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PRESS RELEASE

From March 22 to July 21, 2024, Palazzo Strozzi in Florence will present **Anselm Kiefer. Fallen Angels**, a major exhibition dedicated to one of the greatest masters of 20th and 21st century art. The celebrated German artist will present new and historical works that engage in a profound dialogue with the Renaissance architecture of Palazzo Strozzi, including a new work especially created for the palace's internal courtyard.

Curated by Arturo Galansino, General Director of the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi, the exhibition allows **direct contact with the art of Kiefer**, renowned for his impactful, richly layered works that explore themes of memory, myth, history, literature, and poetry.

The term '**Fallen Angels**' refers to the angels cast out of heaven for rebellion against God. This symbolic image, a representation of humanity itself, is the starting point for Kiefer's exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi, which will unfold as a journey that reflects on topics such as identity, history, and philosophy. Through painting, sculpture, installation and photography, Kiefer's art offers deep introspection into the human condition, in a complex weaving of connections between the past, present and future.

Through the bold use of different media and techniques, Kiefer creates works with a **strong physical and material presence**, establishing an immediate connection with the viewer. With a deep interest in their alchemical value, Kiefer transforms raw materials such as lead, seeds, earth, flowers, sand, and ashes into imposing and evocative works, made up of dense stratifications. Being subjected to electrolysis or fire, the various elements undergo true physical change. The visual layers of his works offer multiple readings, constantly revealing new details and meanings to the observer.

Every work of Kiefer expresses a **refusal of limits**—not only through scale and materiality—but also through the infinite richness of resources with which he probes the depths of memory and the past. He debuted on the German art scene in the late sixties with works that, among the first, marked a reflection on the history of World War II and the emotional and cultural legacy of Germany. From here began an artistic path in which myth, religion, mysticism, poetry, and philosophy merge together.

"Anselm Kiefer has worked at Palazzo Strozzi to create a completely new exhibition that enhances the strong vitality of his art", says Arturo Galansino, General Director of the Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi and curator of the exhibition. "At Palazzo Strozzi, for the first time, Kiefer's works will be in dialogue with Renaissance architecture, thus amplifying the stratifications of their meanings around themes such as memory, history, and war. The exhibition thus becomes an invitation to all visitors to investigate the complexity of existence between past, present and future and in the dialectic between spirituality and materiality."

The exhibition is promoted and organized by Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi. Public supporters: Comune di Firenze, Regione Toscana, Camera di Commercio di Firenze. Private supporters: Fondazione CR Firenze, Comitato dei Partner di Palazzo Strozzi. Main Partner: Intesa Sanpaolo. With the contribution of Città Metropolitana di Firenze. With the support of Gagosian. Thanks to Maria Manetti Shrem and Fondazione Hillary Merkus Recordati.

Walkthrough of the exhibition *Anselm Kiefer. Fallen Angels*

The exhibition unfolds within the spaces of Palazzo Strozzi, spanning the Renaissance courtyard and the rooms of the Piano Nobile, allowing visitors to discover the diverse artistic practice of Anselm Kiefer which encompasses painting, sculpture, installation, and photography. The show features twenty-five historical and new works, including an immersive installation made of 60 canvases of various formats.

The exhibition's starting point is the **new work for the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi**, titled *Engelssturz* (Fall of the Angel, 2022–2023), engaging in a dialogue with the severe Renaissance architecture through powerful materiality and monumental dimensions exceeding seven meters in height. This large painting depicts the famous passage from the Book of Revelation that describes the battle between the archangel Michael and the rebel angels, a metaphor for the struggle between Good and Evil. Enhanced by the context of the open space facing the sky of the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi, it becomes an invitation to reconsider our relationship between the spiritual and the material, becoming an allegory for the search for meaning for all humanity.

In the Piano Nobile, the theme of "**fallen angels**" emerges in the opening room with the painting *Luzifer* (Lucifer, 2012–2023). Kiefer portrays the rebellious angel plummeting into the abyss, reinterpreted through materials that reference contemporary and recent history. The sharp and menacing lead airplane wing protruding from the mass of matter serves as a direct allusion to war, a recurring motif in Kiefer's oeuvre. If the airplane wing might symbolize the violence and destruction that war inflicts, the mass of material can evoke the chaos and devastation it leaves in its wake. The falling figure serves instead as a stark image of humanity's downfall, issuing a poignant warning on war and violence.

In the next room with a work like *Für Antonin Arthaud: Heligabale* (For Antonin Artaud: Heliogabalus, 2023), Kiefer refers to the volume *Héliogabale ou l'anarchiste couronné* (Heliogabalus: or The Crowned Anarchist) by the French artist, actor and dramaturgist Antonin Artaud, dedicated to the Roman emperor Marco Aurelio Antonino, also known as **Heliogabalus**, subject of Kiefer's art already in the seventies. As a young emperor in the third century AD, Heliogabalus enforced the worship of Baal, the sun god, as the state religion. He was assassinated by drowning to suppress his revolution, becoming a symbol of the fragility of power. *SOL INVICTUS Heliogabal* (Unconquered Sun: Heliogabalus, 2023) is the title of the second large canvas in the room characterized by a bright gold background and gigantic sunflowers, where Kiefer also references pagan celebrations dedicated to the triumph of light over darkness.

In these paintings, symbols constantly present in Kiefer's visual vocabulary emerge **sunflowers** and **snakes**. The reptile takes on multiple meanings in Kiefer's work, acting also as an allegory of regeneration, due to the animal's characteristic of shedding its skin, thus alluding to the artist and his ability to renew himself. The sunflower symbolizes both the sun and the earth and can be interpreted as a reference to the artist himself. Notably, Kiefer has long demonstrated admiration for Van Gogh, dedicating works, and texts to him since adolescence.

Kiefer himself asserts that "**painting is philosophy**." Accordingly, a section of the exhibition focuses on this discipline that has always permeated the artist's work. Here are presented three recent large-format canvases, presented for the first time at Palazzo Strozzi. *La scuola di Atene* (The School of Athens, 2022) is reminiscent of Raphael and the fresco in the Stanza della Segnatura (circa 1509–1511) with a gathering of philosophers set in a classical building. *Vor Sokrates* (Before Socrates, 2022) represents instead a kind of family

tree of pre-Socratic philosophers including Archimedes, Anaximander, Anaximenes, and Parmenides. In the work *Ave Maria* (2022), Kiefer depicts both pre-Socratic and post-Socratic philosophers, from Heraclitus and Epicurus; to Plato and Aristotle. If pre-Socratic philosophers focused primarily on natural and cosmological explanations of the world, often resorting to elements such as water, air, and fire, after Socrates philosophy shifted its focus to humanity and knowledge, in an investigation of its ethical, political, and epistemological aspects.

Another nod to philosophy appears with the large woodcut *Hortus Philosophorum* (The Garden of Philosophers, 1997–2011). The work depicts a field of sunflowers in a strongly vertical format, expressing the desire to unite earth and sky. One of the sunflowers grows by taking nourishment from the navel of a naked figure lying on the ground, seemingly representing the artist himself, while also alluding to the figure of Robert Fludd (1574–1637), an English philosopher, physician, occultist, and alchemist, according to whom every plant on earth corresponds to a star in the sky. Due to the position of the body, which appears lifeless or in the shavasana pose of yoga, this work highlights the **link between the earthly and celestial worlds** and alludes to an initiatory journey that allows to overcome the fear of human finitude.

The central rooms of the exhibition present a selection of **vitrines**, a type of artwork that Kiefer has been using since the eighties, creating microcosms where he inserts materials and objects connected also to sentences written by his own hand. The vitrines create a protective, controlled environment for their contained materials to exist in their own space. At the same time, they reinforce the themes of alienation and isolation present in Kiefer's work. The viewer is forced to confront the artwork from a distance, encouraged to reflect on the different worlds and symbolisms that converge in the Kieferian imagination.

