

MY CITY THROUGH TIME



THE PROJECT

My City Through Time

The project “My City Through Time. Exploring our cities through historic and civic education (MCT)” wants to contribute to the recognition and improvement of youth work and its practices and to strengthen the link between youth work and civic and historic education.

The project aims to provide the partner and other organizations working with youth with new skills, competencies, working methods, and materials related to youth work and historic and civic education. At the same time, because of its thematic focus, the project aims to involve young people in a reflection on understanding diversities, the importance of intercultural dialogue, inclusion, and human rights.

The project develops from the idea that the cities we live in are not neutral, but are carriers of values and narratives, and communicate them through elements of its public space, such as monuments, names of streets and squares, and archi-



ecture. By critically exploring their cities through the methods of historic and civic education, the project partners will tackle different relevant topics for today's youth, such as the rise of radicalization, nationalism, and populism, issues of equal representation, and the spreading of stereotypes and prejudices among young people. Because of this reason, through the project's activities and results, young people will become more able to critically approach complex topics related to historical and social changes in the 20th century and better understand the origin and the causes of contemporary challenges, including issues such as memory, identity, representation, inclusion, and democracy.

BLOCKFREI is an independent cultural organization based in Vienna. It was established in 2013 as a platform for innovative cultural praxis, with the goal to support the cooperation between cultural groups from Austria and South-Eastern Europe. Such an interaction has the aim to increase the visibility of cultural variety in Austria today, where ethnic groups from the mentioned region form a significant part of the society, emphasizing the benefits of its diversity. This interaction goes both ways and the projects are being realised both in Austria and other countries as well. Such cooperation gives an opportunity for exchanging ideas and experiences in a vibrant multicultural environment. BLOCKFREI has realized more than 20 projects in the past 10 years with international character and it is among the first organizations in Vienna who has implemented intensive learning course for international, emerging curators.

THE HISTORY OF Vienna



VIENNA has been inhabited continuously since circa 400 B.C., with Celtic and later Roman settlements being set up on the location of today's city centre. During Roman times the location was known under the name of Vindobona. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the area was inhabited by different migrating tribes such as the Goths, Lombards, Slavs, and many others. In 881, the locality was first mentioned under the name of „Venia.“ In the 11th century, Vienna became an important trade centre, and after the noble Babenberg family moved their residency to Vienna in 1150, it gained a status of a city. As of the late 13th century, the Habsburg dynasty took over the rule of Austria, making Vienna the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. Until the 16th century, the city developed rapidly as the economy, trade and culture flourished. With the rise of the Ottoman Empire and its expansion campaigns, the city became a target of military conquest. In 1529, the Ottoman army reached Vienna in their first attempt to conquer it, but due to its elaborate fortification system, the city successfully resisted the lasting attacks. The second siege campaign that lasted for three months in 1683 saw 200.000 Ottoman soldiers trying to break the city walls in vain. After signing a peace treaty in 1718, Vienna became a focal point of trading operations between the western European empires and the eastern lands.

During the reign of Maria Therese (1717-1780) Vienna developed even more rapidly, with almost 200.000 inhabitants living in the inner-city borders, which made it the 4th largest European city at that time. Although Maria Therese was celebrated as being quite reformatory (she introduced the obligatory public school system), her rule was nevertheless autocratic and focused on securing the power of Habsburg by any means available. In the early 19th century, after the fall of Napoleon whose troops managed to conquer Vienna on two separate occasions, the city is marked by the Biedermeier era. Originally a term defining a specific furniture style, Biedermeier eventually started to denote the bourgeois attitude to life. Although its characteristics could be traced throughout Central Europe, they are strongly associated with Vienna where it started as a reactionary movement against the police state authorities of that time. Due to the ruling censorship and the fact that the middle classes could not participate in the state and municipal government, the pursuit of personal interests among the bourgeoisie became a priority. This resulted in a comfortable enjoyment of pleasure and cultivation of social life in bourgeois and aristocratic salons, as well as in coffee houses, or at country parties. During this rather short period, most of Vienna's cultural institutions were erected, with bourgeoisie replacing the aristocracy in the audiences. In addition, the Biedermeier period also promoted decisive technical and economic (infrastructural) policies. However, the rapid growth of the city had its negative consequences as well, with poorer

parts of society growing even poorer. The growing discontent of the masses led to the revolution of 1848 after which the government made some important concessions, such as introducing a communal self-government. Nevertheless, the second half of the 19th century is marked by the return of absolutist political structures under the rule of the emperor Franz Josef who decides by decree to tear down the city walls and initiates the construction of the Ringstrasse (the circular traffic route encircling the inner-city centre) along which the major governmental buildings were erected. In addition, the water system using the spring water from the nearby mountains was introduced; the course of the Danube was regulated to avoid frequent floods; gas and electric works were built, and full freedom of trade was proclaimed in 1859. All these modifications lead to a rise in the city's population, attracting many due to the quality of its infrastructure.

As the result of general economic flourishing and improvement of the city's infrastructure, Vienna's population rapidly grew, and in 1910 it counted some 2 million inhabitants. Nevertheless, due to this large influx of people, many of them lived in extremely precarious conditions. With the founding of the Social Democratic party in 1889, the working class gradually became the most influential political force of the city.

During WWI and the influx of war refugees from neighbouring countries, the city's population expanded to 2.239,000

inhabitants. Although Vienna was not directly in danger from wartime activities, it suffered from shortage of living supplies. Losing the war and with the abdication of the Emperor Charles, the Austro-Hungarian empire ceased to exist, and in 1918 Vienna became the capital of the Republic of Austria.

The 1920s are known as the most outstanding decade of Vienna's history, with the Social Democratic party gaining the majority in the city council. They promoted advanced policies concerning social housing, education, and health care, and during their reign the city earned the nickname "Red Vienna" – red being the official colour of the party. In the period between 1919 and 1934 some 63.000 social apartments were built throughout the city, financed mostly by the adequate taxes introduced in 1923. "Red Vienna" was recognized internationally as a precursor of the modern welfare state, with focus on improving living standards for the working class and their families. Although these policies were much welcomed by the general population, the Social Democrats found very vocal opponents in the Austrian Christian-social party, and their ideological clashes eventually moved to the streets. In 1933 and after the mass political demonstrations, the Austrian chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss dissolved the Parliament and established an authoritarian ruling system. His decision was followed by a massive strike in Vienna, with workers barricading in the social apartment blocks of the city. Once Dollfuss

sent both army and police to fight the workers' uprising, both the city and the country slipped into chaos known as the civil war of 1934. This socio-political situation was best used by the Nazi Party whose influence started to grow throughout Austria. With rising support in the context of mass unemployment rates and a galloping economic crisis, the Nazi political agendas found fertile ground in Vienna as well.

German army forces occupied Austria on March 12, 1938, and just a few days later, Hitler proclaimed "the Anschluss" [annexation] of Austria to an enthusiastic crowd from the balcony of the today's National Library on Heldenplatz. Anti-Semitism, which had been widespread in Vienna for many centuries and had become more prevalent since the turn of the century, eventually mixed with the Nazi policy of what ultimately proved to be extermination of Jewish population. In November 1938 eighteen synagogues and 78 praying houses were destroyed in a single night's rampaging during what became known as "pogroms of November" (Kristallnacht). Before WWII, Vienna had a very large Jewish minority numbering some 160.000 people. Throughout the city's history, members of this community played a prominent role in the society, both economically and culturally. Almost two-thirds of all Jewish people inhabiting the city emigrated to escape the Nazi racial policies, and some 65.000 of them were murdered in concentration camps. Other groups and communities who also fell

victims to the Nazi extermination policies in Vienna and Austria were Roma and Sinti, political opponents and members of labour unions, foreign workers, etc.

During the WWII and along Nazi policies of creating a “great Vienna,” the city had seen a tremendous extension of its territory, with 97 communities outside of the city being incorporated into it. The number of urban districts increased from 21 to 26, and the urban area had tripled, making it the largest city of the Reich by area. From 1943 the city suffered repeated Allied bombing (52 of them), and one quarter of the city’s buildings were either partially or completely destroyed. The city was liberated in April of 1945 by the Soviet troops, after several days of heavy street combats.

After 1945 and due to its role in WWII, Austria was occupied by Allied powers (British, French, American, and Soviet forces), and Vienna was divided into five zones, including an international zone covering the Innere Stadt (“Inner City”). During ten years of Allied occupation and in the context of the Cold War, Vienna became an international centre of espionage. In 1955, the four occupying powers and the Austrian government signed the State Treaty, by which the country regained independence, and Vienna became once again the capital of a sovereign Austria. The State Treaty was soon followed by the

Declaration of Neutrality in which Austria declared permanent “neutrality of its own accord,” stating that it will not join any military alliances and will not allow the establishment of any foreign military bases on its territory – a decision which is still in force today.

