viewer into the landscape only to undo perspectival space by pressing the material of straw into the space in front of the canvas and by providing amalgamations of visual imagery, materials and text that confront the viewer with unnerving historical reference. It is indeed shocking that these same associations re-emerge three decades later at *Walhalla*: in the fields of paintings like *Nubes Pluant Ustem* (2016) (Figure 3.20), in wheat sheaves in one of the vitrines entitled *Morgenthau-das goldene Zeitalter* (2016) (Figure 3.21), or in the subversion to conventional modes of perspective that form in tensions between the paintings, materials and the rooms of the exhibition.

The presence of the Nazi culprit in *Todesfuge* can also be seen to inform the architectural atmosphere of the leaden rooms at *Walhalla*, initially formed as the looming presence of Nazi architecture in the painting *Shulamith* of 1983 (Figure 3.22). In the painting, the word "Shulamith," taken from the repeated line "your ashen hair Shulamith," and representative of



Figure 3.19 *Nuremberg* (1982). Acrylic, emulsion, and straw on canvas, 280 x 380 cm. From <https://www.thebroad.org/art/anselm-kiefer/n%C3%BCrnberg>

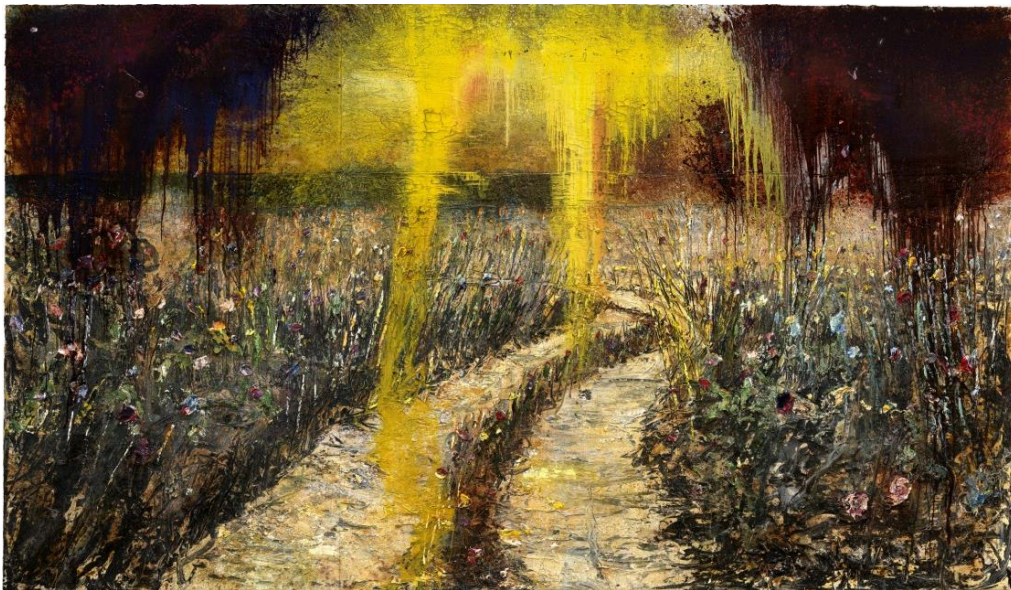


Figure 3.20 *Nubes Pluant Ustem* (2016). Oil, acrylic, emulsion and shellac on canvas, 330 x 570 cm. From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2016



Figure 3.21 *Morgenthau-das goldene Zeitalter* (2014). Glass, metal, lead, sand, clay, acrylic and gold leaf, 360 x 82 x 70 cm. From *Anselm Kiefer: Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.

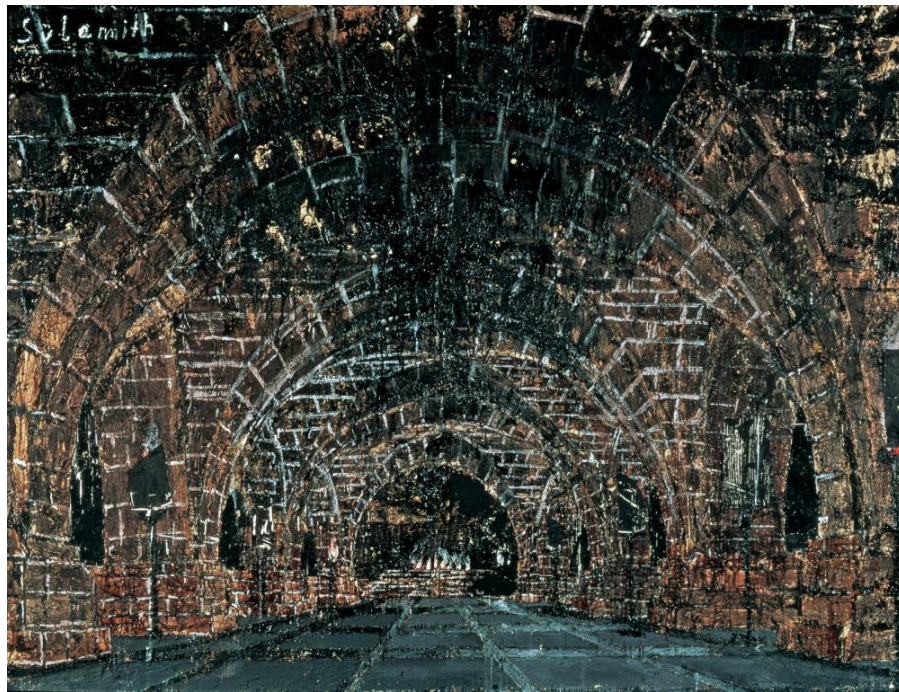


Figure 3.22 *Shulamith* (1983). Oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac and straw on canvas, 290 x 370 cm. Gagosian Gallery, New York.

Jewish culture in the poem, is combined with an image of The Berlin Hall of Soldiers by Wilhelm Kreis. This, along with the darkening of the image and the addition of the menorah at the end of the hall, effectively transforms what was an architectural symbol of the erasure of Jewish culture into a memorial for the Jews in the space of the painting. The feeling is that the restructuring of the original architecture has effectively collapsed the building into an oven. Moreover, if we follow the lines “Black Milk of Daybreak,” the perpetual darkness of Celan’s poem seems to persist in the relentless gloom of the dimly lit corridor of *Walhalla* as much as in the atmosphere of darkness and soot, under layers of oil, ash and straw in the earlier canvass. Consisting of distinct forms of representation—architecture, the photograph of Kreis’s design, poetic inscription of the name, painted works, materials *and* full-scale environments—the sedimentation of various media link historical quotation to the experience of space in both the picture and the installation.³⁹ The uninhabitable landscape in *Nuremberg*, which bears a likeness to some of the *Walhalla* paintings, or the name *Shulamith*, a whisper in the upper left-hand corner of the painting, each resonate with absent bodies in the beds, the empty garments of *Sersum Corda*, as well as with the last words of Celan’s poem. Not bounded by punctuation, these last lines are said to “remain in suspense,” extending the music of the poem out over a void, towards silence. As with the poem, Kiefer’s creations place us within a situation where we are forced to confront a tragic past.

The fact that the sophisticated tensions established between the two women are still present at different registers at *Walhalla* reveals a symbolical integration that is quite different than that of the Jewish Museum. When we consider the ironic alterations brought forward through the pressures of the spoken poem we feel a closer resonance with the interplay of ash and straw in Kiefer’s paintings and at a corporeal level in the exhibition’s leaden rooms and

³⁹ Ibid., 196.

landscapes. In addition to historical associations of lead—used as the lining for coffins or for the interment of hearts—when we compare the titanium-zinc of the museum with Kiefer’s lead even the natural properties of such materials show differences in the attunement of their works towards particular meanings. That titanium can be found in every living thing and is resistant to corrosion pairs well with zinc as an essential vitamin and the hopeful feeling felt by those who choose to see through the fragmentation of the museum. Lead, on the other hand, being heavier in weight, more malleable and poisonous, dramatizes the dark, otherworldly quality of Kiefer’s exhibition. The density and various manifestations of Kiefer’s material also allows entrance into deeper mythic layers and traditional associations resonant with Celan’s poem. Just as the lines “Black Milk of Daybreak” conjure associations to the first lines in the Bible by turning all days to black, Kiefer’s lead continues powerful reversals by abolishing essential nourishment, emphasizing how the surreal and the tragic had overtaken reality in Nazi-ridden Europe. Moreover, in the same way the words “Shulamith” and “Margarete” intonate religious associations into the context to which the poem refers, Kiefer show how combinations of materials resonate with mythical connections. Even the straw strewn across the surface of *Nuremburg* could be seen to suggest relationships to Ceres, the divinity of the harvest and Roman goddess of cycles of growth and guardian of underworld portals, often symbolized by straw, grain, poppies or wheat crowns. Official harvest festivals in tribute to Ceres allowed spirits of the dead to emerge from below and roam among the living. In the context of Kiefer’s work, this relationship of death, resurrection, and expiation emerge in the manure-like property of straw itself. By allowing the expression of interiority central to many of his earlier Nazi paintings to reemerge in the atmosphere of *Walhalla* Kiefer continues to symbolize the excruciating and complex relationships between Jewish and German cultures by allowing

chronologically disparate themes to be found in the material character of spaces themselves.⁴⁰ In Libeskind's design, the difficult relationship between Germans and Jews being left to mere contiguity, either in pathways or views given to the old Baroque Kollegienhaus, are not explored with the same symbolic overlays felt in the substance of Kiefer's work or the vociferation of Celan's poem each of which depend upon more fragmentary, contradictory spaces that allow unexpected discoveries to appear in materials or words.

Ultimately, the Jewish museum provides a more hopeful relationship between German and Jewish cultures—even giving visitors the opportunity to ascend amid branches of a pomegranate tree to leave wishes placed on tree limbs in the central gallery. Libeskind obviously understands that resentment must be overcome and memory needs to open to possible futures. This obviously differs from the tensions that undermine expectations about an improved future in Kiefer's work. Instead of Libeskind's noted optimism, which sees the foundations of any building as the possibility for a better future, the storytelling to which Kiefer refers echoes warnings from the past to our present world in a Sisyphean fashion, constantly cycling one meaning into the next, all seemingly condemned to tragic history. Yet, as suggested by authors

⁴⁰ In her book *Anselm Kiefer and Paul Celan: Myth Mourning and Memory* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2007), Andrea Lauterwein suggest that even references to music in *Todesfuge*, either in the cadence of the spoken poem, or in phrases such as “play more sweetly this Death is a Master from Deutschland,” are perceived “against the backdrop of music and death that is deeply woven into German culture.” Celan's involvement with these leitmotifs are seen as a search for his own standpoint from within a compromised tradition that sought to demonstrate the changes that music and culture had undergone since Wagner. Engagement with similar themes at *Walhalla* are not only begun in the references Kiefer's used in earlier paintings but are also continued in the title of the exhibition, which carry references to Wagner's cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung*, *Entry of the Gods into Valhalla* or *Lohengrin*. In the same way as the grandeur of the Romantic tradition is subverted/transformed in Kiefer's earlier use of straw, which symbolizes both the German landscape and the “weak-willed collectivity of Nazism,” *Walhalla* turns the lure of Wagner's orchestral music into a sepulchral gloom, whereby a melancholic and symphonic weight can be seen to spread out across the exhibition. The musical analogy that gets closest to this experience is expressed in the Opera *Chute d'étoiles* by Matthias Pintscher (written for the *Monumenta* installation in 2007) where, according to Marie Luise Maintz, “the material of music” can be understood to be “smelted as in lead,” where the softness and the weight of Kiefer's lead was used as an inspiring starting point. As Pintscher himself suggests: “I find the ‘sound’ of lead in Kiefer's works incredibly fascinating. This strength which is captured in this material! It is flexible, malleable, but unbelievably heavy. I find this state, with its combination of malleability and weight, exciting: I endeavor to make this audible in the music.” See the online article “Matthias Pintscher's ‘Chute d'Etoiles’ for Lucerne Festival” by Marie Luise Maintz, *Takte, Das Bärenreiter-Magazin*, Feb. 2012, <https://www.takte-online.de>.

such as John Gilmour, because the references and themes presented show “conflict between the traditional, spiritual mission of art and the gravity of the historical situation” there also exists a sense of longing for a previous way of seeing that has been lost in the post-cosmological context. By garnering reference to what once was but is no more, Kiefer self-consciously provokes questions “about the role we assign various narratives, raising questions as to both the historical appropriation of myths as well as the tendency we have to regard science as the only legitimate form of knowledge,” itself the most popular myth today.⁴¹ While questionable with regards to appropriate atmospheres an architect may create, the hope in Kiefer’s work exists in his apparent belief that “art is a vehicle by which to have a dialogue with history,” whereby he may “combat, correct, and critique historical terrors” even from within a context of loss.⁴² Thus, in spite of its unruly character, the multi-layered dimension of Kiefer’s work foregrounds the importance of cultural topics that can become part of the imaginative dimension of architectural work. This emphasizes how we might negotiate imaginative possibilities for a society that is more and more shaped by reductive aspirations. Moreover, Kiefer’s broader involvement with collective memory occurs by continuously extending his historical reach *through* the representational layers and material presence of his work. In itself this is of value for architects interested in involving a participation with history in the creation of their work since it demands “multiple metaphoric and allegorical operations often in a duplicitous fashion” that lead into subtexts beyond the explicitly stated.”⁴³

What comparisons between Kiefer and Libeskind most reveal for architects is that even while each propose a fictive mode of interacting with history that depends upon suspending

⁴¹ John Gilmour, *Anselm Kiefer: Fire on Earth*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 99.

⁴² See Mark Rosenthal’s essay, “Stone Halls 1983,” in *Anselm Kiefer: the Seven Heavenly Palaces 1973-2001* (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2001), 51.

⁴³ Arasse, 222.

reference to the commonplace to create access to a virtual mode of reference, Kiefer exploits an ambiguous spacing wherein content, material and ultimately space is worked more thoroughly when seen as a form of architectural representation. This is the case because Kiefer's fabrication of objects and environments not only challenge the typical separation between conceptually planning and realizing designs but because the exaggerated autonomy of his work creates ties between materiality and representation which dramatically affects the images that arise. Because such processes are made so tangibly present is why his work shows itself to be a new model for architectural consideration that is of value to designers concerned with bringing forth a creative and imaginative, embodied engagement through the reinterpretation of historical themes.

Therefore, because the fragmentary and layered nature of Kiefer's work is more radicalized than the unifying atmosphere of either La Tourette or the Jewish Museum, Berlin, is why the connections that arise involve such a multitude of tensions between tactility, optical depth, and the lived experience of space. This is fundamental to opening new potentialities in architecture whereby sense and imagination are overlaid with memory in a back and forth interaction between materials and ideas so that various regions of the world are opened through a bodily engagement in the contemplation of atmosphere.⁴⁴ Even beyond questionable differences in mood, because Kiefer's work dramatically demonstrates the seeking out of and failure to reach a distinctive end is precisely why it emphasizes how architecture may be found in almost any medium or scale of work, in a sculpture, a painting, a room or a book since each are inhabited at many scales by the imagination. By intensifying the integration of all these levels Kiefer not only foregrounds the way multiple factors contribute to the creation of mood but shows how "imagining through" such layers may allow us to translate things further, always differently, in diverse representations. This shows us how our own creations might play a vital role in shaping

⁴⁴ Bardt. 228.

the material world, raising ideas about architectural settings, even if these are unbuildable in conventional terms.

The fragmented and ambiguous character of Kiefer's work is also significant insofar as it hints at the impossibility of a complete exchange of translation between the media of representation and the things depicted. This is obviously the opposite of the directness associated with the instrumentality of typical design tools and tasks. The physical presence of Kiefer's creations therefore emphasizes ways we may avoid the prefigured Cartesian space of the computer (devoid of context, light, gravity, materiality and narrative) by maintaining a space of translation between things that are open to the discovery of architectural order through both vision *and* tactility. Embracing the play intrinsic to material inquiry, his processes thus exemplify ways we may engage dimensions of consciousness usually stifled by technical education. For this reason, it presents to us a viable model for architecture that demonstrates how the continuation of a meditative practice may reveal wonder to ourselves and others through the physical act of creating work. This type of wonder includes our knowledge of history, as well as what we don't know or could see differently, revealed in the very act of producing and contemplating work. Because Kiefer involves both world history and the history of his own productions to such a degree is precisely why it shows how experiences about topics in the world are themselves continuously enriched by a process that defies totalizing schemes. The function of fiction in Kiefer's work thus amounts to a critical use of history explored through productions that provide a very different way of finding ourselves among things.

It is therefore the difficult mixture of scales, materials, and various histories in Kiefer's work that furthers lessons for architectural modelling since it shows how meanings form around the explorations we enact and how materials allow images to coalesce in various modes of

exploration. This opens an imaginative engagement based less on achieving outcomes than reveling in the search itself. Often dark and morose and thus questionable as a model for architecture, Kiefer's work is also valuable for the fact that it goes further to show how a personal process of making can be brought into a relationship with collective human memory and how this can be revealed to us in the projective tools we use to query particular forms and ideas. By becoming conscious of the expressive capacity of materials, and reframing our relationship to the tools we use to approach design tasks, such an approach foregrounds the role that the imagination might play in approaching architectural programs that "reverse" the normal reliance on narrow functional or aesthetic ideas. Throwing our bodies into a relationship with the experiences that cannot be touched and can never be reached it is also by bringing objects, materials and constructions together that Kiefer reveals a different set of possibilities for architectural representation: wherein stories are constructed in the process of creating work and how this involves ties between materiality, representation and language. I will further show these possibilities using as a foil the *Masques* of John Hejduk and the theoretical architecture of Frederick Kiesler.

Chapter Four: Anselm Kiefer and John Hejduk: The Poetic Image and Kiefer's

Architectural Language

If earlier sections have shown how Kiefer integrates a variety of representational modes that allow complex images to form between various works and spaces, a closer examination of his creations in relation to the immensely important work of John Hejduk epitomizes the very possibility of poetic dwelling in works painted, drawn, written or built. Following Hejduk's deep insight into the role of storytelling and poetic language in architectural design, this chapter endeavors to show the way Kiefer's work operates metaphorically to open reality to forms of fiction and feeling, accentuating the fundamental interrelationship of language and synesthesia essential to the participation evoked by his work. Because Hejduk's later *Masques* emphasize ties between language and the deep structure of perception they provide a crucial foil through which to understand how the integrated, material layering in Kiefer's work poses a critical challenge to the reduction of architecture to direct, visual pictures or prosaic constructions, and correspondingly the uncritical optimism surrounding the instrumental aims of digital tools often implemented in design tasks today. Examined in conjunction with aspects of the eighteenth-century theoretical work of Claude-Nicholas Ledoux, comparisons with Hejduk will also address architectural program as an essential part of the architectural design task, allowing us to further query the appropriateness of Kiefer's work as a model for architectural consideration. Exploring more deeply the political dimension and communicative force of his work, comparisons with Hejduk will help emphasize the unique way Kiefer expands upon the tradition of theoretical projects in architecture, demonstrating how our creations may transform the experience of reality, especially in cases where architecture may be its own representation.

While many of Kiefer's large sculptural works placed in entry halls or courtyards of museums bring to mind some of Hejduk's physically built work, the representational possibilities offered by Kiefer also resemble Hejduk's *Masques* as books themselves, precisely because neither depend upon being a buildable structure in the world. As has been suggested, it is by keeping their distance from the "real world" of "practice" that such work tests the very definition of where and what might constitute a work of architecture because of this autonomy. Tied to this critical positioning is the fact that the *Masques* are also immensely difficult to classify. Like Kiefer's work, Hejduk's *Masques* are understandable as both artistic and architectural because they incorporate a wide variety of media—free-hand sketches, photographs, collage and watercolors—while employing architectural conventions that unveil the always already-enigmatic nature of depth. Most importantly, because these books involve a creative act on behalf of the visitor to *read* into words, pictures, and material combinations is why Kiefer's creations can be seen to relate more closely to the *Masques* than to other architecture. Made of architectural drawings, plans, sections and elevations, often integrated on a singular page, along with texts that relate to the function and fabrication of these structures, Hejduk's later *Masques* exhibit a fictive mode of participation similar to Kiefer's work because each remain dissociated from standard classifications of art and architecture while pointing back to the world we inhabit, postulating architecture as representation itself.¹

Before discussing the particular way these works invite poetic inhabitation, it must be emphasized that even beyond similarities found in the content of their work—including towers

¹ The similarity drawn between Kiefer's work and Hejduk's *Masques* rests on the fact that each open a space of participation that is "implicitly critical of processes of production that tend to reduce architecture to a mere set of signs to be transcribed into a building." By situating themselves outside of contemporary building and sites, their work produces kinesthetic experiences far beyond reductive pictures that assume a neutral rendering of ideas in objective space. Because such work is perceived only on its own terms, through perception, they involve a recollection of being through embodied consciousness no longer regulated by Cartesian coordinates. See Pérez-Gómez, "John Hejduk's Critical and Poetic Architecture," in *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*, Vol. 1 (2016), 378-389.

that question the possibility of their own execution, reference to pewter wings, and cross-references to mythology—what makes such a variety of work so comparable is the active participation required on behalf of the viewer/reader in the creation of “poetic images” that are synthesized and transformed in our perception.² Just as the words and pictures in the *Lancaster/Hannover Masque* produce “X-ray ... apparitions” that reveal the “life” of the book’s inhabitants, Kiefer’s work allows images to arise as we ourselves piece things together.³ In other words, as with Hejduk’s words and pictures, entering Kiefer’s studios or exhibitions provides spaces for the reunion of various meanings to occur, each time differently, in respective works and places.

Accounting for such similarities, it is also important to emphasize that the emergence of such images depends on the way the fragments given remain fundamentally disjointed and insular. For instance, while the workings of a farming community arise between the corresponding “Objects” and “Subjects” of the *Lancaster-Hannover Masque* (1985, 1992) (Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2 & Figure 4.3)—where fundamental human interactions form within the quadrangular space framed by the Court, Prison, Church and Death Houses—one is also left with “the impression of isolation, of multiple narrative fragments that fail to connect rather than

² My reference to “poetic image” is informed by Octavio Paz’s *The Bow and the Lyre*, wherein he states: “Words, sounds, colors, and other materials undergo a transmutation as soon as they enter the circle of poetry. Without ceasing to be tools of meaning and communication, they turn into ‘something else’ ... the stone of the statue, the red of the painting, the word of the poem, are not purely and simply stone, color, word: they are the incarnation of something that transcends and surpasses them. Without losing their primary values, their original weight, they are also like bridges to another shore, doors that open on another world of meanings inexpressible by means of mere language. An ambivalent being, the poetic word is completely that which it is—rhythm, color, meaning—and it is also something else: image. And this second quality, that of being images, and the strange power they have to arouse in the listener or spectator constellations of images, turns all works of art into poems.” Octavio Paz, *The Bow and the Lyre*, trans. Rachel Phillips and Donald Gardner (New York: Arcade, 1990), 12.

³ Zubin Singh, “Inoculations: The Masques of John Hejduk,” PhD diss., (McGill University, 2016), 102.

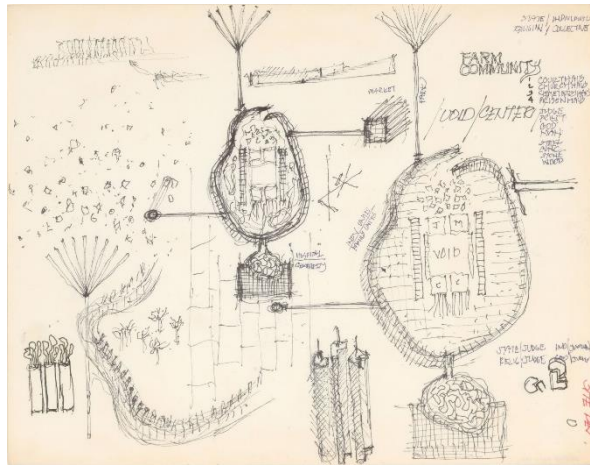


Figure 4.1 John Hejduk, sketches of main court for the *Lancaster-Hannover Masque* (1985, 1992). From <https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/issues/26/what-about-the-provinces/59105/the-lancasterhanover-masque>

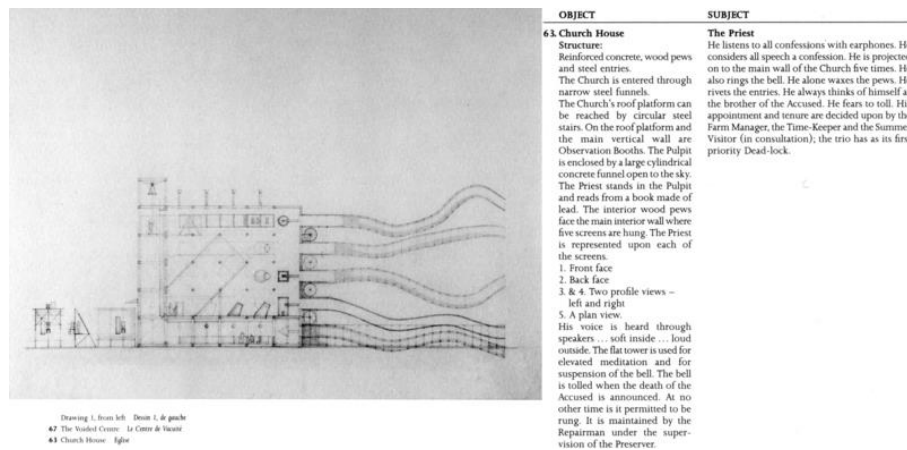


Figure 4.2 John Hejduk “Objects” and “Subjects,” *Lancaster-Hannover Masque* (1985, 1992). From <https://www.wrnsstudio.com/what-were-reading/>

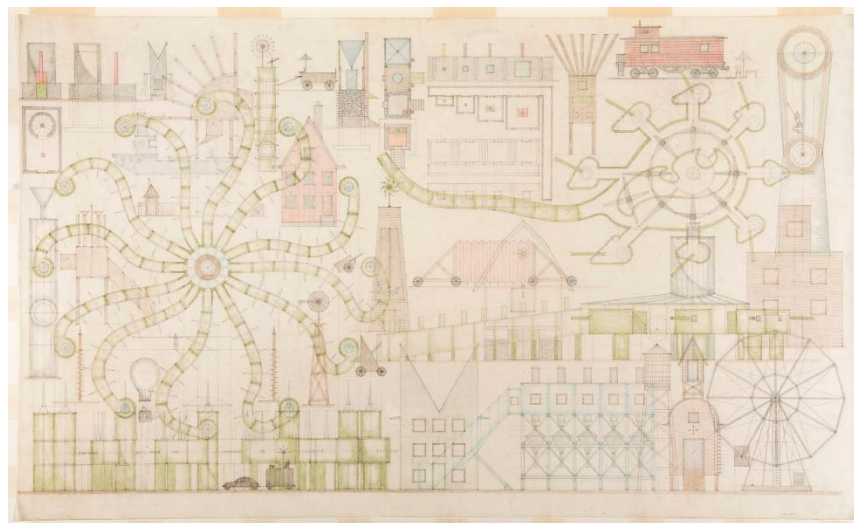


Figure 4.3 John Hejduk, “Objects,” *Lancaster-Hannover Masque* (1985, 1992). From <https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/issues/26/what-about-the-provinces/59105/the-lancasterhanover-masque>

continuous threads.”⁴ This is similar to Kiefer’s installations since the accumulation of different discourses and references always allow for a vast separation between things to occur. Moving through Kiefer’s exhibitions, encountering the variety of objects and paintings, even fits a description of the *Masques* when discussed as emitting “a messy opacity and refractivity,” which “stalls ... arrests ... bothers ... haunts.”⁵ Precisely because such work cannot be wholly absorbed into the identification of the same is why the dispersed places and structures in Hejduk’s *Masques* are comparable to meanings that arise between a sheaf of wheat in a glass vitrine, a painted landscape, or entry into a room made of lead. Since Kiefer’s work never quite materializes into a unifying storyline is why his work, like the *Masques*, also bears a closer resemblance to the realm of poetry, since emergent images take precedence over coherent stories.⁶ As suggested, it is the activity of bringing various fragments together that enlivens our own bodily imagining which the immediacy of perspectival pictures and the typical conception of space forestalls.

In other words, what may be difficult to understand for architects typically used to working with visual representations is that the moment such works are perceived by human consciousness they speak to our emotions and basic metaphoric dispositions that play out more like the stitching together of scenes than comprehending direct pictures. In fact, this participation heightens an understanding of how we actually “see images,” which hermeneutic philosophy and recent cognitive science shows is never simply passive pictures formed in the mind’s eye but rather the reenactment of embodied action in the world, fundamentally tied to the *linguistic*

⁴ Ibid., 117.

⁵ Michael K. Hays, *Architecture’s Desire: Reading the Late Avant-Garde* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2010), 110-111.

⁶ For this comparison see Singh, 117.

dimension of human imagination.⁷ It is therefore the very act of synthesizing potential meanings that we begin to perceive how words, pencil strokes, paint, objects, various materials or even entire environments may enter into the “circle of poetry” when they become “bridges to another shore, doors that open another world of meanings that convey sense and transmit it beyond language but also can only be reached by language.”⁸ Thus, regardless of their particular forms, such work compels us to seek out potential connections and meanings. When connections do flare up this shocking experience depends upon our own knowledge of the world and a recreation of meanings from and in that world.

Consequently, although the environments of Kiefer’s exhibitions and studios provide a situation or event that is recognizably a picture, a room, or a gallery, they are like the *Masques* because each disclose a poetic form of communication in the manner of linguistic semantic innovation whereby each thing perceived is a transformed version of something else, determined by something not actually present. Precisely because such creations stand apart from ordinary forms or direct meanings is why they allow us draw up associative metaphors that hinge upon language and embodied knowledge to make sense of the work. It is likewise this activity that allows such work to overflow with sense, evoking an invisible dimension that characterizes the function of poetic work. Understanding more precisely how Kiefer achieves an interrelationship between language, expression and embodiment necessitates a further clarification of divergences and connections witnessed in the incorporation of textual fragments in their works, followed by a deeper probing into the metaphoric depth and communicative force of Kiefer’s creations which offers its most unique lessons for architecture today.

⁷ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 187.

⁸ Paz, 12.

