

by the Cubitt gallery in London, while *In Memoriam*, 2006, was specially conceived for two rooms in the Kunsthalle. Both works are closely related to the artist's own biography. Metzger was born in Nuremberg in 1926, the son of Polish Orthodox Jews. At thirteen he escaped Nazi Germany for England, where he has lived and worked since. Both of his parents died in the Holocaust. *Eichmann and the Angel* conflates three historical biographies into a

haunting installation evoking multiple references. Its central figure is Walter Benjamin, a refugee as well, but one whose journey ended abruptly at the border between France and Spain, where he committed suicide in 1940. Then there is Hannah Arendt, the philosopher who witnessed the trial of Adolf Eichmann and analyzed it in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963). Arendt also edited and wrote the introduction for *Illuminations*, the first collection of Benjamin's writings in English, including the essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History," with his famous interpretation of Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*, 1920 (a print of which hangs in the gallery). On the wall facing the Klee reproduction, black letters indicate on a map the places of death of Arendt, Benjamin, and Eichmann: New York, Port-Bou, Jerusalem. In the middle of the gallery stands a replica of the bulletproof cage used in Eichmann's trial. We are invited to enter and slip into the role of the person whose most disquieting attribute, according to Arendt, was his normality. From inside, one faces a wall of tightly stacked bunches of newspapers (*The Guardian*, aptly). An industrial conveyor belt runs toward the wall, and we're again encouraged to participate—this time by putting single pages of newspaper on the belt, hurling the catastrophes of a day to the feet of Benjamin's horrified "Angel of History," piling up wreckage upon wreckage. The belt's incessant movement alarmingly calls to mind the mills of bureaucracy and the wagons of deportation.

It took only a day to outline a "final solution to the Jewish question in Europe" at Wannsee in 1942; but to build a *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* (Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe) in Berlin took until 2005, when Peter Eisenman's Holocaust memorial was inaugurated after years of controversy. Formally referring to the Berlin memorial, *In Memoriam* deconstructs Eisenman's grid and replaces its concrete stelae with man-high cardboard boxes—like newspapers, a recurrent element in Metzger's palette of materials. While in its first room the stelae stand in a neat and still passable order, in the second they become a claustrophobic labyrinth prohibiting any passage: a dead end (the very place in which Benjamin and so many others found themselves). Metzger's sharp take on history cuts deep.

—Eva Scharrer

## VIENNA

### Christoph Schlingensief

BURGTHEATER WIEN

Since his production of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth in 2004, Christoph Schlingensief has become for some the enfant terrible of the theater world, for others a contemporary descendant of Joseph Beuys. Schlingensief takes Beuys's idea of an expanded art and turns it into expanded

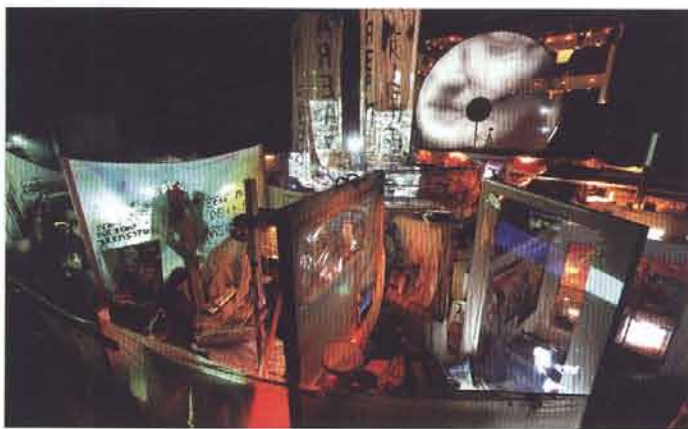
theater—something he has done even more successfully now, at the Burgtheater Wien in his installation *Area7*, than in his *Parsifal*. Based on Bach's St. Matthew Passion, Schlingensief's production, which combines theater, opera, film, visual arts, and "happenings," selects but one theme from this setting of the crucifixion story, the question of redemption, to stage a journey of "irredeemability."

As in all Schlingensief's works, whether TV talk shows, theater pieces, or films, *Area7* evinces a deep antipathy to narrative, going so far as to destroy the normal course of a theater visit. Once arriving on a set evening, visitors must structure their own time, without seating, intermission, or most other conventions of the theater. The stage and a portion of the auditorium on the orchestra level are changed into a giant installation guests may walk through, albeit only in small groups. Cobbled together in a self-consciously sloppy way from lathes, boards, bed sheets, steel, mirrors, and sand, stuffed with monitors and stage props, the structure has visitors stumbling from one room to the next, pressing against beds, baby carriages, shelves full of rabbits, and a giant mask (said to be Beuys's death mask). In its open mouth runs a video of the decaying rabbit already used to great effect in *Parsifal*. This is "the birth chamber, where the myth and legend begin," according to Schlingensief.

On the rotating stage is an installation called "The Animatograph," including such things as an "Ur-Clo" (Ancient Toilet), "Kreuzweg" (Stations of the Cross), "Myonenregen" (Muon Rain), and, in the midst of everything, a boat from Namibia, where Schlingensief was stationed recently with his team and where he made a film, part of which now graces the Vienna installation. And the title, too, refers to that country: Area 7 is a township near Lüderitz, a city founded when Namibia was a German colony. It is impossible to summarize Schlingensief's explanations for the individual stations—too many images and words collide in his highly willful approach to meaning and logic. He has created a parallel universe out of replacement parts, ones thoroughly familiar to us, including myths and models like Schrödinger's cat, transformed here into a rabbit, and artistic icons including not just Beuys but Dieter Roth and Andy Warhol, not to mention Leni Riefenstahl, Hermann Nitsch, and even Jonathan Meese. A loose framework is provided only by the presence of the above-mentioned "animatograph"—a word coined at the end of the nineteenth century for an apparatus to project moving images on to a stage. Schlingensief of course takes the notion several steps further; in his animatograph, *everything* is in motion: not just the images, but also the installation, which is constantly being transformed from evening to evening. Nothing here is final, neither the plot nor the stage sets, nor even the play's execution at a given site. The stage might be the entire world.

—Sabine B. Vogel

Translated from German by Sara Ogger.



Christoph Schlingensief, *Area7* (detail), 2006, mixed-media installation.