Soon after receiving its independence, the “victim theory” became the ruling myth of Austrian society and permeated it until late 1980s. This “theory” insisted that all Austrians, including those who strongly supported the Nazi regime, had been its unwilling victims and were therefore not responsible for its crimes. Although the government initially implemented the post-war denazification (process of removing Nazi supporters from official positions), the prosecution of former Nazis fell sharply already in 1948. Instead, many were granted their pre-war professional status and faced no legal or social consequences. The power of the „victim theory“ was further confirmed in 1986 with Kurt Waldheim, a former Nazi military officer, becoming the president of the country. Although his war deployment was made public and he was harshly condemned by international organisations, he stayed in office for the full term. Nevertheless, his rule sparked public discussion on the role of Austria during the WWII, and the myth of „victim theory“ was addressed by many politicians, intellectuals, activists and artists of that time.

As mentioned, the number of people living in Vienna peaked in early 1900, but between 1934 and 1951 it decreased by approximately 15% in comparison to earlier numbers. Nevertheless, in the late 1960s and with signing the labour agreements with Turkey and Yugoslavia, a slow but consistent rise in the city's population started. With the demise of communist regimes of Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and especially with the wars in former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, the city's population radically increased. At the beginning of 2022, there were almost two million people living in Vienna, out of which 822,400 were of foreign origin. The main countries of origin of Viennese who are foreign nationals or were born abroad have hardly changed over the past years: the majority comes from Serbia, Turkey, Germany, and Poland.

Due to its geographical position as well as its historical significance in the sphere of politics and international relations, Vienna remains a meeting point between “East” and “West.” In addition, as Austria preserves its neutral political position, Vienna is home to many world organisations such as OPEC, OSCE, different UN Agencies, etc. The city is considered to be one of the most vibrant cultural centres of Europe, with many internationally renowned institutions, museums, and concert halls.

city RALLY



MARGINALISATION OF VICTIMHOOD:

The invisible history of Roma in Vienna



THE HISTORY OF WORKING MIGRATION:

“Guest workers”



TRANSIENT MONUMENTS:

Confronting history through
performed artistic interventions



MARGINALISATION OF VICTIMHOOD:

The invisible history of Roma in Vienna

KEY WORDS:

Roma, Sinti, Lovara, discrimination, segregation, WWII, Vienna

DURATION: approximately 90 min

ACCESSIBILITY: accessible by public transport



STATION 1

Memorial Plaque at Ringelseeplatz

(Franklinstrasse 24, 1210 Vienna)



STATION 2

Lovaraweg / Romaplatz

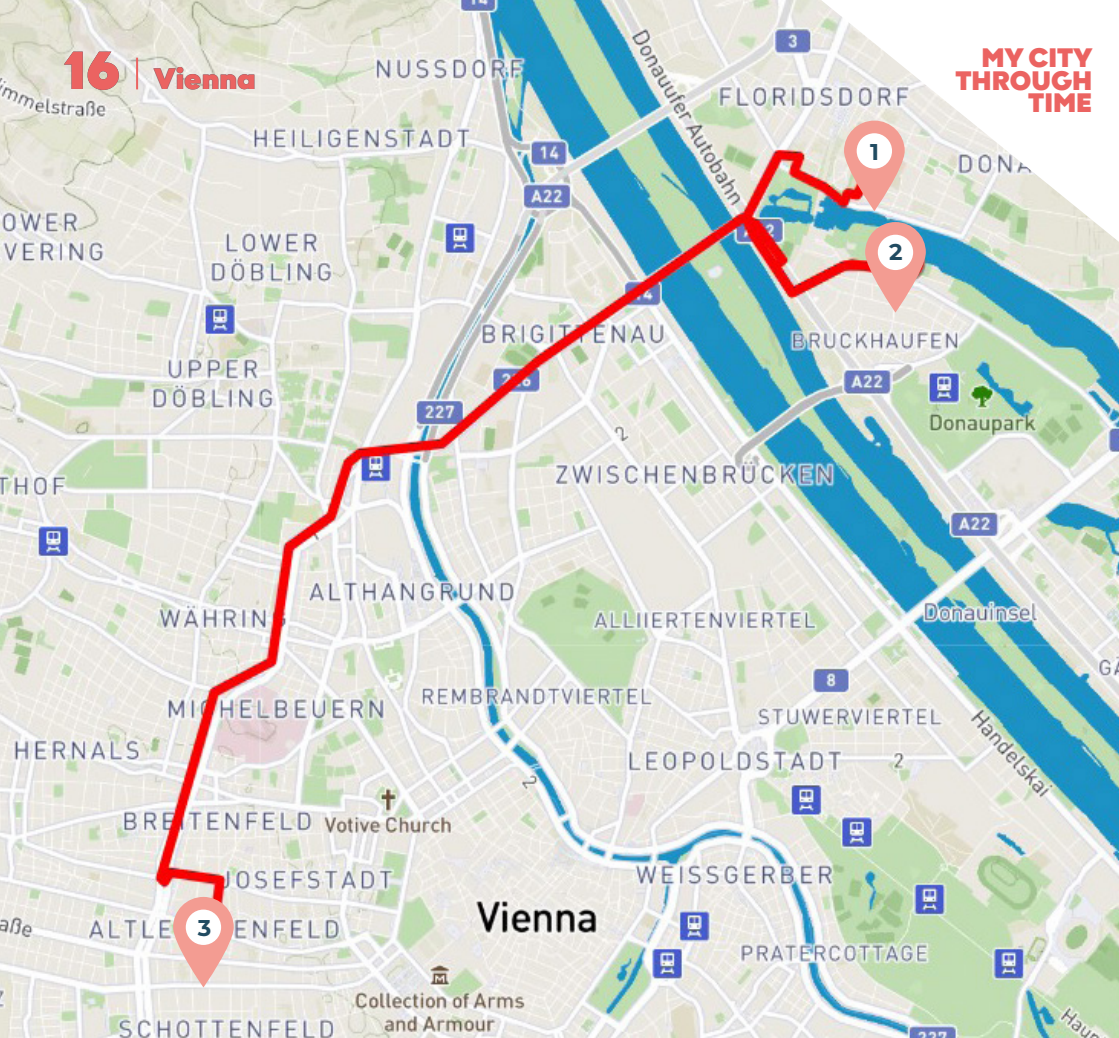
(1210 Vienna)



STATION 3

Ceija-Stojka-Platz

(1080 Vienna)



MARGINALISATION OF VICTIMHOOD:

**The invisible history of
Roma in Vienna**



STATION 1
Memorial Plaque
at Ringseeplatz



STATION 2
Lovaraweg /
Romaplatz



STATION 3
Ceija-Stojka-Platz

Description

Numbering between ten and twelve million people, the Roma¹ population constitutes the largest transnational minority in Europe. It is spread throughout the European continent but is highly concentrated in Central and Eastern Europe, in particular Romania (est. 2 million persons), Bulgaria (est. 700,000), Hungary (est. 500,000), Slovakia (est. 450,000) the Czech Republic (est. 300,000); as well as in the Iberian Peninsula (some 700,000 Roma in Spain, and another 55,000 in Portugal). The Roma consists of many subgroups, each featuring its own set of historical, cultural, linguistic, religious, and other characteristics.

Different sub-groups of Roma communities have been living on the territories of today's Austria for hundreds of years, with the first Ungrika-Roma settlements being established in the Burgenland region as early as the 14th century. Other Roma subgroups such as the Sinti, Lovara or Vlach-Roma communities reached Austria in the early 19th century. During the 20th century, the Roma immigrated to Austria for various reasons: as refugees from Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) or as "guest-workers" from the mid-1960s onwards.

Although existing as one of the oldest ethnic groups in Eu-

1 In this document we will use the term "Roma and Sinti" or "Sinti and Roma" as this is a self-designation that Roma communities use when they want to name themselves in ethnic terms. The term was introduced to abolish the misuses and misconceptions of the label "Gipsy."

rope, the Roma people were stigmatised and persecuted throughout history, and were hence pushed to extremely precarious social and economic living conditions. In the case of Austria, these processes of stigmatisation of the Roma population have been executed by many different state systems. For instance, during the reign of Maria Theresa and Joseph II., the Roma were exposed to extremely problematic methods of “assimilation” and “reform,” ranging from physically punishing those speaking the Romanés language, to forcibly taking away the Roma children and giving them to non-Roma families for the purpose of education.

