

## Engagement and reservation:

Anselm Kiefer's installation at White Cube. 11th March-9th April 2011

Engagement and reservation with Anselm Kiefer's recent installation at the Hoxton White Cube raises matters that I want to revisit or bring to the fore. *DES MEERES UND DER LIEBE WELLEN* [*The Waves of Sea and Love*] is the installation title and the name given to the main displays.

I start with a description of the installation, the title and the theme. A preliminary discussion of Kiefer's use of Euclidean diagrams follows. I then elaborate on the description of the main displays and potentials for meaning. This leads to a brief discussion of the use of more than one media and the use of vitrines. The article then branches into a deeper consideration of the use of geometry and drawing as modes of thought. The installation is discussed as a whole and with a brief note on a lecture recently given by Kiefer. There is then a glimpse of Kiefer's change of thematic attention and the apparent shift from paradox to simplification. The contemporary human condition and environmental damage, as part of his thematic thought, is then considered.

After this a different excursion is made into the world Kiefer appears to associate with through theosophy and psychology with particular reference to Rudolf Steiner, Carl Jung and alchemy. There is then a return to drawing and geometry as part of the *thought-feeling-willing* process involved in Kiefer's facture. This business is elaborated, almost as a tangent into an extended selection of quotations from *The Origins of Geometry* by Edmund Husserl, some brief commentary from Jesse Norman on Euclid and then Claudia Brodsky Lacour on architectural thought. The article concludes with an abrupt statement, without recourse to reconciliation.

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The installation in the main gallery promotes an overwhelming pressure comparable to being in the Victorian anthropological, Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, full of objects in vitrines, sometimes difficult to view through the light conditions, often little room to negotiate a viewing position. The largest work in the Hoxton White Cube, *SALZ, MERKUR, SULPHUR*, like a focal altar in the gallery, nearly twelve and a half feet high by more than eighteen feet wide, a canvas with a three-dimensional representation in lead of a U-boat with mixed media, partly visually obstructed by five vitrines, run down the centre of the gallery floor, mounted horizontally, displaying large opened books. On the walls, left and right, hung 24 vitrines, each three and half feet high by over ten and a half feet long. They were hung in threes, one above the other, in the manner Degas objected to and named "skying" and as a consequence sometimes difficult to see. Each of these vitrines displayed a chemically-treated, single black and white photograph of a seascape upon which had been fixed a gynæcological tool. In the small gallery-room upstairs,

nine photographs with mixed media in vitrines, each just over three feet by just over five feet, with the overall title *I HOLD ALL THE INDIAS IN MY HAND*.

In much of Kiefer's work in the last forty years, there has been a significant relationship for the viewer in the landscapes, seascapes and representations of large architectural interiors used in Anselm Kiefer's canvases and art works and their associations with words and titles; between recognised phenomena and the specifics of a poem or myth used for cognition of the surface and meaning and the less tangible grand scale implicated by the juxtaposition of the dominant representations, like the seascapes, and the attached rediscovered or found objects or natural flora like sunflower seeds or rose briars. After the invited strike of black bile, a melancholy. The question becomes why does, if it does, this rather crude use of relationship, work – crude because self-evident once it is recognised – if it works – does it work?

The installation title and theme derive from the 1831 play *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* by Franz Grillparzer, which uses the Byzantine narrative poem *Hero and Leander* by Musæus Grammaticus, a narrative from a now lost source, previously evident, but unnamed in Virgil's *Georgics*, explicitly given in Ovid's *Heroides* XVIII and XIX, and used by Christopher Marlowe (in his unfinished poem of *Hero and Leander*, 'completed' by George Chapman) and used by John Keats' *Sonnet on an engraved gem of Leander*. The lover drowning. I'm reminded of Hart Crane in Jasper Johns' *Periscope* and associated Front Street and Edisto Beach works from 1962-63 such as two versions of *Diver*, 1962 and 1963 and the painting *Land's End*; the desire to continue, the hand calls to be saved.<sup>1</sup> The upper gallery display of *I HOLD ALL THE INDIAS IN MY HAND* included Kiefer's photographs of a man (who looks like Kiefer) swimming. The title is from the Kiefer exhibition at the South London Gallery in 1996-1997, derived from a sonnet by Francesco de Quevedo in which he writes of a man holding a ring that bears the portrait of his beloved. The image acts like a mandala as a focus for meditation. With the poet's contemplation of it comes a consciousness of the universe and his place within it. 'I hold the starry plains of heaven,' he writes. 'I hold all Indias in my hand.' The narrative of Hero and Leander may be best understood, at least initially, through Virgil and Ovid. The following quotations may be enough to make the attention in Kiefer's work clear.

