

## INTRODUCTION

By Andreas Stadler, Director of the Austrian Cultural Forum

With its annual spring project, OPEN SPACE UNCURATED, the Austrian Cultural Forum New York turns into a creative laboratory for emerging Austrian artists who live and work in the US with a view to establish a position and reputation in the New York and American cultural scene.

With the help of eleven jurors, 13 artists and creators were chosen from a sample of more than thirty highly qualified proposals. The projects ranged from such diverse areas as visual arts, performance, music and academic research. OPEN SPACE therefore also represents a survey of the emerging Austrian Art scene in the US.

Within the framework of OPEN SPACE UNCURATED, the selected artists and creators can make use of the premises and infrastructure of the ACF without any curatorial tutelage. This is an attempt to break away from the museum style exhibitions and curated music- and lecture series that usually dominate the ACF's artistic and intellectual program. The notion "uncurated" pushes back institutional limits, enlarges freedom of thought, and invites both the selected participants and the ACF to take calculated risks. We appreciate risk and accident as important factors of artistic and scientific creativity.

At the same time, "uncurated" is also an ironic statement towards the curatorial trend to occupy the center of the artistic discourse, sometimes leaving the artists themselves behind. While recognizing every single step in the artistic and creative process – from the creation, curation, and production, up to the communication – OPEN SPACE focuses fully on the creator, the artist, musician and thinker. However, the participants must also bear the burden of the full range of responsibilities in the cycle of production, explanation and communication.

In addition, the adjective "uncurated" attempts to benevolently question the perennially fashionable arbitrariness of curatorial themes: Unmonumental, Unbuilt, Unseen, Unheard, Unveiled .... there are many empty artistic and academic project titles trying to avoid trouble that end up saying exactly nothing.

This year's theme, CREATIVE MIGRATION, also refers to a new form of migratory movement: the artists' and creators' motives for choosing the US as their working environment.

Migration as such has always been a crucial parameter of cultural and political transformation in the US and in Austria. Both Vienna and New York gained their cultural attraction as melting pots that grew out of different migratory movements. Vienna 1900 's modernist revolution would not have been possible without the influx of hundred thousands of migrants from all over the Habsburg empire at the end of the 19th century. Gustav Klimt, Joseph Roth, Sigmund Freud had biographies of migration, assimilation and acculturation.

Furthermore, for more than one hundred years, Austrian migrants have contributed to cultural production in the US, but the reasons for their migration have dramatically changed. Many were forced to leave their country because of poverty, war and dictatorship, whereas nowadays these migratory movements revolve around the search for ideal working conditions within a globalized cultural market.

After 1938, many Austrians had to escape from Austria, driven out by the Nazis who had not only expelled but also expropriated them. Some of them founded the Austrian Institute in 1942 as a proof of their will to maintain and develop a certain kind of Austrian culture and Austrianness, even in the blackest moments in their lives in emigration. Therefore, this year's theme also pays tribute to those Austrians who could only dream of freedom, welfare and democracy back in the early forties.

Andreas Stadler, April 2009

**Exhibition dates: April 15, 2009 – May 14, 2009**

**Hours: Monday – Saturday, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm**

**Producer:** Andreas Stadler

**Project Coordinator:** Natascha Boojar

**Project Consultants:** Elisabeth Haider, Michael Karning, Johanna Menne, Kerstin Schuetz-Mueller, Maria Simma

**Poster Design:** Elisabeth Essl

**A special thank you to the members of the jury:**

Barbara BRYAN, Chase GRANOFF, Franz HACKL, Christopher JUST, Mel MERIO, Katharina POSCH, Tina PRESCHITZ, Serge SPITZER, Elga WIMMER, Bettina ZERZA & Joseph ZUTELGTE.

