Jerusalem as *Trauerarbeit*

On Two Paintings by Anselm Kiefer and Gerhard Richter

Wouter Weijers

In 1986, Anselm Kiefer produced a painting he entitled *Jerusalem* (Fig. 3.1). It is a large and heavy work measuring approximately thirteen by eighteen feet. When viewed up close, the surface is reminiscent of abstract Matter Painting. Liquid lead was applied, left to solidify and then scraped off again in places, ripping the work's skin. When the work is viewed from a distance, a high horizon with a golden glow shining over its centre appears, which, partly due to the title, could be interpreted as a reference to a heavenly Jerusalem. Two metal skis are attached to the surface, which, as *Fremdkörper*, do not enter into any kind of structural or visual relationship with the painting

Eleven years later, Gerhard Richter painted a much smaller work that, although it was also given the title *Jerusalem*, was of a very different order (Fig. 3.2). The painting shows us a view of a sun-lit city. But again Jerusalem is hardly recognizable because Richter has let the city dissolve in a hazy atmosphere, which is, in effect, the result of a painting technique using a fine, dry brush in paint that has not yet completely dried. It is the title that identifies the city. Insiders might be able to recognize the western wall of the old city in the lit-up strip just below the horizon, but otherwise all of the buildings have disappeared in the haze. A longer viewing of the painting, however, reveals a car park with lamp posts in the zone at the bottom.

Apart from their identical names, these artworks are poles apart – in size, materiality and texture, depiction and religious reference, in the conception of art behind each work, in the ways they relate to history and memory, and in how they were received. These paintings are different in so many ways that they barely tolerate each other. But whichever way you look at it, in both works the name *Jerusalem* refers to the city marked by history, where ancient religious and political conflicts are still present today and are continuously fed by memory. Even in these relatively recent paintings, Jerusalem is inevitably a place of memory.

Memories do not simply emerge from a readily available past but are constructed and reconstructed in the present. Recollection is a social and cultural

FIGURE 3.1 *Anselm Kiefer, Jerusalem, 1986, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, gold leaf, on canvas (in two parts) with steel and lead, 380 × 560 cm. CHICAGO: COLLECTION SUSAN AND LEWIS MANILOW.*

practice in which a continuous selection, rearrangement and transformation of memory takes place. However, that selection is always perspectival and influenced by socio-cultural and political motives. The same applies to these two works.

The artists are close to being contemporaries. Richter, born in Dresden in 1932, was thirteen years old when the Second World War ended, and then grew up in the GDR until he took refuge in West Germany in 1961. Kiefer was born in Donaueschingen (Baden-Württemberg) in 1945, a war child. Both artists have had a connection to the burden of totalitarian regimes and one thing they do have in common is that they have not avoided that history in their work. Their two *Jerusalems* are part of this history. After the extermination of millions of European Jews during the Shoah, every German artist who decides to call a painting *Jerusalem* knows that this work will carry the burden of that past. Richter and Kiefer grew up in its shadow, and memories of it have had a profound influence on the oeuvre of both artists. However, where one artist seems to want to remember, the other one seems to want to forget, to such an extent that one could speak of 'divided memories', to borrow Benjamin Buchloh's concept, albeit in a slightly different context.¹

¹ Buchloh 1996.

FIGURE 3.2 *Gerhard Richter, Jerusalem, 1995, oil on canvas, 126 × 92.3 cm. BADEN-BADEN: MUSEUM FRIEDER BURDA.*

Buchloh is the critic who has provided what is possibly the sharpest, and ideological, formulation of the difference between Kiefer's and Richter's art. He positioned both artists in relation to the artistic culture of post-war Germany and to the (self-)reflective and socio-critical attitude of the historical avant-garde. According to Buchloh, the biggest problem was how to represent history in post-fascist Germany.² The recent German past had, with the loss of Germany's cultural identity, also problematized memory to an exceptional degree. A new meaning could only emerge from the creation of new modes of memory, which did have to remain inextricably linked to the reality of the past, however. In that respect, Buchloh considered Kiefer to be a 'regressive' artist whose work suggested that history could be transcended. In his opinion, Kiefer does not provide historical insight into processes of cultural memory but

² Buchloh 1996, p. 64 and pp. 69–70.

rather mythologizes the past. Richter's art, on the other hand, is explicitly aimed at the time span that was still accessible to individual memory.³ Buchloh sees Kiefer and Richter as artistic and political antagonists. However, whether the artists, with all their major differences, should be opposed so diametrically when it comes to their reworking of German history is debatable.

In his study on the Holocaust, Michael Rothberg has asked several weighty questions about what happens when two parties dealing with the past compete for precedence in collective memory processes where one past will always be at the expense of the other.⁴ He uses a concept of recollection that is not based on constant rivalry, but starts from the complex interweaving of various practices of memory, which are constantly formed and reformed in varying relation between collective memory and (group) identity. Applied to Kiefer and Richter's work, such an approach is not an attempt to mediate between their highly divergent conceptions of art and practices, but an occasion to examine their relationship with post-war German cultural memory. Rothberg sees memory as fundamentally 'multidirectional', subjected to constant exchange, cross-pollination and mutual borrowing. This interaction between various memories in a state of continuous reconstruction leads to what he, as opposed to rigid competitive memory, calls the productive dynamics of 'multidirectional memory'.⁵ The question is how these two very different paintings relate to this dynamics. In order to answer that question, the two *Jerusalem* paintings in this essay are the departure point for a series of considerations that view these artworks in relation to each other, but also, explicitly, to other works from both oeuvres.

Kiefer's Iconoclastic Controversy

In the winter of 1986, Kiefer's *Jerusalem* was on display in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam at the exhibition *Anselm Kiefer. Bilder 1986 → 1980*.⁶ The striking reversal of dates in the title suggests a return to the past. The exhibition started (or ended) with a work from 1980: *Bilder-Streit*, which depicts a black-and-white photo of the floor and brick wall in Kiefer's studio at the time

3 Buchloh 1996, p. 72.

4 Rothberg 2009, pp. 1–21. Rothberg's book is not about art but about the competition between the positions of the Holocaust and slavery in cultural memory.

5 Rothberg 2009, pp. 2–3.

6 *Anselm Kiefer. Bilder 1986→1980*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 20 December 1986 – 8 February 1987. The exhibition was organised by the then director Wim Beeren.

FIGURE 3.3 Anselm Kiefer, *Bilder-Streit*, 1980, oil, emulsion, shellac, sand on a photo with woodcuts, 290 × 400 cm. ROTTERDAM: MUSEUM BOYMANS-VAN BEUNINGEN.

(Fig. 3.3). Glued to the floor are strips of paper on which a well-discernible wood grain pattern of planks is printed. The outlines of a painter's palette have been drawn over these with black paint. The palette is a motif that recurs time and again in Kiefer's paintings, especially during the seventies, but also later. In the photo are displayed three miniature German tanks which have set the wood, or the palette, alight. The title *Bilder-Streit* refers to the conflict between iconoclasts and iconodules during the eighth and ninth century in Byzantium as a result of the decree issued by Emperor Leo III in 726, prohibiting the use of images, out of fear of idolatry. In earlier versions of *Bilder-Streit*, Kiefer had painted the tanks as well as the names of the Byzantine combatants from both sides.⁷ Kiefer links the Byzantine iconoclasm to the destruction and banning of *entartete Kunst* during the Nazi regime here.