En Sof (The Infinite, 2016) is dedicated to kabbalistic thought and Jewish mysticism, *Das Balder Lied* (The Song of Balder, 2018) is inspired by Scandinavian literature, *Danae* recalls classical mythology. Among the materials Kiefer uses, **lead** stands out, his material of choice, at the basis of infinite experiments, appreciated both for its malleability and ductility, and for its association with alchemical themes due to its metamorphic nature. The **glass** of the vitrines, on the other hand, acts as a membrane that, as the artist explains, "is somehow a semi-permeable skin connecting art with the external world in a dialectical relationship."

In *Locus solus* (The Solitary Place, 2019–2023), Kiefer refers to the eponymous novel of 1914, a seminal cornerstone of surrealist culture, in which the French author Raymond Roussel conjures works and devices that are impossible to realize, destined to remain only imagined, in the *locus* of the impossible. As in this work, a major theme of the exhibition is Kiefer's relationship with **literature** and his engagement with literary works and voices from all times. In a dialogue with *Locus solus*, the painting *Cynara* (2023) refers to classical mythology and the nymph transformed into an artichoke by Zeus, while *A phantom city, phaked of philim pholk* (2023) and *archaic zelotypia and the odium teleologicum* (2023) are linked to Joyce's unfinished novel *Finnegans Wake*. These two works reflect the intricate web of references present in the novel, transforming the complex fabric of words into visual art that captures the dreamlike essence of the narrative.

The exhibition gives way then to the immersive installation **Verstrahlte Bilder** (Irradiated Paintings, 1983–2023), a captivating collection of sixty paintings by Kiefer that completely fills the walls and ceiling of one of the largest rooms in Palazzo Strozzi. With the inclusion of table-like mirrors placed in the center of the room, the work engulfs viewers by its dense layers and all-encompassing quality. Kiefer's use of "irradiated paintings", scarred and discolored, adds an evocative and melancholic dimension to the installation, hinting

Anselm KIEFER Fallen Angels

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22 MARCH
21 JULY
2024

at the fragility of life and the enduring power of art. Oil paint, shellac, and fabric are some of the materials used to create a hauntingly exploration on themes of destruction, decay, and the human condition itself. According to Kiefer, « Destruction is part of the creative process. I place my paintings outside; I submerge them in baths of electrolysis. Last week I showed a series of paintings that have been subjected for years to a sort of "nuclear radiation" inside containers. Now they are suffering from radiation sickness and have become temporarily marvelous ».

A recurring subject of the exhibition is **mythology**, both personal and collective, which Kiefer also explores by constantly finding inspiration from his archive of materials, themes, and compositions. In *Der Rhein* (The Rhine, 1982–2013), Kiefer refers to his childhood and his relationship with the river that is a symbol of all of Germany. In *Dem unbekanntem Maler* (To the Unknown Painter, 2013), Kiefer identifies himself with the figure of the "unknown painter" to whom a memorial is dedicated, also honoring the memory of artists who suffered repression and censorship or who were forgotten by history. The reference to classical mythology is evident instead in works such as *Daphne* (2008–2011) and *Nemesis* (2017). The nymph pursued by Apollo and the goddess of punishment and revenge are represented as 19th-century style dresses, made of resin and plaster. Their identity is hinted at and revealed through the attributes which are in the place of heads. In the work *Ave Maria turris eburnea* (Hail Mary, Ivory Tower, 2017), Kiefer refers instead to Catholic imagery. Here, the "head" of the figure is constituted by a stack of towers in balance that reproduce, in miniature, those that characterize Kiefer's artistic practice as in the famous *I Sette Palazzi Celesti* (The Seven Heavenly Palaces) at Pirelli HangarBicocca in Milan.

The exhibition concludes with a special section dedicated to the famous **Heroische Sinnbilder** (Heroic Symbols) works, presented here through four lead-printed photographs. In 1969, Kiefer had himself photographed performing what he would define as "Besetzungen" (Occupations) in various European locations, including some places occupied by the German army during World War II. Wearing mostly his father's Wehrmacht officer uniform, Kiefer replicates the *Sieg Heil* salute with his arm raised, although in an obviously less martial manner. Kiefer thus uses a gesture characteristic of the Nazi regime with the intention of questioning, in an evidently provocative way, the recent history of the German people.

In this context, to recall the precariousness of human life and the transience of time, as well as to demonstrate the importance of poetry, writing, and language in Kiefer's artistic practice, the exhibition closes with a few verses of 1930 by the Italian poet **Salvatore Quasimodo** traced by the artist on a wall of the room:

«Ognuno sta solo sul cuore della terra / trafitto da un raggio di sole / ed è subito sera».

"Everyone stands alone at the heart of the world / pierced by a ray of sunlight / and suddenly it's evening."

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Anselm Kiefer: Biography

Born in 1945 in Donaueschingen, Germany, Anselm Kiefer is one of the most important and versatile artists working today. His artistic practice incorporates diverse media, including painting, sculpture, photography, woodcut, artist's books, installations, and architecture.

Kiefer studied law and romance languages before pursuing studies in fine art at academies in Freiburg and Karlsruhe. As a young artist, he entered into contact with Joseph Beuys and participated in his action Save the Woods (1971).

Early works confronted the history of the Third Reich and engaged with Germany's post-war identity as a means of breaking the silence over the recent past. Through parodying the Nazi salute or visually citing and deconstructing National Socialist architecture and Germanic heroic legends, Kiefer explored his identity and culture.

From 1971 until his move to France in 1992, Kiefer worked in the Odenwald, Germany. Throughout this time, he started incorporating into his work materials and techniques which are now emblematic—lead, straw, plants, textiles, and woodcuts—along with themes such as Wagner's Ring Cycle, the poetry of Paul Celan and Ingeborg Bachmann, as well as Biblical connotations and Jewish mysticism.

The artist first received major international attention for his work when he represented West Germany alongside Georg Baselitz at the 39th Venice Biennial in 1980.

The mid-1990s marks a shift in his work; extensive travels throughout India, Asia, America, and Northern Africa inspired interest in the exchange of thought between the Eastern and Western worlds. Structures resembling ancient Mesopotamian architecture enter the work. Glimmers of Southern France's landscapes appear, evidenced by depictions of constellations or the inclusion of plants and sunflower seeds.

An avid reader, Kiefer's works are layered with literary and poetic references. These associations are not necessarily fixed nor literal, but rather overlap into an interwoven fabric of signification. The interest in books being both text and object is evident in his work. Since the beginning of his practice, artist's books have constituted a significant part of his oeuvre.

Beyond making paintings, sculptures, books and photographs, Anselm Kiefer has intervened in various sites. After converting a former brick factory in Höpfigen, Germany, into a studio, he created installations and sculptures that became part of the site itself. A few years after his move to Barjac, France, Kiefer again transformed the property around his studio by excavating the earth to create a network of underground tunnels and crypts that connect to numerous art installations.

This studio-site is now a part of the Eschaton-Anselm Kiefer Foundation, which is open to the public. The opening of the foundation in 2022 coincided with Kiefer's return to Venice, where a cycle of paintings inspired by the writings of Italian philosopher Andrea Emo was installed at Doge's Palace, shown in parallel to the biennial.

