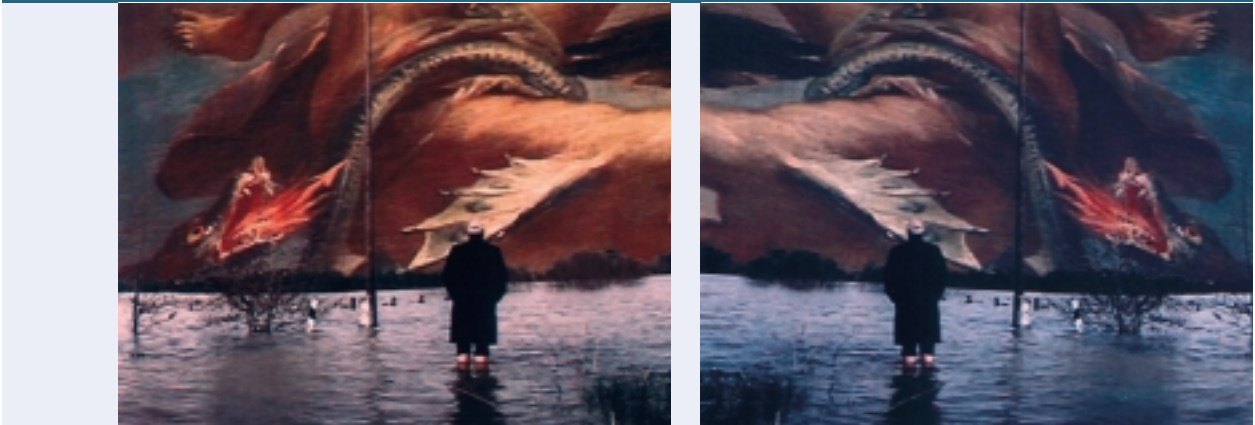


Detlef Heusinger

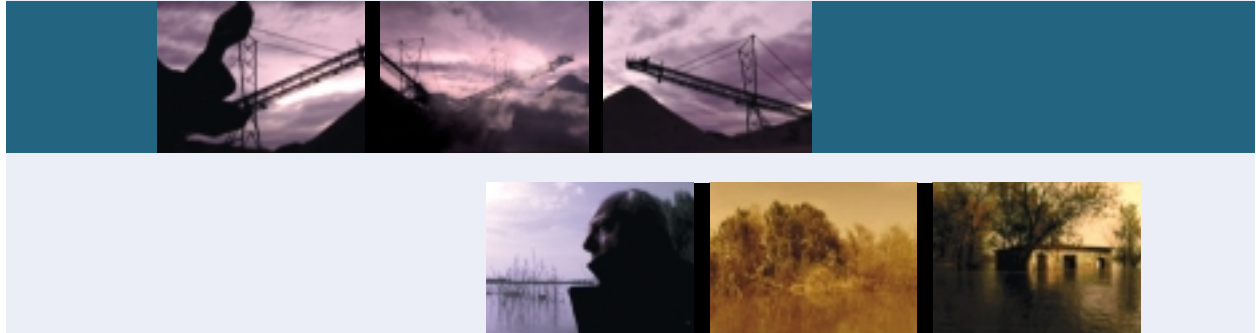
## Sintflut



*Sintflut* ("Deluge") is a video triptych for orchestra and electronic instruments. Ars Electronica will present a modified form of the original version of this work that premiered at the 2001 Donauesching Music Festival. The orchestra is divided into three groups that play in alternating accompaniment to three simultaneously projected films (similar to *triple ecran* by Abel Gance). The five-channel, tape-recorded additional sound track constitutes a direct reference to the films and orchestra groups. Large segments of the films consist of footage that is identical or similar, though with a different perspective or focus. Scenes in extreme slow motion alternate with those at extremely high speed. The video material shown on additional monitors is a made-for-TV version that maintains a spatialization. The films were shot in Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Italy; the postproduction work was done at SWR Baden-Baden and at ZKM Karlsruhe (here on Inferno).

In *Sintflut*, a video triptych based upon the apocryphal book *Henoch*, Detlef Heusinger attempts to establish a connection among Akkadian, Hellenistic and Yahwist flood legends. Henoch, God's scribe, antediluvian patriarch and ancestor of Noah, makes his way on a dream-journey during which the mythological figures Philemon and Baucis, Andromeda and the pillar-hermit Simeon appear to him like chimeras bearing witness to human conceit. Obviously, we already find ourselves in the aftermath of a global catastrophe, since the only actual human being left to accompany him is a foundling who has drifted to him on a skiff. This skiff becomes what is supposedly a rescuing island, since a constantly rising tide in the wake of the dying-out of mankind is consuming the landscape as well. The journey ends in the underworld with a passage into light that leaves all questions open.

The film is an attempt to combine the aesthetic of Tarkovsky with the possibilities of video art. Even in the face of all the problematic issues inherent in this venture, it at least gives rise to an innovative way of dealing with the parameters of color and rhythm—also with respect to the music.



