Infrastructures of Independence

Carlos Kong on Independent Space Index 2026, Vienna

July 18, 2026



Ungargasse, Vienna

When we founded *The Public Review*, we set out "to publish independent criticism that fills a gap—and, ideally, challenges—the existing criticism of our time." By "independent," we meant criticism at a distance from market forces, not sponsored by corporations or beholden to advertisers, and uninfluenced by professional and social relationships with artists, gallerists, curators, or other institutional stakeholders. Our intention was, and remains, to avoid affiliations (financial, interpersonal) that undermine the project of criticism, whether by imposing incompatible agendas or introducing conflicts of interest.

However, just like that other word we cling to, "public," "independent" can mean a lot of things. A few weeks ago, one of our founding editors, Carlos Kong, attended a festival showcasing Vienna's immense network of independent art spaces. Over the course of the weekend, in spaces with vastly diverging structural and infrastructural conditions, Kong repeatedly wondered about the ambiguous contours of independence. Here, Kong shares a diaristic report that captures the texture of the city and the variety the festival had to offer while raising unignorable material and political questions.

Independent Space Index 2026, Vienna, May 29–31, 2026.

May 27

My journey to Vienna to report on Independent Space Index 2026 starts before I leave Berlin. Tomorrow, I will travel there as an invited external writer, tasked with producing a "field report" that covers the annual weekend-long festival of Vienna's independent art spaces. On Instagram, I scroll across a reel in which Tayla Myree, a Vienna-based cultural worker, critically discusses the controversy surrounding a forthcoming event with tech billionaire Peter Thiel planned as part of the Wiener Festwochen's annual summer program. An advocate of the Trump administration, Thiel is the founder of the software company Palantir, whose AI surveillance technologies have been deployed in human rights abuses and war crimes around the world—for instance, in ICE raids in the US and in Israel's genocidal military campaigns in Gaza and Lebanon. Thiel was invited by the Festwochen's artistic director Milo Rau, whose refashioning of the theater into a space of conflictual action has increasingly devolved into political spectacle. Before arriving in Vienna, I encounter an artistic director of a prominent institution attempting to legitimize an architect of techno-fascism and militarism as a public intellectual.

While I'm still in Berlin, protests are occurring today in Vienna and throughout Austria against massive budget cuts, planned at both the federal and municipal levels, to culture and academia in the forthcoming years. Following similar recent cuts in Paris and Berlin, major slashes to cultural funding will definitively occur in Vienna. While the Wiener Festwochen platforming Peter Thiel has a current operating budget of 16.5 million euros—a combination of funding from the city of Vienna and private institutional donors like Erste Bank—the festival I am traveling to Vienna to cover, the Independent Space Index 2026, operates with minimal financial means in a self-organized structure, coordinating the city's independent artist-run spaces into a weekend-long showcase. Throughout my days there, the horizon of even more precarity will hang over the independent scene like a question mark.

