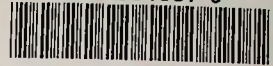


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THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

THE BOOK IN CONTEMPORARY ART

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INTRODUCTION

An artists' book is a book that has been entirely made by an artist who takes full responsibility for its production. The artists' book as we know it today has been around for the last twenty five years or so. Its history can be traced back further than that, but the first significant development in this form happened in the sixties. The artists' working with this form today come from varied backgrounds and the results reflect this. What I am interested in looking at is (1) what qualities the book has to offer the artist and (2) can the artists' book offer something other media cannot.

To investigate these questions I will look at two artists, both contemporaries, who are primarily known as painters: Tom Phillips and Anselm Kiefer. First I will look at the period in art that produced the 'new' book. Then after exploring specific books in relation to the artist and his art, it will be possible to isolate elements that both artists have manipulated to their own advantage. These elements will show how the book in the hands of the artists can become an effective communicative form, a form that in the context of art has certain qualities to offer that other media cannot.

Chapter I

The Emergence of the 'new' book

Everything in this world exists in
order to end up as a book.

Stephane Mallarme, French poet (1842-98)

It seems impossible that such an all encompassing statement should somehow be true. However books being a part of and a product of our lives, contain the history and knowledge of the world. The act of passing on knowledge and learning from one generation to the next is of the utmost importance to our existence. The form that this takes has changed from oral, to the written to the electronically recorded, but for now I am more interested in the written form.

Both the Western and Eastern world have had a rich history of hand illustrated books and manuscripts that chronicled the history and lives of the people of the time. This beautifully embellished art/craft was made redundant by the mechanical revolution of the 1400s, the Gutenberg Press. With the advent of accurate movable type and multiple copies the rift began between fine art of bookmaking and the book as an applied art. Art would now belong to the gallery and book to the bookshop. And so it continued, unchanging, except for a few artists such as William Blake. In the late 1700s, with severe limited access to the establishment art world and the conventional publishing, Blake was driven to the radically unconventional step of making his own books. He was the only printing trade craftsman to be given serious credibility as a high artist although reward was almost entirely posthumous.

The borders between fine art and commercial art remained quite clear until the beginning of the 1960s. In the sixties there was a move away from the more traditional

categorization of painting and sculpture to an approach to art that emphasized idea, process and gesture. The form of the book and people's perception of the book also began to change during this time. How and why it (the perception of the book) changed was due to not one, but a varied collection of art and social movements that occurred in the sixties.

The books produced during the sixties all had something to offer in the early stages of bookmaking by artists. As in any new form it had its teething problems, and the artists themselves were only just beginning to learn about what the book as a form had to offer. The artists working during the sixties began to work with so many new media and images that it seems that the book was just another new medium with which to experiment. So the process of change from 'ordinary' book to 'artists' book' was not a pre-planned transmutation but a fortuitous and enthusiastic by-product of the sixties.

Pop Art and the book

Artists working in the style of Pop art during the sixties took commercial images and used them as the focal point of their art making. They had a wide range of images available to them from newspaper photographs, to magazine advertisements and billboards, to comic books. The Pop artists did not see their employment of commercial images as cheap or trashy. They were responding to the visual data of their environment. In doing so they began to experiment with different media.

Photography, printing, film, collage, had been around for some time but artists used them as a way to make their art popular and accessible to the public at large. Many pop artists also were interested in printing and in this way they became involved in book production. The adoption of a popular mechanical process and inevitability of reaching wider audiences appealed to them. The book was a popular, familiar form that was easily distributed and was an obvious container for the images that they had been working with.

One such artist who was interested in printing was Andy Warhol. In Andy Warhol's Index Book (ill.1) he experimented with the possibilities of a pop-up book. In this book he used images of commercial products, such as the pop-up can in the illustration, and the positive and negative photographic images that he often used in his famous silkscreens. Warhol experimented playfully with the form of the book. It encouraged other artists to work with this form. This was a one-off experiment and is typical of Warhol's attitude to art and the outside world. He took a look at the world of 'ordinary' books and sought to combine the two worlds. So the involvement of artists in the emergence of the 'new' book was that they integrated the book into their art making and put it on the same level as their painted canvas, silkscreen and art movie.

Conceptual Art and the book.

In 1965 Sol Lewitt had his first exhibition. In this exhibition he presented works based on his theory that a work of art could be entirely dependent on the mental processes of its conception (26.p228-229). He called his art conceptual and the term became the label for a great variety of work done about this time and since.

In explaining the reasoning behind conceptual art he said:

All intervening steps - scribbles, sketches, drawings, failed works, models, studies, thoughts, conversations - are of interest. Those that show the thought process of the artist are sometimes more interesting than the final product. (26.p229).

In this way the book was favoured by many conceptual artists as the most appropriate means to record and circulate these 'intervening steps.' Mainly, the conceptual artist used the sequential quality of the book to display their ideas and works.

Sol Lewitt himself worked extensively with the book form during the late sixties and into the next decade, using the idea of a sequence and then the permutations of that sequence. His book, published in 1981, Lines in 2 directions and in 5 colors on 5 colors with all their combinations, shows his continual use of the sequence (ill.2). In this book he experiments with colour sequence. Using five colours, black, white, yellow, red and blue he places them in sequence in certain areas on the page. There is always an overall background cover with coloured lines through it in two directions, up and down, and left to right. The permutations of the sequence of colours used together creates optical illusions. For example in the back cover of the book the background colour is blue, while the lines running down are red. This gives the effect of a purple square within a bigger light blue square. He presents all the permutations in a sequence throughout the book, the pages tell the story of colour and how the eye perceives colour in relation to other colours. How the conceptual artist of the sixties employed the book form did by no means stretch it to its limits but it did however bring attention to the option of working with this form.

Changing Attitudes

The late 1960s and the 1970s saw artists becoming more critical of art institutions. The buying and selling of modern art had become a lucrative business and the success of an artist could be shortlived as museums of modern art were quick to embrace the next rising star. Many artists set out to circumnavigate the gallery system and the book was one way of helping them to do so. Artists whose work was not reliant on the the gallery system still wanted to show to as many people as possible. Performance artists and landscape artists used the book form to preserve their transient art. Working with the book and using photographs, drawings, maps and written documentation, they could bring their art work to the public as a book, after the actual event had ceased. This period was not only a time for changing attitudes in art but also in the politics of the people (6.pl00). As political unrest swept through Europe and America, it generated much talk, much writing and much printing. After posters, books were the next most efficient means of reaching a mass audience. It was inevitable that the artist should pick up on this direct line to channel information into society.

The 'new' book, a child of the sixties?

I have outlined the environment in which the 'new' book emerged. It is suffice to say that the utilization by artists of mass reproduction and the redefinition of what would be termed as art, made fertile ground for the 'new' book to grow. Experiments with the book form during this period would not always be termed as 'good', but they were successful in the way that 'any publicity is good publicity.' With artists moving freely from art to theatre to literature, the book form was being discovered or rather rediscovered by painters, sculptors, printmakers. Not all of the artists working during the sixties and seventies continued to work with the book but of those that did, some

set up their own printing workshops and became their own publishers. Over the last twenty five years or so artists working with the book have begun to stretch the possibilities of the book as an autonomous art form.

The results have been very diverse in appearance and have taken the form of unique, one-off books as well as printed and published artists' books. This difference in circulation abilities does not affect the importance of either category. They both have shared and individual qualities that artists can manipulate to their advantage. To look at these qualities I have selected Tom Phillips and Anselm Kiefer as artists who are noted for their work in bookmaking. They are both contemporaries and painters. The specific works I shall look at have been critically acclaimed as excellent examples of what an artist can achieve using the book form. These books are also an integral part of the artists' work. Tom Phillips' book, A Humument, is a printed and published artists' book while Anselm Kiefer's books, Scherben and Die Geburt der Sonne, are both unique artists' books. Investigating these three books will also show the equal importance of the unique and multiple artists' book.

Chapter II

Tom Phillips

The Artist's background

Tom Phillips was born in London, England in 1937 (ill.3). He is known primarily as a painter but has worked also in the area of print and music. The term 'Renaissance Man' has often been bestowed upon him but he would rather call it 'having a go at everything' (20p.26). His formal education has been unusual, and he chose this unusual approach. He firstly studied Anglo Saxon and English Literature at St. Catherine's, Oxford. After completing this course he began to study life drawing at Camberwell School of Art in the evenings under the guidance of Frank Auerbach, while teaching in a secondary school during the day. A year later, 1962, he had enough of teaching and had begun to realise how little he really knew about painting. He enrolled as a full-time student at Camberwell. During the next 3 years his studies consisted almost entirely of studies from life (ill.4). He cites Frank Auerbach as being his chief source of inspiration at this time.

After leaving art college, Phillips continued painting and exploring different avenues, learning as he went. Phillips constantly looked to other painters often the Old Masters as inspiration. For a time he painted non-referential paintings where he explored the Golden Section as a framework to structure them. Here he referred to the painting The Annuciation by Domenico Veneziano, a constant source for him in this one particular style of painting (ill.5). Throughout his career as a painter Phillips has shown his zest for experimentation and his constant willingness to learn.

His early works in painting demonstrate this from his still-life to his non-referential painting to his painted collages (ill.6). This was a painting based on techniques that usually arise in collage. Work which followed on from that included experiments with graphic notations for music, an idea he had explored where the lines and intersection of those lines signified a note of a certain pitch or a silence (ill.7). Then there was his perservation study where he worked on the idea that any mark repeated often enough over the same surface would make a painting. All of these paintings were a continuation of his studies as a student. He saw himself as 'a panic-stricken man in a maze, making forays down this alley to know that it is not right; all however in slow motion and deliberate'(9.pl6).

Slowly and deliberately Phillips continued to investigate and explore his ideas through painting. But it wasn't until 1965 that he began to find his own 'voice' as a painter, he refers to this turning point as the painting A little Art History (ill.8). He began to incorporate the use of text, and work with what he calls chance procedures. The text is treated with the same importance as the images, rather than as a secondary explanation. The use of the stencil came into his work around 1964 and he used it extensively in his later works. The word C. LOOPSEEND is not a word plucked from the imagination but is a functional shop sign. If you removed the sliding bar that covers the words CLOSED and OPEN you would see the hybrid word C L O O P S E E N D . Phillips had begun to combine his two loves in a visual form, his love of language and his love of painting.