FACT SHEET

Title	<i>Anselm Kiefer. Fallen Angels</i>
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PHOTO SHEET

Courtyard

0.1 Anselm Kiefer
Engelssturz (Fall of the Angel)
 2022-2023
 emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, fabric,
 sediment of electrolysis and charcoal on canvas
 750 × 840 cm
 Copyright : © Anselm Kiefer
 Photo : Georges Poncet



Room 2

2.1 Anselm Kiefer
Für Antonin Artaud: Hélagabale
 (For Antonin Artaud: Heliogabalus)
 2023
 emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf sediment of
 electrolysis, plaster, terracotta and steel wire on
 canvas
 380 x 570 cm
 Copyright : © Anselm Kiefer
 Photo : Georges Poncet



Room 3

3.3 Anselm Kiefer
Ave Maria
 (Hail Mary)
 2022
 emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, sediment of
 electrolysis, fabric, lead and canvas collage on canvas
 380 × 380 cm
 Copyright : © Anselm Kiefer
 Photo : Georges Poncet



Room 4




4.1 Anselm Kiefer
En Sof (The Infinite)
 2016
 steel, glass, wood, lead, zinc, plaster, sediment of
 electrolysis and charcoal
 280 x 115 x 76 cm
 Copyright : © Anselm Kiefer
 Photo : Georges Poncet



Room 7

7.1 Anselm Kiefer
Der Rhein (The Rhine)
 1982–2013
 collage of woodcuts on paper with oil, emulsion,
 acrylic and shellac, mounted on canvas
 330 x 330 cm
 Copyright : © Anselm Kiefer
 Photo : Georges Poncet



7.3	<p>Anselm Kiefer Hortus Philosophorum (Garden of the Philosophers) 1997–2011</p> <p>collage of woodcuts on paper with emulsion, acrylic, shellac, chalk and charcoal mounted on canvas 580 × 280 cm</p> <p>Copyright : © Anselm Kiefer Photo : Georges Poncet</p>	
7.4	<p>Anselm Kiefer Daphne 2008–2011</p> <p>resin, plaster and branches 212 × 152 × 132 cm</p> <p>Copyright : © Anselm Kiefer Photo : Atelier Anselm Kiefer</p>	
Room 8		
8.1	<p>Anselm Kiefer Heroische Sinnbilder (Heroic Symbols) 2009</p> <p>photographic print on paper mounted on lead 400 × 240 cm</p> <p>Copyright : © Anselm Kiefer Photo : Georges Poncet</p>	

Anselm Kiefer in conversation with Arturo Galansino
Croissy, October 16, 2023 – Text from the exhibition catalogue

AG - We are in your studio in Croissy, on the outskirts of Paris, to talk about your exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi, for which preparations began five years ago. Over this period a lot of things have happened: the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and now another one in Gaza. We have all had to modify our outlook. How about you?

AK - I perceive these circumstances from a broader standpoint: men are ill-conceived. Their actions often defy comprehension. They destroy themselves. Wars have persisted throughout history, spanning various regions. Since the Second World War, conflicts have persisted, albeit at varying distances. While they were once distant, they now seem uncomfortably near. Ukraine is close and so is Israel, but wars have always existed, they seem to be never ending. While the impact is more pronounced now, it is not a novel experience for me.

AG - So this situation has not changed the way you see the world and human beings.

AK - No, I remain engaged with the daily news, perusing four newspapers regularly and occasionally tuning into television broadcasts to stay abreast of global developments.

AG - Your initial encounter with Palazzo Strozzi in anticipation of this exhibition was back in November 2018. I think this is the first time you are showing your work in a building that symbolizes the Florentine Renaissance, distinguished by its emphasis on drawing, in contrast to the vibrant palette of the Venetian Renaissance, as noted by the great theorist of art history Giorgio Vasari. As you have previously worked in the equally symbolic Doge's Palace in Venice, I'm curious to know what emotions and experiences this exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi evokes in you, particularly in relation to Italian art.

AK - My connection with Palazzo Strozzi is most significant. When I first visited Florence, approximately at the age of seventeen—I must consult my diary, its writing is a lifelong practice of mine—I recall making notes about Palazzo Strozzi. The reason remains elusive, but perhaps its “minimal” allure rendered it one of my favorite edifices in the world.

AG - Have you found any differences between showing your work in a Venetian building and a Florentine one?

AK - Indeed, the disparity is noticeable. In Venice, I transformed the Sala dello Scrutinio, imbuing it with my artistic vision. In contrast, at Palazzo Strozzi, I intended to work with each room specifically, in accordance with the selected themes.

AG - Organizing an exhibition involves engaging with various spatial elements and a specific location. During your initial visit to Strozzi, you immediately wanted to look out from the open tunnels on the top floor to view the courtyard from above, and then you asked to go and see the cellars, or what we refer to as the “Strozzina.” Is this your usual approach to spaces, starting at the top and then moving down?

AK - The courtyard takes central stage, which I like, because from the outside you can see the structure, you can see the different floors, and it is very useful to get a general view of the building.

AG - For the exhibition, have you chosen a dialogue or a clash with the architecture of the palazzo?

AK - It wasn't about creating a discord; rather, my interventionism or e about enhancing the space. I chose to present the artworks within the existing framework.

AG - You've consistently maintained connections with Italy. We've already mentioned your unique bond with Venice, but you've also had, and still have, links with Naples, Rome, Turin, and Pistoia. Could you elaborate on your relationship with Italy?

AK - When I wanted to leave Germany, I immediately looked toward Italy. Roughly sixty kilometers from Rome, near Lake Bolsena, I was captivated by a house featuring a beautifully maintained fountain with a continuous jet of water in the center. Another search led me to Chianti, in Tuscany, where I came across a former pigsty. But as you can imagine, the area was heavily polluted, rendering it unsuitable. Another place was made up of factories and deserted houses. However, the scale of the properties was overwhelming for my needs. And in the end, perhaps also because I spoke French, I chose France.

AG - Let's move on to the famous topos of the *Italiensehnsucht der Deutschen*, the German longing for Italy. Do you share Goethe's stereotyped—but still poetic—vision of it in 1795: "Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn" (Do you know the land where the lemons blossom)?

AK - It's interesting to note that Goethe himself experienced a pivotal moment in Rome, where he lost his virginity at the age of forty-one. Forty-one years old!

AG - Better late than never.

AK - It fostered a unique dynamic of longing. During his time in Rome, he composed numerous poems. Notably, Goethe was not the only one; many other Germans, known as the Deutsch-Römer, such as Koch and others, sought knowledge and inspiration in the eternal city.

AG - Joseph Beuys, who gave you his support at the beginning of your career, had a special relationship with our country too.

AK - Yes. Italy has often been a center of attraction for Germans, especially for artists. The first were Albrecht Dürer and Adam Elsheimer, followed later by Angelika Kauffmann, Jacob Philipp Hackert and, of course, as we mentioned, Goethe. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the painters Joseph Anton Koch, Johann Christian Reinhart and the so-called Nazarenes came to Rome. And then, in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, came mainly artists influenced by the art of the Italian Renaissance, such as Arnold Böcklin and Anselm Feuerbach. I recall spending about three or four months in this city myself, and those were some cherished moments. This trend extends to an international community—from musicians, such as Hans Werner Henze, to writers, like Max Frisch and Ingeborg Bachmann, or painters, like Cy Twombly.

AG - Let's talk about architecture and your spectacular ateliers or studios. As a child, you played with rubble and constructed small buildings with bricks. However, instead of opting for a traditional path in architecture, you chose to manifest your architectural vision through the creation of studios. The first one in Germany, at Hornbach in the Odenwald (Baden-Württemberg), saw the transformation of an old school building's attic into a studio. Then, you bought and renovated a disused nineteenth-century brickwork factory at Höpfigen, creating a single large installation that seamlessly integrates artworks and architecture. This theme recurs at La Ribaute in Barjac and also here in Croissy. Your studios, it seems, transcend mere workspaces and evolve into immersive environments. Could you share what constructing a studio means for you?

AK - Primarily, I required substantial space, as I perceive a painting as an ongoing process rather than a finished product. I keep paintings for years, occasionally revisiting and reworking pieces dating as far back as 1969. Consequently, this practice embodies a perpetual evolution and extends to paintings, sculptures, and installations that are integrated into various exhibitions.

AG - So you construct your studios in order to facilitate such a process.

AK - Indeed, that is invariably my initial approach, which subsequently results in the expansion of the studio space. In Barjac, for example, I continuously developed the site, excavating the earth to create both above and underground roads and tunnels, building crypts, lakes, and a vast network of interconnected art spaces.

