Anselm Kiefer at the Louvre

A new installation at the museum
“Boundaries”

Fifty years after Georges Braque, another contemporary artist has been commissioned to create a work for permanent display at the Louvre. Anselm Kiefer installs a monumental painting on a staircase of the museum’s Department of Egyptian Antiquities. This ambitious creation has been unveiled on October 25, 2007. To celebrate this inauguration, a month-long program of cultural events has been planned in close collaboration with Kiefer, who after Robert Badinter in 2005, followed by Toni Morrison in 2006, becomes the Louvre’s latest guest curator. Crisscrossing a wide range of disciplines—literature, contemporary music, dance, science, philosophy, art history—this series is organized around the concept of “Boundaries” selected by the artist.

A new permanent work created for the museum

The permanent installation of a 21st century work, the introduction of a new element in the décor and architecture of the Louvre palace, is the focal point of the museum’s new policy of openness to contemporary art adopted in 2003. This ambitious endeavor is in keeping with the history of the palace which has served since its creation as the ideal architectural canvas for commissions of painted and sculpted decoration projects. Anselm Kiefer thus becomes the latest in a long line of artists, including Poussin, Lebrun, Delacroix, Ingres, and most recently Georges Braque in 1953, to be invited to create a permanent work for the Louvre.

By commissioning works from internationally acclaimed living artists, the Louvre officially recognizes the key role of contemporary creation within our artistic heritage, introduces the works of today’s artists to a large, often uninitiated audience, and reaffirms the universal vocation of the museum.

The installation by Anselm Kiefer, a monumental painting on the theme of constellations and self-portrait, is being created specifically for the 19th century staircase designed by the architects Percier and Fontaine, situated at the north end of Perrault’s Colonnade.

The Louvre invites Anselm Kiefer: “Boundaries”

The theme of boundaries has long held interest for Anselm Kiefer, as an artist born in West Germany at the end of the Second World War, who like others of his generation has explored questions of remembrance and identity, given new impetus by reunification. The confrontation with collective memory is central to his work. Kiefer draws inspiration from a variety of sources that have been widely documented and acknowledged by the artist: contemporary history, the traumatic experience of the Holocaust, Germany confronting its past, Jewish culture and traditions (especially cabalistic writings), ancient Egyptian and Sumerian myth, the great epic poems. Literary references also permeate his work: most visibly Paul Celan and Ingeborg Bachmann, but also the Russian poet Velimir Khlebnikov as well as Charles Baudelaire and other great French writers. The Louvre has chosen to follow less traveled paths in his company, including the work of the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa, that of the sociologist and philosopher Edgar Morin, the American dancer and choreographer Bill T. Jones, the cross-cultural young cellist Vincent Ségal, along with his innovative colleagues Jörg Widmann, Matthias Pintscher, Mark Andre and Frédéric Pattar.
Drawings/Boundary/Drawings

A series of drawings is presented on the occasion of this inauguration in the Salle d’Actualité of the Department of Graphic Arts. Between the art of yesterday and the art of today, a boundary is drawn. On one side the collections of the Louvre and on the other Anselm Kiefer, engaging in dialogue with these works, filtered through his particular perspective. Thus a passage is formed.

A temporary exhibition in addition to the permanent installation, itineraries in the galleries, a symposium, a conference series, a special evening of readings, as well as dance and music performances, will explore the crossing of boundaries. “The Louvre invites Anselm Kiefer” will enable museum visitors to experience world premieres (in music and dance) created especially for the Louvre and in honor of this event.

Opening presentation by Anselm Kiefer

The work of Anselm Kiefer is infused in the Romantic tradition, offering a diverse and complex examination of many themes, evoking a universe of correspondences involving several symbolic levels. Most of all, he strives to shed new light on 20th century history and its meaning. In the manner of an archaeologist, Kiefer searches through irreal landscapes, delving deep into the strata of recent memory. His opening presentation will be followed by an exchange with Thomas Macho, cultural historian and professor at Humboldt University, Berlin.

Art on Stage
Cycle of the Virgin zodiac calendar
(Seleucid Babylon, end of the 1st millennium B.C., clay), presented by Béatrice André-Salvini, Department of Near Eastern Antiquities.
A work from the Louvre’s collection selected by Anselm Kiefer, which encapsulates some of his favorite themes—zodiacs and constellations, map borders, mental boundaries.

Reading of works by Fernando Pessoa
Boundaries between selves and languages
Pessoa was a writer of multiple personalities. We have selected from his work texts illustrating the question of “heteronymy”—boundaries between selves—but also the theme of the imaginary journey and that of the passage between languages coloring the poetry of this Portuguese writer who also penned verse in English.

Concerts: (œuvre)² in collaboration with the Paris Festival d’Automne
Three works commissioned from composers Frédéric Pattar, Jörg Widmann and Matthias Pintscher performed by the group L’Instant donné, the Hagen Quartet, Jörg and Caroline Widmann, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and Salome Kammer to inaugurate a new musical series dedicated to world premieres of new works.

Monday, November 5
at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 7
at 12:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 8
at 8:30 p.m.

Fridays, November 9, 16 and 23
at 8 p.m.
Premiere of a new work by Bill T. Jones

Walking The Line
A new dance work created especially for the Michelangelo and Daru galleries by Bill T. Jones and performed by him. Upon the invitation of Anselm Kiefer, the American choreographer and dancer Bill T. Jones presents a special solo performance, accompanied by Yunchen Lhamo (voice) and Florent Jodelet (percussion), with lighting by Robert Wiersel.

Silent films / Music “Ephemeral Duos”

Boundaries
With Vincent Ségal, Mathieu Boogaarts, Aref Durvesh, Ballaké Sissoko and Tommy Jordan. Vincent Ségal and his fellow musician guests offer a new musical creation, an accompaniment to silent films exploring infinite horizons—deserts, ice sheets and oceans, to name a few.

Conference series

Boundaries: opening, closing, transformation
With the participation of Chantal Mouffe (Université Libre de Bruxelles), Johan Galtung (founder and co-director, Transcend), Bruno Latour (Institut d’Etudes Politiques) and Edgar Morin.

Discussions / Debates

A conversation with Bill T. Jones

Die Kunst geht knapp nicht unter
(Art doesn’t just disappear)
To this discussion focusing on paintings and drawings chosen by Anselm Kiefer from the Louvre’s collections, the artist has invited the critic Simon Schama, Columbia University, New York, and the museum’s curators.

Visitor information

Permanent installation
North staircase of the Colonnade, Sully Wing

Temporary exhibition
Salle d’Actualité, Department of Graphic Arts
Access to both is included in the purchase of an admission to the museum’s permanent collections:
€9 (reduced fee €6)

“Boundaries”
Auditorium du Louvre
Enter through the Louvre pyramid or the Carrousel arcade.
Priority entrance via the Passage Richelieu between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Further information
- +33 (0)1 40 20 55 55
- www.louvre.fr