First, it is worthwhile noting how even the literal appearance of words and titles that appear in much of Kiefer's work bear some resemblance to the penetrating quality of Hejduk's use of language. Although it will be shown that Kiefer's use of textual fragments do not themselves account for the richness of his work, nor its primary engagement with language, his use of text does present similarities with Hejduk's creations because, when we come upon handwritten words on books, paintings, or the walls of his exhibitions, these stand out against the pictures, physically created objects and space (Figure 4.4). When encountering the vitrines at *Walhalla*, for example, wherein mixtures of objects such as tree branches (in *Freias Garten*), an Anvil (in *Thor*) (Figure 4.5), or a scale (in *Hortus philosophoum*) (Figure 4.6)—all carefully labelled with names and set off from the pristine whiteness of the gallery—it is easy to think of pictures and words on a page.⁹ Moreover, just as Hejduk's language is said to be marked by a specific type of "brevity and density," Kiefer's use of written language gives off the sense that "behind each word or phrase something profound has been left unsaid."¹⁰ Even while the murky atmospheres of some of Kiefer's installations are certainly different from the "objective" quality of Hejduk's words and pictures, Kiefer's incorporation of text is also similar because words and titles mix together personas, places and meanings that are themselves opaque and at times impenetrable. One recognizes this likeness when the effort to read into these connections is exerted since this often strengthens the cohesion of his works.

Such integration is witnessed in the way textual fragments are placed in relation to perspective in Kiefer's early and more recent work, which even recalls the way words

⁹ An even more direct example of similarities in their use of language is witnessed in the titling of some of Kiefer's mid-career paintings such as *Only with Wind and Time Sound—Sand from the Urns, Awake in a Gypsy Camp and the Desert Tent, Sand Runs Out of Our Hair*, or *Beaten by Lost Ones that Faith Could Not Sustain, the Drums in the River Awake* (all from 1997) since each pair anonymous ruined buildings with poetic language. Linking pictures and words to multiple meanings in the world, some of these works can be seen to recall the literary and poetic references formed in the later *Masques*.

¹⁰ Singh, 133.



Figure 4.4 *Women of the Revolution* at Mass MoCA (2013-2028). Lead beds, photograph on lead and writing. From <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/anselm-kiefer-the-women-of-the-revolution-les-femmes-de-la-revolution>

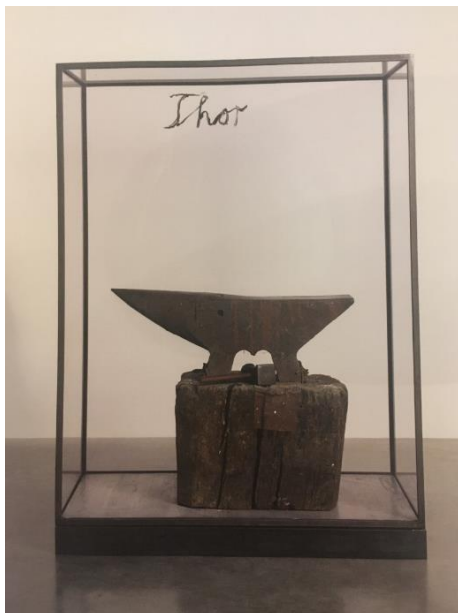


Figure 4.5 *Thor* vitrine, *Walhalla* (2017). Glass, metal, lead and wood, 181 x 132 x 92 cm. From *Anselm Kiefer: Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.



Figure 4.6 *Hortus philosophorum* vitrine, *Walhalla* (2017). Glass, metal, lead, soil, clay, acrylic and salt, 80.5 x 50 x 40.5 cm. From *Anselm Kiefer: Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.

correspond with architectural geometries and “Objects” in some of the *Masques*. For example, reaching as far back to the painting *Germany’s Spiritual Heroes* of 1973 (Figure 4.7), we find words forming a counterpart to perspective in a way that anticipates the interconnection of names on beds in the *Walhalla* corridor. In the painting, the wooden interior of Kiefer’s attic studio in Walldürn-Hornbach was used to create an illusion of a hall depicted with eternal fires that burn above the names of German poets, politicians, philosophers and artists including: Richard Wagner, Joseph Beuys, Caspar David Friedrich, Richard Dehmel, Robert Müsil, Arnold Böcklin, among others. Done forty-four years prior to *Walhalla*, the coupling of names with the painted interior even prefigure the main themes of the later exhibition since the threat that Germany’s heroes may burn conjoins with the title *Walhalla* by involving the parable of Ragnarök, which tells of a mythical afterlife wherein heroes await an ultimate battle that foretells their own destruction.¹¹ As with the worlds formed between language and architectural drawing in the *Masques*, the words inscribed into Kiefer’s paintings, onto sculptures, or along the walls of his exhibitions and studios, produce a similar phantom-like, symbolic interplay because spaces and themes are transformed by reading back and forth between different areas of his work.¹²

Still, while their works are comparable for requiring us to *read* into various layers of words, pictures and objects, important differences also arise in the repetitive titling and references formed in Kiefer’s work and the relationship of language (poetry) and geometry in the later *Masques*. As mentioned, while many of Kiefer’s textual fragments involve literary and

¹¹ Mark Rosenthal, *Anselm Kiefer*, 26-30.

¹² While completely different in terms of overall mood and aesthetic feel, comparisons between *Walhalla* and the *Lancaster/Hannover Masque* are deemed appropriate because each exhibit more autonomy than some of Kiefer’s other exhibitions or Hejduk’s earlier *Masques*. The fact that almost all the references, motifs and themes of Kiefer’s oeuvre are reconfigured at *Walhalla* recalls the subtlety and density of Hejduk’s writing, especially when considered through a non-sequential reading. As with the *Masques*, there is the sense of both the overall unity of Kiefer’s art as well as a labyrinthine quality that calls us to see through multiple layers at the same time. Such integration is echoed in Zubin Singh’s suggestion that the participation incited by Hejduk’s later work “is less a superposition than new enriched combinations, irreducible to any separate formulations.” See Singh, 109-113.



Figure 4.7 *Germany's Spiritual Heroes* (1973). Oil and charcoal on burlap, mounted on canvas, 307 x 68.2 cm. From <https://www.thebroad.org/art/anselm-kiefer/deutschlands-geisteshelden>



Figure 4.8 *Brünhilde bed, Walhalla corridor* (1992-2016). Lead and mixed media. From <https://arrestedmotion.com/2016/12/showing-anselm-kiefer-walhalla-white-cube/>

artistic references that open a multiplicity of possible meanings, they are also more semiotic than semantic. Even beyond the many examples of work which point back to meanings in the world, Kiefer's use of names and titles have more and more come to depend upon nested meanings that require a specialized understanding of historical and mythical themes that do not always appear in the works themselves and certainly not for every viewer. If the integration of text and image in earlier paintings such as *Cockchafer Fly* (1974) are closer to Hejduk's statement that "drawing is like a sentence in a text, in which the word is a detail ... that helps to incorporate [the whole of a dematerialized] thought" (because the folk poem on the horizon makes the landscape specific), when we encounter names appended to the foot of the *Walhalla* beds (Figure 4.8)—including Hildir, Skölgul, Brünhilde, Waltraute and Grimgerde—it serves us well to know the Old Norse poems of the *Poetic Edda* or the *Codex Regius* to connect these Valkyries to the fate of *Germany's Spiritual Heroes*.¹³ A further familiarity with Celan's poetry deepens such connections, allowing convergences between the imposing use of perspective and Nazi appropriation of Nordic myths to pervade the ironic tensions formed by the tragic destiny of the heroes in each case. Thus, while establishing some likeness with Hejduk for putting words on an equal footing with pictures, Kiefer's use of names and titles do not produce an identical form of linguistic emergence as the *Masques* which tend to act propositionally, as words in a sentence, to point back to recognizable meanings in the world.¹⁴

Tied to the obscurity of many of Kiefer's names and sources a further difference exists for the fact that the word/picture combinations created by Hejduk are typically aimed towards

¹³ A popular nursery rhyme dating back to the Thirty Years War, *Cockchafer Fly* relates to the first half of the seventeenth century in which the population of Pomerania suffered brutal atrocities. Towards the end of the Second World War the poem has often been seen to refer to the advancement of Soviet troops into Germany and was sung to Kiefer as a child.

¹⁴ From this perspective, Kiefer's work appears more like Rem Koolhaas's curatorial project for the 2014 Venice Biennale entitled *Fundamentals*, which renders architectural elements as words and establishes a continuity between modern and historical elements. Like Koolhaas also because the names and titles are remote, they do not always function propositionally as an element or word fragment does in a sentence.

meaningful architectural productions. While it is true that Kiefer's work depends upon the viewer to interpret a vast assortment of fragments that give an impeding quality to his work, the sustained effort required to read Hejduk's *Masques* produces comprehensible architectural images that also reflect upon the reader's own life in an architecturally appropriate manner. *The Lancaster-Hannover Masque*, for example, provides us with a program that, rendered into literary language, employs words "as a fundamental tool of architectural representation" that proposes new ways of dwelling in society aimed toward the betterment of humanity.¹⁵ In other words, although many of Hejduk's *Masques* also use cross-references to artists and historical figures in his stories or for programmatic statements that the reader may not know, the focus of his *Masques* are typically directed to communal life. Correspondingly, the world that emerges for the dedicated reader is formed through strange yet resonantly familiar actions and atmospheres relayed through pictures and words. By contrast, Kiefer seems to intentionally exploit the inaccessibility of his references in order to intensify ambiguity and this produces a feeling of alienation and withdrawal. Moreover, the majority of Kiefer's later work tends to depend on atmospheres derived from our bodily emplacement in and amongst diverse fragments and materials rather than on a more pervasive use of words which typify the *Masques*. Thus, while each create fictionalized architectural atmospheres that are suspended outside the world of contemporary building, major differences, as well as specific lessons from Kiefer, are best understood from within the historical context of architectural representation, most explicitly in relation to the work of Claude-Nicholas Ledoux.

As with Piranesi, it was in a context which witnessed the increasing difficulty of creating attuned settings in architecture at the end of the *Ancien Régime* that Ledoux's *L'architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des mœurs et de la législation* (1804; 1847) presents the

¹⁵ Pérez-Gómez, "John Hejduk's Critical and Poetic Architecture," 397.

fictional city of Chaux by setting forth “a new harmonious urbanity for a post-revolutionary society articulated in literary language.”¹⁶ Following insights of Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières (1721-1789) who, like Piranesi, recognized that the growing “crisis of meaning was related to the identification of the homogenous space of science with lived spatiality,” Ledoux was foremost in implementing literary and poetic language “to convey the qualities of analogy needed for resonant exteriority in architectural space.”¹⁷ Related to Hejduk and Kiefer not only for the use of literal use of words but because even the title of Ledoux’s book “proposes a search for architecture whose meanings may be drawn from art, and particularly from painting and its ability to render eloquent and harmonic atmospheres,” a major difference is that where Hejduk inherited Ledoux’s concern for a “social contract” in the form of a program, where “architecture sets forth an urban environment that was desirable, just, and ethical,” Kiefer’s placement of remote sources in dystopian environments (reminiscent of instrumental political power and control) are antithetical to the very things that Ledoux and Hejduk sought to convey. If in Hejduk’s work we find atmospheres that attune inhabitants with their world, ones that engage the “extraordinary dimension of the quotidian, and which shows a recollection of being

¹⁶ Bringing together insights from Le Camus de Mézières and Boullée, the seemingly objective reality of architectural structures is complemented by descriptions of life experiences in Ledoux’s *L’architecture considérée sous le rapport de l’art, des mœurs et de la législation* (1804; 1847). As mentioned by Pérez-Gómez, “the project sought to rethink the role of urban architecture beyond monarchic regimes, based on a new sense of social responsibility and respect for nature that would result in greater human happiness. Housed in simple geometric volumes, the institutions of Chaux are formed in accordance with a Newtonian and deistic conception of Nature along with novel programs that involve values embodied in citizens’ everyday life and manifest as habitual actions, where architecture sets forth an urban environment that was desirable, just, and ethical, operating in analogy to legislation.” See Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 204.

¹⁷ Whereas analogies between musical harmony and mathematics had prevailed in history, Le Camus de Mézières and Ledoux believed that meaningful attunement in architecture could now only be reached through literary structures i.e. through qualitative descriptions of architectural space via expressive fictions and poetic language. The growing identification of isotropic, homogenous space of science with lived spatiality was first addressed in Le Camus de Mézières, *Le génie de l’architecture* (1780) for the fact that it self-consciously emphasized the expressive character of architectural space through language. See Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 85. That Kiefer was explicitly unimpressed by the two floors of Ledoux’s *hôtel particulier* at Rue Michel-le-Comte in Paris, which he purchased in the mid-1990s for his frequent stays in Paris, aligns with the well-known fact that, like Boullée, Ledoux also recognized that his most significant work existed in his theoretical treatise and not in his physically built work. See Anselm Kiefer, *Anselm Kiefer, Notebooks: Volume 1: 1998-1999*, 187.

indispensable for prevailing over nihilism and apocalypse,” much of Kiefer’s work has an opposite effect since it emphasizes the withdrawal of meaning from the contemporary world whereby even absence and loss express their meaning in exile. Instead of bearing social and historical values aimed at the betterment of humanity, Kiefer’s symbolic linking of remote sources to the skeptical appropriation of myth has even been seen to undermine the inheritance of traditional authority related to artistic practice.

An obvious connection that most illustrates these differences are Kiefer’s own creation of books, which since 1968 has constituted an “important sub-oeuvre within the whole of his work.”¹⁸ In themselves, Kiefer’s early books, such as *The Flooding of Heidelberg* (1969), *Heroic Symbols* (Figure 4.9), or *To Genet* (1969), (Figure 4.10) resemble many features of the Masques as well as Hejduk’s *The Berlin Sketchbook*, itself situated with the *Berlin Masque* of 1982. Similarities exists not only because the photographic images of architectural monuments and historical figures are accomplished with graphic incorporations of materials that produce a similar feel, but because these rely upon internal words and references, pictures, particular places, lines from songs and so on. The progression of Kiefer’s later books shows a marked difference since they transmit their meanings through the physical presence of materials, including sand, canvas, burlap, and, most especially, after 1987, lead. Following his integration of tangible substances in works like *The Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen IV* (1975)

¹⁸ According to Armin Zweite, Kiefer’s creation of books is to an extent unparalleled in the work of any other major contemporary artist because, from the beginning until the present day, such creations have remained an integral part of his practice. Whereas his earlier books consisted of sheets of paper with images adhered to the pages, consisting of layers of photographs, painted or drawn over woodcuts that tend to become starting points for the genesis and formation of ideas and elements in his paintings, the later books became thicker and heavier, with the addition of applied materials that contradict the ease and use typically associated with the use of a book. The addition of heavy materials makes these later books either difficult to access or physically frail, which suggests a deliberate reference to the inevitable disintegration of books and their contents. As suggested by Armin Zweite, Kiefer’s books appear to be intentionally designed to be encountered in a “ruinous state.” See Zweite, *Anselm Kiefer, The High Priestess*, 69.

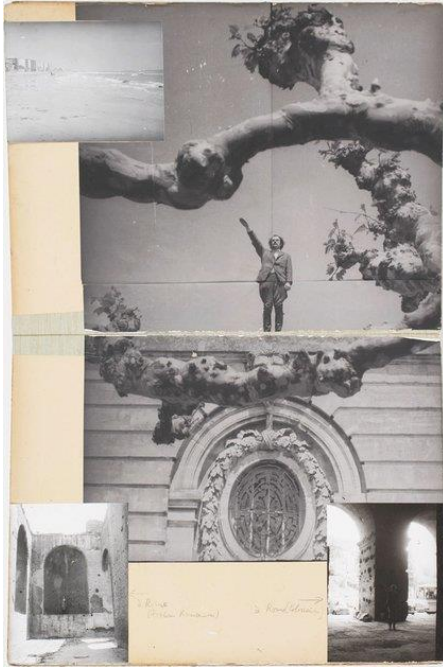


Figure 4.9 *Heroic Symbols* (1969). 46-page book with watercolor on paper, graphite, with photographs, postcards and linen strips mounted on cardboard, 664 x 510 x 85 mm. From <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/heroic-symbols-anselm-kiefer/difficult-reception-occupations>

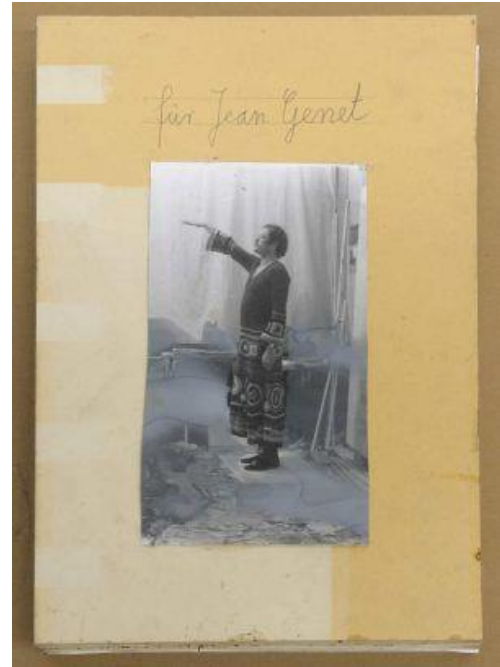


Figure 4.10 *To Genet* (1969). Human hair and watercolors on paper and cardboard, eleven double pages, 70 x 50 x 8 cm. From <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/in-focus/heroic-symbols-anselm-kiefer/difficult-reception-occupations>



Figure 4.11 *The Cauterization of the Rural District of Buchen IV* (1975). Ferrous oxide and linseed oil on pieces of old paintings, 27 pages, 60 x 42 x 8 cm. From https://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/rueffschool/courses/arhistory/384-Menon/Anselm_Kiefer.html



Figure 4.12 *Markische Sand IV* (1977). Linseed oil and sand, original photographs and fibrous wallpaper on cardboard, 42.5 x 60 x 5 cm. From https://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/rueffschool/courses/arhistory/384-Menon/Anselm_Kiefer.html



Figure 4.13 *Zweistromland – The High Priestess* (1985-1989). 196 lead books in two steel bookcases, with glass and copper wire, 455 x 816 x 180 cm. From <https://www.afmuseet.no/en/work/2108>.



Figure 4.14 Book 36 from *Zweistromland - The High Priestess* (1985-1989). Photograph mounted on treated lead, 42 solder bound leaves, approximately 87 x 65 x 17 cm. From <https://tracemarks.tumblr.com/post/142624148407/downinyonforest-anselm-kiefer-lead-book-from>

(Figure 4.11) or *Markische Sand IV* (1977) (Figure 4.12), the grouping of lead books that make up the massive sculpture-library *Zweistronmland* (1989) (Figure 4.13 & Figure 4.14) operate most like exhibitions such as *Walhalla* since they “evoke circuitous pathways more at the level of mood than discursive text” and because this work in particular marks a shift towards undertaking “lost meaning” rather than creating strangely familiar worlds witnessed in his earlier books and paintings.¹⁹ In other words, in Kiefer’s later works “the illustrative elements are almost entirely lacking, and the images that do appear tend to owe their impact not to their subject matter but rather to materials that *speak*.”²⁰ When we consider the value of Kiefer’s work for architectural representation this is certainly one of its most significant aspects seeing as even when names and references are incomprehensible or entirely lacking there remains a haunting presence of language that emanates within the visceral and mental horizon of his work.²¹

Recently, Kiefer’s creations have been seen to dwell “with and within the paradox of language.” Within what Janne Sirén describes as “the push and pull between the dynamic intertwined realms between spoken words (the oral tradition in which change is constant) and written words “that by definition are dead, inert characters marked on a surface and yet are also, at the same time, conceivably immortal.”²² Of the painting *Väinämöinen such die drei fehlende Buchstaben* (2018-2019) (Figure 4.15), Sirén suggests that, having nothing to do with the textual particulars from *The Kalevala*, Kiefer is able “to grab something of the given text’s essence, providing us new access into the lost languages and worlds of the various references he uses [such as] the epic poem’s heroes and heroines and their existential journeys and adventures.”

¹⁹ Arasse, 172.

²⁰ Zweite, 67-68.

²¹ The difference between Hejduk’s *Masques* and the mood of Kiefer’s later books or the atmosphere of *Walhalla* point to two different forms of poetry, namely “tragic” and “lyric” as discussed by Aristotle. See Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 195.

²² Janne Sirén, “Anselm Kiefer and the Realms of Language,” in *Anselm Kiefer: Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot* (London: White Cube 2019), 49.



Figure 4.15 *Väinämöinen sucht die drei fehlende Buchstaben* (2018-2019). Emulsion, oil paint, acrylic, shellac and wood on canvas, 470 x 760 cm. From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2019



Figure 4.16 Detail, *Väinämöinen sucht die drei fehlende Buchstaben* (2018-2019). Photograph by S. Wischer.



Figure 4.17 Detail, *Right Wing, Left Wing* (2019). Emulsion, oil paint, acrylic, branches, wood and metal on canvas, 260 x 760 cm. Photograph by S. Wischer.

These are “intoned back into being” by Kiefer, so that the poem “starts to pulsate and its power as an evocation of the power of language is rematerialized.” Just as *The Kalevala*, through its “infinitely malleable songs gave auditory form to the world’s unfathomable dimensions,” so too Kiefer’s paintings are said to provide a “visual echo” of a quest for words that is both particular and universal by creating a “visual simulacrum of its urgency and vigor, its destructive and regenerative potential.”²³ Yet, it must be added that the vacillations that occur in the presence of Kiefer’s work first and foremost show how physical elements, such as material textures, weight, color, and overall *presence* allow what is seen to be *heard* (Figure 4.16 & Figure 4.17). This occurs because the network of connections set vibrating form not a “visual simulacrum” but “intersignifying relations,” whereby poetry “climbs back up the slope that language descends.” Certainly, this is awakened through our entire bodily response to the work.²⁴ In Kiefer’s work the “living capacity of metaphor,” the “limitless metaphoricity of metaphor,” as Paul Ricoeur states, is what creates this overdetermination. Like true poetry, according to Heidegger, Kiefer’s work can be understood to awaken “The largest view (where) the word is brought forth from its inception [and] makes the World appear in all things.”²⁵

What this means is that we touch Kiefer’s work at a distance in the sense that it opens pathways between us and the world, whereby we *think* and *feel* ourselves into the metaphorical language of his work. This line of connection is always something deeply felt, but also thought, which is why it allows us to see, feel and think differently about the world and ourselves within it. It is hard to deny this affectual participation when encountering Kiefer’s creations because the

²³ Ibid., 50-51.

²⁴ I here follow Paul Ricoeur’s definition of metaphor in *The Rule of Metaphor* when, quoting Heidegger, he states, “True metaphor is not the ‘learned theory’ of metaphor; it is rather the very uttering that the objection reduced to mere metaphor, namely that ‘thought looks in hearing and hears in looking.’” Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 283.

²⁵ Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 100-101. Cited in Paul Ricoeur’s *The Rule of Metaphor*, 284.

images we receive involve an embodied reaction that allow images to well-up inside of us. It is certainly the case that upon our physical access to Kiefer's creation the materiality of the work produces images, not as a picture or smell or texture, but as a contextualized and *sensual mental* event that, while externally present, comes into us, "completes itself in us and alters our outward awareness."²⁶ Standing forth as it does, Kiefer's work can thus be understood to entail a process of becoming language in the sense that it impels an inner dialogue between materials and images that emerge within the physical characteristics of the work. In so doing, his creations involve a sort of primordial force that awakens a hidden depth within us that is of the same order of dreams or reverie.²⁷

In other words, while on one hand distinctions with Hejduk make Kiefer's work appear a dubious model for architecture, which indeed must consider appropriate atmospheres for everyday life, the fact that there remains a resonance between the atmospheres of his work and the deeply poetic rhythms and phrases in Ledoux's language and Hejduk's words and pictures reveals a primarily *linguistic* form of imagining even despite its remote sources or sinister turns. This is doubly important considering that even when names and titles bar us from their meanings, the maelstrom of fragments and materials in Kiefer work evokes a polysemic and metaphoric dimension of meaning that ties bodily perception to language and cultural experience.²⁸ Kiefer's work is a great example through which to make such a claim because, as Danièle Cohn suggests,

So laden with symbols as to become erudite, and so explicit with reference to bodies of knowledge from long-lost eras and to great poems and catastrophes from the last century the work overflows with a significance that ignites hermeneutic pathways for his viewers²⁹

²⁶ Bardt, 89.

²⁷ Ibid., 101.

²⁸ See Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 186.

²⁹ Cohn, *Anselm Kiefer: Studios*, 143.

Said differently, because Kiefer is so skilled at converting stories into space, mood and material presence in works that do not provide a direct picture but rather spaces for *possible images* is precisely why his work shows us how our own creations might speak a poetic form of language tied to the generation and expression of meaning in architecture. The specific means by which Kiefer's work facilitates the implementation of such insight for design is best understood by once more returning to an examination of his engagement with the historical context of postwar Germany, specifically through comparisons of Kiefer's *Walhalla* with Hejduk's well-known *Victims* competition proposal of 1986.

Similar to Kiefer and Libeskind's work, Hejduk's *Victims* (Figure 4.18 & Figure 4.19) engages Germany's traumatic past by being proposed on the ruins of a former SS/Gestapo headquarters—a site known for witnessing some of the most brutal atrocities in world history. Opening with the line “Site had formerly contained torture chambers during WWII,” this dark past is never addressed directly. Only as we move through the texts and drawings do we begin “to sense the vast aquifer running beneath the work: a subterranean flow of history and memory, erasure and amnesia, relentless time and death.”³⁰ While initially appearing completely different than the immediately expressive feel of devastation and loss given in Kiefer's often scarred and heavy materials, when we encounter Hejduk's text *Thoughts of an Architect* we find a poetic use of language that colors our impressions of the seemingly innocent program and elements—a trolley track, telephone poles, bus stop, drawbridge and gate-house as well as various activities that may occur on the site—in a way that is remarkably similar to Kiefer. For instance, when read in relation to sentences like “Missing letters and disappeared signatures speak of lost lives,” the box car takes on symbolic associations with concentration camps, the Mechanic's fear of

³⁰ Singh, 147.

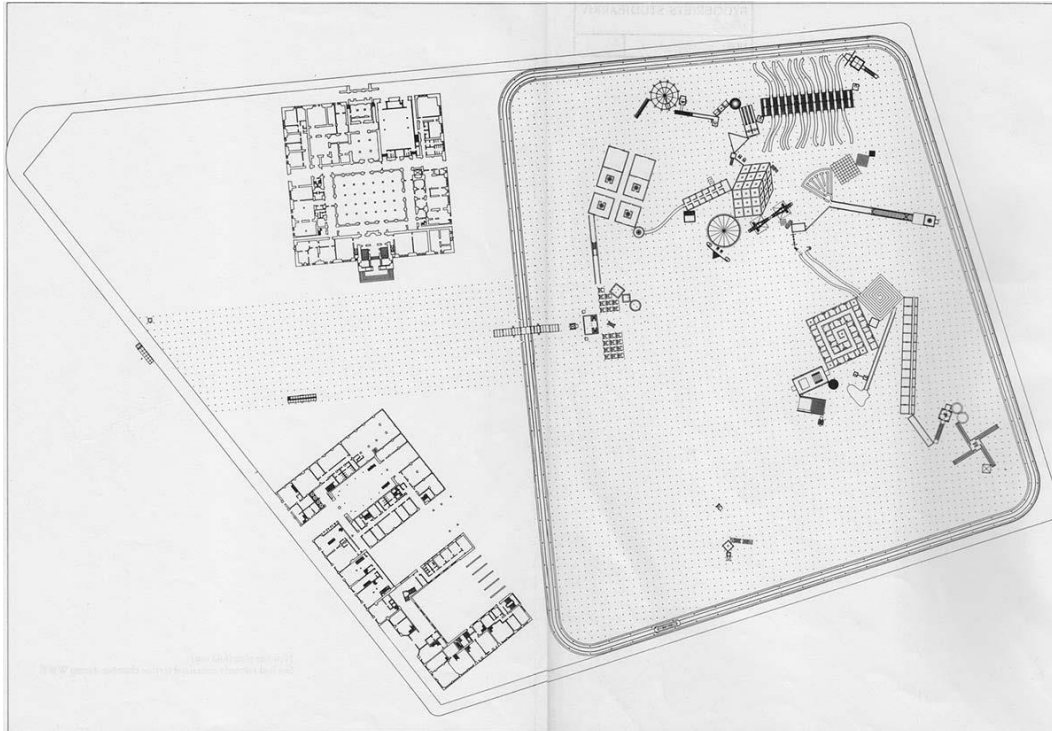


Figure 4.18 John Hejduk, *Victims*, site plan (1986). From <https://relationalthought.wordpress.com/2012/06/12/1136/>

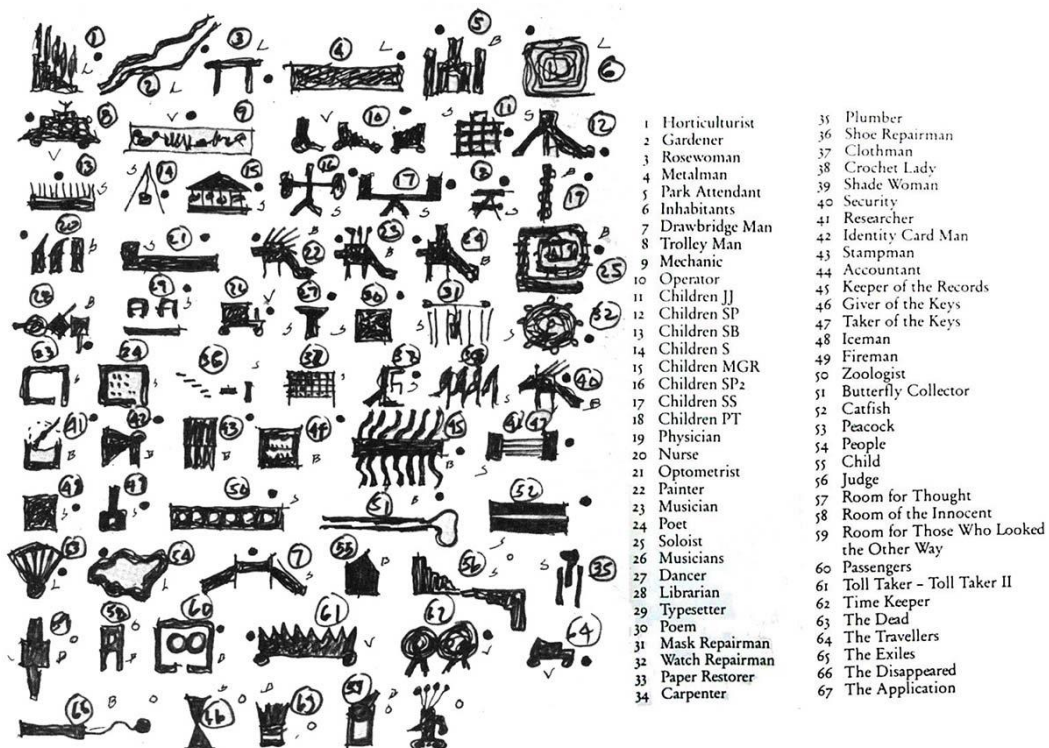


Figure 4.19 John Hejduk, *Victims*, "Objects" and "Subjects" (1986). From <https://medium.com/@ratusimione.rarasea/02a-drawing-and-notation-a-cataglogue-of-monsters-victims-john-hejduk-261002b9d146>

projected images relates to shadows created by “Atomic bleach,” and the trolley track, telephone poles and wires, all emblems of mass communication and transmission of information, speak to the efficient and contained nature of Nazi programs.³¹ Described as “an element of *Victims*, as well as a hinge,” *Thoughts of an Architect* colors meanings that have built up peripherally in our reading of *Victims* in a way that recalls the multiple vantage points and allusions that emerge in Kiefer’s environments and objects each largely effected by the material, lead. In Kiefer’s own words, “lead is the only material heavy enough to carry the weight of history,” and when the mass and density of the metal is used to form entire rooms the appearance of glass, numbers, names, or locks of hair contrast with the material to stimulate a web of associations that allow us to *see into* rather than *look at* the creation in front of us. For instance, if glass and numbers create allusions to the light and temperature of stars in other works, when rediscovered in a tomb-like room made of lead they also harken back to the haunting line in Celan’s poem “grant us graves in the sky where we won’t lie too cramped.”³² Moreover, where cut-off hair can be seen as a forlorn fragment of Shulamith or Lilith, or even “as a stimulus to sexual arousal,” when placed in the *Arsenal* room it also evokes revulsion by eliciting images of the shaving of heads in concentration camps. As with Hejduk’s “elliptical approach to horror,” Kiefer’s work involves a

³¹ In Hejduk’s *Thoughts of an Architect*, even the tone of language is comparable to the experience of Kiefer’s work because of its reference to loss and absence, which reflects and transforms the various meanings already established. For instance, when Hejduk states: “drawings become apparitions, ghosts, X-rays, but also hands, organs of perception in the absence of sight. Missing letters and disappeared signatures speak of lost lives. But what has been lost is also given voice: erasures speak of ‘former existences’ and lost memories, names and language can perhaps be recovered if it’s possible to ‘gelatinize forgetfulness.’” Because such statements open upon a spectral reflection of what was previously encountered reading through *Victims* is why *Thoughts of and Architect* can be considered to be a condensed element of *Victims*, “an image of the whole—and a hinge,” since it colors the myriad of potential trajectories in a fashion that is similar to connections at *Walhalla*. See Singh, *Inoculations*, 161. In other words, Kiefer’s work opens a similar gap between things that contributes to the sense of discontinuity and melancholic absence. This connects the tragedies of the Second World War to myth and cosmological references as well as many contemporary topics in the world.