### Introduction

A backlit gravel pit. The sun shines through the spider-like conveyor belt. Heaven in dissolve from the real to the unreal Wilhering fresco. Over cross to Jesus with halo. A sheep grows into the picture—lamb of God or DOLLY the clone. Fleecy clouds move across on the horizon. And the world focuses in the sheep's eye.

### The Journey

The MAN goes. Finds the dead dove in the gravel. Dove of Noah as well as dove of peace.

Close-up of the maggots. Everything is spinning. He goes on. Then sits down in the gravel and tosses pebbles. In front of him, not behind him like, for instance, Deucalion. This one a demiurge, he only a counter and recounter, a scribe of God perhaps, like Henoah. Now further, barefoot over the rocky, fissured terrain. There he sees the snake, near death. Examines it, plays with it and lays it on a tree stump. Then in camp. The MAN breathes on a pane, draws a number on it and goes inside, entering the verdigris room. Goes through the emptiness, takes a place at the window. Sees: walls, towers, rows of barbed wire, everything collapsing upon him. He feels the coldness of Lycaon, the predecessor of the master from Germany. Climax.

Now in a foggy forest, heading to the cottage of Philemon and Baucis. The elderly couple, sitting stiffly on the table, trying to avoid the rising water, waiting for their existence as trees. Below them floats a children's ark, the animals tumbling out. He takes one. Toy, extraneous for childless dream couples. He leaves. Outside, swaying naves. He wades on through flooded landscapes. The archangel draws the disaster in the heavens. The dragon twines itself around the devil. Knee-deep in water, he discovers Andromeda, bound to a tree, not to a rock. He, instead of Perseus, frees her. Gesticulating, she begs for a coin. Puts it in her mouth for Charon. Climbs into the billows and sinks. Leaving only rings of wavelets behind. A child in a skiff. Alone. Set out, abandoned? Perhaps representing Elpis? The child plays with a broken doll and a sheep. The boat floats rudderless down the flooded street, past half-sunken traffic signs, which, having become superfluous, can no longer provide directions. The MAN brings the boat to a stop, the CHILD hands him an oar. He boards the skiff. Together, they float along with the current. Past the cemetery, past sunken crosses with drowning saviors. Those nailed to the cross cannot walk on the water. The baroque sky breaks above them. Grotesque play of colors.

## Detlef Heusinger



The boat glides along a tree-lined avenue. He rows. His glance roams across the ridge of the roof of a sunken house. Flooded landscape, telephone poles without ground beneath them. The boat drifts, with MAN and CHILD, to the tree of life. This appears in Trinitarian form. And once again the churchly heavens revolve. From out of the clouds, view of the skiff before sinking steeple. In the water, the dead dove, its feathers shredded, being eaten from inside by maggots. The boat disappears behind the steeple. It is struck by lightning. Zero. The catastrophe overtakes all. Global conflagration and deluge in one.

### Epilog

In the submarine bunker, the underworld. The MAN, disembarking from the boat, carries the CHILD in his arms. Strides through the concrete land. Tree, church and the Crucified One appear on bunker walls. MAN and CHILD rest at a swing. He writes. Then the two move on to a pool filled with water and surrounded by a ring of fire. In it, Simeon, the pillar-hermit, naked, gesticulating crazily. The end: walking through a burning gate, heading toward the light.

Translated from the German by Mel Greenwald

---

### Film

The MAN: Erich Josef Langwiesner / Philemon: Albert Nobis / Baucis: Monika Geschwendtner / Andromeda: Suni Löschner / The CHILD: Annina Heusinger / Simeon: Martin Müller-Reisinger

Camera: Lukas Kronsteiner, Bernhard Pevny / Film Editor: Barbara Brückner  
Special Effects: Christian Fritz

Production Staff: Martin Rimpf, Thomas Hummel, Volker Böhm, Michael Acker, Karl-Heinz Drähn, Bernd Drewes, Isabel Theiler, Diana Heusinger, Gudrun Springer, Afshin Amin,

Script, Music, Set Design, Direction: Detlef Heusinger / Production: ton-ART, Detlef Heusinger

### Music

Slovakian Philharmonic Orchestra and experimental studio of the SWR's Heinrich Strobel Foundation, Freiburg / Sound Direction: Andre Richard / Music Informatics and Sound Direction: Thomas Hummel, Joachim Haas / Technical Assistants: Bernd Noll, Technik, Alexander Noelle / Direction: Manfred Mayrhofer

*Sintflut* was commissioned by SWR

Postproduction was done in cooperation with SWR Baden-Baden and ZKM Karlsruhe. The electronic music was produced in the experimental studio of the Heinrich Strobel Foundation of the SWR Freiburg.

Supported by: Film Subsidy Program of the Province of Upper Austria, Film Subsidy Program of the City of Linz, Bremer Theater, Linz University of Art

The performance as part of the Ars Electronica Festival is being staged in cooperation with Brucknerhaus Linz.