

ANSELM KIEFER
THE SEVEN HEAVENLY PALACES

AT THE HANGAR BICOCCA
From 24 September to 7 December 2004

PIRELLI Real Estate will be playing the lead role in one of the coming autumn's most alluring attractions. On **Friday September 24, at 5.30 pm**, the doors of the "HANGAR BICOCCA" will be opened for the first time to contemporary art, as it stages a striking exhibition by the German artist **Anselm Kiefer**, entitled **THE SEVEN HEAVENLY PALACES**. The exhibition, curated by **Lia Rumma**, arises out of a happy inspiration that came to **Franca Sozzani** when, invited to visit the space by Carlo Puri, she realized straightaway that only the work of a great artist would be able to make the most of its extraordinary potential.

Expressly for this space – a blue nave occupying 7000 square meters of the hangar's total of 15,000 – Kiefer has designed **seven monumental towers** that symbolize the mystical experience of the ascent through the seven levels of spirituality. **The towers**, which consist of a "stratification" of structural elements made of reinforced concrete and lead, **adopt the "universal section" of the container for the shipping of goods as a modular "measure"**, a recurrent feature in the artist's most recent output and symbol of the globalization of the urban landscape. Kiefer has experimented with the use of this "material of our time" to create his own aesthetic utopia at his workshop in Barjac, France, where he has been living since 1993. The towers in Milan also first saw the light of day in the form of prototypes at Barjac, before being constructed on site in the "Hangar Bicocca".

An imposing and ambitious project, entailing the production of over **100 lead books of various formats** and around **7000 "falling stars" on sheets of glass**, in whose realization the students of the Second Level Diploma, Two-Year Course of Specialization in the Visual Arts, at the Accademia di Brera have played a part, in direct contact with the artist.

The towers (which have been given the titles *Falling Stars*, *Deposit of Stars/Sternenlager*, *Die Sefiroth*, *Tzim-Tzum*, *Shevirat Ha-Kelim*, *Tiqqun* and *The Seven Heavenly Palaces*) represent the metaphysical principles corresponding to the various levels of human participation in the divine. They are also associated with the emotional situations that characterize the daily life of every individual and that can lend it order and meaning. Aligned in three main branches – Strength, Compassion, Love – the **SEPHIROTH** constitute the three paths that open up before humanity and that together form the tree of life. The tree of life is the plan for the creation of the world, which has made it possible for souls to take on bodily form. But it is also the opposite direction, that of ascent, through which the whole of creation is reunited with the one. This path is represented by "Jacob's ladder", which stands on the earth and reaches all the way to heaven.

In addition to this profound mystical significance, **the towers establish a relationship with the urban landscape of Milan**, dominated by the belltowers of its Romanesque churches and by the skyscrapers symbolic of the last century: Giò Ponti's recently restored Pirelli Building and the BBPR group's Torre Velasca, to mention the best-known examples, which are also massive structures of "raw" reinforced concrete.

Thus Kiefer has utilized the language and the means of architecture to create seven works whose complexity and beauty make them one of the highlights of recent worldwide artistic production.

The "Hangar Bicocca", symbol of the history of the Milanese working class, could become a new venue for exhibitions of contemporary art. This would be a real gift for Milan, where people have been calling for the creation of a centre dedicated to today's visual arts for years.

The project has received the support of a number of important sponsors: **Deutsche Bank, Morgan Stanley, Siemens, Tim and UniCredit.**

Coordination: Fabrizio Tramontano.

The exhibition will remain open from 12 am to 7 pm until December 7.

The entrance charge is 6 euros. The catalogue is published by Editions du Regard, France.

The venue is the Hangar Bicocca, Viale Sarca 336, Milan.

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