³² John Felstiner, *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*, (New York: Norton and Company, Inc., 2001), 31.

deep meditation upon a history marked by devastation by drawing up memories that are impossible to convey completely in words or pictures.³³

Most fascinating about such a comparison is that when we consider the synesthetic allusions that arise from *Thoughts of an Architect*, where “words come to express the poetic operation itself [where] even touch and sight are transmuted into the instruments and act of drawing,” we cannot help recall the heavy softness of Kiefer’s lead, “its apparent weight and malleability and the way it responds to Kiefer’s manipulation to capture both a sense of living fluidity and the inescapable weight of death.”³⁴ Like poetic language, which “instead of copying thought, lets itself be taken apart and put back together again by thought,” Kiefer’s lead bears witness to a vital process that is both fixed and waiting for further changes as if the material itself “bears the meaning of thought just as a footprint signifies the movement and effort of the body.”³⁵ Like Celan’s poetry, which sought “to dismantle and displace the old linguistic order so he could reconstruct it, bringing it to new life,” Kiefer’s work converts the historical references to which it refers, layering and transforming material, like language itself.³⁶

And so, whereas Hejduk employed poetic language as an essential feature of architectural representation, Kiefer shows how poetic meanings may indeed emerge in the physical manipulation of materials since these too become metaphors and mediums that convey and dramatize the narrative structure of reality. Even if the difference could appear to be that the emotive experience received from *Victims* arrives after being decoded, whereas Kiefer’s work might be seen to be more immediately perceived through our senses, both are governed by a

³³ John Hejduk and David Shapiro. “The Architect Who Drew Angels.” *Conversation. A + U: Architecture and Urbanism*, no. 244 (Jan. 1991), 59-65.

³⁴ Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*, 239.

³⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 44.

³⁶ Arlice Davenport, “Collected later poetry of Paul Celan showcases his struggle to make words say what they cannot,” *The Wichita Eagle*, Jan. 4, 2015, <https://www.kansas.com/entertainment/books/article5402316.html>.

“hinge-like quality” wherein physical and narrative structures commingle and grow indistinguishable.³⁷ Because it is “in terms of human language, its ambivalence and consubstantiality with our flesh, that we ‘understand’ all communicative acts,” when we sense the purpose of gesture in words or materials as tied to the expression of meaning, the metaphoric principle at the very core of human meaning-making incites a “seeing as,” which acts to “join the light of sense with the fullness of images in a way that the non-verbal and verbal are firmly united at the core of the image-making function of language.”³⁸ Since metaphor itself corresponds to the “inherent dynamism of matter” in the sense that it provides a space for reflection, realization and imaginative enactment, is precisely why the primary and kinesthetic dimension of human perception is part of the act of *reading* ourselves into the cultural themes in each case. Whether leafing through *Victims* or walking through *Walhalla* we are presented with fully emotional spaces interwoven in the poetic revelations we receive. As has been suggested, the mystery of such work is that by becoming more than pictures, words, or materials, by becoming *images*, made by and in each of us, is why such work speaks to our emotional and intellectual being, opening a space of existential orientation.³⁹ Because Kiefer highlights a

³⁷ My working premise is that both Kiefer and Hejduk emphasize the interwoven dimension of the linguistic and material imagination suggested by Octavio Paz, who states: “the distinction between words and images is probably more subtle than real. The threshold where language crosses into image, where the polyvocal figure or symbol hardens into a univocal sign, remains a populous and mercurial domain.” See Paz, 11.

³⁸ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 186. Kiefer himself has suggested: “Concepts remain for me logical seconds of abstraction, they are barely conceived and already they’re fused (overgrown, shot through) with emotion [wherein] the exactness of the emotion supplements, is appended to, the concept’s accuracy.” See Anselm Kiefer *Anselm Kiefer Notebooks Vol. 1: 1998-1999*, 258. Such statements recall Hejduk’s own discussion of his process of drawing when he speaks of never having been “more deeply in a state of mental and physical communion than in this investigation” wherein drawing, like language, becomes a “medium for thought.” See John Hejduk and David Shapiro, “The Architect Who Drew Angels,” *Conversation. A + U: Architecture and Urbanism*, no. 244 (Jan. 1991): 59-65.

³⁹ As Octavio Paz suggests, “All works end in meaning; whatever man touches is tinged with intentionality where all is language or is come to be known by language ... Nothing precludes our regarding plastic or musical works as poems, if they are able to meet two stated conditions: on the one hand, to return their materials to that which they are—sparkling or opaque matter ... on the other hand, to be transformed into images and thus to become a peculiar form of communication. Without ceasing to be language—sense and transmission of sense—the poem is something that is beyond language. But that thing that is beyond language [the poetic image] can only be reached through language.” See Paz, 12.

correspondence between the cognitive and emotional levels of consciousness across such a vast range of work is why it can be seen to expand upon insights given by Hejduk and Ledoux, showing how objects, diverse fragments, materials, as well as built environments may function like words in a literary structure to achieve a “resonant exteriority in architectural space.”⁴⁰

Hence, a central lesson from Kiefer is recognizing how his work functions very much like the *Masques* by constituting a radical criticism of typical approaches to architectural representation. It achieves this status by showing quite directly how the expressive use of materials may involve “the essentially active nature of poesy, which ever hovers between the immaterial or dematerialization and the concrete.”⁴¹ Such insight is crucial seeing as it reveals how:

The ‘language’ of the poet or architect is indeed like the materials for the hand of the craftsman since the very possibility of acknowledging the predominance of materiality for meaning in architecture hinges upon the primacy of metaphor for signification and its appropriate uses by an architect⁴²

Moreover, just as Hejduk shows us how “language is indispensable for reconnecting us to qualities of physical matter in a time when architects have been estranged from their traditional role as craftsmen,” Kiefer recuperates the possibility of showing how material meaning is interwoven with the imagining act itself, which operates through polysemic language.⁴³

Therefore, even if we must imagine Kiefer’s works attuned differently, works like *Walhalla* exemplify the capacity of materials to engage complex narratives that involve cultural and physical values that speak to our fully emotional and multi-sensorial being. Considering the banal environments that typify much of our constructed world, such insight is surely needed to

⁴⁰ Ibid., 186.

⁴¹ Singh, 103.

⁴² Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 185.

⁴³ Ibid., 197.

ground architectural projects in the production of meaningful atmospheres that might provide a fuller sense of place for human events.

Made possible by the potential of autonomous representation arising from the cultural conditions of modernity, what such comparisons most reveal is that when words *or* materials leave behind their literal horizon or customary use, they compel the reader/visitor to infer a productively metaphorical meaning that refers us back to experience in the world that cannot be spoken of or depicted directly. Dependent upon language, while also operating beyond it, the atmospheres formed by pictures, words or in our physical emplacement at Kiefer's installations maintain a paradoxical stance outside of common language or prosaic meanings. They are paradoxical in the sense that, while being "self-referential" or "self-standing," and thus withdrawn from the everyday world, they also alter our relation to language and to the very world from which they sit apart. As Kiefer's work profoundly demonstrates, this produces emotive connections that are irreducible to the conceptual abstraction that regulates our common (Cartesian) understanding of space or standard denotative thought. It is in this sense that the "autonomy" of such work is interwoven with the function of poetry more generally, which, as Hans-Georg Gadamer suggests, "holds open a space for the Open," providing "an attentiveness or attunement, to the strangeness or otherness of words, materials and space."⁴⁴ Not reducible to a direct use of words, pictures, materials, nor algorithmically generated "languages," these works involve a necessarily emotional, kinesthetic and multisensorial dimension of communication that is far less abstracted from concrete experience than the technical images and means of construction typically employed by architects.

Nonetheless, even if such comparisons show how all these works are adequate forms of architectural representation, since each involve an emotive and cognitive engagement in their

⁴⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gadamer on Celan: Who am I and Who are You? And Other Essays*, 14.

way of proposing worlds, they also confirm that the difference between them stems less from their varying formats than from the fact that Hejduk aimed his work at involving inhabitants and visitors in a process of remembering that is also a process of healing. Following the signifying intentions of the active metaphors in their works we see that, like Libeskind's Museum, *Victims* allows hopeful atmospheres to emerge in a distinctly architectural program even when faced with a history marked by destruction and unspeakable violence. This occurs not only because the latent metaphors in the work extend to other victims of technological warfare (since Kiefer's creations do this as well) but because such meanings are routed through deep and everyday life experiences. In so doing, Hejduk enters into a "social contract" in the sense initiated by Ledoux because they create atmospheres attuned to human dwelling and a better life. This intention is clearly put forward by Hejduk himself, who in the *Berlin Masque* states:

The Architect is responsible to create the spirit of a thought. And to translate through whatever medium is available a sense of place, whether it be in a text, in a drawing, in a model, in a building, in a photograph, in a film. The architect concerns himself/herself, with the mysteries of space and form, and is also obligated to invent new programs. It is essential that the Architect create works that are thought provoking, sense provoking, and ultimately life provoking. Or more precisely, life giving, to what appears to be at first inanimate materials. The Architect enters into a social contract in the deepest sense⁴⁵

Thus, even though Kiefer creates communicative settings that depend upon stories and literary structures translated into resonant material atmospheres, the fact that many of his exhibitions tend to integrate the mourning of German culture with a further lamentation on "the loss or withdrawal of meaning in history," procures a feeling of despair and melancholy that has even allowed "the failure of art" to be seen as the creator's true mission. This remains fundamentally challenging when considering the relevance of Kiefer's work for architecture.

Acknowledging the essential ambivalence in Kiefer's work, one notices that even if it is true that the artist holds a skeptical view of art, having gone so far as to suggest that "Art cannot

⁴⁵ John Hejduk, *Berlin Night*, (Rotterdam: NAI Uitgevers, Netherlands Architecture Institute, 1993), 18.

help directly ... Art is cynical, it shows the negativity of the world, its first condemnation,” an encouraging paradox remains when we consider how all the pieces from Kiefer’s exhibitions were first created in the atmospheres of his own studios, which are themselves a place, and a program, for poetic inhabitation. Certainly, just as the *Masques* have been understood as an “entry into Hejduk’s workshop,” wherein “the act of drawing, thinking, and making, of thinking in making, is given voice,” works like *Walhalla* point back to Kiefer’s “studio-worlds” wherein he has worked to encompass meanings that can only come from the translational act of making.⁴⁶ It is Kiefer’s actualization of works in his studios that contributes further lessons for architecture by emphasizing a dialectic between inner and outer worlds in the *act* of representation itself.

Just as the metaphoric, indeed stereoscopic, effect of Kiefer’s work allows meanings to be reflected to us in both a familiar yet transformed manner, the environments of La Ribaute provide insight into the way his creations come to hold such an ambiguous mixture of cynicism, compassion and even playfulness that lends his work its incredible impact and allure. Because, if the flowers in his paintings evaporate with any sense of reprieve from annihilation at some exhibitions, his studios reveal how Kiefer first grows giant sunflowers, entire fields of them, in a way that resembles “the slow, growing vision” symbolized by the growth of the trees in *Victims*. While we may encounter claustrophobic rooms at *Walhalla*, when we see how lead is employed as an active element forged into the hanging sculptures, earthworks or massive books, its ambiguous properties also afford peaceful moments where the silent beauty of the material creates somber places of rest and meditation, suggestive of transformation. Certainly, the many works and spaces at La Ribaute, including the paintings in various stages of production, interact with one another in ways that recall the role of the citizens of Berlin as “Caretakers of memory” in *Victims* or Libeskind’s Museum that has been said “to remember while instilling a sense of

⁴⁶ Sirén, 49.

hope, growth, and healing.”⁴⁷ In other words, in the same way that Hejduk explored architecture and its relation to literary language to open a space where architectural meanings are manifest in relation to lived life, Kiefer’s studios physically embody entirely new programs that move far beyond the typical understanding of architecture as “building” or “object” since these are places fashioned by, and for, the temporality of lived events. Like the *Masques*, they are comparable to the emotional experience of poetry, a work of fiction, or musical rhythm, each interwoven with an emplotted whole. Thus, while on the one hand exhibitions like *Walhalla* suggest a skeptical relationship to human society in that they question the very possibility of authentic dwelling, Kiefer’s studio opens a lost terrain of multidimensionality and corporeality via the images Kiefer actually inhabits as he creates.

Fashioned by moving through space, operating one machine and then another, and living amongst the work, the tensions formed between works and spaces at La Ribaute thus present a co-emergence of environment and process that on one hand retains a spirit very near to the *Masques*. If it can be said that Kiefer’s exhibited work emphasizes distance from practical action for his viewers, which might allow it to be seen as an aestheticized critique of the world, at La Ribaute there appears a new resemblance with Hejduk’s “propositional programs,” because it is a place formed through lived life “in action, in a physical, formal context, framed by the designer” that provides attunement between Kiefer’s own “objects” and “subjects.”⁴⁸ In other words, while it is true that Kiefer does not propose the possibility of a new social order, the fact that Kiefer lives within the poetic atmospheres he creates provides physical evidence “of making as a self-making, where architecture exists as an action, a process, a verb, that embraces the often-

⁴⁷ Pérez-Gómez, *Built Upon Love: Architectural Longing after Ethics and Aesthetics*, 106-107.

⁴⁸ Pérez-Gómez, “John Hejduk’s Critical and Poetic Architecture,” 399-400.

forgotten ephemeral nature of our human condition.”⁴⁹ In his workshops we find parts fit together, adjusted and re-joined so as to fold out into other works and studios that arise from a wholly embodied process of thinking. This includes hands, feet, heart and stomach as much as the head, since relationships are formed by poetic interconnection as opposed to generalized concepts of space. Consequently, while different than the other projects we have discussed in the sense that it is not an intentional work, nor is it public, Kiefer, like Hejduk, has created “*another architecture*” that exists outside the abstraction of space born from reductionist processes of planning and modern design. Continuously expanding upon previous productions, the studio at Barjac indeed functions as a “forge” for Kiefer to use his own body to go between worlds and between various times to explore the interrelationship between action, thought and language.

Although the implications of Kiefer’s living and working in his studios will be taken up more thoroughly in the next chapter in relation to Frederick Kiesler’s Endless House, it is worthwhile noting that the degree to which Kiefer employs industrial processes and labor power in the creation of narrative, formal, and material objects relate to language in yet another sense, namely by deconstructing and twisting the tools of technology. Just as the written narratives of Hejduk have been said to produce haunting scenes that are at one and the same time “preindustrial, industrial, and postindustrial,” Kiefer’s use of almost every tool conceivable—from paintbrush and canvass, to cranes and excavators—shows how technology is destructured through the play of absolute forces that indeed approach the ineffable.⁵⁰ Despite differences in programmatic intention, Kiefer and Hejduk thus deal with modernity in a similar fashion in the sense that neither have to do with style but are rather concerned with the creation of poetic

⁴⁹ Ibid., 380-381.

⁵⁰ Detlef Mertins, “The Shells of Architectural Thought,” in Michael K. Hays and John Hejduk, *Hejduk’s Chronotype*, (Canadian Center for Architecture, Princeton Architectural Press, 1996).

expressions that engage the time and place of the modern world.⁵¹ This analogy holds in both cases because each are situated outside contemporary building and sites, always awaiting further translations. They therefore depend upon displacement to open indirect references that incite the vibrations in their work. If it can be said that Hejduk's "words and machine-like drawings seem impossibly to be aware of us, to address us, retuning to us not a gratifying reflection of ourselves we had hoped for but another thing, looking back at us, watching us, placing us,"⁵² Kiefer's work also involves a "sounding of the technological world," where we find the miracles of our industrial age brought to bear on work haunted by the aspirations and fears of modern humanity and the circle of its violent history.⁵³ It is certainly from within our modern context that Kiefer has effectively engaged a blind spot in the modern world which produces a certain type of "emptiness." This involves both an exorcism of our sordid past while also pointing to the latent, spiritual potential of our creations to bring contemporary forms of technology into a relationship with language and meaning.

In addition to the books, sculptures or the creation of the *Walhalla* rooms, one need only recall the various manifestations of Kiefer's towers to see how he has adopted the reductive tools associated with the representation, design and fabrication of buildings in ways that awaken the primacy of poetic language. Stacked in tower forms for the *Jericho* installation in the Royal Academy courtyard (2006) (Figure 4.20 and Figure 4.21), photographed or reemployed as the subjects of books or paintings (Figure 4.22), Kiefer's towers recall many of the "Objects" found in the *Masques* and also Hejduk's physically built works such as *Studio of a Musician* from *The Berlin Masque* (1984) (Figure 4.23 & Figure 4.24) or *The Collapse of Time* (1986) from *Victims* (Figure 4.25 & Figure 4.26). The similarity here rests on the fact that each employ technological

⁵¹ Pérez-Gómez, "John Hejduk's Critical and Poetic Architecture," 387-390.

⁵² Michael K. Hays, *Architecture's Desire: Reading the Late Avant-Garde*, 89-134.

⁵³ Pérez-Gómez, "John Hejduk's Critical and Poetic Architecture," 392.



Figure 4.20 *Jericho* installation, Royal Academy Courtyard (2006).
From <http://picssr.com/photos/c-u/popular-interesting?nsid=31973325@N06>



Figure 4.21 Interior of *Jericho* installation (2006).
From <http://www.urban75.org/london/royal-academy.html>



Figure 4.22 *Rapunzel* (2006). Clay, photographic paper, hair, gouache and lead on cardboard in frame, 100.5 x 150.5 x 10 cm. From <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Rapunzel/>



Figure 4.23 John Hejduk, *Studio of a Musician* (1984). From <https://www.boeldieu.com/leonard/Observation/Observation/>



Figure 4.24 John Hejduk, *Studio of a Musician* (1984). From <https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/search/details/collection/object/10228>

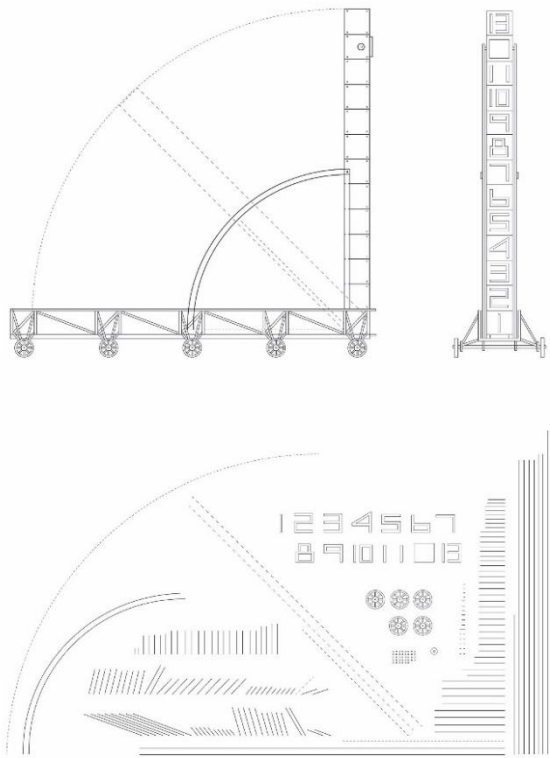


Figure 4.25 John Hejduk, *The Collapse of Time* (1986). From <https://cargocollective.com/InfamousLines/John-Hejduk>



Figure 4.26 John Hejduk, *The Collapse of Time*, Bedford Square, London (1986). From <https://www.archpaper.com/2017/03/hejduk-cooper-union/>

processes in ways that reinvigorate a transcendental and semantic dimension of meaning. Like the trolley car, Dual Clock or telephone poles in *Victims*, whose paradoxical depiction of modern technology recalls many of Kiefer's earlier works,⁵⁴ Hejduk's clock, erected in Bedford Square in London (1986) is comparable to Kiefer's towers because they open "multiple domains of knowledge" and "different angles of time."⁵⁵ As with the collapsible clock, designed to "dip down as into a coffin" and "rise like a tower of wholeness," Kiefer's towers relate to the upward aspirations of mankind while summoning thoughts of overreaching disaster and destruction. Installed at the Royal Academy, these skeletal towers are transcendent creations as well as hulking wrecks that function similarly to Hejduk's clock as a kind of time machine, where past, present and future are architecturally related through memories generated by physical, teetering relations. Part of this world, and worlds of their own, the concrete towers are a composite of various times that stretch from the material ground of the modern world to the heavens, only to reference a further falling down. Beyond their differences, both Hejduk's clock and Kiefer's towers (each transported "from place to place and from time to time") reformulate our relation to present reality by filling up a "shell of thought."⁵⁶ Like the German word *Aufhebung*, which "implies the conservation of earlier stages during a transformation by which something passes

⁵⁴ Here, I am following Matthew Biro's suggestion that earlier works such as *Yggdrasil* (1985), *High Tension Pole*, *Transformer Station*, *Breaking of Vessels* (1984-85) or books such as *Birth of the Sun* (1987) each involve photographic processes, the incorporation of found objects or materials, and thematic overlays that portray the everyday production and use of energy "in a contradictory and paradoxical light." Within such works, photographs of poles, steel frames and high-tension wires recall many elements in *Victims* such as telephone poles and wires, and the movement of the trolley around the site. As suggested by Biro, in Kiefer's work "everyday symbols of the transfer of power and information or electrical transmission are usually juxtaposed with symbols of only partially controllable, transformable material that involve various mythic overlays that link the transformative power of technology to both creation and destruction, to symbols of power and development, neglect, decay, degeneration, and even death." As mentioned, for the most detailed discussion of Kiefer's paradoxical use and representation of technology in the context of art, see Matthew Biro's book *Anselm Kiefer and the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, 209-252.

⁵⁵ Mertins, 23.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

into a new state, thereby providing continuity in the face of change,”⁵⁷ Kiefer’s involvement with collective memory occurs not through a nostalgic recovery of historical connection but because such connections are brought to life by contemporary means. It is this sense of interconnection that shows how the scale and *perceptual size* of the objects in the *Masques* or in Kiefer’s paintings, sculptures and books remain identical to their larger “built” structures since continuity rests in their ability to collapse the universal with the specific.⁵⁸ Placed within the uncomfortable atmospheres of Kiefer’s installations or in the mystifying depth of his studio, fictive inversions are doubled and redoubled in the ambiguities of his work wherein we feel our history and future represented.

In the context of the Internet, virtual reality and cyberspace, such participation indeed makes us aware of the alienation of the common individual from the real world of experience. And yet, because Kiefer’s work allows images to arise through aspects of writing, painting and building is also why it breaks open the world of technological utopia, revealing the potential richness of a world that we tend to believe is ordinary, factual, and predictable. In other words, even though his work embodies “motion, the coming, passing, going of everything that arrives on the scene,” we do not find an aspiration to the current infatuation with speed, innovation and change. Rather, Kiefer’s work presents to us a sense of “durability in the face of incessant movement” based on transformations more akin to “the oral and literary realms of language,” themselves based on “a continual process of becoming.”⁵⁹

In light of current reductions that parametric or algorithmically generated software promote against human interpretation, it is the metaphorizing of meanings in Kiefer’s work that

⁵⁷ Cohn, 36.

⁵⁸ Pérez-Gómez, “The Renovation of the Body: John Hejduk and the Cultural Relevance of Theoretical Projects,” *AA Files*, No.13, (Autumn, 1986).

⁵⁹ Arasse, 306.

allows it to be seen as a critical form of architectural envisioning, showing how we may employ almost any combination of materials or techniques in ways that put us in touch with a mythopoetic reality. As opposed to the capacity of digital software to “innovate” at the expense of context and meaning, Kiefer’s work is capable of providing profound revelations since it reinvigorates discoveries that are often masked by formal styles and technological values.⁶⁰ Said differently, Kiefer’s work shows us how we as architects might become more conscious of our language, materials, tools and use of machines by properly grounding them in thoughtful approaches to representation. Hence, instead of creating a world less and less involved with embodied engagement aimed towards an efficient and technologically transparent way of life, Kiefer goes further to propose ways to adapt the paradigm of factory-like productions towards story-telling and poetic fiction. What is remarkable is the extent to which he is able reestablish a body-world continuum even when working with tools typically employed towards instrumental ends and reductive material control. Like poetic speech, Kiefer’s productions function beyond the directness associated with efficiency, control and optical seduction in ways that hold resonance with the mysterious origins of technology.

Certainly, the very presence of Kiefer’s installations or his work at La Ribaute are evidence of creations that return technological making to a form of participation traditionally associated with magic and ritual. The sheer scale and output of Kiefer goes far to reveal a form of making that bridges the duality of craftsman and architect through creations that are a part of a paradigm of *techne-poiesis*—a poetic making unveiling prior meanings that the ancient Greeks understood as the human equivalent of demiurgic creation, potentially mimetic of the cosmos

⁶⁰ Kiefer’s work directly addresses such issues. In his *Notebooks*, Kiefer has stated: “The life of actual language consists in multiplicity of meaning. to relegate the animated, vigorous word to immobility of a univocal, mechanically programmed sequence of signs would mean the death of language and the petrification and devastation of dasein. see dogma, computer language and works of pornography. Anselm Kiefer, *Anselm Kiefer: Notebooks: Volume 1: 1998-1999*, 78.

and thus liable to disclose significant truths. When we experience the endless network of metaphors in Kiefer's work we may recall the marvelous animated machines epitomized by the *daidala* of Homeric literature which enabled "inanimate matter to become magically alive."⁶¹ This is the case because Kiefer's work reveals how "material that has become separate from denotation is never static; it is tense and alive," which, like poetic language, "creates images."⁶² In line with Gaston Bachelard's discussion of the "material imagination," the poetic images we receive from Kiefer places us at the origin of the speaking being by "reverberating" into the depth of existence as a source of psychic activity. It therefore "enlivens" physical matter in a way that recalls a *thaumaturgic* form of expression, which in ancient times, was known to overwhelm the spectator "with awe in the contemplation of the hidden powers at work in world."⁶³ After fifty years of fitting together pieces that fashion the cosmos of his oeuvre, Kiefer's creations can thus be seen as an incredibly hopeful approach to architectural thinking and doing that restores technology to a practice etymologically related to the *architecton*, a master builder who cuts and joins, divides and connects, to reestablish connections between body and world.⁶⁴ In other words, just as Hejduk has been said to be "the master-builder of metonymical distortions and lexical fictions," Kiefer reveals how technology might entail a playful (surrealist relationship) with materials that indicate possible realities, discovering the intangible through tangible objects.⁶⁵ For Kiefer, this is accomplished by setting up events that permit unpredictable arrangements that at the same time exhibit rigor and symbolic accuracy in

⁶¹ Pérez-Gómez, *The Myth of Daedalus*, AA Files Vol. 10 (1985): 50.

⁶² Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 185.

⁶³ Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis, "The Machine in Architectural Thinking," in *Daedalus 18* (1985): 18.

⁶⁴ Based on tectonically adjoining, conjoining and ultimately the jointing of materials and meanings together, such actions recall the primordial task of building as interconnection, which is implicit in the etymological origin of the word architect, *architecton*, as discussed by Maria Karvouni in her essay "Demas; The Human Body as Tectonic Construct" in *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture* vol. 3, ed. Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell (McGill-Queens University Press, 1999), 104-124.