As of early 20th century, “Gipsy Headquarters” [“Zigeunerzentrale”] were set up throughout German-speaking countries, aiming to control an imagined “gypsy plague” by building up a central personal database of all those “Gypsies” and “persons wandering in the manner of Gypsies.” This system paved the way for the most radical period of racial discrimination occurring as of 1933 and the introduction of several discriminatory laws on the territory of the German Reich. Between 1933 and 1945 Roma and Sinti communities suffered greatly as victims of Nazi persecution and genocide policies. Building on long-held prejudices, the Nazi regime viewed Roma both as “asocials” (residing outside “normal” society) and as racial “inferiors” believed to threaten the biological purity and strength of the “superior Aryan” race. During World War II, the Nazis and their collaborators killed almost half a million Romani men, women, and children across German-occupied Europe. In the

context of today's Austria, recent studies have set the total number of Austrian Roma killed during WWII between 8.000 and 9.400.

After WWII and in the context of Austrian inner politics that was very reluctant to recognize both the real persecutors and the victims of the Nazi regime, the Roma communities were left deprived of any right for compensation payments. It was only in 1984 that Austrian Roma were legally granted equal treatment with other groups of WWII victims for their suffering. In 1993 and upon the vocal engagement by local Roma associations and initiatives, autochthone Roma groups such as Burgenland Roma, Lovara und Kalderasch, have officially been recognized as one of the six ethnic groups ("Volksgruppe") in Austria, thus providing tangible benefits to the communities.

The estimated number of Roma population living in Austria today is somewhere between 25.000 and 50.000, with some 10.000 belonging to the autochthone groups. The exact number is extremely complicated to determine due to several factors such as the reluctance of 'outing' oneself as a member of this community due to still present prejudices and stigmatization.

Despite being a historically constitutive part of Vienna's socio-political system, the relevance of the local Roma and Sinti population is still lacking in the public memorial structures of the city.



STATION 1

Memorial Plaque at Ringelseeplatz (Franklinstrasse 24, 1210 Wien)



Source: Wiki Commons

The Roma population that reached Vienna throughout the 19th century brought with them a wide array of skills and hand-crafts, using them to secure socio-economic conditions and material survival. As wandering blacksmiths, sharpeners of scissors, tinkers, pig-slaughters, horse dealers, musicians etc., they fulfilled necessary functions of an urban system, and were thus tolerated by the official structures. In many instances, they were able to establish a symbiotic relation with the autochthonous communities.

In the 1920s, Sinti and especially the Lovara communities that came from Hungary settled in the district of Floridsdorf. Here, on the periphery of the big city, the latter mainly engaged in horse trading and in some cases owned large farms. The Ringelseeplatz was the site of temporary campgrounds and an important meeting place where Roma, Lovara, Sinti and handlers travelling through Austria met and mingled.

The memorial plaque commemorating the Lovara, Roma and Sinti communities of Floridsdorf was erected on June 15, 2018 by the district administration together with the Vienna Ministry of Culture.

**STATION 2****Lovaraweg / Romaplatz**
(1210 Wien)

Source: BenjaminStorck

Prior to WWII, there were several sites in the city where the

Roma communities lived and traded. As of autumn 1939 and the execution of Nazi policies, the cities and municipalities in Austria were obliged to set up assembly campgrounds for the Roma and Sinti from which they were deported to concentration camps. In Vienna, these camps were established on Hellerwiese (10th district), Wankogstätt'n (11th district), and at Bruckhausen (21st district). Bruckhausen was the largest assembly camp for the Roma population in Vienna during WWII. This historical fact was commemorated by the municipality of Vienna in 2001 by naming several locations after different Roma groups such as Lovara and Sinti.



STATION 3
Ceija-Stojka-Platz
(1080 Wien)



Copyright: Matthias Reichelt_VG Bild-Kunst



Copyright: Wiki Commons

This square carries the name of Ceija Stojka (1933 – 2013), one of the most prominent Roma writers, artists, and ac-

tivists from Vienna. Almost all of her extended family was exterminated in different concentration camps throughout Europe with only 6 of some 200 family members surviving deportations during WWII. She herself was first deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943 and from there she was transported to Ravensbrück, and ultimately to Bergen-Belsen. She wrote numerous books depicting her experiences during WWII and is considered one of the most important European voices depicting the horrific torture of Roma people under National Socialism.

In her writings and artwork, Ceija Stojka not only narrated her life and the Lovara culture, but also vehemently defied stereotypes and exoticizations of “Gypsies [Zigeuner]” being carefree and happy-go-lucky nomads that live on the edge of society. By presenting and sharing real-life stories from her own community, she demonstrated just how much of these notions concerning Roma were caused by the systemic persecution and extermination that this population faced throughout history. In 2014, the Municipal Council Committee for Culture and Science decided to name this square after her, thus commemorating her work and engagement.

Questions:

- _____ Can you find these locations and the memorial plaque? Who does it commemorate? Are there any visible signs of damage to the plaques?
- _____ The biggest Roma, Sinti and Lovara settlements were to be found on the outskirts of the city. Do you have any idea why that was?
- _____ Which street names on this location can you find that commemorate the Roma population?
- _____ Do you know any racial slurs that are still used in the languages you know and that are connoting Roma and Sinti people in a negative way?
- _____ Are you facing any prejudices on the basis of your ethnic / cultural / religious background?

Glossary:

- **ANTIGYPSYISM / ANTIZIGANISMUS:** Racism against Roma. Other terms such as Romaphobia, anti-Romaism, anti-Romism, anti-Roma racism are also known to be used.
- **ARYAN RACE:** In Germany, the Nazis promoted this false notion that glorified the German people as members of the “Aryan race,” while denigrating people of other races and ethnicities.
- **ASSIMILATION:** Refers to the process through which individuals and groups of different heritages acquire the basic habits, attitudes, and modes of life of an embracing culture.
- **AUTOCHTONE ETHNIC GROUP [VOLKSGRUPPE]:** An autochthonous ethnic group (from the Greek for “from the country itself”, “ancient” or “original”) is an ethnic national minority that is legally protected in Europe. Colloquially, “ethnic group” is often used synonymously with the term “ethnic minority.”
- **EXOTICIZATION:** A form of “othering”, i.e. the deliberate demarcation of one social group from another. Other “foreign” cultures are thus only perceived through biased, stereotyping views. This is usually done by using superficially positive attributes such as a special closeness to

nature, permissive sexuality, healthy physicality or emotionality, which portray the people concerned as fundamentally different and implicitly as “uncivilised.”

- **“GYPSY PLAGUE”:** A term originating from the decree on the “battle against the gypsy plague”, issued by the commander of the SS and police, Heinrich Himmler on 8 December 1938, regulating the solution to the “gypsy question” in the German Reich on a racial basis.
- **MARIA THERESA (1717- 1780) AND JOSEPH II (1741 - 1790):** Rulers of the Habsburg lands, proponents of enlightened absolutism.
- **STIGMATISATION:** The marking, labelling, or spoiling of an identity, which leads to ostracism, marginalisation, discrimination, and abuse.

Author:

Jana Dolečki

Bibliography:

http://www.romane-thana.at/antiziganismus-in-oesterreich-2015-2017_web.pdf (sintiundroma.de)
The Roma in Austria - A Historical Perspective (econstor.eu)

THE HISTORY OF WORKING MIGRATION: “Guest workers”

KEY WORDS:

“Guest workers”, labour migration, foreign workers, discrimination, segregation, social housing, immigrants, Vienna

DURATION: approximately 60 min

ACCESSIBILITY: accessible by foot



STATION 1

**Hauptbahnhof,
Südtirolerplatz**

(1100 Vienna)



STATION 4

**Filmcasino,
Margareten-
straße 78**

(1050 Vienna)