AG - How much have you been influenced by the buildings of Albert Speer, whose designs you have studied and referenced in various works?

AK - The architectural legacy of the Third Reich is commonly referred to as fascist architecture. However, it is crucial to discern that while no painting from that era can be classified as art, the situation differs when it comes to architecture. For example, in Paris, which is considered the most beautiful city in the world, Haussmann created the boulevards by drawing lines, and it was a very positive intervention. That was exactly what Speer wanted to do in Berlin. The Trocadero in Paris exemplifies what Speer envisioned for Berlin. It transcends the label of fascism and can be appreciated as an architectural representation of the prevailing taste during the 1930s.

AG - In Italy, very few buildings constructed under Fascism have been destroyed. Are you familiar with Italian rationalist architecture, such as the Santa Maria Novella station in Florence or Marcello Piacentini's EUR?

AK - Yes, EUR in Rome. I have frequently painted the Palazzo delle Poste in Naples; it is not of the fascist era, yet it boasts exquisite architecture. Additionally, there is Terragni's Casa del Fascio in Como. While the Tempelhof airport in Berlin was conceptualized prior to the Nazi era, it is often associated with fascism.

AG - Let's go back to La Ribaute in Barjac, this incredible work that has led over time to interventions in the hills, to the construction of buildings, galleries, amphitheatres, and even a lake. You have called it a picture. Could your art be characterized in a way as Land Art?

AK - Barjac is a painting on which I constantly work: I start, pause, and resume again. There is no Haussmann in Barjac. I always envisioned it as a small Italian village, so I fashioned an Italian town. An Italian town's square is always flawless. That's the essence of Italian architecture. Squares serve as communal spaces, while urban planning is meticulously executed. Michael Heizer, the American artist renowned for his large-scale sculptures and Land Art pieces, has left a profound mark on the landscape. However, I do not consider myself a Land Artist.

AG - What is the difference? The construction of La Ribaute has progressed by itself, without an idea?

AK - It's challenging to articulate; there's always an initial idea, like when I begin a painting, but it often undergoes alterations.

AG - La Ribaute is more empirical?

AK - It is an organic process.

AG- You have moved several times: from Germany to Barjac in 1992, then to Paris in 2007, and finally, soon afterward, to Croissy-Beaubourg. Has changing places changed something in your work?

AK - While the south of France is undoubtedly a visually stunning region, I must admit, I don't feel it has directly inspired me. What we perceive, what we see, is with the eyes from our childhood. Building on this, Italian philosopher Andrea Emo emphasized that "there is nothing new except in recollection... the new arises out of us, ourselves the future if we can relinquish it."

AG - Here in Croissy, as in your previous studios, one can see how your work progresses. You have actually compared it to a garden "where many plants grow at the same time." Are you creating your own Giverny?

AK - Yes, indeed, although Monet's dedication to Giverny resulted in a magnificent garden, his masterpiece was the paintings it inspired.

AG - Nature is very important to you and your art. You often insert flowers and seeds (chiefly sunflowers and poppies) in your work. Has your relationship with nature changed over the years?

AK - My perception of nature has always been intertwined with human history. Painting nature in isolation isn't feasible; it must be understood in the context of historical events, such as wars.

AG - You have said: "I cannot see a landscape on which war has not left its trace."

AK - Indeed, there's no such thing as an innocent landscape. In contemporary times, landscapes lose their innocence as they relentlessly transition into urban and industrialized settings, leading them to eventually disappear.

AG - And, on the subject of nature, do you think it's necessary to live in secluded places? You have previously compared Bach, a musician linked to a simple provincial life, with Handel, a dandy highly

sought after by the courts of Europe, catering to varying musical levels. So do you think that, for the sake of creativity, it's better to live "where there is as little as possible"?

AK - I would never assert what is definitively best. I tend to stay rooted in my remote landscape, even though there are others who thrive in bustling metropolises like London, much like Handel did.

AG - Let's discuss spirituality. You have referenced your Catholic upbringing, your disappointment at the moment of your First Communion, and your rebellion against the strictures imposed by Catholicism.

AK - This shift largely occurred during my exhibition in Jerusalem in 1984, when the director introduced me to the Jewish religion and its rituals. I encountered Gershom Scholem's writings through his fantastic books on Jewish mysticism. Immersing myself in literature about the Jewish religion, I realized its richness surpasses that of Catholicism. The Church, with its aspiration to be triumphant, the *Ecclesia triumphans*, tends to discard anything that deviates from a linear path. Consequently, much has been lost over time. I find myself drawn to studying the Jewish religion, despite my familiarity with scholastic philosophy and figures like Anselm of Aosta, who sought to prove the existence of God in his *Monologion*. It's remarkable because such a proof is inherently unattainable. My upbringing was deeply rooted in the Catholic Church. All my relative were devout Catholics, and even in my grandfather's large family of sixteen children, nearly all of them pursued paths in priesthood or religious life. My grandfather, who intended to become a priest, ultimately fled on the day of his ordination, and found my grandmother. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here. Initially, I aspired to become pope, but was told that all popes were Italian, with no history of a German pope at that time, thus ending my pursuit. Instead, I decided to immortalize this sentiment in a vitrine, inscribed with the words: *Und du bist doch nicht Papst geworden* (In the end you did not become pope).

AG - Even though you've moved away from Catholicism, and toward the imagery of Judaism, Catholic imagery underlies your works. It has shaped them, and references to it often surface I'm thinking of Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, and other moments of Catholic ritual, or the dimensions of the big choir books...

AK - There was no other way for me. The concepts of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity continue to captivate me. Theodicy, a part of philosophy that examines the relationship between divine justice and the presence of evil in the world, is particularly intriguing. It asserts that God is inherently good, and yet the world is plagued by evil. Theologians argue that this coexistence is a result of the presence of free will.

AG - Does the asceticism of Le Corbusier's concrete spaces of the Dominican priory of La Tourette, where you stayed in a cell when you were very young and where you have recently held an exhibition, chime with the asceticism that pervades your work, with these spaces of solitude and reflection?

AK - Asceticism has long been a central concept for me. I am not baroque.

AG - Your works often contain inscriptions. Why do you write on your paintings?

AK - I have always had a strong affinity for writing, literature, and poetry. The words I choose to inscribe have, for me, a certain aura about them.

AG - The inscriptions inserted in your works often provide their titles as well. How do you go about this? Do you start from an idea, from the title, or the other way around?

AK - My approach isn't "painting for painting." For me, painting is not merely about creating an artwork, but rather, it symbolizes my personal struggle.

AG - You have said that "writing opens up another layer of memory [...] the painting can be filled with another meaning": are these inscriptions intended to guide or confuse?

AK - It could be either. Inscriptions can serve as a form of commentary, sometimes aligned with the painting, and sometimes in contrast to it. They possess various characteristics.

AG - And with regard to the titles of your works, in contemporary art sculptures and paintings often have no title and are simply labeled *Untitled*, but your works consistently bear titles.

AK - When I work on a painting, it gradually reveals its essence to me. I decipher the work and eventually assign it a title. This title is not intended to be dogmatic; rather, it represents me.

AG - But when you start to create a work, do you already have the title in mind?

AK - Hardly ever. I usually commence with a concept, which evolves and transforms as I progress. It's akin to climbing a ladder; each step signifies a stage in the creation process.

AG - Speaking of titles, that of our exhibition is *Fallen Angels*, a reference to the angels of Christian imagery, but also to Wim Wenders, who has made a documentary about you, *Anselm: Das Rauschen der Zeit* (The Sound of Time) presented at the Cannes Film Festival in 2023.

AK - It's not a traditional documentary. The film is unique in that it represents Wenders' personal interpretation of my work. He made the film according to his own vision, and his very powerful images were truly surprising for me.