But there is another important issue that severely burdened post-war art. The essay 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft', written by Theodor Adorno in 1948 and published in 1951, contains the now famous line 'Nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch', which has been quoted often, in any con-

7 Anselm Kiefer 1984, pp. 88–89.

ceivable context, and is actually part of a sentence from a longer quotation.⁸ In her book *Anselm Kiefer and Art after Auschwitz*, Lisa Saltzman explores Adorno's thesis in relation to Kiefer's *Bilder-Streit* and the Second Commandment, which forbids the making of 'graven images'.⁹ What that commandment implies is not that God should not be depicted but that he *cannot* be depicted because he is unknowable. Adorno applies the commandment to the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust, which leave no other possibility than 'an aesthetic ethics of visual absence and poetic silence'.¹⁰ However, this silence is not total and can be articulated, as in Paul Celan's poetry and in some forms of abstract art and atonal music which give a wide berth to sensual experiences, pleasures and desires. With his rejection of 'libidinous engagement', Adorno shifts the responsibility from the object to the spectator: Moses destroyed Aaron's golden calf because the Jews did not direct their worship at God but at the statue.¹¹ The image is not forbidden but it requires an ethical spectator who has internalized the old testamentary law. Only then can testimony be given, as required in Leviticus 5:1.

In *Bilder-Streit*, Kiefer also thematizes the tension between images and their prohibition by stacking various layers of meaning in his combination of studio photo and painter's palette with tanks, fire and smoke: layers that refer to the mythical time of the Bible, to the historical time of the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy and to the lived-through time of the Second World War that is still near. Moreover, he views this stratification in relation to his contemporary artistic calling.

In his book *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, Egyptologist and cultural scientist Jan Assmann distinguishes two modes of remembering, which permeate each other often.¹² 'Communicative memory' is his term for the 'biographical' memory, which goes back three generations and refers to memories we share with contemporaries. This communicative memory disappears with its bearers and can then only be conveyed through media. Next to this, Assmann places the 'cultural memory', which in his theory refers to what he calls 'origins'. It is aimed at a (distant) past that has disappeared but is constantly commemorated through symbolic figures such as myths. In Assmann's notion of cultural

8 'Kulturkritik findet sich der letzten Stufe der Dialektik von Kultur und Barbarei gegenüber: nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch, und das frisst auch die Erkenntnis an, die ausspricht, warum es unmöglich ward, heute Gedichte zu schreiben'. Adorno 1977, p. 30.

9 Saltzman 1999, pp. 17–27.

10 Saltzman 1999, p. 19, and Exodus 20: 4–6.

11 Saltzman 1999, p. 21.

12 Assmann 1992, pp. 48–59.

memory, factual history is transformed into remembered history and thereby into *mythos*. Cultural memory contains something sacred then, in which memory often takes the shape of a ceremonial celebration that serves to bring the past into the present. This process involves the constant application of what Assmann has called the *Rekonstruktivität* of cultural memory, which is the way this memory adapts itself to ever-changing, contemporary memory needs.

If Kiefer's *Bilder-Streit* also shows a form of transference from a primeval age to his own time, the question is what memory needs it is based on. This question is directly linked to that of how Kiefer manages, in his visual art and in his own time 'after Auschwitz', to deal with the historical event whose extraordinary horrors prevent their expression, yet at the same time demand to be remembered.

Kiefer's artworks from the period 1970–1986 problematize the possibility and impossibility of the representation of history, specifically that of Germany, from the perspective of the post-war generation which has to position itself in relation to the burdened heritage of the previous generation. However, in the eyes of some critics, his reclaiming of German preoccupations and myths that had been deeply tainted by Nazism, led to an art that was at the very least ambivalent, but to some plainly reactionary and mostly disturbing. Criticism increased when Kiefer showed a series of landscapes, woodcuts and artist's books, including the painting *Nero malt* (1974) in the German pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1980 (Fig. 3.4). By far the largest part of the painting is taken up by the blackish-brown, scorched-looking, ploughed arable land in which traces of blood are also still visible. Over this, Kiefer painted, in red and orange strokes, a transparent palette with paintbrushes that change into candles. High on the horizon they set a village alight with their flames. The ambiguous image, in which fire can be interpreted as both destructive and cleansing¹³, seemed to contain a barely concealed allusion to the 'Blut und Boden' ideology with its atavistic dream of a pure race, in which even the notion of extermination resounded.¹⁴

In her review of the exhibition in *Die Zeit*, Petra Kipphoff voiced her fear that Kiefer did not refer to the German horror and aggression to denounce them but to maintain them in a subdued form in his megalomaniac work.¹⁵ With this comment she subscribed to a more generally supported conviction that Kiefer did not so much come to grips with the shameful chapters of

13 Fuchs 1980, p. 57. *Malen = Verbrennen* is the title of another painting by Kiefer from 1974, which was also shown in Venice, besides *Nero malt*.

14 Saltzman 1999, p. 109–10 and p. 163 n. 36.

15 Saltzman 1999, p. 110; Kipphoff 1980.

FIGURE 3.4 Anselm Kiefer, *Nero malt*, 1974, oil on canvas, 220 × 300 cm. MUNICH: STAATSGALERIE MODERNE KUNST.

Germany's history but reaffirmed them. The often-quoted headline 'Überdosis am Deutschen' above Werner Spies's review of the exhibition in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of 2 June 1980 speaks volumes.

Benjamin Buchloh's criticism in his essay 'Figures of Authority, Ciphers of Regression: Notes on the Return of Representation in European Painting', which was published in the spring of 1981, was even sharper.¹⁶ Even though Kiefer is mentioned just once and only in a derivative way in a note, Buchloh classes him with contemporary German artists like Penck, Baselitz and Lüpertz, who with their return to forms of representation embodied the negative, if not reactionary, antithesis of the historical avant-garde. Buchloh regards the return to representation as the most important symptom of this regression. He believes that although this 'neo-expressionism' pretends to be subversive, its radicalism is apolitical in the end, and he sees the 'postmodern' demolition of the avant-garde idiom as a cynical attempt to reaffirm (conservative) power structures. Eight years later, in 1989, Buchloh repeated his criticism, but this time much more explicitly aimed at Kiefer. According to Buchloh, the attraction of Kiefer's work partly stems from 'its reconstitution of traditional identity

¹⁶ Buchloh 1981.

for the generation of West Germans who wish to abandon the long and difficult process of reflection upon a post-traditional identity'.¹⁷ However, whether it was Kiefer's aim to fulfil *that* wish is highly doubtful.

