

Report: **Sid Fiore Branca**

AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Niederösterreich, **July-August 2023**

Following questions can be answered in the report:

How was the residency? Advantages and disadvantages of AIR Niederösterreich.

What did you realize during your residency period?

What did you miss at the residency?

What do you appreciate at AIR Niederösterreich?

List all projects, workshops, concerts, exhibitions, events etc. that you realized or participated in during your residency. Please add all data (title, date, time, place).  
+ images with full credit information

My experience at AIR Niederösterreich was incredibly rewarding. I found the time deeply productive, while also giving space for the relaxation and open hours that are so necessary for creative work to flourish. There are many advantages to this residency: the invaluable resource of time, the beautiful landscapes, the unique cultural environment of Lower Austria, the support of the Kunstmeile staff, and -- perhaps most unexpectedly impactful for me -- a cohort of truly remarkable fellow artists all exchanging ideas. I have faith that the friendships and collaborative relationships formed during this residency will continue to inform my practice for years to come.

I realized a number of things during this residency period. Firstly, spending time swimming in the Donau, biking along its banks, and hiking in the hills of the Wachau region has made me realize I absolutely need more access to nature in my daily life. As an artist who works so much through digital means, based in a massive city, it is easy for me to neglect the important role of immersing myself in a natural landscape to sort through my thoughts, and return to all this screen-based making newly refreshed. Secondly, what I had thought was a creative and intellectual rut prior to this residency was simply the result of not being able to dedicate enough time and energy to my practice, and that as soon as I am able to do those things, there is a substantial shift in my making. Thirdly, that I would like to return to Austria for another extended period, and am even more committed to my efforts in studying the German language. And while I could go on and on regarding the realizations I had during this time at AIR Niederösterreich, I will end with the realization that it is hugely beneficial to me to work

in a balance between independent research and solo creative practice, and a collaborative and conversational environment.

While a month seemed like an immense luxury of time before the residency began, I did find myself absolutely wishing I could have been at AIR for two months, because I started to break new ground on my projects just as I was about to leave. On a more material practical note, it might be helpful for future artists if the residency had a couple of tripods and photo/video lights, as these are bulky and awkward items to travel long distances with in comparison to cameras and audio recorders. I was however able to use equipment belonging to one of my fellow artists-in-residence, so I really did not feel I was lacking anything during my time in Krems – I just wish I could have stayed longer! I feel very grateful to have had this time.