AG - Let's go back to the angels. The exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi greets visitors in the courtyard with a gigantic *Engelssturz* (Fall of the Angel), whose subject is taken from the Book of Revelation.

AK - It elucidates how Evil entered the world and gave birth to Original Sin.

AG - Why did you want to begin the exhibition with this very forceful subject? It's the work that everyone who passes through the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi will see, even those who are not going to visit the exhibition—a very powerful and dramatic image.

AK - For Christians, it signifies the beginning of the world, the emergence of Evil. However, the Jewish perspective differs. Isaac Luria, a sixteenth century Jewish mystic and theologian, wrote that initially, God receded, creating a space for freedom, and the world formed itself. This perspective seems more astute. God bestowed grace upon the world, which the world rejected.

AG - The theme tackled in the painting is the struggle between Good and Evil. But you have mentioned that you are opposed to Manicheism and the consequences of such a drastic vision.

AK - The cosmos consists of trillions of stars forming galaxies, and there are billions of galaxies. These concepts can drive one to madness and despair due to their inexplicability. With being aware of the complexity of the world, no, I don't adhere to Manichaeism. I rather perceive humans as flawed.

AG - Do you consider yourself a pessimist?

AK - Optimist and pessimist are inadequate labels for me. I believe in hope, not as an anticipation of something that might happen, but as an entirely novel concept that eludes description. Pessimists dwell on the past, optimists look forward to the future, but I harbor no desires; I am open.

AG - Going back to the painting in the courtyard, does your interest in Michael stem in part from the fact that he is a figure present in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?

AK - It is a painting that, like many of my other works, revolves around theodicy. Monotheistic religions in particular have a hard time resolving the contradiction between omniscience, goodness and absolute goodness in God and the catastrophic conditions in the world.

AG - In *Engelssturz*, there are references to Italian art. From what iconography, what work have you drawn inspiration?

AK - I drew inspiration from numerous works within the Italian tradition, particularly from Luca Giordano, the Neapolitan artist who explored this theme extensively, including pieces housed in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, and the Church of the Ascension in Chiaia, Naples. Yet, my reference primarily stemmed from a lesser-known canvas, the *Expulsion of the Rebel Angels* (or *St. Michael*), currently residing in the Museum of Cadiz.

AG - Your works always have very complex meanings. They are pervaded by history, philosophy, and religion. Do you think that a visitor needs some sort of guidance, or do you leave the reception/experience of your work to personal interpretation?

AK - Either approach is acceptable: with guidance or according to one's personal interpretation. Each person can interpret them as they wish. However, it's essential for people to observe and begin to contemplate.

AG - Philosophy always permeates your work: "painting is philosophy," you have said. You were also granted an honorary degree in philosophy by the University of Turin in 2014, and as a young man you had begun to study law at university, only because you were interested in the philosophy of law.

AK - Regarding constitutional law, my path bore a resemblance to that of Anselm Feuerbach, the painter who, like me, was confronted with confusion during his formative years. Studying the logical constructs of legal texts during my studies left a lasting impression. I was interested in various subjects, including

criminal law and constitutional law. Upon my departure, my professor made earnest efforts to dissuade me.

AG - In the lecture you gave in Turin on the occasion of the bestowal of the philosophy degree, you spoke mostly of Nietzsche. Is he a philosopher who aligns with your vision and thinking, along with Heidegger, of course?

AK - Nietzsche's philosophy, to me, embodies a profound physicality, evidenced by the palpable physicality infused into his writings. One can discern his embodiment of philosophy in his assertion: "I dance, I dance philosophy." I also "dance with pictures."

AG - Nietzsche is not included in the group of philosophers referenced in the paintings at Palazzo Strozzi. Instead, we find the ancient Greeks, the pre-Socratics...

AK - Indeed, the pre-Socratic philosophers captivated my interest during my educational journey. Anaximander's perspective, Anaximenes' theory, and Democritus' foundational understanding of atoms fascinated me as they sought to articulate the workings of the world.

AG - Florence is the home of Neoplatonism.

AK - While I have delved into the myth of the cave, elucidated in the *Höhlengleichnis* (allegory of the cave), my philosophical stance diverges from Platonism. I hold no belief in a superior system above us, eschewing metaphysical constructs. Instead, I perceive consciousness within every material I use, be it sand, straw, or lead. I envision the artist as the one who unveils the spirit encapsulated within objects.

AG - So you are not a materialist, but rather a pantheist. Would you agree?

AK - I embrace a pantheistic viewpoint akin to Democritus, perceiving ourselves as minute components of the universe. Upon my demise, my infinitesimal essence shall amalgamate with the whole, echoing a concept reminiscent of Buddhism.

AG - What is the significance of Raymond Roussel's literary work *Locus solus* (The Solitary Place), written in 1914, to which a showcase at Palazzo Strozzi is dedicated?

AK - Roussel's eccentricity manifests prominently within his work, incorporating the creation of paintings through an unconventional medium – his teeth. This distinctive approach left an indelible mark on my consciousness, emphasizing the artificiality embedded within his oeuvre, a departure from the conventional.

AG - It was highly regarded by people who would go on to become major exponents of Surrealism and Conceptual Art: André Breton, Salvador Dalí, and Marcel Duchamp.

AK - Speaking of Duchamp, his revolutionary impact on the notion of a work of art remains undeniable. He challenges the viewer's belief, drawing a parallel to the religious fervor espoused by Catholics, who

affirm the perpetual virginity of Mary. Such paradoxes, he suggests, reveal the intricate dynamics at play in the affirmation of truth and belief.

AG - In the exhibition, we have a room devoted to female figures, with heroines of antiquity, Christianity, the Nordic world, and myth. Why have you chosen them as subjects?

AK - Reflecting on the French historian and philosopher Jules Michelet's writings on the women of the Revolution, I found inspiration in the salons of influential figures such as Madame de Staël and Madame Roland. These women not only shaped the discourse of the time but also actively prepared for the Revolution through discussions and intellectual pursuits. Furthermore, I am currently engaged in a project centered on Sylvia Beach, who fearlessly published James Joyce's *Ulysses* in Paris, defying prevalent norms with her renowned bookstore, Shakespeare, and Company, when no one else dared to.

AG - In *Hortus Philosophorum*, a sunflower grows out of the penis (or navel) of a naked man lying on his back, who seems to represent yourself and allude to an alchemical initiatory cycle through which it is possible to overcome the fear of death by coming part of the cycle of nature. It is a reference to a drawing in a manuscript in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence (Ashburnham 1166, *Miscellanea d'Alchimia*, 1460–75). You started to make use of the image as far back as 1971. What does the manuscript mean to you?

AK - I was familiar with the work. And I used the idea for some drawings and actions in the early seventies. It is also similar to *Sol Invictus*, the painting in this exhibition which depicts my body lying underneath a giant sunflower.

AG - The Rhine, the Danube, the great rivers—like the veins of a vast organism—inspire you: is it the idea of the *panta rhei*, the aphorism attributed to Heraclitus?

AK - The Rhine is a fine example of Heraclitus' *panta rhei*. The river has changed its course over time. First it flowed eastward (like the Danube today); it now flows westward into the North Sea. Hölderlin described this in his poem "The Rhine." For me, rivers are also examples of shifting borders. In spring, when the thawing glaciers caused the border river to swell, it overflowed its banks and we suddenly had Rhine water in our cellar. So where was the border between Germany and France? In the middle of the river? Or had the border run right through our cellar?

AG - What is the significance of the spectacular immersive installation *Verstrahlte Bilder* (Irradiated Paintings)?

