

# AIR Krems - July and August 2013

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## **The residency period**

During our Artist in Residency period we have had the opportunity to stop, observe and think about our professional and personal interests for a very intensive time. We have also had the chance to live in this quiet and reflexive atmosphere in the residence, where we have met an international crowd of creative people.

We liked the independence the apartments offered, together with the possibility to meet other residents in the common facilities. In fact, we loved the meetings we had with them, where we all shared the projects and discussed about our work and impressions here.

This has been for us a chance to travel quite a lot. Actually, it was very important for our project. We have been knowing the Wachau Valley as an example of what rural Austria is. This way we have been able to know and move all around the area. Maps, routes and touristic information were available for us at the residence since the first day.

We have used the bikes that the organization let us. We appreciated that very much because moving and visiting the places was very important for our research work. We would anyway recommend the organization to have some more, just in case there is more than one resident in each apartment. We have also used the train and regional buses service, which are fantastic in Austria and offer a the possibility to arrive almost anywhere.

We have been moving to villages in the Wachau ( Krems, Stein, Willendorf, Emmersdorf, Joching, Melk..) as well as Langenlois, Herzogenburg and St. Pölten in Lower Austria, Ottensheim in Upper Austria, Vienna, and also to Klagenfurt in Carinthia. That way we could visit a lot of interesting people, building and places.

It was nice to be situated in Krems because we could live quite an active cultural atmosphere, in addition to that in Vienna. We visited the Karikaturmuseum and its "Lucky Luke -Neues aus dem Wilden Westen von Achdé" and "Für Immer Deix" exhibitions, the Kunsthalle Krems and its Kiki Kogelnik and Elfie Semotan exhibitions and the Minoritenplatz complex (Forum Frohner, Kunstraum Krems-Raffael Rheinsberg's "Die Seele der Dinge"exhibition - and Ernst Krenek Forum) and the Factory and its Olivia Mihaltianu's "The woman who was waited for" exhibition at the Kunstquartier building. Together with that we went to the Glatt & Verkerht festival's Sufi Soul session.

## Our project

Ours was a research project, on a broad sense, about contemporary architecture in rural settlements.

Most of our professional background is related to work in rural areas in the Basque Country and Northern part of Navarra, in Spain, which are in many ways similar to Lower Austria. Both landscapes look quite alike, they are hilly and green, and there are many little towns and rural villages spread throughout the landscape.

Our experience has led us to identify some problems on architecture, regional planning and space planning or urbanism that are specific to those settlements. That's why we wanted to know what the situation on these topics is like here in Lower Austria, and specifically in the Wachau, because it is an area we can handle and manage to know.

We wanted to find what both regions have in common, what problems we share and learn some lessons from each other.

That for, we met architects and other professionals related to architecture and interviewed them. They were Barbara Feller, director of the Austrian Architectural Foundation and chairwoman of the "Initiative Built Environment Education for young people"; Petra Eichlinger, head of the division "Ortsbildpflege" in the building department of the Office of the Provincial Government of Lower Austria; Reinhard Seiss, urban and spatial planner with filming and publishing activities in that field and Renate Hammer, architect specialized in sustainability and founder the Institute of Building Research and Innovation in Vienna.

We were impressed by the kindness they welcomed and attended us with. It led us get some insights of the topics we have been researching about.

At the same time we were also interested in finding interesting modern architecture examples in rural settlements, quite near the Wachau valley and filming those spaces but also having their owners and users speak about them. Just like what happened with the professional interviews, we were really very well received.

As a result of our work we have produced a booklet with our interviews and reflections, published by ORTE Architecture Network in Lower Austria, as well as a series of videos showing interesting modern architecture examples in rural settlements. At the same time, we have been writing a blog about our whole experience.

You will find all these work at the following links:

<http://www.midestudio.com/index.php?/ongoing/baukultur/>

<http://theaustrianway.tumblr.com>

Heidrun Göbl, from ORTE Architecture Network in Lower Austria, helped and encouraged us and also gave us the needed contacts, which was the most difficult part for us. She has been a great support!

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