

DEUTSCHER PAVILLON 2011 CHRISTOPH SCHLINGENSIEF
D U T C E VI O 011 CHR STOP SCH IN ENSIE
D Christoph Schlingensief
DE Deutscher Pavillon
DE Biennale di Venezia 2011
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**Christoph Schlingensief
German Pavilion**

**54th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia 2011
June 4 – November 27, 2011**

May 5, 2011

**Invitation to the Press Conference in the German Pavilion on June 1, 2011, 11 AM
Venice, Giardini**

“...ultimately, what counts is that I feel safe knowing that there is a social thrust to my work”
(Christoph Schlingensief)

For the 54th International Art Exhibition – *La Biennale di Venezia 2011*, the German Pavilion will present an exhibition with artworks by Christoph Schlingensief. I would like to invite you to a press conference regarding this event on June 1, at 11 am. Please take note of this date and time; further details regarding the events of June 1st will follow shortly.

Moreover, I wish to take this opportunity to inform you of the state of affairs of the German Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale. Since Christoph Schlingensief's death in late August 2010, curator Susanne Gaensheimer and Aine Laberenz — Schlingensief's wife and for many years, his closest collaborator — have collectively decided to not exhibit Schlingensief's sketches and proposals for the German Pavilion, but rather, to show existing works.

In constructive collaboration with a circle of Schlingensief's closest collaborators and confidants including Carl Hegemann, Thomas Goerge, Voxi Bärenklau, Heta Multanen, and Frieder Schlaich, and drawing on extensive conversations with Chris Dercon, Alexander Kluge, and Matthias Lilienthal, a concept for the German Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale that focuses on existing theatrical productions and films by Schlingensief was developed. These selected works offer insights into central aspects of his multifaceted oeuvre, and focus particularly on the artist'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 the stage of the Fluxus oratorio *A Church of Fear vs. the Alien Within*, which Schlingensief conceived for the 2008 Ruhrtriennale will be presented. In *A Church of Fear vs. the Alien Within*, Schlingensief uses his own personal experiences to contend openly with the universal

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and existential themes of life, suffering, and death. The play's stage, which consists of many film and video projections and a multitude of sculptural, spatial and pictorial elements, offers viewers, more than any other of his stage-sets, an all-encompassing total installation.

(Please note that "A Church of Fear vs. the Alien Within" is not to be confused with "Church of Fear," an unrelated performance held in Venice in 2003.)

One of the pavilion's two side wings will feature a movie theater where a program of six selected films from different moments in Schlingensief's career will play on a large screen: *Menu Total* (1985–6); *Egomania* (1986); the Germany trilogy of *100 Jahre Adolf Hitler* (1988), *Das deutsche Kettensägenmassaker* [*The German Chainsaw Massacre*, 1990], and *Terror 2000* (1991–2); and his penultimate film, *United Trash* (1995–6). All films are digitized from original film stock, and have been partially restored. The theater is accessible at all times during the Biennale's opening hours and offers an international audience the opportunity to see a significant selection from Schlingensief's films, including some films that are subtitled for the first time.

The pavilion's left side 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.

We are also very pleased to announce that Kiepenheuer & Witsch, publisher of Schlingensief's 2009 book, *So schön wie hier kanns im Himmel gar nicht sein! Tagebuch einer Krebserkrankung* (Heaven can't be as nice as it is here! Diary of a Cancer), will produce the publication accompanying the 2011 German Pavilion. The book presents texts by over thirty authors, including Dierich Diederichsen, Charlotte Roche, Jonathan Meese, Alexander Kluge, Carl Hegemann, Boris Groys, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Matthias Lilienthal, Thomas Demand, among others. (ISBN 978-3-462-04343-3, ca. 368 pages, ca. € 29,00). An English version will be published via Sternberg Press. (ISBN 978-1-934105-42-9, ca. 368 pages, Softcover, € ca. 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, and Chris Dercon 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 is 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.

For further information please check:

www.deutscher-pavillon.org

www.schlingensief.com

www.kirche-der-angst.de

www.operndorf-afrika.com

Attention:

Official press accreditation for the opening days (June 1 – 3) can be obtained only at the press office of the Biennale: Tel: +39 041 521 8849, Fax: +39 041 521 8815

www.labiennale.org/en/art/index.html