STATION 2

Trappelgasse 1

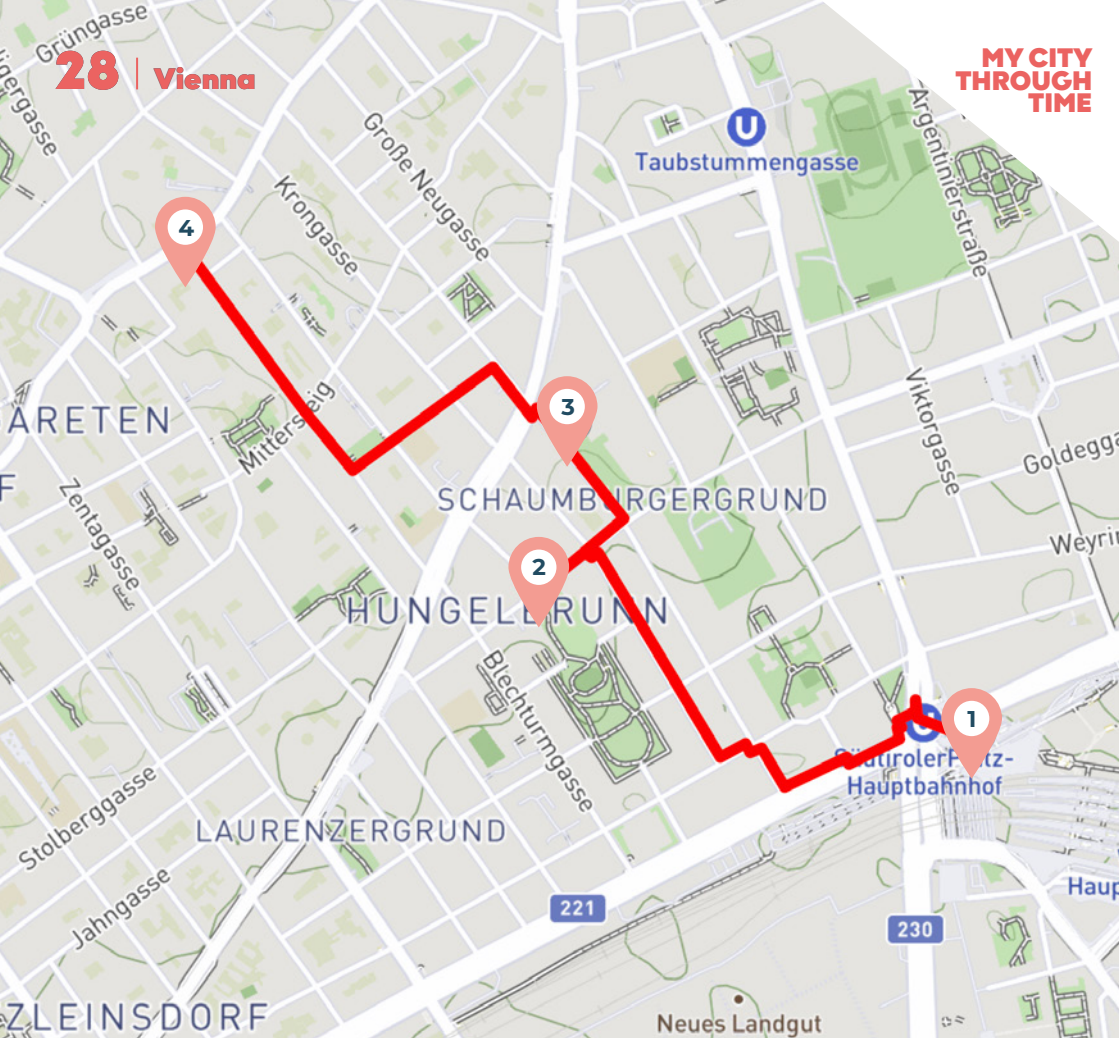
(1040 Vienna)



STATION 3

**Chamber of Commerce,
Wiedner Hauptstraße 6**

(1040 Vienna)



THE HISTORY OF WORKING MIGRATION:
“Guest workers”



60'  2 km



STATION 1
Hauptbahnhof, Südtirolerplatz



STATION 2
Trappelgasse 1



STATION 3
Chamber of Commerce, Wiedner Hauptstraße 6



STATION 4
Filmcasino, Margaretenstraße 78

Description

In the early 1960s, a building-boom in Austria created a large demand for workers in construction and other related services. Due to the lack of local resources, Austrian authorities began to develop an economic strategy whose goal was to acquire foreign labour force. The first step in securing this was the Raab-Olah Agreement signed in 1961 between the presidents of the Federal Economic Chamber and Federation of Trade Unions. According to this document, the representatives of employers and workers decided to introduce a quota system (based on the Swiss model of seasonal workers' employment) that would be fixed in different agreements with other countries. The first country to sign a bilateral agreement that regulated the number of workers coming to Austria was Spain in 1962. However, this contract failed to secure enough workers as Spanish employees preferred German and Swiss markets due to higher wages. The Austrian government then decided to shift their focus southwards, signing the bilateral recruitment agreement with Turkey (1964) and Yugoslavia (1966), both of which resulted in massive labour migration.

Some 230.000 workers from these countries came to Austria during the first wave of labour migration (the 1960s till early 1970s), being employed mostly in the construction industry and related services, making up some 8.7% of the total working force of the country. The process of their employment would start in their respective countries where they would

register in recruiting offices founded by the Austrian labour administration. There, eligible candidates from the long waiting lists of unemployed people were selected according to certain criteria such as age, professional qualifications, and health. The recruitment commissions would determine whether the candidates fulfilled the requirements for employment in Austria, and checked whether their health and professional adequacy for the work offered was sufficient. As these workers were initially hired on temporary contracts, they became known as “guest workers” or “Gastarbeiter.”

The term itself appeared already in the last years of WWII to denote foreign civilian workers who were employed in the Nazi war economy on a voluntary basis. At that time, however, the term “foreign workers” [Fremdarbeiter] was still predominant. Despite certain continuities in the employment of foreigners, after 1945 the expression “Gastarbeiter” was generally no longer associated with the National-Socialist era but was used to denote the labour emigrants who came voluntarily to German-speaking countries as of early 1950s. This rather contradictory term (guests are usually not expected to be working) was seen as problematic by relevant intellectuals already in the early 1970s, parallel to more and more foreign workers seeking a permanent residency. As the term is still often used in a derogatory sense, the academic and activist communities advocate for using it exclusively enclosed in quotation marks.

As mentioned, the term “guest worker” was meant to de-

scribe the temporary stay of those who would come to work in Austria and other German-speaking countries. Initially, most workers travelled to their new working environments without their families, eventually returning to their countries of origin after having earned some money. This short-term labour process where foreign workers were replaced by other workers after a maximum of two years became known as the “rotation labour system.” Although this was at first seen as beneficiary for both the employers and the employees, the system was gradually abandoned due to several reasons. For instance, the employers soon realised that the training needed for temporary workers was also a financial burden, while more and more employees considered staying permanently in Austria due to better economic and political conditions in comparison with their respective countries. Once the employers gradually started to secure permanent working contracts and permissions, foreign workers started to bring their families. With their children becoming an integral part of Austrian society via educational and other social structures, most families of foreign workers opted to stay here permanently.

In substantial numbers since the 1960s, “guest workers” have become a permanent feature of Austrian society, and one could even state that they represent the largest minority in Austria today. Although they were welcomed by local industries for their contribution to Austria’s economic rise, they nevertheless faced social and economic discrimination both in everyday life as well as in their professional status. They were

predominantly relegated to low-paid jobs with high workloads, they held rather low social positions that were 'abandoned' by lower-class Austrians, and were confronted with permanent ethnic discrimination. In addition, with the international gas crisis of the early 1970s which provoked record unemployment rates worldwide, "guest workers" were often seen as the culprits for the declining economic trends, and were further discriminated against by the general society.

Following the mentioned recruitment agreements, there were some 75.000 workers from Yugoslavia and some 10.000 from Turkey living in Vienna in 1973. In the period marked by the economic crisis, the number of Yugoslav workers living in Vienna diminished, while the number of those coming from Turkey almost tripled. In the second phase of labour migration to Austria from 1988 and 1993, the number of foreign workers grew dramatically. Because of the fall of the "Iron curtain" and the civil wars in Yugoslavia, some 223.000 of foreign workers were registered to reside in Vienna in that period.

Despite their significant contribution to Austria's post-WWII economic prosperity, the foreign workers are still not part of Austria's official national collective memory, and are only sporadically commemorated or thematized in public. Although becoming a constitutive part of the Austrian socio-political system, they are still discriminated against and often described as an example of 'failed' social integration.

**STATION 1****Hauptbahnhof, Südtirolerplatz**
(1100 Vienna)

Vienna Südbahnhof, 1964



Vienna Südbahnhof

Source: Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, AZ-Archiv, Wien

The majority of the “guest workers” arriving in Vienna from Turkey or Yugoslavia came with train transport which was organised and paid for by the Austrian employment services to the Südbahnhof terminal (next to today’s central train station). For groups of 70 or more workers arriving in Vienna, special wagons from the Turkish or Yugoslav railway administration were ordered. These special trains would mostly travel during

the peak employment season, between March and May. Trains such as the “Balkan Express”, the “Istanbul Express” and the “Yugoslavia Express” connected Austria with South-Eastern Europe via Zagreb and Belgrade.

