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7×8. Vienna – Budapest Curators Connection

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7 young curators and an 8-week journey along the Danube. This is about 56 days of infinite chances to understand the complexity of the contemporary art scene between two cities: Vienna and Budapest. The residency program Curators Connection (<http://cartc.hu/index14.php#.Unk6mBw2SA4>) organized by BlockFrei (<http://www.blockfrei.org/>) (Vienna) and cARTc (<http://www.cartc.hu/>) (Budapest) creates an exciting framework for gaining new insights into the region. Tina Kaplár had a nice talk with the curators and the organizers on the 46th day of their cooperation.

(http://thenewcontemporary.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/curatorsconnection_5v.jpg)
Curators Connection

Who were the initiators of the program?

Laura Sipos: The main idea of the project came from cARTc. Later on we developed the program together in order to make it a whole, even though it takes place in two different cities. The Vienna part was initiated by Blockfrei, a very young NGO devoted to cultural exchange programs.

Fruzsina Kigyós: The young curators residency program has been ripening me for a long time to work with curators from the Hungarian/Austrian art scene in the future. I also would have liked to involve another city.



(<https://viennacontemporarymag.com/fruzsina-kigyos/>)



(<https://viennacontemporarymag.com/laura-sipos/>)



(<https://viennacontemporarymag.com/melissa-ho/>)



(<https://viennacontemporarymag.com/ashleeconery/>)



(<https://viennacontemporarymag.com/kimberly-kitada/>)



(<https://viennacontemporarymag.com/yael-santopinto/>)



(<https://viennacontemporarymag.com/roland-ramos/>)



(<https://viennacontemporarymag.com/jordana-franklin/>)



(<https://viennacontemporarymag.com/roberta-palma/>)

How did you select the 7 ?

Laura Sipos: We were thinking a lot about who we should target with this program. It was obvious that we wanted to host young, emerging curators interested in contemporary fine arts, however we were wondering about the amount of previous experience we should aim for. Finally we decided to

choose a small group of people with very different professional backgrounds and treat the project as an interactive, experimental pilot. Interactive in the sense that we asked the participants to take an active role in shaping the program to their own taste and proactively shower us with their feedback.

What is the program like?

Laura Sipos: The Vienna part, which was the first three weeks of the program, is mainly focused on team building and networking; the Budapest part, which takes five weeks, is more focused on curatorial skills and in-depth research, besides gaining a thorough understanding of the contemporary art scene of both cities. We hope that our participants will leave with a tremendous amount of professional contacts and project ideas, and of course we hope to see them again and maybe work together with them in the future.

Fruzsina Kigyós: The main focus is on contemporary conditions of display and understanding issues and institutions that affect contemporary art. Curators Connection aims to foster interesting dialogues on issues surrounding curation and takes a wide perspective in the inquiry into what constitutes “the curatorial” in the Central European region and particularly in Vienna and Budapest today.

You will lead curatorial conversations at Art Market Budapest. What will you integrate from your newly gained experience? How did you select the topics?

Kimberly Kitada: For Art Market Budapest we are exploring the role of the curator through performative actions, panel discussions, tours, audience surveys, and art production. We will incorporate our current perspectives in the contexts of Vienna and Budapest, which focus on the active archive, the production of sociopolitical art, and art “outside” the gallery space. These topics, which will frame each day’s activities, were selected to initiate a larger discourse on contemporary curatorial practice.

Ya’el Santopinto: 7x8 Curatorial Conversations attempts to trace the outer edges of curation: the gray areas where curatorial practice is now just beginning to explore. This boundary condition includes radical practices outside the gallery, involves unexpected audiences, instigates new conversations, traces new histories and futures. These themes are influenced by the connections made over the course of the past eight weeks, having encountered both artists and curators working in these gray zones.

Roland Ramos: I will use my new experiences to create better and more sophisticated proposals for galleries regarding shows. I also integrate the experiences of the gallery owners and the archivists into my discussions. I am very excited about what the future has in store.