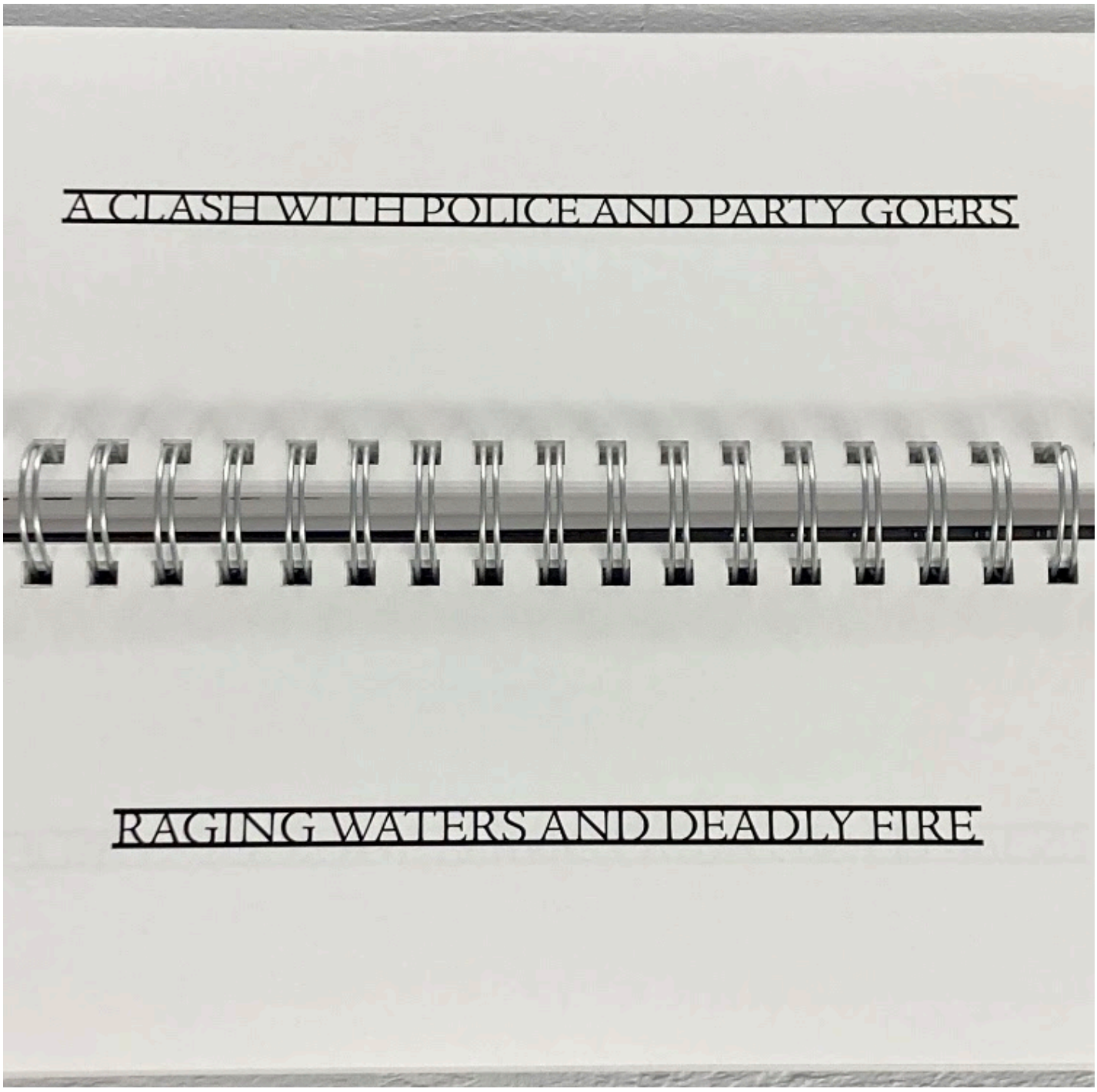
May 28

Last minute packing-induced procrastination. I'm not traveling if I'm not also extremely underslept. Bleary-eyed on my laptop in the Berlin airport, I come across *Arts of the Working Class*'s publication of the lecture transcripts from "What Is Infrastructural Critique?"—a conference held in celebration of the work of Marina Vishmidt (1976–2024) in October 2025 at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, where the late theorist taught. Her notion of "infrastructural critique" offers a crucial vocabulary and artistic-political praxis for sensing and sabotaging contemporary infrastructural power. For abolishing the infrastructural

reproduction of a present dominated by automated forever wars, technocratic nihilism, and the burning planet. As Vishmidt argues, “infrastructure might be that which repeats, but this repetition is not without difference: it can monotonously produce the same differences (such as infrastructures that reproduce social inequalities), but it can also be a means of ensuring the reproduction of a wholly different form of social life over time.”[1]

There, in the airport, I skim through Rose-Anne Gush’s text “Figures of Entropy as Anchors of Value,” which reads Vishmidt’s writings on entropy within infrastructures in relation to political ecologies, fossil fuel extraction, and the current “geophysical meltdown,” in Vishmidt’s words. Gush cites an amazing quote from Fredric Jameson’s essay “The Aesthetics of Singularity” (2015), in which he writes that “in our time all politics is about real estate. […] Postmodern politics is essentially a matter of land grabs, on a local as well as global scale. Whether you think of the issue of Palestine or of gentrification and zoning in American small towns, it is that peculiar and imaginary thing called private property in land which is at stake. The land is not only an object of struggle between the classes, between rich and poor; it defines their very existence and the separation between them.”[2]

The notions of infrastructure and all politics as reducible to property circle in my head and foreshadow thoughts that recur throughout the weekend. Thoughts that remain fragmented impressions, that I am trying to retrospectively synthesize. As I attempt to visit as many of the sixty-eight independent spaces in Vienna that have put on exhibitions as part of Independent Space Index 2026, I attend not only to their displayed artworks but grapple with how best to attune to their structural and infrastructural conditions—their spatial, economic, and sociopolitical realities—that make maintaining an independent art space and claiming the status of independence possible.