The Step towards the book

Although painting continued to occupy his main body of work, in 1966 Phillips began to work in the evenings on yet another venture that strayed away from the canvas. After reading an interview with William Burroughs, the novelist, he began to play with the 'cut up' technique, where existing words were manipulated to read as poetry. He did this using current copies of the New Statesman. A continuation on from this idea was to use this device in a more ambitious situation.

Once more Phillips' chance procedure was to come into practice. He made a rule that the first book he found for threepence (old pence) would do. And the book he came upon, one Saturday morning, was A Human Document by W.H. Mallock, a Victorian novel. It was published in 1892 and, although he knew nothing at first about the author he found the book ideal for his purposes. The vocabulary was rich and lush and its range of reference and allusion large (9.p215).

This originally was a project which he worked on only in the evenings. However, it is a project that has lasted over the years. The first publication of this work was in 1970 and it continued to influence further works and became a constant source for him as an artist. His step towards working with the book is quite an obvious one. Here Phillips could work creatively as the author/illustrator.

A Humument

I have mentioned Phillips usage of chance procedures where some of the decision making in his work is left partly up to 'Fate'. Once again in this work, chance procedure dictates some of his decisions. The title A Humument was the result of chance.

By folding one page over and placing it against the page beneath the running title read A Humument i.e. A HUM[AN DOC]UMENT. The copy of A Humument which I will look at was published in 1980, though it was first published in 1970, as a box of ten silkscreened sheets, which made up volume one.

In the beginning Phillips approached the work by scoring out unwanted words with pen and ink(ill.9). But soon he realised that a more comprehensive approach could be reached by a fusion of word and image. This meant taking on more techniques and changing the media used. In this way he managed to continue his painting and methods from his early works with his knowledge and understanding of the English language. During the course of the work he began to set rules for himself for how he would deal with the existing text and he began to use the basic structure of the novel as a framework. Looking at the layout of his book, the bones of the original book are still evident. Phillips takes the formal layout of a novel and mimics it in a loose but very believable manner. At the outset we have the introduction which is then followed by chapters titled by Roman numerals. The first chapter is Chapter I, suprisingly enough, and after that the numerical order is random and finishes with Chapter XXX (thirteen chapters later!). He keeps the running title, A Human Document, and the folio number positioned at the top of the page. By keeping the folio numbers in order of sequence, and with the progress of randomly numbered chapters throughout the book, he has given the reader directions i.e. where one should start and go on and end. The numerical order of the pages is not the order in which he worked on them, initially he picked pages at random and the emerging themes from each page was worked forwards and backwards into the volume.

The treatment of each page, structurally, is consistent throughout. He works with the space that the existing body copy covers. This shape, albeit sometimes a loose shape, is a constant, giving the reader the feel of reading a novel(ill.10).

No extraneous matter was used in the making of his work and the first element he worked on would always be the text. Often one page would take a long time to complete only because of the many alternatives present to him. Within the body of text on a page, Phillips would shape the flow of the words and phrases by rivulets that would run down the page. These add to the experience of reading, for the reader has to forsake his lazy habit of traversing the words from left to right, to now examine the entire page and sometimes choose which river of type to read first and in what order (ill.11). Sometimes he presents the words in bursts, so it reads like poetry. In this example most of the existing text can still be seen, a reminder of their origin (ill.12).

The techniques he used throughout the book were pen and ink, acrylic gouache, some typing and some collaged fragments from other parts of the book (ill.13). In page 328 Phillips has used the collage technique to cover up the main body of the text that is unnecessary to him. Like his usage of pen and ink it is still possible to see part of the underlying text. Only one phrase remains open to the reader- 'chance lies in my opera'. A reference to the opera he was writing. The characters and scenarios all came from his work on A Human Document, where chance featured greatly in his approach to uncovering the elements of opera.

The images and pictorial matter in the book mirror the chosen text in mood and reference. Here he incorporates his work with non-referential painting and often the pictorial matter becomes just a framework for the text and is formed in accordance with the position of the text on that page. Page 290 is an example of an image created to mirror the message of the text (ill.14). The image here acts as a barrier between the phrases, creating a scenario with suggested environments. We start by reading the words at the top of the page, from left to right, - "I shall have you again by and by", she said more calmly'. Then we follow down through a blue background which we recognise, as the sky, as we read - 'look my place is here'. At the bottom of the sky we see a section of text that has been blocked out by a pictorial image of grass. Below this we see a line of type which leads, by Phillips usage of the rivulet of type, into the next pictorial image, of soil. Over all, the eye sees the page as if Phillips has sliced down through three environments, sky, grass, and soil. These environments contain the phrases on the page, pictorially and spatially.

Having made the rule for himself that no outside material would be used during the process; Phillips looked to the original text for his characters and in doing so found the ghost of a character lurking between the lines. The original hero and heroine of Mallock's novel, Grenville and Irma, remain but Bill Toge, Phillips creation, is the central character. Toge exists only on pages which contain the word 'together' or 'altogether'. The only words from which his name can be derived. He is also the only character with his own trademarks. These recurring images are a carpet and a window that looks out onto a forest (ill.15). His body shape is amoeba-like and is formed from the rivers of type.

Toge and his adventures is the main story running through this book, but unlike an 'ordinary' book it does not run from beginning to end. Phillips experiments with Mallock's words to produce pages that are poetic, autobiographical, and sometimes mildly erotic (ill.16). These extra subjects are woven in and out of the main story. This format creates a great literary richness which is matched by the pictorial content. It is possible to pick up the book and start reading from the middle to the end or just to read small sections at random. To only read it through from beginning to end is to skim the surface. More time spent viewing each page and its individual identity makes for more enjoyable reading and a better understanding of the book as a whole.

Because of the fact that each page can be read and viewed individually, Phillips is pushing the physical qualities of the book as a collection of sheets enclosed between a cover. Normally we are not made aware of this because 'ordinary' books are constructed to be read from beginning to end through the sequence of pages that follow on from the one before. Phillips interferes with this traditional form of reading and the reader is forced to approach the book in an open-minded manner, willing to let the physicality of this book, shape the action of their reading.

Tom Phillips has managed to combine many arts - literature, poetry, painting, collage amongst others, in one hand sized form. He has successfully married text and image in its natural container the book, while working with this in an inventive and compelling manner to communicate his ideas. He continued working with Mallock's novel to produce more work including an opera, Irma, whose music, staging instructions and costume all came from the novel. A Human Document spawned other books such as Trailer and Doc using the techniques and devices used in A Humument.

It was the source for many small paintings which consisted of variations of wording and design from the original and also A Humument. A chance procedure became a rich source of ideas for the artist.

Chapter III

Anselm Kiefer

The Artist's background

Anselm Kiefer was born in 1945, in Donaueschingen, Germany. He read French and Law at university and began to study painting in 1966. After graduating in 1969 he studied under Joseph Beuys in Dusseldorf. He now works from his studio in Odenwald. From the start his work has been occupied with German cultural history and especially the legacy of the Third Reich. He has attracted criticism from German sources for his work that involved Third Reich themes. After the Second World War, Germany reacted strongly against any association with the Nazis. In the year of his birth, 1945, students were rejecting Germanic music and folklore; any section of culture that had been taken on board and manipulated by the Third Reich became taboo. Kiefer was the artist to address this era in history. As an art student he photographed himself giving the Nazi salute in various European locations. He would not block on this part of his heritage, he dealt with it head on, refusing to repress his emotions on the Third Reich, refusing to be evasive like his elders.

In his search for national identity he began to incorporate references from many broader subjects. Kiefer's work drew inspiration from ancient mythology and the writing of medieval scholars. He does not keep in touch with other artists and shuns the media, rather letting his work speak for itself. He says of his isolation: 'it helps me maintain a unity of thinking, feeling, willing. I want to synthesize them in a work. It is this unity that counts'(25.p90). It is this unity that best describes the entirety of Kiefer and his work. In everything he does and from one work to the next there is a continuity, a constant confrontation of our history, our existence, and

our place in the universe. To approach a Kiefer image is to be drawn into a multilayered world, the image is never 'a direct illustration of an implied narrative text'(14.p106). It has been said that to begin discussing Kiefer's work is a difficult task (23.p7) and deciding where to begin equally difficult. My interest at this point is his years of work in bookmaking and how he treated the book form. This makes the task of approaching Anselm Kiefer, the artist, perhaps more compact but still as formidable.

A Lifetime of Books

He has been working with books as far back as his student days since 1969. He creates one and sometimes more each year. In his first appearance in an international forum at Documenta 6 in 1977, he was represented by books. His books have been growing and developing alongside his paintings. They are very much part of his work as a whole, sharing the same themes as his paintings and sculptures, often sparking off another book, always connected to the complex threads of thought that exist in his work.

When he began as a student creating his handmade books they were small and composed of collaged pieces of paper or his own photographs attached to thin sheets of white paper. To this he would add inscriptions with a ballpoint or fountain pen. A book he made in 1969, Die Frauen ("The women") shows his interest as a student in archetypal women as well as bookmaking. The book has small cutouts from popular magazines glued to its loosely bound pages. The images are so small that sometimes it is hard to make out what they are. After studying them, a close up of a nostril or the top of a thigh begins to appear (ill.17). The book has a flow and rhythm of its own as the collaged pieces grow smaller to dot size during the turning of the pages and then larger again. On other pages real hair and plastic were used and he added inscriptions of his own, listing

women of the day, Sharon Tate, Princess Grace, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. All these women sharing the trauma of being present day goddesses.

Gradually the materials used in making the book became more varied and the book became heavier and thicker. Materials used in his painting, that were important not just for their physical presence but because of the connotations attached to them, appeared frequently in his books. Lead, sand, dried plants, photographs being just a few of these. His early books, as Die Frauen shows had conceptual and somewhat theatrical tendencies (23.p8). Later his books became more closely related to his paintings and for perhaps the first time, he began to use elements in his books that were to develop further into later works. Because of the number of books that Kiefer has created and because of the scale of ideas used in his work I shall concentrate on two books that through the development of ideas connect one to the other. Taking a small section from his work will enable me to highlight the way in which he has moulded the book to present his ideas. The books I will look at are Scherben, 1969 and Die Geburt der Sonne, 1987.

