

Four weeks ON AIR – Jagoda Marinic

The moment I was picked up from the famous „Café Museum“ in the center of Vienna I not only knew I would get to know a new place, namely Krems, but I also felt immediately I would get back to a time zone I had almost forgotten: the endless-days mode, hours full of ideas, impressions and thoughts, like the ones you experienced as a kid when you felt there had to be an eternity from the moment you woke up to the moment it went dark in your sleeping room – and yet it all passed in a second.

I “inherited” my residency apartment from Juriy Andruchowytch and Dragan Velikic. Both very political writers in the use of their gift with words. The walls of the “Lesesaal/ function room” are decorated with a black-and-white-gallery of all writers who were invited to a stay at AIR Residency during the last years. From second one, you feel placed at the center of “a thinking Europe”, amidst writers and their books, experimental and classic, making you aware that you should better use your time in a good way. In the best way. Which is always connecting: to your own creativity, to the artists that happen to be your neighbors (I had the luck to be there at the same time as a bunch of wonderful artists from Italy, Romania and Serbia. Though we were all busy creating our stuff, we managed a late-night-dinner and a Sunday afternoon to discover the beautiful region of Wachau together – with a ping pong night session afterwards).

The political air of my predecessors must have stayed behind in the room I wrote in. Germany is currently struggling with explaining to itself a right-wing movement called Pegida, a phenomenon so strong that it has already reached copy-paste fans in Austria. I was amazed at how much the newspapers here wrote about it. I read four Austrian newspapers daily, from solid to boulevard. The reading newspapers in the morning café brought interesting insights, it is always good to see your own country from abroad; so I started and finished a huge Op-Ed on what I believe is one of the causes for what is going on concerning Germany and Pegida. The article was published in the “Berliner Zeitung” during my stay in Krems and added to the discussion about the democratic claims behind the mis-used slogan „We are the people“.

At the same time I managed to work on my play, a project as of now called „Mehrsprache/multilingualism“. It’s a work the National Theater Mannheim asked me to write, and due to a very packed schedule and a nasty sequence of colds I didn’t manage to get into the plot and characters in Germany. In order to finally manage Krems

provided me with the Danube, this mystic river that offers endless strolls; the residency left me some time to start training Martial Arts and getting in touch with „real people“ in town whose energy inspired me to come up with more dynamic and vital characters and to not only reflect about excessive power but also to experience it and thus describe it more authentically. Young people on stage have to feel the real thing. Fortunately there were so many young people in my Martial Arts class that I could take that powerful energy into the play. The first draft of the play will be finished by the end of my stay here at the AIR Residency.

The museums I was allowed to visit during my stay, the innovative spirit that brings all this art into the “Museumsmeile” and the city of Krems provided a unique atmosphere and experience. I hope that more and more artists will benefit from this kind of artistic exchange, showing us what Europe can be and has to offer, if it wants to.