Spiralbindung, Salon für Buchkunst, Independent Space Index 2026

Think of your desires as realities



Spiralbindung, Salon für Buchkunst, Independent Space Index 2026

Vienna is a city that I have returned to various times, at distinct points in my adult life. No longer foreign but still not quite familiar. A city that has provided me hospitality in the form of multiple writing residencies (and some romance and heartbreak), which have been essential to my being and becoming a writer.

It's also a city that, in spite of its post-imperial hangover, I still associate with architectural beauty. So it's always jarring to glimpse the gargantuan steelworks of the Schwechat Refinery on its outskirts—the first thing you see from the S-Bahn into the city from the airport. Reopened in 1961 after its use by the Nazis during the Second World War, Schwechat is one of the largest inland oil refineries in Europe. It can process up to 9.6 million tons of crude oil annually; its production of jet fuel is funneled directly to the adjacent airport. It is one of Austria's largest greenhouse gas emitters, a site of the toxic infrastructures that seemingly power everything, including my travels here.

I am staying on Ungargasse. My own private pleasure at staying on one of the most iconic literary-historical streets, forever enshrined in and synonymous with Ingeborg Bachmann's novel *Malina* (1971). The site of the writer protagonist's doomed love triangle and iconic post-fascist Mitteleuropa-induced mental breakdown. Yes, I too have lived in Ivan and will die in Malina. I channel the spirit of Bachmann, one of the most badass literary diagnosticians of fascism's enduring psychic traces. The building facades along Ungargasse seem to exert an outward pressure, as if suffocating the narrow street on which a tram speeds through like an incision in space.

I stave off my exhaustion and Ungargasse's death drive and go to the opening night of the Independent Space Index. Wandering on my own, orienting myself in the city, pacing myself for the days to come. While walking through Mariahilf, the buzzy 6th District lined with a central shopping street, my eyes dart to graffiti that I also see around Berlin: EIGENTUM IST DIEBSTAHL (PROPERTY IS THEFT). Thoughts drifts back to Jameson's line that "all politics is about real estate" and is "a matter of land grabs," which so lucidly underscores the infrastructural and scalar connections between local urban gentrification and ongoing settler colonial violence worldwide.

My first stop is Salon für Kunstbuch, a publishing house and archive of artist books founded by artist-publisher Bernhard Cella. The exhibition Spiralbindung showcases artist books with spiral binding, which "allows the pages to lie completely flat, alters the relationship between front and back, and makes the technical connection between the sheets visible," as the exhibition text states.[3] I glance over Cella's immaculate display of s l-bound artist books and appreciate the capaciousness of what spiral binding enables as a humble structural device. Books opened to specific page sequences and placed adjacent to

each other in associative constellations. I flip through a rectangular-shaped artist book and land on a pair of statements on opposing pages that jump out into the present: “A CLASH WITH POLICE AND PARTY GOERS” / “RAGING WATERS AND DEADLY FIRES.”

I then make my way to Dito, a nearby space run by five artists, set in a narrow below-ground recess beneath a residential building. I am drawn to Tuure Leppänen’s photographs, which feature arrangements of plaster casts that the artist modeled on shapes from his childhood drawings that no longer exist. There’s a sense of suspension in the photographs, as if the plaster pieces have been archaeologically excavated from another time and rearranged within unsettling landscapes. The images make me think of affects as infrastructures that bind memory fragments to possible futures, that have the potential to compel other ways of building and inhabiting the world.



Photograph by Tuure Leppänen, installation view, *Niklas Feinik & Tuure Leppänen: resin in my brain glues my pictures together*, Dito, 2026



“Indexing as Method: Toward, In Relation, Beyond,” Panel Discussion at Kunsthalle Wien, Independent Space Index 2026

May 29

I'm at Kunsthalle Wien for the first panel of "Indexing as Method: Toward, In Relation, Beyond," a discussion series that opens each day of Independent Space Index 2026, curated and hosted by Vienna-based curator Michał Leszuk. In this first session, "Toward the Criticality of Independent Spaces," the invited respondents discuss their respective independent spaces. I appreciate Michał's prompt to think the "index" in "Independent Space Index" not only as an infrastructure that assembles Vienna's independent spaces, but also in relation to the semiotic figure of the index, which points to something. What realities do independent spaces index, point to?

