

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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1990 COLLECTORS COMMITTEE GIFT ANNOUNCED

WASHINGTON, D.C., November 14, 1990 - A monumental work by the German-born artist Anselm Kiefer, Zim Zum, 1990, has been given to the National Gallery of Art by its Collectors Committee, Gallery director J. Carter Brown announced today. Zim Zum, which measures 12 feet 5 3/4 inches by 18 feet 4 1/2 inches, is the first work by the artist to enter the National Gallery's collection. It goes on view to the public tomorrow on the Concourse level of the East Building.

"A work of this quality and commanding importance by such a great artist is a wonderful boon to our twentieth-century collection," said Brown. "It is all the more exciting since this is our first Kiefer."

Zim Zum is made of several interlocking horizontal sheets of lead, Kiefer's signature material in his most recent work, partially covered with canvas treated with oil, crayon, ashes, sand, lead dust, and clay dust to create a dynamic surface texture in a rich spectrum of metallic colors. Across the bottom Kiefer has affixed a landscape painting on canvas in a style close to his paintings of the early 1980s depicting a vast plain and a lake that recede sharply into the distance. The dramatic presence of the work is heightened by its size.

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The title Zim Zum, which is written on the surface of the work, refers to the Judaic concept of the tsimtsum, the instant of creation described in the Kabbalah, a historical and mystical Jewish system of occult theosophy and scriptural interpretation. Kiefer's art in the last two years has responded to such tenets of the Kabbalah as creation through emanation and the supremacy of man's spirit over his desires.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, Anselm Kiefer (born 1945) has emerged as one of the most powerful and evocative German artists of the younger post-war generation. Kiefer's complex works refer, among other things, to Teutonic mythology and the drama and tragedy of history, especially that of central Europe. His work has appeared in numerous one-person exhibitions and is represented in public collections in the United States and abroad. Kiefer is a recent recipient of Israel's prestigious Wolff Prize in recognition of his international achievement in the arts.

In addition to giving major works of twentieth-century art, the Collectors Committee has also established a curatorial discretionary fund for acquiring post-war graphic art and photography. Gifts this year include prints by Robert Mangold, Alice Neel, and Louise Nevelson and photographs by Harry Callahan.