Mourning

At the heart of Kiefer's works referring to German history is the question of how this heritage is to be represented by the post-war generation 'whose memory is without "recollections"' because the personal remembrances of the Nazi years are absent.¹⁸ 'What Kiefer does is not so much a work "of" memory, but a work "on" memory', writes Daniel Arasse.¹⁹ Because personal 'recollections' are absent for his generation, Kiefer claims the memory through other's objects, texts and images. Furthermore, according to Andreas Huyssen, Kiefer's thematizing is not expressed in a stereotyping of 'the German' but in the ambiguity of Kiefer's work in the context of German society after Auschwitz. Kiefer does not explore, and exploit, the power of mythical images without (self-)reflection on the ambivalent nature of such mystifications at a time when West German culture was haunted by the past – a culture 'haunted by images which in turn produce haunting images'.²⁰

By detecting an ambivalence between fascination and horror that partly goes back to the theory of the Sublime, Huyssen shifts the attention from the work itself to the ambiguous experiences of the spectator, for instance with respect to the painting *Sulamith*, a painting about mourning in a culture that is unable to mourn. In *Sulamith* (1983), Kiefer has transformed a fascist architectural space for the Nazi death cult into its opposite (Fig. 3.5). By using the name Sulamith – the girl from Shulem (Song of Solomon 7:1), Solomon's great love and bride – Kiefer takes a big step in his work towards a confrontation with the Holocaust instead of with his own German history. The painting harks back to a photo of a model of the vaulted crypt under the *Soldatenhalle*, which was designed by Wilhelm Kreis but never built, and was meant to be a Pantheon for 'deutsche Kriegshelden'. Kiefer subjects the fascist death cult to a rigorous metamorphosis. The crypt's windows are shut and the brick vaults now show black scorch marks. Seven fires burn in the background, immediately bringing to mind the Menorah, the golden candlestick with seven arms, which is one of

¹⁷ Buchloh 1989, p. 100 n. 5.

¹⁸ Arasse 2001, p. 77.

¹⁹ Arasse 2001, p. 74.

²⁰ Huyssen 1989, pp. 26–28.

FIGURE 3.5 *Anselm Kiefer, Sulamith, 1983, oil, acrylic, emulsion, shellac, straw and ashes on canvas with woodcuts, 290 × 370 cm. LONDON: SAATCHI COLLECTION.*

the oldest symbols for Judaism and which burned permanently in the Second Temple in Jerusalem, thereby raising the suggestion that this is a sacred place. At the same time, the tunnel-shaped, dark hole at the end is reminiscent of the incinerators in which the gassed Jews were cremated. Kiefer has transformed the place where glorious German heroes were supposed to be honoured for a thousand years into a place of mourning for the victims of the Shoah.²¹ In order to understand the impact of the painting in 1983, it is important to realize that there were no memorials for the victims of the Holocaust anywhere in West Germany at the time, apart from the remains of the concentration camps.²²

In this painting commemorating Sulamith, she is absent. Yet her name and her metonymical representation are there in the grey, ash-like layer that has spread from the fire over the top half of the painting, in keeping with the ban on images, which prohibits the depiction of that which cannot be depicted. At the same time, *Sulamith* is an image that bears witness to the unspeakable.

21 Saltzman 1999, pp. 28–32; Huyssen 1989, pp. 42–43.

22 Lauterwein 2007, p. 157.

A major problem related to the representation of the Holocaust that Kiefer and others encountered during the eighties, is what Primo Levi (who was a prisoner in Auschwitz himself) has called 'the memory of the offence', the memory of the extreme experience that binds victim and perpetrator together forever.²³ The painting *Sulamith* visualizes this unavoidable interweaving by situating Sulamith's monument in a Nazi building that itself was meant as a place of commemoration. This conflicting coordination of the German and the Jewish leads to what Matthew Biro has called 'hermeneutic undecidability': 'the ability of a cultural representation to generate not just ambiguity, but a conflict of interpretations: radically contradictory readings of the same set of signifiers'.²⁴ The way Kiefer places various times and ways of representation next to each other in his work defies the spectator to compare and contrast the different levels of time and space. This also happens in *Jerusalem*.

Jerusalem (1)

Kiefer's *Jerusalem* also refers to the Holocaust and German history, even though this cannot immediately be deduced from the painting. It does not show us the historical or the contemporary, earthly Jerusalem, and despite the allusion in a golden glow that lights up at the top of the image, the painting does not show the promised heavenly place from the Revelation of St John either (21: 1–4).

Jerusalem started as a painted landscape and Kiefer himself identified the earthly part as a stubble field.²⁵ This would indicate that he started with the same landscape he has used time and again (compare Fig. 3.4) but that it then became hidden from view by many additions and scrapings-off. Over this layered surface float the two metal skis, parallel to the canvas, one with its tip pointing up and the other with its tip pointing down. Both directions are emphasised even more by two arrows that have been drawn on the skis with white chalk. With their vertical position, the skis point from earthly to heavenly regions and back again.

The painting can be seen as both a flat, almost impenetrable surface and as a landscape that runs into the background to the horizon, perspectively. The skis are attached frontally and oriented along a vertical axis, a strange position for skis, which we would sooner want to let glide into the landscape. According to Kiefer, they represent 'the cosmic clambering that is supposed to lead us to

23 Levi 1989, p. 12; Biro 2003, pp. 114.

24 Biro 2003, p. 117.

25 Kiefer in a conversation with Mark Rosenthal, December 1986; Anselm Kiefer 1987, p. 143.

the Heavenly Jerusalem but that road goes up and down, down and up [...].²⁶ As far as I know, it is the only time Kiefer used skis as a, rather strange, metaphor for this motion between up and down.²⁷ He used the more apt image of ascending and descending a ladder much more often.

In (late) medieval art, the ladder is depicted countless times as a symbol for the link between earth and heaven, with the chosen ones having to walk up many steps to reach the Divine light, and the damned making the opposite movement down to hell. An illustration from a fourteenth-century Catalanian manuscript shows a ladder that leads to 'the house of wisdom' where God's hand lets down 'the rope of mercy' from above. From this rope hang the intellect, the memory and willpower, followed by the seven virtues. Further down, the seven sins, only mentioned by name, burn in the fires of hell.²⁸

Kiefer's *Jerusalem*, with its upward and downward motion, can also be interpreted along the vertical axis. However, evil is dragged into Kiefer's own time – and for him, in the 1980s, it is the pure evil of the Holocaust. This is highlighted by a comparison with another painting by Kiefer. *Eisen-Steig* (1986) also shows a landscape with a high horizon and was initially entitled *Heavenly Jerusalem* (Fig. 3.6).²⁹ The skis in *Jerusalem* have bindings, the clips that clamp the feet to the (metal) slats and therefore presume a potential human presence. In *Eisen-Steig*, we also see bindings attached to metal – in this case a reference to the irons mechanics use to climb up and down telephone poles.³⁰ However, Kiefer transforms the motion along the vertical axis into a horizontal one here, as if the ladder is laid down on the ground and now forms the iron path that does not lead to heaven but to destruction.

Eisen-Steig, writes Matthew Biro, shows the Holocaust as an anonymous trip to death.³¹ Just like *Jerusalem*, its surface possesses an intruding materiality, but this wall, with its heavy *impasto* is, much more than in *Jerusalem*, broken by a coercive perspective that converges to a point at the centre of the horizon. This lay-out also pulls us spectators through the wall into the background.

Nevertheless, *Eisen-Steig* is an ambiguous painting, one that confronts us with our own 'hermeneutic undecidability'. The train tracks bend away from

26 Kiefer in a conversation with Wim Beeren, 3 September 1986: Beeren 1986, p. 20.

27 A variation on this can be found on panel number 7 of Kiefer's 14-part cycle *The Secret Life of Plants for Robert Fludd* (Grothe Collection, Duisburg), where the left and right half of a pair of slippers, splashed with white paint, point up and down in opposite directions.

