

COVA MACIAS.

RESIDENCE VISUAL ARTS: NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2012. FINAL REPORT

My residency has been a very productive and rich experience. I was very comfortable during my stay and I found many personal attentions for develop my project. It was a very supportive framework.

The main focus of my residency was to explore different social action and interaction strategies in the city of Krems in close collaboration with its young residents, and then, as the result of this process to produce a short video.

The first step when marking out the field of any new work is familiarizing myself with the various institutional structures dedicated to the young people in the context of the study.

In Krems, I was interested in working with high school students. Through the connections of the staff at AIR—ARTIST IN RESIDENCE met Florian Naehrer who teaches visual arts at BORG Krems. He introduced to me his group of students aged between 16-17 years old.

The goal of my project called “The importance of elsewhere” was working on the biography in order to empower the act of thinking about yourself and who you are, and the resulting construction of a self-image.

I was also interested in analysing how adolescents develop feelings, concepts and understandings about the social and geographic environment through lived experiences.

My action plan was as follows:

1)- November 22. Opening of the student's exhibition at Musikschule Krems. The student's paintings were inspired by Francis Picabia retrospective at Kunsthalle Krems.

I got to know Florian there and I made initial contact with some of his students who participated in the show.

2)- November 23. Presentation of my film “Parallel Stories” within the show of the Lower Austrian Cultural awardees at the NÖ Dokumentationszentrum für Moderne Kunts, St. Pölten.

This presentation of my work, my first in Austria, was a great opportunity for me.

3)- November 27. First meeting with students at the High School BORG Krems. Florian opened to me the doors of his class. Due to my unawareness of German language I proposed to use a second language share by both parties, such as English. I gave a talk about my work with a screening of several extracts of my films and I invited them to participate in my new project. Fourteen students wanted to participate.

As a knowledge method, the students interested had to choose a powerful quotation where they recognise themselves. It could be a phrase or short piece of writing taken from a longer work of literature, poetry, song lyric, etc. or someone else's statement or thoughts. They also had to do two or more of the following exercises in introspective reflection: (Some of these exercises would be included in the final video).

- Write an autobiographical account from your childhood to the present, highlighting the moments or situations you considered most relevant to your process of learning in life: interests, concerns, fears, and dreams.
- Choose a song that expresses your present mood and feelings. Write a short text to explain your choice.
- Take a picture of your favourite part of the city. Write a short text to explain your choice.
- Take a picture of a personal object that defines you or that reminds you a person, a place or a memory. Write a short text to explain your choice.
- If you have a hobby or you play some sport, take a picture of this activity. Write a short text to describe it.
- Choose a photo of someone of your family. The photo must have been taken before you were born. You have to tell a short story from his or her life that either demonstrates his or her character or something which helped shape it. You can use what you have heard about this person during that period of time.

4)- December 4. I started the initial conversations with the students by groups of three. We were in a small classroom next to the Florian's classroom. I asked them about their most immediate environment, about their worries, their concerns, their wishes... We also discussed about the exercises that they had to write in German at home. They had to work on a text that they define themselves in order to end up with a meaningful construction of their experience.

During this session, I only recorded the sound with a portable digital recorder.

My intention was to acquire knowledge about the information they would like to share regarding their own reality in order to give shape to the narrative of the video. The concretization of the project always emerges from the dialog with the protagonist.

5)- December 11. I started shooting the video in the small classroom by groups of three. I asked them to read their text in German in front of the camera one by one.

I decided to use a fixed, front and balance medium shot. I recorded their performance in a sequence shot, in real time. I used an HD camera, an audio digital recorder and a lavalier microphone.

5) December 13. I continued the shooting. I used the same rules.

6) December 18. I finished shooting the plans of readings. I recorded one of the students playing violin piece in a music classroom of BORG. This is the last sequence of the video.

7). December 19-29. I edited the video at my studio. The final duration is 18min.

I made DVD copies for the AIR Krems staff, for the teacher and for the students.

I consider that the final video became a document of this shared experience of learning through dialogue.

During this short period of time, I tried to work efficiently and in a respectful way. I have found a new perspective on my own work and creative process, and I look forward to returning to Austria

The ability and the challenge to create my work in an unfamiliar environment would not have been possible without the kindness and help of AIR—ARTIST IN RESIDENCE staff, and I cannot thank them enough for it.