The panel circles around the notion of the "independent space," often used interchangeably with "project space," "off-space," "alternative space," or "artist-run space." The Independent Space Index defines an independent space as "a self-organized exhibition space that is primarily and programmatically dedicated to contemporary art," as "open and accessible to the public" and "engage[d] in mediation work," and as "ultimately not a profit-driven endeavor."[4] Throughout the discussion, questions recur around the ambiguous status of "independence." What are independent spaces actually claiming independence from? From the art market? From specific sources of funding (or lack thereof)? From hegemonic politics? Is independence a mode of artistic autonomy? The speakers describe their spaces as "flexible," "agile," "hermetic," "ephemeral"—and all municipally funded for now but significantly less feasible to maintain amid current inflation and impending budget cuts.

After the talk, I visit *flowers* at Laurenz, located in a former horse stable in a residential courtyard on the Linke Wienzeile, run by Aaron Amar Bhamra and Monika Georgieva. Originally part of the Klima Biennale (Climate Biennial), the exhibition focuses on the seemingly innocent topic of flowers in art, as a retort to art's instrumentalization in greenwashing campaigns. Flowers often do not fare well in cultural history: recall Hegel's description of the men he termed "world-historical individuals," who "must trample down many an innocent flower—crush to pieces many an object in its path."[5] The exhibition critically recuperates flowers from trampled figures of decorative excess into sites of infrastructural power. As Pieternel Vermoortel writes in a discerning exhibition text, "What appears as natural is produced through coordination across material, financial, and logistical distances, across the same distributed systems that structure contemporary labor."[6] In the exhibited loans of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century textiles embroidered with flowers by anonymous women artists from the Archive of the University of Applied Arts, the fl ers materialize gendered artistic labor long rendered invisible. Displayed adjacently is Jennifer Tee's *Taxus as Migration Bird #1* (2024), in which flowers are presented as remnants

Jennifer Tee's *Tampan Migration Bird #1* (2024), in which flowers are presented as remnants of migration and extraction. Collaged from tulip petals in the patterns of ceremonial Tampan textiles from Lampung, Sumatra, Tee's work deftly recasts Dutch colonial tulip mania within the visual grammar of Indonesian Dutch migrant life-worlds.



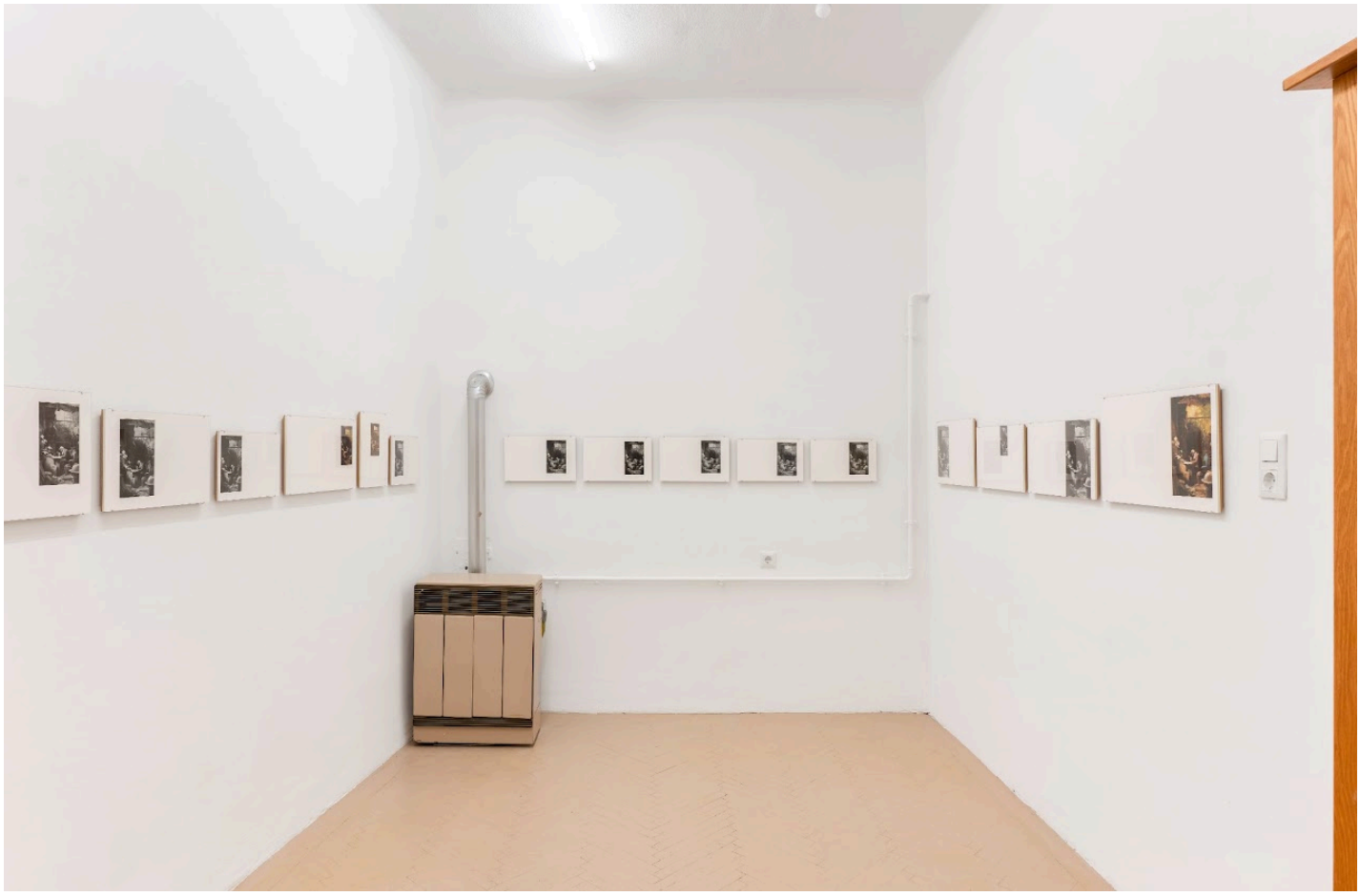
flowers, installation view, Laurenz, 2026