Scherben

The word Scherben in english means sherds. The book in size is twenty five by nineteen centimetres, and is 185 pages long. Like his book Die Frauen, the format is photographs on this white paper, loosely bound, with the cover made from the same white paper. All inscriptions are his own and written in his own hand. He always writes with his right hand and paints with his left or both together. The photograph on the cover shows us two teapots, one placed in the far left corner of a square and almost perfect. The second one is placed in the centre of the photograph, completely shattered in pieces, some hardly distinguishable as having once being part of a teapot

(ill.18). This book shows Kiefer's wry sense of humour and impatience with the tunneled vision of academic teaching and research. The creation of this book was a reaction against this narrow mindedness after he had to sit through a lecture on Greek art during which tiny fragments from a Greek vase were analyzed with minute, mindnumbing detail. Each page contains a sherd in photographic form or an actual fragment of porcelain glued to the page. This is his catalogue of all existing sherds. We follow the sherds through the book as Kiefer places them in different contexts creating visual puns and double entendres (ill.19). This parody of official archeological reports contains two elements which he was to use again in later works. The porcelain fragments were developed further in his book Die Geburt der Sonne and the photographs that incorporated images of the bathroom fixtures were the forerunners of the larger and more sophisticated props to come (ill.20).

Scherben, made while Kiefer was studying under Joseph Beuys, is very much the work of an artist interested in Conceptual Art. His thought processes visualized in the photographs and usage of real pieces of porcelain are presented and preserved through the sequence of pages in the book. He does not make use of the entire space within the page but presents the images centred on the page. This gives the book a constant rhythm which is then broken by the introduction of real material (ill.21). The cover mirrors the inside of the book in format and material. And the theme which is formulated in the title is clearly articulated throughout the book (10.p77). This unity of word and image is constant throughout his work. He uses words as integral pieces of his art. His titles and inscriptions are not straightforward, simple explanations but elements that give 'final shape to his work and direction to its meaning '(23.p11).

During the 1970s Kiefer's books showed a marked interest in his materials and what they could say as part of his work, not just what they were meant to represent. I have already noted Kiefer's interest in ancient mythology and its allegorical possibilities. In the next book Die Geburt der Sonne, Kiefer integrates a specific Egyptian myth with the image of fragmented porcelain already used in his book Scherben in 1969. Within the book he also experiments to a greater extent with his very large studio props which were photographed and used as images.

Die Geburt der Sonne

Die Geburt der Sonne, or "The Birth of the Sun" was made in 1987. Its format is much larger than his early works, this book is seventy by fifty centimetres and is fifteen centimetres thick. The materials used change dramatically too. His books became great tomes in terms of the sheer size of them as well as the complexity of ideas communicated through them. The myth that Kiefer incorporated in this book was the myth of Osiris and Isis. Isis was the daughter of Saturn and Rhea, who married her twin brother Osiris. Osiris travelled all around Arabia, India and Europe, teaching the savage people that lived there about architecture and agriculture. While he was away his brother Typhon usurped the throne of Egypt. Typhon tricked Osiris into climbing into a chest which he sealed and threw into the Nile. Isis went in search of the chest which was now the coffin of Osiris and finally found it. However, Typhon then cut the body up into fourteen pieces and scattered them around Egypt. Again Isis went to find and collect the pieces of her husband. In the end she managed to collect only thirteen pieces and sealed them in urns. The penis, the fourteenth piece, could not be found and so she made an artificial replacement. At the end Isis and Osiris are transformed into the Moon and the Sun.

Kiefer uses this myth to work out a parallel with more

up-to-date subjects. He combined the image of Osiris and Isis, and a nuclear reactor. The underlying theme was separation and union, fission and fusion. The constant image throughout is the sun; Osiris is the Egyptian God of the Sun and the nuclear reactor is a man made sun containing thermonuclear energy. In this book Kiefer uses his own photographs that are greatly enlarged to cover the double spread. He sometimes uses his photographs as under drawings and works over them with other materials, in this case he uses clay, silver, acrylic, glass, porcelain and copper. The pages are made from board and bound with canvas. The first half of the book is different in appearance to the second half. The photographs are covered in a wash of clay to varying degrees, starting with the cover (ill.22). Kiefer has incorporated his porcelain pieces in this book, this time they take on another significance. From the cover through the book until almost half way he works in these fragments which are connected by copperwire. They sit into the clay and are numbered from one to fourteen, the fourteen pieces of the body of Osiris (ill.23). He uses the props that he built in his studio to tell the story of Isis' search. He begins with an airplane-structure that hung from the ceiling of his studio to show Isis in flight (ill.24). The next pages are mainly landscapes partly covered in clay. By the time we come to the fourteenth piece, the overall image changes to clearly viewed photographs. These are of his home-made nuclear reactor, fourteen rods stand upright in a storage tank. In the myth when Isis shed tears over the death of Osiris she flooded the Nile. In Kiefer's photographs his tank gradually fills with water through the sequence of the pages (ill.25).

In enlarging his photographs to almost cover the entire space of the page, Kiefer leaves the brand name that is on the negative. A reminder perhaps of the medium of

photography or maybe the use of the word Safety Film is to protect the viewer against his nuclear reactor (ill.26). Kiefer's ideas which revolve around a myth is told in a dramatic way. He is always aware of the flow and rhythm of his images as the viewer turns the pages. His use of clay to partly cover the first photographs until the last piece of porcelain breaks to a solarized photograph, changing the rhythm (ill.27). The rods seem to be lit by a brilliant divine light.

The materials and the reproductions of his constructed objects bear their meaning within the passage of the book. He confronts the idea that the book should impart information quickly and his very handling of his materials defy this idea. 'Art is not an object. Art is a way of receiving, and it is full of archaeological potential'(25.p90). Kiefer realizes this feeling in his work, to understand what he has to say. He wants to present us with our history to show how little we have changed.

In his exhibitions Kiefer places his books beside his paintings, specifically those of similar or related themes. Sometimes an older book would be shown alongside new works, to show the continuity of his ideas and themes despite his change in media. Kiefer does not make a qualitative distinction between his books and other works. However, it is quite apparent from the richness and abundance of his books that he sees them very much as autonomous works. In an informal interview with Donald Kuspit in 1987 he was asked if he preferred one particular type of work from the many different kinds that he produced. His answer: 'I like bookmaking most, but I also like environments and actions. A painting is harder to complete for me. I have made books since 1969. They are my first choice' (25.p86).

Chapter IV

Elements of the 'new' book

After looking at the individual books of Kiefer and Phillips in relation to the artist and his art, it is quite obvious that the book is an important part of their own work. Because of the fact that an artist makes a book or employs the book to present his ideas, it does not follow that this should be classed as an artists' book. There are certain elements that should be realized through the process of creating. Like any other art form it has its own qualities and limitations. Although the appearance of Phillips' book is very different to Kiefer's in use of materials and ideas, they are both aware of certain elements. To understand these elements is to understand the structure that they form. By examining what these elements are in relation to Phillips' and Kiefer's work we can see how the book can be perceived as a functional and self-sufficient form.

Space within the artists' book

A book is made up of pages and the basic unit of the book is the double spread. At any one time it is only possible to see two pages. Each page should be treated as an individual space within the book. In A Humument Tom Phillips treats every single page as an isolated space. The page opposite does not necessarily connect spatially within the double spread. Although his treatment of the content of the book within the space of each page is similar, in that he allows for a white border to completely surround the content, the overall feel is of two individual pages. They are connected by the fact that they lie opposite each other in the space of the double spread. Kiefer treats space within his books differently. In making his later books such as Die Geburt der Sonne he treats the double spread as a complete space. The content

of his book stretches across the double spread. The physical join of the two pages can still be seen but this is overridden by the use of maximum space for the content. Because of the physical nature of the book i.e. a book is made up of pages, a sequence occurs throughout the book.

Therefore the book is also a sequence of spaces (6.p31). This is one of the main elements that an artist uses to structure the content of the book. The artist can physically realise the progression or development of an idea using a sequence of spaces. Unlike, say, a painting or sculpture where the space that is communicating the idea or feeling to the viewer is all at once on show, the artist must work with spaces that are shown in an ordered fashion. That is, it is not possible to see all pages at the same time. Phillips uses this sequence of spaces to contain his main story interspersed with his poetry, word plays and autobiographical references. His main story of Bill Toge does not follow through the ordered sequence of spaces but in a random sequence that stops and starts throughout the whole book. Kiefer works with his sequence of space in Die Geburt der Sonne as if he was creating a storyboard for a film or animation. Each double spread following the one before reveals a little more of his overall message. He uses the sequence of space to organise the content of his book. His numbered porcelain pieces echo the traditional sequence of 'ordinary' books, folio numbers. The sequence of space within a book is limited, it has a beginning and an end. If this is altered then it is not the same book.

The element of time

The book is a sequence of spaces and because these spaces can only be seen at different moments, the book is also a sequence of moments (6.p31). The book contains the fourth dimension, time. While the artist is aware of this fact it is the reader who dictates the sequence of moments. The reader can choose where to start reading and where to stop, he chooses the speed at which to read and what exactly and in which order he shall read. This is the point where the book begins to function. It functions in a direct and private interaction with the reader. It only comes alive when the reader begins to turn the pages. The reader guided by the structure that the artist has created, manipulates the book. Tom Phillips has made a book where the content follows through from page one to page threehundred and sixtyseven. The reader confronting this book, A Humument, may start at the middle and work to the end or perhaps read small sections at random, as well as reading from beginning to end. Kiefer has structured the content of his book spatially in such a way that the reader must firstly start at the beginning and read through until the end, to understand it. The time spent looking at each double spread is left up to the reader and the speed of reading may vary depending on the accessibility of the individual images.

Text and Image

The book is arranged by the artist spatially and is perceived by the reader within a time sequence. It is through the combination of these two actions that the content is revealed to the reader. The artist uses the images and text as an organic part of the whole book. Text does not necessarily need to be present in the book, it is up to the artist to decide what language best transmits his mental images.