28 Ramón Llull, Thomas de Myésier, *Electorium Parvum seu Brevicolum*, Badische Landesbibliothek, Codex St. Peter perg. 92. See also: Roob 2006, p. 250.

29 Anselm Kiefer 1987, p. 143.

30 Kiefer in a conversation with Mark Rosenthal, December 1986. Anselm Kiefer 1987, p. 143.

31 Biro 2003, p. 133.

FIGURE 3.6 *Anselm Kiefer, Eisen-Steig, 1986, emulsion, acrylic, gold leaf on canvas with two wrought climbing irons, olive branches and lead, 220 × 380 cm. FORMERLY PHILADELPHIA: THE PINCUS COLLECTION, current whereabouts unknown.*

each other to the left and the right in the distance and Kiefer, again as in *Jerusalem*, makes the sky light up just above the horizon using gold leaf. What's more, olive branches protrude from the bindings. The olive branch has been a symbol of life and continuance ever since a dove released by Noah returned to the arc with an olive branch as the first sign of life on earth after the Flood (Genesis, 6–9). Seen as a horizontal axis disappearing in the distance, we are standing at the beginning of a railway that pulls our eyes to the horrific end in the distance. Seen as a vertical axis, we are at the bottom of the ladder which may lead up to salvation, but only if we climb it one rung at a time. Even in that case, we, spectators, are closer to the fires of hell than to the light of heaven.

The paradox of the representation of the Holocaust in Germany is the duty to remember it and the impossibility of depicting it. *Eisen-Steig* and *Jerusalem* give rise to conflicting interpretations. The constant reversal of motion along the vertical and the horizontal axes shows the dichotomy of heaven and earth and good and evil in Kiefer's work from that period most clearly, but with a pessimistic undertone that shows the irreparable tear in the fabric of the world. However, it is during these very years that Kiefer bends his work away from scenes that reflect the burdened German history and towards artworks that focus on various aspects of Jewish mysticism and mythology. In this respect *Jerusalem* also forms a pivotal point.

Richter's 'Inability To Represent'

In 1995, Gerhard Richter was in Jerusalem on the occasion of his exhibition *Gerhard Richter – Paintings* in the Israel Museum (19 September – 30 December 1995). The day after the opening, he took a photo of the town from the King David Hotel, facing the northeast, looking out over the Yemin Moshe district towards the Christian part of the old city, the western walls of which are visible.³² On the photo itself the date of the shot is displayed: '95 9 20. That same year, Richter decided to use the photo from 1995 as the basis of two virtually identical paintings of slightly different sizes that were both given the title *Jerusalem*. I will limit myself to the larger work here, which is part of the Frieder-Burda collection in Baden-Baden. On the back, the name and date are displayed: 'Richter XII.1995'.

Compared to the photo, Richter's painting is more schematic and the colour, however refined, has a more artificial feel to it. In the painting, the city is almost erased, both literally and figuratively (Fig. 3.2).³³ Jerusalem is nothing but an unspectacular shade, one that does not show any of its complicated history. Richter's *Jerusalem* does not go back to a mythical primeval source, but to a banal, everyday photo of a place that seems just as banal and everyday. Yet, just like Anselm Kiefer's *Jerusalem*, Richter's painting cannot be separated from a long series of historical connections, a context in which it becomes meaningful. The fact that Richter does not feel the need to mythologize Jerusalem again does not mean that to him the city falls outside the shadow of history, and specifically that of the Shoah. Even in this earthly form, Richter's Jerusalem is a place burdened with memories.

A year earlier, in Jerusalem, Richter had been awarded the 1994/5 Wolf Prize in arts (painting).³⁴ 'Calling on history and art history, [...] Gerhard Richter introduces the problem of representation and the representable, of history and politics, in the specific context of post-Auschwitz Germany, of Germany beyond the wall', according to the judges' report. In this report, Richter's work is

32 Macaulay 2008, s.p. The photo is printed in Atlas 2006, panel 617, in a section 'Various Motifs'.

33 Gerhard Richter Bilder 2008, pp. 142, 167. See also: <http://www.gerhard-richter.com/search/?search=jerusalem%201995> (accessed on 28 July 2014). The smaller painting *Jerusalem* (CR 825-1) made international news when it failed to sell at the guide price of five to seven million pounds sterling at a Sotheby's auction in London on 20 October 2008 and was withdrawn from the auction. It was sold for 6.6 million dollars by Sotheby's on 26 June 2012, however.

34 AP, 'German painter Gerhard Richter gets the Wolf Prize', *The Jerusalem Post*, 30 November 1994, p. 3. Richter was awarded the prize on 29 November 1994 and was the second German artist to win it, after Anselm Kiefer, who had received it in 1990.

called 'continuously ambivalent' and its strength is that it 'renders obsolete the constant references to the "end of painting", its inability to represent'.³⁵ The question is how this ambivalence and the 'inability to represent' relate to a banal and everyday view of Jerusalem painted from a snapshot taken from a hotel room.

Landscapes ('Für uns ist Alles leer')

Richter's oeuvre is layered and varied. Over the years it has moved in different directions which can exist alongside one another or can cross each other. The artworks are related to various traditions, including that of abstraction, which are reused and undermined in equal measure, but also to a diverse repertoire of second-hand images that can come from anywhere – from mass media, art history and photos he took himself.

The category in which *Jerusalem* is sometimes placed in Richter's seemingly very heterogeneous oeuvre is that of landscape art. That is the case in both Richter's classification of his own work³⁶ and in *Gerhard Richter Landscapes* from 1998, which was compiled by Dietmar Elger.³⁷ Yet within Richter's complete oeuvre the landscape has a modest place, especially when compared to the large number of abstract works.

During the years 1968–69, Richter thematized the motif of the landscape in an interrelated series of works based on photos of, amongst other things, the flat landscape surrounding his town of residence, Düsseldorf, as in *Landschaft bei Hubbelrath* (1969, Fig. 3.7). These paintings met with surprise at the time. Richter was accused of an escapist return to the fine arts, which could hardly be taken seriously, especially in those years of socio-cultural and political turmoil.³⁸ However, these negative qualifications were reversed by others. It is true that Richter himself, in a somewhat obstinate statement, explained the origin of these paintings from a need for something beautiful to paint³⁹ and later said that the landscapes showed his desire⁴⁰, yet at the same time they

35 'The 1994/ 95 Wolf Foundation Prize in Arts (Painting), <http://www.wolffund.org.il/index.php?dir=site&page=winners&cs=417&language=eng> (accessed on 28 August 2013).

36 <http://www.gerhard-richter.com> (accessed on 28 July 2014).

37 Gerard Richter Landscapes 1998. The book was published on the occasion of the exhibition *Gerhard Richter. Landschaften*, Sprengel Museum Hannover, 1998. In 2011, a second edition appeared in which Richter's *Jerusalem* is no longer included.