Unknown Artist, *Handschuhe / Gloves*, approx. 1870

It takes me a minute to find Nectar. No location is specified for where the space actually is within the newly constructed residential building I'm standing in front of. Eventually I come to notice its ground-floor side door, affixed with a sign from the PR Immobilien/Real Estate agency that says "Geschäftslokal zu Mieten," or "retail space for rent." Within Felizitas Moroder's solo exhibition, I most like the life-sized boxes made of marble, in the shape of normal cardboard boxes used for storage and transport. Hidden from immediate view within the exhibition, they embody the unseen bureaucratic infrastructures that undergird the space itself.

A mouse scurries past me as I'm buzzed into the residential building in Favoriten, the 10th District south of the main station, that houses Twinkler, run by Demian Kern and Lucie Pia. There, I come across what will be my favorite exhibition of the weekend, *Other previous losses* by Luciano Pecoits. On display is an installation oriented around the artist's long-term provenance research on Carl Spitzweg's painting *Scholar of Natural Sciences* (1879), now in the collection of the Milwaukee Art Museum. Spitzweg's enigmatic painting can be read as an allegory of German colonialism. Its titular scholar sits in his study, surrounded by the plundered objects that originated academic disciplines—an Egyptian sarcophagus (archaeology), stone tablets (philology), animal skeletons (biology), and a globe (geography). The latter points to the painting's colloquially known title, *Das ist deine Welt* (This is Your World), which underscores its colonial vision of the world as there for the West's taking. Sometime during the tumultuous period in which it was expropriated from its Jewish owners by the Nazis and restituted after the Second World War, the painting was retouched, its bird figure removed from the tableau—a buried fact that Pecoits discovered in 2024 in his research across provenance, conservation, and archival collections. In an installation that is minimalist but ambitious in scope, Pecoits presents a row of printed reproductions of the painting as it appears in art history books, with the surrounding text removed to produce variously sized frames of white negative space. The presentation heightens attention to the visual conventions of the painting's reproduction as well as the disappearance of the bird figure after its retouching—who becomes personified as a phantom figure of historical prophecy in an eloquent exhibition text by artist Joshua Leon. The surrounding blank spaces moreover evoke silences in the archival record and frame how artworks are manipulated within the writing of art histories that remain unfinished. Pecoits additionally displays a proposal for an updated wall label for the painting that foregrounds the historical violence of its expropriation and retouching, as well as altered dataset entries in the Milwaukee Art Museum's collections database—a speculative infrastructural cut into the institutional systems of archiving and mediation.



Luciano Pecoits, *Other previous losses*, installation view, Twinkler, 2026

May 30

My day starts with more Vienna-related noise on social media. While visiting the city, the Berlin-based artist and comedian Mila Panić has made a reel about the exhibition *Lebt und arbeitet in Wien* (*Living and Working in Vienna*): *Contemporary Art from Vienna* at the Kunsthalle Wien. Speaking in a hyperbolic comedian-style tone, Panić decries that the show is largely "all white artists," and that artists from Vienna's significant migrant communities, such as Turkish, Balkan, and Asian artists, remain unrepresented. I'm not here to review this exhibition and don't manage to visit the larger of its two venues. But I overhear local murmurings that some are not pleased with the artist selections—as is also immediately apparent in the video's comments section. Who is qualified to represent the status of "living and working in Vienna"? While the exhibition does partly feature a diverse selection (56 artists from 42 cities in 18 countries), Panić's point still stands. At least some of the international positions represented in the exhibition are established artists who have moved to Vienna for teaching or career opportunities, and their artistic practices do not reflect the realities of Austria's transformation into a postmigrant society.