In the case of A Humument, Phillips has used someone else's text as a basis for his book. He uses his images and chosen text to tell a story or stories. The relationship between the image and text in his book is symbiotic. The combination of both emphasizes the form of the book. Kiefer does not use large chunks of text but works with words in a definite manner to supplement his images with meaning. Most times he uses inscriptions with his images that act almost like clues to his often hidden ideas. With his book titles he concentrates the related themes of the book in a few words. As in the book Die Geburt der Sonne where the images of Osiris/Isis and a nuclear reactor are combined. These words then become part of the total image that becomes the book cover. It is important that any symbols used by the artist, be it words or visual images, must work towards communicating the whole book. It is a case of the sum of the parts being more important than the parts. The artists' book is not an accidental container of a text like the 'ordinary' book (6.p32). The text and image, organized within the space of the book, are elements emphasizing the form of the book. Text and image are not only the content of the artists' book, they are elements manipulated by the artist to communicate the book as a complete form. As a painter may work with different pigments to convey a feeling in his painting, the book artist must work with text and images as a language of symbols which is integrated into the sequence of space and time of the book.

The Accessibility of the artists' book

The closed book is a dead book. Reading, an action taken on by the reader, is necessary for the book to function. With the artists' book 'the reading itself proves that the reader understands' (6.p41).

Everyone has the ability to follow a sequence in a book. It is how we first begin to understand the relation of symbols, children's alphabet and picture books are an example of this. Although the book in an artist's hands becomes something else, an expression of his ideas, a communicative medium, an artwork, by its physical identity it is still a book. This works to the advantage of the artist. It seems that art can be more approachable in this form. Sometimes an artist works with this accessibility in other ways. Kiefer's books are not very portable and have to be handled quite carefully. His books can take on precious qualities, verified by the fact that he makes only one of each. This is where the element of accessibility can go two ways. The book in the hands of an artist like Kiefer becomes a unique form. Kiefer's books are not meant for publication, though there are excellent photographic reproductions in books about his books. I see the creating of an artists' book in two main sections, the first is the physical making of the book, the second is the step towards printing and publishing the book. While the first section applies to every artist working with the book, not everyone would find it necessary to make multiple editions of their art. Tom Phillips began with A Humument as a unique form, but as he continued to work on it he decided to silkscreen some of the pages and present them in a box and then later to print and publish the entire work. His final printed book is not a reproduction but an original itself since the artist made the decision to work towards this end. While it is not possible for the same amount of people to enjoy Kiefer's original books as it is for them to own Phillips' A Humument, one is as important as the other. Both are valid inclusions in the broad category of artists' books. Phillips and Kiefer have worked with the physical qualities of the book to communicate their ideas. The books

themselves stand as rich examples of what an artist can achieve using this form.

CONCLUSION

The artists' book stands at the crossroads of many disciplines. While it emerged as a hybrid of many ideas in art and literature, it has over the years proved itself to be a viable inclusion in the categories of art. Like the books of Kiefer that stand oftentimes as reference books is his larger paintings, the artists' book is also self-sufficient. It lends itself to expressive qualities that can not be found in other media. Whether or not the artists' book is a limited edition of one or is produced for multiple editions, it reacts on the same one to one basis with the reader. The artwork is only realized when the audience, the reader, turns the pages. This participation is an active one, demanding the full attention of the reader, not the distant observation that may form the reaction of audiences of other media. This physical participation between artwork and reader, does not need a playback button, nor does it necessarily need to be placed within the confines of a gallery to function as an artwork. However publicity for this artwork does not feature too much in art magazines and some people, especially the ordinary people on the street, remain ignorant of its existence. In a recent review of a display of artists' books in cabinets outside the British Library at Kings Cross, London, it was hoped 'with luck they may introduce the form to a new public' (13.p34-36). Luck is not what is needed, more publicity in leading art magazines and the infiltration of artists' books into more bookshops and libraries are two main steps in the right direction.

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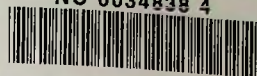
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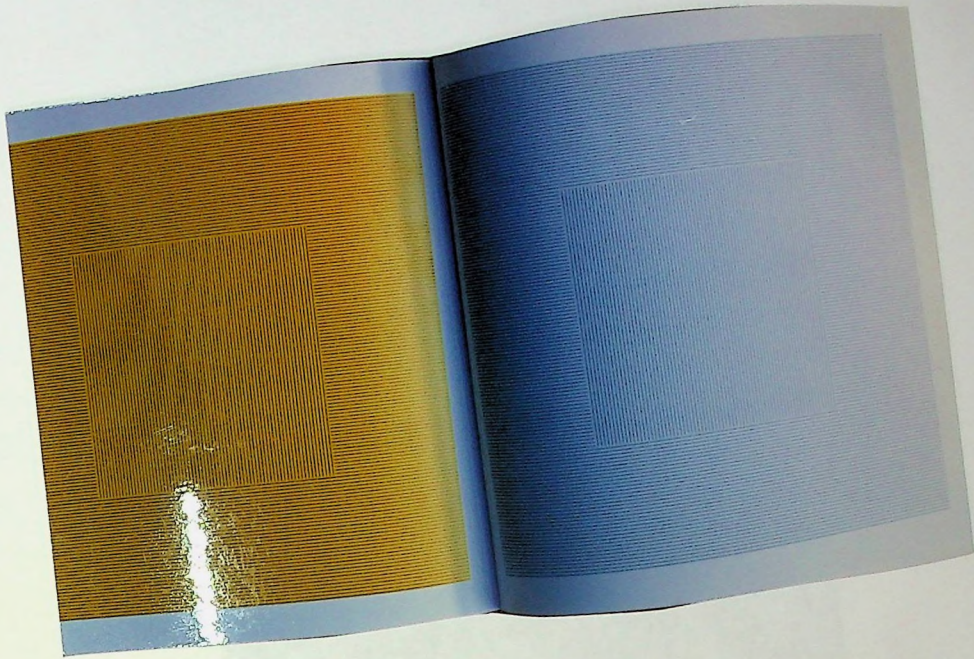


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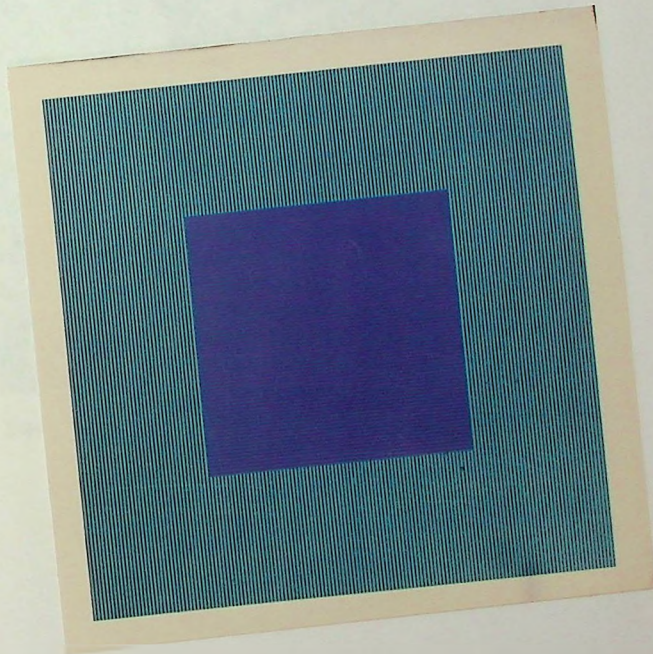
THE BOOK IN CONTEMPORARY ART



ill 1 Andy Warhol *Andy Warhol's Index* [Book] 1967

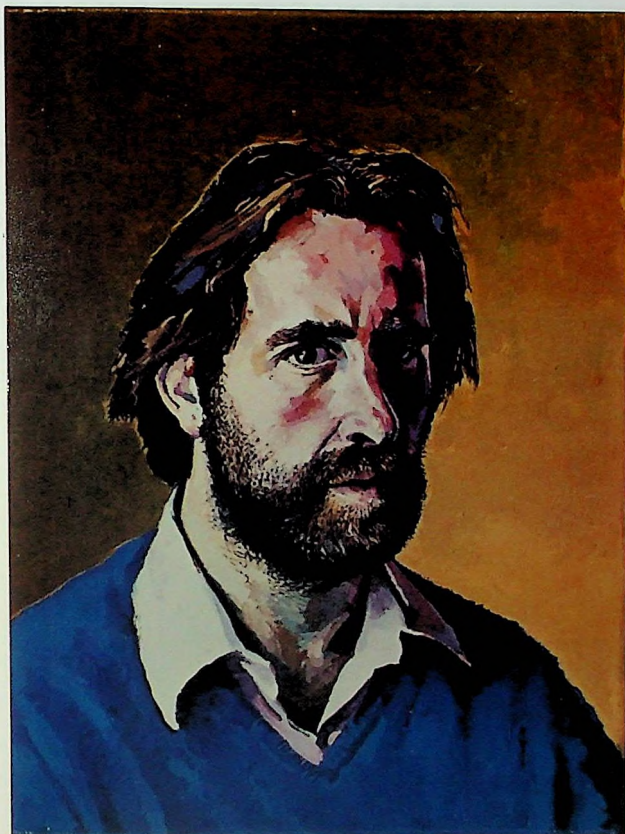


double spread

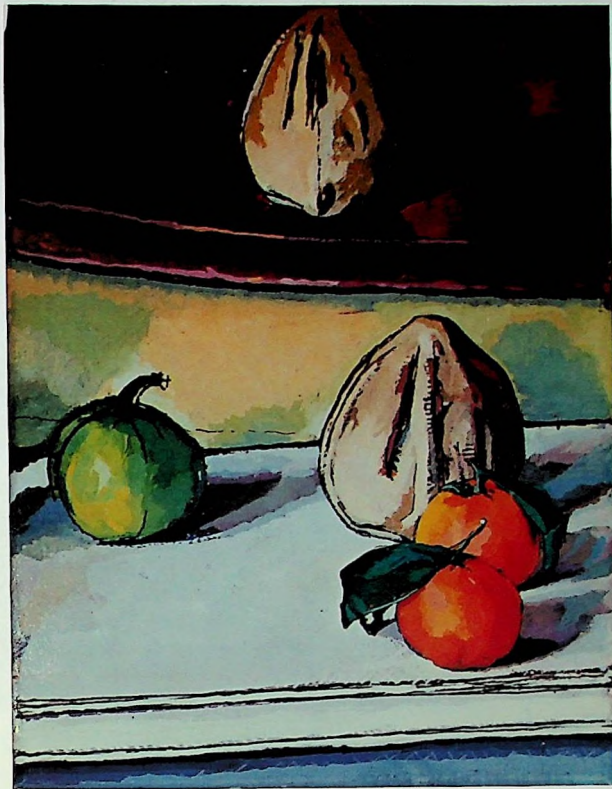


back cover

ill 2 Sol Le Witt Lines in 2 directions and in 5 colors on 5 colors with all their combinations



