

ANSELM KIEFER

I wish to die in autumn moonlight even in darkness not to be lost

Opening Friday April 17, 2026, 6 - 8 pm
Galleria Lia Rumma | Via Stilicone 19 | MILANO

On Friday, 17 April 2026, Lia Rumma Gallery, in Milan, opens a new solo exhibition by Anselm Kiefer. Its title, *I wish to die in autumn moonlight even in darkness not to be lost*, evokes a poem by 19th century Japanese poet, Buddhist nun, and ceramist Ōtagaki Rengetsu—to whom Kiefer also dedicates a painting, *For Ōtagaki Rengetsu* (2025–26)—which is presented at the overture of the exhibition.

The exhibition runs parallel to *The Women Alchemists*, which Kiefer conceived for the Sala delle Cariatidi at Palazzo Reale (curated by Gabriella Belli and open through September 2026), where large canvases of nearly six meters high evoke and depict women who, over the centuries, made fundamental contributions to modern science through alchemy. This female pantheon, painted by Kiefer, brings together names and voices forgotten by history, yet united by the lack of public recognition of their abilities and knowledge, in their own time and beyond.

Anselm Kiefer—who is himself a sort of alchemist—seeks new forms to confront those which already exist. For him, the creative act is always a process of transformation, echoing the alchemical process from whose first stage of decomposition of base matter proceeds, step by step, towards the realization of the philosopher's stone. And it is from here that we must begin our epistemological journey through the works created for this new solo exhibition at Lia Rumma: the paintings are steeped both in history and forgotten stories.

I wish to die in autumn moonlight even in darkness not to be lost was conceived by Kiefer with careful consideration of the gallery spaces. The works demonstrate his continued research of the “alchemists,” broadening its scope and delving deeper into the role of other female heroines, who have long been forgotten. Blanche von Navarra, Sophie Brahe, Isabella Cortese, amongst others: each of these paintings is a further exploration of figures omitted from the official narrative. With their names inscribed in gold letters, Kiefer allows their faces to emerge from the dust of time. Their bodies, too, struggle to surface from the tangle of a textural and highly symbolic painting marked by various processes of stratification, electrolysis and oxidation, whose green and blue-tinged hues of copper coexist with gold—one of the key elements of the artist's “alchemical” practice.

Joining this female gathering are the two mythological figures of Calliope and Melpomene, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (the goddess of memory), depicted within a single large canvas that alone occupies the first floor of the gallery. Melpomene is the muse of tragedy, whilst Calliope, “she who has a beautiful voice,” is the muse of epic poetry. Both become bearers of ancestral knowledge, often lost or concealed.

Anselm Kiefer, one of the most important and versatile artists working today, was born in Donaueschingen, Germany, in 1945. For the first twenty years of his career, he worked in the Odenwald, Germany. Since 1993, Kiefer has lived and worked in France, where he continues to create works that explore the human condition and the cyclical nature of history. The broad range of themes and motifs found in his work are both drawn from and inspired by literature, history, politics, religion, science, and philosophy. Kiefer's vision brings to light the importance of the myth and memory, metamorphosis and renewal. His oeuvre comprises paintings, sculptures, vitrines, installations, artist's books, and works on paper such as drawings, woodcuts, watercolors, and photographs. The materials he uses—from lead to gold leaf, concrete to textile, ashes to plants—are as vast as they are symbolically resonant. His works have been the subject of solo exhibitions and retrospectives in major international museums, from the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao to Palazzo Ducale in Venice. In Milan, he is particularly well-known for the permanent installation *The Seven Heavenly Palaces* at Pirelli HangarBicocca.