38 Godfrey 2011, p. 79.

39 Richter, 'Interview mit Rolf-Gunter Dienst, 1970', in: Gerard Richter Text 2008, p. 56.

40 Richter, 'Notizen 1981', in: Gerard Richter Text 2008, p. 102.

FIGURE 3.7 *Gerhard Richter, Landschaft bei Hubbelrath, 1969, oil on canvas, 100 × 140 cm.*
AACHEN: LUDWIG FORUM FÜR INTERNATIONALE KUNST.

also exhibited a subversive ironic quality that could refute the accusation of the nostalgic escape from the present.⁴¹ Moreover, Richter himself called his landscapes ‘first and foremost “untruthful”’.⁴² This untruthfulness does not only lie in the projection of human emotions onto a nature that is itself completely soulless, but specifically in the nostalgic longings that led him to make these paintings in the late sixties. The anachronism of these paintings is also their undermining quality, yet at the same time, dreams and longings are acceptable to Richter, providing their untruthfulness vis-à-vis real life is recognized.⁴³

Not only landscape painting but the entire art of painting as a credible artistic medium was under great pressure in avant-garde circles during those years. This led to a paradoxical iconoclasm amongst ambitious artists, in which painting only seemed possible if it simultaneously showed it was no longer possible, or at the very least showed awareness of its own impossibility.⁴⁴ So

41 Bättschmann 2011, p. 64.

42 ‘vor allem “verlogen”’. Richter, ‘Notizen 1986’, in: Gerard Richter Text 2008, p. 159.

43 Bättschmann 2011, p. 66.

44 Bättschmann 2011, p. 66.

Richter's fundamental problem was painting while it could no longer be done, showing this 'impossibility' in a painting, and doing so while aware that it was not going to get him anywhere. This kind of attitude can only lead to a, perhaps more repressed than directly visible, critical and reflective art, even if it seems to draw on the traditional genre of the landscape.

Oskar Bätschman has pointed out that Richter's interest in the landscape more or less coincided with a renewed orientation on the Sublime and on northern European art in the art and art historiography of those years (an interest that comes to light in a different way in Kiefer's work).⁴⁵ Accordingly, Richter was sometimes called a 'belated Caspar David Friedrich' in art criticism.⁴⁶

But even though Richter adopted a lay-out developed by Friedrich (an open-ended landscape without repoussoirs, with a low horizon, a high, empty sky above it and a foreground without a special focus), his apparent imitation of Friedrich is mediated by a photo. According to Richter, this method, which is fundamental to him, is what makes the painting more objective and 'corrects' his own view. Apart from that, the technique of blurring disturbs the painting's connection to the landscape that is represented. The painted landscape is hard to fix and oscillates between appearing and disappearing.

Richter's alleged connection to the work of Caspar David Friedrich is ambiguous at the very least. In 1973, Richter said 'dass wir die Romantik nicht hinter uns gelassen haben. [...] Die Romantik ist bei weitem nicht erledigt. So wenig wie der Faschismus'.⁴⁷ But straight after, when asked about the difference between his work and romanticism, he added: 'Was mir fehlt, ist die geistige Grundlage auf der die romantische Malerei beruhte. Wir empfinden nicht mehr die "Allgegenwärtigkeit Gottes in der Natur". Für uns ist alles leer'.⁴⁸

Richter's *Landschaft bei Hubbelrath* shows a contemporary, banal landscape in which a rain-drenched asphalt road, a road sign and bollards have domesticated nature. The fact that the painting is based on an amateur snapshot turns it into a fragment in time that seems to negate any claim to eternity. Nevertheless, Richter's landscapes, however unspectacular, can be seen as mediators of moods and desires in their allusion to romantic notions, even though continuity and discontinuity go hand in hand here and associations with romanticism are immediately undermined.⁴⁹ Richter's painting *Abendstimmung* (1969), for

45 Bätschmann 2011, p. 64. See also: Rosenblum 1961 and Rosenblum 1975.

46 Werner Krüger quoted in: Godfrey 2011, p. 79.

47 Richter, 'Interview mit Irmeline Lebeer', 1973, in: Gerard Richter Text 2008, p. 82.

48 Richter, 'Interview mit Irmeline Lebeer', 1973, in: Gerard Richter Text 2008, p. 82.

49 Butin 2011, pp. 121–29.

example, recaptures, amongst other things, the romance of everyday desires as they are played out in any travel brochure. In that sense it is a reproduction of a reproduction of a clichéd mood, whether or not burdened with extra layers of meaning as it pervades our commodity culture in an endless circulation of unreflected images. The use of travel brochures or amateur snapshots also freed Richter's landscapes of the artistic need for personal experience and aspects of the art of painting like style, composition, or (self-)expression. After all, the photo had already done that for him. In that sense, Richter's *Abendstimmung* is just as banal as his painting of a toilet roll (*Klorolle*, 1965). But there is more.

Just as Kiefer's retaking of earlier phases of painting during the sixties was seen as an anachronism, even as regressive, apropos the compelling course of art history, so were Richter's landscapes. The taboo was reinforced by the idea that these kinds of paintings had perhaps had their legitimate historical moment during the romantic period but later, especially during the time of National Socialism, had become tainted. Moreover, Richter's supposed relation to Friedrich was coloured by the particular way Friedrich had been received in the Third Reich, when some Nazis had seen him as a precursor of National Socialistic art.⁵⁰

However, in Richter's emptiness it is the gulf that separates German romanticism from the post-Holocaust history of Richter and Germany that is shown.⁵¹ Richter's landscapes are dominated by the need for a visual reflection on his own historical situation and the possibilities that are left for painting in this period. His art destabilizes traditional forms of representation and the inherited meanings attached to them. The subversive and contemporary quality of Richter's landscapes, and this also applies to his *Jerusalem*, entails our insecurity about what we actually see in front of us.

We think we discern Friedrich's art in *Landschaft bei Hubbelrath* because we bend the landscape to an art historical tradition, which then pervaded every nook and cranny of our media culture. It is an image conveyed by media that Richter displays in his paintings, and his landscapes, rather than claiming inner experiences of a religious nature, show the casual, incidental and banal-contemporary. Yet simultaneously, cultural and political layers of meaning that enriched, or indeed burdened, the landscape earlier also sound through in Richter's paintings. What's more, in his representation of the landscape he also

⁵⁰ Godfrey 2011, p. 79 and p. 89 n. 38.

⁵¹ Godfrey 2011, p. 80.

touches upon nostalgic feelings of longing for what was lost.⁵² This makes Richter's landscapes a form of 'Trauerarbeit'.⁵³

Memory Images

The relationship between the painting as an art-immanent aesthetical attempt directed at the medium and the artistic debate on one hand, and the narrative spun around it, through which the painting positions itself in relation to the world at large on the other, is often complicated in Richter's work. One example is the way Richter uses his family album for a layered and multifaceted memory art.

When Richter left East Germany with his wife Marianne (Ema) Eufinger in 1961, he also left his family behind. He would never see his parents again. Apparently he did take photos from the family album, because in the mid-sixties he used several of those as the basis of a number of paintings. Much has been written about these paintings, especially because over the course of the years, and therefore in hindsight, a connection between these works, which had initially gone unnoticed, was spotted. The story that pulls these works together leads us back to extremely nasty aspects of life in Germany under Nazi rule during the Second World War, but it is important to realise that to the uninitiated spectator – meaning virtually everyone around 1965 – these paintings seemed to have been derived from neutral, everyday private snaps.

