

RA

Royal Academy of Arts

Art Detectives

A guide for
young visitors

Art Detectives are supported
by the Flow Foundation



Anselm
Kiefer

You will need
a pencil to
write and draw

Introduction

Anselm Kiefer was born in Germany in 1945, the year World War II came to an end. Germany, both its people and its lands, had been severely damaged. Kiefer was one of the few young German artists to make art about the effects of this traumatic war on his country. As an artist, Kiefer confronts history directly, often creating works that refer to ideas of memory, identity, knowledge and spirituality. His paintings and sculptures have many layers of meaning, and are often made up of many different materials.

Please be aware that some of the material in this exhibition may be unsuitable for young children.

Let's explore...

Section 1.



Find number 2:
Language of the Birds, 2013

What items does Kiefer include in this enormous sculpture?

Can you spot an animal slithering across the sculpture?
What is it?

What materials have been used to make this sculpture?

The sculpture has wings, and refers to birds in its title, but do you think it could fly? Why or why not?
How does this make you feel?

Section 2.



Find number 14:

Winter Landscape, 1970

Look at this painting. What do you see?

What do you think has taken place in this landscape?
How does colour help you understand what
has happened?

Kiefer is interested in war, history and nature.
What do you think he might be trying to say
about these in this painting?



Find numbers 3 and 4:

*Man in the Forest and Head in the Forest,
Head in the Clouds, 1971*

Forests are a big part of German history, and often feature in fairy tales like 'Hansel and Gretel' by the Brothers Grimm. They also come up again and again in Kiefer's art. Coincidentally, 'Kiefer' means 'pine tree' in German!

Do you think forests are scary places, or fun?
How do you think Kiefer feels about forests?

Write a short story about an adventure in a forest. Does it happen at night? Do you meet any animals or people living in the woods along the way? Let your imagination run wild!

Section 3.



The 'Attic' Series

The paintings in this room were all made in Kiefer's studio during the 1970s: the attic of a former school.

Look closely at all of these works. In one of them, an item has been added and stuck onto the canvas beneath. Can you find it?

Which work is it? Write the title here.

Section 4.



Gallery 3

This idea of Kiefer adding on different elements to his paintings carries through into this room. Most of these enormous paintings are made up of many layers of materials. Can you find:

Straw
Clay
Ash
A sunflower

What is straw normally used for?
Does it have the same purpose or significance here?

How long do you think it takes the artist to make paintings like the ones in this room?
Do you think he has helpers or works alone?
Why do you think so?

Section 4. (continued)



Find number 41:

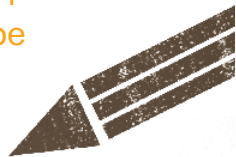
Ways of Worldly Wisdom:

The Battle of Hermann, 1980

This enormous work shows a tangled group of historical German figures. Their portraits are set within a forest and connected by the rings of tree trunks. They are all people who have been an influence on Kiefer.



In the spaces below, draw the faces of people who are important in your life. They could be your family, teachers or your friends...
You can add some words as well!



Section 5.



Find number 55:
The Orders of the Night, 1996

Describe the texture of this painting.
Is it thick, or has the paint been applied thinly?

What kind of flowers are these?

Who do you think the man lying down beneath the
flowers is supposed to be?

How does the man look to you? Why do you think Kiefer
put the man on the ground close to the roots of the
flowers?

Section 6.



Find number 60:
Ages of the World, 2014

Stand back from this sculpture. What colours
do you see?

Now walk closer and look harder.
Do you see more colours? Describe them.

Part of the stack of this sculpture is made up of old
canvases. Are there paintings on the canvases?

Section 6. (continued)



Ages of the World, 2014
(continued)

What else is the sculpture made up of?
Have you seen these objects anywhere else
in the exhibition?

What do you think Kiefer is saying by using old
works of art to create a new one? What is he
saying about history and the present day?

Section 7.



Find number 59:
Black Flakes, 2006

How does the artist draw your eye into this painting?

Choose some words from the selection below that best describe how this painting looks to you:

Scary Burnt Cold Peaceful
Ancient Endless Heavy

What do you think the object in the middle of the painting is made of? Can you tell what it is?

Section 8.



The Morgenthau series

In these works, Kiefer uses real gold leaf, and in other works, actual diamonds!
Why do you think he included these valuable elements in his work?

Would you describe these landscapes as happening in the daytime or night time? Why?



The Morgenthau series (continued)

There are some objects attached to the canvases,
can you spot them? What are they?

Why might Kiefer have included these things?

Written by
Asha McLoughlin, RA Learning
© Royal Academy of Arts
Designed by
Kathrin Jacobsen

If you would like to see your drawings on the RA website, please hand in your completed Art Detective at the Reception Desk. Alternatively, if you would like to work on your picture at home and send it to us later, you can post it to:

Learning Department
Royal Academy of Arts
Burlington House
London
W1J 0BD

#AnselmKiefer