'Think of young man, burning with cruel love to the bone:  
Think of him, late in the blindfold night swimming the narrows  
That are vexed by headlong gales, while above his head the huge  
Gates of heaven thunder and the seas collide with a crash  
Against the capes: powerless to recall him his sorrowful parents  
And the girl who is son to die of grief over his body.' (Virgil<sup>2</sup>)

'I've been disturbed, as the troubled ocean raged with cruel waves.  
If my mind has seen gentle sleep through those nights,  
may this delay caused by the raging straits be a long one.  
I'm sitting on a rock, sadly gazing at your other shore  
and I'm carried in mind to where my body cannot go.

Indeed my keen watchful eye either sees  
or thinks it sees the summit to your tower.  
Three times I've left my clothes on the dry sands:  
three times, naked, painfully, I've tried to swim the roads:  
the swollen sea opposed my youthful undertaking,  
and, swimming against the waves, my head was submerged.' (Ovid<sup>3</sup>)

The ground-floor, main wall-mounted vitrines, each displayed a large chemically-damaged photograph of the sea upon which had been mounted a chemically-damaged gynæcologist's tool, one on each photograph. Some of the photography has been subjected to various processes, including what Kiefer calls 'electrolysis', to ensure that the surface, when exposed to air, changes appearance over time.

The main central canvas and the photography of seascapes in the books, in the horizontal vitrines, have been overdrawn with what Kiefer names Euclidean diagrams. Kiefer in conversation with Nicholas Wroe, explains "Putting a Euclidean diagram on a seascape is about the impossibility of capturing the sea. The sea is always fluid. The geometrical figure gives the impression of fixing it at a certain moment. It's the same as us imposing constellations on the sky which, of course, are completely crazy and nothing to do with the stars. It is just for us to feel more comfortable. To construct an illusion for ourselves that we have brought order to chaos."<sup>4</sup> This use of idealised Euclidean geometry recalls Marcel Duchamp's twin photographs of a seascape with a pencil drawing over each, depicting the drawn geometric projection of the outlines of a pyramid and its mirrored image.<sup>5</sup> Duchamp's other work in Buenos Aires in 1919 also rhymes with Kiefer's use of deterioration and damage in this installation in contrast to the Euclidean geometry. Robert Rauschenberg's use of the geometric outlines of a "transparent" cube screen-printed onto the canvas can also be noted, for example the same figure, on *Buffalo I*, 1961; *Glider*, 1962; *Shortstop*, 1962.<sup>6</sup> *Buffalo I* also includes a photograph of a swimmer in the sea. And, as already touched upon, Jasper Johns' use of geometric instruments (for example in his *Device* 1961-62 and in the two versions of *Diver*<sup>7</sup>) could become relevant here.

In the twenty-four larger vitrines the large photographs of seascapes are in a state of chemical change, made possible by Kiefer's additions of chemical instabilities and processes he names as electrolysis. Over each of these seascapes a gynæcological tool. All of these tools have been found or subjected to deterioration, chemically damaging their metal surfaces through rust or other surface damage. This aspect encourages a direct link between the sea and the instability of the metal. The main canvas tableau, with the representation in lead of a U-boat, multiplies this attention to chemistry through its use of chemical symbols for sulphur, mercury and sodium chloride, labelling the outer corners of a large triangle drawn over the representation of crusts of a seascape turning to a kind of dried-up lake. I'm reminded of Robert Rauschenberg's *Dirt Painting (for John Cage)*, 1972<sup>8</sup> and of Terry Setch's 1980s canvases prepared through immersion in the Severn estuary,<sup>9</sup> but also by Kiefer's earlier seascapes, such as *For Paul Celan - Sea Foam*, 2005.<sup>10</sup> The

triangle's internal apex angle is larger than ninety degrees and a second line in white crayon from the lower left base to the apex converts that apex angle into ninety degrees. This may be a diagram from Euclid's work, but it doesn't appear in his *Elements*; indeed many of the diagrams drawn over the seascapes in the displayed books (the catalogue reproduces all of each book's pages) do not directly appear in Euclid's *Elements*.<sup>11</sup> but the use of Euclidean idealised and logical geometry, and its contextual disruption, relates directly to the thought and subsequent meaning of these drawings in relation to the photographs of seascapes.

