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AIR Report

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My experience at AIR Krems certainly exceeded my expectations. While it was my first residency, I still feel pretty confident that I may never have a residency as supportive socially, monetarily and spatially, as was AIR Krems. Much thanks for all of their support!

I had applied to the residency through ORTE, the architectural wing of AIR Krems about a year previous with a pretty specific project in mind. The project was very well defined in the proposal and had already reached a pretty high level of conceptual resolution and materialization in my home studio; unfortunately by the time I had actually reached Krems, I felt as though I had exhausted the project's concept. As an architect by trade in a large office and corporate setting, the amount of time outside of work that I have to develop multiple project departure points is quite limited. This made it very difficult to develop other ideas to work from in the time frame between my application to the residency and the beginning of the residency.

With that all being said, what I ended up with as a result of not having used my original proposal was a lot of clarity relative to the process of working in artist residencies over seas. For me, the entire residency ended up being an extremely powerful, compressed education in managing the elements of a successful future residency: among many others, time, money, project concept potential and social engagement.

Additionally, the work produced here was not unfounded at all, in fact it was more site specific than I could have predicted; it pertained not only to the physical space that I occupied, but it reflected something that I have only complained about but never actually experienced for my self. That is, the artist's drive to create work that helps them sustain a life as a creator who wants to convey ideas through art. In order to sustain this trajectory, one (or maybe I should just speak for my self) always has a fear of monetary instability. The work that I ended up with was not what I wanted, it was graphic, it was not visually cohesive; it was overtly fashionable. A subconscious drive to be exclusively an artist pushed my work in a direction that I have always feared.

It was perfect however, now it is more clear to me why so much of the art that I see, I see as unoriginal, market driven graphic-art.

Because of a connection made through AIR-Krems, I was able to find an Austrian collaborator for a project that I proposed to a residency in Graz which was accepted while I was still in Krems. I expect that my second residency in Graz will be a good gauge of how much I learned from this experience. Thanks again to everyone at AIR-Krems and ORTE, I hope to see you all soon!

Regards,

Keene Kopper