Most of these workers travelled with bare necessities packed into small suitcases, and many of them came without previously arranged working contracts, upon invitation from family members or friends. Once arriving in Vienna, the workers were picked up by the representatives of different companies and were taken directly to their new workplaces. For the first migrants, the train stations were of crucial importance and they very soon developed into special meeting points: this is where the migrant workers had taken their first steps into an uncertain future, and this is also where they would regularly come later to meet compatriots and receive news from home.

Both the general public and the city government disapproved of these informal meetings at the Südbahnhof, stating how the station should not be “balkanised” and turned into a “bazaar.” In 1971, there were even plans to build a separate “guest worker quarter” around the station to separate the labour migrants from the rest of the population.

In 2021, writer and political activist Savo Ristic initiated the idea of erecting a monument to “guest workers” at the central train station. In his own words, the monument would commemorate “the achievements of those women and men who came as workers, helped to build the city and also the country,

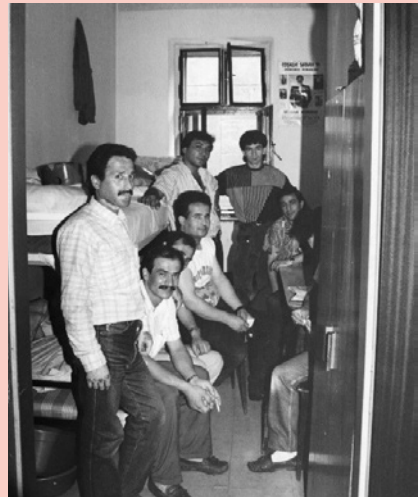
and became an important co-creating part of our country: in the construction of our motorways, the Viennese subways, the UNO-City and many other buildings that contributed to the modernisation of Austria and Vienna, as well as the care of people.”



STATION 2
Trappelgasse 1
(1040 Vienna)



Social housing, Trappelgasse 1.
Source: Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, AZ-Archiv, Wien



“Guest workers” in a shared room
Photo credit: VGA

Due to the large influx of workers looking for temporary accommodation, the housing situation in Vienna during the 1960s and 1970s was put to the test. In fact, the city of Vienna is known for its exceptional social housing system initiated in the 1920s that provided quality and affordable homes to the general population of the city. From 1949 onwards, housing construction returned to its pre-war numbers, with houses like this one in the Trappelgasse 1 being erected across the city. In comparison with pre-war times, the standard equipment of these social flats was improved - all newly built apartments were equipped with private bathrooms and the minimum size was raised from 42 to 55 square metres.

However, the foreign workers coming to Vienna during the described period faced problems when finding a place to stay, especially those coming on their own initiative and without previously arranged contracts. As only Austrian citizens could apply for the use of social housing (this law was changed only in 2006), “guest workers” could not rent social apartments. They would usually end up in buildings in need of renovation, often without water supply or toilets, sharing beds. The apartment-ads in papers openly stated “no foreigners” until the 1980s, there were often no tenancy agreements which meant overpriced, run-down flats, rented out to several workers as sleeping quarters on a monthly basis.



STATION 3

Chamber of Commerce, Wiedner Hauptstraße 63

(1040 Vienna)

Verwaltungsagenden der Kommission in Istanbul
Arbeitsgänge nach Eintreffen des T-Auftrags der Arbeitsgemeinschaft aus Wien

1. Der Akt

ein Ordner mit der T-Zahl wird angelegt.

2. Auftrag an das türkische Arbeitsamt

Zahl der gewünschten Arbeiter, Altersgrenze (bis 35), Berufsbezeichnung, Mitteilung, ob ein Kommissions- oder Firmenvertreter bei der Selektion anwesend sein wird, Stunden- oder Tageslohn
Das Arbeitsamt stellt in 14 bis 17 Tagen ab Auftragserteilung Arbeitskräfte vor.

3. Übersichtsliste

der offenen T-Aufträge, der Auftragsstand ist alle 14 Tage der Arbeitsgemeinschaft zu melden.

4. Vorstellung

Die Abfertigung des Arbeiters dauert etwa 1 Woche. Pro Arbeiter ist anzulegen:
Karteikarte, Arbeiterausweis und Laufzettel

4.1. Gesundheitsuntersuchungen

Blutuntersuchung, Reihenuntersuchung (Größe, Gewicht, Augen, Ohren, Geschlechtskrankheiten etc.) und Röntgenuntersuchung
(Diese werden vor der Vorstellung bei der Kommission von der türkischen Untersuchungsstelle durchgeführt, die Kosten trägt der Arbeiter.)
Stuhluntersuchung und Eignungsuntersuchung
(Diese werden von den Ärzten der Kommission durchgeführt, die Kosten trägt die Kommission.)

Ist der Arbeiter tauglich, erfolgt ein Vermerk: UYGUNDUR auf den Arbeiterausweis und ein Infektionsfreiheitsschein (verfällt in 14 Tagen) wird ausgestellt.

Arbeiterpass

besorgt der Arbeiter über das türkische Arbeitsamt, Voraussetzung: Unbedenklichkeitszeugnis

Bulgarisches Visum

besorgt der Arbeiter und meldet sich wieder bei der Kommission.

Vertragsunterzeichnung

wird ausschließlich durch den Kommissionsleiter vidiert, der Pass wird dem Arbeiter abgenommen.

Österreichisches Visum / A-Sichtvermerk

wird vom österreichischen Generalkonsulat nach Überprüfung auf Grund des Fahndungsbuches erteilt. Der Arbeiter holt seinen Pass ab, um sich die türkische Ausreisegenehmigung zu besorgen.

Abfahrtstag / Transport

Die Kommissionsleitung teilt die abfahrtsfertigen Arbeiter ein in: Gruppen unter 10: Einzelfahrschein aus Wien
Gruppen 10-70: Sammelfahrschein aus Wien
Waggons (70): bei der türkischen Bahnverwaltung zu bestellen
Sonderzüge: im Frühjahr im Einvernehmen mit der Arbeitsgemeinschaft zu organisieren

Alle bekommen ein Verpflegungspaket von der Firma Elmas Konserve.

Eine Transportliste wird angefertigt.

Platzkarten werden im Wiener Wagon (Nr. 335) für den Zug um 16.30 bestellt.

Jedem Arbeiter wird eine Firmenkarte mit Stecknadel gegeben, die er sich vor dem Aussteigen in Wien außen auf den Rockaufschlag steckt.

Das Transporttelegramm an die Arbeitsgemeinschaft wird geschickt.

Source: Initiative Minderheiten

On December 28, 1961, the Trade Union Federation president Franz Olah and the president of the Chamber of Commerce

Julius Raab concluded an agreement that allowed foreigners much easier access to the Austrian labour market. In addition, the agreement regulated how many guest workers the labour market would need, subdivided by industry and province. The companies applied to the competent labour office for the issue of a certificate of assurance, filled out order forms and employment contracts, and submitted them to the consortium. Although the companies paid workers' transport costs, the workers themselves had to pay a recruitment fee to cover the recruitment costs.

Some historians describe the role played by the Trade Union Federation for foreign workers as “ambivalent.” Although they cooperated really well with the Yugoslav and Turkish trade unions, there was clear discrimination such as the exclusion of foreign workers from the right to vote in companies, and the clear preferential treatment of nationals through the provisions of the Employment of Foreigners Act.

**STATION 4****Filmcasino, Margaretenstraße 78**
(1050 Vienna)

Source: Filmcasino, Webpage

With growing numbers of foreign workers coming to Vienna, a need for places where these people would meet and explore social and cultural group activities became more and more evident. Alone in Vienna, there were some 120 worker-clubs for “guest workers” originating from Yugoslavia that operated until the late 1980s. For example, today’s Filmcasino served the Yugoslav community as a venue for cultural activities between 1979 and 1989. Here the workers could attend folklore

performances, see new film production from the homeland, the referees of different sports clubs would meet, as well as the teachers of the Serbo-Croatian language. Although Yugoslav “guest workers” faced daily marginalisation and discrimination, this space offered them a rather representative meeting-place in the middle of the city. The activities of this and other clubs were financed with the help of the Yugoslav trade union and the Austrian Union Federation. In 1989 and along with the political developments in Yugoslavia leading to civil wars (1991-1995), the Yugoslav Cultural Association dissolved and the Filmcasino regained its function as a city cinema.