ill 3 Tom Phillips self portrait Oil on canvas



ill 4(a) Tom Phillips *Still life with Gourd* 1963 Oil on canvas



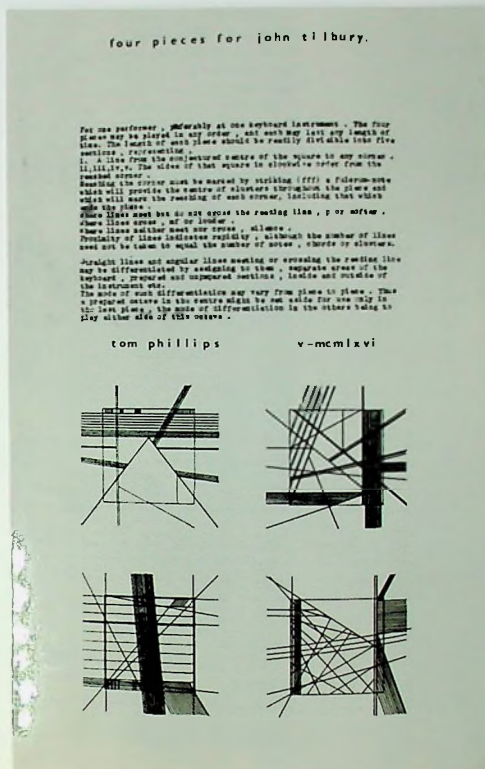
ill 4(b) Tom Phillips *Portrait of David Rudkin* 1962 Oil on canvas



ill 5 Tom Phillips *After Veneziano* 1965 Watercolour on paper

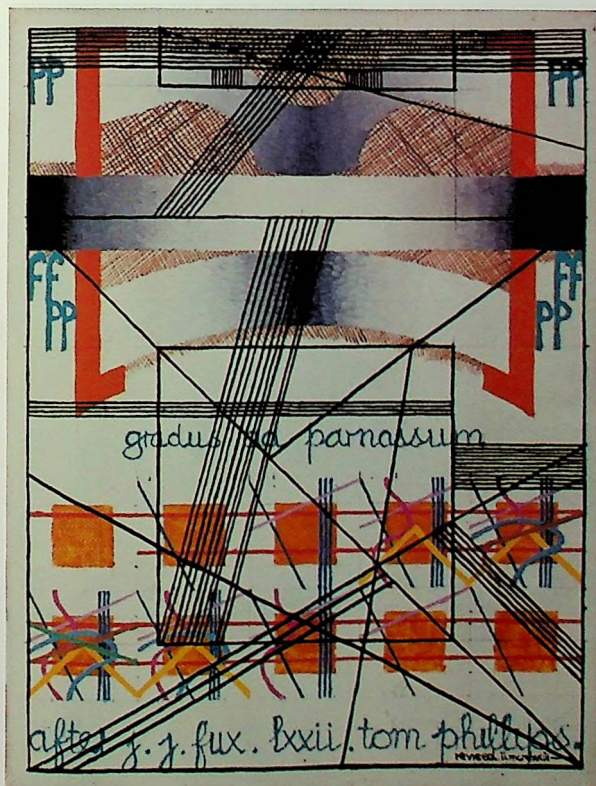


ill 6 Tom Phillips *Pink Again I Think Like No Rose* Painted collage



This was published as a silkscreen print on sheets of varying colour in an edition of 100

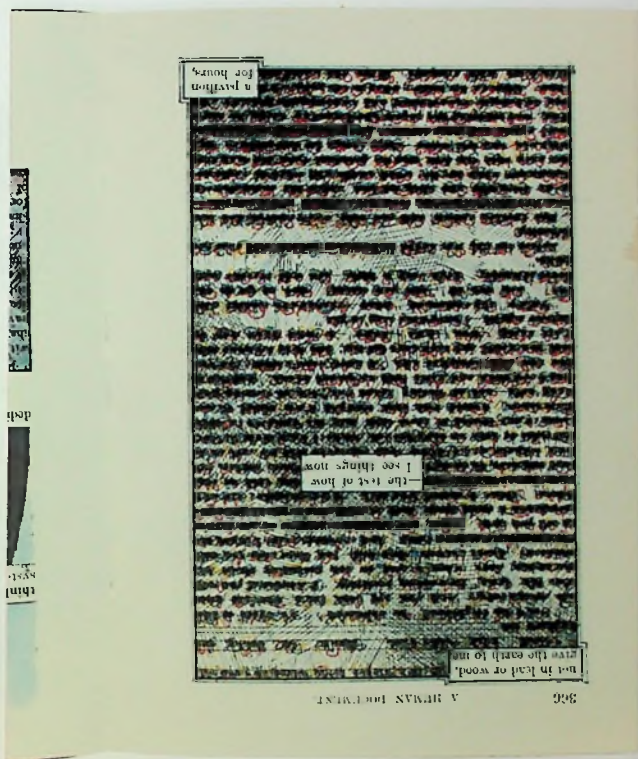
ill7(a) Tom Phillips *Four pieces for John Tilbury* 1966



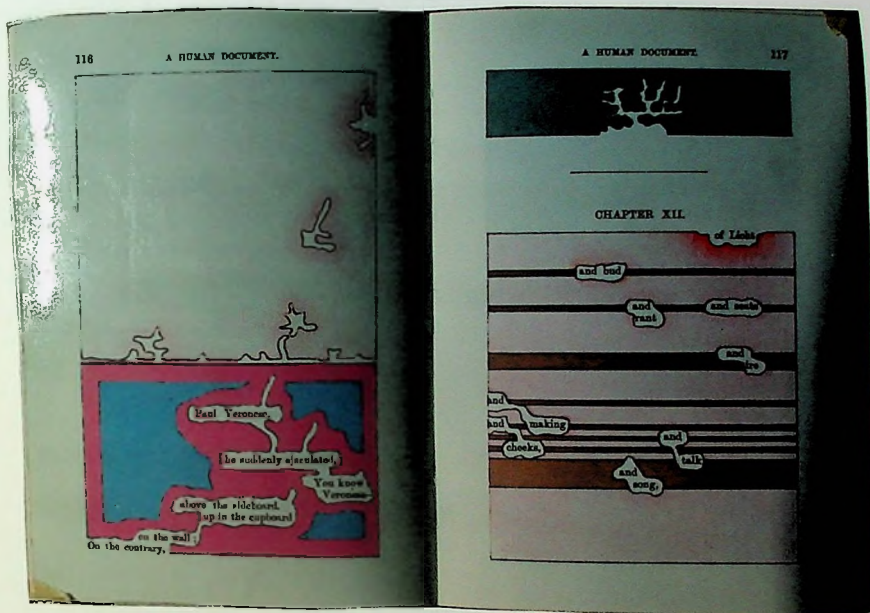
ill 7(b) Tom Phillips *Parnassus: J J Fux* 1966 Oil on canvas



ill 8 Tom Phillips *A Little Art History* 1965 Oil on canvas

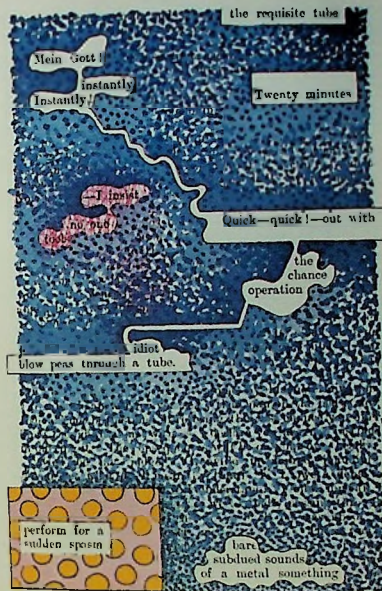


ill 9 Tom Phillips *A Humument* page 366



ill10 Tom Phillips *A Humument* page 116-117

Phillips mimics the layout of the traditional novel, using folio numbers, numbered chapters, a running title and the formal shape of body copy.



ill 11 Tom Phillips *A Humument* page 329

The text is generated in boxes and rivulets that run in different directions down the page. The eye must quickly decide the order of reading and take in all the information before the entire page is understood.

[illegible]

stumped big—
children instantly gave
their hands towards
him and laughed. The
whole Greenville knew
she was bright with a happy
first snowdrop.
“Bobby,” she said,
“look so wren and take
my arm; you are
She closed the
She started, looked
gravely and in silence
ment towards him
the tendril
week, and
his
Hush,
severe
remotely
even
little
softly
very weak
back strong

before separating

"I shall have you again by and by," she said more calmly.



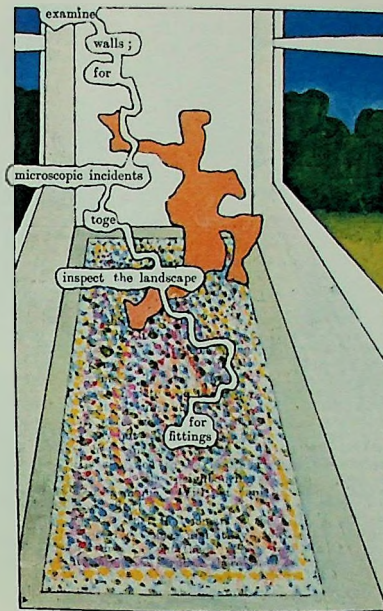
"Where are you going?" she asked.



