

## VIENNA

## “Into Position” BAUERNMARKT

The big institutions of the Viennese art world are in turmoil, leading some observers to see a paradigm shift in the offing; in the meantime, independently organized projects are where much of the real energy is emerging. At Bauernmarkt, in the city center, for instance, the freelance curator Elsy Lahner, the philosopher Michael Göd, and gallery owner Emanuel Layr (of Galerie Layr & Wüstenhagen) made interim

use of empty office spaces and apartments as well as artists' studios for their curatorial venture “Into Position,” which encompassed discussion groups, a “Mittwochsbar” (Wednesday Bar), an archive in suitcases, and exhibitions of both emerging and established artists organized by a number of invited guests, including the editors of the Austrian art magazine *Spike* and the curators from the project space Temporary Contemporary in London.

The most impressive exhibition was put together by Severin Dünser, the curator of Galerie Krinzinger's project space, and titled “Das Labor” (The Lab)—which was apt, because all the works could be seen as experiments of one sort or another; for instance, Martin Walde's *Battle Angel*, 1993/2007, a forest made of measuring tapes, which seemed to be testing the boundary between fragility and stability. In *Who Loves the Sun*, 2007, Nikolaus Gansterer placed pots of sunflowers atop philosophical treatises, letting us interpret their flourishing in relation

to their foundations. In the middle of the space, Johannes Vogl's *O.T. (Marmeladenbrotstreichmaschine)* (Untitled [Jam Bread Spreading Machine]), 2007, spread jam on toast, which then fell to the floor from a conveyor belt. Objects move, thereby moving other things—a simple artistic model whose exemplar is Roman Signer, represented here by the video *Old Shatterhand*, 2007: With a massage strap around his hips, causing his whole body to vibrate, Signer attempts with trembling hand to hit a target with a pistol shot.

The contributions selected for “The Lab” could be read as a cross-section of contemporary art—from the self-referential through the discourse-oriented to the technoid, and including (more or less) traditional painting and sculpture. Thus, “The Lab” mirrored the entire project of “Into Position” on a smaller scale: No new ideologies were declared nor existing boundaries made manifest; instead, something like a survey was conducted. “Into Position” did not assert an alternative public space, as did many artists in the '90s, nor set a limit on the art market. It was also not implicated in the process of gentrification: The area around the Bauernmarkt already includes the most expensive real estate in Vienna. Questions of general living and working conditions inflected our perception of the works without being foregrounded. With this interfusion of work and context, differentiation as a hallmark of the modern was replaced by postmodern networking—the declared goal of “Into Position,” where established gallery artists met with students at the beginning of their careers, foreign organizers were invited along with locals, and an archive of all current, independently organized projects in Vienna was created. While the big art institutions run in circles in their search for definition and

demarcation, collaboration was practiced here—the young scene in Vienna has taken off.

—Sabine B. Vogel

Translated from German by Diana Reese.

## STOCKHOLM

## Erik Krikortz MODERNA MUSEET

“The day of individual happiness has passed” would be the perfect catchphrase for Erik Krikortz's attempt to measure collective happiness, had it been he who said it, rather than Adolf Hitler. Happiness has long been a subject for deep thinkers and dark rulers. Aristotle called it a virtue; Hitler, something to be sacrificed for the greater good. In his ongoing interactive project, “Emotional Cities,” Krikortz invites his audience to log on to [www.emotionalcities.com](http://www.emotionalcities.com) and register their day-to-day emotional states using a scale of seven faces, from frowning to smiley, each colored to represent a point on the spectrum from violet (sad) to red (happy). In the first two weeks of Krikortz's recent exhibition at the Moderna Museet, more than twenty thousand people clicked on the face that best summed up their emotional grade, and that number continues to grow. Anyone can take part, but the collective input of Stockholm-based respondents becomes part of the project's next phase: Their self-evaluations, averaged every second into one representative color, are currently still lighting up the facades of the five office buildings around Hötorget square, the closest thing to skyscrapers in central Stockholm. Checking out the “Emotional Cities” webcam one snowy evening, I saw the office buildings awash in yellow; Stockholmers were on the whole mildly happy.

Krikortz's scale might seem little more than pop psychology, too crude a means for creditably measuring the subtle shades of human emotion; but academic constructs such as the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS), created by researchers at Stanford University, and other similar instruments, use as few as four questions to quantify emotional well-being. But, of course, a measure of happiness is the measure of discontent, and if nothing else, “Emotional Cities” is captivating in its attempt to visualize, on a mass scale, a Swedish state of mind. In the country where consensus is king, Stockholmers can look up at the Hötorget buildings to see if they are in emotional harmony with their fellow urbanites. Swedes are reputed to be a gloomy bunch, prone to suicide and depression; Krikortz's random sampling suggests otherwise, and statistics back him up. Sweden's suicide rate is not particularly high, and according to the Satisfaction with Life Index (created by social psychologists at the University of Leicester), its citizens rank seventh in the world in happiness. Knowing this prompts us to dissect myths about nationalities. Where *did* that yarn about suicidal Swedes come from? It seems to have taken hold after a 1960 speech by Dwight Eisenhower in which he alleged that “sin, nudity, drunkenness, and suicide” were the direct result of welfare-state excess in Sweden. It was the rumor heard 'round the world.

At the Moderna Museet, Krikortz's project is presented as a sort of advertisement for itself, with wall paintings featuring an urban skyline



View  
Krika  
Cities  
Höto  
Stock



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media,  
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