

SETH WEINER & SADIE SIEGEL | Vanilla Was Here

Vanille Was Here is the culmination of a six-month sound residency by Seth Weiner and Sadie Siegel who focused on the past, present, and future "life" of the site. The result is an asynchronous soundtrack for **Bildraum 01**, driven by the question of how a space can be carried and transported by sound, and what social and technical infrastructures are necessary to do so. While looking for the melody and exploring the social and spatial rhythms of Strauchgasse (**Bildraum's** location), Weiner & Siegel created a soundtrack to the space that intertwines the immediate activity of the street, the muscular white walls of the gallery, and its previous life as Vanilla.

While exploring the past and present character of the space, the question of its future arose, along with considerations of how exhibition practices could be made self-sustaining in times of environmental and geopolitical crises. Weiner then decided to use a solar-powered battery to provide electricity for the exhibition. But what to do when you're located on a shady block? Can enough energy be collected in one hour of direct sunlight to power the exhibition? How much energy is actually needed, and which technical devices, lights and infrastructure are essential? What became clear is that as a society we've created rules and rhythms that get in the way of changing behavior easily, no matter how destructive the patterns are. On a bureaucratic level, the use of the solar-powered battery became more difficult than on a technical level. Even though it might disrupt the continuity of the exhibition, the room will be fueled by a battery, with every electrical input and output listed throughout the duration of the show.

From power consumption to the power of image and sound, Weiner & Siegel flip another common switch. Instead of displaying pictures on the wall, **Bildraum 01** itself becomes an image-producing machine that utilizes the storefront windows. Everchanging views are paired with an unsynchronized soundtrack, serving as an invisible renovation to the architecture, subtly bending, focusing, and erasing aspects of its identity.

Rounding it all up is a free booklet for the soundtrack that includes a link for streaming. Reminiscent of a time when you bought CDs and poured through the liner notes while listening, the booklet has a transcript of an interview between Weiner and artist Carola Dertnig about her experience as a child at Vanilla, a notorious “action laboratory” and artist hub run by her mother at Strauchgasse 2 in the 1970s. To inscribe this history into the archives and list of shows at **Bildraum 01**, the exhibition is quite literally named *Vanilla Was Here*.

But to summon the ghosts of past times, you have to give tribute; and to recreate the creative and social energies of these and possible future times, you have to give a little. Within this highly intricate, conceptual exhibition, Seth Weiner & Sadie Siegel did exactly that by letting the show itself become a sculptural album in which a social space of exchange is hidden, and the work can then be carried home.

Duration: July 7th - August 25th 2023

sethweiner.org