

DEUTSCHER PAVILLON 2011 CHRISTOPH SCHLINGENSIEF
D U T C E V I O 011 CHR STOP SCH IN ENSIE
D Christoph Schlingensief
DE Deutscher Pavillon
DE Biennale di Venezia 2011 **ILL N 2011 CHR ST PH SCHLI G NSIEF**
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**The team of the German Pavilion welcomes you at the
54rd International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia 2011**

Our press kit comprises the following information:

- Factsheet about the exhibition at German Pavilion
- Press information: Christoph Schlingensief at the German Pavilion
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- Biography of Susanne Gaensheimer
- The German Pavilion from 1948 to 2011
- Press information of the Commissioner
Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt)
- Press information of the Cooperating Partner
Institute of Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa)
- Press information of the Partner Goethe-Institut
- Press information of the Partner AXA Art Insurance

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The German Pavilion

54rd International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia 2011

Duration: 4 June – 27 November 2011

Press preview: 1 – 3 June 2011

Press conference

German Pavilion: 1 June 2011, 11 am, German Pavilion,
Giardini della Biennale

Opening of the

German Pavilion: 1 June 2011, 2.30 pm, German Pavilion,
Giardini della Biennale

Official opening

of the Biennale di Venezia: 4 June 2011, 10 am, Giardini della Biennale

Director of the Biennale: Bice Curiger

Curator of the

German Pavilion: Susanne Gaensheimer, Director of MMK Museum für
Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main

Artist at the

German Pavilion: Christoph Schlingensief

Exhibition title: Christoph Schlingensief

Publication: Christoph Schlingensief

Susanne Gaensheimer (ed.)

The book presents texts by over thirty authors, including Diedrich
Diederichsen, Charlotte Roche, Jonathan Meese, Alexander

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Kluge, Carl Hegemann, Boris Groys, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Matthias Lilienthal, Thomas Demand, among others.

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Press Information

Christoph Schlingensief

Christoph Schlingensief at the German Pavilion 2011

Susanne Gaensheimer, Director of the MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt and Curator of the German Pavilion at the 54th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale Venezia presents the pavilion.

Elke aus dem Moore, Head of the Department of the Arts Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa) and Aino Laberenz, Christoph Schlingensief's wife and longtime collaborator, complete the panel and are also available for your questions.

The German Pavilion presents at the 54th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia 2011, an exhibition with works by Christoph Schlingensief.

After Christoph Schlingensief's death in late Summer of 2010, the curator Susanne Gaensheimer and Aino Laberenz, Christoph Schlingensief's wife and longtime collaborator, decided not to exhibit his latest project, which existed in developmental, sketch-like form, but rather, to show existing works in the Pavilion. In a constructive collaboration with a circle of close participants and confidants of Christoph Schlingensief including Carl Hegemann, Thomas Goerge, Voxi Bärenklau, Heta Multanen, and Frieder Schlaich, and drawing on extensive conversations with Chris Dercon, Alexander Kluge, Matthias Lilienthal, and Francis Kéré; Gaensheimer and Laberenz have developed a concept for the German Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale. The selected works will provide a representative insight into his complex oeuvre and in particular cover the areas of theater, film, video, and Africa.

In the main hall of the German Pavilion, the stage of the Fluxus oratorio *A Church of Fear vs. the Alien Within* has been installed, which Schlingensief conceived for the 2008 Ruhrtriennale. *A Church of Fear vs. the Alien Within* is perhaps Christoph Schlingensief's most personal work, where he portrays his illness openly and unsparingly, using his own painful experience to examine the existential circle of life, suffering, and death. The play's stage with its many film and video projections, and a multitude of spatial and pictorial elements, has the character of an encompassing spatial installation.

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In the right wing of the pavilion's two side wings, a cinema will present a program of six selected films from different moments in Schlingensief's career are played on a large screen: *Menu Total* (1985–86), *Egomania* (1986), the Germany trilogy of *100 Jahre Adolph Hitler* (1988), *Das deutsche Kettensägenmassaker* [*The German Chainsaw Massacre*, 1990], and *Terror 2000* (1991–92), as well as his penultimate film, *United Trash* (1995–96). Presented on a structured schedule, these films exemplify central features of Schlingensief's filmic oeuvre. The theater is accessible at all times during the Biennale's opening hours and accomplishes two tasks at once, offering an international audience the opportunity to see a significant selection from Schlingensief's films—some of which have been subtitled for the first time—while introducing the artist's filmic visual language into the canon of visual culture.

The pavilion's left wing is dedicated to Schlingensief's *Operndorf Afrika*, his opera village in Africa. Located near Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, it includes a school which houses film and music classrooms, a café, a hospital, and a central theater building with a festival hall. The opera village is under the leadership of Aino Laberenz and planned with architect Francis Kéré. Alongside photographs and documentation of the already realized parts of the African project — and in conjunction with selected scenes from *Via Intolleranza II*, Schlingensief's last play in which he collaborated with actors from Burkina Faso — this portion of the pavilion will feature a large-scale panoramic projection of footage of the natural scenery surrounding the construction site of the opera village, filmed by an African filmmaker Schlingensief himself had commissioned for use in the German Pavilion.

The publication of the German Pavilion in 2011 *Christoph Schlingensief* published by Sternberg Press, collects more than 30 contributions by authors such as Diedrich Diederichsen, Charlotte Roche, Jonathan Meese, Alexander Kluge, Carl Hegemann, Boris Groys, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Matthias Lilienthal, Thomas Demand and many others. ISBN 978-1-934105-42-9, about 368 pages, soft cover, € (D) about 29.00

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We would also like to bring to your attention a discussion about Schlingensief's African Opera Village, presented by the Goethe Institute, to be held in front of the side wing of the German Pavilion on June 2, 2011, at 4 PM (tbc). Aino Laberenz, Susanne Gaensheimer, Francis Kéré, Chris Dercon and Simon Njami are all expected to take part in this discussion.