Questions:

- _____ Where would you place a monument commemorating the “guest workers” and why?
- _____ What would the monument represent?
- _____ Do you know anyone whose parents or grandparents came to Vienna as “guest workers”?
- _____ What family names can you read on the doorbells of the building in Trappelgasse 1?
- _____ Comment on the contract in the photo in groups. Do any of these paragraphs seem problematic to you?
- _____ Are there some evident traces of the Yugoslav Cultural Association in today’s Filmcasino? If yes, where?
- _____ Do you know the rights of foreign workers in Austria today? Are there any differences you know between workers from the EU and other countries?

Glossary:

- **DEROGATORY:** showing strong disapproval and not showing respect.
- **ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION:** Economic discrimination may be defined as long-lasting inequality in economic well-being among individuals based on their colour, gender, or ethnicity.
- **“IRON CURTAIN”:** the political, military, and ideological barrier erected by the Soviet Union after World War II to seal off itself and its dependent Eastern and Central European allies from open contact with the West and other non-communist areas.
- **PERMANENT RESIDENCY:** The residence permit “long term resident” entitles the holder to permanent settlement in Austria and free access to the labour market. The right of residence is unlimited if the settlement in Austria is maintained. However, the residence permit card is issued with a validity period of five years.

Author:

Jana Dolečki

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[U1-A4.pdf](http://www.gehoergaenge.at/U1-A4.pdf) (akwien.at)

TRANSIENT MONUMENTS:**Confronting history through
performed artistic interventions**

KEY WORDS: performance art, activism, commemoration, monument, statue, public power, confronting history, subversion of meaning, authority, dissent

DURATION: approximately 45 min

ACCESSIBILITY: accessible by foot



45'

2
km**STATION 1****Marcus Omofuma
memorial stone at
Human Rights Square**

(Platz der Menschenrechte,
Mariahilfer Straße, 1070 Vienna)

**STATION 2****Memorial against
War and Fascism**

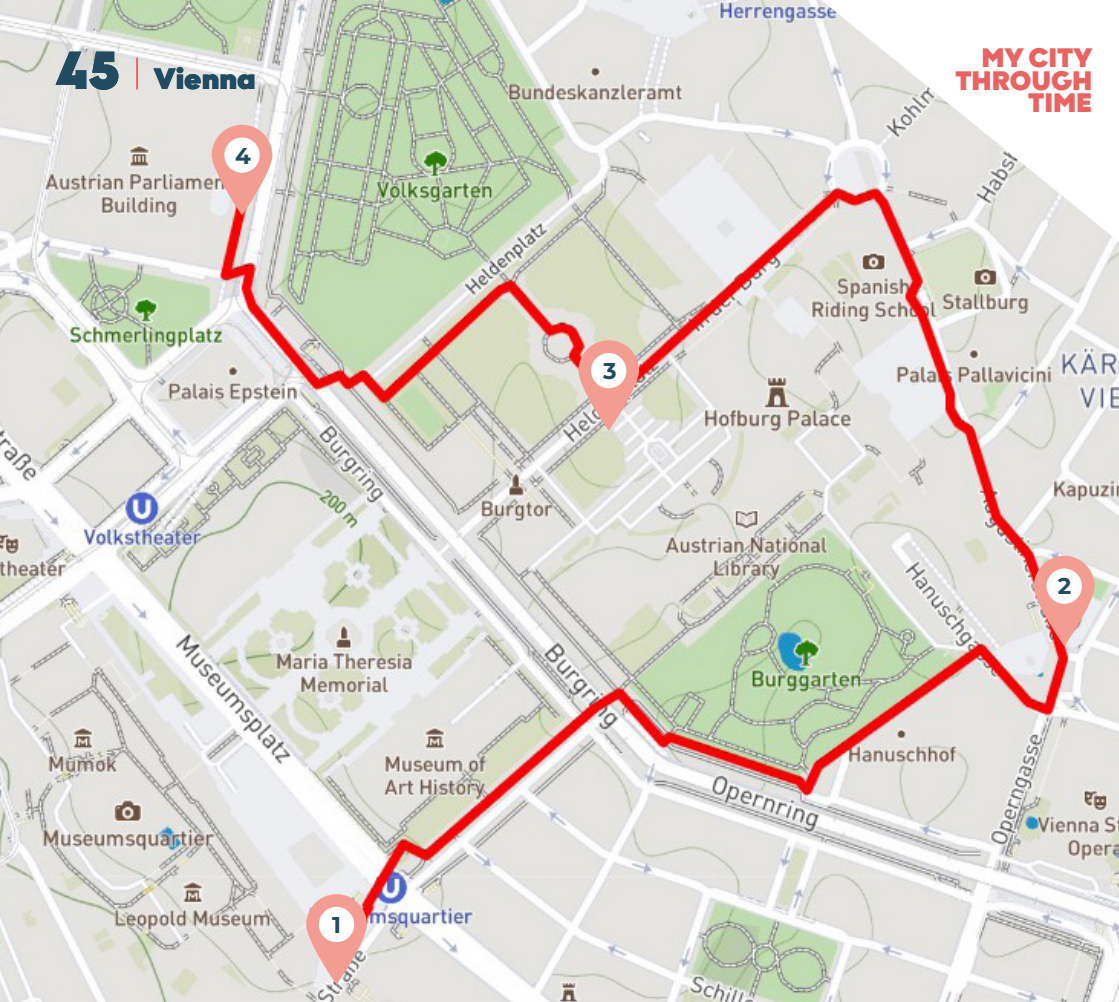
(1010 Vienna)

**STATION 3****Heldenplatz**

(1010 Vienna)

**STATION 4****Stairs in front of
Austrian Parliament**

(Dr. Karl Renner-Ring, 1010
Vienna)



TRANSIENT MONUMENTS:

Confronting history through performed artistic interventions

STATION 1
 Marcus Omofuma memorial stone at Human Rights Square

STATION 2
 Memorial against War and Fascism

STATION 3
 Heldenplatz

STATION 4
 Stairs in front of Austrian Parliament



45' 2 km

Description

Public monuments are intended to commemorate people and events that shaped a certain society by leaving defining marks in its history. However, traditional monumental sculpture in public space is often overlooked and formerly famous heroes, poets, and politicians sink into oblivion. On the other hand, some monuments and sites, that were created to serve as enduring symbols of remembrance, power, and authority, become subjects of controversy, particularly as societies continue to grapple with the complexities of history, memory, and identity.

The tradition of performative interventions around public monuments can be traced back to the early 20th century and the work of avant-garde artists, associated with the Dadaist movement, who sought to challenge traditional art forms and conventions of public space. In Vienna, in particular, the artists began to deal more intensely with the public sphere after World War II, implicating public spaces, monuments, and their history. The Viennese Actionists, a notable group of artists, that emerged in the 1960s, are known for their happenings, actions, body art, and performances. These artists aimed to unlock suppressed memories and meanings and enable new perspectives. Since the purpose of monuments is to claim a particular narrative in public space – a narrative which can be at times problematic, exclusionary, and harmful – the artists employed performance and other types of interventions to

reclaim the ownership of public spaces and sites. Their goal was to prompt the audience (be it the immediate passersby who observed the live action or the subsequent viewers who encounter the actions through texts, photographic or video documentation) to think critically about some of the most representative and recognizable features of a city.

Vienna as an imperial city – the historic capital of the Habsburg monarchy and Austro-Hungarian Empire – abounds with imposing statues, buildings, and monuments. In the city center, the monuments are most often representative of political, religious, and cultural power. They depict specific rulers, politicians, composers, authors, and poets (for example the Maria Theresa Monument on Maria-Theresien-Platz or the Goethe Monument next to Burggarten) but often also portray ideals or concepts by the use of figurative representations of antique deities and personifications (like the Pallas Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom in front of the parliament building, or the personifications of continents along the Museum of Natural History Vienna façade).

As the purpose of monuments is to solidify power by asserting specific ideology, artistic interventions with or around them can challenge the commonly accepted understanding of power, authority, and their history and create meaningful engagement with contemporary audiences. Even though most monuments are solid inanimate objects, they are far from imperishable. They are meant to serve a public function,

grab attention and incite emotion. Therefore, the public (including artists, as well as activists, and communities) should be empowered to utilize them to express dissent and demand attention. Through artistic and activist action, the static figures and buildings are transformed into sites where historical and present moments intersect and where a reexamination and confrontation with history can be performed.



STATION 1

Marcus Omofuma memorial stone at Human Rights Square

(Platz der Menschenrechte, Mariahilfer Straße,
1070 Vienna)



Irike Truger, *Marcus Omofuma Memorial Stone*, 2003, african granite
Photo credit: APA/Eva Manhart; Source: wien.orf.at

An asylum seeker from Nigeria, Marcus Omofuma (1973–1999) arrived in Europe in the early 1990s to find refuge. After spending several years in Germany, Omofuma relocated to Austria in 1998. Here, his asylum request and a subsequent appeal were denied and he was detained for deportation.