AK - In the case of the irradiated paintings, I used something new to accelerate their development, or evolution: plutonium. Irradiating the paintings makes way for the uncontrollable. Some layers of the painting remain almost untouched by the radiation, others are extinguished, others suddenly glow with new life. We know this from Chernobyl: some trees suddenly grow faster, some animals live on, unchallenged by the radiation, others suffer damage to their genetic material. After the radiation treatment of my paintings—some of which some were four decades old—I was surprised by the large number of mutations. After the exposure to radiation in my paintings—some dating from forty years ago—I was surprised by the large number of mutations. There is a new book by Andreas Wagner that

deals with the origin of innovations. He explains that everything that nature produces for one purpose is also suitable for other purposes. This also applies to my working method. Chance is only part of the process because what is selected from the abundance of possibilities created by the radiation can be used for these and other purposes.

AG - At your studio in Croissy-Beaubourg, there are objects of all kinds. It really seems to be a place of alchemy. The materials in your works undergo transformation: you've emphasized the importance of allowing your works to rest, sometimes for decades, exposed to the elements. The metamorphosis, a key element in your art, requires layers added by time and external events. Is it an endless process?

AK - Time, alchemy, and weathering are integral components of my artistic process.

AG - In your work, can we discuss the concept of "non-finito," akin to Michelangelo's approach, something you find yourself returning to repeatedly?

AK - My works are perpetually in a state of evolution; they never reach a definitive conclusion.

AG - Books are among the main protagonists of your imagery. You have said they make up at least sixty percent of your production and they were already in the title of your first solo exhibition, held in Karlsruhe in 1970. You have also said that you start your day by opening a book, often chosen at random, from which to draw inspiration. Indeed, your studio may seem chaotic, but your library is perfectly cataloged.

AK - Yes, the book I happen to open in the morning often inspires the direction of the day's work.

AG - Another element in the last room is photography, a constant in your work.

AK - The initial works I produced during my time at art school were predominantly photographic. The moment of revelation during the development process holds a certain magical allure. My archive currently houses 130,000 negatives, and since 2008, there is an extensive collection of digital photographs.

AG - Are these photographs documentary or purely artistic? In Germany, at the end of the 1970s, the school founded in Düsseldorf by Bernd and Hilla Becher, characterized by an objective gaze, an impartial presentation of subjects, and a quest for neutrality, had a significant influence. However, your approach is different.

AK - Their approach indeed contrasts mine. While they present a vision of reality, my approach involves manipulation of photographs, experimenting with light during the development process, and occasionally employing chemical enhancements that verge on the brink of destruction. The photographic image is often the point of departure for me in the creation of books, sculptures, and paintings.

AG - The last room of the exhibition features photographs from the famous *Besetzungen* (Occupations) actions, known worldwide. These powerful images caused a scandal at the time, extending beyond the art world. They were not widely understood, as they depict you wearing the uniform of the Wehrmacht

inherited from your father, with your right hand raised in a parody of the Nazi salute, in some locations occupied by the German army during the Second World War.

AK - I created this series as part of my final university exam, declaring that it would either merit the highest grade or nothing at all. One of my professors, the relatively unknown artist Rainer Maria Küchenmeister, who had endured an internment in a concentration camp, came to my defense.

AG - And what was the purpose of images with such a forceful impact?

AK - They were meant to incite thought and introspection. If democratic elections had been held toward the end of the war, Hitler would have triumphed. I pondered what actions I, as a young man at the time, would have taken. It was a pivotal question that demanded exploration.

AG - And in this image of a man alone, often among ruins, there is a reference to German Romantic painting.

AK - There are indeed references, such as allusions to Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* (Wanderer above the Sea of Fog).

AG - People often mention your work in relation to its large scale.

AK - Criticisms about the scale and overwhelming nature of my works are not without merit. I myself am continuously overwhelmed by visual stimuli, scientific discoveries, musical composition, and poetry.

AG - Thank you, Anselm.

Engelssturz (Fall of the Angel). Site-specific work for the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi



Anselm Kiefer, *Engelssturz* (Fall of the Angel), 2022–2023, emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, fabric, sediment of electrolysis and charcoal on canvas, 750 × 840 cm

The exhibition *Anselm Kiefer. Fallen Angels* kicks off with the work *Engelssturz* (Fall of the Angel), specially conceived by the artist to establish a dialogue with the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi and its austere Renaissance architecture, through a powerful materiality, the monumental dimensions of more than seven meters, and the gold background reminiscent of Gothic polyptychs. Kiefer's painting fits into the historical-artistic context of the place, emphasizing the fusion of tradition and contemporaneity. The imposing presence in the courtyard of Palazzo Strozzi creates a unique experience, provoking reflections on transience and transformation, concepts intrinsic to the depiction of the "fall of the angel."

The artist has drawn the title on the upper left, and the name Michael in the Hebrew alphabet (מיכאל) on the right. Rebellious angels are driven out of Heaven by the archangel, who with his right hand holds a sword, wears a feathered helmet, and with his left index finger points to heaven, symbolically manifesting the divine will and, simultaneously, revealing his own name.

The archangel stands out, translucent at the bottom, against the golden background, symbolizing, as in fourteenth-century paintings, the metaphysical world. Of the fallen angels, only faces and robes are visible, falling into the dark part, where they acquire three-dimensionality. Embedded in the chaotic mixture of materials, modern garments stand out, like remnants that survived a catastrophe. The work becomes a reflection on the struggle between Good and Evil, as well as an invitation to reconsider the relationship between heaven and earth, between spiritual and material dimensions. The expression "fallen angels" takes on a broader scope, extending to identify all people and especially the artist. The connection between the two spheres, emphasized both by the painting and by the space in which it is placed, constitutes a challenge to the unknown: art thus becomes the means through which human beings attempt to confront the transcendent, trying to reduce it to a rational dimension.

For this canvas, Kiefer was inspired by Luca Giordano's *Expulsion of the Rebel Angels* or *St. Michael*, executed by the Neapolitan painter between 1692 and 1702, and preserved today in the Museum of Cadiz, whose subject is based on Revelation (12:7-9).



Luca Giordano, *Expulsion of the Rebel Angels* or *St. Michael*, 1689–1702, oil on canvas, 202 × 148 cm. Museum of Cadiz, inv. no. CE20027

The installation of this work has been possible thanks to the support of Fondazione Hillary Merkus Recordati.

The Exhibition Catalogue

The exhibition catalogue, published by Marsilio Arte (192 pages, 38 euros at the exhibition), is the result of the close collaboration between the artist, his Studio, graphic designer Peter Willberg, who has a long association with Kiefer, the publishing house and Palazzo Strozzi.

The volume, edited by Arturo Galansino with Ludovica Sebregondi, opens with the *Conversation* between Anselm Kiefer and Arturo Galansino recorded in October 2023 in Croissy, in the artist's studio. The text is accompanied by images from a photo shoot taken on that occasion and a rare shot of Kiefer at Palazzo Strozzi around 1969–1970, during a university trip.

This is followed by a contribution by the theologian, philosopher and sociologist Klaus Dermutz, devoted to *Creation and the Fall*, with a reflection on the theme of "fallen angels" in the works in the exhibition, in the light of the philosophical, literary implications, with particular attention to German culture.

Arturo Galansino devotes his essay to Anselm Kiefer at Palazzo Strozzi, traversing the rooms of the exhibition, placing the works in Kiefer's production and addressing the recurring themes in his work and the complex layering of meanings.

The *Artist as Critic* is the title of the text by Maurizio Ferraris, professor of philosophy at the University of Turin, who awarded Kiefer an honorary degree in 2014.

It is followed by a rich portfolio with large-format reproductions of the works in the exhibition. The catalogue ends with a full-bodied *Biography* of Ludovica Sebregondi, enriched by rare photographs provided by the Studio, and a selection of major solo exhibitions.

Because the installation at Palazzo Strozzi will give special significance to the works, which were specially conceived for its Renaissance spaces, a "leporello" with photographs taken in those environments will be added to the catalog later. The accordion folding format is particularly significant for Kiefer, who has used it for artist's books as well as for large-format artworks.

Education and public program

Palazzo Strozzi devotes special attention to its visitors and offers a broad selection of activities designed to turn their encounter with art into an even more fascinating experience for all age groups.