⁶⁵ See Peggy Dreamer's "Me, Myself and I," in *Hejduk's Chronotype*, (Canadian Center for Architecture, 1996), 68.

the way it interposes with the world. As with the majority of architectural creations in the traditional world (prior to the eighteenth century) Kiefer thus accomplishes what has always made architecture, architecture, namely by evoking interconnection of man and cosmos through poetic dwelling.

Considered in relation to the *Masques*, Kiefer's creations thus provide a fuller impression of their contribution to architecture because even if the worlds he creates are remote, obscure and impossible to occupy, they also provide whole atmospheres dedicated to the metaphorizing of materials and meanings that allow him to bring his very existence into the *language* of his creations. In conjunction with exhibitions like *Walhalla*, the manufacturing and physical processes undertaken in his studios reveal how Kiefer's architectural language is not the same mode of communication that we find in the appearance of words or phrases in his work, nor is it distinguishable from the sensuousness of his creations. Rather, like the myths and poems to which he refers, Kiefer's act of making begets a form of language that is born into the work as he makes it. This need for penetration, where the imagery that arises is not only "thought" about but rather *lived through* in the action of producing work shows how our own creations need not depend upon processing information like a computer but can be born in a discovery that occurs through a search for symbolic meaning arising from a synthetic dimension of human meaning in action, always dependent upon language. As eloquently summarized by Pérez-Gómez,

This is not language in the sense assumed by constructivist linguistics ... but rather tied to our fundamental human expressivity: inherently poetic, indicative, polysemic and open, in continuity with the body's own expressivity and gesture, which like the voice comes to fruition in making⁶⁶

Since the studio's contents (all collected from the world) are transformed in materials, materials into new forms, and forms into continuously renewed relations, the revelatory moments that

⁶⁶ Pérez-Gómez, "Poetic Language and Architectural Meaning," in *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture Vol. 2* (Montreal: Right Angle International, 2016), 283.

emerge from such work resound with the spatial quality of language because they too provide places for Kiefer to take up a position in the world of his meanings. Kiefer's work thus shows us how, like fiction and poetry, the human imagination is primarily linguistic and woven into the world through action and involvement. And, like fiction or poetry, the act of perceiving meaning in such work incites a re-description and transformation of the space of the world we inhabit and correspondingly the "reality" we often take for granted. In this sense, Kiefer's work indirectly shows us how writing, speaking, painting, drawing or the act of building may all serve as vehicles for thinking about architecture more deeply when guided by sense and meaning. Such an approach inherently challenges the third-person picture (ultimately Cartesian belief), also the space of computers, typically understood as reality today. Very different from the reductive aims of typical architectural production that since the eighteenth century has tended to disconnect language and physical making, Kiefer's creations show a kinship between narrative as a "living language" of culture and action attached to the world by way of the meaning it discerns therein since each are dependent upon knowledge forthcoming through the body's interaction and effort. Bringing relationships of the various arts and language to life, Kiefer's studios open whole new worlds for himself and for others where fiction and the poetic give new form to reality. Such possibilities are resonant with the traditional grounds of cultural production which were always meaningfully woven into the world. As such, Kiefer's work continues to speak of possibilities for evoking a contemporary form of spiritual experience manifest through acts of translation in the creation of poetic environments.

Chapter Five: Anselm Kiefer and Frederick Kiesler: Endlessness and Ritual in Architecture

Because Anselm Kiefer so dramatically engages the imagination through our senses in creations that, while situated apart from the world, also inspire a reinterpretation of the world we inhabit, I want to conclude my exploration of his contributions to architecture comparing them to the work of Frederick Kiesler (1890-1966), the only architect whose work was explicitly associated with surrealism, and whose lifelong theoretical project, the Endless House, was concerned with human dwelling, developed and exhibited over a period of forty years. Regardless of stylistic and tectonic differences, and even amid the differing ways their works relate to the world, the interconnection between Kiefer's exhibitions and the living and working in his studios present parallels with the "ineffable endlessness" Kiesler sought in models, drawings, sculpture, the production of theatre sets, exhibition designs and written works that engaged technological making and challenged the pervasive functionalism of his time. Another form of "outsider architecture," Kiesler's Endless House, along with his concept of "Correalism," permit a final exploration into the way Kiefer expands upon the tradition of theoretical projects, foregrounding the immense impact that the environment has on our interaction with the world and the value of ritual making essential for architects. Such comparisons also help clarify the crucial "reversals" Kiefer's work provides with regards to the relationship of imagination to the "real world," framing it as a form of modelling that points back to and transforms an understanding of reality. It is precisely in this sense that Kiesler's project provides an important foil through which to gain a better understanding of Kiefer's contribution: both as a further elaboration of the poetic image in architecture and even as a valuable model for architecture in its task to frame everyday life.

The very fact that Kiesler's work is comprised of "an endless thread of connections that span physical objects, motifs, and spaces, from one decade to another, which emit a sense of unity ... and of this same unity an enigma," shows parallels with the abundance of work produced by Kiesler since each blur boundaries between individual artistic genres and have the expressive quality of environments as their central concern. Indeed, Kiesler's lifelong pursuit of achieving a more profound interaction between human perception and the environment was central to his Endless House, an ever-evolving project that in conjunction with models and drawings is also understood through his design of exhibition spaces, theatre sets, multimedia work and especially his writing, which epitomize a widely experimental career that started in Vienna in the 1920s and continued until his death in New York in 1965.¹ Kiesler's best known built work is the Shrine of the Book, a repository for the Dead Sea Scrolls realized in Jerusalem in 1961, which is a fascinating work in its own right but outside the scope of this thesis. The Endless House on the other hand was never built in the conventional sense, it remained a theoretical project in the tradition we have been discussing in this dissertation as a context for Kiesler's architecture. As such other works, it represents a critical alternative to the popular understanding of space that has severely impacted the creation and experience of environments in the contemporary world. In the article "The Future: Notes on Architecture as Sculpture" Kiesler himself stated, "The coming of the Endless House is inevitable in a world coming to an end. It is the last refuge of man for

¹ Kiesler's Endless House took on three main forms: The first being an ovoid form that was made visible to the public in 1950 at the Kootz gallery in New York. The second more distorted, egg-like form appeared in 1959, and the third was presented at both the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1960 and the Leo Castili Gallery in 1961. Martha Franco suggests that the Endless House became a "non-built symbol," described by Kiesler as being "poetry of unity in itself" and "the direct expression of man's wholeness in a single continuum." Its mission was to create an "enlivened" space that would reflect humans' condition as a vital being, exposing them to different sensations not previously considered as part of the program of standard living. Planned as "a monolithic shell, the senses were to find a continuous flow from floor to wall to ceiling, creating a dynamic equilibrium of the body in motion." Thus, the goal of the Endless House was "to stimulate participation in the event of architecture, serving as a place for a liberation of the senses that were to be connected to the mind in order to create a perceptual event through the analogical imagination of the inhabitant's reinterpretation." See Martha Franco, "Towards a Correal Architecture: Reflections on Frederick Kiesler" M.Arch Thesis, (McGill University, 1996), 25.

man,” and the perforated egg-shaped, shell models based on an uninterrupted flow of spaces stood as a critical manifesto against meaningless orthogonal forms of technological building in his time. For Kiesler, “Functionalism is determination and therefore stillborn,” and in his opinion the standardization of routine activity directly affected the perception of the inhabitant, leading to conditions in which a foot could walk but not dance, an eye could see but not envision, where a hand could grasp but not create.² Often mistaken as a precursor to some form of parametric or “blob” architecture, the Endless House is ultimately a theoretical proposition that seeks a *poetic* sense for everyday life, allowing fluid images to arise between categories, forms and function, based on an active participation of the inhabitants with perceptions incited by the work.³

Although Kiesler’s vision for relating to the everyday world drastically differs from Kiefer, and the project even had a few prospective clients interested in having it built, the fact that the Endless House was thought to be at its best when constructed as a “participatory stage” (at 1:1 scale) in New York’s Museum of Modern Art in 1960, allows us to consider important analogies with Kiefer’s installations since each provide critical alternatives to the contemporary infatuation with aesthetic ideals in art and architecture that have only increased since early modernity. While never realized at the MoMA, when understood as an ever-evolving project aimed at enlivening human interaction with lived space, resonances between Kiesler and Kiefer become fruitful in the sense that each emphasize the interaction with architecture and its contents as people move through space, exploring their environments.⁴ Using Kiesler’s writings as a

² See Frederick Kiesler’s “Pseudo-Functionalism in Modern Architecture,” in *Frederick Kiesler 1890-1965*, ed. Yehuda Safran (London: Architectural Association, 1989), 57.

³ The history of the Endless House is also recounted by Angeliki Sioli in her essay “Is the Endless a House” in *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 7, ed. Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2016), 282, wherein she traces the origins of the house back to a first version exhibited at the Koonz Gallery in New York and through its continual development made apparent in later publications such as the *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Vogue*, *Art in America*, and *Time* (1959).

⁴ R.L. Held suggests that despite the efforts of both Kiesler and Arthur Drexler (the Director of architecture for the Museum of Modern Art) no suitable builder was found to underwrite the construction cost estimated for the House,

guide, we see that even the bronze, aluminum, wood, granite, and concrete forms of *Us, You, Me*, (Figure 5.1) or the cave-like spatial cone of *Bucephalus* (Figure 5.2) incorporate many of the architect's ideas of theatrical space begun in his *Space Stage* (1924) (Figure 5.3), the *Abstract Gallery* or *Surrealist Gallery* (1942) and the evolution of his *Vessel of Fire*, a sculptural work that morphed into various models of the House presented to the public between 1950 and 1961 (Figure 5.4 & Figure 5.5).⁵ These works have been understood as different manifestations of the House, just as we have seen how Kiefer's installations involve the continuous transformation of spaces and themes that span the entirety of his career. Although completely different in terms of form and style, the rotating motifs in Kiefer's work give off the sense of things in continuous flux, and the synesthetic imagining evoked by his work can thus be seen to resemble Kiesler's desire to relate individual pieces to an infinite cosmos of connections, carefully correlated between artistic and architectural constructions.

The basis on which the Endless House rests was Kiesler's concept of "Correalism," a theoretical perspective involving the idea that man was the nucleus of ever-occurring forces that came from the world of Nature, Art and Technology. Correalism sought to develop an attitude towards nature, art, and technology, aimed at enhancing everyday life for others. Its central tenet was to employ technology towards new forms of art and theatre and ultimately towards new

at approximately 100,000 dollars, which far exceeded the 12, 000-dollar grant Kiesler received from the R.H. Gottesman Foundation. See R.L. Held's *Endless innovations: Frederick Kiesler's Theory and Scenic Design* (Ann Arbor MI: UMI Research Press, 1982), 67.

⁵ *Us, You, Me*, was the last work that Kiesler attempted before his death, parts of which were exhibited at the Martha Jackson Gallery in the spring of 1966. The sculpture consisted of 37 pieces arranged over a length of 48 feet and the unfinished pieces were cast posthumously and shown by Howard Wise in 1969. Included in the exhibition catalogue was Kiesler's concept for the installation, said by Held to be "a metaphor for civilization whereby the sculpture was conceived as an island on which man is shown in various aspects from his triumph to his rush for success in the nuclear age and the supremacy of money." In the center of the work hangs a gong which Kiesler intended to have the spectator strike. The stand from which the gong is supported is inscribed with a poem Kiesler wrote to express "the guiding spirit of the total coordination of these sculptures," which reads: "Us, You, Me ... so swift/to roar from rift to rift/a prey of/nature's gift/to man/for self-destruction/resist sweet madman/the drive to wound or kill/have the guts/to live your depths/security is/you, me, us." See Held, 65.



Figure 5.1 Frederick Kiesler, *Us, You, Me* (1962-1963). Mixed media. From <https://www.jasonmccoyinc.com/the-estate-of-frederick-kiesler>



Figure 5.2 Frederick Kiesler during work on the sculpture *Bucephalus* (1964). From <https://www.arkitektuel.com/sonsuz-ev/>

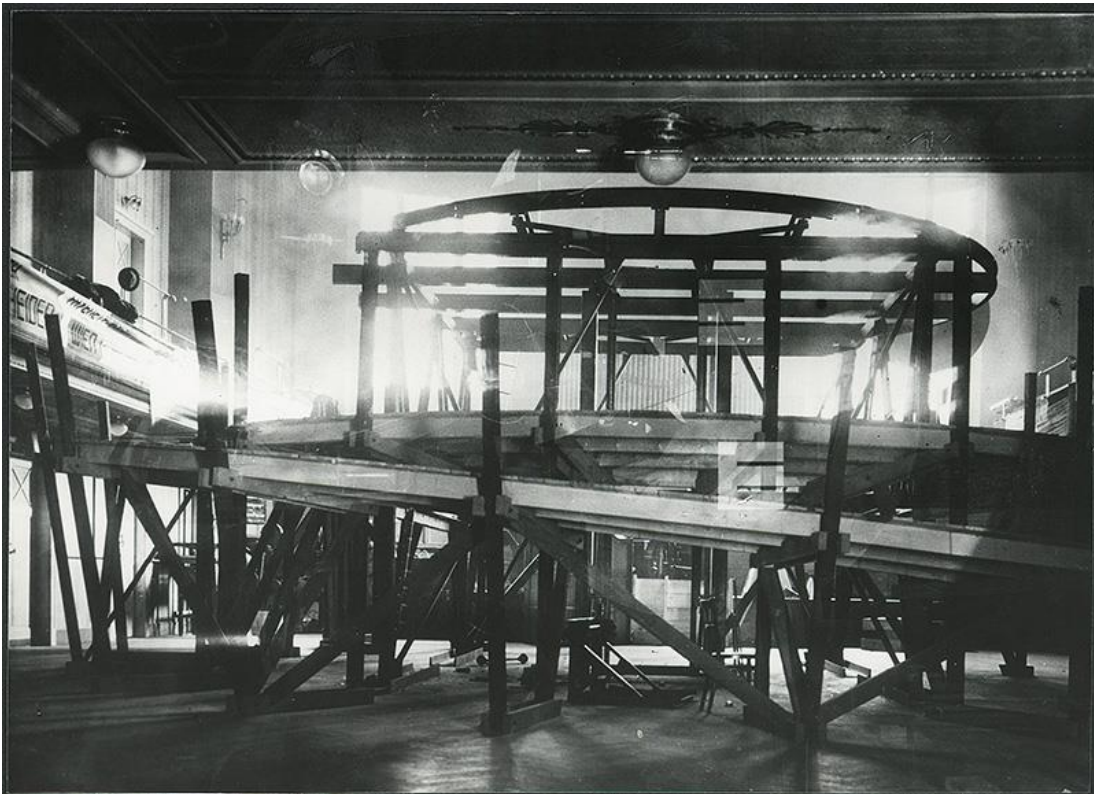


Figure 5.3 Frederick Kiesler *Space Stage (Raumbühne)* (1924) at the *International Exhibition of New Theater Techniques*, Vienna. From <http://www.dreamideamachine.com/en/?p=24375>

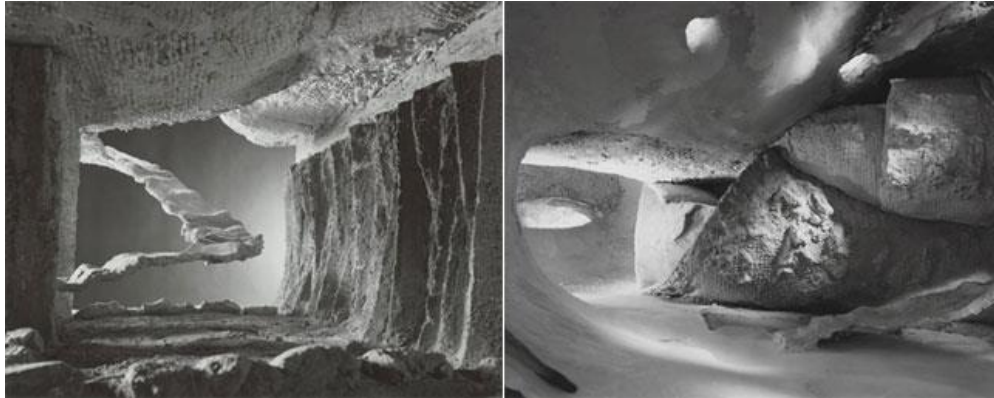


Figure 5.4 Frederick Kiesler, interior views of the Endless House model (1959) for *Visionary Architecture* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1960. From https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2015/07/16/the-animation-of-frederick-kieslers-endless-house/

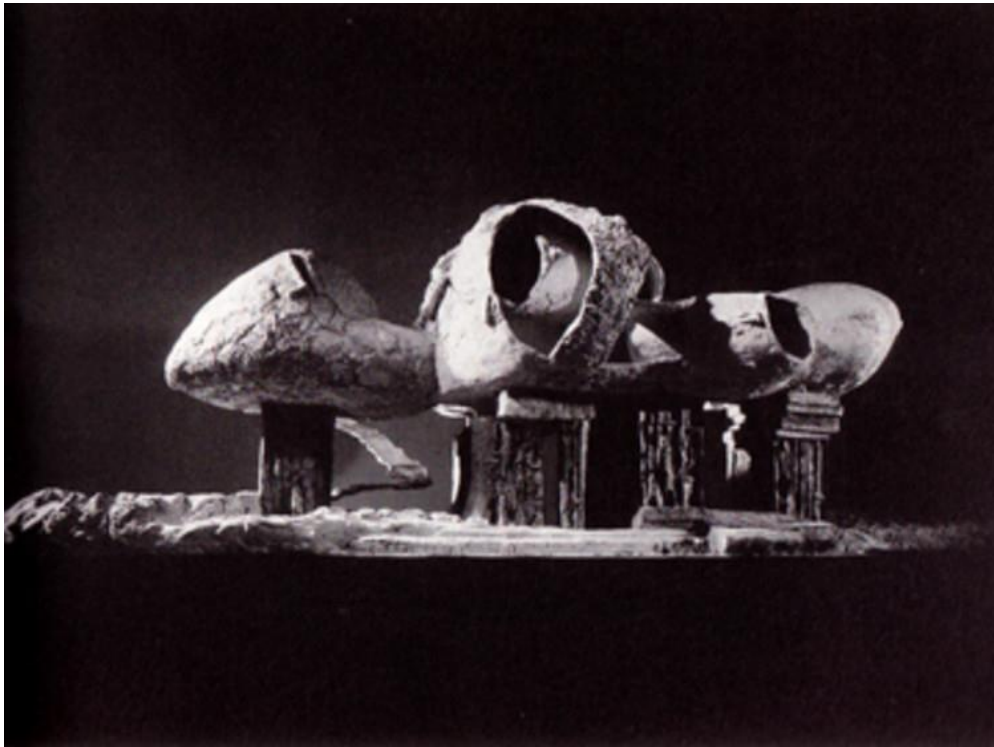


Figure 5.5 Frederick Kiesler. Endless House model (1959) for *Visionary Architecture* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1960. From <https://www.archdaily.com/126651/ad-classics-endless-house-friedrick-kiesler>

ways of living that would satisfy “man’s very basic need for being in union with the cosmos.”⁶ I would argue that there is here an important resonance with Kiefer’s aim to integrate organic and inorganic materials as well as traditional and industrial modes of production that dramatically impact our perception of the world. Moreover, Kiefer’s combined forms of artistic and architectural work have increasingly broadened to include influences that also seek cosmic correlation. For example, if in 1969-1970 Kiefer’s body appeared in works like *Occupations*, *Heroic Symbols*, or *To Genet*, to “test the madness of Nazism,” works such as *Sol Invictus* (Figure 5.6), *Man under a Pyramid* (Figure 5.7), or *I Hold All Indias In My Hand* (Figure 5.8) (all from 1995) show an important return of Kiefer’s own body after his move to France that expresses “desire for fusion or union with the cosmos.”⁷ In *I Hold All Indias In My Hand* we find references to Robert Fludd and Quevedo y Villegas (via the title of the work) collapsed into the representation of Kiefer’s singular figure placed within a geographical context also reminiscent of old representations of astrological man. Likewise, woodcuts and books such as *For Robert Fludd* (1996) (Figure 5.9) take the sunflower out of the context of earlier work to do with Nazi architecture (such as *Ashflower* 1995) to express what Daniel Arasse suggests is “an image of free movement of cosmic flux and the possibility of regeneration.”⁸ Most of Kiefer’s works from the mid-1990s share a similar concern as the sources of these works since they are based on “syncretic forms of knowledge as a means to access a magical, living unity of the world.”⁹ As is well-known to epitomize the progression of Kiefer’s work, Kiefer’s physical acts of painting and building have come to depend upon creating a tense communion between the body and the

⁶ Ibid. 75.

⁷ Daniel Arrase, *Anselm Kiefer*, 256-265.

⁸ Ibid., 263.

⁹ Ibid., 262-263.



Figure 5.6 *Sol Invictus* (1995). Sunflower seeds and emulsion on burlap, 476 x 280 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.



Figure 5.7 *Man under a Pyramid* (1995). Emulsion, acrylic, shellac and ash on burlap, 73.0 x 50.4 cm. From <https://artblart.com/tag/anselm-kiefer-man-under-a-pyramid/>



Figure 5.8 *I Hold All Indias In My Hand* (1995). Woodcut, shellac, and acrylic on canvas, 275 x 192 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.



Figure 5.9 *To Robert Fludd* (1996). 17-page book, acrylic and emulsion on photographs on cardboard, 103.5 x 81.5 x 11 cm. From Daniel Arasse, *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001. 237

world through various “tools” of construction whereby the context of the environment is as important as the work itself.¹⁰

While Kiefer’s living and working in his studios warrant the most crucial comparisons with Kiesler’s House it is worthwhile first noting a curious coincidence. Both artists exhibited work in the Parisian Grand Palais. In fact, Kiefer transformed the same entry hall some eighty years after Kiesler. In 1925, Kiesler constructed a monumental environment within the hall as part of the International Theatre section of the Paris World Fair (Figure 5.10), which included plans for his “Optophon” and “Endless Theatres” as well as the “City in Space,” each designed to relate the body to the spatial organizations found in the complex pictorial objects and sculptural work of the later 1950s and 1960s. In 2007, Kiefer’s installation for *Monumenta 7* transformed the newly renovated nave of the Palais with steel houses set alongside his impending *Starfall* tower (Figure 5.11) so that crumbled concrete, clay, branches, sunflowers and other salvaged materials (Figure 5.12) create dramatic tensions with a venue often seen as a monument to humankind’s dreams of progress while encompassing “the birth and death of the universe.”

Relating the installation to a series of paintings with the same title, Kiefer suggests:

All these stars that are born and die every day like human beings ... when a star dies, it explodes and becomes incandescent, white, exploding and sending all sorts of debris and dust into the universe at unimaginable distances. This matter comes together, coagulates and forms a new star, another star. *Sternenfall* speaks of this universal metabolism, this metabolism of nature and stars. The title encompasses not just our lives but the universe¹¹

Because Kiefer’s installation is placed in a venue associated with capitalist culture and the beginnings of the pleasure industry, the dispersed pieces of his creations come together to evoke

¹⁰ See Frederick Kiesler’s *Inside the Endless House; Art, People, and Architecture: A Journal* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 573.

¹¹ *Réunion des musées nationaux – Grand Palais*, “Monumenta 2007: Chute d’étoiles (Falling stars), Anselm Kiefer (May 30 – July 8 2007),” accessed June 15, 2020, *Monumenta*, <https://www.grandpalais.fr/en/article/monumenta>.

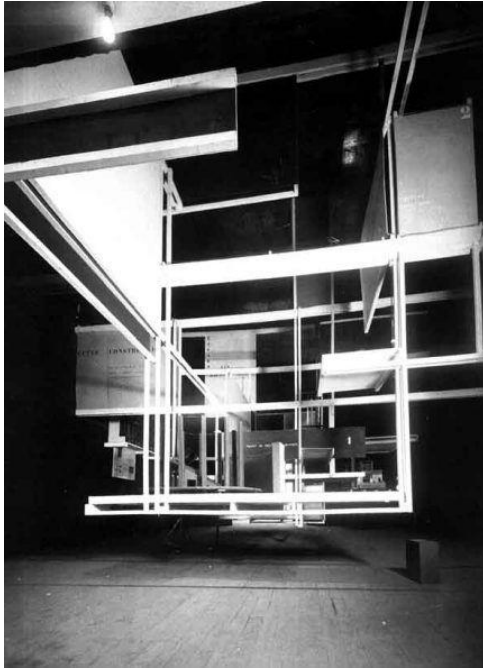


Figure 5.10 Frederick Kiesler, *City in Space*, Grand Palais (1925). Frederick and Lillian Kiesler foundation. From <https://thecharnelhouse.org/2013/11/19/fred-erick-kiesler-city-of-space-1925/>



Figure 5.11 *Starfall* tower at Monumenta 7, Grand Palais, (2007). From http://www.chanot.fr/kief_plan

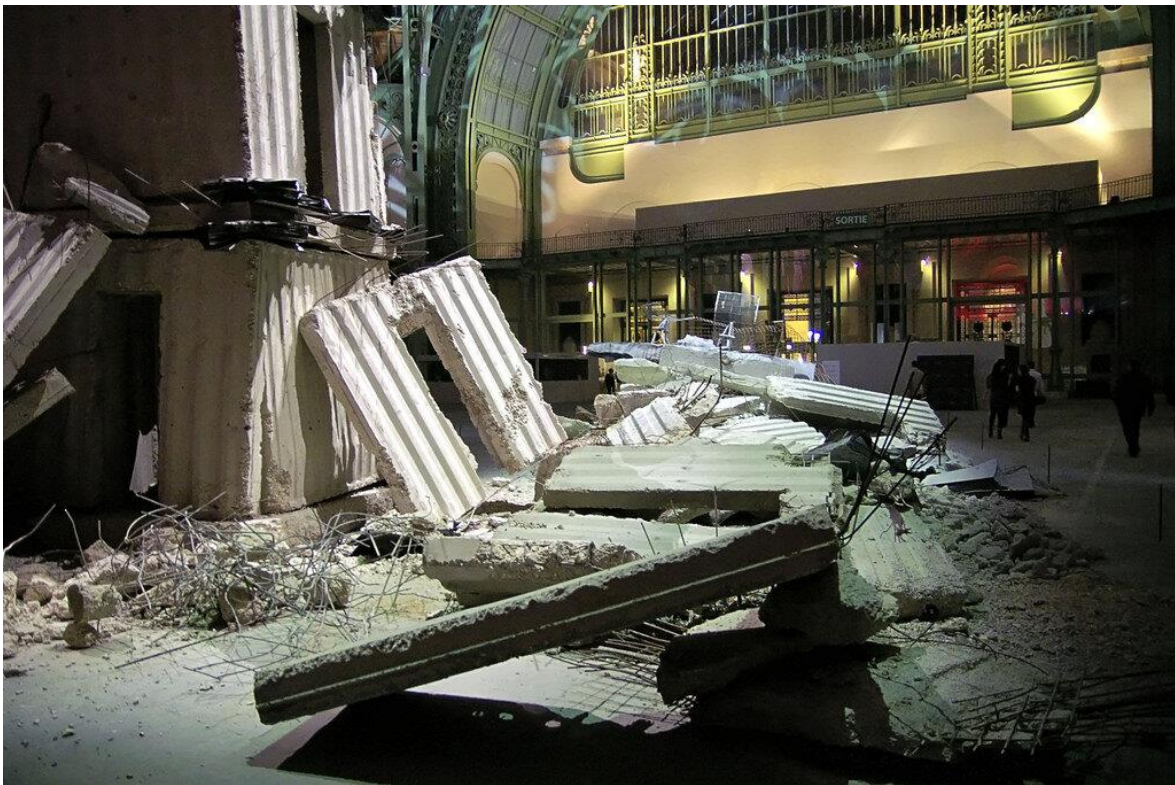


Figure 5.12 *Starfall* and sculptural elements at Monumenta 7, Grand Palais (2007). From <http://minimalexposition.blogspot.com/2009/08/friday-photos-anselm-kiefer-monumenta.html>

a sense of both unity and fragmentation in relation to the desire for cosmic interconnection. This embodies a similar critical attitude that Kiesler held towards the modern world and his belief that art should point up reasons as to why man was out of tune with the universe.

In other words, as with Kiesler whose work engaged the technological world and acknowledged scientific assumptions concerning the infinity of the universe, analogies between science, philosophy and art have more and more become part of the way Kiefer discusses his work. This has included reference to alphanumeric codes used by NASA to classify celestial bodies; scientific research into how copper, formed by stars, is also found in the human body; as well as associations drawn to the emptiness of the molecular structure of atoms, of which Kiefer suggests: “We are all empty. I think spirituality is dissolving back into this emptiness.”¹² Even his most recent fascination with String Theory has led Kiefer back to the alchemical writings of Robert Fludd, which is still a major influence found at his recent *Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot* installation at the White Cube Gallery in London (2019-2020) (Figure 5.13). For this exhibition, the gallery’s central corridor is transformed to display thirty glass vitrines full of swirling coils of plastic tubing and electrical cables with hand written formulas by Albert Einstein and Edward Witten (among others) that express a kind of “organized chaos theory” (Figure 5.14).¹³ With emphasis on “the looped connection of all things” via the “vibratory base” of the universe, a panel discussion with Kiefer, Hans Obrist, Mónica Bello, Priya Natarajan, Ben Okri, Marcus du Sautoy and Janne Sirén confirmed relationships between Kiefer’s work and

¹² Cited by Arasse from Laurie Attias’ article, “Anselm Kiefer’s Identity Crisis,” *ARTnews*, vol. 96, Issue 6 (1997): 110. Included within the shifting of Kiefer’s work, from proportions that were existential to a more “global, geological history,” is Kiefer’s more direct engagement with the technological world. This is evident not only in his attempt to purchase a decommissioned nuclear reactor in Koblenz but his visit to Cern in 2015, at which time he toured Europe’s particle physics center near Geneva. During this visit “Kiefer was inspired by his meeting with leading scientists and his tour of the gargantuan Hadron Collider.” See *Artlyst*, “Anselm Kiefer Meets Science at Cern’s Monumental Hadron Collider,” Jan. 5, 2015, <https://www.artlyst.com/news/anselm-kiefer-meets-science-at-cerns-monumental-hadron-collider/>.