Marcus Omofuma died on May 1, 1999, at the age of 25, due to suffocation while being deported from Austria via an airplane. The deportation was supervised by three police officers who, to prevent him from resisting, had bound and gagged Omofuma using mechanical restraints and duct tape. His death sparked protests and discussions about police brutality against PoC people in Austria, leading to the creation of an independent Human Rights Advisory Board in the Interior Ministry.

In 2003, the artist Ulrike Truger was asked to create a memorial for Omofuma. Despite facing obstacles, Truger managed to fund the production of the monument through the sale of limited-edition bronze models. The five-tons, three-meter-high abstract sculpture made of African granite was completed and placed nearby the Vienna Opera building without official approval. Eventually, the memorial was relocated to an approved site at the Human Rights Square, in front of Vienna's Museumsquartier. The memorial continues to be a symbol against racism and xenophobia in Austria, with protesters gathering around it regularly to protest against police brutality, systemic xenophobia, social injustice, and other human-rights-related

causes. The demonstrations were particularly numerous on the occasions of the 10 and 20-year anniversaries of Marcus Omofuma's death as well as during the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020.

The memorial serves as a reminder of Austria's history and the importance of learning from past injustices. In January 2023, the "Omofuma Stone" has been placed under official monument protection.



STATION 2

Memorial against War and Fascism (Albertinaplatz, 1010 Vienna)



Alfred Hrdlicka, *Memorial against War and Fascism*, 1988/1991, marble, granite, limestone and bronze

Photo credit: Thomas Ledl; Source: de.wikipedia.org



Johannes Angerbauer-Goldhoff,
Tooth-Gold-Time-Gold, 1990

Photo courtesy of the artist; Source: Article:
Schult (2018), *The Performative Power of a
Problematic Public Work*



Steven Cohen, *Cleaning Time –
A Shandeh un a Charpeh*, 2007

Photograph: Marianne Greber/Bildrecht,
2018; Source: Article: Schult (2018), *The
Performative Power of a Problematic
Public Work*



Ruth Beckermann,
The Missing Image, 2015

Photograph: Philipp Dietrich; Source:
Article: Schult (2018), *The Performative
Power of a Problematic Public Work*

In the late 1980s, cultural memory and collective historical consciousness in Austria underwent crucial changes which resulted in demand for a more thorough confrontation with Austria's historical role in World War II and, more specifically, the participation of Austrians in the persecution of Austrian Jews. *Memorial against War and Fascism (Mahnmal gegen Krieg und Faschismus)*, placed prominently on the Albertinaplatz in Vienna, is the most notable public work of Viennese artist Alfred Hrdlička (1928–2009), well known for his political and often controversial sculptures, paintings, and graphic works. He lived through extreme socio-political turmoil during the First Austrian Republic, followed by the *Anschluss* of Austria to the German Reich, and WWII. In the 1960s and 1970s Hrdlička became known as an oppositional artist, whose work reflected persistent anti-war and anti-fascist attitudes as well as a strong distrust of the Catholic Church.

The erection of the *Memorial against War and Fascism* in 1988 sparked criticism and heated public debates. Even though it shows an explicit opposition to war and fascism and confronts the horrors of WWII, many felt that the memorial falls short of addressing the role and guilt of Austrians in the genocide of Jews.

Dedicated to “all victims of war and fascism”, the memorial comprises a constellation of several parts – the *Gate of Violence* (with two parts: *Hinterland Front* and *Hero's Death*), *The Street-washing Jew*, *Orpheus enters Hades* and the *Stone of*

the Republic. The dark bronze figure of *The Street-washing Jew*, unlike the other parts made of stone, is placed very low, directly on the ground, without a plinth. It shows a figure of an old bearded Jewish man, scrubbing the pavement with a brush. This is the motif of so-called *Reibpartien* (scrubbing squads), which was a form of humiliation inflicted upon Jews in Vienna after the Anschluss when people were forced to clean the streets with brushes. At the time, the disenfranchised minority groups under National Socialism, especially Jewish citizens, were arrested, their businesses and shops looted and destroyed, many were assaulted and beaten severely – by state authorities and sometimes by ordinary citizens.

Remembering Jewish victims in Austria by portraying a stereotypical visualization of a Jewish person in a degraded position remains highly problematic. While, on the one hand, showing the humiliation suffered by the Jews does bring to the fore the memory of *Reibpartien*, which has been repressed for decades preceding the installation of the memorial, on the other hand, it does not address the horrors and genocide that followed. Moreover, its dedication to “all victims of war and fascism” shows a problematic treatment of all WWII victims on equal terms. Therefore, allowing once again ordinary Austrians to distance themselves from either participation or tolerance of the systemic and societal persecution and victimization of the Jews.

The public controversy surrounding this memorial led also to campaigning for construction of a different memorial that would be dedicated directly to the Jewish victims of fascism. As a response, *Nameless Library* by the British artist Rachel Whiteread (born in 1963) has been installed and unveiled at Judenplatz, Vienna, in 2000. Furthermore, since its placement in the public space, Hrdlička's memorial has functioned as a performative site, where several artists – such as Johannes Angerbauer-Goldhoff, Steven Cohen, and Ruth Beckermann decided to enact their interventions:

In 1990, the Austrian sculptor Johannes Angerbauer-Goldhoff (born 1958) performed a “gold attack” when he covered the figure of *The Street-washing Jew* in gold bronze as part of the intervention *Tooth-Gold-Time-Gold (Zahn-Gold-Zeit-Gold)* in an attempt to elevate the status of the degraded Jew. Angerbauer-Goldhoff's plan was to continue by performing a careful cleaning of the figure. The artist was, however, prevented from doing so by the authorities. *The Street-washing Jew* was removed for a period of two months and re-installed with the addition of barbed wire on its back (added by Hrdlička) to prevent passersby and tourists from sitting on the sculpture.

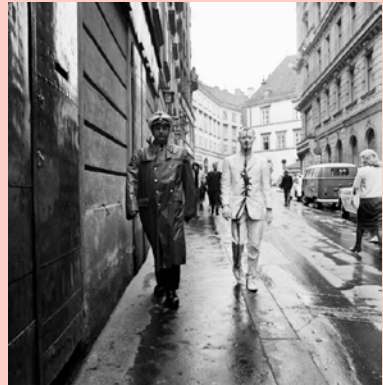
In 2007, Steven Cohen (born 1962), a performance artist from South Africa, realized his intervention *Cleaning Time (Vienna): A Shandeh un A Charpeh* (Yiddish for *A Shame and a Disgrace*) at Albertinaplatz (as well as Heldenplatz and Judenplatz at separate occasions). The artist used symbolic props,

such as an oversized toothbrush and the Star of David, while wearing platform heels, a corset, and a gas mask covering his genitals, and performing the scrubbing of the street on his knees. Cohen's provocative performance elaborates on the figure of *The Street-washing Jew*, alluding to the tropes prevailing in the antisemitic propaganda of the 1930s where Jews were portrayed as wealthy, privileged bourgeoisie, and Jewish bodies as distorted, homosexual, decadent, and perverse. By exposing his own body, the artist reminds that Jewish degradation did not simply end with WWII.

In 2008 at the public screenings at the Viennese Film Museum, the writer and filmmaker Ruth Beckermann (born 1952) encountered a short archival amateur footage of the *Reibpartien*, which shows an amused crowd observing the humiliation of their Jewish fellow citizens. Beckermann's intervention *The Missing Image* (2015) utilized the footage and LED screens, placed at the base of the *Gate of Violence*, to show what was missing in the original version of the memorial— the portrayal of the role and implication of ordinary Austrians as bystanders and culprits in humiliation, torture, and extermination of Jews. This intervention was officially approved and attached to the memorial for close to nine months, eventually being removed at the end of 2015.



STATION 3
Heldenplatz
(1010 Vienna)



Günter Brus, *Wiener Spaziergang (Vienna Walk)*, 1965

Photos by Ludwig Hoffenreich; courtesy of mumok, museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien



VALIE EXPORT, *Heldenplatz (Heroes' Square)*, 1982
(from the *Body Configurations* series)

Photos courtesy of the artist;
Source: Book: Widrich (2014), *Performative Monuments: The Rematerialisation of Public Art*

Heldenplatz (Heroes' Square in English) is a prominent public square located in the heart of Vienna, surrounded by some

of the city's most significant historic buildings (including the Hofburg Palace, the National Library, and the ethnographical Weltmuseum). Built under Emperor Franz Joseph I, the square is known for its role in Austria's troubled history. On March 15, 1938, Adolf Hitler announced the annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany in a speech from the balcony of the Hofburg Palace. The speech was met with cheers from the crowd, and the event marked the end of Austria's independence as a sovereign state.