It would be worth considering the potentials for meaning in this aesthetics, which is to say the imperfect fit of these patterns of connectedness. The elements Kiefer brings together in this installation may be summarised: deteriorating seascapes in process of decomposition, juxtaposed with chemically damaged gynæcological tools; idealised and logically focused Euclidean diagrams drawn over seascapes; deteriorating black and white photographs of a swimmer at sea with occasional red paint marks; a tableau representation of a U-boat, with painted representations of flames leaving its gun barrels, on what could as easily be a dried-up lake as much as a picture of the sea beneath the surface, with a superimposed Euclidean diagram and chemical symbols. The use of vitrines to contain the processes of deterioration of the photographs and tools. The use of titles and, occasionally, handwritten words to lead the viewer into a more complex array of meanings.

The use of one media on another, particularly found or displaced objects fixed to a fine art picture plane, originated in work factured by Braque and Picasso in the early part of the twentieth century and labeled *Cubism*. This is facture further developed by Marcel Duchamp, some East European Constructivists and German and other Dadaists, and subsequent artists in Europe and America. Indeed many of these artists were all also involved at different times with representations of geometrical articulation through drawing, and also facturing drawings, two and three-dimensionally, through the use of strings, wires and paper edges. Both processes of facture lead to a pattern of connectedness that can be either didactic or rhetorical, or both. Both processes are also sensual and present the overt demonstration of imperfect fit. I'm reminded of Jesse Norman's work in *After Euclid*, subtitled *Visual reasoning and the Epistemology of Diagrams*,<sup>12</sup> but as much by the discourse developed by Claudia Brodsky Lacour articulating philosophical thought through geometry and architectural drawing.<sup>13</sup> Even more particularly the discussion of truth through Edmund Husserl's 1936, *The Origin of Geometry*, extensively *introduced* by Jacques Derrida in 1962.<sup>14</sup>

There is clearly a range of precedents informing Kiefer's facture. In 1915 Ivan Puni added a handsaw to his sculptural relief;<sup>15</sup> Kurt Schwitters' *Relief construction* from 1919<sup>16</sup> used wire, wood and metal to facture the work's geometric complexity; Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg had started using sculptural attachments to their canvases in the period from 1955 into the 1960s: for example: Rauschenberg's *Hymnal*, 1955; *Canyon*, 1959; *Magician II*, 1959 and Johns' work in the period 1960-1962, for example, *Painting with Ruler and "Gray"*, 1960; *In Memory of My Feelings* -

*Frank O'Hara, 1961; Device, 1961-62;*<sup>17</sup> all of which included reference to geometric practice; Cy Twombly and Grace Hartigan were both using handwritten words on canvas in the 1950s; R.B. Kitaj started to add poignant texts to his canvases in 1960 with *The Murder of Rosa Luxemburg*.<sup>18</sup>

Kiefer's use of vitrines has at one time been articulated by him, discussing the work, *Karfunkelfee* in 2009,<sup>19</sup> as providing a threshold between the work and the viewer, drawing the viewer into the work to investigate the contents. Unfortunately, or perhaps deliberately, this was made partly impossible in this Hoxton show, because of the proximity of the exhibits. In the show that included *Karfunkelfee*, it was evident that the vitrines were also the containers to hold the Moroccan thorns in place in front of the canvases, and this is part of what is meant by threshold, requiring the viewer to get engaged with the difficulty of viewing. If that is part of the intention in the 2011 show, then it was partly achieved by the reflected light on vitrine glass and partly by their out-of-reach hanging. This use of vitrines is emphatically different from the extensive use of vitrines by Joseph Beuys, partly in his late period from 1974, it is different again from the use by André Breton and the Surrealists developed by Joseph Cornell in his use of glass cabinets, some of which included natural fauna and flora; the connections to these artists' work will not be further discussed here.