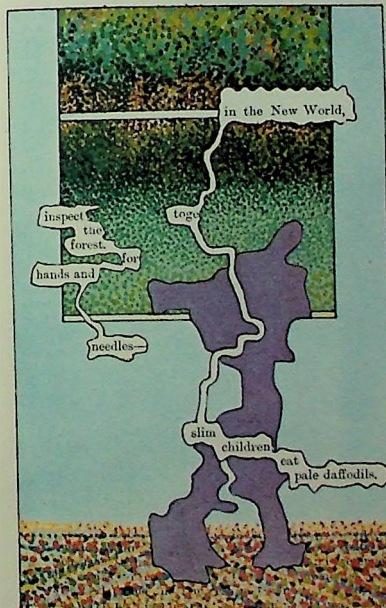
He raised his hat, turned on his heel, and went.



below the surface,

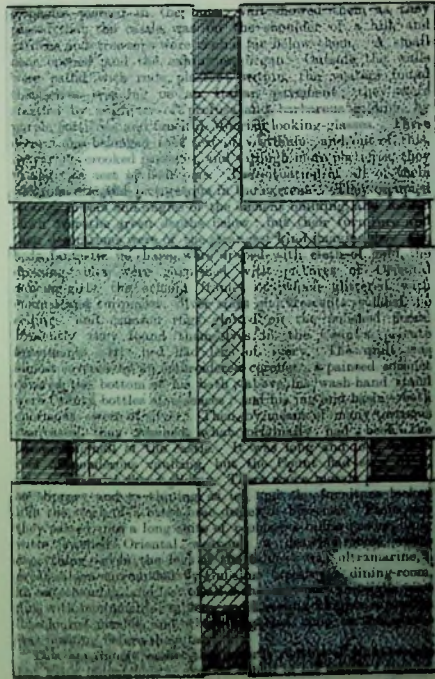


ill 15(a) Tom Phillips *A Humument* page 150



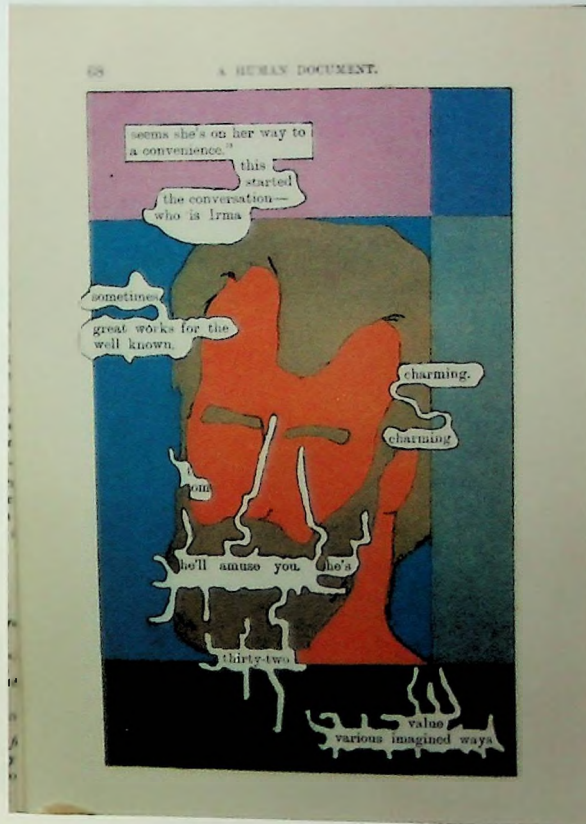
and
On
An
inter,
can
has
iter,
has
and
sub-
and
and
aged
man

ill 15(b) Tom Phillips *A Humument* page 155



ill 16(a) Tom Phillips *A Humument* page 97

A 'poetic' page. Phillips presents the text in bursts of carefully selected words, that flow in a poetic manner.



ill 16(b) Tom Phillips *A Humument* page 68

An 'autobiographical' page. He mentions himself by his first name 'Tom' and the background pictorial image is a crude representation of his face.

was now making him sleepy. He sought his bed again, and slept till Fritz awoke him. He made Fritz tie the woman together, and told him to take them at once to Mrs. Schlimzi, and ask if she had no outer ties, the inner & night's rain. "If she wishes not stronger and closer, and she will send back word to say so, offer the pain the humiliation of finding her door closed." He waited miserably impatient for the return of Fritz. He waited for position and circumstance message came to say that she was in it, and the precise extent of instruments. You have stings. Along with the message they will be needed." for fear this scrawled on it. "How good of you! what lovely sacrifices were as crimson as a rose.

The words operated like a charm on him. A load fell from his heart. He realized that Countess Zwas at his bedside. He as a creature rose instantly. He dressed with a hurried eagerness, and turned his steps to the sacrifices he approached she helplessly again sank, and his hand trembled as he knocked at the door of her sitting-room. hands sharp and rapid.

He entered. She was at sacrifice. for perfect love casts

A tall, grizzled man in the breast of her red dress, fixed, looked full at him. "hand, she now went on to face, there was no confusion, and her arm on his knee, explored violently. Come, Herr Grenville, spring time. The only change in her—about it." these I have taken off my dress, and a red one and smile of an inquiring pathetic earnestness.

"I see," he said, by way of saying something, "that Fritz has brought you my opium-smoker."

"Yes," she murmured, pointing him the darkened sun.

"I know, too, why you sent me to Grenville's bedroom, some particles of Olga, get a little harder.

Grenville declined. "Stop!" he exclaimed.

"Won't you?" she said. "You look tired."

"No!" he said; "I've been I have touched you."

"Yes," she replied; "Will you refuse what I ask many to my love as a woman, on the balcony, and glided off together as it lived and breathed I tell me," she said, in a whisper, as ending, as they were alone together. "you don't hate me, do you? Speak, Bobby, and suffer like this."

Grenville looked at her in silence, had sunk back exhausted.

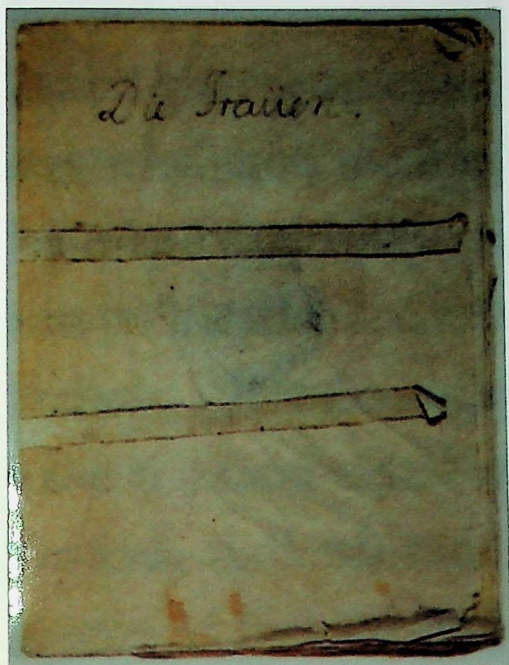
They shook penetrating slowly, "I don't want to come out—she could not move, or ride.

She gave a gasp, as if a knife had wounded her girlhood.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE
COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE, AND
OTHER RECOLLECTIONS.

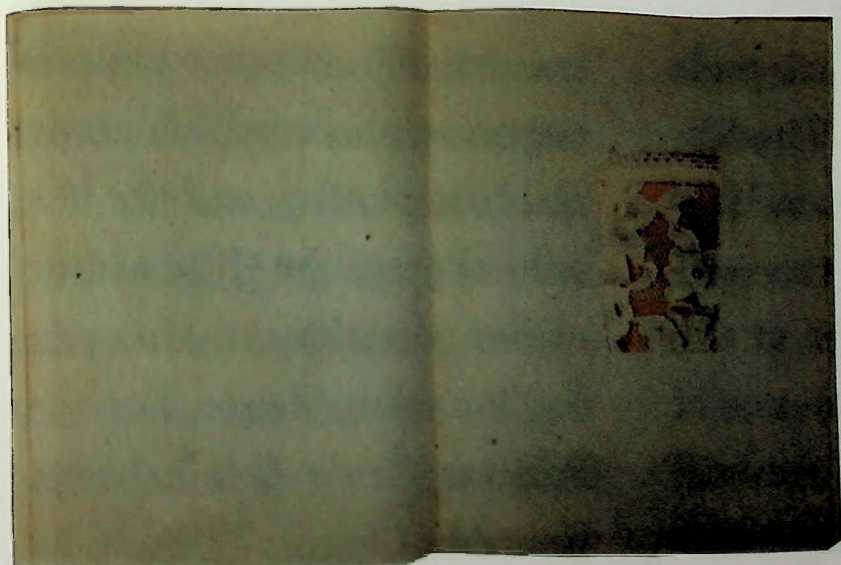
ill 16(c) Tom Phillips A Humument page 174

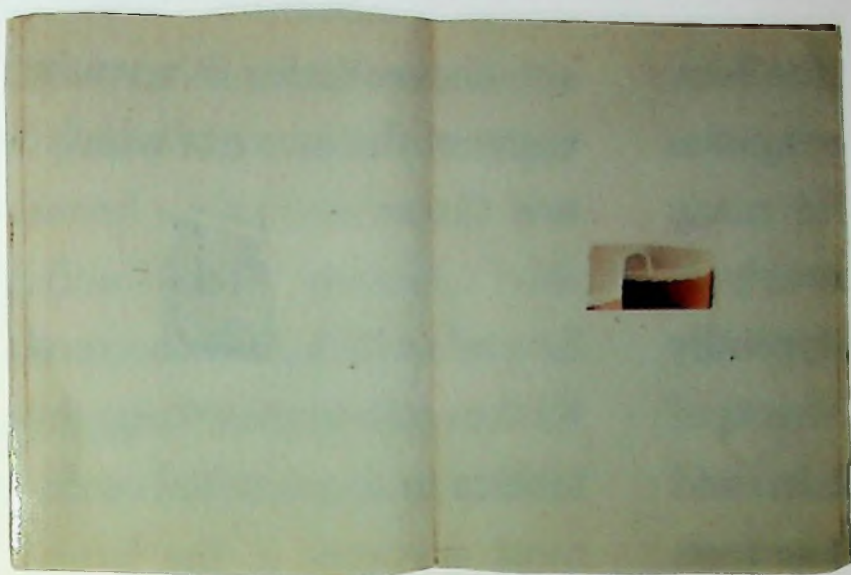
An 'erotic' page. Philips plays with the cut-up words and pastes them into a scenario between one of the main characters 'Grenville' and a 'Fritz' and a 'Countess Zwas'. The result is humorous in that he uses Mallock's words to create a story that Mallock, the original author, a Victorian gentleman, would never have approved of.



