

**Jeremy Bakker**

**AIR Krems – Artist in residence report**

One of the earlier memories from my two and a half months residency here in Krems was the enthusiastic welcome and beaming smile of AIR curator Andreas Hofe r. Andreas was picking me up so that we could make a trip together to Baden, a one hour drive from Krems, to visit the Kunstverein gallery where I was to have an exhibition. That warmth and willingness to help epitomized my time here, and I experienced this in many different forms from many people throughout my residency. The Kunstverein curator Cornelia König, for example, made a two hour round trip to collect me and my artwork to take back to Baden for the installation of the exhibition. Or the two weeks where it seemed like everyone in the AIR team were invested in trying to find me a Hecksler machine (wood chipper) appropriate to chop up a ladder. It was only with the persistence (and patience) of Lucia Waldschütz and a little help from her mum and local wine barrel maker, Toni, that a more elegant and meaningful solution to the original idea presented itself.

This generosity was not limited to staff but came from fellow residents too. Madis Luik, a resident artist from Estonia, gave his time and expertise to help me with a photographic work that had us climbing a mountain in search of an elusive tree. As an outsider, unfamiliar with the language and without contacts or knowledge for how to find technical assistance, this support from the AIR community was invaluable.

Another rewarding aspect of my residency in Krems has been the friendship and conversations with the other artists-in-residence. We would sometimes meet in the shared studio for informal feedback sessions of work-in-progress, or more often, for an after dinner drink on the balcony. A particular highlight were the excursions we made to a local Heuringer. To round off a day with a glass of Gruner Veltliner and a cheese plate is about as good as it gets. It was also a great counterbalance to the more solitary time spent in the studio during the day.

Most of my days would start and end in a similar way—seated at the studio desk looking out to the panoramic view south of the river. From here I could see the Danube with its ebb and flow of boats, over to the gradual rise of hills behind and up to Göttweig Abbey perched high. In the evenings I would watch the countless bats in their scrambled flight as they chased insects through the darkening sky.

The studio has been a wonderful place to live and work. It is spacious, clean, has a well-equipped kitchen and is filled with light. The generous size meant that both my partner Angela and I could work comfortably without feeling hemmed in. And with a spare room we could host my parents who had come to visit for a couple of days. To be able to share some AIR time with my family, who usually come to know about previous residency experiences through photos and stories, and for them to feel comfortable here and welcomed by the team meant a great deal to me.

With the exhibition opening 5 weeks in, the first period of my residency had some urgency towards resolving ideas and finishing work. I tend to work relatively slowly so my initial concern was that I might struggle to find a way to fold in experiences here into the work that I would make. But this time constraint turned out to be useful and the work has been shaped both by discussions with artists and curators and by the encounters made while walking around.

One of the biggest challenges for me was learning to be more versatile, spontaneous and collaborative with the making. Ideas that I was convinced would be the center around which the rest of the work would turn had to be discarded because of time and technical limitations. The often haphazard process of thinking, testing, rejecting and eventually settling on an idea that normally takes me months was, by necessity, condensed into a couple of weeks.

The upshot of completing the exhibition early in the residency is that it opened up the remaining time to exploring Krems and the surrounds. This is a beautiful part of the world and especially so in early Autumn when the grape vines are glowing a vibrant yellow and the hills are blooming the colours of the season. To ride a bike along the Danube to nearby medieval villages, to hike up into the forests of the Wachau or simply to sit amongst the vines inhaling their colour and scent has been an unforgettable experience.

I would like to thank all of the AIR Krems team who have contributed in a variety of ways to making my time here in Krems so meaningful and rewarding—to Florian, Andreas, Verena, Sabine, Lucia W., Kathrin, Bernhard, Lucia T., Cornelia from Kunstverein Baden and David from Stadpark. Thank you all!

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The following images are from the exhibition, *with holding*, held at Kunstverein Baden between 23 September and 5 November 2017.



Installation view



*Moment*, 2017  
Rock, clock, plinth



Installation view



Still from *Hands in the dark*, 2017  
4 min looped video on iPad  
Image of Gravettian stone tool sourced from: [www.aggzbach.de](http://www.aggzbach.de)



*Unfathoming (The darkside of the moon)*, 2017  
Framed photograph of NASA image of the "dark side of the moon"  
Image sourced from: [www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)



Installation view



*All of the above, 2017*  
Photograph mounted on board



*The comedown, 2017*  
Wooden ladder chopped up



*The fixed and the fugitive*, 2017  
Found leaf on shelf