From the group of five or six paintings, I select two here: *Onkel Rudi* (1965, Fig. 3.8) and *Tante Marianne* (1965, Fig. 3.9). The narrative one could spin around these photos can be summarized as follows.⁵⁴ *Onkel Rudi* is based on a photo of the brother of Richter's mother, Rudolf Schönfelder. It was an ordinary photograph at the time but it was made special by the course of history. It shows a proudly smiling young man in his *Wehrmacht* officer's uniform, shortly before he was killed in 1944. *Tante Marianne* is the pendant painting to *Onkel Rudi*. In the painting she, 14 years old, is depicted with a baby: her nephew Gerhard Richter. When she was about nineteen, a mental illness that was diagnosed as schizophrenia manifested itself, and in 1938 she was admitted to a

52 See also: Butin 1995.

53 Germer 1989, pp. 51–53. Germer's concept applies to Richter's series of paintings about the Baader-Meinhof group, entitled *18. October 1977* from 1988.

54 The story of the connection between these works is described in many publications. Unless indicated otherwise, I have mainly used Gerard Richter *Maler* 2002, pp. 161–84; Gerhard Richter *Forty Years* 2002, pp. 40–41; Verhagen 2011, pp. 8–37.

FIGURE 3.8 *Gerhard Richter, Onkel Rudi, 1965, oil on canvas, 87 × 50 cm.*
PRAGUE: THE CZECH MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, LIDICE COLLECTION.

psychiatric clinic where she underwent forced sterilisation that same year, as a result of a decision by the court in Dresden. In February 1945, she was murdered as part of the Nazi's euthanasia programme for the mentally ill. Her life story and the unique historical circumstances of her death cannot be deduced from the painting Richter made of her, however. Those circumstances only appear when we see the painting in relation to *Onkel Rudi* and one or two other works that are considered part of this group, and the underlying story that connects these paintings.⁵⁵

These family paintings are often seen in the light of the collective silence of the German people about the war and the mass destruction of people in concentration camps and psychiatric institutions. This self-imposed forgetting

⁵⁵ *Familie* (1964) and *Herr Heyde* (1965) belong to these other works. *Familie am Meer* (1965) was not included until later.

FIGURE 3.9 *Gerhard Richter, Tante Marianne, 1965, oil on canvas, 120 × 130 cm. TAIWAN: YAGEO FOUNDATION.*

plays an important role in divergent and sometimes conflicting interpretations of Richter's work. One of the questions is to what extent Richter's paintings helped break the post-war silence, all the more because the intrinsic connection of the works was not known to a larger audience at the time. With these paintings, Richter seems to simultaneously thematize the Nazi era and keep it at a distance. During the same years, Adolf Eichmann (in 1961 in Jerusalem) and guards of the concentration camps in Auschwitz (in 1963–1965 in Frankfurt) went on trial, and the German press wrote detailed reports about the mass destruction of the Jews for the first time.

Richter's 'realistic' paintings are based on a specific type of given, everyday reality: amateur photos from the family album or photos from papers and magazines. By using them he plays out the dialectic between a desired aesthetic act on one hand and a static, objective world on the other. What is of special importance in this connection between painting and photography is the relation to memory. A photo shows us a reality that is elsewhere in time and place and thus replaces the current observation of reality. Living reality becomes history in the photo, but at the same time amateur photos are used as 'memory aids' in the battle against the destruction of time. In the words of Roland Barthes: 'in-

stantaneous in space and past in time, in photography an illogical link between the now and the then is forged [...] the “has been” encroaches on the “is now”.⁵⁶

Richter transforms the dematerialized, commonplace light image, handed down through time, into a material and handcrafted object, and by doing so returns the actual time and the actual space to the painting. The dialectic between the plastic-pictorial presence of the painting and an iconic-photographic absence, and the moving back and forth between present and past, presence and absence in one and the same image, leads to the essence of Richter's work.

Although emptiness and absence form the core of Richter's art, that which the image refers to still resonates in the painting, even though its accessibility is affected, as if a veil is lowered that precludes a sharp focus. The past is simultaneously brought closer and blurred in the painting. The fact that these artworks are paintings is crucial, because with their special technique they do exactly what a photo cannot do: present and pull back at the same time. With this technique, Richter shows processes of remembering and forgetting, and this is what makes his paintings into memory images.

Impossible Paintings

Germany's deepest wound, which has never healed, is the Holocaust. Richter considered defining that almost unfathomable mass murder artistically in his paintings at least twice in his life as an artist, but both attempts failed due to the impossibility of the task. Both attempts can be traced in Richter's *Atlas*.⁵⁷ The first, from 1967, is a group of photos depicting the persecution of the Jews (arrests, public humiliation, executions and images from concentration camps) copied from books, some of which have been blurred or coloured in (Fig. 3.10).⁵⁸ In *Atlas*, these are immediately followed by a number of panels

56 Buchloh 2000, pp. 378–79, Originally in Roland Barthes, 'Rhétorique de l'image', *Communications* (1964), no. 4, pp. 40–51: 'Il s'agit donc d'une catégorie nouvelle de l'espace-temps: locale immédiate et temporelle antérieure; dans la photographie il se produit une conjonction illogique entre l'ici et l'autrefois'.

57 Richter's *Atlas* is the ever-expanding collection of photos, newspaper and magazine cuttings and design sketches, brought together on panels, which served as part of the source material for Richter's artworks and which has also been published as a book. Although the images in Richter's *Atlas* more or less follow his development over the years, the order and arrangement of the panels/pages is more thematic than strictly chronological.

58 The photo at the top left (Fig. 10, panel 19), which is repeated twice more, depicts Jewish forced labourers, including Elie Wiesel, in concentration camp Buchenwald and was taken five days after the liberation by the Americans.

FIGURE 3.10 Gerhard Richter, *Atlas*, panels 19 and 20, 'PHOTOS FROM BOOKS', 1967.

with photos from pornographic magazines.⁵⁹ The second attempt is a larger group of photos, again of the persecution of the Jews, which he included in *Atlas* under the title 'Holocaust' in 1997 (panels 635–646). I believe that the problem with these attempts, and the reason they failed, is that Richter's dialectic relation between appearing and disappearing cannot work here. Any artistic transformation of the photos is doomed to fail because these images will not be erased so easily. What the photos from the concentration camps have in common with the pornographic images is that the eye is caught in and by the obscene, which keeps forcing itself on the spectator through all artistic interventions. Apparently, Richter did not find a way to transform the need to look to a different level. His strategy of 'unpainting', that is to say, emphasizing the physical reality of the painting by pushing back the image, did not work here.⁶⁰ All that was left was repetition and with it the impossibility of aesthetic reflection.

Jerusalem (2)

Richter's soft-toned and sunny *Jerusalem* takes us in with ease – or at least it seems to. On closer examination it turns out that the city cannot be reached by

59 Richter, *Atlas*, panels 16–20 ('Photos from Books', 1967) and 17–23 ('Photos from Magazines', 1967).

60 The concept of 'unpainting' comes from Storr 2000, p. 111.

our gaze. And even though the painting is based on an ordinary photo, dated to the exact day, that captured the factual existence of the city on 20 September 1995, the painting does not escape the 'imagined reality', the web of associations, desires, and memories that have been spun around the actual Jerusalem through the centuries.⁶¹ Three religions have developed a 'sacred geography' there that has everything to do with the ancient phenomenon of recognizing a place as the location where one makes contact with a supernatural, spiritual domain. Jerusalem cannot be separated from the mysterious, heavenly bliss it represents. Even though several religions dismiss each other's founding stories as 'mere' myths, the city's holiness is pre-eminently based on these mythologies. These myths are what make the various religious claims on Jerusalem so irrational and explosive and they are the source of deep conflicts that still continue in our time.