front cover

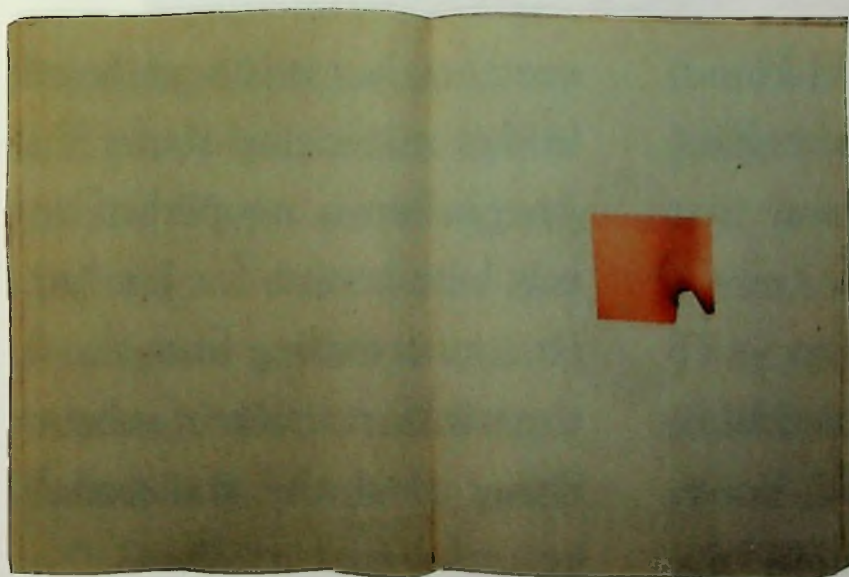
page 110-111

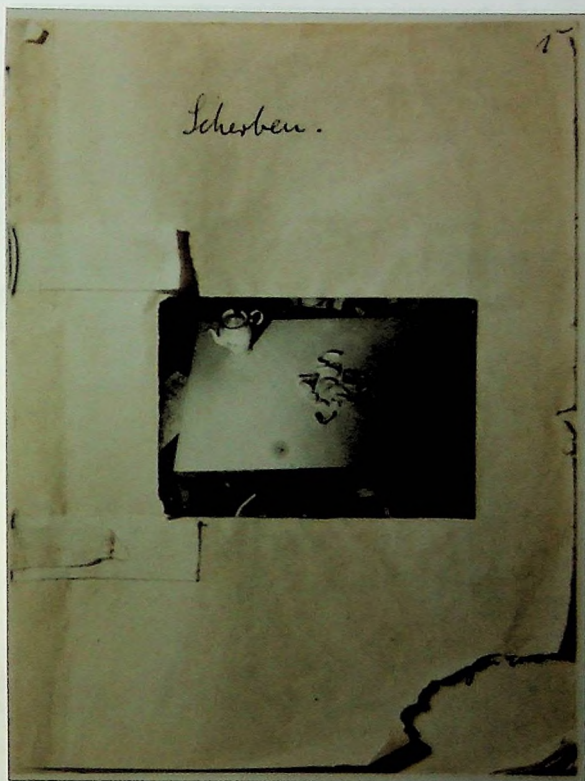




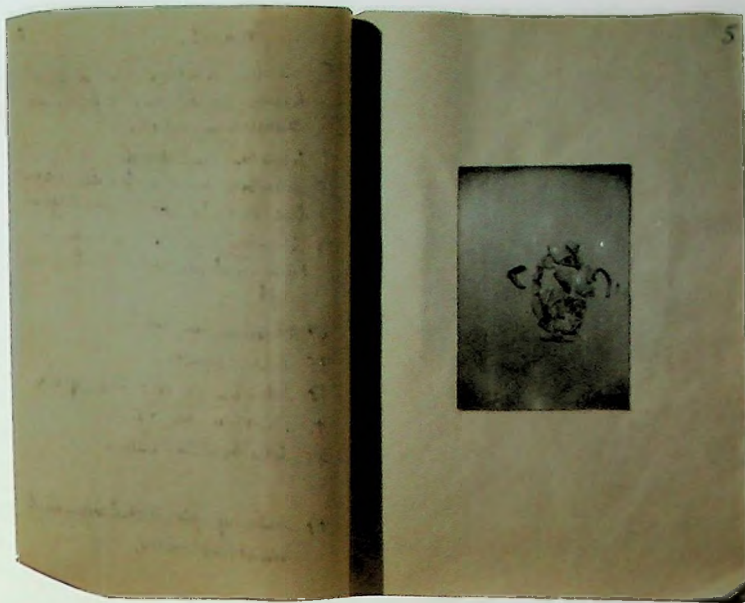
page 114-115

page 116-117



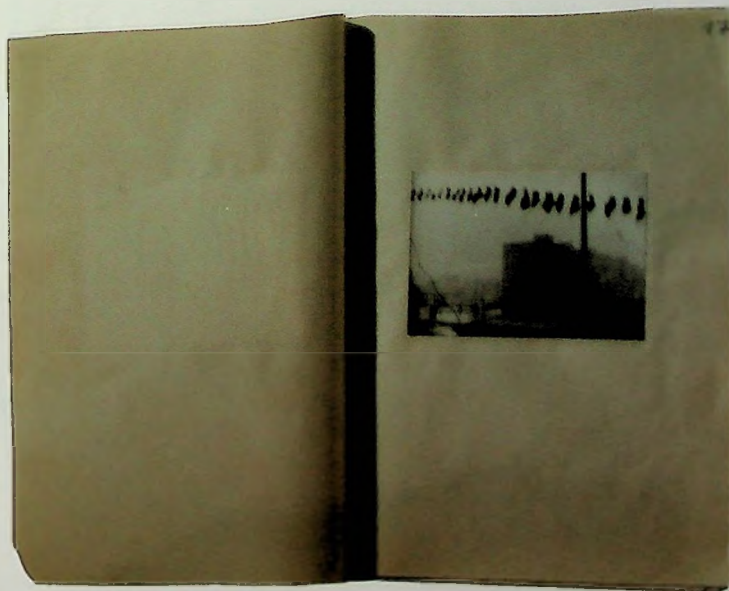


ill 18 Anselm Kiefer *Scherben* 1969 front cover



page 5 Kiefer recreates the teapot from his sherds, but as his photograph shows, the reconstruction is a poor substitute for the real thing.

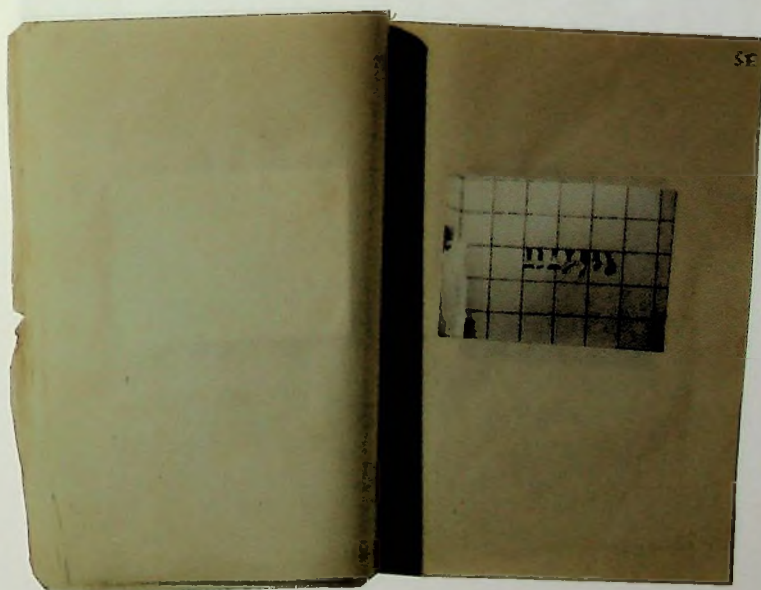
page 17 Kiefer hangs his sherds out to dry, or maybe he is airing his views.





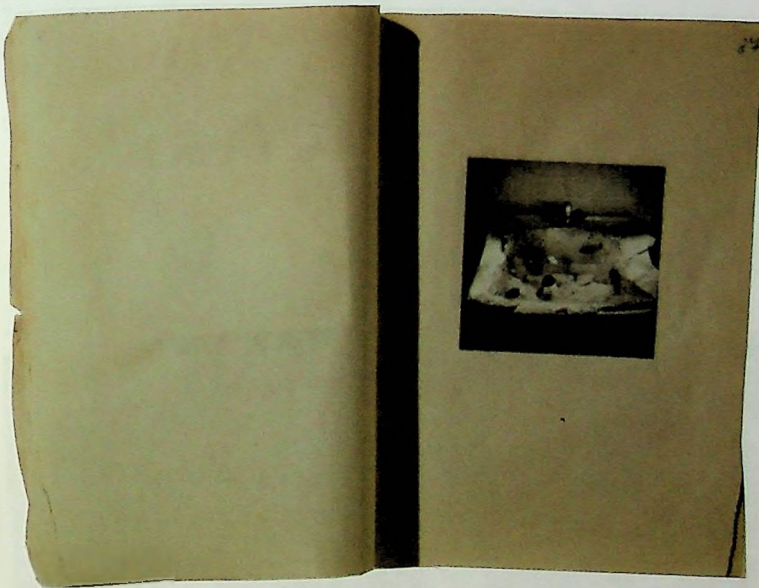
page 27

page 35

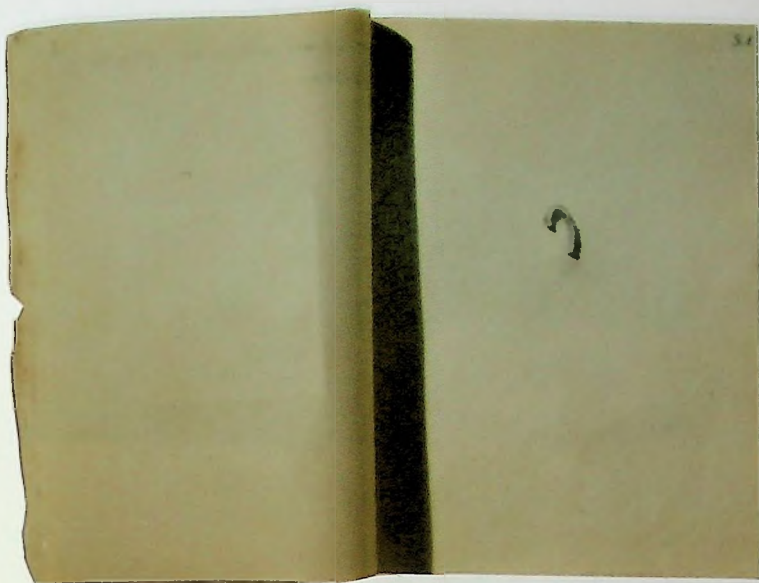


ill 20 Anselm Kiefer *Scherben* 1969

In pages 27, 35, and 37, Kiefer sets up his props to photograph them and use the photographs as images. Here Kiefer places his porcelain sherds in various positions against and in bathroom fixtures, themselves whole porcelain objects.