Moreover, we are extremely pleased to be able to announce that the Museum Folkwang in Essen has begun to plan a retrospective exhibition of Schlingensief's work and life, to take place as part of the 2012–2014 Ruhrtriennale (Artistic Director Heiner Goebbels).

The exhibition for the German Pavilion for the 54th Venice Biennale is sponsored by the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany*, and it was made possible with the partnership of the *Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa)*. The pavilion is sponsored by the Goethe Institute, Axa Art Insurance, by Friends of the Museum Folkwang of Essen and generous lenders and private supporters. Deutsche Welle DW-TV is our media-partner.

Curator: Susanne Gaensheimer

Artistic consulting: Aino Laberenz

Dramaturgy: Carl Hegemann

Stage design: Thomas Goerge

Light Designer: Voxi Bärenklau

Film editing and video: Heta Multanen

Film programme: Filmgalerie 451 / Frieder Schlaich,
Constantin Hartenstein

Press and Communication: Bureau Mueller /

Markus Müller, Ulrike Bretschneider, James Thomas

Project Manager: Christine Kaiser

Editorial Publication: Eva Huttenlauch

Büro Schlingensief: Meike Fischer

Technical Realisation: Ruhrtriennale / Joachim Janner, Harald Frings

Architectural support: Clemens Kusch,

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 Deutschland in collaboration with the Institute of Foreign
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Curator's Foreword Susanne Gaensheimer

"I have worked in many fields: as a film, stage, and opera director, a producer, a solo entertainer, a human being, and as a sick human being and a Christian, too, and as a politician and a performer, and I've also always been interested in artists who practiced their art almost compulsively, and didn't necessarily see it as different from the compulsion of having or wanting to live. Some form of schizophrenia has always been typical of my work and my life. If I were to focus on one thing only, I'd get bored; my head would never hit its stride. Between music and the image, between people and language, between the healthy and the sick, between the funny and the sad, I always need to have the chance to assert the opposite as well. An unambiguous world is not something I believe in. The assignment to use the German Pavilion, a suspicious representational building, for purposes not of representation but of art strikes me as exactly right: a heavy burden, but art makes light what is otherwise heavy. Yet perhaps that's exactly what's good about it. I, in any case, love rifts and antagonisms, and over the next few months I will find out which antagonisms are the most productive for Venice, for the German Pavilion, and for Burkina Faso." *Christoph Schlingensief*

Wellness Center Africa

Sometime last spring, Christoph Schlingensief began to think about an idea for the German Pavilion that he would work on until his death on August 21, 2010. This idea gradually took definite shape as he played through the possibilities it opened up and the associations it called up in his mind; but of course he had not fleshed it out in all formal detail by last summer. The way he worked, Christoph Schlingensief would probably have kept reconsidering and condensing this original idea right until June 1, 2011, the day the German Pavilion was to open, responding with his outstanding capacity of observation and celerity to what would happen in his immediate as well as extended social and political environment. What would ultimately actually have taken place at the German Pavilion? There is no way for us to know, and so all we can do today is describe the shape this idea had taken when, after his long struggle with cancer, Christoph Schlingensief unexpectedly died while working on it.

It is surely a great loss to the art world that it will not experience Christoph Schlingensief's contribution in the German Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale. For what he wanted to do would have challenged the perceptual habits of the pavilion's visitors and confronted them with the need to rethink this highly ideologically charged site, a site that has been discussed ad

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nauseam and is fraught with significance even today. Schlingensief's dissecting and yet generous style, his uncompromisingly critical and yet humorous attitude, his tendency to overburden objects and overwhelm spectators, his straightforwardness, and most importantly his profound dedication to the social would have been able to undermine the monumentality of this building and to allow us to experience it in a new way.

It became clear in one of our first conversations that Christoph Schlingensief was not interested in addressing the pavilion as such; nor did he see it as a stage on which to produce himself as an artist. He saw it more than anything as the site of a process in which the visitor was to participate. He then developed his idea for the German Pavilion by elaborating fundamental themes that had run through his projects of the past several years, with carefully placed emphases on several points. In addition to motifs that had already been central to his trilogy on illness—*Der Zwischenstand der Dinge* [The Intermediate State of Affairs], *Eine Kirche der Angst vor dem Fremden in mir* [A Church of Fear vs. the Alien Within], and *Mea Culpa*—the plans for the pavilion also incorporated his longstanding engagement with nationalism, racism, and Eurocentrism, as well as the very personal experiences and insights he had gained from his great project for the future, the opera village he conceived for the African nation of Burkina Faso.