Unlike Kiefer's painting, in which the heavenly and mythical Jerusalem is played out and separated from the geographical place in modern-day Israel, Richter's earthly, personally viewed *Jerusalem* seems to be stripped of all that is holy and symbolic. However, this does not mean that *Jerusalem* can be construed as a commentary on paintings that are overburdened with meaning, like Kiefer's. Even if Richter's *Jerusalem* truly is stripped of all things transcendental and spiritual, that does not mean that the discordant history of the place can be banished from our memory and that Richter has not taken it into account. Just as his banal, pseudo-romantic, 'untruthful' *Landschaft bei Hubbelrath* can only exist artistically by letting several cultural and historical meanings that shaped the landscape in art in the past sound through in the painting, *Jerusalem* cannot make us forget everything the city stands for just like that. *Jerusalem* is also part of a historical and narrative context that exists outside the painting.

In the post-war era, Jews regard Jerusalem as the city with 'healing power': 'they see Jewish Jerusalem rising phoenix-like from the ashes of Auschwitz'.⁶² Richter is a special outsider here, however – not a perpetrator, but a German and raised in the GDR, a state that did not consider the Nazi era part of its own history and therefore excused itself from the moral duty of recognizing the state of Israel. Aside from that, his *Jerusalem* places itself in an artistic context that is partly formed by Richter's art preceding this painting. The painting links itself to other works, including *Onkel Rudi* and *Tante Marianne*, which show us in an ambivalent way that we are unable to prevent the tragedies that ensue

61 The concept of 'imagined reality', specifically related to Jerusalem, is borrowed from Armstrong 2005, p. xi.

62 Armstrong 2005, p. x.

from convictions, ideas and religion. They draw on actual events in the world, even though the act of painting brings them into the realm of art, where they play their own game.

If Kiefer's *Jerusalem* sets off into a mythical *Ursprungszeit*, Richter's *Jerusalem* shows the dialectic of the then and now, the now of December 1995, when he painted the town. On the evening of 4 November 1995, prime minister Yitzhak Rabin was murdered in Tel Aviv by Yigal Amir, an ultra-right, Jewish student who violently opposed the so-called Oslo Accords that Rabin had reached earlier with the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in 1993 and 1995. Based on the politics of 'land for peace', these agreements regulated the right of self-government of the Palestinians in the Palestine territories. Another part of the agreement was that Arafat's PLO was to recognise the state of Israel's right to exist and renounce its destruction. However, orthodox Jews, ultranationalists, and supporters of the Likud Party saw the Palestinian territories as indissolubly linked to the God-given Jewish land. The magazine *Nekuda*, published by settlers, wrote that Rabin's government was a 'government of blood' and the leader and founder of the secular right-wing party Tsomet, Rafi Eitan, called the council of ministers 'a bunch of judenrat quislings'.⁶³ On 5 October 1995, a month before Rabin's murder, a demonstration was held against 'Oslo II', at which Likud politicians Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon spoke, amongst others. Rabin was represented as a Nazi collaborator and demonstrators carried posters on which he was depicted wearing a Nazi uniform.⁶⁴ In this political turmoil, mythical history, recent past and current events fell on top of each other.

Before the end of that year, Gerhard Richter painted *Jerusalem* – a fading image of longing, absence, incompleteness and frustration that is as equally incapable of holding on to the past as it is of focussing on the future.⁶⁵

63 Quoted in: Shindler 2008, p. 261.

64 The posters can be seen in a YouTube clip about the Likud demonstration. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMTx8O_1hzU, accessed on 28 August 2013). At 2:31 signs are shown on which Arafat is compared to Hitler and Rabin to Pétain (the French Field Marshal who collaborated with the Germans during World War II and led a puppet regime in Vichy France). Between 4:10 and 4:25 the posters depicting Rabin in a Nazi uniform are shown. These posters were based on a photo of Heinrich Himmler.

65 Richter took his photo of Jerusalem on 20 September 1995. In Gerhard Richter 2005, all paintings are mentioned and shown in chronological order. Both paintings with the title *Jerusalem* (numbers 835-1 and 835-2) are part of the last six of a total of 61 paintings Richter made that year. After that followed four smaller abstract works.

Jerusalem & Jerusalem: diverging and converging practices of memory

Both Anselm Kiefer and Gerhard Richter's practices of memory consist of a continuous selection, rearrangement and transformation of images. This is why a constant transference of meaning takes place in the work of both artists, making it impossible to fix that work in its meaning. Yet the way the various works within both oeuvres refer to each other follows a course that prevents arbitrariness and provides a consistency behind which a coherent conception of art is hidden, developing in different directions over time. It is clear that the conceptions of both artists vary greatly. Kiefer's *Jerusalem* consists of an almost overwhelming accumulation of materials and objects, in part metaphorically used; Richter's much smaller work shows nothing more than a thin skin of oil paint, in which his distinctive artistic processes (from photo to painting) lie. Kiefer's painting seems overburdened with potential meanings of a great and mystical weight, while in Richter's work such a notion of 'deep' meaning appears to have been dissolved so far that it seems empty to us – although inability is also thematized in his work.

Nonetheless, both artists play out the dualism between the banal and the sublime. Although Kiefer's imagination may possess ahistorical and mythical-theological dimensions, the impulse behind it is the German history and identity, which he and his contemporaries experienced as highly problematic. Moreover, his work is at least as concerned with the earthly and human, even in its horrific forms, as it is with a promise of salvation.

Richter may seem much more focussed on the here and now and reflect on current events in his art, but while doing so he also often refers, directly or indirectly, to a long tradition of cultural and religious practices. And at least part of his work deals with the same problematic German history and identity that was also at the root of Kiefer's work up until and well into the eighties. Both artists show that they are ambivalent about the world and how it can be represented by art, and that ambivalence returns in artworks filled with hermeneutic undecidability. Both apply, albeit in very different ways, a self-conscious, anachronistic practice of 'postmodern' history painting that is capable of keeping history present in the consciousness in a critical and historically-specific way.

In their art, both Kiefer and Richter work with a concept of 'multidirectional memory', which is based on the complicated interweaving of various practices of memory in a state of constant reconstruction and in varying relations

between collective memory and identity, as advocated by Michael Rothberg.⁶⁶ Memory and identity are never pure and authentic, neither are they connected by a straight line. Their relationship is subject to continuous reconstruction, whereby one's own memories and identities interfere with those of others: 'Memories are not owned by groups, nor are groups "owned" by memories', according to Rothberg.⁶⁷ Add to this the ahistorical quality of memory – bringing together then and now, there and here – and the memory practices and identity constructions attached to them seem unstable and subject to constant enrichment or even reversal. Kiefer and Richter both take part in these kinds of multiple memory processes. Even though their artistic ideas and the execution of those ideas are very different, they both reflect each other's practices. It is in that reflection that they take part in the dynamic transfer as it occurs in memory between various places and times. To both artists, remembering is 'making present', bringing a layered and traumatic past into a heterogeneous and changing present.

