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Intro

I am a musician, singer, percussive dancer, composer and songwriter.

I was here in Krems for a one month residency, during which time I planned to work on a new solo show combining all elements of my work, my time here would then end with a performance at Glatt und Verkehrt festival in Krems with my quartet, The JigDoll Ensemble.

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, some changes had to be made! In order to perform at the festival I needed to make a new line-up of the band with artists based in Austria, so, as well as working on my next solo piece, I have also spent time travelling to Vienna, rehearsing with new musicians, re-working existing material and connecting with the musical community.

How was the residency? What were the advantages/disadvantages of of AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE?

I'm very happy that this residency was able to happen - despite the pandemic. It's been a very welcome opportunity to be away from the usual distractions, take stock of how things are, how the landscape I work in has and will change, and what I want to say with my work in this post-covid era.

As there is no pressure to create a finished work on this residency, I've had the time and space to research and allow new ideas and skills to develop. I have really appreciated this rare opportunity.

The living space/studio provided is quiet and spacious, and it's great to know that the AIR team are always close by if you need something.

I also really appreciated being introduced to the other artists at the beginning of the residency, being around artists from different disciplines has given me new ideas about future projects.

I can't really think of any disadvantages. It would have been really nice to have had a shared working/meeting space with the other artists but I know this is usually possible, this was a pandemic-specific limitation!

What did you realise during your residency period?

Mostly that I want to spend more time here!

I realised that Austria really has an amazing arts scene and a big appreciation for artistic quality and expression. Its refreshing for someone who comes from the UK music scene - which is becoming evermore focused on branding and turning artists into products who can't evolve or develop - to come to a place where there is a real focus on the art itself and the development of artistic practice.

During this residency - which will culminate with a performance at Glatt und Verkehrt festival - I had a unique opportunity to collaborate with a new musician from Vienna who will perform with me at the festival (strangely, thanks to the pandemic!). Through this collaboration I have also connected with a Vienna based film maker and several other artists. These are connections which will last far beyond the period of the residency and I am very grateful to have been introduced to this artistic community.

What did you miss at the residency?

I think the only issue I had was that the studio I am staying is not that suitable for acoustic music practice. I think most of the previous musicians in residence here have been electronic musicians or composers who can work through headphones, but my music is loud! There's no getting away from it! So I would have driven my fellow artists mad. Luckily this issue was quickly resolved by the organisers of Glatt und Verkehrt festival who gave me 24 hour access to a beautiful space in their building Klangraum Krems which was a perfect place for me. It's great that the arts organisations in this town are all connected and able to support each other.

What do you appreciate at AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE?

I think the main thing I appreciate here is that there is no pressure to create a finished work by the end of the residency. This has really allowed me the time to delve into the roots of my creative practice, to think about my techniques and the different areas of my work as a multi-disciplinary artist, and to start to find the seeds of my next solo work. As a full time musician/dancer I work on a lot of different projects and collaborations but sometimes it feels like the pressure to create high volumes of work leaves you with no choice but to repeat and recycle previous patterns and ideas. It's so important to take a step back from time to time in order to refine your practice and create something different but so hard to do unless you have dedicated time and support like this.

The lack of pressure has also allowed me to respond to the current situation in the most useful and productive way. The pandemic has thrown a lot of things into question and meant that many things have to work differently. For example, I had to change the line-up of my band who I have been working with for three years, it's quite a big deal!

If I was under pressure to create a planned work here I wouldn't have had the time to collaborate with the new musicians and create a finished solo work - it would have been very rushed the quality of the new work would have been compromised. Instead, it's been

a real time of exploration and adaptation, made possible by the freedom that this program allows.