Christoph Schlingensief wanted to transform the German Pavilion into a grand wellness center, to be called "African Wellness Center" or "Wellness Center Africa" or, later on, the "German Center for Wellness and Prevention." The pavilion was to be equipped with functional bath and sanatorium facilities, with a swimming pool, a sauna, and a hamam; services to be offered included cryotherapy and massages and, as in *Mea Culpa*, Ayurveda—though an "African Ayurveda." A Burkinabè company was to erect an architectonic structure made of mud brick, and plants and trees would grow everywhere. Visitors would also have the possibility to have preventive CT scans taken; an obscure Swiss company called Ingenia would have set up an information booth, offering a saliva test to determine the visitors' genetic ancestry. A central element of the pavilion's design, balancing between reality and a theatrical production, would have been a large projection of a panorama, a sort of zoetrope or diorama, featuring footage of the natural scenery surrounding the construction site of the opera village. To be recorded over the course of a year, the pictures were to render the way the landscape changes with the seasons and the time of day in the manner of a real-time projection. This panorama would have enclosed the wellness center so that the visitors would have found themselves amid a permanently changing African landscape—a landscape that, to Schlingensief himself, always exuded calm and healing. Schlingensief's plan was that with every twenty-fourth frame in the

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film the image would be replaced with a different one: images of a starving African child, a child soldier, or another situation that illustrates the poverty and catastrophic situation in the country, but also images showing everyday life in Africa as a well-functioning routine, something our media usually fail to represent. These intercalations would have been brief irruptions of the real, almost passing beneath conscious perception, into an ostensibly authentic but in fact highly romanticized situation. He also wanted to integrate a great variety of other visual media into the wellness center: pictures Burkinabè children were to take using disposable cameras, video material to be shot by African students, and other films produced in the opera village. He was going to mix them with images of torture and violence from his own films such as *100 Jahre Adolf Hitler—Die letzte Stunde im Führerbunker* [100 Years of Adolph Hitler—The Last Hour in the Fuhrerbunker], *Terror 2000*, and *Die 120 Tage von Bottrop* [The 120 Days of Bottrop] in order to condense the material into a “medical-sociological torture chamber.” Dependent on technological feasibility, there was also going to be a sort of closed-circuit installation in which visitors would have seen themselves with black skin. The swimming pool, too, would contain tinted water so that visitors would have turned black in it, “purging” themselves of their whiteness.

These plans clearly illustrate how the idea of wellness and relaxation as well as the ostentatiously idealizing image of “Africa” would have immediately turned into their pointed exaggeration and caricature. Displaying the hedonism of Western societies implicit in their exoticizing notions of Africa, the “black continent,” would have made for trenchant commentary, particularly when set in the context of the Venice Biennale, a destination for wealthy tourism. The emphasis on “wellness,” a phenomenon of modern civilization, and its exaggeration in the principle of “preventative medicine” would likewise have taken up a theme that had strongly occupied Schlingensief ever since he became ill. The endeavor to use preventive measures and all forms of insurance to preclude anything unforeseen and to mobilize our technological and financial means to protect ourselves against any discomfort—an endeavor that is fundamental in Western societies and inevitably doomed to fail—always struck Schlingensief as a reflection of repressed insecurity and helplessness. “Why are we constantly trying to help the African continent even though we cannot help ourselves?” was a question he had repeatedly asked in other contexts, and it became a leitmotif of sorts in his concept for the German Pavilion, whose initial levity, not unlike that of his last play *Via Intolleranza II*, would have turned rapidly into a caustic, unrestrained, and merciless critique of society and mankind.

The Biennale’s exhibition format, with its national pavilions, had immediately brought the

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association of the idea of the world's fair to Schlingensief's mind, which he wanted to address in the pavilion's surroundings. In an allusion to Hagenbeck's ethnological zoos and the colonial exhibitions of the nineteenth century, as well as the Brussels World's Fair, which, as late as 1958, had featured an ethnological exposition (called *village indigène*) literally exhibiting Congo and Ruanda-Urundi people in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Belgian state's takeover of power in the Congo, Schlingensief wanted to erect cage-like structures outside the German Pavilion in which he would have presented Africans as artists, actors, computer technicians, and all sorts of other "curiosities." One of these cages would have housed an African painter creating pictures of "Negros" in the manner of Gerhard Richter—a reference to the sale at Sotheby's in early summer 2010 of a painting by Gerhard Richter entitled *Neger*, which Schlingensief had spontaneously brought up during one of his last performances in *Via Intolleranza II*. The German Pavilion's façade was to be transformed into a funfair-style "Totally Wacky Tavern," with a gigantic Negro mask with a moving oversized bottom lip laughing at the crowd from the gable.

"The space is testing you, rather than you testing the space"—Schlingensief's permanent quest for a shift of perspective was also behind the plan to build a ramp that would let visitors look into the pavilion from above. The panorama shot of an African landscape that was to enclose the wellness center would likewise have generated such a shift: Africa would observe the observer. But Schlingensief conceived the entire space of the pavilion as a sort of projection screen, a camera. So it is not at all improbable that he would have designed the pavilion's interior, like all of his theatrical productions in recent years, as a rotating stage, an Animatograph whose rotating movement and constantly shifting superimposition of spaces and projections would have undone not only the one-dimensional position of the spectator but also a linear conception of space and time.

»Plan B«

Even before Christoph Schlingensief's death became foreseeable, the media and the public began to raise the question concerning a "Plan B." An English locution that has become popular in Germany, designating the attempt to prepare for all eventualities; using it in direct reference to the death of a person is not entirely in good taste, and it is hardly surprising that Schlingensief would respond with the plan to call the website representing the German Pavilion "Plan B." He thus used his own slow death once more to satirize a fundamental attitude that is so typical of German society today, one Schlingensief had repeatedly taken aim

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at: the attempt to compensate for human insufficiency by asserting absolute control and repressing the possibility of failure.