¹³ Edward Witten is an American theoretical physicist who lends his name to one of the new paintings at the *Superstrings, runes, the norms, Gordian knot* exhibition at the White Cube, Bermondsey, London.



Figure 5.13 Hall with vitrines from *Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot*, White Cube Gallery, London (2019-2020). 30 painting vitrines, each mixed media in steel and glass frames, 20 vitrines 382 x 192 x 35 cm., 10 vitrines 382 x 282 x 35 cm. From https://whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/anselm_kiefer_bermondsey_2019



Figure 5.14 Vitrines from *Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot*, White Cube Gallery, London (2019-2020). Mixed media in steel and glass frames, 382 x 192 x 35 cm. From the exhibition book *Anselm Kiefer: Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot*. London: White Cube, 2020.

Kiesler's interrelated idea of the Universe as a single unit, where everything is connected in an endless sequence of change.¹⁴ Just as Kiesler perceived the universe to be based on polarizing elements that were integrated by the very nature of their opposing forces, "like the attraction of positive and negative poles of a magnet," analogies drawn between Kiefer's work, science, mythology, and the harmony of music, evince a network of endless parallels with the theories Kiesler aimed to express in his art.¹⁵ Thus, even while drastically different than the De Stijl influences in Kiesler's earlier work or the curvilinear forms of the later Endless House, the greater similarity rests on their desire to connect the finite with the infinite structure of the cosmos through physical and psychological aspects of human environments.

The emphasis on continuity in diversity that underpins Correalism is also found in Kiesler's *Galaxy* creations. These relate to Kiefer's work not only because they addressed the realities of the technological world prevalent at the time but because they typically appeared as grouped units comprised of combined forms of painting, sculpture and drawing, where the space between different parts was considered as important as the works themselves.¹⁶ In the article "Notes on Correalism," Kiesler remarked,

¹⁴ At a panel discussion I attended on Jan. 13, 2020 for the exhibition *Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot* at the White Cube Gallery, London, much of the discussion was based on establishing similarities and differences between old world myths and stories and recent scientific speculation used to explain the contemporary structure of reality. In the essay "Anselm Kiefer and the Realms of Language," Janne Sirén summarizes much of the discussion, stating, "This idea of comprehensive and all-encompassing knowledge, about everything that is known and unknown, is as much the stuff of religion and myths, of language, as it is of theoretical physics. And, ultimately, the vocabulary of theoretical physics—including the mathematical jargon of the *Veneziano Amplitude* (understood as the birth of string theory)—is just one among many man-made modes of communicating the universal in collusion with the particular." See "Anselm Kiefer and the Realms of Language," in *Anselm Kiefer: Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot* (London: White Cube, 2020), 53.

¹⁵ See Franco 43-44. Originally cited in Frederick Kiesler's "Design-Correlation." *VVV Magazine* 11 (1942), 7.

¹⁶ Although access to Kiesler's early Galaxies is difficult because much of the work was destroyed, photographs of these works show an early series of portraits composed of heads detached from bodies that created the tension necessary for a "co-real" bond to form between the works. In the later 1940s the creation of galaxies took three main paths which consist of ones that portrayed personalities such as Jean Arp, Marcel Duchamp, Mette Cunningham, E.E. Cummings, Henri Laugier, and André Breton. A second included works that became intrinsic to the development of the Endless House, the third series were sculptural works that Kiesler considered to be environmental art.

I find my paintings consisting of many paintings, smaller and larger units, separated from each other through intervals of varying dimensions, yet belonging together as one cluster, one nova, one galaxy. My sculptures I also see as consisting of divergent chunks of matter, held together yet apart, appearing like galactic structures, each part leading to a co-existence, of correality with the others. Yet this correlation, whether close or far apart, does not necessarily depend on physical links. As in wireless electricity, there is correlation without connection. These ‘endless’ paintings and sculptures lead a life of inner cohesion. Between these corporeal units there lies the various empty fields of tension that hold the parts together like planets in a void¹⁷

Developed from the 1920s onward, Kiesler’s *Galaxies* played a foremost role in his concept of Endless Space and distinctly resemble Kiefer’s own shuffling of works, formats and titles that circulate, reform, and intermix meanings at his exhibitions. Most comparable are the later *Galaxies* since these involved continuously flowing, sculptural environments that engaged the realities of the atomic age, nuclear physics and space exploration in ways that resemble Kiefer’s linking of scientific and mythical symbols and analogies. Key to recognize however is that even if the Endless House is more nurturing when compared to some of Kiesler’s *Galaxies* or Kiefer’s installations, when the House is understood as a project that depends upon our own reconstruction of a complex mosaic of items—models, sketches, plans and photographs of various exhibitions, along with the many principles and stories in his writings—it functions similarly to Kiefer’s work since each involve an integrating and disintegrating relationship with every other part of their creations whereby resemblance creates a semblance of unity.¹⁸

Importantly, is also in this sense that these works draw influence from Surrealism,

Whose analogical approach sought to show the world to be not a conglomeration of fragments, apprehended by compartmentalized logical thinking, but as a wholeness in which everything seduces everything else¹⁹

¹⁷ Frederick Kiesler, *Notes on Correalism, Fifteen Americans*. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1952): 8.

¹⁸ Dieter Bogner, “Inside the Endless House,” in *Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space*, ed. Dieter Bogner and Peter Noever. (Ostfilder: Hatje Cantz, 2001), 12. See also Michael Wilk “Affinity to Infinity: The Endlessness, Correalism, and *Galaxies* of Frederick Kiesler,” M.Arch Thesis, (McGill University, 1999), 26.

¹⁹ See Franco, 44-46; Bogner, 12; and Wilk, 26.

For the Surrealists this “required a vast transformation of reality and suggested the distortion of rational standards providing the opportunity for ‘the otherness’ to appear.” This was an approach ultimately aimed at bridging the gap between the imagination and the senses through the creation of environments.²⁰

Seeing as the House was to consist of boundaries set in accordance to the “scale of one’s living,” whereby “poetry should play a role in everyday life,” the very fact that Kiefer physically inhabits atmospheres dedicated to the generation of unending interconnection in his studios recalls Kiesler’s emphasis on a participatory space of architecture. Such similarities exist even despite the fact that Kiefer’s work has been physically realized and is drastically different than the flowing forms that Kiesler adamantly proposed. Indeed, the cohesion of work at La Ribaute bears resemblance to the fragments of drawings, models, installations, and even the act of reading Kiesler’s book *Inside the Endless House* (1966) since the person reading the book participates with “mediate memories and projections that bind the disperse parts of the project together as if they were in the House itself.”²¹ In other words, although the House is often misunderstood to be a model for single family dwelling (whereby structural deficiencies have been seen to be the sole reason it never materialized), when understood as “an adaptable concept meant to enliven human imagination in interior space,” it distinctly resembles the continuous expansion of Kiefer’s studios—from Buchen to Höpfingen, from Barjac to Marais and Croissy—not only due to the emphasis placed on the “life-giving correlation of environments” but because each depends less upon visual resemblance than stages and degrees of active transformation.²²

²⁰ Franco, 46-48.

²¹ Ibid., 25.

²² The following is a complete list of Kiefer’s studios since 1968. The Studio in Karlsruhe (1968-71); the Schoolhouse “Attic” studio in Walldürn-Hornbach/Oldenwald, (1971-82); a former garage in Buchen/Odenwald, Walldürner Strasse (1982-86); the former factory storehouse in Buchen/Odenwald, Dieselstrasse (1986-93); the former brickworks factory in Höpfingen/Odenwald; a loft in New York City, 20 East 20th Street (1991-94); the former silk mill in Barjac, France, Gard (1993-2007); the Paris studio in the former department storehouse in

Just as the Surreal work of art “could change its form and shift itself into something else by engaging the observer's imagination in the process of reinterpretation,” it is the degree to which Kiefer realizes a form of “superposition” and “circularity,” not only from work to work but across all his studios, that can be seen to expand upon Kiesler’s ideas of a correlated Endlessness.²³

For example, if reading across Kiesler’s work allows us to bring together various fragments, whereby we can imagine curvilinear walls, floors and ceilings “coming to life with paintings incorporated into high or low reliefs, into ‘the plactisicity of full sculpture,’” even a walk through the underground and over-ground passageways at La Ribaute, into the pavilions and glass houses, allows us to weave together early and later influences on Kiefer. This experience distinctly recalls Kiesler’s vision of architecture as “a content, growing out of man’s relationship to the unknown (the universe), whereby an expression of a flow of life forces could become intensified to the point of intrinsic expansion.”²⁴ Just as Correalism allowed the various fragments of Kiesler’s work to function as possible conduits for metaphors, where we may imagine inclined floors curving into walls that make us aware of walking, openings through which light would change according to the moods of the day, or even “swinging wall sections, folding, rolling and fanning overhead and sideways” (that allowed the inhabitant to become the “real architect” of the House), Kiefer’s studios are only understood in coordination with different

Croissy-Beaubourg, La Samaritaine (2007-present). Most recently, Kiefer has also set up a studio south of Lisbon Portugal. I have focused on La Ribaute in its relation to architecture due to the diversity of physical constructions and my access to the complex, yet the above list is included to emphasize the fact that the environments of Kiefer’s studios have always been central to the production of his work and that his practice is typically spread out across various locations.

²³ Franco, 46.

²⁴ Of the House Anthony Vidler suggests, “Once it’s built it becomes a fixed point, an end, a glob, a blob, a nothing because it is no longer transmutable ... So the question is how you keep modeling.” It is thus the degree to which Kiefer’s studios evoke the sense of an active and continuous transformation that substantiates similarities between his work and Kiesler. See Anthony Vidler’s comments in the essay and symposium “Rethinking Kiesler: Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space Symposium, in *Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space*, ed. Dieter Bogner and Peter Noever (Ostfilder: Hatje Cantz, 2001) 85, 81-86.

elements wherein the act of perceiving them derives consistency from an ensemble of various works and places.²⁵ Such participation is substantiated by the discussion of Kiefer's workplaces put forth by Danièle Cohn who suggests, "Kiefer's studios are so similar that they might be made to overlap, superimpose even: they are of one and the same form that each change or metamorphosis materializes a little more. If Barjac contained everything that Kiefer brought over from Germany, Croissy incorporates Barjac."²⁶ To the question aren't the successive studios one and the same, Kiefer replies,

They are the same places, they might overlap almost exactly. Through the current one the earlier ones can be seen, though if one takes a photograph of these studios one is presented with a different image. But photographs are not reality²⁷

Accessing La Ribaute, we see how the books, paintings, sculptures and the rooms that house them, all contain "a rush of ideas," which allows the studio, itself a "container," to be seen as a "model reconstruction" for Kiefer, wherein "objects can be put on trial, set in certain contexts to see how they survive and the associations that they accrue."²⁸ Similar to Kiesler's emphasis on "co-ordinated forces" that could "condition, limit, push, pull, support one another; which leap together and leap apart like groups of acrobats in a circus, who transform themselves from one unit of two or more bodies into another unit, without losing their balance," La Ribaute involves a knowing body as an entity invariably extended through the environment. This consists of meanings of the entire place including: the sound and silence of works and spaces, their tactile sensibilities, the resonance of materials, and even the smell and sense of humidity, all essential for images to arise through the motility of embodied perception.²⁹ On top of the leaden room,

²⁵ Cohn, 144.

²⁶ Ibid., 228.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ See Kevin Power's essay in the monograph *Anselm Kiefer: Für Chlebnikov* (London: White Cube; First Edition, 2005).

²⁹ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 148.

glass houses with clothes suspended from the ceiling, towers and broken staircases, even the roughhewn concrete in the caves, halls or truncated entrances at Barjac (all heavily marked by the processes of their construction) recall the massive canvasses of oceans made of congealed oils so thick that they too resemble the encrusted earth in some of his painted landscapes. Noting Kiesler's belief that space could not be understood "planimetrically flattened out," but only by "tramping through it," because Kiefer's studio inscribes upon things a resemblance that gives rise to bodily vision, the fragments he employs become materials for "new arrangements in space, where new realities are constructed out of them."³⁰ It is also in this sense that our movement through the arrangement (as in music) of various materials, paintings, sculptures, and houses, can be seen to resemble the "looped networks" of connections that Kiesler imagined forming an "aura" around the inhabitant of the Endless House. Since even time itself is experienced as layered in material/spatial relationships, because every moment shows and reappears in different works and locations, is why Kiefer's studios reveal a fundamental circularity in all organismic relationships to their environments and that our behavior is in turn affected by our environment. In other words, because continuity was the most important theme of the House, and the guiding principle for most of its components and surrounding forms, is why Kiefer's studios align with Kiesler's basic principle of unity that occurs through man's active participation of perceiving and reinterpreting the reality in which he lives.³¹

If we follow Kiesler's understanding of architecture as presented in his essay "The Future: Notes on Architecture as Sculpture," it might even be surmised that the intertwining of

³⁰ Frederick Kiesler, *Inside the Endless House*, 511.

³¹ My characterization of this experience can also be drawn to Kiefer's *Ash Flower*, of which Jonathan Jones suggests, "there is no sense of a single moment," because the painting, as with the spaces in his studios, seems "to span epochs ... It is ancient. Kiefer includes time in his art (as a matter of fact, it took from 1983 to 1997 to build up *Ash Flower*, and every minute shows). His tangled, archaeological surfaces, layered with paper, woodcuts and charred photographs, are mirrors of time itself." See Jonathan Jones, "Anselm Kiefer's work at the Royal Academy "an exciting rollercoaster ride of beauty, horror and history," *The Guardian*, Sept. 22, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/sep/22/anselm-kiefer-royal-academy-of-arts-review>.

bodily perception with the environment of Kiefer's studio could be seen to link what Kiesler felt Le Corbusier achieved for religion (at Ronchamp) and Frank Lloyd Wright achieved for art (at The Guggenheim) with the act of living itself precisely because the things produced are not yet objects in an aesthetic sense but rather actions that emerge and reveal connections in a spatialized setting.³² When we imagine Kiefer operating machines, enacting the processes of his painting, or conducting the workmen, we can also imagine that being able to dwell so fully within his studios even the many travels Kiefer has taken beyond the physical location of his studios belong to his studios completely since everything leads back to the work accomplished therein.³³ Because the studio itself is what arranges objects and materials into a "moving composition" is precisely why it can be seen to actualize a "practical sculpture" that echoes Kiesler's conception of the Endless as:

Expansion from the nucleus of an idea to such vast dimensions that you can 'live with it.' Art itself becomes the environment; in other words, the work steps down from the pedestal where it was an illustration of some idea or some memory and expands to become living space. Thus, it defines total space and induces endlessness in concrete form³⁴

It is also in this sense that Kiefer's studios can be seen to go beyond the architectural projects Kiesler himself realized in the everyday world. Indeed, even if the continuity Kiesler longed for was partially realized in his construction of The Shrine of the Book, which is said to accomplish "a real feeling in which ancient and the modern exist in complete harmony ... where Israel's past and future are dramatically joined and therefore closed," La Ribaute more closely resembles Kiesler's House since it extends the domain of dwelling into a cosmos of present yet

³² In the sense that all works connect through spatiality, "because it becomes, in the location that is the studio, the action of relating space as spatiality." See Cohn, 26, 12-13, 16-17.

³³ Ibid., 244-245.

³⁴ Kiesler, *Inside the Endless House*, 394-395.

continually unravelling phenomena.³⁵ Since there really is no beginning or end to the connections in Kiefer's studios, or rather because "all ends return to meet their beginnings," is why time itself is experienced as thick and endowed with dimensions, becoming in a sense eternal. Precisely because our perception is altered by the space through which the body moves is why La Ribaute can be seen to realize a form of Endless Architecture that functions as a *poetic image*, communicates universally, and transcends present time.

Day to day, it is indeed the case that Kiefer lives in his studios. Upon my tour of La Ribaute it was apparent that although he had since moved to his studio outside of Paris, connections between the main living areas within the renovated Silkmoth factory, which include a library and modest kitchen and sleeping area (Figure 5.15), were linked to the main studios though a large corrugated pipe, held above the ground by scaffolds (Figure 5.16 & Figure 5.17). The environment of the studio, still filled with an overpowering smell of paint, also appeared as if it may have supported mixed-uses of practical and poetic dwelling at one time or another (Figure 5.18 & Figure 5.19). In his 2020 article, Karl Ove Knausgaard recounts his visit to Kiefer's Croissy studio, stating, "A long table in the middle [of the studio] was set for three people. It looked strange, as if someone had planned an elegant meal in an auto-repair shop." He furthermore notes,

The remarkable mismatch between the size of the rooms and the furnishings. The effect being a bit like seeing a room on a movie set—up close it looked like any other room, but taking a few steps back, you realize that the room was inside a huge studio that did not relate to it in any way, but was merely a vessel for it and that feeling of 'home' was leaking out of it in every direction³⁶

³⁵ This comparison speculates upon differences between Kiesler's Shrine of the Book and Kiefer's work where I suggest that the experience of La Ribaute more closely resembles the "radically new, uncertain vistas of space-time" of the House. My position draws influence from the critique of The Shrine by Lebbeus Woods in the essay "Frederick J. Kiesler: Out of Time" in *Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space*, ed. Dieter Bogner and Peter Noever (Los Angeles: MAK Center for Art and Architecture, 2001), 63-64.

³⁶ See Karl Ove Knausgaard's online article "Into the Black Forest with the Greatest Living Artist," *The New York Times*.



Figure 5.15 Sleeping quarters at La Ribaute. From <http://www.philippechancel.com/albums/anselm-kiefer/content/ed9w2379/>



Figure 5.16 Corrugated tube hall connecting studio and living spaces, La Ribaute. From Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.

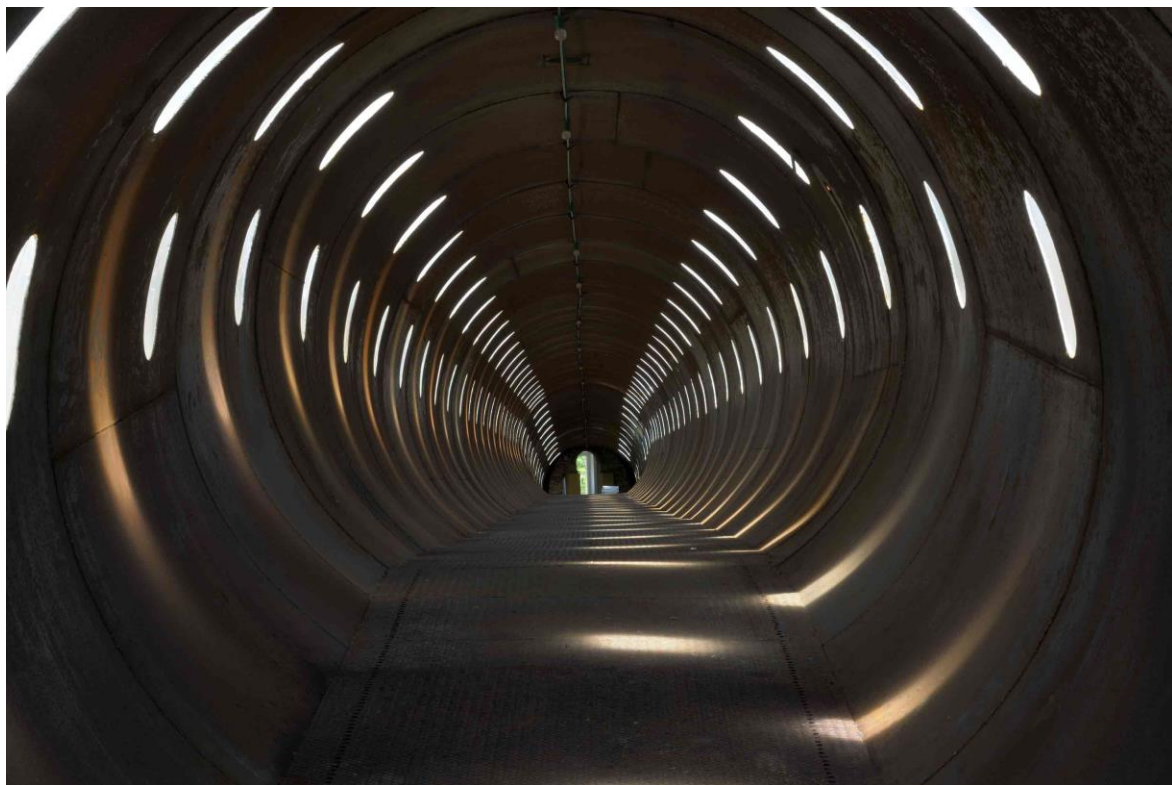


Figure 5.17 Interior of tunnel hall, La Ribaute. From Atelier Anselm Kiefer, photograph by Charles Duprat.



Figure 5.18 Studio areas at Ribaute. From <http://www.philippechancel.com/albums/anselm-kiefer/>



Figure 5.19 Anselm Kiefer in a studio at La Ribaute. Still from Sophie Fiennes' film *Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow*, 2011. Amoeba films.

At La Ribaute, there is also evidence that Kiefer had “turned all his studios into artworks themselves, so it was as if he lived *in* his art.” While impossible to know for certain the degree to which everyday functions were performed in studio areas filled with machines, massive paintings and various sized sculptural objects including a collection of war machinery and tanks (at Croissy), all of the spaces seem to mirror the coagulations formed in his art. Walking from space to space, one feels the amount of time and experimentation undertaken in the worn and layered quality of spaces and materials, each haunted by a global, practical and implicit relation between body and things. Knausgaard concludes: “If Kiefer was similar to any mythological figure, it must be King Midas: All he touched turned into art. If that was a blessing or a curse, only he could know.”³⁷

While there is no doubt that Kiefer’s studios realize deep associations between everyday living and ideas that arouse a sense of the living unity of the world, it is both the distance retained from the everyday world outside the studio and the pervasive ambiguity in his creations that have continuously raised questions pertaining to its value as a model for architects. As with comparisons to Hejduk, the central paradox being that while Kiesler’s most significant work was never built it was still intended as a model attuned to “everyday life” for others, Kiefer, who has built and lives within a form of Endless Architecture, creates uninhabitable, ever-shifting worlds of uncomfortable historical and cultural connections that may only be appropriate for Kiefer himself. Thus, while there may be no distinct borders between Kiefer’s own life and the work in his studio in the sense that the work undertaken does not differ as it does for the majority of human beings from life and leisure, Kiefer paradoxically suggests,

There is a special border, the border between art and life that often shifts deceptively. Yet, without this border, there is no art. In the process of being produced, art borrows material from life, and the traces of life still shine through the completed work of art. But,

³⁷ Ibid.

at the same time, the distance from life is the essence, the substance of art, And, yet, life has still left its traces. The more scarred the work of art is by the battles waged on the borders between art and life, the more interesting it becomes³⁸

Moreover, although Kiefer deals with global systems of complex, reciprocal relationships that emerge through ceaselessly connected processes and works, there is an obvious difference between Kiesler's desire for "unbroken wholeness" and the "ever-failing images" that emerge within Kiefer's creations. This is not to say that Kiefer's studios do not produce a deeply enhanced sense of self in relation to the world but rather that central strands in his work, its themes and mood, so easily slip into territories so boundless in its terror and conjure forms of knowledge now so impossible to imagine let alone depict that the polarizations inherent in his work both do and do not adhere as a viable model for architecture. As with his exhibitions, entering into Kiefer's studios we find historical and mythical fragments endlessly superimposed upon one another in spaces that amplify a vertiginous digging down or rising up from the ashes of the modern world to look at the stars.³⁹ On one hand, this resembles Kiesler's desire to find one's place in the world and the capacity to build a cosmos. On the other, the sheer amount of ruins seemingly buried under the destruction from World Wars and amongst archaic or modern remnants do not express the exuberance for everyday life that animated Kiesler's work. Whereas Kiesler felt mankind should "confront his problems," finding in culture, art and theatre a "new philosophical position" that could recalibrate man in correlation with the cosmos, Kiefer does not find, nor does he seem to seek, such reconciliation.⁴⁰ Of the work brought from La Ribaute to the Grand Palais Kiefer has stated, "What you see is despair, I am completely desperate. I cannot

³⁸ *Anselm Kiefer: Next Year in Jerusalem*, June 16, 2020, <https://gagosian.com/exhibitions/2010/anselm-kiefer-next-year-in-jerusalem/>.

³⁹ Lia Rumma, Foreword to *Anselm Kiefer: Merkaba*. Milan: Edizioni Charta, 2006, 15.

⁴⁰ Held, 75.

explain why I am here. It's more than mourning, it's despair."⁴¹ Furthermore, Kiefer defines his work as a "chance to escape from the commonplace, from the division between labor and life, and consequently between man and himself."⁴² Substantiating new lessons for architects from within this difficult terrain is perhaps possible upon further entry into Kiefer's studios with the aid of the artist's own written accounts at La Ribaute, published in his *Anselm Kiefer: Notebooks Volume 1: 1998-1999*, alongside further comparisons with Kiesler.

Notwithstanding the fact that that Kiefer's writing will be shown to elucidate crucial differences, an initial pass through the *Notebooks* (2017) presents notable similarities with Kiesler's large volume *Inside the Endless House* (1966) for the fact that both are structured as journals and travel logs that provide intimate reflections on the way they see the world. In each case this affords insight into the interrelationship between consciousness and everyday phenomena. They are likewise comparable since the style of writing goes beyond mere descriptions, permitting an expression of what Martha Franco states (of Kiesler's writing) is "not drawable or even buildable but rather 'tellable,' so that they give us an analogy to sensorial perceptions of everyday living."⁴³ In fact, much of the four hundred pages of Kiefer's *Notebooks*

⁴¹ See Alan Riding, "An Artist sets up House(s) at the Grand Palais," *The New York Times* (May, 31, 2007), np. See also Sean O'Hagan's article "Anselm Kiefer: When I make a truly great painting, then I feel real." *The Guardian*, Nov. 25, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/nov/25/all>.

⁴² Cohn, 13. In an interview with Danièle Cohn, Kiefer states: "I've never asked myself the question whether I have to live where I work. It has just simply always been like that. I have never 'gone out to work,' as people say. Taken as a whole, for me work is not something objectified, reified. This work in the studios has nothing to do with 'work' so far as it differs, as it does for the majority of human beings, from both life and leisure." And yet, Cohn continues, "Anselm Kiefer has always been opposed to the idea orchestrated by Joseph Beuys that life and art are one and the same thing; that every man is, or at least can be, an artist; and that art and individual mythology intersect. [Kiefer states] 'One should in no case mix up the parallel between life and work with the contrary couple of life and art. But how can it be contended, as I myself have always emphasized that life and art are opposite, and yet affirm that for me life and work are one and the same thing? Isn't this contradictory?' Deliberately employing the traditional Marxist language as revisited by the advocates of the Frankfurt School ... it is by using the term 'work' that Kiefer avoids the contradiction. He explicitly rejects the vocabulary and romantic ideology espoused by Beuys circle. No, everyone is not an artist, and life is not immediately 'art'. Art is work, and the only life worth the effort of living is one that is work through and through – and work that is not a gesture, a pose, but action that leads to conclusion. Kiefer refers to this as 'direct action,' opposing it to the distance one must accept once the work has attained the status of an object, an object of evaluation, detached from process and activity." See Cohn, 12-13.

⁴³ Franco, 25.

address many of Kiesler's central concerns, whom, inspired by Surrealist work and under the influence of Andre Breton sought out "magical," "poetic qualities" that,

Challenge inhabitants in an open and creative way by involving an awareness of the actual conditions of life-space [that could] shelter those continuous mutations of life force that seem to be part of the practical as well as of the magical⁴⁴

Just as the Endless House sought to thwart pure function or comfort, whereby even turning on a faucet, eating a meal, or entering the House in a ritualistic fashion, could enliven everyday encounters, Kiefer's awareness of the deep structure of perception emerges from quotidian things such as contemplating a swim, the delay of turning on a computer, or detailed descriptions of the relationships of smell to memory, his travels to India (and even questions surrounding his decision of whether to become a writer or a painter) much of which is inspired by the surroundings at La Ribaute.⁴⁵ Comparing the rhythm of working in the studio to the flow of a river (versus its "frozen" counterpart at his exhibitions), an entry dated "30/7/98" refers to the circuitous flow of water through the property, whereby its streams are contemplated in terms of spatial and metaphoric networks, "routed through detours that preserve the water a bit longer and use it in a wide variety of applications." Kiefer continues:

It's like the sensation of going through a labyrinth, you know there's an easier way, but you make your way through the labyrinth and that delays you. but only with such a delay do you finally sense how you are suspended between everything. you sense your existence. the labyrinth forces you to linger. if there's nothing that can make you linger, then you're certain the way you've chosen is the shortest, and that is something only

⁴⁴ This concern is consistent with the Surrealist artists and writers of the early twentieth century, as, for example, witnessed in Andre Breton's essay "The Crisis of the Object" (1936) and his call for "a creative relationship between the real and what exists beyond the real, by revealing the marvelous in everyday life." See Andre Breton, *Surrealism and Painting* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 275-280.