**The Austrian Cultural Forum New York is generously supported by: Austrian Airlines, Botstiber Foundation, RZB Finance & Zumtobel Staff.**

*Admission to exhibitions, concerts, and other events at the Austrian Cultural Forum is free.*

*Address: 11 East 52nd Street, New York, NY 10022, USA*

*Additional information: 212 319 5300 or [www.acfny.org](http://www.acfny.org).*

# ARTISTS AND WORKS

## VISUAL ARTISTS

### > LOBBY

#### **Michael STRASSER**

##### **Blew Hawaii, 2009**

Mixed Media Installation

Michael STRASSER's (b. Innsbruck, Austria, 1977) installation is based on photographs of the devastated Coco Palms Resort on K'auai, Hawaii. Elvis Presley's first Hawaii movie 'Blue Hawaii' was partly shot at this location, which was destroyed by hurricane Iniki in 1992. Since then, this high society destination of the 1960s has not been reinstated. The photographic documentation combined with a sound collage consisting of six times the title song of the movie plays on common concepts of paradise and success.

### > LOWER MEZZANINE

#### **Anja HITZENBERGER**

##### **Thom I – IV, 2009**

Vinyl prints, 50"x73"

Collaborator: Thom Fogarty

#### **Mimi & Akos, 2009 ( > VESTIBULE)**

Video, 3" loop

Music by Edward Ratliff

Performers: Michaela & Akos Hargitay

Anja HITZENBERGER's work is about the body in space and it's relationship to architecture and urban surroundings. She often collaborates with performers, mainly people who improvise: she prefers to not direct her subjects too much, but rather to have them react to the space around them and also to the camera. The four photographs in this exhibition are called "Thom I-IV" and were created in February of 2009 in Coney Island. HITZENBERGER's collaborator, Thom Fogarty, used to be a well known dancer and choreographer in New York's downtown dance scene in the 1980's. He still enjoys performing and was excited when she invited him to collaborate with her on this project.

Because her work has to do with space, HITZENBERGER tries to always install her photographs within a space, rather than having the photographic prints directly touch the walls. Sometimes the photos hang from the ceiling in the middle of the room, sometimes from strings stretched across the space. She decided to hang all four prints about 6 to 8 inches away from the wall of the ACF Gallery, which gives them a more three-dimensional feeling.

**Zipora FRIED**  
**Blue #2, 2007**

**b...b...bat, 2009**

**Triptych, 2009**

**Samsonite #1, #2, 2009**

Zipora FRIED's (b. 1963, Haifa, Israel) practice has long maintained a delicate balance between the dichotomy of laborious creation, requiring concentrated endurance and vigor, and the inevitability of her work's eventual ruin. A labor-intensive heuristic inversely corresponds to the potential for destruction. FRIED's interventions are often confined to spatial or temporal limits imposed by her process and medium; the ensuing fragility of the work, and potential for violence or destruction directed towards it, is evidenced through the viewer's interaction with the work in the space of exhibition.

The pieces in this installation relate to themes consistent in her work, including creation, nurture, the alteration and repetition of domestic forms, and the opposing themes of powerlessness, destruction and obfuscation.

**> UPPER MEZZANINE**

**Michael HÖPFNER**  
**Outpost of Progress, 2009**

Hermits bivouac, Wool strings, tape, 5'9" x 9'8" x 13'1"  
Courtesy Galerie Hubert Winter Vienna

Michael HÖPFNER's (b. Krems/Donau, Austria, 1972) work is based on his long, largely solo walking journeys in remote landscapes of western China, central Asia and eastern Europe. In choosing a slow, simple and solitary approach, the artist confronts the improvised lives of nomads and indigenous peoples, whose lives have been dramatically altered by cultural,

economical and military interests in recent years. HÖPFNER documents his experiences in b/w photos, writings, and often topographical drawings, which he incorporates into installations that also include the tent-like structures that he, in part, creates as a quiet resistance to the needless acceleration of modern life.

**Michael STRASSER**

**Improvisationen (National Hotel, Pune / Vivek Hotel, New Delhi), 2008**

C-prints

Traveling through India implies a multitude of sensual experiences. This series of photographs remains very intimate and, contrary to Indian daily life, does not show any people. On one hand these temporarily created environments refer to the fear of diseases and to a retreat and confrontation with oneself while in transit. On the other hand the improvisations connect to Indian surviving techniques adopted in its numerous slums.