Ho Leng: By suggesting the ‘open panels’ in the booth: The panels are there to demonstrate critical debates on current issues that are happening right now in Budapest, particularly addressing the scene of artistic practices, collecting, artists’ exposure, and new ideologies on exhibiting, which might be developed in the time to come. This will draw from the conjecture about the struggling art scene in Budapest, which I have observed and experienced during the residency program.

(http://thenewcontemporary.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/904648_306093212862649_463213110_o.jpg)
Curators Connection at VIENNAFAIR at BWA Warszawa booth led by ArtGuideEast

Each curator has a different story – from Canada to the U.S. through Europe (Rome, Paris, London) down to Singapore – and the comparison and confluence of all these experiences create the perfect precondition for a new affected insight into the contemporary art scene. How has your insight developed in the past weeks?

Roberta Palma: I've improved my way of seeing things and I'm continuously comparing my point of view with all the others. I might be in Budapest but I'm learning a lot about the New York, Toronto, Vancouver, and London art scenes.

Ya'el Santopinto: As an architectural practitioner and sometimes curator, I have spent the past eight weeks gaining knowledge from the art world and its curatorial practices. The discourse on architectural curation is still young, and these conversations with the art world have acted both as a library and a laboratory for me: learning and testing ideas through the expertise of my colleagues and of the many experimental practitioners I have encountered. This will all culminate in the performance at the Art Market, where the space of the 7x8 Curatorial Conversations booth is taken over as a laboratory for curatorial practice.

Jordana Franklin: I have learned an immense amount from the curators, artists, and institutions, etc. we have met over the past six weeks, but I have learned equally as much from my fellow residents. Having the unique opportunity to speak with such a wide network of individuals, who work in different contexts, has provided me with a wider understanding of the art world and the numerous ways one can interact within and outside of the system.

Ho Leng: The concept for what I plan to do in the booth is to re-approach the problematic of the 'Y' generation of art practitioners who are struggling with their sense of belonging or commitment to their passion and individualism in both cities.

<http://thenewcontemporary.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/image.png>

The Curators Connection team

In your blog 7x8curators.blogspot.hu (<http://7x8curators.blogspot.hu/>) you report experiences, raise questions, confront opinions, and collect memories in order to share what you found and what you missed in the art scene of these cities. What have been the highlights for each of you so far?

Roberta Palma: Of course, the way artists and artists' spaces try to define their role in this present situation, where the political culture seems to ignore the role of contemporary art in Budapest, and for artists in Vienna their relation with the rest of the Europe and their feeling about identity and borders in contemporary art scene.

Jordana Franklin: The highlights for me have been the artist studio visits and creating a network of curators and artists I could potentially work with in the future. Another highlight have been the moments when my preconceived notions were challenged and/or changed.

Roland Ramos: In Vienna it is definitely the art interventions and art for art's sake. In Budapest I would say it's the contentious political climate and how it motivates young artists to create movements. I believe we are now in the midst of a new avant-garde movement in Budapest.

Ho Leng: Meeting the directors, senior and assistant curators from Generali Foundation, mumok, the Secession, Ludwig Museum, das weisse haus, Parallel Vienna, and the VIENNAFAIR, and foremost the artist studio visits.

What have you missed?

Roberta Palma: In Budapest I feel that I missed the sense of prospective and the confidence for a better future among artists and curators. We knew that the weight of the past is still remarkable, and because of it the sense of a possible change is not enough strong to be visible for foreigners.

Kimberly Kitada: As the program was organized by Blockfrei and cARTc, they selected the most relevant art spaces to our interests, focusing primarily on contemporary art. While we have been introduced to a broad range of art spaces, artists, curators, galleries, and museums, we may have missed some artists or art spaces (for example, encyclopedic museums or modern art).

Jordana Franklin: In Vienna I missed the collaboration with the artists that seems to be so prevalent here in Budapest. In Budapest I occasionally miss the optimism that Viennese artists had.

Roland Ramos: I missed my family and pizza.

Ho Leng: The sense of collaborative efforts in both cities.