I had no “Plan B” for the event of his death, since my resolution to invite Christoph Schlingensief to design the German Pavilion was based on my conviction of his significance as an artist and my view that he was the right artist for this site at this moment in time. The more I learned about his work, the more my convictions grew. My decision developed from the idea that for the German Pavilion I should approach an artist of my own generation who looked back on a solid career—in Christoph Schlingensief’s case, almost thirty years—whose art had not merely responded to the artistic, social, and political issues in a reunified Germany but had even influenced public discourse. Christoph Schlingensief was one of the Germany’s most significant artists, filmmakers, theater directors, and performers, one who always articulated and asserted his position, uncompromising towards the public and himself, and with all the clearness and straightforwardness necessary to comment effectively on the situation. Schlingensief’s oeuvre is complex, and it is in the nature of his work that it was subject to permanent self-interrogation and transformation. My decision was ultimately determined also by his opera village project in Burkina Faso, which demonstrated that Schlingensief, rather than relating the questions he raised only to Germany, placed them in a global context. In this visionary social as well as artistic undertaking—the project to build a festival hall complete with a school, housing facilities, and a hospital in Africa in close collaboration with local partners—and in also reflecting the failure of his humanitarian efforts in *Via Intolleranza II*, he transposed his analysis of “Germanness” into a transnational dimension.

Now, after his death, it seems all the more important to me to make Christoph Schlingensief’s oeuvre, which is well known in Germany, accessible to an international audience. Yet realizing a project conceived by Christoph Schlingensief without him is impossible. Though it would have been appealing to implement his plans, it was also clear that too many questions had been left unanswered, and no one was competent to make the necessary subsequent artistic decisions. Christoph Schlingensief’s death changed the situation fundamentally. What had originally been planned as an artistic project *by* Schlingensief could now only become an exhibition *about* him. In constructive collaboration with Aino Laberenz, Christoph Schlingensief’s wife and longtime collaborator, as well as a circle of close collaborators and confidants such as Carl Hegemann, Thomas Goerge, Voxi Bärenklau, Heta Multanen, and Frieder Schlaich, and drawing on extensive conversations with Chris Dercon, Alexander Kluge, Matthias Lilienthal, and Francis Kéré, we have developed a concept for the German Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale that focuses entirely on existing works—theatrical

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productions and films by Schlingensief—and offers insights into central aspects of his multifaceted oeuvre. Three themes are central to the concept: Christoph Schlingensief's engagement with his own illness and biography, the wide field of cinema and film, and his initiative to found an opera village in Africa.

In the main hall of the German Pavilion we have installed the stage of the Fluxus oratorio *A Church of Fear vs. the Alien Within*, which Schlingensief conceived for the 2008 Ruhrtriennale as the second part of his illness trilogy, after *Zwischenstand der Dinge* and before *Mea Culpa*. Written immediately after Schlingensief had undergone surgery to remove one lung and several months of chemotherapy, the play was first performed in Duisburg, then at the Berliner Theatertreffen and in Amsterdam. *A Church of Fear vs. the Alien Within* is perhaps Christoph Schlingensief's most personal work; he portrays his illness openly and unsparingly, using his own painful experience to examine the existential circle of life, suffering, and death. The stage is a reconstruction of the Oberhausen church of his childhood and teenage years, where he served as an altar boy for years and where the funeral service after his death was also held. The theme of religious faith, of belief and doubt, which had always been central to Schlingensief's thinking, is scrutinized in a highly subjective perspective and with a keen eye for its ambivalences. Yet the play addresses not only themes of childhood, illness, and faith, but also Schlingensief's views regarding music and the visual arts. His engagement with Richard Wagner's music as well as the art of Joseph Beuys and the Fluxus movement—both positions in art history profoundly shaped his own practice, but he repeatedly questioned and parodied them as well—find expression in *A Church of Fear vs. the Alien Within*. The play's stage, unlike that of other works by Schlingensief, not only serves as the venue of a theatrical production; with its many film projections, including no less than twelve 16mm projections, and a multitude of spatial and pictorial elements, it is an encompassing spatial installation as well, a role it always also played for Schlingensief. It shows central features that defined Christoph Schlingensief's art over the last several years, while generating atmospheric effects so powerful that it can stand by itself, without a theatrical production in the strict sense taking place. It is the only stage design Schlingensief considered and conceived not only as a stage on which to direct, but which he also organized tours of when the show itself was not playing.

In one of the pavilion's two side wings, we have set up a movie theater where a program of six selected films from different moments in Schlingensief's career play on a large screen: *Menu Total* (1985–86), *Egomania* (1986), the Germany trilogy of *100 Jahre Adolph Hitler* (1988), *Das deutsche Kettensägenmassaker* [*The German Chainsaw Massacre*, 1990], and *Terror 2000* (1991–92), as well as his penultimate film, *United Trash* (1995–96). Presented on a

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structured schedule, these films exemplify central features of Schlingensief's filmic oeuvre. The theater is accessible at all times during the Biennale's opening hours and accomplishes two tasks at once, offering an international audience the opportunity to see a significant selection from Schlingensief's films—some of the films have been subtitled for the first time—while introducing the artist's filmic visual language into the canon of visual culture. As far back as the early 1980s, Schlingensief developed a highly individual style of an incredible visual power whose ostentatious B-movie aesthetic had parallels in the work of visual artists such as Paul McCarthy and, later, Andreas Hofer, Jonathan Meese, and John Bock. Although Schlingensief's performative actions such as *Church of Fear* and film installations such as *Area 7* have been recognized in the art context, his filmic oeuvre has long remained on the periphery of the art world. Yet both in their radical social critique and in their excessive visuality, Schlingensief's films prove an unconsciously prophetic element of our cultural memory.