⁴⁵ Kiefer's decision to become a builder at Barjac is also recounted in his *Notebooks*. In an entry dated "10/1/99" Kiefer writes: "Last summer the credit you procured for yourself with the belief: you're the best painter. Curiously, when others (in the USA) said: 'The best painter on both sides of the Atlantic' the credit slowly disappeared, because when it's no longer a belief, but a plain fact (in the newspapers), the credit vanishes and you need a 'higher' belief. What could this be? It could be there when you claimed you'd found the most comprehensive contextual formula for the world in a painting. Problem: Must it be a painting? Is the production loan tied to profession or can it be freely applied where, according to its nature, there is constriction? (=house in the cosmos)." See Anselm Kiefer, *Anselm Kiefer, Notebooks, Volume 1: 1998-1999*, trans. Tess Lewis, Seagull Books, (2015), 209.

someone who knows what he wants can do. he who knows what he wants never goes through a labyrinth. he who always knows what he wants has forgotten his existence⁴⁶

Along with relating flows of cool and warm water to journeying through new or familiar paths in a city, to distant or near memories, and to the possibilities of “representing empty space,” Kiefer even imagines how water pumped up through sculptures into houses with electrolysis basins onto a lead picture covered with salt may become “the Dead Sea lifted into the third dimension.”⁴⁷

Just as Kiesler was concerned with creating environments in which basic functions are questioned, Kiefer’s imaginative use of pipes, pumps and mechanical networking challenge utilitarian function in order to reinvigorate various metaphorical operations that resemble Kiesler’s foremost goal of recreating a “new belief in the superfluous.”⁴⁸

These types of parallels are found throughout the *Notebooks*. When, for example, Kiefer discusses the concrete stairways he produced at the compound in reference to the poem *The Lay of Love and Death of Christoph Rilke*, stating: “That’s why you have to free them, from their ‘usual’ context by raising them with a crane, like a pale unconscious woman.” He correspondingly asks, “what must be done to the unshapely concrete stairs to turn them into a white unconscious woman? You could picture them as a flag by fastening the stairs to a strong iron girder overhead, so that the steps are like folds.”⁴⁹ By suspending the function normally associated with things like stairs, towers or rooms, Kiefer seems to seek out the “secret magnetism” of architecture that Kiesler felt was epitomized in the enduring presence of the Pyramids or the Parthenon, whose “practical *raison d’être* has long since vanished.”⁵⁰ In this sense, Kiefer’s approach echoes Kiesler’s belief that “it is vision rather than function that is the

⁴⁶ Ibid. 41.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 133-134.

⁴⁸ Frederick Kiesler, “The Future: Notes on Architecture as Sculpture,” *Art in America* Vol 2. Issue 3, (May-June, 1966): 67. See also Kiesler, *Inside the Endless House*, 568.

⁴⁹ Anselm Kiefer, 163.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 118.

prime mover of architecture,” which in the case of their work (as with ancient examples above) is the scale of human dwelling between heaven and earth.⁵¹

Seen in this way Kiefer’s writing lends value to architecture in the same way as Kiesler’s *Journal* because it expresses a fundamental concern for a physical world in dialogue with the psyche. From this perspective, Kiefer’s writing also distinctly resembles Kiesler’s critique of the modern world found in many of the architect’s articles, essays, manifestos and his *Inside the Endless House*, since it too aims at putting off immediate ends, confuses regular associations, and expands potential experiences of the body in space. Just as Kiesler states, “You wander into habits thoughtlessly because they offer guidance to security. Insecurity however is what we search for,” Kiefer writes: “In the studio, you make every possible effort, use all your discipline, your willpower, sometimes at great cost, in order that something unforeseen, something unprecedented happens.”⁵² This recalls Kiesler’s proclamation: “We like tradition for the security it offers, but at the same time we retain a sneaking hope that the unusual might happen at the usual moment. It is the artist’s role to conjure that happening.”⁵³

The *Notebooks* thus affirm how Kiefer’s creations go beyond the attributes that architecture shares with other arts, because whereas some forms of painting, sculpture, film or music are experiences we can voluntarily quit, Kiefer’s studios envelop the inhabitant completely. In so doing, they address a way of living as a narrative story whose elements are Kiefer’s own habits. Even the use of materials found throughout the studio are “never inconsequential to meaning but seem to resolve into the perception of higher purpose and

⁵¹ Kiesler, *Inside the Endless House*, 395. See also Michael Auping’s discussion of Kiefer’s studio, when he states, “With the exception of a modest living area, all of the buildings on Kiefer’s land, as well as the land itself, have become a monumental staging area for exploring the relationship between heaven and earth.” Michael Auping, *Anselm Kiefer: Heaven and Earth*, 43-44.

⁵² Kiefer, 223

⁵³ Kiesler, 395.

emptiness.”⁵⁴ This happens because they allow us to contemplate culture in a sort of raw state, in the process of making, as potential meanings that may emerge in Kiefer’s acts of living and working amongst them.

Consequently, if there can be said to be a difference between Kiefer’s exhibitions and his studios, his writing substantiates how the work undertaken at La Ribaute does not remain frozen remnants of the artist’s process but rather point to the very possibility of architectural atmospheres to impact our mental and physical moods and sense of the world. Just as Kiesler’s early designs for the theatre explored “interaction and interrelation between actor and spectator, which later in his career involved the same relationship between art and the viewer and between man and his environment,” at the heart of Kiefer’s process there lies a concern with organizing work, arranging and continuously recreating a flow of ideas where space itself organizes the mental and emotional orientation of the artist. In other words, because entire environments, as much as individual works, are perpetually expanded and reorganized as he lives and works there is why Kiefer’s studios resound with Kiesler’s belief that “The house freed from aesthetic tradition, [could become] a living creature” since it “lives as a whole and in details.”⁵⁵ From this standpoint, Kiesler’s statement “The architect is his house. The house is the architect,” and Kiefer’s confession, “La Ribaute is not for exhibition. It is my Brain,” each suggest an alignment of mind, body and imagination through *perception* as *action* rather than adhering to the nineteenth-century premise of an inhabitant as a passive observer.

Nevertheless, although Kiefer’s writing resembles Kiesler’s call for architecture to move beyond operations that contributed to “settling into a pre-equipped world” that would be “seen, touched, and smelled in a standard, aesthetic way,” when we compare what Kiefer writes to his

⁵⁴ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 216.

⁵⁵ Kiesler, “Manifesto on Correalism,” *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 2 (June 1949): 92.

physical productions of tottering towers, ruinous sculptures or the aggressive archeological surfaces of his canvasses, fundamental gaps appear between his writing and the work he physically creates that show important distinctions with Kiesler. For instance, whereas Kiesler's writing can be seen to be like Hejduk's *Masques*, since it becomes an inherent part of the image of the architecture of the House—replete with details that allow his *Journal* to become a “representation of its own content through writing”—this differs from Kiefer's writing, which remains oblique to the subjects he paints, sculpts, or builds.⁵⁶ Unlike Kiesler (or Hejduk) who used poetic language to emphasize adaptability and appropriateness with regards to specific architectural situations meant to enrich inhabitants' daily habits, Kiefer talks less about the immediate effect of writing and even less about the impact his creations may have on others. This allows the *Notebooks* to add to the ambivalent character of his work rather than promoting a concern for the quotidian aspects of everyday life.⁵⁷ Although some of Kiesler's writings on “Magic” certainly involve esoteric forms of knowledge, and while there are examples of sculptural experiments such as his *Galaxy* installed beside Philip Johnson's Glass House in 1953 that articulate “a schizophrenic modern subject; no longer unified but oscillating violently between the architectural forces of technological determinism and regressive primitivism,” Kiesler's most deeply sought aim was the betterment of everyday world for others, firmly devoted to health.⁵⁸ In the last essay he published, Kiesler stated:

We want building solely dedicated to the meaning of everyday's life, life in all its aspects for the old, the young, the poet, the worker, the priest, jailbirds, thieves, money-changers, executives and truckers. To make it clear for all of us: the guiding principle for our future relationship to all people is the new awareness throughout the world of time-space continuity. Everyone and every part, nature and man-made objects, are subject to the

⁵⁶ Franco, 37.

⁵⁷ Cohn, 137.

⁵⁸ Michael Chapman, “Alien Doubles: Magic, Myth and Taboo in the Spatial Experiments of Frederick Kiesler,” in *Cultural Crossroads: Proceedings of the 26th International SAHANZ Conference the University of Auckland*, (July 2009), 2.

interrelationship of a single continuum, whose beginning and whose end are unknown to man⁵⁹

As shown, this emphasis on a truly architectural expression of life for the everyday person would sharply contrast with Kiefer, whose ambivalent work retains a distance from the everyday world and even the definition of “reality” associated with that world. Rather than using the everyday world as a place to implement change through gallery, shop, or residential designs, Kiefer has preferred the far flung remoteness of his studios to explore a reality prefaced on poetic connectivity, wherein only artworks or poetry are “real ... things categorically distinct from life.”⁶⁰ Accordingly, if the recurrent topics in the *Notebooks* such as “Waiting,” “Longing,” or “Withdrawal,” present similarities to Kiesler (and Duchamp) since discovery depends upon the delay between emergence and disappearance, because Kiefer’s writing does not solidify in clear intentions is why it differs from Kiesler’s view of art as “the only constant in human society [which] must take an active part in forming a new world image.”⁶¹ It is therefore the emphasis placed upon permanent transformation and ambiguity that has led his critics to question whether La Ribaute “represents an extension of Kiefer’s engagement with the world or a retreat from it [since] the dissolution of history into myth [may involve] the loss of history’s relevance to present context and action.”⁶² From this perspective, even Kiefer’s earlier work with Germanic themes can be seen to be more like Kiesler’s theories because it points “onwards towards some hoped-for resolution that might be attained in the linear progression of history.”⁶³ Much of the work produced after Kiefer’s move to France is different in the sense that it involves a “free-sliding, lateral displacement of themes.” This occurs to such a degree that in the same way

⁵⁹ Frederick Kiesler, “The Future: Notes on Architecture as Sculpture,” 64.

⁶⁰ Cohn, 143.

⁶¹ Held, 83.

⁶² McEvelley, *Anselm Kiefer: Let A Thousand Flowers Bloom* (London: Anthony d’Offay Gallery, 2009), 22.

⁶³ Ibid.

flowers become symbols of both birth and death “at times pointing upward towards the sun, and downward as their fragility tends towards decomposition in the earth,” Kiefer’s paintings, towers and stairways involve both the ascendant striving of mankind to erect monuments and their inevitable collapse over time.⁶⁴ As a consequence, while similar to Kiesler’s Correalism because senses and imagination become one for reinterpreting the event of architecture, questions remain as to what steps Kiefer’s work gives towards achieving an equilibrium between man and world.⁶⁵ From this standpoint, Kiefer’s creations might even garner the same critique Kiesler offered to Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright who, after praising Ronchamp and the Guggenheim, in the same breath, characterized them as “abstractions of art and death” that did not fulfill an architecture of common life.⁶⁶

Consistent with the paradoxical essence of Kiefer’s work it is nonetheless the sustained sense of ambiguity that has been shown to offer important lessons for architects. In our present context, more and more driven by the application of direct information and expedient, reductive processes in the design of buildings that result in environments which standardize and instrumentalize attitudes towards life, Kiefer’s work holds an essential coherence with Kiesler when we consider that neither of their works are really inhabitable in an everyday sense.⁶⁷ Indeed, even while Kiesler emphasizes how exhilarating it would be to live in the House, and Kiefer accentuates distance from the everyday world, the value of these works rests not on

⁶⁴ Ibid, 9.

⁶⁵ In 1942 Kiesler stated, “We the inheritors of chaos, must be the architects of a new unity,” from “Inheritors of Chaos,” *Time* (November 2, 1942): 47. Such a difference in attitude is also witnessed in Kiesler’s essay “Kiesler by Kiesler,” in *Architectural Forum*, CXXXIII (September 1965): 64, and R.L Held’s *Endless Innovations*, 75.

⁶⁶ Kiesler, “The Future: Notes on Architecture as Sculpture,” 64.

⁶⁷ I owe much to Angeliki Sioli for this line of argumentation, wherein she questions: “Wouldn’t this deliberate insecurity make living sometimes difficult or even unbearable? Wouldn’t it be hard to live in an environment that forbids complacency, where every breath is a new experience for the body, where the question of ‘being’ is perpetually asked? Even if this kind of living were possible, wouldn’t its inhabitants become accustomed to its novelty, and stop being fascinated by the challenges it offers, eventually treating it in the same banal way as conventional architecture?” Sioli, 277-278.

actualizing spaces in which the everyday person could live, but rather maintaining a space for “poetic adaptation” that “an imaginative designer may adopt with infinite variety.”⁶⁸ In this sense, Kiefer’s oeuvre shows value for architecture in the same way as the House “existed, and still exists, as a *poetic concept* for adaptation that had to be developed to permit active and conscious living.”⁶⁹

In other words, even if the works produced after his move to France “are no longer limited to morally charged subjects,” it is also true that having freed himself from the German context we have been more apt to perceive his work as a model that allows itself to be taken apart and put back together in ways that provide lessons regarding a process of poetic making in distinctly architectural terms. It is also in this sense that the “emptiness” often mentioned by Kiefer in his *Notebooks* speaks to the codependence and co-emergence of the world, showing how it can be structured differently by seeing through the illusion of independence precisely because it transcends the particularities that root them to their respective times and places. Whereas Kiesler visualized space “not as emptiness,” but rather “filled with the forces of repulsion and attraction between objects,”⁷⁰ it is the intensity by which Kiefer embodies such connections that his work shows how “nothing is found that is not dependently arisen. For that reason, nothing is found that is not empty.”⁷¹ Surely, the many distances opened up in his work

⁶⁸ Frederick Kiesler, “Frederick Kiesler: The Endless house on Camera Three,” 88. In the essay “Is the Endless a House,” Sioli furthermore suggests that a literal domestic environment isn’t what Kiesler intended. Referring to an interview Kiesler gave to CBS wherein he suggested that the Endless “depends on location ... on the desire and size of the family, on the amount of money available and it should not be difficult for any imaginative designer to adopt that with an infinite variety.” Sioli concludes that Kiesler’s design did not adhere to an ideal standard but rather that the House “existed, and still exists, as a poetic concept for adaptation that had to be developed to permit active and conscious living.” See Sioli, *Is the Endless a House*, 277-278. The original source of Sioli’s argumentation stems from Frederick Kiesler’s, “Frederick Kiesler: The Endless house on Camera Three,” in *Frederick Kiesler: Endless House 1947-1961*, ed. Dieter Bogner (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2003), 88.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 277-278.

⁷⁰ Held, 148.

⁷¹ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 231. Pérez-Gómez citing Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch’s interpretation of Nargajuna’s *Stanzas of the Middle Way* in their book *The Embodied Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 220-226.

express how “emptiness may be understood to underscore fulfillment,” whereby sense arises from emptiness itself.⁷² On top of each being viable models for architecture, substantiating the particular ways Kiefer expands on the work of his predecessors is best summarized upon a final inspection of inherent differences between Kiesler’s “correlation” of nature, art and technology and Kiefer’s choice to build in the foreign location of Barjac precisely due to the distance it maintains from the everyday world, from Germany, and the natural context that surrounds it.

When we consider the emphasis Kiesler placed on the relation between natural and technological environments in his ideas of “Correlation,” where we find “a form of resolution by finding inspiration in nature,” this profoundly differs from Kiefer since in no way can his work be seen as the direct mimesis of natural form. Even while the studio at La Ribaute has been seen to “germinate like plants that soar up from the ground ... forming part of a cyclic task [of] spiral formations that fashion the land,” Kiefer’s work is far removed from emphasizing sensual experience as a primary means for relating to everyday life or the natural world. There is, for example, a vast difference between the perpetually twilit atmospheres in Kiefer exhibitions and studios and Kiesler’s Color Clock designed for the first version of the House, wherein prismatic glass and mirrors could “potentially receive light from the sun and divide it into spectral colors throughout the day so that the inhabitant would become aware of his own dynamic integration with natural forces.”⁷³ As Michael Auping suggests, “even when Kiefer is not using lead, his landscapes are always overcast, as if caught in an infinite winter, suggesting either cataclysm or the prelude to one.”⁷⁴ Such ambivalent atmospheres continue in the spatial experiences of La Ribaute, especially when we consider his use of symbols wherein the spiritual, psychological,

⁷² Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 232.

⁷³ Franco, 23. Originally from Frederick Kiesler “Endless House and its psychological lighting,” *Interiors* (CX), (Nov. 1950), 122-129.

⁷⁴ Auping, 50.

and historical collide without resolution. Moreover, although situated in the natural beauty of the Cévennes, the works and spaces of La Ribaute avoid reinforcing the desire to merge with the beauty of a landscape or a sunset because these could be seen to “imbue natural relationships with a direct correlation to the human imagination.”⁷⁵ While Kiefer has dealt with the relationship of the land as a scarred entity, where the excessive crackling surfaces of his canvasses relate to the Fall of Man or some Great War, Cohn reminds us that “the landscape at Barjac has never inspired a single painting.”⁷⁶ Of his time at La Ribaute, Cohn remarks: Kiefer has “built within the landscape but also far from the landscape, to escape the thrall of the romantic association with natural beauty that was so much a part of the myths that led up to the war.”⁷⁷ Thus, while Kiefer writes about the beauty of a sunset, the experience of light on water, or the smell of perfume that may return enriched in his *Notebooks*, his depiction of landscapes, seascapes and architecture, as well as his acts of building, are all laden with a heavy history and ironic tensions. This radically differs from Kiesler’s suggestion that man should “find inspiration in nature for obtaining a more humanized interaction with technology since only the artist is near enough to nature to find a solution for this encountering.”⁷⁸ Rather than seeking inspiration in nature, it is by transporting everything from Germany into the emptiness of the foreign environment of France that it was left to “cultural connections constructed by the artist to evoke a strangeness, sought and discovered in this new location [and] this does not necessarily entail assimilation to the place.”⁷⁹

As a consequence, although there is no denying that the sensuousness of Kiefer’s work is intrinsic to reconciling the body with organic processes of the world and its cycles of creation,

⁷⁵ Kiefer, 164.

⁷⁶ Cohn, 38.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Franco, 14.

⁷⁹ Cohn, 243.

destruction and rebirth, his use of materials is always intertwined with ruins and symbols that ward off direct resemblance. As has been seen, straw, charcoal, glass, concrete and lead all take on cultural associations precisely because he reframes relationships between these substances and the deeper strata of stories in his creations. Moreover, even while “natural” or chemical reactions are allowed to take over the creative process, or where paintings in process are burnt, slashed, buried or exposed to the elements, whatever process is involved it prevents his work from appearing simply natural or beautiful. Turning instead to relics of human existence, to emblems, analogies and symbols—transforming paintings or constructions themselves into ruins and symbols—his work has come to involve a “geological” form of painting and building that emphasize invisible connections between past and present, the beneath and above, “the within and beyond, where geology is congruous to history and history to natural science.”⁸⁰ “Charged with symbols,” if there is nature in Kiefer’s work it is not perceived as an “inexplicable transcendent force.” Rather, subsumed with history, his work functions like *language*, speaking through us and capturing meanings in its mesh.⁸¹

Tied to this is the crucial difference that in Kiesler’s writings on Correalism we get the feeling “that the future and the present should be changed by the technology generated from poetry, art, theatre, architecture and science, whose (shared) goal is the revelation of the unity of the cosmos and how man can retain his appropriate part in that cosmos.”⁸² This differs from the type and variety of tensions in Kiefer’s work and his belief that “We come from somewhere. [Our] movement isn’t just into the future, it’s into the past and into the future at the same time.”⁸³ Certainly, most of Kiefer’s work gives us a sense that as disastrous as it may be we are part of

⁸⁰ Ibid., 244.

⁸¹ Cohn, 143.

⁸² Held, 88

⁸³ Kyle Chayka, “Anselm Kiefer Talks Religion, Politics, Ruins at 92y,” *Hyperallergic* (blog), November 3, 2010, <https://hyperallergic.com/11870/anselm-kiefer-92y/>.

history, and this comes to us in prereflective atmospheres which give rise to reflective, poetic thoughts about potential historical meanings. It is in this sense that Kiefer's work refers to memories and events *from the world* and, though overwhelming, involves us with collective, communal memory.

Moreover, although Kiesler and Kiefer seek means by which to relate to the world, when we compare the tangible aspects of Kiefer's work with Kiesler's project, we see how the House actually retains a much wider "gap between its intentionality and its materiality."⁸⁴ This is evident in the difference between Kiesler's many written works that promote intervening in the everyday world and his ever-evolving models and drawings that never find their place within it. Kiefer's work *works* in the opposite direction. In spite of ambiguous intentions in his writing, the material presence of his work *speaks* back to us and makes us seek transformative words. In fact, although Kiefer himself questions *why* one should build in such a fashion, stating of his constructions "It would be nice to create this, but the question remains: what for?" his creations provide insight into *how* one might create in ways that relate to the world and its history.⁸⁵ Because his work is so full of layered associations, which over time has built up meanings of the work as a whole through its own presence, is why the images we receive originate somewhere deep down in our linguistic consciousness—a place of language that Maurice Merleau-Ponty understood as part of the *Flesh of the World*.⁸⁶ As we have seen, an encounter with Kiefer's work is like language in the sense that it brings out perceptual meanings by allowing us to gather together previous expressions in an eternity of possibilities that are always ready to be remade.

⁸⁴ Franco, 53-54.

⁸⁵ In his *Notebooks* Kiefer states: "a house lined with lead over water, which would be the source of the danube. A glass house with a ruined concrete staircase, impassable, crumpled, with clothing hung from the ceiling: jacob's ladder. there would be places in which the houses are clustered together and others where they are more widely scattered. It would be nice to create this, but the question remains: what for?" See Kiefer, *Anselm Kiefer: Notebooks, Vol 1: 1998-1999*, 118.

⁸⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World*, xxxiii.

As such, it is the essence of the architectural gesture in Kiefer's work that "once made, modifies the situation of the universal enterprise in which we are all engaged constructing new signs from signs, putting new signification at our disposal, and expands culture the way a new organ might expand our bodily capacities."⁸⁷

Such a difference is crucial seeing as even if their works inspire within us different modes by which to reinterpret the reality in which we live, the difficulty found with Kiesler's House relates to connections formed between senses and the imagination because they do not always "intersect" the intersubjective common ground. As Martha Franco suggests, the Endless House "projects to us a place where one is supposed to be freed from every restriction for the senses, presents itself in such an 'out of this world' manner, that the mere idea of building it finds no place."⁸⁸ Kiefer on the other hand has given place to the imagination by living through the connections he creates. Just as Arasse recognizes that it was not by chance or convenience but necessity which led Kiefer to use his own body as the vehicle of his creativity in 1969 and again in 1995 upon his arrival in France, the physical traces of the creator's presence remains everywhere in paintings, materials, and constructions. Precisely because Kiefer's work speaks to us in the same dialogical mode, the same space, as if we were addressing another person, the meanings that are transferred to us involve dialogue, necessarily completed through the participation and interpretation of the inhabitant, which leads back to the world.⁸⁹

It is here that Kiefer's creations offer their most important lessons to architects, because if the House can be seen to "misconstrue the imagination as something other than real," as if it was issuing out of Kiesler's own subjectivity (as in the model of the creative genius), Kiefer's

⁸⁷ Ibid., 80.

⁸⁸ Franco, 53-54.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 2-3.

work gives place to the imagination “in an original sense in the act of perceiving the world.”⁹⁰ Whereas the suspension of the House outside the world can be seen to reinforce the common (mis)understanding of “reality,” wherein the imagination could appear as if it was “other than real”—like “an act of science-fiction,” where one “switches on his mind and imagines, then comes back to reality”—the reality to which Kiefer refers is the form reality adopts *through us* and the degree of reality something attains which it commits to the world. Indeed, the physical location of Kiefer’s studios reveals how his “immersion in a plurality of heterogeneous worlds and eras” has allowed him to turn a piece of wilderness into the full development of a “world within a world” based on an entanglement of language and culture.⁹¹ It is precisely in this sense that Kiefer’s representations enter the real, become real, by employing the imagination, which arises out of situations he has formed.

Another discrepancy is that unlike Kiesler, whose writing on sculpture and architecture show that “in the formal or informal process of experimentation he thought ‘intuition’ began to work, which referred to portions of the mind that operate without generating its thinking into language constructs,” Kiefer (while accepting that connections may be random) is also aware of the links between the emotive and cognitive dimension of his creations that employ history as a primary source of influence.⁹² Unlike Kiesler’s writings on theatre and scenic design, which generally show a great deal of research and study into the theatrical scripts under study, some of Kiesler’s writings on sculpture show how he felt “intuition had mysterious effects on a problem under study such as witnessed in the many pages of his *Inside the Endless House* wherein he recounts how his sculptures created themselves without his conscious thought.”⁹³ To the

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Cohn, 243.

⁹² Held, 78.

⁹³ Ibid.

contrary, Kiefer states: “I do a painting because I am interested in a historical event or its mythological context. This gives me the motivation to paint.”⁹⁴ While he is quick to remind us that these topics often change during his processes of making, he recognizes:

There are historical reversals of meaning in language’s fundamental word. the will to originality, rigor and measure in words is therefore no mere aesthetic pleasantry; it is the work that goes on in the essential nucleus of our *dasein*, which is historical existence⁹⁵

When discussing the “distance” that occurs between particular memories he has had of various travels, between places that are suddenly connected by a “shock” that “flashes when something remembered overlaps with something in the present that has no objective relation to what is recalled,” Kiefer incisively addresses the delay between prereflective experience and reflective thought essential to the metaphoric essence of his work and the dynamic structure of neural processes recently substantiated by neuroscience.⁹⁶ Because current studies have shown how properties of the mind such as moods and feelings are not primarily internal (a neural network in the head) but rather shaped by the living body and its actions in the world, we see how Kiefer’s environments allow him to procure connections between sense, imagination and *language* based on symbolic mediations of a fully embodied mind.⁹⁷ Storing works away in containers, weathering his work, or spacing it out over long periods of time and in different locations, Kiefer “bides his time until he has found out what the paintings are waiting for ... [until] they call out ... place themselves in a context, breakaway, demand something.”⁹⁸ This form of recognition is not only triggered by psychological impulses propelled by emotions but through an “action of

⁹⁴ See Alan Riding, “Unseen as He Stares Down History; Look at the Art, Says Anselm Kiefer as He Turns to Jewish Mysticism,” Apr. 3, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/03/arts/unseen-he-stares-down-history-look-art-says-anselm-kiefer-he-turns-jewish.html>.

⁹⁵ Kiefer, 78.

⁹⁶ See Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 142-143.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Anselm Kiefer, 224.

culture” that, like language, carries artist and viewer more closely towards a common universe.⁹⁹ In such moments, memory itself “vibrates with tangible lines of force,” not as a past event that has happened (as in a form of recollection) but because “memory [imagination] is completely real and equipped with the power to mobilize and rekindle ... creativity.”¹⁰⁰ Therefore, in the same way Kiefer had collapsed various historical/cosmic references into an “archetypal body” in works like *I Hold All Indias in My Hand* (1995), the majority of Kiefer’s creations show how achieving any sense of cosmic unity is not some form of mystical delirium experienced alone but rather something deeply shared along with others through collective memory.¹⁰¹ Just as I have suggested that history, language and perception come to meet in Kiefer’s work, his creations open paths between one life and the lives of others by involving both emotive *and* cognitive connections. Because he is so adept at achieving symbiosis while leaving questions of meaning open is why we too are invited to engage in the process of finding and reenacting parallels that require us to traverse various worlds and collapse various worlds into one.

It is this rhetorical act of building that offers the most promising lessons for architects since it requires an act of restoring continuity in the process of creating work. This is an approach that could be radically effective within the common ground of our time. Because Kiefer’s work does not only focus on achieving participation between inner and outer worlds but on the reinterpretation of a *shared world* through experience, it enlivens a process of creation

⁹⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World*, 89.

¹⁰⁰ Cohn, 240.

¹⁰¹ Daniel Arasse refers to Walter Benjamin to make a similar point stating, “Benjamin believes that, as well as being in a state of intoxication, man needs to experience communion with his fellow men in order to communicate with the cosmos ... As with *Occupations*, *Heroic Symbols* and *To Genet*, Kiefer does not consider these self-representations to be self-portraits: his body is an archetype of the ‘human’ body, the instrument and location of a psychic experience: a body that could even be called ‘collective,’ in the way that the ‘self-portraits’ of *I Hold All Indias in My Hand* compress Kiefer, Fludd and Quevedo into a single figure.” It is in this sense that Kiefer’s works “do not exalt solitary mystical delirium, but instead record an experience of the cosmos and form a mirror or memory for those who look at them; as such, they are keeping with a concept Kiefer spoke of in 1985: ‘A work of art is something passing through me as an example to be grasped as precisely as possible by a lot of people. I can’t do anything other than what passes through me.’” From Joseph Beuys, Enzo Cucchi, Anselm Kiefer and Jannis Kounellis, *Ein Gespräch = Una discussion* (Zurich: Parkett-Verlag, 1986), 159. Cited in Arasse, 264-265.

that allows various materials, different spaces and ideas to be transformed, always further, in ways that could prove valuable even in places outside his studios. In other words, because his work depends upon creating thresholds between history and the present is why it serves as a model for possible interventions that could enter into a meaningful dialogue with an existing situation—allowing us to see what already exists in a new light. As we have seen in comparisons with Piranesi, it is because such work opens possible translations into situations in the world that it offers the possibility for “seeing as” that opens a world of fiction (history) pointing to potential interventions in specific contexts that enables different times and meanings to be placed in special relationships. This could be done by playing with the surrounding environment, be it an existing building, landscape, ruin, or even a city, since, no matter the scale, such interventions become embedded in materials and details that become meaningfully placed. Thus, while the meanings we derive from either Kiesler or Kiefer can be constructed in a number of ways, the tensions Kiefer employs awaken a historical consciousness that gives us a perceptual field in which to act. This is essential for cultivating questions that matter, as an imaginative engagement, one that sees the past as part of present experience and action, as something transformable.

Accordingly, while similar to the otherworldly character of some of Kiesler’s creations Kiefer works, also *Other*, points back to a world of architectural communication that, while no longer being built in the “real” world, still exists as the *real* context of any architectural endeavor. This is the case because it shows how meaning arises from “a process of enculturation (beyond the dichotomy of nature and nurture) involving an embodied understanding and skilled engagement in the world, constructed from the bottom up, woven out of the polysemic,

indicative, narrative living language of cultures.”¹⁰² Building upon Kiesler’s approach, whereby the process of making is based on the serendipity found in the ritual act of making, Kiefer’s work shows how:

The architect must act in search of culturally specific poetic images, while accepting the experimental nature of the search, which, like the embodiment of traditional cities or language itself, gives a durable form of perception, conception and reflection for an enactive form of knowledge that layers significance over the world of perception¹⁰³

Expanding upon the phenomenological basis of Kiesler’s project, this *hermeneutic* process places the body at the center of both the creation and reception of the work since embodied wisdom itself becomes central to binding forces of nature, art and technology together. As suggested, the methods Kiefer uses for creating this exchange point to a number of specific strategies for employing contemporary tools in distinctly architectural terms. Possibilities for implementing this critical and poetic approach into the contemporary context become most evident upon a final comparison of Kiefer’s creations with Kiesler’s views on technology which reveal crucial insights with regards to their varying dispositions towards history, its role for the survival of culture, and ultimately human health.¹⁰⁴

If it can be said that Kiesler sought a more direct relationship to nature, and Kiefer distances his work from such concerns, conversely, Kiefer has gone to extraordinary lengths to integrate traditional and mechanical means of production into his creations that reveal just how much his work (while remaining apart from the everyday world) also belongs to the industrial world and the world of our everyday existence. While there are instances where the machine itself plays an important role as an art object in Kiesler’s scenic designs, Kiefer’s approach is different overall because, instead of distinguishing art from the current standards of technology,

¹⁰² Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 157.

¹⁰³ Kiesler, *Inside The Endless House*, 61.

¹⁰⁴ Held, 78.

he tends to “contaminate the language of technology and science with art,” collapsing differences between them. Kiesler’s ideas of “Biotechnique,” understood as “a mode of Correalism applied directly to the production of shelters and practical items” is helpful for pointing out differences in this regard.¹⁰⁵ For instance, whereas Kiesler’s writing on “Biotechnique” sought to “link technological cycles of transformation with historical change in order to slow and disrupt technological progress (to decrease the rate of the cycle) in order to promote more appropriate standards,” by contrast, Kiefer embraces all forms of technology and almost every tool of production (including current standards) in ways that allow the acceleration of the procedures used to actually increase potential connections with the world.¹⁰⁶ Not confined to the continuous tension of a shell structure, Kiefer’s use of metal forging, excavators, the manufacturing of plane fuselage, photography, and even his mention of the “fossil-like” potential of plastic, shows how he is open to employing even the most reductive processes and materials towards poetic dwelling. Working in studios comparable to refineries or mines, these places take on the quality of massive transformers because they absorb, expand, and branch out through multiple activities in ways that reawaken a critical interaction with the cultural world.

As we have seen, even cubic shipping containers, used as a universal standard for the transportation of goods by ship or by rail, are used towards the “transportation” of meanings associated with these recognizable forms. Certainly, the very use of the forms produced from these containers—in the construction of his studios, for towers, tunnels, sculptures, or as

¹⁰⁵ For this line of argumentation, I follow Martha Franco’s critique of Kiesler’s use of technology when considered in relation to the philosophies of Gianni Vattimo because, as she states, “even if the philosopher offers no direct example of the way that the language of technology and science could be contaminated, he makes clear that the idea is not to aestheticize them, but to collapse the difference between technology and art. Kiesler instead, refers to a mimesis between both. He thus differs from Vattimo’s ideas of collapsing them and, on the contrary proposes instead to differentiate them.” See Franco, 16.

¹⁰⁶ In order to pursue studies on “Biotechnique,” Kiesler created a design laboratory at Columbia University (1936 to 1942), which dealt with ways to improve the standard in products such as furniture and construction materials, based on the study of changes within the technological process of mankind. See Franco, 17-19. See also, Frederick Kiesler “On Correalism and Biotechnique,” *Architectural Record* XXXVI (Sept. 1939), 62.

theatrical settings for the Operas *Electra* (2003)—directly engage aspects of the technological world. By virtue of their reappearance in so many different locations the containers even critically absorb the basis of Newtonian physics, which in conjunction with the development of geometric space “made possible the Industrial Revolution and our mobile society along with the common understanding of movement almost anywhere in our global village and its requisite ‘no-places.’”¹⁰⁷ Encountering Kiefer’s work, such preconditioning is effectively “reversed” because it awakens a bodily response to depth not reducible to Cartesian coordinates of breadth and height. Reinvigorating our imagination, and allowing us to ponder different aspects of our world, Kiefer’s towers bring to mind many myths and stories, recalling archaized spires, temples and industrial building on the outskirts of cities. No matter how ephemeral such creations may seem they resonate with the understanding of place in the traditional world, always enacted through ever-transforming stories deeply shared by people intertwined with their surroundings. Of the concrete containers he has employed, Kiefer states:

If I have been using containers for many years, it’s because they’ve always fascinated me. Nomads, they crisscross the entire world. I buy a lot of them, pre-used, damaged, secondhand. And the idea is the same as when I work in disused factories, as I did in Germany, as I still do in Barjac. The lives of hundreds of thousands of workmen over dozens of years are concentrated there, between these walls. This has major implications for my work. In the same way the containers enable me to bring together continents of the whole world, and to create transmission in the way I use them¹⁰⁸

Certainly, the use of these pre-cast forms employed as building modules, or broken into ruinous pieces for sculptures, allows concrete to take on a phenomenic quality where its moldable form (made from particles and dust) reinforce associations with vulgar productions of the industrial

¹⁰⁷ As suggested by Pérez-Gómez, Galileo conceived a physics that differed greatly from the Aristotelian world view which was primary until the later Renaissance. “In Galileo’s world the ontological difference between the superlunary heavens and the sublunary world was obliterated. The universe became a homogenous geometric void in which bodies, both celestial and terrestrial, were objectified and described in accordance with the same mathematical laws.” Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 118-119.

¹⁰⁸ Cohn, 17. From *Anselm Kiefer au Grand Palais* (Paris: Editions du Regard, 2007), 58.

world as well as more noble historical referents. Because concrete is used to isolate radioactive material there is a correlation to be drawn to his use of lead as far as radiation absorption is concerned but mostly because it is a trade-material employed poetically. As with the capacity of fire to both separate and fuse substances in Kiefer's work, his use of concrete hinges on both creation and destruction. As with his use of lead, it includes both fluid and brittle forms. In fact, no matter the materials Kiefer employs, the circulation of energy used to produce his work seems to cause us to redirect inquiry to the context in which we exist because they destroy "the spectator's sense that all technology or transformative processes are always good—either for human beings or for whatever it is that they are transforming."¹⁰⁹ Thus, instead of disrupting the cycle or trying to modify the historical process of production and consumption, Kiefer invests modern materials and technological processes with symbolic meanings that move in many directions all at once.

Additionally, whereas Kiesler believed that a proper application of technology (art) could occur only when the pursuit of profit was abandoned, Kiefer goes further in the sense that even the capital generated from the increasingly profitable sale of his work is cycled back into his productions. Kiefer's purchase of massive workplaces, machines, the employment of assistants and workmen all partakes in the physical use and transformation of systems endlessly related to the everyday world.¹¹⁰ Over the years, we see how he has employed production and consumption typically related to capitalistic gain into the creation of poetic work. Continuing the cycle, this process transmutes the "currency" of economic exchange—the cycle of mechanical and monetary systems—into the creation of works that embody the "raising" up of meanings

¹⁰⁹ See Matthew Biro's *Anselm Kiefer and the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, 207-210.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 228.

concealed in the everyday world.¹¹¹ Kiefer has stated: “I am interested in the connection between spiritual power and technological power, one might even say the technological possibilities of spiritual power.”¹¹² And, his use of technology indeed goes far to suggest how our post-industrial environments could become part of our everyday life in a more meaningful sense. In fact, the essential trajectory of Kiefer’s work seems to grant the possibility of attaining spiritual wholeness by establishing free and open relationships between materials and ideas that alter prosaic functions and systems by destabilizing sedimented meanings. Hence, the ambiguity central to Kiefer’s productions again increases the possibility to connect with the world because it suggests ways of bringing historical narrative, technology and art into a closer relation to everyday reality.

It is for these reasons that even while different than facets of Kiesler’s theory that strove for “balance between Nature, Technology and Art,” Kiefer’s work shows consistency with the third and final principle of Kiesler’s Correlation, which sought to enliven spaces for human encounter by transforming “inanimate technology into animated architecture.”¹¹³ Seeing as the value of Kiesler’s House was its inherent adaptability to diverse situations, the manifestation of technological themes in Kiefer’s work might even be seen to retrospectively reinvigorate Kiesler’s approach since, by the very necessity of interpreting its meaning, it goes far beyond formal similarities often drawn to works by Patrik Schumacher, Greg Lynn, or Lars Spuybroek. The difference here exists precisely in the fact that, like Kiesler, Kiefer’s creations involve a process of *mimesis* “in which man acts as the one that reinterprets space, rendering it ‘enlivened’

¹¹¹ See Paul Ricoeur’s *The Rule of Metaphor*, 285-287.

¹¹² From “Anselm Kiefer,” Interview with Donald Kuspit, ed. Jeanne Siegel, *Art Talk: The Early 80s* (1988; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1990): 87.

¹¹³ Franco, 23.

by pulling out its sense through his senses.”¹¹⁴ Unlike work formed through “autopoetic,” self-organizing, parametric methods, Kiefer demonstrates a “heteropoietic” system capable of “complementing the metabolic processes of human consciousness” through embodied interpretation. This approach could certainly be brought into places that provide for “prereflective, purposeful action and a reflective understanding of our place in the natural and cultural world.”¹¹⁵ Undeniably, the ambiguity in Kiefer’s approach, and his acceptance of the modern situation (with all its instrumental processes and inherent reductions), is what creates unforeseeable possibilities for recollecting memories and merging stories today.

Thus, similar to Kiesler, who aimed at achieving cosmic interrelation through continuity, Kiefer goes further to show us how cosmic interconnection in our current time necessitates a deeply shared venture; one which requires us to critically position ourselves in relation to the larger continuum of culture via an open and interpretive attitude. This is something we may emulate in our own approaches to contextualizing architectural productions so long as they are based on language in view of intersubjective expression. Such potential may bring to mind earlier comparisons we have drawn to John Hejduk, Daniel Libeskind and Le Corbusier, or the awareness of atmospheres found in the writings and work of Peter Zumthor, which also involves human perception in a profound interaction and translation of historical traces through building as technology.¹¹⁶ Kiefer’s work can also be seen as a valuable model for architectural pedagogy,

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 225-226.

¹¹⁶ One may here imagine the many successful works by Peter Zumthor, such as the addition to the Gugalun House in Versam, Switzerland. Likewise, Zumthor’s Kolumba Museum in Cologne explores the monumentality of architecture not as an end in itself “but a means through which temporality may be made visible against the shadow of eternity, the continuity of humanity’s multiple histories.” For his Protective Housing for Roman Archaeological Excavation in Chur, Zumthor also creates tensions between history and the present by carefully “staging relations between the Roman ruins and the modern visitor” so that the intervention operates as a threshold between the modern visitor and the stratification of rock that were formed and deposited in time and are now embedded in the earth.” See Anne Bordeleau’s essay “Monumentality and Contemporaneity in the Work of Tarkovsky, Goldsworthy,

especially when brought into the creation of narrative artefacts in linguistic or material form. Based on an act of translation, such work foregrounds a process that sponsors a fully interpretive effort on behalf of students that has been more and more curtailed by the emphasis on immediate and reductive procedures supported in the educational environments of architects. Moreover, because Kiefer's work bridges many approaches in its own production his creations allow us to see what is similar between all such work. Namely, that each depends upon the creation of atmospheres that may open reflective possibilities that allow humans to perceive meaningfulness in the coincidence of opposites—past and present, inside and outside, life and death. This shows how the spiritual (beyond theological dogma) might be expected to appear in the realm of everyday life and how our own creations may mediate this possibility. Not dependent upon systematic projections, reductive applications, nor an idealistic view of nature or the future, Kiefer manages to foreground a space of translation through a ritual program of producing work that retrieves new possibilities for intertwining human perception with an intersubjective world and its history.

Looking across Kiefer's career, his ability to bring together such a multitude of worlds can thus be seen to dramatically build upon the Endlessness of Kiesler's approach since it presents an infinite number of workable possibilities for architecture that relates to the psychological health of human beings, a trajectory long associated with the history of architecture and its relation to theater. This participation stretches far beyond further comparisons that could be drawn between Kiefer's work and the many innovative stage sets designed by Kiesler that prompted audience participation. Most significant is recognizing how by physically realizing "stage-like," theatrical environments, whose properties both limit and

and Zumthor" in *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 7, ed. Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2016), 14-15.

make possible actions and habits, Kiefer's creations function like much of Kiesler's work with theatre, which achieved "a greater sense of intersubjectivity for the reinterpretation of the plots meant to stimulate the consciousness of the audience."¹¹⁷ Like the version of the House planned for the MoMA exhibition in 1960, which is imagined to "transport participants temporarily to another world ... then returned them to their previous reality, renewed and possibly enlightened," the complex web of meanings in Kiefer's work goes deeper with threads of time and history to evoke a cathartic involvement with cultural themes in ways that resonate with the very origins of Greek theatrical arts.¹¹⁸ His work at the Grand Palais, for example, has been seen to achieve a transmutation "of the 'ugly' into the 'beautiful,'" and to exist "as much as a symbol of the hope for rebirth as it is a metaphor for cultural nihilism."¹¹⁹ When two years later twelve of the towers reappeared at the Opera Bastille in Paris for *In The Beginning* (2009) (Figure 5.20) (an opera for which Kiefer directed, created costumes and worked with composer Jörg Widmann for the musical score) we see perhaps the most integrated spectacle of Kiefer's expressive sensibility brought to bear on the public world. Interspersed with instrumental noises, broken vessels, and movement of figures, the production explored creation mythology, the nature of the cosmos, while summoning allusions to the Trümmerfrauen ("rubble-women" who cleared the German streets of debris at the end of the War) and migrants of the diaspora (the twelve tribes of Israel) (Figure 5.21). Here, we see how, like ancient performances, Kiefer presents a dramatic "layering of partially present, partially obscured, dream-like situations," which involves a

¹¹⁷ Franco, 29.

¹¹⁸ The parallels I drawn between Kiefer's work and the planned exhibition of Kiesler's Endless House are made evident by Angeliki Sioli who suggests, "Theatrical qualities would also have been evident in the Endless House had it been built for the museum exhibition ... In the context of the museum, the Endless House would have operated as a stage, with visitors becoming both actors and spectators in an interactive plot with its environment." Angeliki Sioli, 280.

¹¹⁹ Tom Service, "See In the Beginning if it's the last thing you do," *The Guardian*, July 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/tomserviceblog/2009/jul/10/anselm-kiefer-jorg-widmann>.



Figure 5.20 Elements from Kiefer's *La Ribaute* at the Opera *In the Beginning*, Opera Bastille, Paris (2009). From <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2009/jul/10/anselm-kiefer-bastille-opera>



Figure 5.21 Actors and elements from the Opera *In the Beginning*, Opera Bastille, Paris (2009). From <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2009/jul/10/anselm-kiefer-bastille-opera>

“residual influence on the audience’s understanding of their own situation.”¹²⁰ Understood in relation to the origins of Western art and architecture, often related to “the participation at a distance” in the ancient Greek theatre, Kiefer’s creations continue to allow us to create for ourselves the movement of feelings incited by the work in front of us. Like ancient tragedies, laden with conflict between upper and lower worlds, inside and outside, past and present themes and ideas, Kiefer’s work achieves “a space of interpretation that grasps the full geopolitical and mythopoetic scope of our creations [which] is absolutely crucial in the post-cosmological, hyperreal context.”¹²¹ The participation evoked by Kiefer is thus consistent with the essential space of participation in the theatre, entwined with the Platonic concept of *chōra* as the “enigmatic entity fundamental to cosmological formation and human making [after Plato].”¹²² Considering how Kiefer’s work physically and metaphorically exists in the paradox of several places at once—in his private studios, at galleries, public settings, or in the theatre—it resembles *chōra* as both an inhabited “region” or “land” and as a “receptacle” between Being and Becoming described in *Timaeus* as “the third kind of reality” fundamental to every event of making. Understood as the coemergence of place and event, where elements are always coming to be, “making their appearance, and again vanishing,” the ambiguous tensions in Kiefer’s work hold resonance with the “situational duplicity” inherent to dramatic representation.¹²³ The penetrating and culturally laden themes of Kiefer’s work thus shows how achieving such participation remains relevant for architects who are “motivated to engage meaningful change

¹²⁰ See Lisa Landrum’s essay “Chora Before Plato: Architecture, Drama and Receptivity,” in *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 7, ed. Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2016), 339.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 345.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 324. For the most comprehensive articulation of relationships between architectural representation, dramatic origins and the Platonic concept of Chora see Pérez-Gómez, “Chora: The Space of Architectural Representation” in *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 1, ed. Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell (McGill-Queens University Press, 1994), 1-34.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 336.

amid politically and ecologically vexed circumstances” through the gift of our embodied imagination.¹²⁴

At the conference held in London for the *Superstrings* exhibition (2019-2020), the panelists recognized how the “crisis” faced by our current civilization is perpetuated by the “acceptance of theories that don’t work,” and a “need to change the story.” Agreeing, Kiefer stated, “this crisis is not recognized as extreme enough. I will bring the crisis to the gallery.”¹²⁵ Such statements lend a further understanding to Kiefer’s work as a place to explore meaningful conflicts that not only involve the tragic amputation of Jewish culture or a mourning for the loss of cosmic civilizations but as creations which themselves embody a recognition of the incredibly vulnerable state of achieving meaningful participation in today’s world.¹²⁶ Amid a reductive cultural climate, more and more reduced to the high-speed exchange of information and the homogenization of society, Kiefer not only recognizes such difficulties but has spent his entire career creating a “new room in space,” “Weltraums” (World rooms), as he expresses it in his *Notebooks*, of which he comments,

The rooms of the writer, like those of the painter are fragile, [they] can break. Perhaps people write, paint, or make sculpture to build a room, to occupy a place that can shelter them and where they can live, a place a poet called a knotted place, that is, exactly what other species do when they build a nest ... To have again a roof over one’s head, a place of one’s own¹²⁷

Kiefer here shares an essential connection with Kiesler’s vision for restoring places that play a role “in the very understanding of what it means to be alive, in the sense that architecture could provide a proper place for the survival of the imagination.”¹²⁸ Like Kiesler’s *Endless House*,

¹²⁴ Ibid., 324.

¹²⁵ Notes from panel discussion with Kiefer at the White Cube Gallery on Jan 13, 2020.

¹²⁶ Landrum, 324-358.

¹²⁷ Cohn, 139.

¹²⁸ Franco, 35. This furthermore echoes Paul Celan’s summative statement, “Reality is not simply there; it must be searched for and won.” See Paul Celan’s *Breathturn into Timestead: The Collected Later Poetry* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Bilingual edition, 2014).

Kiefer's literal and metaphorical theatrical stages invert the traditional Western distinction between private and public, expressing a similar desire for an architecture of active participation. Because the sequential development of his work allows a "historical consciousness" to be made present, it leaves the impression of a filmic sequence across separate locations, similar to the dramatic unfolding of a play. Kiefer's work thus engages architecture's inveterate nature as an intersubjective "space of appearance," even if it can no longer be built in the world.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 105.

Conclusion: Anselm Kiefer and Future of Theoretical Architecture

It is precisely by being built, but remaining unbuildable, that Kiefer's ambiguous creations demonstrate their essential value for the history and future of architecture, showing its task to be found not in prosaic construction but in unearthing dimensions of consciousness typically concealed by analytic thought. It is also the paradoxical distance that his work maintains from the standard practice of architecture that allows comparisons with various architects in the preceding chapters to illuminate eloquent lessons from Kiefer, especially pertaining to the task of achieving spiritual possibilities in architecture today.¹

In the case of comparisons with Le Corbusier, the exaggeratedly self-referential and critical position of Kiefer's work, situated outside the everyday world, makes visible how the continuous discoveries we associate with artistic creation might be circulated within the experience of work that culminates in resonant architectural creations. The metaphoric space of collage in Kiefer's paintings, which also separate and join together references in architectural experience, was deemed to be a primary reason that La Ribaute can be considered among the great paradigmatic, spiritual works of modern architecture in the same manner as La Tourette. As with the "plastic experimentations" of Le Corbusier, which informed his task of translating the depth and temporality of his canvasses into the embodied experience of architecture, the accelerated tensions in Kiefer's work continues to show how such creations may be further queried as an appropriate modality for conceiving architectural atmospheres that maintain an emphatic exchange between inner thoughts and emotions and the external world. Unique to

¹ As discussed Pérez-Gómez, the spiritual potential of architecture is unfortunately a tragically underrepresented topic which, while speaking to a fundamental need in humanity, is often disregarded by the current dualistic premise of modern culture based on the rights of "a new, truly autonomous subject, modeled on Descartes's dualistic premises, endowed with almost absolute free will and who must be totally responsible for his or her actions." This modern situation places the individual outside the environment, culture and rituals that were traditionally framed by architecture as "external agencies that were believed to have true and effective responsibility for outcomes." See Pérez-Gómez' articulation of these matters in the book *Attunement*, 221.

Kiefer's work is that the struggle physically palpable in his creation of paintings and sculpture, as much as full-scale environments, provides insight as to an emergent dimension of architectural meaning not separate from the act of representation itself. In a world that tends to neglect material imagination and the physical/bodily interaction in the conception of architectural projects, Kiefer's creations show how we may recover the primacy of embodied perception in the very development of our conceptual constructions.² Kiefer's creation of towers and tunnels, as much as paintings, books and sculptures, thus show how our own creations may speak back to us but only when ideas are externalized in action, through physical work. It is this immediate and bodily interaction that is a fundamental condition for raising an awareness of the primacy of qualitative *place* in being and thus for the appearance of genuine architectural meanings that could be further translated into appropriate atmospheres for human events. Radicalizing similar types of productions as Le Corbusier, Kiefer's raw use of materials and his peculiar use of tools used to fashion them, thus goes further to influence the conceptualization of building processes that are themselves open to physical change and transformation. This foregrounds how the discovery of unexpected relationships may emerge in the act of producing work that is typically overlooked in modern approaches to design. It is therefore Kiefer's exploration of twentieth-century materials, forms and symbols, and their relationship to spiritual possibilities, that provides a contemporary example that reinvigorates the very possibility of telling stories in the depth of architectural experience by engaging the "mystery of dimensionality" across an

² Indeed, the turn towards the production of top down, instrumental notations in architectural representation parallel the continuing loss of conceptual and manual skills that is "further encouraged today by current technological tools like CAD and Revit, which produce drawings meant to be unambiguously fabricated by robots (or workers functioning as though robots), thus reinforcing the formal conception of architecture as tectonic object. These are the objects that have come to constitute the contemporary physical environment, the post-industrial city, mostly the actualization of idealities cut away from the natural world and irresponsive of cultural contexts and materiality. However novel, the result is a world perceived as mostly void of meaning, a world that produces nihilistic and frustrated architects, inhabitants who fail to find meaningful orientation in their lives, and craftsmen turned into menial laborers. See Pérez-Gómez' "Architecture as Performing Art: Two Analogical Reflections," in *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*, Vol. 2, 92

enormous range of work. It is also in its questionable proximity to the “real world” that Kiefer offers further convergences with architectural traditions that placed emphasis on the autonomy of representation in the creation of theoretical works.

Beyond traditional oppositions between the “fine arts” and architecture, the distance that Kiefer’s work maintains from the scope and practice of conventional design indeed shows its lessons most readily when understood in relation to the tradition of theoretical projects in architecture, first initiated by Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778). Comparisons with Piranesi and, more circuitously, with work by Jean-Laurent Legeay, Étienne-Louis Boullée and the writings of Johann Heinrich Lambert, were used to show how Kiefer’s work is related to a tradition of architecture that embodies symbolic intentions in representations as an alternative to the dominant technological values and the representation of architecture as isotropic space. Such comparisons allowed for a closer exploration of how the abstraction implicit in modern architectural representation is employed by Kiefer in ways that imply that architecture may indeed appear in representations themselves and how this is intrinsic to the critical and poetic character of his work. Drawing associations between Kiefer’s 2017 *Walhalla* exhibition and the labyrinthine quality of represented space in the second state of Piranesi’s *Carceri* etchings (1761) we examined how themes and ideas from across Kiefer’s oeuvre return in the representational capacity of both unbuilt *and* built work. This, more than anything, grants new possibilities for expressing symbolic intentionality in architectural productions not bound to prosaic construction in the world. As with Piranesi, who had worked *through* perspective to enliven poetic depth in his engravings, Kiefer goes even further to explode and replay the convention, pairing the perspective of paintings with installations to allow the “real” experience of space to become a fundamental access point for his themes. Because Kiefer’s paintings and full-scale environments

always give us something that needs to be renewed and reclaimed meaningfully in our perception, this metaphoric depth allows our senses to translate one another, showing how the lived perspective we actually perceive is not a geometric or photographic one. In so doing, Kiefer's work provides an example of the generative capacity of architectural representation that is dramatically different from the high-speed proliferation of images today. Using the power of projections to engage and transform, it shows how we too may employ significant strategies to produce meaningful atmospheres that preserve a space for the *invisible* in the creation and contemplation of architectural work. Like Piranesi's fragmentary approach to representation, Kiefer's work thus allows us to "consider architecture and space as it has been or could be in other situations in the world."³ For this reason, this chapter set the tone for the remaining discussions in this dissertation, each, with different emphasis, revealing Kiefer's work as a *model of architectural representation* that foregrounds new methodological lessons in our current context.

Creations from La Ribaute, along with a variety of Kiefer's installations, were seen to go even further than other architects creating theoretical projects since they reveal the act of making itself as the most important part of the mutual relationship of theory and practice, thinking and doing, in a generative process of architectural making. Not only does Kiefer's use of technical devices associated with architecture show similarities with the challenge to objectified Cartesian space in Daniel Libeskind's *Micromegas* or *Chamber Works* drawings, but because each engage with a similar socio-political context in their built works, such comparisons allow us to see how Kiefer deals with absence and loss through a continual transformation of works and themes. Indeed, the layering, interweaving and reworking of themes at many of Kiefer's installations establishes an indeterminacy between represented and constructed space that is incredibly

³ Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*, 376-377.

particular to the way he plays with depth. This involves a multitude of tensions between tactility, optical depth, and the lived experience of space that is *unlike* transparent operations typically employed by architects that have become standard to transcribing objectified information into the design of a building. Foremost to this, the eerie, transformative quality of Kiefer's work is brought into physical presence by working across different scales in order to bring specific contexts together, even at the scale of a building. Indeed, the incongruences and gaps that form between various materials and scales of work necessitate an imaginative response in the process of making and experiencing such creations that promotes a transfer of meanings across dimensions. Such work thus emphatically shows how a direct physical involvement in the act of making raises ideas about architectural settings, even if these are unbuildable in conventional terms. Because Kiefer's unyielding experimentation accentuates how material and mind may interweave through various tools and modes of representation, it shows itself to be a new model of value for designers concerned with bringing forth an imaginative, embodied engagement with the reinterpretation of historical themes—where stories are constructed in the process of creating work, and how this creates ties between materiality, representation and language.

This potential was further examined in chapter four, where the works of John Hejduk served as a foil to accentuate the fundamental interrelationship of language and synesthesia essential to the participation evoked by all of Kiefer's work. Indeed, just as Hejduk's later *Masques* show how "language is indispensable for reconnecting us to qualities of physical matter in a time when architects have been estranged from their traditional role as craftsmen," Kiefer recuperates the very possibility of showing how material meaning is interwoven with the imaginative act itself, which operates through polysemic language.⁴ Like the myths and poems to which Kiefer refers, his acts of making were shown to beget a form of language born into the

⁴ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 197.

work as he makes it. This need for penetration, where the imagery that arises is not only “thought” about but rather *lived through* in the action of producing work, shows how our own creations need not depend upon processing information, like a computer, but can emerge in discovery, through a search for symbolic meaning arising from a synthetic dimension of human meaning in action, always dependent upon language. In all such cases, comparisons with Hejduk showed how Kiefer’s creations exemplify the capacity of materials to engage complex narratives that involve cultural and physical values that speak to our fully emotional and multi-sensorial being. Such work not only speaks to the necessity of creating a framework or mythos to inform architectural tasks but also goes further to deconstruct, twist and ultimately demystify the tools of technology through story-telling and poetic fiction. Kiefer’s translational acts are thus especially relevant considering the current trajectory of parametric design, and the fabrication of architecture through increasingly reductive means. The difference being that connections between the material, spatial and linguistic imagination emerge, like gesture or speech, in the making of the work itself.

The concluding comparison with the architectural theory and practice of Frederick Kiesler, further clarified how Kiefer’s work operates as a model of the poetic image in architecture, always awaiting further translation. Indeed, comparisons with Kiesler’s *Endless House* allowed us to reflect upon previous lessons, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of producing work that coincides with the search for culturally specific, poetic metaphors that both represent and reveal such space to humanity. Building upon Kiesler’s ideas of Correalism, the integration of Kiefer’s works and themes dramatically expands the field, providing a possibility for recovering the spiritual dimension of the world, one that exists not in theological dogma but in an encounter with the Otherness of words, materials and space. What is

similar about all such examples is that they invite participation from a fully embodied consciousness, whereby prereflective atmospheres open upon reflective images and thoughts about our own situation in the world.⁵ Yet, what is truly new from Kiefer for architecture is the degree of material layering and working back and forth to intersect various pieces and times that involve tools and situations always in dialogue with history itself. In the presence of Kiefer's work, we see how history's fragments are themselves a *material* brought to life by contemporary means. Drawing vision and tactility together, his creations incite a communion between our world, its history and the internal world of the body. Indeed, by "Getting under our skin," the ambivalent character of Kiefer's work blurs barriers between near and far, between inside and outside, and between the perceiver of the work and the work itself. If translated further, this approach shows great potential for framing architectural situations. This could provide sites for collective orientation drawn from pre-existing orders of culture, which may be transformed in a multitude of ways. Remaining unbuildable, such work thus demonstrates how our own creations—buildings, drawings or various other artefacts used to think about architecture—may carry an affinity with the great traditional creations of the past by transmuting, reinterpreting and transforming stories and traditions in a living way. In so doing, Kiefer's work revitalizes an understanding of architecture as *knowledge*, one that arises in a process of making, which "in the absence of cosmological or religious certainties is necessarily grounded in history."⁶ Posing a challenge to modern assumptions regarding space as consisting of homogenous dimensions, or the modern understanding of time as progressive and linear, Kiefer's creations build upon work from his predecessors, providing a contemporary model for poetic creation, which stands as a critical counter-position to historically shallow and formalist modern works.

⁵ Ibid., 217.

⁶ Pérez-Gómez, "Architecture as Performing Art: Two Analogical Reflections," in *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture*, Vol. 2, 95.