 The Curators Connection team with Róna Kopeczky at Ludwig Museum, Budapest

(<http://thenewcontemporary.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/ludwig.jpg>)

The Curators Connection team with Róna Kopeczky at Ludwig Museum, Budapest

How do the art scenes of Vienna and Budapest compare?

Roberta Palma: These two cities look quite different from each other. It's not easy to illustrate the portrait of a city and of course is not easy at all to compare two different realities. But this is what we are trying to do with our blog. So maybe you will find the answer on it.

Kimberly Kitada: Both Vienna and Budapest share a young, active art scene, even though their funding structures differ. In Budapest the funding in the cultural sector appears to be restricted, whereas funding in Vienna seems more abundant. For example, a number of artists in Vienna received funds to attend artist residency programs abroad, while artists and non-profits in Budapest often struggle to secure adequate funding for projects. Despite these challenges, both cities are incredibly exciting sites for artistic production, and I am very fortunate to have participated in this residency program.

Jordana Franklin: Vienna's art scene is flush with government funding and has minimal government restrictions, which allows artists more freedom and a more comfortable lifestyle. In Budapest, artists and institutions are struggling to adjust to a new cultural scene that previously shared resemblance to Vienna's and is now quite the opposite. Amid the frustration and sadness this drastic change has caused, new and alternative funding models have emerged while others report a desire to leave Hungary.

Roland Ramos: They differ in a variety of ways. First, the political climate of both cities is very different. Public funding is available in Vienna, with little or no oversight as to how the Euros are spent. In Hungary, there is no public funding, but when any is available, it is a painstaking process to document every forint spent.

Ho Leng: There is a lot of 'actionism' and experimental art in Vienna; Budapest's artists are more technically disciplined in their art practice. However, both cities' artists have a common agenda: sociopolitics.

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Curators Connection is an intensive 8-week program (October 9 – November 31, 2013) that looks directly at the roles and responsibilities of curators as mediators between artists, objects, institutions, experiences, and audiences. The main focus is on contemporary conditions of display and understanding issues and institutions that affect contemporary art. Curators Connection aims to

foster interesting dialogues on issues surrounding curation and takes a wide perspective in the inquiry into what constitutes “the curatorial” in the Central European region and particularly in Vienna and Budapest today.

Block Frei www.blockfrei.org (<http://www.blockfrei.org>) is an independent cultural organization based in Vienna. It is conceived as a platform for innovative cultural praxis, with the goal to support cooperations between cultural groups from Austria and Southeastern Europe. Such an interaction can increase the visibility of the cultural variety present in Austria today, where ethnic groups from the mentioned region form a significant part of the society. At the same time, these types of projects can emphasize the benefits this diversity has for the society.

Laura Sipos is an independent art educator based in Vienna, Austria. She is currently working on her MA in Museum Studies – Learning and Visitor Studies in Art Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester, England. In recent years she has worked at several museums, such as the Tate Modern, London, the Kunsthalle Budapest, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Beijing, and the Kunstforum Wien. She has also taken part in various civil initiatives and has contributed as organizer and facilitator to the work of various NGOs, such as kultúrAktív and Blockfrei. Her main field of interest is contemporary art and how it serves as a tool of social responsibility.

cARTc www.cartc.hu (<http://www.cartc.hu>) is a non-profit cultural organization based in Budapest, Hungary. It organizes exhibitions, (online) courses – cARTclab, fellowships, as well as a residency program for curators.

Fruzsina Kigyós is project leader at Curators Connection and cARTclab and editor-in-chief assistant at Flash Art Hungary. She received a diploma in culture and art management and art market studies. Fruzsina has worked for art galleries, institutions and as an assistant curator. She is actively engaged in organizing international exchange projects in Hungary and beyond its borders. She is also the coordinator of an online course programme which aims to provide as much information and experience as possible about contemporary art for people employed within this field.

ABNC is an independent curator working in Paris and Vancouver. While in possession of a BA in Art History, ABNC’s curatorial practice has included: public art galleries, commercial galleries, international art fairs, private collections and artist management. It is ABNC’s belief that the field of art benefits from curators who have an understanding of business, creative funding, marketing and public relations, as well as art history. As the curatorial role shifts from that of a cultural gate-keeper to a collaborator, ABNC endeavors to respond by co-creating reflective environments that necessitate context specific art production and facilitate sustaining relationships between contemporary art and contemporary community.