Learning from Africa

The pavilion's second side wing is dedicated to what ultimately became Schlingensief's most important project: his vision of an opera village in Africa. Schlingensief conceived the plan for this social project the night before his surgery, and committed himself to it with all his strength and devotion until his death. Starting in 2010, the African opera village *Remdoogo* has begun to emerge near Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso; the structure will include a school, film and music classrooms, studios and storage facilities, housing facilities and accommodations for visitors, a canteen, offices, a café, residential areas, a soccer field, agricultural areas, a restaurant, a hospital, and a theater stage with a festival hall and rehearsal rooms. Schlingensief designed the project with friends and partners in Ouagadougou and in collaboration with the African architect Francis Kéré; part of the plans have already been realized. The opera village is to be a place where children, teenagers, and adults living in the immediate neighborhood and abroad learn to develop their musical and artistic talents and showcase them in joint productions; where young Burkinabè can live and explore their love of experimentation and curiosity and unleash their creative powers. In keeping with Beuys's idea of the social sculpture and the expanded concept of art, the project seeks to merge art and life, to serve as a research laboratory for the reunion of art and non-art. In addition to visual and documentary material already produced in Africa and photographs taken by children and teenagers at the project site, the exhibition in this part of the pavilion will feature selections from the panorama footage showing the opera village's surroundings. Schlingensief had already commissioned an African filmmaker to make before he died. We will

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also present a compilation of scenes from *Via Intolleranza II*, the play in which Christoph Schlingensief distinctly articulates his concern for Africa, but at the same time demonstrates his ability to self-reflection and self-critique. Almost painfully, the play addresses the complex and complicated relation between vision and failure, between being a person and an artist, and the perhaps irresolvable contradiction between Western intolerance and the sincere attempt to achieve a real and equal encounter.

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Curator's Acknowledgments Susanne Gaensheimer

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Biography of Christoph Schlingensiefel

Christoph Schlingensiefel was born in 1960 in Oberhausen. Following countless short films, in 1984 he shot his first full-length feature *Tunguska – Die Kisten sind da*, followed, among others, by *Menu total* (1985), *Egomania* (1986) and *Mutters Maske* (1987). In the years 1989 to 1992 he produced his Germany trilogy: *100 Jahre Adolf Hitler – Die letzten Stunden im Führerbunker*, *Das deutsche Kettensägenmassaker* and *Terror 2000 – Intensivstation Deutschland*.

At the Volksbühne theater on Rosa Luxemburg Platz in Berlin, he directed his first play in 1993: *100 Jahre CDU – Spiel ohne Grenzen*. This was followed among others by *Kühnen '94*, *Rosebud* (2001) *Kunst und Gemüse*, *A. Hipler* (2004) and in 2006 the large walk-through installation *Kaprow City*. Moreover, he worked at various theaters, directing, for example, Elfriede Jelinek's *Bambiland* at Vienna's Burgtheater (2003) and in 2001 a version of *Hamlet* for Schauspielhaus Zürich, with actors recruited among other things from Neonazis who had officially repented. As of 1997 he started his first Action art projects outside theater. As part of the Vienna Festival, in 2000 he organized the container action *Bitte liebt Österreich*. On the occasion of the German general election in 1998 he founded the *CHANCE 2000* party. Between 1997 and 2003, Schlingensiefel also worked as a TV talk show host, going on air with media-critical formats such as *TALK 2000*, *U 3000* and the non-disabled reports *FREAKSTARS 3000*.

He has directed operas at different venues, with highlights being Wagner's *Parsifal* in Bayreuth (2004-7) and the *Flying Dutchman* (2007), performed in the legendary opera house in Manaus, Brazil.

With his countless stage productions, art installations, actions and installations inside and outside Germany Christoph Schlingensiefel has for over two decades constantly intervened in the cultural discourse and, referencing various artists, such as Joseph Beuys, brought together opera, theater, film and Action art. He regularly addressed issues such as the existence of God, salvation, and the meaning of all art. He has actively tackled the shift in his images and thinking prompted by contracting cancer in his production of *Der Zwischenstand der Dinge* at Berlin's Maxim Gorki Theater (2008), his Fluxus oratorio *Eine Kirche der Angst vor dem Fremden in mir* performed in 2009 as part of the Ruhr Triennial, his readymade opera *Mea culpa* produced at Vienna's Burgtheater and most recently his *Sterben lernen – Herr Andersen stirbt in 60 Minuten*, a co-production of Zurich's Neumarkttheater and Schauspielhaus Zurich. Christoph Schlingensiefel was Professor of Free Art at the Braunschweig Academy of Visual Arts. He had frequently been invited to present productions at Berlin's Theatertreffen and had received countless awards, most recently the *Helmut Käutner Prize* bestowed by the City of

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Düsseldorf. Moreover, Filmmuseum Düsseldorf has been honoring him in March, 2010 in the form of a wide-ranging retrospective and exhibition.

He founded the Initiative *Festspielhaus Afrika*. Feb. 8, 2010 was the foundation stone laid for *REMDOOGO*, the world's first opera village, located in Burkina Faso.

On August 21, 2010 Christoph Schlingensief died of cancer surrounded by his family.

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Biography of Susanne Gaensheimer

Dr. Susanne Gaensheimer is an art historian. She studied in Munich and Hamburg before completing the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and going on to be awarded a doctorate from Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich for a thesis on Bruce Nauman. Since 2009 she has been Director of Museum für Moderne Kunst (MMK) in Frankfurt/Main. From 2002 until 2008 she was manager of the Collection of International Contemporary Art and curator in Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich, prior to which she headed the Westfälischer Kunstverein in Münster (1999 – 2001). In late 2009 she was appointed Commissioner for the German Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011.

