

Report: Sandile Radebe

AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Niederösterreich, August 2023

TEXT Upon arriving at Niederösterreich I had the pleasure of meeting Lisa and Klaus for the first time in person, it became apparent that the two had meticulously prepared for my arrival, laying the groundwork for networking possibilities, site visits and as well as engagement with art communities in both Lower Austria and Vienna.

After settling in, I serendipitously met other artists in residence while enjoying a cigarette outside the building. I got plugged into the artists' Whats App group which streamlined communication. From there on it was plain-sailing as I could reach out to other artists with suggestions about navigating the space as well as share experiences about Krems.

On my first Friday, I attended a presentation by undergrad architecture students from Newark, New Jersey. This gave me perspective on how the place works in terms of wayfinding which enabled me to decipher its layout. Later on that day there was a presentation by Boto Press and Eclectic publishers that was later followed by an exercise of walking around the block, documenting the area with our cellphone cameras. This exercise created a space for conviviality facilitating an exchange of dialogue and ideas.

Armed with this foundational knowledge, I gained autonomy to navigate the space on my own, doing museum, and gallery visits and immersing myself in the town's cultural offerings. My next exploration was the museums of Vienna, galleries and other cultural places which was a feast for my eyes and soul. I managed to also get down and dirty painting some graffiti on legal walls. On one occasion I painted with a writer from Vienna and another one from Hamburg, Germany. During that session, an invitation to a local graffiti jam was extended that I am still considering taking up. This session allowed me to embed myself in Vienna's cultural tapestry.

Filled with so many experiences, ideas and encounters, I felt ready to put into action a document I had been drafting to acquaint my counterparts in the residency with my research interests which revolve around isiZulu ontology, epistemology and rituals as a device to generate new imaginaries. Fusing this interest with my encounter with Daniel Spoerri's gastronomic diaries at Landgalerie Niederösterreich, I conceptualised *umcimbi* (a gathering in isiZulu) as a tool to create a space with which to think through and asses isiZulu customs in a pluralised setting. *Umcimbi* opened up the possibility of participation, collaboration and discussion with the diverse group of artists in residence.

Following the custom of posting a flag in an isiZulu home as a way of inviting the community, I printed stickers that I stuck throughout Steneir, Und and Krems as an invite to the public. I also gave out these stickers to people I would meet and the staff in various offices of the Niederösterreich AIR. The indecipherable isiZulu petroglyphs in Krems mirrored the displacement of isiZulu material culture in museums where meaning gets lost and in this lost state, the viewer generates new meanings. This was to be a springboard into epistemological debates in my practice by using obfuscation as a catalyst to trigger dialogue.



Umcimbi was initiated by burning sage with Lisa and Klaus as they helped me prepare the food. Upon struggling to find *atchar* as the main ingredient for the South African relish 'chakalaka', Klaus ingeniously made a version of *atchar* from scratch which resulted in a new form of *chakalaka* that most attendees found enjoyable. With music in the background the ambience was engaging and created a platform which allowed people to get into conversation. The topics discussed varied but there was a moment where we spoke about epistemology at length, I took this opportunity to share my perspective of *isintu* epistemes which allowed me emphasise how I appreciate that we speak and engage from different positionalities. Throughout *umcimbi*, Laurynas helped take snare pictures of the table set up, making a nod to Daniel Spoerri through an inversion from the vertical to the horizontal by the use of the camera. This inversion also translated in the improvisation of isiZulu rituals, from Klaus' *atchar*, the use of Tibetan sage instead of *impepho*, and the dining on a table with cutlery instead of eating on the floor or the lap with your hands, playing music instead of singing which made this version of *umcimbi* specific to the location of Krems and varying cultures that the attendees represented. The attendees also added another dimension to *umcimbi* by participating from their epistemic bases whilst being sensitive to isiZulu customs which enriched the gathering immensely.

The picture's that Laurynas took will make up photographic project whose particulars are yet to be confirmed. I am still ruminating on how to share this project with the public, where and with which potential institution.

- **List**
 - Museum Krems-Dominikanerkirche; 11:00, 2 August.
 - Landesgalerie Niederösterreich, Kunstahalle Krems; 11:00, 3 August.
 - New Jersey undergrad presentation-studio 25 AIR. BotoPress and Eclectic Presentation at Artothek; 17:00-01:00; 7 August.
 - Susanne Wenger Foundation; 14:00, 6 August.
 - Klangraum Krems Minoritenkirche 13:00, 8 August.
 - Forum Frohner; 13:00, 9 August.
 - Albertina Museum, Wien; all day 15 August.
 - Graffiti Jam, Innere Stadt, Wien; all day, 16 August.
 - Kunstahalle Wien. Kunsthalle Museum Quartier Wien; 17 August.
 - Graffiti Jam, Börseviertel, Wien; all day 18 August.
 - Belvedere Contemporary, Wien. Albertina Modern, Wien; all day, 19 August.
 - Graffiti Jam, Stadlau, Wien: all day 20 August.
 - Laurynas Skeisgeila' Luimp' Heuringer; 18:00-01:30, 22 August
 - Christian Berkes and Sophie Wohlgemuth 'No Broken Brick'; all day 24 August.
 - Sophie Wohlgemuth 'Caring is scary'; 15:00-01:00, 27 August.
 - Sandile Radebe 'Umcimbi wendawo- a gathering of the place'; 12:00- 02:00, 28 August.