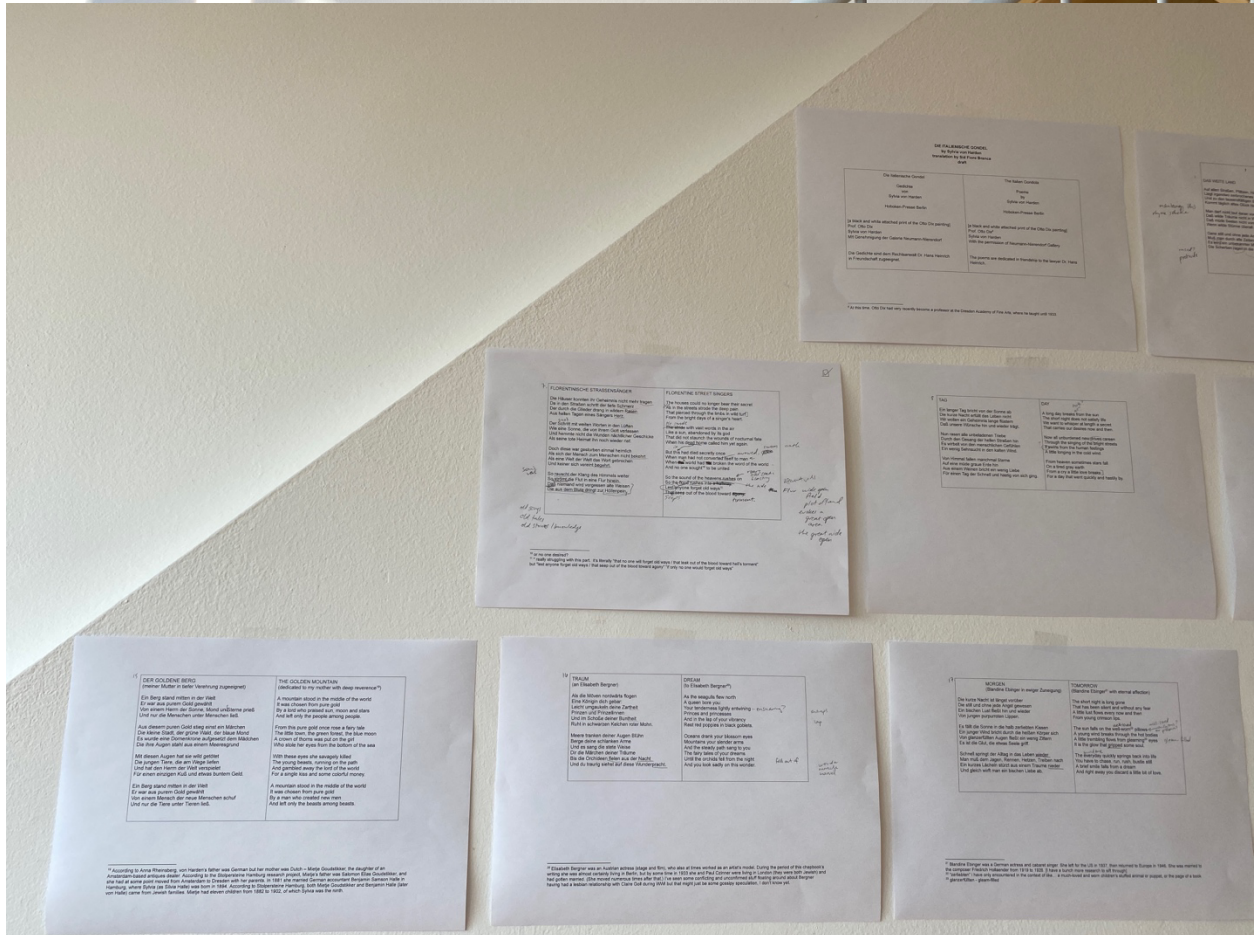
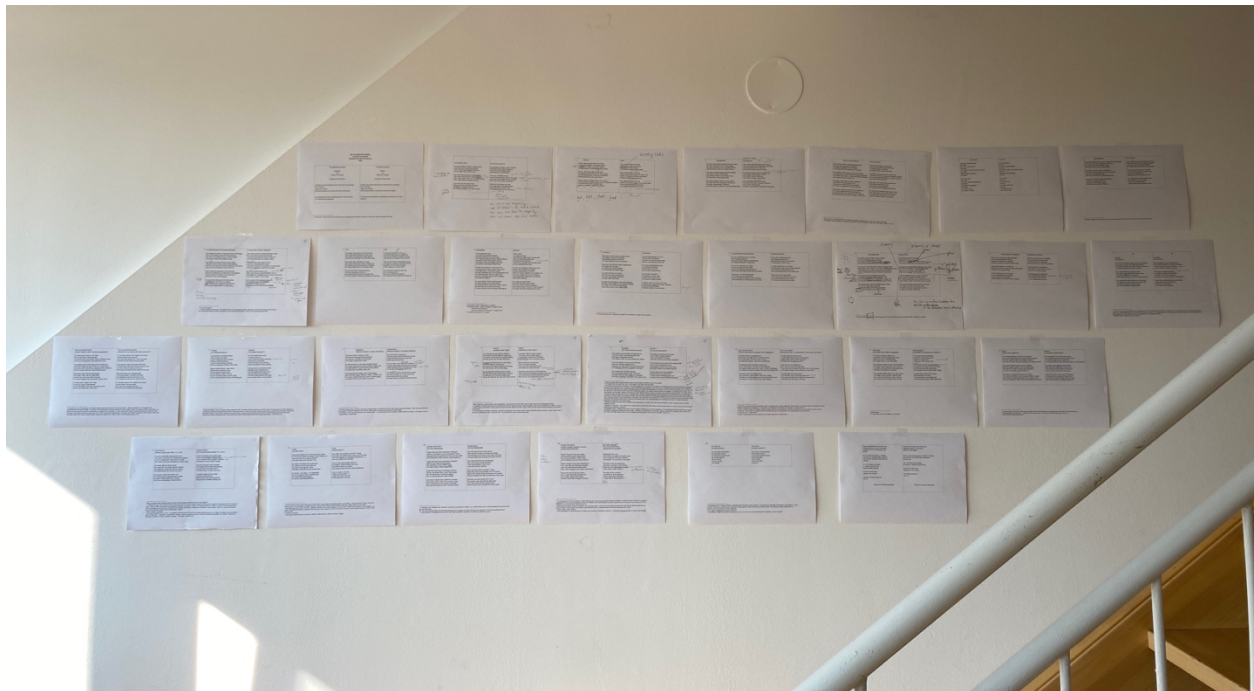
In terms of my own making, I was able to begin and complete a first draft of an English translation of Sylvia von Harden's 1927 book of poetry, *Die italienische Gondel*, as well as an immense amount of historical research regarding the life and work of von Harden, and that of her contemporaries references within the text. I am now reaching out to publishers regarding the possibility of publishing an annotated bilingual edition of this text, alongside von Harden's earlier chapbook *Verworrene Städte*, which I have already completed a translation of, and an introduction using the research I completed at AIR Niederösterreich. I am particularly indebted to fellow artists-in-residence Sophie Wohlgemuth and Christian Berkes for immensely helpful and fascinating conversations regarding some of the more nuanced poetic lines.