Today, the Heldenplatz serves as a popular gathering place for locals and tourists alike. The square features a large statue of Archduke Charles of Austria, one of Austria's prominent military commanders. It is also a popular site for concerts, cultural events, and political demonstrations. As a symbol of Vienna's rich cultural heritage and a reminder of Austria's past struggles and triumphs, Heldenplatz often served as an appropriate site for artistic and activist interventions.

In 1965, the Austrian artist and co-founder of Viennese Actionism, Günter Brus (born 1938) performed *Vienna Walk (Wiener Spaziergang)* an action of walking from Heldenplatz towards Stephansplatz, his face and hands painted white and dressed in a white-painted suit featuring a dark irregular line across the middle of his front and back. Due to being stopped by the police, Brus never reached his intended destination. In this unannounced action, the artist functioned as a walking painting, himself performing a work of art and using the monumental

setting of the Heldenplatz as a stage. Even though the performance did not provoke strong reactions from the uninformed passerby audience, it was deemed transgressive by the police and, therefore, interrupted.

Heldenplatz was also the location (along with several others) of one of the actions from VALIE EXPORT's *Body Configurations series*. EXPORT (born 1940) is an Austrian artist and filmmaker, known for her performances, conceptual art, and experimental films. In 1982, the artist was photographed while performing a subtle gesture of adapting her body to the stairs as part of the architecture at Heldenplatz. The action of adjusting the artist's female body to the imposing environment of *Heroes' Square* points to the historical reality of women having to adapt to male authority in a patriarchally constructed society.



STATION 4

Stairs in front of Austrian Parliament

(Dr. Karl Renner-Ring, 1010 Vienna)



VALIE EXPORT, *Elongation*, 1976
(from the *Body Configurations series*)

Photos courtesy of the artist;
Source: Book: Widrich (2014), *Performative
Monuments: The Rematerialisation of
Public Art*

The Austrian Parliament Building is an impressive neoclassical structure on the Ringstraße. Completed in 1883, the building's exterior features a symmetrical façade with monumental stairs, a series of massive columns, and ornate pediments. In front, there is a large sculptural fountain dominated by a statue of the goddess Pallas Athena, symbolizing wisdom and justice. The design reflects the importance placed on classical ideals and the desire to create an enduring symbol of the Austrian state.

VALIE EXPORT's performative action *Elongation* (from the *Body Configurations* series) on the stairs in front of the Parliament Building, was realized and photographed in 1976. The juxtaposition of the vertical sculptural and architectural elements with the horizontally elongated body of the artist, laying on her side, offers a commentary on public power through the prism of sexual symbolism. The artist is laying on the stairs, below the fountain, her body seeming small and insignificant compared to the authoritarian monumentality of the site. In this situation, the female body appears displaced and vulnerable. EXPORT conducted and documented similar actions throughout the most prominent locations in Vienna. By interacting directly with monumental architecture, the artist exposes its hidden mechanisms of power and, in a way, satirizes the institutional, commemorative, and governmental authority of public spaces.

Questions:

- _____ What are appropriate ways of commemorating historical events and what does this depend on?
- _____ Who are the visited monuments and historical locations meant for and how can Viennese citizens interact with them?
- _____ What are the advantages and disadvantages of temporary, performed monuments?
- _____ Do you know about an event from recent history (within the 21st century) that has not yet been publicly commemorated and that you would like to see adequately memorialized?
- _____ Could the bodies of these artists be understood as temporary monuments?
- _____ Do you find what the artists did transgressive or progressive and why?
- _____ Can you find the precise spots where the photographs were likely taken?
- _____ How do you think the performed interventions by the artists ended?
- _____ Do you know of any similar examples of artistic interpretations of public monuments?

Glossary:

- **ACTIONISM:** The term Actionism refers to a form of performance art, particularly the artistic movement Wiener Aktionismus (Viennese Actionism) that was founded in Vienna in 1962. The core representatives Günter Brus, Hermann Nitsch, Otto Mühl, and Rudolf Schwarzkogler performed intentionally shocking actions and rituals that included radical use of the body and even self-harm. (Source: Tate)

- **ANTISEMITISM:** Antisemitism is hatred of and hostility toward Jews as a religious or racial group. The Nazi ideology of antisemitism, which ultimately led to the Holocaust, was characterized by a racist aspect that discriminated against Jews based on their perceived biological traits – including those who had converted to another religion or whose ancestors had converted. (Source: Britannica)

- **ART INTERVENTION:** Art intervention refers to a form of art conceived and intended to interact with an existing structure or situation, such as an institution, an audience, a piece of art, or a particular public space. (Source: Tate)

- **ASYLUM:** Asylum is the protection provided by a country to a foreign individual who has fled their own country due to fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. It is a form of refuge granted to indi-

viduals who cannot safely return to their home country. Asylum seekers must make a formal request to the host country and meet specific criteria to be granted asylum.

(Sources: oesterreich.gv.at ; Britannica)

— **AVANT-GARDE:** In the field of art, avant-garde refers to art that is innovative and that explores new subject matter or forms. The term avant-garde originated in France and translates to advance guard, referring to the portion of an army that leads the way. The notion of the avant-garde encompasses the idea that art should be evaluated primarily on the quality and originality of the vision and ideas presented by the artist. (Source: Tate)

— **DADA:** Dada was an art movement that emerged in Zurich during World War I. To react in denouncement of the war's horrors and absurdity, Dada artists created, often satiric and nonsensical, art, poetry, and performances. Along with its anti-war stance, Dada also opposed bourgeois values and was politically affiliated with the radical left. (Source: Tate)

— **PERFORMANCE ART:** Performance art is a type of art created by carrying out actions that involve the artist or other participants, whether they are live or recorded, spontaneous or pre-planned. In the 20th century, performance art was frequently viewed as a non-traditional approach to making art, offering artists new possibilities to explore physical movement and impermanence, which stood in

contrast to the static nature of painting and sculpture. In the post-war era, due to its immateriality, performance art became associated with conceptual art. (Source: Tate)

— **PERFORMATIVE:** Performative refers to something that is related to an artistic or theatrical performance, whether it involves the creation of art or the act of performing on a stage. Performative can also describe something that has the effect of performing an action, meaning that it influences or produces a particular outcome or result. (Source: Cambridge Dictionary)

— **POC (PEOPLE OF COLOR):** People of Color (in the singular Person of Color) is a self-designation term of people who experience racism and who identify as being a member of a non-white racial or ethnic group. (Sources: Oxford Learner's Dictionaries and Diversity Arts Culture)

— **REIBPARTIEN:** *Reibpartien* (*scrubbing squads* or *scrubbing parties* in English) was a form of public humiliation and antisemitic violence perpetrated against Jews during the Anschluss in 1938. The Nazis would force members of the Jewish population in Vienna to clean the city's streets while being taunted and jeered at by onlooking crowds. The victims were often forced to remove the pro-independence slogans from the canceled Schuschnigg plebiscite. Thereafter, Austria's Jewish population faced further restrictions, discrimination, and prosecution under Nazi law. (Source: Holocaust Encyclopedia)

— **XENOPHOBIA:** Xenophobia is fear, hostility, and contempt of strangers, foreigners, or anything designated as foreign. Xenophobia manifests in the conviction that foreigners and their cultures pose a threat to the identity of one's own country and cannot peacefully integrate into society. The term derives from the ancient Greek words *xenos* (stranger) and *phobos* (fear). Fear and hatred towards outsiders have been present throughout history in various forms, including discrimination and violence toward religious and ethnic groups, racist attacks, hate groups, and even genocide. (Source: Britannica)

Author:

Eva Kovač

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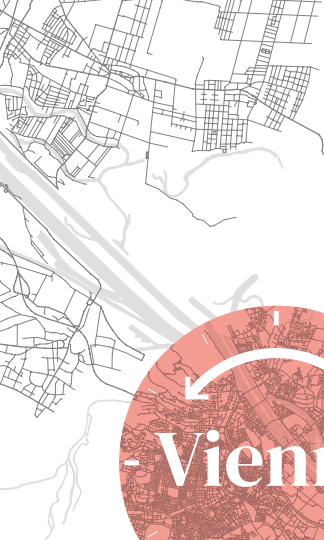
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MY CITY THROUGH TIME



Co-funded by the
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of the European Union