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photo: Sandile Radebe

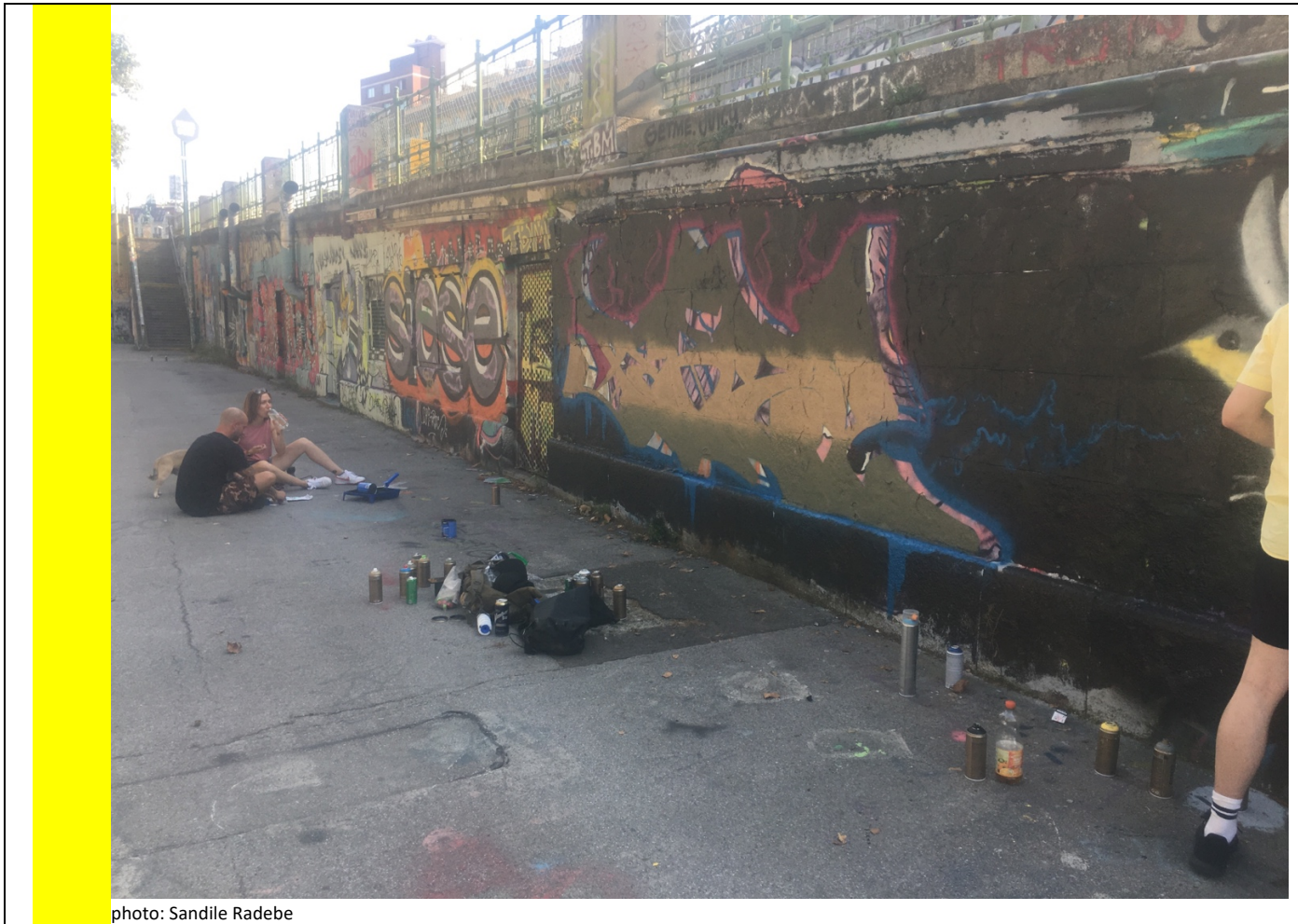


photo: Sandile Radebe

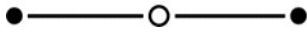


photo: Sonia





photo: Sandile Radebe



photo: Sandile Radebe





photo: Laurynas Skeisgeila



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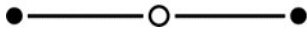


photo: Sandile Radebe



photo: Sophie Wohlgemuth



photo: Laurynas Skeisgeila