**> UPPER GALLERY**

**Maria PETSCHNIG**

**Minnie, 2009**

Mixed Media & Video Installation (6")

Maria PETSCHNIG (b 1977, Klagenfurt, Austria) explores the relationship between the body and clothing, drawing attention to questions concerning sexuality, identity, voyeurism and fantasy, all from a specifically feminist/post-feminist viewpoint. She intentionally plays on prejudices and stereotypes, creating a constant shift between the sensual and the grotesque by tapping into a pool of endless roles, poses, and personae. Disregarding gender conventions in a bold and sometimes disturbing manner, PETSCHNIG uses her own body, surrendering herself to the mercy of the public eye.

There is an ambivalent relationship towards nudity and sexuality in American society – in particular, those concepts surrounding public and private presentation. It is this conflict and ambivalence that she wishes to address in her work.

For the space where her video "MINNIE" is presented, PETSCHNIG has envisioned an environment for a specific viewer, one that would heighten the awkwardness and loneliness of the installation. In addition, she wanted to break with the sleek interior of the existing ACF gallery spaces by installing a very suburban and familiar room.

**Annette SONNEWEND****Me and..., 2007/2008**

4 Videos

In this piece, Annette SONNEWEND selects a brief sequence from films of various genres and dates. She outlines the setting and builds a scale model of the scene in the spatial situation. The idea of creating a new reality, and acquiring the space as a timeless person, forms the basis of the reconstruction of the film space as a scale model. In the roughly one-minute short films the artist "meets" the actors of the original movie in the scale model. The original actors, who have space for maneuvering only in "their" film detail, simply disappear as partially fragmented cutouts as they leave the once allocated area. They fall behind to Annette SONNEWEND, who is the only one who can move on the whole stage of the model. But despite this benefit, the artist doesn't take the main role for herself, but interacts without verbal intervention. The original soundtrack is unchanged. Reality and dramatization becomes indistinct. Fictional as well as artificial realities emerge, which seems strange yet is somehow familiar at the same time.

**Window to Paris, 2009**

Yuri Mamin, F/R, 1994

Cardboard

The work is a reference on the French-Russian comedy "Window to Paris" by Yuri Mamin. The main character, a Russian teacher, finds a magic window in his apartment that allows him and his friends to travel from St. Petersburg directly to Paris.

**> MAIN GALLERY****Johannes GIRARDONI and Astrid STEINER****7 Minutes 20 Seconds, 2009**

Scrim Frames, LEDs, Video and Light-to-Sound Revibrator

Music for Video Sequence by ZANSHIN aka Gregor Ladenhauf

The installation 7 Minutes 20 Seconds is a site-specific collaboration between Johannes GIRARDONI (b. 1967, Graz, Austria) and Astrid STEINER. Two perpetually looped multi-media works investigate the relationship between perceptual phenomena and narrative imaging by layering opposite projections – pure light and video – into a spatial-temporal setting.

The installation is composed of two projected sequences:

The video is a visual metaphor of a dialogue between Alice in Wonderland and the Caterpillar. It refers to the different aspects of self-perception and identity in contrast to societal projection. Embedded in a social environment, one's identity is co-defined by the perception of others. In moments where familiar patterns fade the foundations of one's personality break down and make way for a different set-up. Audio-visual analogies describe the redefining of identity, a process accompanied by the bitter feeling of shrinking as well as the liberating experience of growing.

The LED and sound projection sequence investigates the boundary between manufactured states and perceptual events. Visual planes open and close depending on the viewers' position within the work's layered setting, creating a constantly shifting environment. Exposed LEDs at the center of the installation emit wavelengths of light from opposite ends of the visible spectrum – red and blue – which are experienced as purple. The electromagnetic waves of red and blue light are transposed onto mechanical waves of sound, revibrating light waves into sound waves, making purple "audible." The installation, with its two component sequences, creates a physically and visually layered situation, which explores the interface of archived information and perceptual phenomena.

## CREATIVE MIGRATION PERFORMING ARTISTS

### Christoph "Pepe" AUER

Saxophonist & