

HALL

ART FOUNDATION

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Inside Art

Carol Vogel

Mass MoCA Is Big Enough for Them

The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, or Mass MoCA as it's more popularly called, has something urban museums and art galleries do not: space and plenty of it.

On a 13-acre campus in the tiny Berkshires town of North Adams, the museum can show monumental artworks, which has been an advantage for this 15-year-old arts complex. Seven years ago, it signed a 25-year-loan agreement with the Yale University Art Gallery to hold a major exhibition of Sol Le Witt's wall drawings, which has been on view there since November 2008.

Now the Hall Art Foundation, established by the Connecticut collectors Andrew C. Hall and his wife, Christine, has agreed to lend Mass MoCA an exhibition of sculpture and paintings by the German artist Anselm Kiefer. The works will be shown in a newly renovated 10,000-square-foot building that was once a water filtering tank. Mr. Hall said the foundation is paying \$1 million to \$2 million to transform the water tank into an art gallery. The show opens on Sept. 27 and will be on view there for at least the next 15 years, but probably longer.

"Having a few milestone moments like this and like the LeWitt is great for our audiences," said Joseph Thompson, Mass MoCA's director.

The centerpiece of Mr. Kiefer's show is "Étroits Sont les Vaisseaux" ("Narrow Are the Vessels") from 2002. This six-ton, 82-foot-long undulating, concrete sculpture adorned the front lawn of the couple's 19th-century Greek Revival house in Southport, Conn., until the area's his-

toric commission sued, claiming that the sculpture was a structure and therefore required a certificate of appropriateness. The Halls' lawyers argued that the artwork was not attached to the ground and was the legal equivalent of a birdbath or swing set.

The commission won the court battle to have the piece removed. Rather than continuing to fight the decision, the Halls sent the sculpture to Mass MoCA, where it was first shown for about 18 months starting in 2007.

That initial exhibition was particularly successful. "It got us thinking about renovating a space, making a more or less permanent exhibition with that and other works," Mr. Hall said in a telephone interview. (The Halls have amassed an outstanding collection of Kiefers.)

Now, in its second appearance at Mass MoCA, "Narrow Are the Vessels" will be shown alongside other Kiefer works from the Halls' collection, including "The Woman of the Revolution," a 1992 installation made up of about 20 beds covered with sheets of lead accompanied by photographs and wall texts, and "Velimir Chlebnikov," a steel pavilion from 2004 containing 30 paintings that deal with nautical warfare inspired by that Russian Futurist poet and theorist.

Also on view will be a new, large-format commission that is being created by Mr. Kiefer for the space.

"Anselm has spent time in North Adams," Mr. Hall said. "He actually thought of moving his studio there. He's quite taken with old warehouse buildings."