Among other things Dr. Susanne Gaensheimer has organized numerous solo exhibitions of works by internationally renowned contemporary artists, for example in Münster exhibitions featuring Liam Gillick, Elizabeth Peyton, Olaf Nicolai, Tobias Rehberger, Rodney Graham, Lucy Gunning and Harun Farocki. In the Lenbachhaus she curated one-man exhibitions by James Coleman, Thomas Demand, Maria Eichhorn, Olafur Eliasson, David Goldblatt, David Claerbout, Andreas Hofer and Cerith Wyn Evans. She also staged projects in public spaces with Jeppe Hein, Hinter/Hörbelt, Isa Genzken, Michael Sailstorfer and Erik van Lieshout. At MMK in Frankfurt/Main as in Munich a major focus of her work has been the exploration, presentation, and expansion of the museums' collections and the conceptual investigation of the tasks of and opportunities open to a museum of contemporary art. In Frankfurt she has established a program with themed presentations of works from the collection and a series of exhibitions featuring artists in the collection such as Jack Goldstein, Barbara Klemm, Sarah Morris and Peter Roehr.

Dr. Susanne Gaensheimer has edited numerous publications and work catalogs on the relevant artists and objects in the exhibitions and collections, e.g., the first comprehensive catalogs of works by Liam Gillick and Andreas Hofer, the collected texts of Harun Farocki or themed publications on group exhibitions such as *Geschichten des Augenblicks. Über Narration und Langsamkeit* (Tales of the Moment. On Narration and Slowness) and *Bühne des Lebens – Rhetorik des Gefühls* (The Stage of Life – The Rhetoric of Feeling). A part of her investigation into the importance of museums of contemporary art she organized the Symposiums *Museum der Kunst des 21. Jahrhunderts. Perspektiven I* (21st Century Museum of Art. Perspectives I) and *Ist Kunst käuflich? Sammeln für ein Museum des 21. Jahrhunderts* (Can Art be bought? Collecting for a 21st Century Museum). Last year she launched the *MMK talks. Museum Productions I-IV* series of events at MMK, which will look into museums of

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contemporary art as a venue for the inter-disciplinary production of art, knowledge, and culture.

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The German Pavilion from 1948 to 2009

Nestled within the artificially created parkland of the *Giardini della Biennale*, the German Pavilion in Venice has as its neighbors the French, British, Korean, Japanese and Canadian pavilions. Constructed in 1907 in a neo-classical style and originally conceived as the Bavarian Pavilion, the German Pavilion was, until 1956, subjected to frequent alterations and changes. The possibility of creating a completely new pavilion was often considered, but ultimately a decision was made to retain the existing building.

Germany has participated almost without interruption in the Biennale di Venezia since the international exhibition began in 1895. Between 1948 and 1962, German contributions largely took the form of retrospectives, mainly featuring work of Classical Modernists. By pursuing this policy, Eberhard Hanfstaengl, curator of the first six post-war presentations and Director of the Staatsgemäldesammlung in Munich, made the connection with art first shown before the Second World War. Moreover, on an international level, this return to tradition marked a new beginning and symbolized the will to take responsibility for the past.

Although Germany was not invited to participate in the first Biennale after the Second World War in 1948, it did in fact make a contribution, albeit unofficially. With the focus on the artists' group the *Blaue Reiter* in 1950 and on the *Brücke* artists in 1952, Eberhard Hanfstaengl turned the spotlight on Expressionism. This was followed by *Surrealism* in 1954, with work by Oskar Schlemmer and Paul Klee, and by a retrospective of the work of Emil Nolde in 1956. In 1958 Hanfstaengl presented a retrospective of the work of Wassily Kandinsky, tracing his route to abstraction. Thus in 1954 and 1956 the German Pavilion showed work by artists who were no longer alive. In 1960 Konrad Röthel, then Director of the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus Munich, was commissioned to curate the German contribution. Röthel decided to present, among others, the artist Karl Schmidt-Rottluff as an individual, independent of his membership of an artists' group. And, in keeping with the same policy, in 1962 work by Erich Heckel formed the centrepiece of the exhibition. In 1964 and 1966 Eduard Trier presented contemporary art in the German Pavilion, marking a change to the exhibitions concept that had prevailed up until then. In 1968, however, Alfred Hentzen returned to a more traditional art-historical concept which met with an unfavorable response at that time of student protests.

In 1970, Dieter Honisch became the first to use the area outside the pavilion as part of the exhibition space, and in 1972, set another precedent by devoting the entire German Pavilion to the work of one artist, in this case Gerhard Richter. Organizational difficulties prevented the

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Biennale from taking place in 1974. In 1976, Klaus Gallwitz, then Director of the Städel in Frankfurt, invited Joseph Beuys, Jochen Gerz and Reiner Ruthenbeck to represent Germany. Following this, in 1978, together with Ulrich Rückriem and Dieter Krieg, he organized a presentation that focused on the connections between Art and Nature. Gallwitz's last presentation in 1980 instigated a political scandal amid claims that the work of the artists Georg Baselitz and Anselm Kiefer bore the signs of Fascist attitudes. After this 'political' exhibition, in 1982 Johannes Cladders, then Director of the Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach, selected the artists Wolfgang Laib, Gotthard Graubner and Hanne Darboven. The outcome was a 'contemplative' contribution with color-field paintings, Concept Art and the 'Nature aesthetics' of the 1980s.

From 1948 until 1980 all the artists presented in the German Pavilion had been exclusively West German. However, in 1984 Cladders turned his attention to the fact that Germany was a divided country and invited A.R. Penck to design the exhibition in the German Pavilion. In 1986 and 1988, Dierk Stemmler – like Dieter Honisch before him in 1972 – presented solo exhibitions, with work by Sigmar Polke and Felix Droese respectively. In 1990, the exhibition curated by Klaus Bußmann presented photographs by Bernd and Hilla Becher, and the *Deutschlandgerät* by Reinhard Mucha, which is now on display in K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf.