The Hoxton installation, curated by Kiefer, also needs to be taken as a complex whole. The catalogue includes a translated transcription of Kiefer's recent public lecture titled 'Marine' (the title is from Rimbaud's poem in *Illuminations*), given as part of a series he is giving in Paris following his new appointment in that city from where he now runs his studio. There is a persistent interest in metaphoricity of language and also the individual plight figuratively rhyming with a larger dilemma, 'gliding through the defeated waves' and 'the troubled ocean raged with cruel waves' in Ovid, the description of the sea in the vocabulary of the land, 'Now my worn path through the solitary waves is familiar,/ no different to a road traversed by many wheels' in Ovid; 'Prows of silver and of steel -/Thresh the foam, -/Upheave the stumps and brambles./The currents of the heath' in Rimbaud.<sup>20</sup> In his lecture Kiefer notes: 'We know that angles, solids, geometry do not exist in reality. // We know that we are incapable of locating a particle in a definite place, that it is merely a probability, and that a particle can also be a wave, because science never yields certainty.'<sup>21</sup>

In the same lecture he displays photographs of a book that he put together in 1969 titled *Unfruchtbare Landschaften (Barren Landscapes)*. He notes: 'In *Man muss das All zersplittern* [which Kiefer translates as 'the universe must be shattered' from *The Will to Power*] Nietzsche said in substance that the artist, by shattering things, paradoxically creates a new artificial unity, a desperate, impossible, illusory unity. Michael Crichton discusses Jasper Johns' use of 'paradox' in his 1977 monograph.<sup>22</sup> Kiefer, writing about *Unfruchtbare Landschaften* notes, 'I applied ... paradox by bringing together two elements that had nothing to do with each other: landscapes and the pages of a medical textbook dealing with contraception, illustrated by intra uterine devices [IUDs]. The shapes of these IUDs and the idea behind them

interested me in relation to Catholicism: aren't contraceptive devices always the work of the devil? // I placed IUDs on photographs of landscapes that I declared to be sterile ...' (2011: 88-89)

An initial holistic view of the Hoxton installation *DES MEERES UND DER LIEBE WELLEN* may now take place. The initial subject derived from the title is the myth of Hero and Leander. This is a recent feature of Kiefer's practice. In *Landscape and Memory*, 1995, Simon Schama noted, '... Kiefer designed his paintings to return those compositional lines back to their narrative function...' (in representational response to Mondrian's abstraction from natural forms, for example, *Piet Mondrian-Arminius's Battle*, 1976<sup>23</sup>)(1995: 126) '...The real problem – what we might call the Kiefer syndrome – is whether it is possible to take myth seriously in its own terms, and to respect its coherence and complexity, without becoming morally blinded by its poetic power. This is only a variation, after all, of the habitual and insoluble dilemma of the anthropologist (or for that matter the historian, though not many of us like to own up to it): of how to reproduce the "other," separated from us by space, time, or cultural customs, without either losing ourselves altogether in total immersion or else rendering the subject "safe" by the usual eviscerations of Western empirical analysis.' (Schama 1995: 134<sup>24</sup>)

In 2007, Andrea Lauterwein noted: 'After 1980, references to national iconography poisoned by history become less frequent, and Kiefer takes most of his titles from works of poetry. At first sight, it therefore seems as if his strategy has moved from the political to the poetical realm, but this apparent shift is only external, as the texts and poems to which he refers are, to varying degrees, explicit condensations of political history.'<sup>25</sup> (2007: 20-21) Indeed the initial subject is almost reiterated by the photographs of the swimmer in *I HOLD ALL THE INDIAS IN MY HAND* in the upper gallery. The juxtapositioning of seascape and gynæcological tools, is, on the surface, what Kiefer proposes as Nietzsche's paradox, Kiefer notes, 'by bringing together two elements that had nothing to do with each other'. However in *DES MEERES UND DER LIEBE WELLEN*, bringing together waves of sea with, by association, love through childbirth, there is less of a paradox and more like a simplification. The human struggle, through the tools, with natural processes, childbirth, but also the sea as the origin of life, which is now historically in various states of deterioration through anthropogenic activity, does provide the beginnings of a cogent æsthetic statement. Taking this practice into a deeper understanding could assist here.

The 'struggle' contributes to an understanding of existence, of being, both on an individual psychological level as Grillparzer's play proposes, but also on a larger figurative level that the source myth and subsequent poetry encourages. The complexity of æsthetic decision partly derives from the relationship between assemblage facture and the contingent empathy, between conceptual and planned decision on the one hand, and proprioceptive engagement within the planned praxis on the other. This appears to expand and provides a metonym for the human condition. The desiring figure of Leander, like humankind in a polluted ocean, is drowning. Environmental damage at sea from pollutants such as oil spillage, is

leading to a massive destruction of wildlife, which effectively preludes the destruction of humankind. The quantity of phosphorus (part of a boundary with the nitrogen cycle) flowing into the oceans is already approaching its upper sustainable limit. The surface ocean is everywhere saturated with calcium carbonate; increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide, which increases oceanic acidity and carbonate ion concentrations and thus the level of saturation ... some surface waters will become undersaturated within decades.<sup>26</sup> These changes will threaten high-latitude aragonite secreting organisms including cold-water corals, which provide essential fish habitat, and shelled pteropods, an abundant food source for marine predators. But Kieffer's use of chemical symbols (sulphur, mercury and sodium nitrate) do not link directly to these matters. His use of these chemicals in the title *SALZ, MERKUR, SULFUR* probably derives from Rudolf Steiner's 1923 lecture, of the same title.<sup>27</sup>