I felt similarly to Panić when I came to Vienna for a critics' residency in 2023, where I had mandatory list of studio visits to complete and saw a few too many practices by white artists whose work felt divorced from broader sociopolitical and structural realities. Thankfully, this was not the case during my time at Independent Space Index 2026. The aspiration of artistic independence perhaps allows for other positionalities and narratives to be centered, as is evident in the Asian diasporic collective Mai Ling's Spring Stretch festival at 8B®1, in Martina Lajczak's photographic work on Polish migrant women in Austria at Plateau, and in German-Guinean artist Ava Binta Giallo's exhibition at School.

I particularly enjoy visiting *Technologies of Togetherness* at VBKÖ (Vereinigung bildender Künstlerinnen Österreichs), the Association of Austrian Women Artists, which was founded in 1910 and still occupies the same premises in the central 1st District. Upon entering, I encounter the "living library of becomings"—a shelf filled with books on "intersectional, decolonial, and queer feminist voices" and a prominent selection on Palestine. On display are the remains of a poetry workshop and performance facilitated by poet Mihret Kebede with members of the Schwarze Frauen Community, a grassroots association that supports Black women in Austria. In the screening room, the Super-8 film *An Herbal Narrative* portrays foraging in Vienna, made by the artist duo Drága Cardo with together the vendors who sell *Augustin*, a local street magazine. The presentation at VBKÖ emphasizes process over a fi. .ned exhibition, as well as infrastructures of collective learning and solidarity in

collaboration.



Living Library of Becoming, Vereinigung bildender Künstlerinnen Österreichs (VBKÖ, Association of Austrian Women Artists), 2026

I see another thoughtful exhibition at Size Matters: Space for Art & Film in Margareten, the 5th District. It's one of five exhibitions that make up "Dérive – Horizont Stadt," which commemorates twenty-five years of the Vienna-based urbanism journal *dérive–Zeitschrift für Stadtforschung* and includes works by artists who have collaborated with the magazine. At the center of the small space is Katrin Hornek's poignant installation *testing grounds (A ghost that cannot be laid to rest)* (2024), comprised of bedsheets and children's pajamas printed with the bright colors of sonar mapping around former nuclear testing sites like Bikini Atoll. Along the perimeter of the uncanny laid-out bed are turtles cast in concrete and polyurethane. I'm told I can pick them up. Doing so reveals iPhones embedded on their undersides, each of which contains a stream of messages—photographs, voice notes, and maps—that document the imperialist violence of nuclear war and its toxic damages that endure in bodies and ecosystems today. Alongside Hornek's installation is the video documentation of Selma Selman's performance *Mercedes Matrix* (2019), in which the Roma artist and her family physically deconstruct and recycle a Mercedes Benz, as well as Allan Sekula's photograph *Museum Guards, Seattle* (2008) from his *Shipwreck and Workers* series. The image depicts two museum guards in their office, which they have densely decorated with posters (mostly of art: Tatlin, Picasso, Basquiat). Together, the works of Hornek, Selman, and Sekula point to the labor of perception and action necessary for resisting capitalist infrastructures of toxicity, extractivism, and alienation. In Sekula's photograph, one poster includes the question, "How can you rebel culturally within a system that consumes cultural rebellion?"—a question that addresses the fundamental infrastructural paradox at the heart of running an independent space.

I also like the hand-painted drinks list at Size Matters, which, in reference to its new prices, ends with "Sorry, inflation."

The night begins at Can, where I'm less interested in the show itself, but am more taken by the area's towering buildings at the edge of the 3rd District next to a highway junction, the anonymity of its corporatized urban space, and the sign pointing in the direction of the city of Vienna's "Tuberculosis prevention and control" next to the exhibition space. And how we all sort our bottles, pick up cigarette butts, and sweep the outdoor space before we leave—the labor of maintaining an independent space laid bare.