Both Kiefer's *Jerusalem* and Richter's *Jerusalem* are about coping with bereavement in a productive way rather than about passive melancholy. Both paintings are part of chains of references within oeuvres that deal with the way Germany copes with the Second World War, especially the Holocaust, and the inability to visualize it directly. In Kiefer's case, *Jerusalem* takes a new position within a group of works that make the transition from an art that is focussed on German history to one that takes Jewish history and culture as its subject. Richter's *Jerusalem* places the impossibility of remembering opposite this. Of course he remembers, but he does not really know what and how and what to do with it, except to turn that inability into an artwork, and by doing so, visualize the problem of contemporary painting without a 'deeper meaning'.

Both *Jerusalem*s are the result of the conflict between remembering and forgetting and the 're-remembering' of a ruined past in an indirect way. In the paintings, the unimaginable is partly presented by using the banal, trivial and cliché, but in such a way that the result remains filled with doubt. Like all memories, these paintings are layered and subject to constant rearranging, because they do not only refer to other media themselves, from tourists' photos to historical images, but also because they in turn are media that activate memory and carry its burden.

66 Rothberg 2009, 'Introduction', pp. 1–29.

67 Rothberg 2009, p. 5.

Bibliography

- Adorno, Theodor W., 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft', in: Theodor W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften, Band 10.1: Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft I. Prismen, Ohne Leitbild*, Frankfurt am Main 1977, pp. 11–30.
- Anselm Kiefer, exhib. cat., ed. by Jürgen Harten, Düsseldorf: Städtische Kunsthalle/Paris: ARC|Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris/Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, Düsseldorf 1984.
- Anselm Kiefer, exhib. cat., ed. by Mark Rosenthal, Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago/Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Munich 1987.
- , *Bilder 1986 → 1980*, exhib. cat., Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 1986.
- Arasse, Daniel, *Anselm Kiefer*, London 2001.
- Armstrong, Karen, *A History of Jerusalem. One City, Three Faiths*, London 2005.
- Assmann, Jan, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, Munich 1992 (2005).
- Associated Press, 'German painter Gerhard Richter gets the Wolf Prize', *The Jerusalem Post* (30 November 1994).
- Bätschmann, Oskar, 'Landscapes at One Remove', in: *Gerhard Richter Landscapes*, ed. by Dietmar Elger, Ostfildern 2011, pp. 57–69.
- Beeren, Wim, 'Anselm Kiefer: recuperatie van de geschiedenis', in: *Anselm Kiefer. Bilder 1986 → 1980*, exhib. cat., Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 1986.
- Biro, Matthew, 'Representation and Event: Anselm Kiefer, Joseph Beuys and the Memory of the Holocaust', *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 16, no. 1 (2003), pp. 113–46.
- Buchloh, Benjamin, 'Figures of Authority, Ciphers of Regression: Notes on the Return of Representation in European Painting', *October* 16 (1981), pp. 39–68.
- , 'A Note on Gerhard Richter's October 18, 1977', *October* 48 (1989), pp. 88–109.
- , 'Divided Memory and Post-Traditional Identity: Gerhard Richter's Work of Mourning', *October* 75 (1996), pp. 60–82.
- , 'Readymade, Photography, and Painting in the Painting of Gerhard Richter', in: Benjamin Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry. Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975*, Cambridge MA and London 2000, pp. 365–403.
- Butin, Hubertus, 'Die unromantische Romantik Gerhard Richters', in: *Ernste Spiele. Der Geist der Romantik in der deutsche Kunst 1790–1990*, exhib. cat., Munich: Haus der Kunst 1995, pp. 454–56.
- , 'Romantic Landscapes as "Cuckoo's Eggs"', in: *Gerhard Richter Landscapes*, ed. by Dietmar Elger, Ostfildern 2011, pp. 121–29.
- Fuchs, Rudi, 'Kiefer malt', in: *Anselm Kiefer. Verbrennen, Verholzen, Versenken, Versanden*, exhib. cat., ed. by Klaus Gallwitz, Venice: Deutscher Pavillon, Biennale Venice, Stuttgart 1980, pp. 57–62.

- Gerhard Richter. Bilder aus privaten Sammlungen*, exhib. cat., ed. by Götz Adriani, Duisburg: MKM, Museum Küppersmühle für Moderne Kunst 2008.
- Gerhard Richter. Forty Years of Painting*, exhib. cat., by Robert Storr, New York: The Museum of Modern Art 2002.
- Gerhard Richter Landscapes*, ed. by Dietmar Elger, Ostfildern-Ruit 1998.
- Gerhard Richter Landscapes*, ed. by Dietmar Elger, Ostfildern 2011.
- Gerhard Richter, Maler*, ed. by Dietmar Elger, Cologne 2002.
- Gerhard Richter. Text 1961 bis 2007. Schriften, Interviews, Briefe*, ed. by Dietmar Elger and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Cologne 2008.
- Germer, Stefan, 'Ungebetene Erinnerung', in: *Gerhard Richter 18. Oktober 1977*, exhib. cat., Krefeld: Museum Haus Esters/Frankfurt am Main: Portikus, Cologne 1989, pp. 51–53.
- Godfrey, Mark, 'Damaged Landscapes', in: *Gerhard Richter. Panorama*, exhib. cat., ed. by Mark Godfrey et al., London: Tate Modern 2011, pp. 73–89.
- Huyssen, Andreas, 'Anselm Kiefer: The Terror of History, the Temptation of Myth', *October* 48 (1989), pp. 25–45.
- Kipphoff, Petra, 'Die Lust an der Angst – der Deutsche Holzweg', *Die Zeit*, 6.6.1980, p. 42.
- Lauterwein, Andréa, *Anselm Kiefer/Paul Celan. Myth, Mourning and Memory*, transl. by David H. Wilson, London 2007.
- Levi, Primo, 'The Memory of the Offence', in: Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, transl. by Raymond Rosenthal, London 1989, pp. 11–21.
- Macaulay, Michael, 'Mastering the Medium', brochure Sotheby's Contemporary Art, London September/October 2008.
- Richter, Gerhard, *Atlas*, ed. by Helmut Friedel, Munich and Cologne 2006.
- , *Gerhard Richter. Catalogue Raisonné 1993–2004*, ed. by Anette Kruszynski and the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf: K20 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen 2005.
- , <http://www.gerhard-richter.com> (accessed on 28 July 2014).
- Roob, Alexander, *Alchemy and Mysticism. The Hermetic Museum*, Cologne 2006.
- Rosenblum, Robert, 'The Abstract Sublime', *Art News* (October 1961), pp. 38–41.
- , *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition. Friedrich to Rothko*, London 1975.
- Rothberg, Michael, *Multidirectional Memory. Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, Stanford CA 2009.
- Saltzman, Lisa, *Anselm Kiefer and Art after Auschwitz*, Cambridge 1999.
- Shindler, Colin, *A History of Modern Israel*, Cambridge 2008.
- Verhagen, Erik, 'Gerhard Richters Familienbilder', in: *Gerhard Richter. Fotografie und Malerei – Malerei als Fotografie. Acht Texte zu Gerhard Richters Medienstrategie*, ed. by Dietmar Elger and Kerstin Küster, Cologne 2011, pp. 9–37.