Steiner's lecture concerns itself with the archaic idea of the three principles of alchemy and thus a figurative understanding of the self: *thinking, feeling and willing*. This can be better understood from a brief scan of Carl Jung's historical work on alchemy, which carries many of the concepts touched upon by Steiner and which Kiefer uses in his works with particular regard to the Hoxton installation. I have extracted a few examples to indicate these connections: 'The form of the birth is as a turning wheel, which Mercurius causes in the sulphur.'<sup>28</sup> This idea of a wheel in Jacob Böhme's work is that of a natural process, he reads Ezekiel, which in the theosophical literature becomes, 'Thus we see that the spiritual life stands turned out of and facing itself. The wheel of nature turns in upon itself from without...' (Jung 1968: 166<sup>29</sup>) 'The basis of alchemy,' notes Jung, 'is the work (*opus*). Part of this work is practical, the *operatio* itself, which is to be thought of as a series of experiments with chemical substances... The most commonly used substances [are] quicksilver, salt, and sulphur, whose alchemical meaning is one of the secrets of the art.' (1968: 288) Jung quotes from 'VIII Exercitatio in Turbam': '... there is in fact one substance in which everything is contained and that is the *sulphur philosophorum*, [which] is water and soul, oil, Mercurius and Sol, the fire of nature, the eagle, the *lachryma*, the first *hyle* of the wise, the *materia prima* of the perfect body. And by whatever names the philosophers have called their stone they always mean and refer to this one substance, i.e., to the water from which everything [originates] and in which everything [is contained], which rules everything, in which errors are made and in which the error is itself corrected. I call it "philosophical" water, no ordinary [*vulgi*] water but *aqua mercurialis*, whether it be simple or composite...' (1968: 234) This genre of thought lends itself to Kiefer's project and this installation; it provides him with materials for his facture and encourages an extension to his rhetoric.

These provisions and encouragements are further elaborated through the use of drawn geometries and tools applied to the seascape images. They shift his photography into emphatic representation and shift the potential from representation of perceptive description and the æsthetic of verisimilitude into the potential for a rhetorical component and speculation. The application of geometry further elaborates the potential for recognising drawing as part of a *thinking-feeling-willing* process. 'Drawing is the primal means of symbolic communication, which

predates and embraces writing and functions as a tool of conceptualisation parallel with language.’ (Petherbridge 1991: 7<sup>30</sup>) and ‘Geometry permeates the discourse of systematic analysis ... [and] is also the source of constituent arcs and directional lines ... It is a common misconception that analytical procedures are antipathetic to feeling.’ (1991: 56) Kiefer’s drawn geometries are both engagements with conceptual analysis as part of a process of planning or conceptualisation, they are also part of his autograph, part of his proprioceptive engagement. ‘How,’ asks Edmund Husserl, ‘... is a science like geometry possible? How, as a systematic, endlessly growing stratified structure of idealities, can it maintain its original meaningfulness through living reactivability if its cognitive thinking is supposed to produce something new without being able to reactivate the previous levels of knowledge back to the first? ... We must take into consideration the peculiar “logical” activity which is tied specifically to language, as well as to the ideal cognitive structures that arise specifically within it.’ (Derrida 1978: 166-167<sup>31</sup>) But it is also the case that ‘... what is missing from the accounts of authenticity is the possibility that autograph is not ensured in every line, but is intermittent. The encyclopædic nature of drawing within an artist’s *œuvre* means that in some drawings autograph has been suppressed, overlaid or not yet formulated. To insist ... – that every drawing must carry the stamp of its author – is either naïve or pandering to an economist view of art.’ (1991: 21)

