

Report by Alexandra Stahl

AIR Resident in February 2022

Invited by Unabhängiges Literaturhaus
Niederösterreich

The first thing I saw in my apartment in Krems was a blue parrot on a green skateboard. A little figurine some fellow writer left behind. I took it as a sign that the following four weeks in Krems a.d. Donau would be four good weeks because as a writer I am neurotic and of my neuroses is an infatuation with parrots as my best friend gave me one years ago, it's a not a real parrot, his name is Peppe. Anyway: The four weeks were great. The parrot was right.

The studio was the perfect place to work in. First it was extremely quiet. I never heard anything from the fellow artists who all lived in studios next to me and though I saw them all once for a get-together in the first week I assume they must have turned into ghosts right after that. Second the studio was very bright, the desk placed in front of the large windows with a view of the Danube. Every morning I could see the sun rise over the river.

This peacefulness enabled me to write a lot. I came to Krems to work on a new manuscript for a novel I had just started in Berlin and I left Krems with more than one hundred new pages - way more I had planned.

Besides working on this manuscript I often talked to my publishing house Jung und Jung in Salzburg to discuss cover and title of my second book, a story collection that will be published in fall 2022.

In the last week I could finally present my work in two readings: One at the Literaturhaus NÖ in Krems and one in Klagenfurt at the Robert-Musil-Museum where I had been a fellow of the yearly selected writers class the summer before. When they saw that I was a resident in Krems they immediately invited me - turns out that Austria is small. And very friendly!

Turns also out that I didn't miss anything during my residency. I especially appreciated the nature surrounding the studios: Either in long walks at the Danube or by hiking in the hills - there was always a way to forget about work for a while and come to new ideas while walking through and around Krems. So the residence was a good start into the new year for me.

Thanks a lot to the great team of Unabhängiges Literaturhaus NÖ for the invitation and also the AIR Residency team for the nice support during my stay!