

Report – AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Niederösterreich

Om Bori, March 2019

Exchange artist of Budapest Galéria Budapest – Történeti Múzeum

My one month as artist in residency in Krems was marvellous throughout. The AIR team was greatly accommodating, and they supported me in every possible way. Krems and its surroundings, the picturesque Wachau valley, are a real gem, and I found the environment both inspiring and soothing. The tranquillity, accessibility and, for that matter, walkability of the town helped me a great deal in slowing down my life pace, which in turn proved beneficial to finding the right speed for putting my mind to work. The apartment was impeccable, providing ravishing views of the Danube and the surrounding vineyards. And I will sorely miss the contemplative muse of watching the freight vessels sidling up the river and the flocks of birds circling above the church spire. If I can think of any disadvantage of my residency, then it is that the period has been too short. Although, at the outset of my residency, I had the firm intention of visiting at least Vienna and Linz for collecting work-related materials and visiting exhibitions, I quickly got absorbed in my work routines and, eventually, I did not manage to leave the Wachau region at all. Krems and the Wachau captured me, wholeheartedly, and they did not let loose of me until I run out of time.

I came to Krems with a broadly-tuned idea for a new art project about the reticulate biographic trajectories of three generations of my female ancestors, the broader significance of which I want to relate to themes of womanhood, migration and memory. I also brought along a largely unsorted pile of family photographs, footage of video and audio-recorded interviews with family members, scribbles of family stories and anecdotes and a head full of rekindled memories and fleeting ideas. I can no longer reconstruct what exact plans and expectations I had in mind for my residency period before commencing work on the project proper. In retrospect, my stay in Krems turned out a real boon for putting into shape the essential form and features of my new project and for producing significant parts of the artwork. Initially, I worked in a rather eclectic manner: I wrote texts, condensing the women's life histories into short prosaic narratives; I produced a series of watercolour paintings and drawings based on selected photographs of the women; I transferred crucial episodes of their lives into sketches of hand-animated video clips. As the work on the different life story vignettes progressed, I gradually assembled the individual pieces and formats into a more coherent whole. While the work remains yet to be finished, the exceptionally high degree of concentrated work in Krems allowed me to already complete the most painstaking parts of the process toward completion: sorting ideas, producing materials and composing of the different elements a squaring and aesthetically consistent structure.

To me, the AIR residency left nothing to be desired. I very much appreciated the independent work time granted to the stipendiaries, which, besides pursuing my project work, I mainly used for engaging with the inspiring surroundings by painting vineyards, making photographs, filming the Danube and sauntering along the valleys. And I also embraced the collectively organised activities, which provided welcomed opportunities for exchange with the other AIR artists while offering fascinating insights into Krems' art institutions. Curator David Komary was a very cordial host whenever I had the chance to be at the Galerie Stadtpark, and he was a fantastic interlocutor for discussing nascent ideas of my project and for talking about art at large. Thanks to idea and initiative of AIR's Sabine Guldenfuß, I have had the great fortune to meet up with Christina Werner, the Vienna-based 'exchange artist' who will do her residency at my sending institution, the Budapest Galéria. Her artistic themes and methods resonate strongly with my own approaches, and the afternoon we spent together spawned lots of productive and indeed also encouraging exchange.

List of projects/exhibitions/events I realised/attended:

- throughout March: work on my female-family-biography project (working title ‘Anna Maria Josefin’)
- March 13: Guided Tour with Martha and Wolfgang Denk: Susanne Wenger Foundation
- March 19: Guided tours with Günther Oberhollenzer: Landesgalerie Niederösterreich & with Florian Steininger: Hans op de Beeck exhibition at the Kunsthalle Krems

Om Bori

Anna Maria Josefin (*work-in-progress, 2019*)