It is in such ways that Kiefer continues a tradition of “resistance” in architecture, previously articulated by Pérez-Gómez, who has shown how works within this tradition evoke the poetic image as a recovery of the spiritual dimension of the world. It achieves this status precisely by “remaining open to further possibilities for the poetic to emerge as an embodied image in stark contrast with the optical (reductive image) that remains central to the evolution of our scientifically driven culture.”⁷ Themselves models, Kiefer’s *La Ribaute*, along with his many installations, reveal how our environment is indeed the “equipment of consciousness,” part of our being, fully intertwining mind and action.⁸ At their most basic, Kiefer’s creations reveal the places we inhabit as an event that, while open to change and discovery, and utilizing a vast range of tools to create, are never reducible to specialized techniques.⁹ Rather, like poetry, Kiefer’s creations operate against prosaic or scientific language, and thus continue to weaken the strong values of our technologically driven culture, showing how our environments (which *are* our world) may still incite wonder. By wonder, I mean the Otherness of Kiefer’s work, the *empty space* we have previously acknowledged as being central to beckoning a bodily imagining that when open to Being and attuned appropriately may awaken “the vividness and intensity of metaphor, which remains the basis of passionate spirituality.”¹⁰ This is the hallmark of the poetic image in architecture, which, as Kiefer shows, remains always in transit. The distances evoked within the atmospheric intensity, material richness and perpetual change so central to his work thus restores the gift of place and time at symbolical levels, which are in this sense eternal.

All such insight into Kiefer’s work helps to frame the architectural task as the opposite of direct representations that reduce reality to objective visual information or novel effects, since it

⁷ Pérez-Gómez, *Built Upon Love*, 109.

⁸ Pérez-Gómez, *Attunement*, 229.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 230.

is a depiction of reality that enlarges our existential horizon, augmenting it with meanings intrinsic to its own universe of discourse. It is in such ways that Kiefer's work shows the very nature of significant architecture. More than ever, this depends upon the preservation of a middle ground of human thinking and doing, where the promise of translation may still offer possibilities to fill the spaces of our contemporary world with creations attuned to poetic imagining based on the critical interpretation of themes. As with earlier examples of theoretical projects in the last two centuries, Kiefer achieves a departure for architecture that is both critical and radically different than previous examples, and yet deeply resonant with the traditional ground of architecture, which always sought to connect humanity with the larger world and the cosmos.

Bibliography

- Abdullah, Hannah. "Kiefer and Beuys: Cathexis and Catharsis." *In Focus: Heroic Symbols 1969 by Anselm Kiefer*. Tate Research Publication, 2016.
- Anderson, Ross. "All of Paris Darkly: Le Corbusier's Beistegui Apartment. 1929-31." Conference: *Le Corbusier, 50 year later, International Congress*, Valencia, Spain, 2015.
- Andreotti, Roberto, and Federico de Melis. "With History Under His Skin." In *Anselm Kiefer: Merkaba*. Milan: Edizioni Charta, 2006.
- Arasse, Daniel. *Anselm Kiefer*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001.
- Arendt, Hannah. *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought*. New York: The Viking Press, 1961.
- Attias Laurie. "Anselm Kiefer's Identity Crisis." *ARTnews* vol. 96, Issue 6. (June, 1997): 108-111.
- Auping, Michael. *Anselm Kiefer: Heaven and Earth*. Fort Worth: Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, in association with Prestel, 2006.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *On Poetic Imagination and Reverie*. Trans and intro. Colette Gaudin. Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2014.
- . *The Poetics of Space*. Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1994.
- Barber, Stephen. *Abandoned Images: Film and Films End*. London: Reaktion Books, 2010.
- Bardt, Christopher. *Material and Mind*. Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2019.
- Belpoliti, Marco. "Memory of Oblivion." *Anselm Kiefer: Merkaba*. Milan: Edizioni Charta, 2006.
- Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Trans. Howard Eisland and Kevin McLaughlin. Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory*. Trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. New York: Zone Books, 1990.
- Beuys, Joseph, Enzo Cucchi, Anselm Kiefer and Jannis Kounellis. *Ein Gespräch = Una Discussion*. Zurich: Parkett-Verlag, 1986.
- Biro, Matthew. *Anselm Kiefer and the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

- Bogner, Dieter. "Inside the Endless House." *Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space*. Eds. Dieter Bogner and Peter Noever. Vienna: Ostfilder: Hatje Cantz, 2001. 11-25.
- Bond, Anthony. "Fields of Reference." *Anselm Kiefer: Aperiatur terra*. London: Jay Jopling/White Cube Gallery. 2007.
- Bordeleau, Anne. "Monumentality and Contemporaneity in the Work of Tarkovsky, Goldsworthy, and Zumthor." In *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 7, edited by Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell, 1-20. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2016.
- Breton, André. "The Crisis of the Object." In *Surrealism and Painting*. Translated by Simon Watson Taylor, 275-80. London: McDonald and Co., 1972.
- Brüderlin, Markus. "The Exhibition 'the Seven Heavenly Palaces' Passages through Worlds and Cosmic Spaces." In *Anselm Kiefer: The Seven Heavenly Palaces: 1973-2001*, 32-35. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2001.
- Cacciari, Massimo and Germano Celant. "A Tribute to Anselm Kiefer and The Destiny of Art." *Anselm Kiefer*. Milan: Edizioni Charta, 1997.
- Calvocoressi, Richard. *Anselm Kiefer: Morgenthau Plan*. Paris: Gagosian Gallery, 2013.
- Cawelti, Andrea. "The Stage as a Well-Designed House: Frederick Kiesler's Ideal Theatre." New York: New York Public Library, 2001.
- Celan, Paul. *Breathturn into Timestead: The Collected Later Poetry*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; Bilingual edition, 2014.
- Chapman, Michael. "Alien Doubles: Magic, Myth and Taboo in the Spatial Experiments of Frederick Kiesler." *Cultural Crossroads: Proceedings of the 26th International SAHANZ Conference The University of Auckland*, 2-5 July, 2009.
- Chayka, Kyle. *Anselm Kiefer Talks Religion, Politics, Ruins at 92y*. Nov. 2, 2010. <https://hyperallergic.com/11870/anselm-kiefer-92y>.
- Cobelo, Jose Luis Gonzalez. "Architecture and its double: idea and reality in the work of Daniel Libeskind." *El Croquis*, Issue. 80, 1996.
- Cohn, Danièle. *Anselm Kiefer: Studios*. Paris: Flammarion Publishers, 2013.
- Comment, Bernard. *Die Frauen der Antike*. Paris: Galerie Yvon Lambert, 1999.
- Creighton, Thomas. "Kiesler's Pursuit of an Idea," in *Progressive Architecture*. July 1961.
- Curtis, William J. R. *Le Corbusier: Ideas and Forms*. Phaidon Press; Revised Edition, 1994.

- Dalton, Trinie. Punctuation: Anselm Kiefer's Notebooks Volume 1, 1998-99. Online, Oct 17, 2015. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/punctuation-anselm-kiefers-notebooks-volume-1-1998-1999>.
- Davenport, Arlice. "Collected later poetry of Paul Celan showcases his struggle to make words say what they cannot," *The Wichita Eagle*, January 4, 2015. <https://www.kansas.com/entertainment/books/article5402316.html>.
- Dermutz, Klaus, and Anselm Kiefer. *Anselm Kiefer: Maria durch ein Dorwald ging*. Salzburg, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, 2008.
- Dreamer, Peggy. "Me, Myself and I," in *Hejduk's Chronotype*. Ed. Michael K. Hays. Canadian Center for Architecture, 1996.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Open Work*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- Eisenstein, Sergei. *Film Sense*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1942.
- Evans, Fred and Leonard Lawlor. *Chiasms: Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Faigan, Gary. "Anselm Kiefer at Grand Palais Paris – July 2007." Online, Feb, 17, 2013. <http://www.garyfaigin.com/art-reviews-blog/anselm-kiefer-at-grand-palais-paris-july-2007>.
- Federica, Goffi. *Time Matter(s): Invention and Re-Imagination in Built Conservation: The Unfinished Drawing and Building of St. Peter's, the Vatican*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Felstiner, John. *Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*, New York: Norton and Company, 2001.
- . *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Ficacci, Luigi. *Giovanni Battista Piranesi: The Complete Etchings*. Cologne: Taschen, 2016.
- Fiennes, Sophie, dir. *Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow*. London: Artificial Eye, 2011. DVD.
- Fludd, Robert. *Utriusque cosmi maioris scilicet et minoris, metaphysica, physic atque technical historia, or A Metaphysical, Physical, and Technical History of Both Worlds, the Greater and Also the Lesser, 1617-1621*.
- Forster, Kurt. "Mildew Green is the House of Forgetting." *Daniel Libeskind: Radix Matrix*. Munich, New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1997.
- Franco, Martha. "Towards a Correal Architecture: Reflections on Frederick Kiesler." M.Arch Post-prof. thesis, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. August, 1996.

- Frascari, Marco. *Monsters of Architecture: Anthropomorphism in Architectural Theory*. Rowman & Littlefield, 1990.
- . *Eleven Exercises in the Art of Architectural Drawing: Slow Food for the Architect's Imagination*. New York: Routledge, 2011.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. Ed. Robert Bernasconi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- . *Truth and Method*. Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. New York: Crossroad, 1990.
- . *Gadamer on Celan: Who Am I and Who Are You? And Other Essays*. Trans. Bruce Krajewski with introduction by Gerald L. Burns. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Gilmour, John C. *Fire on the Earth: Anselm Kiefer and the Postmodern World*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990.
- Hays, Michael K. *Architecture's Desire: Reading the Late Avant-Garde*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2010.
- Hecht, Alex and Werner Krüger. "Venedig 1980: Aktuelle Kunst Made in Germany." *Art*. 6 (June 1980): 40-53.
- Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology." *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993.
- . *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982.
- . "The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays." Trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- Hejduk, John, *Berlin Night*. Rotterdam: NAI Uitgevers, Netherlands Architecture Institute, 1993.
- . *Mask of Medusa: Works 1947-1983*. Ed. Kim Shkapich, New York: Rizzoli, 1985.
- . *The Lancaster/Hannover Masque*. London: Architectural Association; Montreal: Canadian Center for Architecture, 1992.
- . *Victims*. London: Architectural Association, 1986.
- Hejduk, John, and David Shapiro. "The Architect Who Drew Angels." *Conversation. A + U: Architecture and Urbanism*, no. 244 (January 1991): 59-65.

- Held, R.L. *Endless Innovations: Frederick Kiesler's Theory and Scenic Design*. Ann Arbor MI: UMI Research Press, 1982.
- Honnef, Klaus. "Writing/Painting: A Central Aspect in Anselm Kiefer's Work." *Anselm Kiefer: Memorabilia*. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2012.
- Hopkins, Owen. "Kiefer and Chipperfield talk space and creativity." *Royal Academy of Arts*. Nov. 19, 2014. Web. February 2015. <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/kiefer-and-chipperfield-talk-space>.
- Hudson, Mark. "Anselm Kiefer on life, legacy and Barjac: I have no style I am not a brand." *The Telegraph*. 27 September, 2014. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-features/11109299/Anselm-Kiefer-on-life-legacy-and-Barjac-I-have-no-style-Im-not-a-brand.html>.
- Huyssen, Andreas. "Anselm Kiefer: The Terror of History the Temptation of Myth." *October*. MIT Press. 48 (1989): 25-45.
- . "Kiefer in Berlin." *October*, MIT Press. 62 (Fall 1992): 85-101.
- Jones, Jonathan. "Anselm Kiefer at the Royal Academy review – 'an exciting rollercoaster ride of beauty, horror and history.'" *The Guardian*, Sept. 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/sep/22/anselm-kiefer-royal-academy-of-arts-review>.
- Karvouni, Maria. "Demas: The Human Body as Tectonic Construct." In *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 3, edited by Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcel, 103-124. McGill-Queens University Press, 1999.
- Kiefer, Anselm. *Anselm Kiefer: Alkahest*. Ed. Arne Ehmann. Paris: Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, 2012.
- . *Anselm Kiefer: Die Argonauten*. Madrid: Ivorypress, 2010.
- . *Anselm Kiefer Notebooks Volume 1: 1998-1999*. Translated by Tess Lewis, Seagull Books, London, New York, 2015.
- . *Anselm Kiefer: The Secret Life of Plants*. Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 2003.
- . *Anselm Kiefer: Velimir Chelbnikov and the Sea*. Edited by Harry Philbrick. Ridgefield, CT: The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum and Derneburg Publications, 2006.
- . *Anselm Kiefer: Works on Paper*. Rome: Galleria Lorcan O'Neill, 2010.
- . "Besetzungen" folio. *Interfunktionen* 12. Cologne, 1975.

- . *L'Art surviva à ses ruines, Anselm Kiefer au Collège de France*. Paris: Éditions du Regards, 2011.
- Kiesler, Frederick. "Art as the Teaching of Resistance." *College Art Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Spring, 1959).
- . "A Symposium on how to Combine Architecture, Painting, and Sculpture." *Interiors* 110.01 (New York), May 1951.
- . "Frederick J. Kiesler's Endless House and Its Psychological Lighting." In *Frederick Kiesler: Endless House 1947-1961*, edited by Dieter Bogner (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2003). 94.
- . "Frederick Kiesler: The Endless house on Camera Three," CBS, 1960," in *Frederick Kiesler: Endless House 1947-1961*, edited by Dieter Bogner. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2003.
- . *Inside the Endless House; Art, People, and Architecture: A Journal*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966.
- . "Manifeste du Corréalisme." *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*. 2 (June 1949): 79-105.
- . "Notes on Correalism." *Fifteen Americans*. (Exh. cat.) New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1952.
- . "On Correalism and Biotechnique: A Definition and Test of a New Approach to Building Design," *Architectural Record* 86, no 3 (1939): 60-75.
- . "Pseudo-Functionalism in Modern Architecture," in *Frederick Kiesler 1890-1965*, edited by Yehuda Safran. London: Architectural Association, 1989
- . "Shrine of the Book," *Progressive Architecture*, XLVI (September, 1965): 30.
- . "The Future: Notes on Architecture as Sculpture." *Art in America*. Vol. 54. Issue 3, May-June, 1966.
- Kim, Sue. *Anselm Kiefer: Geheimnis der Farne*, Kukje Gallery; Bilingual edition (May, 2011).
- Kligerman, Eric. *Sites of the Uncanny: Paul Celan, Specularity and the Visual Arts*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.
- Knausgaard, Karl Ove. "Into the Black Forest with the Greatest Living Artist," *The New York Times Magazine*. February 12, 2020.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/12/magazine/anselm-kiefer-art.html>.

- Kozel, Susan. *Closer: Performance, Technologies, Phenomenology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007.
- Kraus, Rosalind, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." *October*, Vol. 8. (Spring, 1979): 30-44.
- Kuspit, Donald. "Acts of Aggression: German Painting Today, Part I." *Art in America*, LXX, 8, (1982). Print.
- . "Anselm Kiefer," Interview with Donald Kuspit, edited by Jeanne Siegel, *Art Talk: The Early 80s* (1988; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1990): 87.
- . "Authoritarian Abstraction." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. 36 Fall (1977). Print.
- . "Flak from the 'Radicals': The American Case Against Current German Painting." *New Art from Germany*. Saint Louis: The Saint Louis Art Museum, 1983.
- . *The Cult of the Avant-Garde Artist*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- . *The New Subjectivism: Art in the 1980s*. Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1988.
- . "The Night Mind." *Artforum*, 21.1 (1982): 60-70. Print.
- . "Transmuting Externalization in Anselm Kiefer." *Arts Magazine* 59.2 (1984): 43-55. Print.
- Lambert, Johann Heinrich. *La perspective affranchie de l'embaras du plan géométral*. Zurich, 1759. Reprint, Alburgh: Archival Facsimiles, 1987.
- Landrum, Lisa. *Architectural Acts: architect-figures in Athenian drama and their prefigurations*. Diss. McGill University, 2010. Print.
- . "Chora Before Plato: Architecture, Drama, and Receptivity," *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 7, edited by Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell, 323-358. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2016.
- Lauterwein, Andrea. *Anselm Kiefer/Paul Celan: Myth, Mourning and Memory*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2007.
- Lawlor, Leonard. *Imagination and Chance: The Difference Between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1992.
- Leatherbarrow, David and Mohsen Mostavi. *Surface Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
- Le Corbusier. *Poème de l'angle droit*. Paris: Foundation Le Corbusier, 2012.
- . *New World of Space*. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1948.

- . *Oeuvre Complète Volume 4, 1938-1946*. Zurich: Les Editions d'Architecture, 1995. Originally published in 1946.
- . *Oeuvre Complete, Volume 5, 1946-1952*. Zurich: *Les Editions d'Architecture*, 1995. Originally published in 1953.
- . *Towards a New Architecture*. Translated by Frederick Etchells. London: Architectural Press, 1946.
- . *When The Cathedrals Were White: A Journey to the Country of Timid People*. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1947.
- Le Corbusier, *Architect of the Century*. Edited by Susan Ferleger Raeburn with Muriel Wlaker. London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1987.
- Ledoux, Claude-Nicholas. *L'Architecture Considérée sous le Rapport de l'Art, des Mœurs et de la Législation*, 2 vols., Paris: 1804, 1846. Reprint, Munich: UHL Verlag, 1981.
- Lee, Sabine. *Anselm Kiefer: Geheimnis der Farne*, Kukje Gallery; Bilingual edition, 2011.
- Lefaivre, Liane, and Alexander Tzonis. "The Machine in Architectural Thinking." *Daidalos* 18, (1985): 16-26.
- LeVitté-Harten, Doreet. *Anselm Kiefer: Lilith*. New York: Marian Goodman Gallery, 1990.
- . "Anselm Kiefer." *NIKE* 29 (1982): 18-19.
- Libeskind, Daniel. Studio Daniel Libeskind. <http://daniel-libeskind.com>.
- . *The Space of Encounter*. New York: Universe Publishing, 2000.
- . *Inspiration and Process in Architecture*. Edited by Serrazanetti, Francesca and Matteo Schubert. Italy: Moleskine SpA, 2015.
- Lynn, Greg. "Endless Surface." In *Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space*. Edited by Dieter Bogner and Peter Noever. Ostfilder: Hatje Cantz, 2001.
- Madoff, Steven Henry. "Anselm Kiefer: A Call to Memory." *Artnews*. 86.9 (1987): 125-130.
- Maintz, Marie Luise. "Matthias Pintscher's 'Chute d'Etoiles' for Lucerne Festival." *Takte*, Online. <https://www.takte-online.de>.
- Matyiku, Anca. "Architecture Drawn out of Bruno Schulz's Poetic Prose." *Reading Architecture: Literary Imagination and Architectural Experience*. Edited by Angeliki Sioli and Yoonchun Jung, 114-122. New York: Taylor and Francis, 2018.

- McEvelley, Thomas. *Art and Discontent: Theory at the Millennium*. Kingston, New York: McPherson, 1991.
- . *Anselm Kiefer: I Hold All Indias in My Hand Communication and Transcendence in Kiefer's New Work: Simultaneously Entering the Body and Leaving the Body*. London: Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 1996.
- . *Anselm Kiefer: Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom*. London: Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 2000.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. "Eye and Mind," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*. Edited by G.A. Johnson. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996.
- . *The Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Colin Smith. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- . *The Primacy of Perception*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964.
- . *The Prose of the World*. Translated by John O'Neill. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991.
- . *The Visible and the Invisible*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968.
- . *The World of Perception*. Translated by Oliver Davis. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Mertins, Detlef. "The Shells of Architectural Thought." *Hejduk's Chronotope*. Edited by Hays, K. Michael, John Hejduk. Canadian Centre for Architecture, Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.
- Muller, Alois Martin. "Daniel Libeskind's Muses" in *Daniel Libeskind, Radix-Matrix* (Munich, New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1997), 116-119.
- Naginski, Erika. "Romanticism's Piranesi." In *Built Surface, vol. 1, Architecture and the Pictorial Arts from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*. Edited by Christy Anderson. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.
- . "Preliminary Thoughts on Piranesi and Vico." *Architecture Post Mortem: The Diastolic Architecture of Decline, Dystopia, and Death*, edited by Donald Kunze, David Bertolini, and Simone Brott, 179-204. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2013.
- Neff, John Hallmark. *Anselm Kiefer: Bruch and Eitnung*. New York: Marian Goodman Gallery, 1987.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." *Untimely Meditations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

- Noever, Peter. "On the Subject: Avante-Garde as an Obsession." *Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space*. Edited by Dieter Bogner and Peter Noever. Ostfilder: Hatje Cantz, 2001.
- O'Hagan, Sean. "Anselm Kiefer: When I make a great painting, then I feel real," *The Guardian*, Nov, 25, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign>.
- Olshavsky, Peter. "Situating Pataphysical Machines: A History of Architectural Machinations." In *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 7, edited by Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell, 181-210. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2016.
- Padel, Ruth. *In and Out of the Mind*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Papapetro, Spyros. "The Birth of Design" at e-flux architecture, last accessed Sept 28, 2019.
- Parker, Ian. "Anselm Kiefer's Beautiful Ruins." *The New Yorker*, July 3 Issue, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/07/03/anselm-kiefers-beautiful-ruins>.
- Paz, Octavio. *Marcel Duchamp, Appearance Stripped Bare*. Translated by Rachel Phillips and Donald Gardner (1978, New York: Arcade, 1990).
- . *The Bow and the Lyre (El arco y la lira): The Poem, the Poetic Revelation, Poetry and History*. Translated by Ruth L.C. Simms. Austin: University of Texas, Press, 1991.
- Pérez-Gómez, Alberto. "Architecture and Public Space." In *Rites of Way: The Politics and Poetics of Public Space*, ed. Mark Kingwell and Patrick Turmel (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009).
- . *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983.
- . "Architecture as Embodied Knowledge," *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-), Vol. 40, No. 2, Jubilee Issue. (Winter, 1987), 57-58.
- . "Architecture: The Space of Participation," in *PUBLIC 43: Suburbs, with The Leona Drive Project Catalogue* (July 2001).
- . *Attunement: Architectural Meaning after the Crisis of Modern Science*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2016.
- . *Built Upon Love: Architectural Longing after Ethics and Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006.
- . "Chora: The Space of Architectural Representation." In *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 1, edited by Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell, 2-34. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994.

- . *Depth in Architecture: The Lesson of Merleau-Ponty*. Keynote lecture at “Flesh and Space: Intertwining Merleau-Ponty and Architecture” at the *34th Annual Maurice Merleau-Ponty Circle Conference*, Mississippi State University School of Architecture, Starkville, Mississippi, USA, Sept. 9, 2009.
- . “Mood and Meaning in Architecture.” *Mind in Architecture: Neuroscience, Embodiment, and the Future of Design*. Eds. Sarah Robinson and Juhani Pallasmaa. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2015. 219-35.
- . “The Myth of Daedalus.” *AA Files Vol. 10*, 1983.
- . “The Renovation of the Body: John Hejduk and the Cultural Relevance of Theoretical Projects” *AA Files*, No.13, Autumn, 1986.
- . *Timely Meditations: Selected Essays on Architecture Vols. 1 and 2*. Montreal: Right Angle International, 2016.
- Pérez-Gómez, Alberto and Louise Pelletier. *Architectural Representation and the Perspective Hinge*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1997.
- Phillips, Lisa. “Frederick J. Kiesler: Ambient Artist.” In *Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space*. Edited by Dieter Bogner and Peter Noever. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2001. 27-30.
- Phillips, Stephen. “Towards a Research Practice: Frederick Kiesler’s Design-Correlation Laboratory.” *Grey. Room 28* (Winter 2010): 90–120.
- Pintscher, Matthias. Matthias Pintscher’s “Chute d’Etoiles for Lucerne Festival.” *[t]akte: Das Barenreiter-Magazin*. August 25, 2012. <https://www.takte-online.de/en/contemporary-music/detail/artikel/matthias-pintschers-chute-detoiles-fuer-luzern/index.htm>.
- Piranesi, Giovanni Battista. *The Prisons: The Complete First and Second States*. Intro by Philip Hofer. New York: Dover Publications, 1973.
- Power, Kevin. *Anselm Kiefer: Für Chlebnikov*. London: White Cube; First Edition, 2005.
- Prodger, Michael. “Inside Anselm Kiefer’s astonishing 200-acre art studio.” *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media Ltd. 12 Sept. 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com>.
- Prouty, Richard. “Notes on Anselm Kiefer at the Grand Palais.” *One Way Street*. May 31, 2007. <https://onewaystreet.typepad.com>.
- Ransmayr, Christoph. “Sea Level.” *Anselm Kiefer: Alkahest*. Paris/Salzburg: Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, 2011.
- . “The Unborn or Anselm Kiefer and Tracts of the Heavens.” *Anselm Kiefer: The Seven Heavenly Palaces: 1973-2001*. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2001. 11-25.

- Reifenscheid, Beate. *Memorabilia*. Silvana Editoriale, 2013.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*. Edited by Don Ihde. Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974.
- . “The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality.” *Man and World: An International Philosophical Review* 12.2 (1979): 123-141.
- . *The Rule of Metaphor*. Translated by Robert Czerny. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977.
- . *The Symbolism of Evil*. New York, London: Harper and Row Publishers, 1967.
- . *Time and Narrative*. Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1988.
- Riding, Alan. “An Artist set up House(s) at the Grand Palais.” *The New York Times*. May 31, 2007. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/31/arts/design/31kief.html>.
- . “Unseen as He Stares Down History; Look at the Art, Says Anselm Kiefer as He Turns to Jewish Mysticism,” *The New York Times*, April, 3, 2001.
- Robinson, Sarah. “Nested Bodies.” *Mind in Architecture: Neuroscience, Embodiment, and the Future of Design*. Edited by Sarah Robinson and Juhani Pallasmaa. Cambridge MA.: MIT Press, 2015.
- Rosenthal, Mark. *Anselm Kiefer*. The Art Institute of Chicago and Philadelphia Museum of Art. New York: Neues Publishing Company, 1987.
- Rosenthal, Norman. “Towards the Towers,” in *Aperiatur terra*. London: Jay Jopling and White Cube, 2007.
- Rykwert, Joseph. *The First Moderns: The Architects of the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1980.
- Samuel, Flora. *Le Corbusier in Detail*. Burlington MA: Architectural Press, Elsevier Ltd., 2007.
- Schama, Simon. “In Mesopotamia.” *Anselm Kiefer: Karfunkelfee and The Fertile Crescent*. Ed. Tim Marlow. London: White Cube, 2009. 27-32.
- Schmidt, Katharina. “Archaic Architectures 1997.” *Anselm Kiefer: The Seven Heavenly Palaces:1973-2001*. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2001. 65-67. Print.
- . “Cosmos and Star Paintings 1995-2001.” *Anselm Kiefer: The Seven Heavenly Palaces:1973-2001*. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2001. 75-77.

- Scholem, Gershom G. *Kabbalah*. New York: Penguin Books, 1974.
- . *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1954.
- . *Origins of the Kabbalah*. Edited by R.J. Zwi Werblowsky. Translated by Allan Arkush. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987. Print.
- Searle, Adrian. “History Repeating: Anselm Kiefer goes back to the Beginning.” *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media Ltd. 10 July 2009.
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/jul/10/anselm-kiefer-bastille-opera>.
- Service, Tom. “See In the Beginning if it’s the last thing you do,” *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media Ltd. July 10, 2009.
<https://www.theguardian.com/music/tomserviceblog/2009/jul/10/anselm-kiefer-jorg-widmann>.
- Shapiro, David. “The Clock of Deletion: Time and John Hejduk’s Architecture.” London: Architectural Association, 1987.
- Siedell, Daniel A. “Where Do You Stand? Anselm Kiefer’s Visual and Verbal Artefacts.” *Image Journal*, Issue 77, 2013.
- Singh, Zubin K. *Inoculations: The Masques of John Hejduk*. Ph.D. Thesis, School of Architecture McGill University, Montreal, Canada December, 2016.
- Sioli, Angeliki. “Is the Endless a House?” In *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 7, edited by Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell, 253-284. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2016.
- Siren, Janne. “Anselm Kiefer and the Realms of Language,” in *Anselm Kiefer: Superstrings, runes, the norms, gordian knot*. London: White Cube, 2020.
- Stead, Naomi. “The Ruins of History: Allegories of Destruction in Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum Extension to the Berlin Museum,” in *Open Museum Journal*, Vol. 2, 2000
 Received (1.25.2014) Accepted. 2015.
- Stonard, John-Paul. “Walhalla.” *Anselm Kiefer: Walhalla*. London: White Cube Gallery, 2016.
- Strasser, Catherine. *Anselm Kiefer: Chevirat Ha-Kelim*. Paris: Editions du Regard, 2000.
- Taminiaux, Jacques. “Thinker and the Painter.” *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*. Ed. Johnson, Galen A. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993.

- Vesely, Dalibor. *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.
- Vidler, Anthony. "Building in Empty Space": Daniel Libeskind's Museum of the Voice." *Daniel Libeskind: The Space of Encounter*. Edited by Olsen, Richard: Universe Publishing, 2000.
- . "Rethinking Kiesler: Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space Symposium," in *Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space*. Edited by Dieter Bogner and Peter Noever. Vienna: Ostfilder: Hatje Cantz, 2001.
- Warner, Marina. *Anselm Kiefer: Next Year in Jerusalem*. Second Edition. London: Prestel. March 27, 2012.
- Welch, Cyril and Liliane. "Reading Poetry and Philosophy" *Man and World* 11, no. 3-4 (1978). 350-371.
- Wilk, Michael. *Affinity to Infinity: The Endlessness, Correalism. and Galaxies of Frederick Kiesler*. March Post-prof. thesis, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. August, 1999.
- Wilkes, James. "Remains and Remnants," *Studio International*. Oct. 31, 2009.
<https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/remains-and-remnants--anselm-kiefer-the-fertile-crescent>.
- Wischer, Stephen. "Incarnations of Paul Celan's *Todesfuge* in the Paintings of Anselm Kiefer and Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum, Berlin, *Architectoni.ca*, 2012.
http://ccaasmag.org/arch_2012/vol2/Wischer_multipleArt.pdf.
- . "The Architecture of Anselm Kiefer: La Ribaute and the Space of Dramatic Representation." *Chora: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, vol. 7, edited by Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Stephen Parcell, 301-322. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2016.
- Woods, Lebbeus. "Frederick J. Kiesler: Out of Time" in *Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space*, in *Frederick J. Kiesler: Endless Space*. Edited by Dieter Boegner and Peter Noever. Los Angeles: MAK Center for Art and Architecture, 2001. 63-68.
- Zweite, Armin. *The High Priestess*. London: Abrams in association with Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 1989.