

## ANSELM KIEFER

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### FÜR PAUL CELAN

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

03 Wednesday - 03 Saturday

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If we ask what artistic genre, with any kind of form and content, has most clearly marked Anselm Kiefer's career, we automatically encounter his preoccupation with the book.

The legendary 1991 exhibition, curated by Götz Adriani in the Tübingen Kunsthalle, showed books created by Kiefer between 1969 and 1990. The presentation was accompanied by a comprehensive publication for this block of works. Now, in a major solo exhibition by Anselm Kiefer in Salzburg, we are proud to present a new series dealing with the medium of the book in general and the poet Paul Celan in particular.

While our 1993 exhibition *Am Anfang* [At the beginning] focused on the iconography of the Heavenly, dealing primarily with cabbalistic mythology and myths concerning the origin of the world, Kiefer's latest works show a more secular aesthetic. Here references to Germanic mythology are linked with the poetry of Paul Celan, a German-speaking Jew from Czernowitz.

A leitmotif of this series is scenes of mown fields, with a perspective typical of Kiefer and sometimes looking more like battlegrounds; they are based on photographs Kiefer took in Salzburg last winter. Besides leaden books and ships, runes in the form of appliquéd scorched twigs are an element of the new pictures and books – a formal novelty in Kiefer's work.

In this exhibition, the viewer again finds himself in the typical "Kiefer labyrinth", as Daniel Arasse put it so aptly. "For thirty years, Anselm Kiefer's work has been developing in a process of accumulation, mingling and reworking of themes, motifs and constellations which recur and overlap repeatedly in diverse media [...]. The more we familiarise ourselves with his work, the better we know our way around it, the stronger the feeling becomes of being involved in a kind of labyrinth, increasingly extensive and complex [...]" (Arasse, 2001).

The exhibition comprises eleven works on canvas, a series of bound books shown in display cases, and five sculptures: one powerful, monumental outdoor sculpture of reinforced concrete and lead elements, two leaden piles of books combined with bronze sunflowers, lead ships and wedges, and two monumental leaden books from the series *The Secret Life of Plants*.