ADULTS

Guided tours

Visits to the exhibition through the works by Anselm Kiefer.

For groups, reservation required: € 100, max 20 people. For individual visitors: free with the ticket entrance on Mondays and Wednesdays at 18.00, on Sundays at 15.00, with the support of Unicoop Firenze. Reservation required.

Painting is philosophy.

Special cycle of guided visits, only in Italian, led in dialogue by a museum educator and a philosophy lecturer from the University of Florence, offering a unique interpretation to understand the complexity of Anselm Kiefer's work. Free activity with exhibition admission ticket. Reservation required.

TEENAGER

Kit Teenager

Interpretative material with in-depth explanations and ideas for discussion designed for teens to explore the show alone or with friends. The Kit can be downloaded on the website palazzostrozzi.org. With the support of Fondazione Hillary Merkus Recordati.

No Grown-Ups

High school students conduct relay-guided tours, narrating Anselm Kiefer's works to their fellow peers visiting Palazzo Strozzi. Free activity with exhibition admission ticket. With the support of Fondazione Hillary Merkus Recordati.

SCHOOLS

Visits and workshops for classes

Conversational tours and creative experiences for discovering the artworks of Anselm Kiefer. Available in multiple languages for all school levels; the contents of the activity are tailored to suit the various different age groups. € 3 per student, tour of the exhibition; € 4 per student, tour + workshop; € 80 university student groups. The cost of admission to the exhibition is not included. Reservation required.

FAMILIES

Family workshops

Activities in Italian dedicated to children and adults to discover the exhibition together and experience the languages of art.

Free activities with exhibition entrance fee. Reservations required.

- *Little Seeds*: every Wednesday 5 p.m. for families with children ages 3 to 6

- *The Surprising Life of Books*: every Sunday 10:30 a.m. for families with children 7 to 12 years old

Family Kit

A kit for adults and children aged five and over to visit the exhibition together and play with art. A pathway among the exhibits with suggestions for observing and ideas for discussion. Available free of charge at the ticket office and online at palazzostrozzi.org. With the support of Ferrovie dello Stato.

ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS

A programme of activities designed to make Palazzo Strozzi a venue for coexisting with differences. Schemes for autistic young people (*Nuances*), for people with Alzheimer's (*With Many Voices*), disabilities and mental distress (*Connections*), tours in Italian Sign Language (*Signs and Words*) and a dance pathway devoted to the wellbeing of people with Parkinson's (*Free Flowing*).

SPECIAL EVENTS

Buried Images

Thursday, June 6, 5:30 p.m., Strozzina

Presentation of the seminar dedicated to the artistic practice of Anselm Kiefer and his visual imagery, realized in collaboration with students of the course History of Contemporary Art at the University of Florence. Free admission subject to availability

Palazzo Strozzi Golden Night

Thursday, June 20, from 6 p.m.

A special evening dedicated to the Under30s in collaboration with Unicoop Firenze.

Microcosm Palazzo Strozzi

Thursday, July 18, 6 p.m., Strozzina

Presentation of the special magazine that chronicles a year of exhibitions and educational projects at Palazzo Strozzi through the contributions of teenagers, young artists, curators and graphic designers.

INFO AND RESERVATIONS

T. +39 055 2645155

prenotazioni@palazzostrozzi.org

THE MARIA MANETTI SHREM EDUCATIONAL CENTER

Opened in 2022 with **more than 40,000 people attending over 700 activities in the last 2 years**, the Maria Manetti Shrem Educational Center has become the heart and the starting point for all the Palazzo Strozzi's activities for schools, families, young people, and adults, with a particular focus on accessibility.

These spaces have been specifically designed to allow as many people as possible to experience Palazzo Strozzi's exhibitions through numerous activities aimed at transforming the encounter with art into an opportunity where the expressive potential of each participant is valued, and **where everyone can feel involved**.

The Maria Manetti Shrem Educational Center is a space where it is possible to forge new relationships between individuals and their families, as well as create an interdisciplinary field of work and discussion among artists, museum educators, healthcare professionals, and experts from various disciplines. Fundamental part of the activities are those dedicated to **inclusion and accessibility**, for autistic young people (*Nuances*), for people with Alzheimer's (*With Many Voices*), disabilities and mental distress (*Connections*), tours in Italian Sign Language (*Signs and Words*) and a dance pathway devoted to the wellbeing of people with Parkinson's (*Free Flowing*).

"The art of living is the art of giving. I am truly pleased to support the arts and culture and, in particular, make access possible for the most vulnerable people. Art can help people by bringing them together through a holistic vision." (Maria Manetti Shrem)

Born in Florence, Maria Manetti Shrem moved to San Francisco in 1972. She became instrumental in the internationalization of some of the world's most iconic fashion brands, such as Gucci and Fendi.

Maria and her husband, Jan Shrem, have long contributed philanthropic support in the U.S., Italy, and the UK to about 50 charitable programs through 30 foundations. In the U.S., these include UC Davis, the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, the San Francisco Opera, Festival Napa Valley, the San Francisco Symphony, SF MoMA, KQED, Cal Performances, ArtSmart, SF Film, and hospitals such as UCSF (neurology, orthopedics) and CPMC (cardiology). In Europe, Maria is one of the principal patrons of the King's Foundation, Royal Drawing School, Friends of the Louvre, the Venetian Heritage, the Italian National Trust (FAI), Palazzo Strozzi Foundation, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Museo 900, Mascarade Opera, and the Andrea Bocelli Foundation.

The Manetti Shrems are co-founders of the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis, which opened in 2016 to complete a longtime art legacy that took 60 years in the making. The museum's collection includes works from major California artists such as Wayne Thiebaud, William T. Wiley, Robert Arneson, Roy De Forest, and Manuel Neri. The extraordinary architectural design of the museum was listed in *ARTnews* as "One of The World's 25 Best Museum Buildings of the Past 100 Years."

Maria has received numerous recognitions as an outstanding cultural ambassador between the U.S. and Italy and an unparalleled world-class arts philanthropist. Amongst them, in 2019, the President of Italy, Sergio Mattarella, bestowed upon her the *Grand Officer of the Order of the Star of Italy*. In 2022, the Mayor of Florence, Dario Nardella, awarded her with *The Keys of the City* for her inspiring role model of patronage, following in the steps of the Medici's legacy. The City and County of San Francisco proclaimed *June 22 - Manetti Shrem Day for Philanthropy*. The Festival Napa Valley bestowed upon the Manetti Shrem couple the inaugural *Angels of The Arts Award*. On a celebratory event organized by SF Opera and SF Symphony, "Maria--50 Years in America", the San Francisco City Hall rotunda exceptionally lit up in the Italian flag colors to honor her unparalleled philanthropic activity. Maria was recognized with the highest community honor, *The Spirit of the Opera Award*. She is the 2023 UC Davis Medal recipient—the highest honorary degree presented by the University of California system to individuals in recognition of extraordinary contributions that embody the university's vision—as the major philanthropist of the arts at UC Davis.

FUORIMOSTRA

For each exhibition, Palazzo Strozzi proposes an itinerary in the region, creating a connection between the exhibition and museums, cultural institutions and partners of the Metropolitan City of Florence and the Region of Tuscany. Palazzo Strozzi acts as a catalyst for Florence and Tuscany, seeking synergies and collaborations that stimulate the cultural promotion of the region.