In 1993 – with the Biennale taking place a year later than usual – Hans Haacke and Nam June Paik showed work in Venice. This was followed in 1995 by an exhibition curated by Jean-Christophe Ammann who selected works by Katharina Fritsch, Martin Honert and Thomas Ruff. Gudrun Inboden, who curated the exhibitions for 1997 and 1999, was the first woman commissioned to present the German contribution at the Venice Biennale. In 1997 the artists she selected were Katharina Sieverding and Gerhard Merz; in 1999 it was Rosemarie Trockel. In 2001 Udo Kittelmann presented Gregor Schneider's *Totes Haus ur*, for which the German Pavilion was declared best national pavilion.

Julian Heynen, Artistic Director of K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, became curator for the German Pavilion in 2003 and 2005. For 2003 he has chosen works by Martin Kippenberger and the photographer Candida Höfer; for 2005 he presented the artists Thomas Scheibitz und Tino Sehgal. In 2007 sculptor Isa Genzken showed her work in the German Pavilion. The commissioner was Nicolaus Schafhausen, Director of Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam. For 2009 Schafhausen selected Liam Gillick as the exposing artist at the German Pavilion and showed the exhibition *Wie würden Sie sich verhalten? Eine*

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Küchenkatze spricht. How are you going to behave? A kitchen cat speaks. Susanne Gaensheimer decided to exhibit at the German Pavilion 2011 works from the artist Christoph Schlingensief.

[Further information: The Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen published a History of Germany's contribution to the Venice Biennale. Germany's Contributions to the Venice Biennale 1895-2007. / Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Ed.), Cologne: DuMont, 2009. 400 pp., € 35,- ISBN 978-3-8321-9249-5
<http://www.ifa.de/en/pub/einzelpublikationen/deutsche-beitraege-zur-biennale-venedig/>]

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**Artists at the German Pavilion of the
 International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia 1948 – 2011**

- 1948 Willi Baumeister, Carl Casper, Maria Casper-Filser, Oskar Coester, Otto Dix, Heinrich Ehmsen, Edgar Ende, Ernst Fritsch, Ernst Geitlinger, Werner Gilles, Ludwig Grossmann, Adolf Hartmann, Erich Heckel, Karl Hofer, Max Kaus, Hans Kuhn, Rolf Müller-Landau, Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Thomas Niederreuther, Richard Ott, Max Pechstein, Rudolf Schlichter, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Ernst Schumacher, Richard Spaeth, Paul Strecker, Heinz Trökes, Mac Zimmermann
 1950 Ernst Barlach, Max Beckmann, Gerhard Fietz, Werner Gilles, Karl Hofer, Alexej von Jawlensky, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Alfred Kubin, August Macke, Franz Marc, Georg Meistermann, Gabriele Münter, Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Emil Nolde, Max Pfeiffer-Watenphul, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Fritz Winter
 1952 Willi Baumeister, Xaver Fuhr, Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Gerhard Marcks, Otto Müller, Emil Nolde, Max Pechstein, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Max Unold, Theodor Werner
 1954 Heinz Battke, Leo Cremer, Edgar Ende, Paul Klee, Karl Kunz, Oskar Schlemmer, Rudolf Schlichter, Hans Uhlmann, Mac Zimmermann
 1956 Hans Hartung, Bernhard Heiliger, Ernst Wilhelm Nay, Emil Nolde, Toni Stadler, Fritz Winter
 1958 Julius Bissier, Rolf Cavael, Werner Gilles, Otto Herbert Hajek, Wassily Kandinsky, Heinrich Kirchner, Fritz Koenig, Hans Mettel, Karl Otto, Otto Pankok, Hans Platschek, E. Andreas Rauch, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Johanna Schütz-Wolff, Emil Schumacher, K.R.H. Sonderborg, Fred Thieler, Heinz Trökes, Wilhelm Wessel, Hans Wimmer
 1960 Willi Baumeister, Julius Bissier, Emil Cimiotti, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Rupert Stöckl, Werner Schreib, Ernst Weiers
 1962 Werner Gilles, Hap Grieshaber, Erich Heckel, Alfred Lörcher, Brigitte Meier-Denninghoff, Emil Schumacher
 1964 Joseph Fassbender, Norbert Kricke
 1966 Horst Antes, Günter Haese, Günter Ferdinand Ris
 1968 Horst Janssen, Richard Oelze, Gustav Seitz
 1970 Kaspar-Thomas Lenk, Georg Karl Pfahler, Heinz Mack, Günther Uecker
 1972 Gerhard Richter
 1976 Joseph Beuys, Jochen Gerz, Reiner Ruthenbeck
 1978 Dieter Krieg, Ulrich Rückriem
 1980 Georg Baselitz, Anselm Kiefer

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1982 Hanne Darboven, Gotthard Graubner, Wolfgang Laib
 1984 Lothar Baumgarten, A.R. Penck
 1986 Sigmar Polke
 1988 Felix Droese
 1990 Bernd und Hilla Becher, Reinhard Mucha
 1993 Hans Haacke, Nam June Paik
 1995 Katharina Fritsch, Martin Honert, Thomas Ruff
 1997 Gerhard Merz, Katharina Sieverding
 1999 Rosemarie Trockel
 2001 Gregor Schneider
 2003 Candida Höfer, Martin Kippenberger
 2005 Thomas Scheibitz, Tino Sehgal
 2007 Isa Genzken
 2009 Liam Gillick
 2011 Christoph Schlingensief



Federal Foreign Office

The German Pavilion in the grounds of the Venice Biennial (Giardini Pubblici) is the property of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The commissioner for the German contribution to the Visual Arts Biennial is the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany (www.auswaertiges-amt.de).