The night ends at the club Titanic on Theobaldgasse. Arriving there, I'm transported into the past. I coincidentally spent the summer of 2018 living in the building next to the club while on a writing residency where I did little to no writing. The summer I read *Malina*. A s' ner when everything seemingly fractured and I courted the void but emerged to say: I am. But tonight, descending into Titanic, the figure of a sinking ship somehow feels timelier.



Drinks List at Size Matters. Space for Art & Film



Katrin Hornek, *testing grounds* (A *ghost that cannot be laid to rest*), 2024

May 31

Sunday. My day starts by wandering through Währing, the 18th District, and the neighboring Alsergrund, the 9th. This area once again takes me into terrains of memory and their affective, world-building infrastructures. This part of the city was the first place I visited and stayed, in 2015, at the apartment of an artist lover from Kosovo who lived in Vienna. I had traveled from Heidelberg—where I was supposedly living while actually drifting aimlessly across Europe—to Salzburg to see a Carolee Schneemann retrospective. We met in the screening of Schneemann's *Fuses* (1967). Amid the film's oceanic sequences of erotic liberation, a stranger whispered "come to Vienna" to me. And so I did. I will never forget Wilhelm-Exner-Gasse. For those few days, I was surrounded by artists brimming with ideas and desires that aligned with my experience of the world. Among them, I was saturated with a hunger for art and life—a prefiguration for my young incoherent self of how I wanted, but was not yet able, to live.

I walk to Kulturdrogerei, one of the veteran independent spaces that recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary. Located in a former pharmacy, the space now also includes a parklet out front, a small street-side oasis overflowing with plants. There on view is the exhibition *d e f* by Stefan Brandmayr, Christel Kiesel, and Felix Pöchhacker, three artists who run the independent space EFES 42–Verein für Skulptur in Linz. I am drawn to the ethos of the three artists' respective works, which together index the messiness of collective life—as visible in the chewed sunflower seed shells strewn across the floor, a remnant from the opening night. Felix Pöchhacker's *untitled (Automat)* (2026) is a geometric structure affixed with a drinks price list, surrounded by bottlecaps on the ground. I compare the post-inflation prices from Size Matter's drinks list to the pre-inflation prices on Pöchhacker's sculpture, and project onto the work a longing for more affordable times.

My Independent Space Index 2026 ends in the 2nd District at Kevin, now run by Michał Leszuk and Gina Merz. In her solo exhibition *Chariot*, Asta Lynge has built structures out of playing cards, atop which heavy cast bronze weights have been precariously placed. Seemingly defying physics, the playing cards structures hold up and resist the crushing weight of the bronze toppers, though some have already fallen. I can't help but read them as allegories of both independent spaces and infrastructures—of how collectivity and solidarity, even in the most fragile configurations, can lead to survival against the weight of top-down economic and political pressure. Yet they also point to how the infrastructures of the present are also houses of cards. They can improbably persist or unexpectedly fall, for better or for w e.



Asta Lynge, *Untitled*, Kevin 2026.



Felix Pöchhacker, *untitled* (*Automat*) (2026), detail, *d e f*, Kulturdrogerei, 2026.

Peter Thiel's planned talk is canceled by the Wiener Festwochen. There seems to be overall relief, though the incident perhaps could now appear as an instance of so-called "cancel culture," rather than a stance against platforming fascists.

I try to reflect on the intense and stimulating weekend at the Independent Space Index 2026. Totalizing summaries are impossible, given the many varied exhibitions I saw. I was interested in how the independent spaces sat in relation to public space, private property, and real estate. How these material conditions structure the possibility of running an independent space. And how actually finding the spaces—traversing through back streets, tunnels, residential entryways, gardens, and my own Vienna memoryscapes—nuanced my experience of their exhibitions.

I think about the role of independent spaces today. In Berlin, among the several independent spaces that I attend, a prominent concern in the last years has been the rising authoritarianism and censorship against artists and cultural workers who resist their ideological and material complicity in Germany's *Staatsräson*, its state support of Israel that has led to a societal blindness to the genocide in Palestine and mass silencing of those who stand against it. In April 2026, the Art Worker Solidarity (AWS) network organized the symposium "Culture Workers Organizing Against the Authoritarian Turn" at the Berlin independent space Anorak to independently self-organize against the precaritization of artists via authoritarian tactics of defunding and censorship. As the AWS writes, "Modes of self-organization can restructure not just culture but infrastructure more broadly, holding it accountable to people's needs rather than to the demands of militarized state structures and profit-driven interests."[7]