I was also able to complete a new rough cut of a film I had shot in Chicago in 2022, with the tentative working title *Deep Embarrassment Is Sometimes Necessary*. I not only completed a new edit of the material I had filmed earlier and had stalled out on how to proceed with, but I was also able to write and shoot a new scene, and make plans for one last final minute that I will be recording in Chicago this fall. I am once again indebted to my fellow artists: Laurynas Skeisgiela not only served as the cinematographer for this additional scene, but our conversations about this film, and about filmmaking in general, were clarifying and inspirational. This film should be complete in October 2023, with a runtime of about 30 minutes. I did also make some progress on writing and conceptualizing for another project, a browser-based multimedia science fiction narrative that I've been sporadically working on for years and had hit a bit of writer's block on that I think I have now somewhat broken through.

I was also fortunate enough to participate and enjoy the work of my fellow AIR artists. Participating in Inès Lissner's walking tour of empty spaces was a fascinating way to get to know some of the more liminal spaces of the heart of Krems. (I also had the pleasure of modeling for images related to the culminations of Inès' research.) I was able to attend AIR artist Desirée Saarela's concert at the Glatt & Verkehrt festival (July 27), and it was a joy hearing Desirée's collaborative arrangements with Hannah James

and Austrian singer Lylit, surrounded by the beautiful vineyard. On August 4, I witnessed the presentations by American architecture students on their proposals for transforming the outdoor space of the Kunstmeile, which exposed me to a mode of artistic proposal I had no familiarity with. I was also able to spend time in the wonderful museums of Krems, as well as enjoy two meetings with the incredibly thoughtful curator of Galerie Stadtpark Krems, David Komary. It was both fun and thought-provoking to participate in a variety of Christian Berkes and Sophie Wohlgemuth's activations of the library space throughout July and August – including experiments in sourdough, the presentation of photography, a dance party, movie nights (for one of which I was pleased to briefly introduce a screening of the provocative Claire Denis film *Trouble Every Day*), and the instigating of an artist collective, complete with the promise for us all to meet again. While I was sad to leave, and particularly to miss the presentations of work by my new friends taking place after my departure, my experience in Krems was able to extend past my time physically there, through the enthusiastic photos sent by the artists who had not yet left. I very much look forward to sharing the next phases of the projects I've been working on with the amazing people who work at the Kunstmeile and the artists with whom I shared this formative time. I am happy to expand on the details of any element of this report, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [sid@sidbranca.com](mailto:sid@sidbranca.com). A few images and image credits are on the following pages.

My many thanks for your support of my work through this residency.



Images of translation in process of Sylvia von Harden's *Die italienische Gondel* (1927), photo by Sid Branca, 2023.





still from *Deep Embarrassment Is Sometimes Necessary*, video shot by Sid Branca



still from *Deep Embarrassment Is Sometimes Necessary*, video shot by Laurynas Skeisgiela





stills from *Deep Embarrassment Is Sometimes Necessary*, video shot by Laurynas Skeisgiela