There are 14 venues involved in the Fuorimostra developed on the occasion of the exhibition *Anselm Kiefer. Fallen Angels*:

Firenze

Accademia delle Arti del Disegno
Collezione Casamonti
Gucci Visions
Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut
Museo Sant'Orsola
Opificio delle Pietre dure
Villa Bardini
Villa Romana

Bargino

Antinori Art Project

Palaia

Villa Lena

Prato

Centro Pecci

Pistoia

Biblioteca di San Giorgio
Collezione Gori, Fattoria di Celle

San Casciano Val di Pesa

Collezione Freymond

More info: www.palazzostrozzi.org/fuorimostra

SPECIAL EVENT

FROM FLORENCE TO MILAN:

Anselm Kiefer between Fallen Angels and Heavenly Palaces

In the miart week in Milan, a special event at the **Gallerie d'Italia in Milan** to celebrate the great German artist on the occasion of the exhibition *Anselm Kiefer: Fallen Angels* at Palazzo Strozzi and the 20th anniversary of *The Seven Heavenly Palaces 2004-2015* at Pirelli HangarBicocca.

Friday, April 12th at 11:00, **Intesa Sanpaolo** hosts at the Gallerie d'Italia in Milan a special event organized by Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi dedicated to Anselm Kiefer as part of the **miart** program and on the occasion of the exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi and the 20th anniversary of the work *The Seven Heavenly Palaces 2004-2015* at Pirelli HangarBicocca.

Intesa SanPaolo, which is the Main Partner of both the fair and the exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi, facilitates dialogue among the institutions it collaborates with to promote a discussion on contemporary themes through art and culture.

The event will delve into key themes of Kiefer's work such as the relationship between spirit and matter, individuality and collectivity, myth and history, in a dialogue between **Michele Coppola** (Intesa Sanpaolo – Gallerie d'Italia), **Arturo Galansino** (Fondazione Palazzo Strozzi), **Nicola Ricciardi** (miart), **Giovanna Amadasi** (Pirelli HangarBicocca), and **Lia Rumma** (Galleria Lia Rumma), with a special contribution from the artist.

The ***Seven Heavenly Palaces 2004-2015*** is the major site-specific work by Anselm Kiefer for the spaces of **Pirelli HangarBicocca**. The title refers to the ancient Hebrew treatise Sefer Hekhalot, the "Book of Palaces/Sanctuaries," which dates back to the 5th-6th century AD, which narrates the symbolic path of spiritual initiation that anyone who wants to become closer to God must undertake. It is composed of seven tower-shaped constructions between 13 and 19 meters high, made with modules made of reinforced concrete integrated by elements and materials such as lead books and wedges. Over the years, the work has become a permanent installation, undergoing changes that have modified its fruition, the most significant being in 2015 with the addition of five large painted canvases that have further expanded the subjects and symbols of the installation.

From March 22 to July 21, 2024, the exhibition ***Anselm Kiefer: Fallen Angels at Palazzo Strozzi*** allows visitors to directly engage with the great German master through a journey among historical works and new productions, including a new major piece created in dialogue with the Renaissance courtyard. Through painting, sculpture, installation, and photography, the exhibition unfolds as a voyage through allegories, figures, and forms reflecting on grand themes such as identity, poetry, history, and philosophy. At its core is a profound contemplation of human nature, its conflicts, contradictions, and potentials.

The event will take place at the Gallerie d'Italia – Milano, with free admission requiring mandatory reservation at the toll-free number 800.167619 or via email at milano@gallerieditalia.com.

LIST OF THE WORKS ON DISPLAY

Courtyard

0.1

Anselm Kiefer, *Engelssturz* (Fall of the Angel), 2022–2023
emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, fabric, sediment of electrolysis and charcoal on canvas, 750 × 840 cm

Room 1

1.1

Anselm Kiefer, *Luzifer* (Lucifer), 2012–2023
emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, sediment of electrolysis, fabric, and photographic print on paper on canvas, 330 × 760 cm

Room 2

2.1

Anselm Kiefer, *Für Antonin Artaud: Heligabale* (For Antonin Artaud: Heliogabalus), 2023
emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, sediment of electrolysis, plaster, terracotta, and steel wire on canvas, 380 × 570 cm

2.2

Anselm Kiefer, *SOL INVICTUS Heliogabal* (Unconquered Sun: Heliogabalus), 2023
emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf and sediment of electrolysis on canvas, 380 × 570 cm

2.3

Anselm Kiefer, *Sol Invictus* (Unconquered Sun), 1995
emulsion, acrylic, shellac and sunflower seeds on burlap, 473 × 280 cm

Room 3

3.1

Anselm Kiefer, *La Scuola di Atene* (The School of Athens), 2022
emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, sediment of electrolysis, fabric and canvas collage on canvas, 470 × 840 cm

3.2

Anselm Kiefer, *Vor Sokrates* (Before Socrates), 2022
emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, sediment of electrolysis and canvas collage on canvas, 470 × 560 cm

3.3

Anselm Kiefer, *Ave Maria* (Hail Mary), 2022
emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, sediment of electrolysis, fabric, lead and canvas collage on canvas, 380 × 380 cm

Room 4

4.1

En Sof (The Infinite), 2016
glass, steel, wood, lead, zinc, plaster, sediment of electrolysis and charcoal, 280 × 115 × 76 cm

4.2

Das Balder-Lied (The Song of Balder), 2018

steel, glass, lead, dried mistletoe and chalk, 280 × 160 × 160 cm

4.3

Danae (Danaë), 2016

glass, metal, resin, lead, sunflower seeds and gold leaf, shellac, emulsion, acrylic and clay,
280 × 125 × 90 cm

Room 5

5.1

Anselm Kiefer, *Locus solus* (The Solitary Place), 2019–2023

glass, steel, lead, resin, gold leaf, plaster, charcoal, asphalt, gravel, ash, fabric, emulsion, oil and shellac, 240 × 216 × 345 cm

5.2

Anselm Kiefer, *A phantom city, phaked of philim pholk*, 2023

emulsion, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, cardboard, and charcoal on canvas, 280 × 380 cm

5.3

Anselm Kiefer, *archaic zelotypia and the odium teleologicum*, 2023

emulsion, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf, cardboard, and charcoal on canvas, 280 × 380 cm

5.4

Anselm Kiefer, *Cynara*, 2023

emulsion, oil, acrylic, shellac, gold leaf and dried artichokes on canvas, 380 × 380 cm

Room 6

6.1

Anselm Kiefer, *Verstrahlte Bilder* (Irradiated paintings) 1983–2023

60 painting elements, 600 × 1482 × 673 cm

Room 7

7.1

Anselm Kiefer, *Der Rhein* (The Rhine), 1982–2013

collage of woodcuts on paper with oil, emulsion, acrylic and shellac, mounted on canvas, 330 × 330 cm

7.2

Anselm Kiefer, *Dem unbekanntem Maler* (To the Unknown Painter), 2013

collage of woodcuts on paper with oil, emulsion, acrylic, shellac and chalk, mounted on canvas,
330 × 380 cm

7.3

Anselm Kiefer, *Hortus Philosophorum* (The Garden of Philosophers), 1997–2011

collage of woodcuts on paper with emulsion, acrylic, shellac, chalk and charcoal, mounted on canvas,
580 × 280 cm

7.4

Anselm Kiefer, *Daphne*, 2008–2011
resin, plaster and branches, 212 × 152 × 132 cm

7.5

Anselm Kiefer
Ave Maria turris eburnea (Hail Mary, Ivory Tower), 2017
resin and plaster, 210 × 140 × 140 cm

7.6

Anselm Kiefer, *Nemesis*, 2017
resin, plaster, lead and dirt, 190 × 140 × 190 cm

Room 8

8.1

Anselm Kiefer, *Heroische Sinnbilder* (Heroic Symbols), 2009
photographic print on paper mounted on lead, 400 × 240 cm

8.2

Anselm Kiefer, *Heroische Sinnbilder* (Heroic Symbols), 2009
photographic print on paper mounted on lead, 400 × 240 cm

8.3

Anselm Kiefer, *Heroische Sinnbilder* (Heroic Symbols), 2009
photographic print on paper mounted on lead, 400 × 240 cm

8.4

Anselm Kiefer, *Heroische Sinnbilder* (Heroic Symbols), 2009
photographic print on paper mounted on lead. 400 × 240 cm