In the early nineteenth century, David Cox, tired of painting stage scenery in Birmingham at four shillings a square yard, turned to landscape painting; then began teaching perspective, but finding he not understand it himself, chose an unhelpful textbook on Euclid; this so confused him, that in exasperation he ‘hurled’ the volume right through the lath-and plaster wall of his fragile home’, and thereafter relied solely on his eye.<sup>32</sup> When Marcel Duchamp was in Buenos Aires in 1919 he planned a birthday present for his sister, Suzanne Duchamp. He instructed her to take a geometry textbook, hang it out of a window so that ‘the wind was to go through the book, choose the problems, thin out its pages and tear them.’<sup>33</sup> Husserl writes: ‘... the writing-down effects a transformation of the original mode of being of the meaning-structure, within the geometrical sphere of self-evidence, of the geometrical structure which is put into words. It becomes sedimented ... But the reader can make it self-evident again, can reactivate the self-evidence.’ (Husserl 1936: 164)

‘Geometry is available to us in its propositions, its theories. Of course we must and we can answer for this logical edifice to the last detail in terms of self-evidence. Here ... we arrive at first axioms, and from them we proceed to the original self-evidence which the fundamental concepts make possible. What is this, if not the “theory of knowledge,” in this case specifically the theory of geometrical knowledge? ... What is fundamentally mistaken is the limitation through which precisely the deepest and most genuine problems of history are concealed. If one thinks over our expositions (which are of course still rough and will later of necessity lead us into new depth-dimensions), what they make obvious is precisely that which we know – namely, that the presently vital cultural configuration “geometry” is a tradition and



is still being handed down – is not knowledge concerning an external causality which effects the succession of historical configurations, as if it were knowledge based on induction, the presupposition of which would amount to an absurdity here; rather to understand geometry or any given cultural fact is to be conscious of its historicity, albeit “implicitly.” (1936: 172-173)

It is now appropriate to extend this discussion into what may seem a tangential, but necessary phase, in order to address, or begin to address, the difficulty of truth values and thus the meaning accrued from æsthetic practice in the work by Kiefer being considered. This business has to do with the complexity of presenting a critique of singular and assured truth values in a field where clearly these ideas of truth and value are necessarily in flux and in a state of decoherence, in a state of what I have elsewhere started to name as a ‘confidence in lack’ (and further developed as part of the *Complexity Manifold*<sup>34</sup>). ‘Anything that is shown to be a historical fact,’ notes Husserl, ‘either in the present through experience or by a historian as a fact in the past, necessarily has its *inner structure of meaning*; but especially the motivational interconnections established about it in terms of everyday understanding have deep, further and further-reaching implications which must be interrogated, disclosed...’ (1936: 174) ‘All not-knowing concerns the unknown world, which yet exists in advance for us *as world*, as the horizon of all questions of the present and thus also all questions which are specifically historical.’ (1936: 176)

‘Geometry and the sciences most closely related to it have to do with spacetime and the shapes, figures, also shapes of motion, alterations of deformation, etc., that are possible within spacetime, particularly as measurable magnitudes. It is now clear that even if we know almost nothing about the historical surrounding world of the first geometers, this much is certain as an invariant, essential structure: ... a world of “things” (including the human beings themselves as subjects of this world); that all things necessarily had to have bodily character – although not all things could be mere bodies, since the necessarily coexisting human beings are not thinkable as mere bodies and, like even the cultural objects which belong with them structurally, are not exhausted in corporeal being.’ (1936:177) ‘... the problem would be to discover, through recourse to what is essential to history, the historical original meaning which necessarily was able to give and did give to the whole becoming of geometry its persisting truth meaning.’ (1936: 179)

‘... Only if the apodictically [demonstrable] general content, invariant throughout all conceivable variation, of the spatiotemporal sphere of shapes is taken into account in the idealization can an ideal construction arise which can be understood for all future spacetime and by all coming generations of humankind and thus be capable of being handed down and reproduced with the identical intersubjective meaning.’ (1936: 179) But when we take on Euclid in an uncritical position we represent Western affinities to truth values in ideal or fixed forms. What Husserl confirms is that these are false truth values. Kiefer’s installation is exemplary of this struggle for a comprehension of existence in the face of the

processes of change, damage and questionable exactness. ‘How can one’s experience of a diagram,’ asks Jesse Norman, ‘justify a belief state about something other than the diagram?’ His own answer is immediate, ‘a diagram may have representational content. For example, it may represent one circle as intersecting another...’ (Norman 2006: 36)<sup>35</sup>

