

**Artistic Research Report, January – March 2022**  
**AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Niederösterreich**  
**Victoria Gouzikovski**

My main project during the residency was visual research of architecture in the Lower Austria region, with a specific focus on baroque buildings and artworks. The theory-based work led to the conceptualization of a series of installations that would encapsulate the theoretical developments when realized, focusing on developing affective portraits of the region during this specific time. This theoretical framework is now the foundation of a set of future transdisciplinary projects which would disseminate the theoretical developments.

The artistic research also included a peripheral, process-based project that experimented with the language of votive images and religious imagery through the medium of painting. The project, in line with the history of landscape painting in the Wachau region, conceptualized the landscape upholding the Göttweig Monastery as religious imagery, with the building of the monastery itself as an iconic symbol of worship.

Working entirely out-of-medium, I was on foreign land with the language of painting, which benefited the aims of the work: rather than using skillful painting techniques or sophisticated optical methods to construct convincing and complex paintings, the works conveyed the lighting conditions in an unfiltered, quick, affective, and unselfconscious manner, prioritizing unrefined descriptions of color, light, and atmospheric phenomena. In effect, they were quick sketches of rapidly changing weather conditions and seasonal changes surrounding the castle, created through a process of meditation and worship.

The project amassed fifty-seven paintings depicting the site of Göttweig from winter through early spring, writing overcast skies, tumultuous rainclouds, dramatic sunsets, powerful winds, beams of sunlight emerging through the clouds, the rare moonlight beams through clouds, the astronomical twilight of winter, hail, gentle snow, clear skies, spring showers, sunrises, early dawn, cloudy mid-day, the frosty crispness of winter skies, fog, rainstorms, and romantic, moody, looming clouds.

This language of painting also offered a philosophical dissociative state in a world of increasing surveillance, control, and bureaucracy, entering a lexicon where color, light, temperature, and atmosphere engulf everything. Much of my work aims towards developing alternative languages to dominant logics (i.e. the neoliberal ideology), and this work developed into its own project from being process-work for the theoretical aspects of my primary research trajectory.

The paintings also embodied the ethos of site-specificity and were imbued with the spirit of the land: They were infused with Marillenschnapps, a regional product, which was implemented as a paint thinner for all of the votive paintings. The paintings also contain the weather conditions: some of them were affected by the intervention of the rain, snow, and hail of Krems and der Donau, forming erratic patterns in the paint.

The landscape is idealized in the images, ignoring the traffic with its rapid pace, the abrasiveness of a cluster of billboards, the rapid movement of trains, the circulation of cars within settlements, the football fields with their sounds of hegemonic masculinity, and even omit the twinkling houses in the nocturnes. Some of the paintings indicate the more pleasant aspects of those elements: a section of bright green grass alluding to the sport fields, the calm gray tone of the road, a soft glow emanating from the valley at night between the mountains where the lit building clusters are. The abbey appears as a golden icon, a spiritual symbol, an object of worship, a point of meditation, that remains a constant throughout the works.

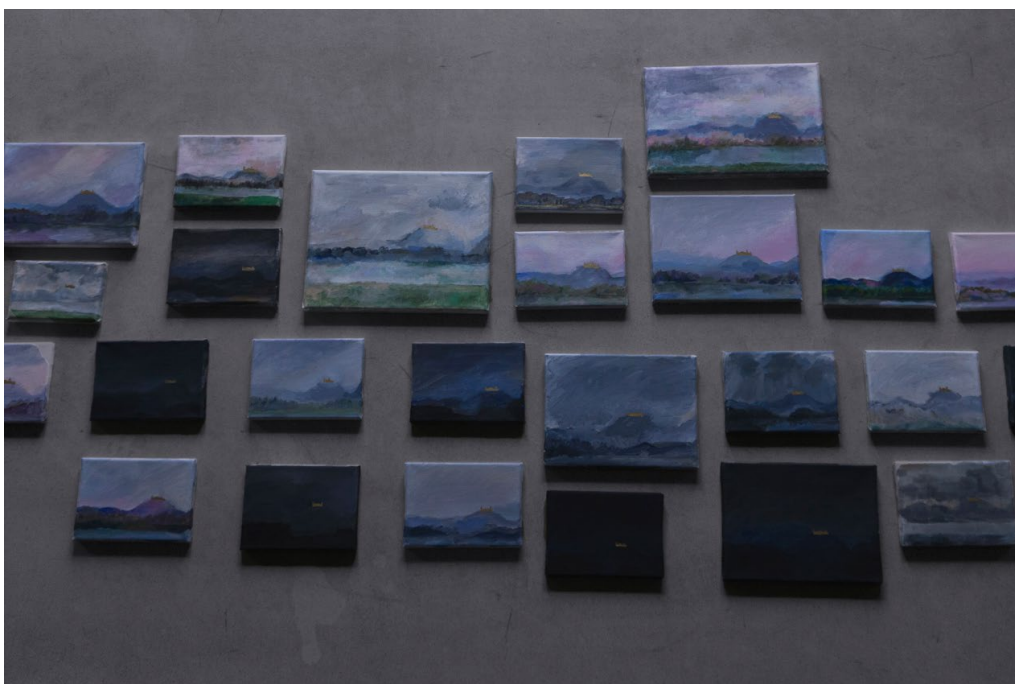
Vials of the painting water from each individual work were collected as “essences” of their creation.



*Image 1: image from research*

*Image 2: section of paintings*

*Image 3: section of paintings*







*Image 1: vials of essences*  
*Image 2: section of paintings*  
*Image 3: painting closeup*