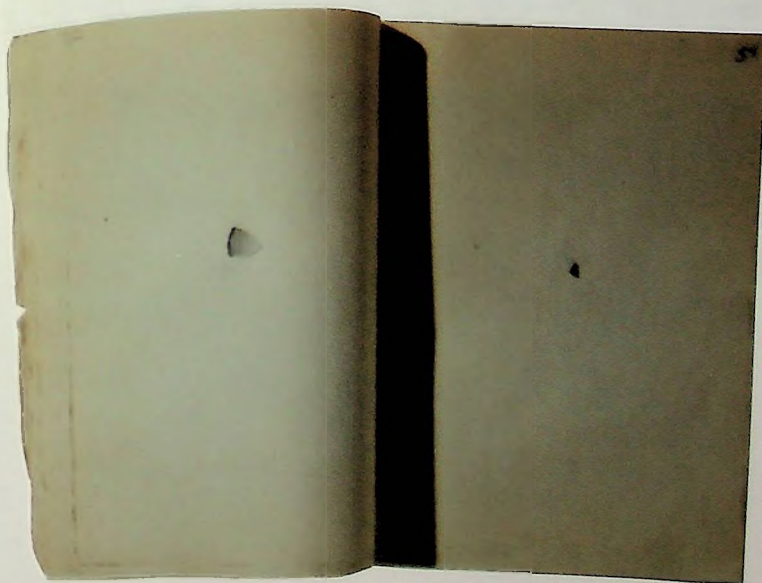


page 37



page 54

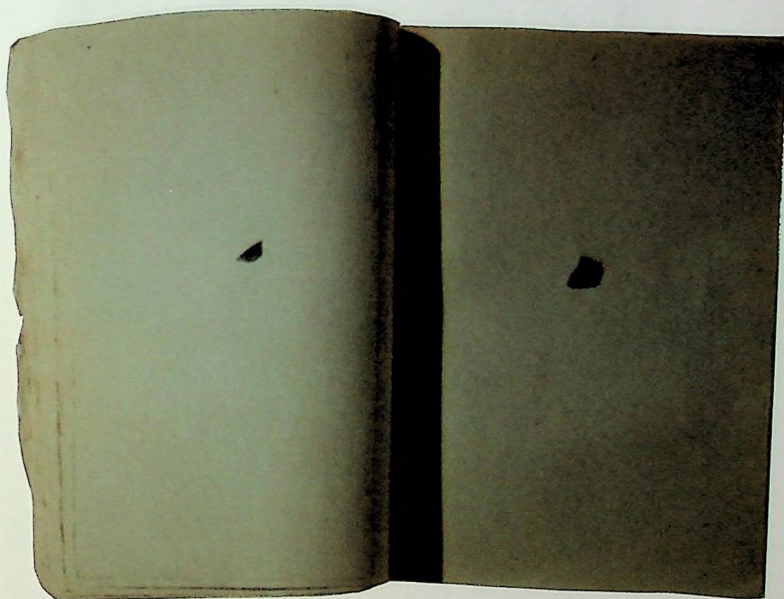
page 59



ill 21 Anselm Kiefer *Scherben* 1969

ill 21 contd overleaf

In pages 54, 59, and 67 Kiefer glues some of his porcelain sherds to the pages mimicing the notebooks of archaeologists. The small pieces of a teapot are presented as delicate precious segments in the centre of a page.



page 67



ill 22 Anselm Kiefer *Die Geburt der Sonne* 1987 front cover

The front cover is thickly covered in red clay that is now hardened and cracked. The title is barely discernible and lies written over the clay. A single piece of porcelain is embedded in the cover and connects to a piece of copper wire.



ill 23 Anselm Kiefer *Die Geburt der Sonne* 1987 double spread 8

Here most of the underlying photograph is seen and is 'wired-up' to the twelfth piece of porcelain.



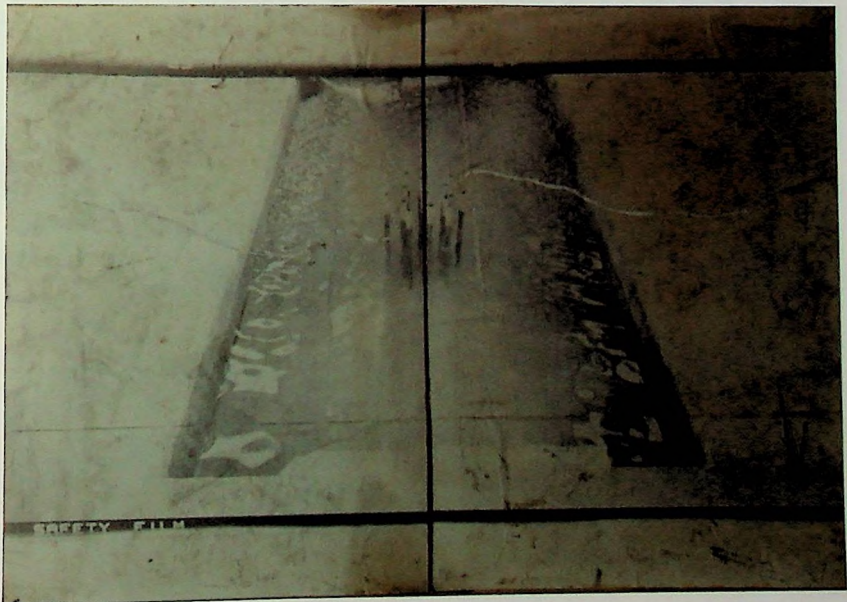
ill 24 Anselm Kiefer *Die Geburt der Sonne* 1987 double spread 1

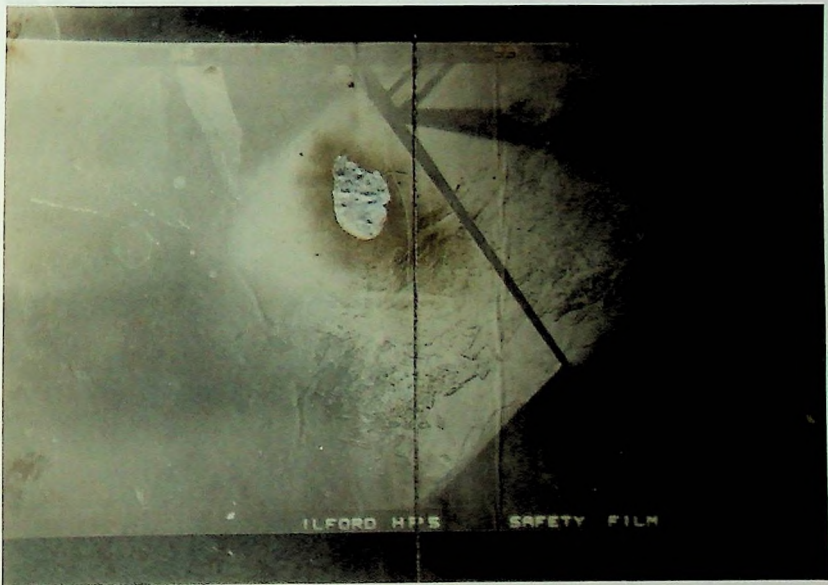
To this double spread Kiefer has added the inscription: *Isis sucht die Teile des Osiris* (Isis searches for the body of Osiris). Above the inscription Kiefer's airplane structure zooms across the page.



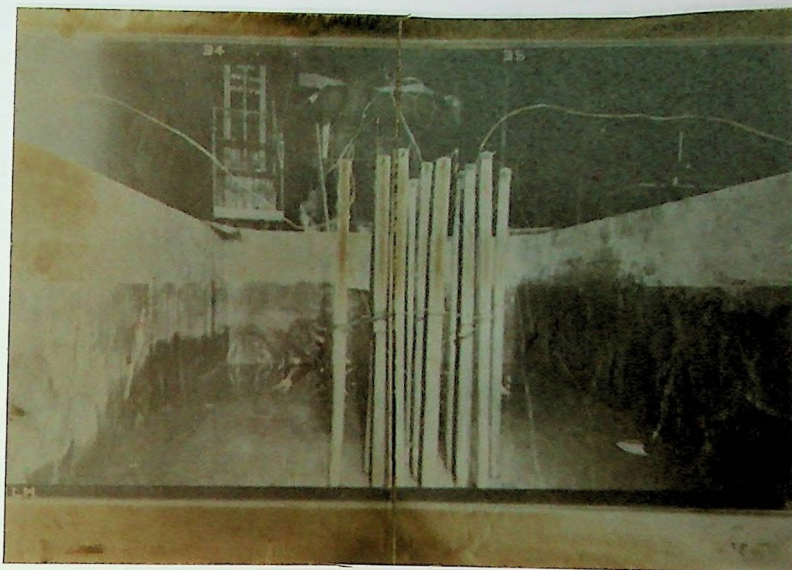
double spread 12

double spread 14





ill 26 Anselm Kiefer *Die Geburt der Sonne* 1987 double spread 18



double spread 10

double spread 11



ill 27 Anselm Kiefer *Die Geburt der Sonne* 1987

This is another example of Kiefer's studio props. The sharply angled photographs show us the empty tank which is also his symbolic nuclear reactor. Here begins the second half of the book where the wash of clay and porcelain fragments disappear and the photographic images take over.