It will be useful at this stage to note some aspects of geometry and *thought-feeling-willing*. In *Critique of Pure Reason*, in the ‘B’ Preface, Kant describes the main goal of his work as an ‘attempt to transform the accepted procedure of metaphysics, undertaking an entire revolution according to the example of the *geometers* (my emphasis) and natural scientists.’ And in the Doctrine of Method, he gives a worked example of someone following an argument in Euclid to illustrate his doctrine that intuition of a diagram or figure is required for geometrical knowledge. (2006: 7) But, as Norman makes clear, Kant is mistaken in thinking that intuition of a diagram is required for geometrical knowledge, ‘we can plausibly attribute the source of the mistake to [what Norman names as] his lack of a [spacetime]-independent understanding of real numbers.’ (2006: 8)

Such ideas can be further considered through the work of Lacour.<sup>36</sup> ‘The history of the human endeavour to order itself, to live in society, and to know, is a tissue of partial efforts whose diachronic development ..., like the historically composite buildings produced by several different architects [or installation artists or artist-curators], can never resemble the self-regulating reasonings of a single man (sic) thinking, like a single architect drawing, alone.’ (1996: 90) Descartes’ discourse ‘is ... also the discourse of human civilization. The only basis on which Descartes, as autobiographical narrator, can “reform [his] own thoughts” and formulate a method is the “thought” of non-discursive formation manifested in architectural drawing. But this “thought” is not “merely” a metaphor, that is an image understood as a dispensable figure of an otherwise independent thought. It is the manifestation, in discourse, of the method exercised in the *Géométrie*.’ (1996: 92) ‘Thinking is independent of subjectivity and objective things the way lines, in the *Géométrie*, are independent of their historical limitation to geometrical shapes.’ (1996: 101<sup>37</sup>) It is necessary, notes Claude Perrault, ‘always to join observations with reasoning ... it often happens that one sees things without knowing that one sees them, and one can also know that things are, although one does not see them.’ (1996: 119<sup>38</sup>) This early expression of what was to become decoherence is part of the contemporary Western dilemma, it is also a step towards changing those now archaic values.

Kiefer’s practice, made manifest in the Hoxton installation, presents the dangerous position of chaotic and tentative combinations with assured clarities that can lead the engaged viewer beyond their initial reservation into a personal dialogue with the human condition, that of an individual’s situation, but more energetically, of a greater human plight. Kiefer uses idealised forms and logical thought and juxtaposes these with intangible and poetic excursions. This complexity of practice ensures an open agenda that can bring in more than one level of discussion and, most significantly, more than one outcome or result in a single

meaning. Kiefer has shifted the praxis of mourning, evident in his earlier work and elaborated through an attention to local history in the wake of the Holocaust, into a new attention, but no less daunting attention, to the discontinuous and multiplicity of spacetimes we now search within and beyond.

<sup>1</sup> *Periscope (Hart Crane)*, 1963, oil on canvas, Artist's Collection; *Diver*, 1962, oil on canvas with objects, in Irma and Norma Braman Collection; *Diver*, 1963, charcoal, pastel and watercolour, and *Untilted*, 1963, charcoal, collage and paint, both in the Mrs. Victor Ganz, New York collection; and *Land's End*, 1963, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. There are also some related prints such as the lithograph, *Hatteras*, 1963.

<sup>2</sup> Virgil, *Georgics, Book III*, translated by C. Day Lewis, 1983, Oxford University Press. Lines 258-262.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid, *Heroides*, XVIII-XIX, translated by A.S. Kline, 2001,  
<http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasheroides.htm>

<sup>4</sup> *The Guardian*, 19.03.11.

<sup>5</sup> *Handmade Stereopticon Slides*, 1918-19, Buenos Aires, part of the Katherine S. Drier Bequest in the Museum of Modern Art, New York. *vid.* Arturo Schwarz (1969) *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, London: Thames & Hudson. plate 258.

<sup>6</sup> *Buffalo I*, 1961, Mr. & Mrs. David A. Wingate Collection; *Glider*, 1962, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Sonnabend Collection; *Shortstop*, 1962, Sonnabend Collection.

<sup>7</sup> *Device*, 1961-62, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and *Diver*, 1962, Irma and Norma Braman Collection; *Diver*, 1963, Mrs. Victor Ganz, New York collection;

<sup>8</sup> Smithsonian Institution touring show catalogue (1977), Washington D.C., no.18.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.rwa.org.uk/tsetch.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Andrea Layterwein (2007) *Anselm Kiefer/Paul Celan. Myth, Mourning and Memory*, translated by Paul Filkins, London: Thames & Hudson.

<sup>11</sup> *The Elements of Euclid*, edited by Isaac Todhunter (1933, reprinted 1939) London: J.M. Dent & Sons.

