

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

By Wolfgang Förster & William Menking

THE VIENNA MODEL

Housing for the 21st Century City

The City of Vienna has realized extraordinary achievements in public housing since 2007. Multiple housing projects spread across the capital make clear just how unique they are as examples of architecture, urban habitation, neighborhood revitalization and the creation of new communities. Though based on the historic legacy of "Red Vienna" they nevertheless present new possibilities, prototypes and advances in housing all segments of the contemporary city. *The Vienna Model* will highlight these extraordinary Viennese achievements for an American audience in 2013 and 2014.

Today about 60% of the Viennese population live in municipally built, owned or managed housing and the city clearly controls its housing market. This is a different condition than exists in the United States where, in most cases, the private market is the provider of housing and is relied upon even to rehabilitate existing neighborhoods and create new communities.

Thus the curators of *The Vienna Model* worried that any exhibition that featured only the architectural design of Viennese housing would be of little use to an American audience of building professionals and the public. However the specific emphasis in these Vienna examples on facilities like Kindergartens, swimming pools and meeting rooms is not unheard of the United States so this exhibit will focus instead on the conception, organization and design of these communal components.

To expand this architectural and urban discussion into a cultural discourse, the curators invited Vancouver and Vienna based artists and cultural researchers Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber to look at these communal spaces and concepts and speculate on how they resonate within artistic and cultural practices. Their selection of art projects and public works will accompany, reflect upon, and contextualize the selected examples and also shape the format of the exhibition and publication.

Finally, the exhibition aims to open up a space for cross-cultural negotiations between the design of Viennese housing and examples of American housing and their background and recent conditions and concepts. Thus in each of the cities where the exhibition is featured we intend to bring together the curators and artists in round table discussions with local architects and planning officials to highlight the cross currents between the cities and examples highlighted in the exhibit. It is our intention that this exhibit will be more than just a 'show" but a starting point for a discussion of housing for the 21st century. These discussions will become part of the exhibition catalogue that will be a major contribution to the subject of housing in the 21st century. *The Vienna Model* will travel to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington D.C. and finally to Vienna from 2013-2014.

APR 17 - SEP 2, 2013

Austrian Cultural Forum New York

11 East 52nd Street, New York

acfnyc.org

EXHIBITION OPENING:

APR 16, 6-8PM