Many of the exhibitions in Vienna engaged, in coded ways, with infrastructures of the present that we know are damaging but whose reproduction we seem unable to overcome. But little was spoken, at least in my three days there, about how the status of independence relates to material infrastructures of implication beyond artistic institutions. It is a known fact that Austria continues to export arms and military goods to Israel—shipments of over 1 million euros in 2024—and that Austrian Rotax engines power Israeli drones that fly over Gaza.[8] I don't doubt that discussions about this have and continue to take place, both in public and private. But it is not enough to outwardly lament budget cuts that will further precaritize artists and potentially shutter independent spaces without simultaneously resisting the policies of the same conservative governments that slash culture to increase military budgets while silencing artists and academics whose practices contest the logics of

fascism and genocide—including in Vienna.[9]

I think back to a curious exchange during a Q&A of the first panel of "Indexing as Method." An audience member raised a question surrounding the exclusionary politics of independent spaces, unsustainable precarity, and how things need to change. A fellow audience member, a prominent artist and director of an independent space participating in the festival, shot back something like, "We are artists, not union organizers! Showing art is political! Serving beer is political!" Setting aside the fact of historical precedents of artists organizing unions, I don't disagree that showing art is political. But rather, I think that showing art is a place from which politics should begin, not end. My thoughts drift to questions posed by Andreas Petrossiants as "tests of infrastructural critique" in *Arts of the Working Class*: "How do infrastructural movements within the art field relate to wider movements? How do they relate to circulation struggles at the supermarket, at a pipeline blockade, or within other gaps in the capitalist infrastructure?"[10] Ultimately, I come away from Independent Space Index 2026 ever more invested in how independent spaces can leverage their claim of "independence" to negotiate their simultaneous states of implication in the material conditions of cultural, economic, and political structures. And how they can navigate ways to resist the reproduction of detrimental infrastructures that we know are failing us, both within and beyond the realm of art.

1 Marina Vishmidt, “Between Not Everything and Not Nothing: Cuts Toward Infrastructural Critique,” in *Former West: Art and the Contemporary after 1989*, eds. Maria Hlavajova and Simon Sheikh (MIT Press, 2017), 268.

2 Fredric Jameson, “The Aesthetics of Singularity,” *New Left Review* 92 (2015): 131, quoted in Rose-Anne Gush, “Figures of Entropy as Anchors of Value,” *Arts of the Working Class*, April 27, 2026, https://artsoftheworkingclass.org/text/figures-of-entropy-as-anchors-of-value.

3 Salon für Kunstbuch, “Spiralbindung,” 2026, https://2026.independentspaceindex.at/exhibitions/spiralbindung.

4 Independent Space Index, “What is an Independent Space?,” https://independentspaceindex.at/about.

5 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, III. Philosophical History*, §35, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/hi/history3.htm.

6 Pieternel Vermoortel, “The Stable. The Ground. The Secretion.,” exhibition text for “flowers” at Laurenz, 2026.

7 Art Worker Solidarity, “Culture Workers Organising Against the Authoritarian Turn,” *Arts of the Working Class*, April 27, 2026, https://artsoftheworkingclass.org/text/culture-workers-organising-against-the-authoritarian-turn.

8 See, for instance, Raimund Löw, “Was hat Österreich tatsächlich an Israel geliefert?,” *Falter*, June 5, 2026, https://www.falter.at/maily/20260605/raimund-israel, and “Österreichische Motoren in Kampfdrohnen über Gaza?,” *Falter*, August 21, 2025, https://www.falter.at/maily/20250821/oesterreichische-motoren-in-kampfdrohnen-ueber-gaza.

9 Rose-Anne Gush and Danny Hayward, “How Austrian Liberals Silenced Pro-Palestinians,” *Jacobin*, December 19, 2024, https://jacobin.com/2024/12/austria-liberals-pro-palestine-antisemitism.

10 Andreas Petrossiants, “The Test of Infrastructural Critique: 26 Questions on Abolition and Organization,” *Arts of the Working Class*, June 6, 2026, https://artsoftheworkingclass.org/text/the-test-of-infrastructural-critique-petrossians.

Carlos Kong is an art historian and critic, and a cofounder and editor of *The Public Review*.

Images of Ungargasse; Spiralbindung; Tuure Leppänen; Living Library of Becoming; drink list; and Felix Pöchhacker: Photo by the author

Indexing as a Method panel image: Photo: Nikola Hergovich

flowers installation images: Photo: Aaron Amar Bhamra.

Luciano Pecoits image: Photo: Demian Kern. Courtesy of the artist and Kunstverein Twinkler,

Vienna

Katrin Hornek image: Courtesy of Size Matters. Space for Art & Film

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