On the suggestion of an advisory committee, which has renowned Museum Directors and art experts as members, the Federal Foreign Office appoints a curator (formerly: commissioner) who is responsible for the selection of the artists and the organisation of the contribution.

At the Venice Biennial, Germany has traditionally been represented by its own pavilion commissioned and co-funded by the Federal Foreign Office. The Federal Foreign Office is keen to help foster a lively and creative arts scene in Germany as well as cultural exchange throughout the world. Such efforts are part and parcel of its cultural relations and education activities, which for many decades have been considered a key dimension of its foreign policy.

The Venice Biennial is not just a mecca for art-lovers everywhere but also an important forum for international exchange that attracts people from all over the world. This year Germany is once again represented at the Biennale with a Pavilion.

For the Federal Foreign Office, cultural engagement is a well-established tradition; we have long seen fostering lively cultural contacts as an important part of Germany's foreign policy. The activities in this field are geared to a number of objectives. First and foremost to help people all over the world to discover Germany for themselves rather than relying on clichés and preconceptions. By the same token, Germany's own culture and education will benefit as well if people are convinced abroad, for example, that Germany is an attractive place to study. At the European Union level it is hoped that activities in this field will increasingly help forge a common identity among citizens of the EU's 27 member states.

To realize these objectives, the Federal Foreign Office and its embassies abroad work with a number of highly competent partners. The main organizations active in this field are the Goethe Institute, the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – DAAD), the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations. The management of 117 German schools abroad is aided by a special body set up for this purpose, the Central Agency for Schools Abroad.

Working together, these institutions have achieved some impressive results. Across the world from Sao Paolo to Kabul some 70,000 young people a year attend German schools abroad. An estimated 150,000 people annually attend the Goethe Institute's German courses. Currently some 30,000 young foreigners per year are studying at German universities on DAAD scholarships.

These figures also mean a host of personal ties with Germany and its people, ties from which both sides have much to gain. Learning to understand how a foreign artist or researcher perceives the world enables Germans to acquire new insights. In particular, the productive and stimulating exchanges that take place at the Venice Biennale forge enduring ties with the wider world. For German foreign policy as a whole, such ties are clearly a tremendous asset.

^ Connecting Cultures – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations)

The Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) has been involved for more than 90 years in art exchange worldwide, in dialogue between civil societies and in the promotion of information about Germany's foreign cultural policy. It is Germany's oldest intermediary organisation for foreign cultural affairs.

Germany's contribution to the Venice Biennale is presented by the German Foreign Office. In 1971 ifa took on responsibility for coordinating Germany's contribution to the Venice Biennale. The ifa has published a book on the history of German biennale exhibitions, which is also available in English. As well, ifa has produced a documentary archive on international biennales and supports artists living in Germany in participating in Biennales all over the world.

With art funding programmes and ifa galleries in Stuttgart and Berlin, ifa is Germany's leading institution in the field of artistic exchange. In so doing ifa promotes intercultural discussion and artistic dialogue.

Ifa also organises a wide spectrum of exhibitions around the world together with specialist curators. They are both monographic and thematic exhibitions of twentieth and twenty-first century German painting, photography, film, architecture and design. Workshops and an accompanying program of events for each exhibition serve to enhance intercultural dialogue.

Foreign cultural and educational policy is seen as an integral part of foreign policy and as an investment in Germany's future. It serves to support peacekeeping efforts, the promotion of democracy, the realisation of human rights and cooperative partnerships. Stable networks that foster cross-border and cross-cultural understanding have been built up in recent decades. As an independent intermediary organisation ifa follows German foreign cultural policy guidelines and pursues pluralistic and non-partisan cultural work abroad.

The Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, the State of Baden-Württemberg and the City of Stuttgart.

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The Goethe-Institut in brief

as of May 2011

Germany's worldwide cultural institution promotes the study of German abroad, manages international cultural collaboration and fosters extensive knowledge about Germany. In an age of new global challenges, the Goethe-Institut's work is aimed at deepening understanding among cultures and at strengthening Germany's standing in the world.

In doing so, in addition to the fields of film, literature, music, theatre and dance, the visual arts from Germany also play a central role. With its diverse activities, the Goethe-Institut contributes to enabling international encounters with and examination of contemporary art from Germany. It initiates and promotes group and solo exhibitions in all genres: painting, sculpture, graphic arts, architecture, photography, media art, design and fashion. It produces documentary touring exhibitions on cultural and contemporary historical topics shown in cooperation with local partners abroad, organizes conferences and panel discussions on important trends and carries out workshops, artist-in-residence programmes and meetings with artists from Germany. In addition, the Goethe-Institut offers curators working in Germany who are pursuing practical research projects in international contemporary art the opportunity to apply for a grant for research travels abroad.

In 2011, for the second time the Goethe-Institut is also supporting the German Pavilion at the Biennale in Venice with a substantial contribution. The Goethe-Institut had close ties with Christoph Schlingensiefel through many joint activities – most recently the “Operndorf” in Africa. The Goethe-Institut accompanied the project from the site search phase and continues to be committed in its realization as an active partner.

At present, the Goethe-Institut has over 136 institutes and 11 liaison offices in 92 countries in addition to 13 institutes in Germany. The Goethe-Institut additionally supervises 76 reading rooms, dialogue points and information centres and 122 foreign-German cultural societies and 54 language learning centres. The Goethe-Institut is funded to a large part through annual contributions from the German Foreign Office.

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