Bauhausist finds ways to use architecture and design as social catalysts. Her recent work includes the design and launch of an international ideas competition for the unused spaces of a disappearing neighborhood, and the installation of a site-specific viewing apparatus in the hallways of a local hotel. Bauhausist has published work in several north American publications, and her collaborative projects have been exhibited at the Venice Biennale of Architecture and at shows in Toronto, Montreal, California and Japan. Bauhausist works as an architectural designer, curator and collaborator, and is currently learning tactics for production and education from the art world.

Jordana Franklin is an independent curator based in Toronto, Canada. She possesses an MA in Art History and has worked for non-profit arts organizations, museums, and commercial galleries on both land and sea. Her previous curatorial work includes co-curating an exhibition at the Katzman Kamen Gallery in Toronto and her interests are focused on exploring identity politics and creating interactive exhibition spaces. In addition to visual art, she is passionate about travel and creative writing and is continuously seeking ways to merge them all together.

Kimberly Kitada is an independent curator based in New York. She received a BA in Art History and Classics from Bucknell University and an MA in Museum Studies from New York University. Her primary research interests are contemporary curatorial practice, performance art, and time-based media. She recently co-curated an exhibition called (in)complete at TEMP Art Space in New York, and has worked for a number of arts institutions and non-profits, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Independent Curators International (ICI).

A photographer, **Holeng**, also works as an independent curator based in London, her recent curated exhibition 'An Urban Analogue' (<http://www.an-urban-analogue.org/>) was held during the Annual International Visual Sociology Association Conference 2013 in London. She holds a MA in Photography & Urban Cultures with Goldsmiths College, University of London and earned a BA Hons in Graphic Communications with Loughborough University. Her Forthcoming projects include Lyrical Memoirs: The Old 'Dutch' House (c.1928), "Southeast Asia in Transition" (<http://projectsoutheastasia.com/academic-events/sea-symposium-2014/posters>) Symposium 2014 University of Oxford. Curatorial work has opened doors for her to be nefariously open-minded, and to explore many aspects of ideology, theory and philosophy. Questioning art's cultural relevance as a visual medium in today's society.

Roberta Palma – Blue*- is a young curator based in Rome. She has completed her master's degree in Contemporary Art at Sapienza University and she has collected different experiences in art spaces between Rome and Milan. She worked as a gallery assistant, contributor for art magazine and intern at Viafarini a non-profit organization. She is fond of literature, writing, sailors and sea stories. Her curatorial research is focused on young artists practices, especially their engagement with identity, social, geopolitical issues and investigations into cultural diversity.

In 2005 **Roland Ramos**, worked for Michael Somoroff, an artist based in New York and was illuminated by the powerful effect art can have on society. Since, Roland has created multiple art festivals including the Annual "Digable Arts Festival" and "Hudson County Art Slam." Roland has curated numerous exhibitions, most recently "Four Word Progress" at Jersey City Hall and "Island Girls" at Gallery 58. He is part of "Two Doors," a new movement which pairs artists and residents in collaboration, showcasing emerging artists in an informal setting. Roland was appointed as one of the directors of "Arts in Action," where he co-organized the weekly "Creative Grove Artist Market." Roland also founded "720 Creation Station," a pilot program at the Monroe Center for the Arts in Hoboken, providing low cost studio rental and gallery opportunities for artists. Roland is now tickled pink to be part of "Curators Connection" and all the amazing things going on in Vienna and Budapest. ART INTERVENTION!!!!

Tags: [Art Market Budapest](#), [ArtGuideEast](#), [blockfrei](#), [BWA Warszawa](#), [cartc](#), [das weisse haus](#), [Fruzsina Kígyós](#), [Generali Foundation](#), [Laura Sipos](#), [Ludwig Museum Budapest](#), [MUMOK](#), [Parallel Vienna](#), [Róna Kopeczky](#), [viennafair](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

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