<sup>12</sup> Jesse Norman (2006) *After Euclid. Visual Reasoning & the Epistemology of Diagrams*, Stanford, California: Center for the Study of Language Information.

<sup>13</sup> Claudia Brodsky Lacour (1996) *Lines of Thought. Discourse, Architectonics and the Origin of Modern Philosophy*, Duke University Press, Durham and London.

<sup>14</sup> Jacques Derrida (1978) *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, translated by John P. Leavey, Jr., New York and Sussex: Nicolas Hays and Harvester Press respectively.

<sup>15</sup> Ivan Puni, *Sculpture-Relief with Saw*, Mr. & Mrs. Herman Berninger Collection, Zurich, *vid.* Diane Waldman (1992) *Collage, Assemblage and the Found Object*, Oxford: Phaidon. plate 107.

<sup>16</sup> Kurt Schwitters, *Relief construction*, 1919, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Rauschenberg: *Hymnal*, 1955, Sonnabend Collection; *Canyon*, 1959, *Sonnabend Collection*; *Magician II*, Sonnabend Collection and Jasper Johns: *Painting with Ruler and "Gray"*, 1960, Joseph A. Helman Collection; *In Memory of My Feelings - Frank O'Hara*, 1961, Dr. & Mrs. Eugene A. Eisner Collection; *Device*, 1961-61, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts.

<sup>18</sup> Tate Collection, London.

<sup>19</sup> The discussion is online at the White Cube site <http://www.whitecube.com/artists/kiefer/>

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Rimbaud (1957) *Illuminations*, translated by Louise Varèse, New York: New Directions. In Helen Rootham's translation, 'Beat the foam,/Lift the stems of the brambles./The streams of the barren parts', Rimbaud (1932) *Prose Poems from Les Illuminations*, London: Faber & Faber.

<sup>21</sup> Anselm Kiefer (2011) 'Marine', in the catalogue for *DES MEERES UND DER LIBE WELLEN*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, London: White Cube.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Crichton (1977) *Jasper Johns*, New York: Harry N. Abrams.

<sup>23</sup> Andrea Lauterwein (2007) *Anselm Kiefer*.

<sup>24</sup> Simon Schama (1995) *Landscape and Memory*, London: Harper Collins.

<sup>25</sup> Andrea Lauterwein (2007) *Anselm Kiefer*.

<sup>26</sup> When atmospheric carbon dioxide reaches 550 ppmv, in year 2050 under the IS92a business-as-usual scenario, Southern Ocean surface waters begin to become undersaturated with respect to aragonite, a metastable form of calcium carbonate. By 2100 as atmospheric carbon dioxide reaches

788 ppmv, undersaturation extends throughout the entire Southern Ocean and into the subarctic Pacific. *Nature* **437**, 681-686 (29 September 2005) and Law Journal Library (2011):

<http://www.heinonline.org/HOL/CSV.csv?index=journals&collection=journals>

<sup>27</sup> Rudolf Steiner (1923) 'Salz, Merkur, Sulfur' in *Anthroposophy*, no.1, volume 6, 1931.

<sup>28</sup> Jacob Böhme (1912) *The Signature of All Things*, edited by Clifford Bax, translated by John Ellistone, London and New York: Everyman.

<sup>29</sup> C.G. Jung (1968) *Psychology and Alchemy*, Second edition, translated by R.F.C. Hull, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

<sup>30</sup> Deanna Petherbridge (1991) *The Primacy of Drawing, An Artist's View*, London: The South Bank Centre.

<sup>31</sup> Jacques Derrida (1978) *Edmund Husserl*.

<sup>32</sup> Lawrence Wright (1983) *Perspective in Perspective, London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul*.

<sup>33</sup> Arturo Schwarz (1969) *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, London: Thames & Hudson.

<sup>34</sup> Allen Fisher (2007) *Confidence in lack*, Sutton: Writers Forum. *The Complexity Manifold* talks have to date provided a series of video recordings (now online at Birkbeck) and a discussion at Birkbeck.

<sup>35</sup> Jesse Norman (2006) *After Euclid*, and also Kant:

<http://www.colorado.edu/philosophy/wes/3010/pdfs/Kant-Preface-B-selection.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Claudia Brodsky Lacour (1996) *Lines of Thought*.

<sup>37</sup> Claudia Brodsky Lacour (1996) *Lines of Thought*.

<sup>38</sup> Cited by Claudia Brodsky Lacour (1996) *Lines of Thought*.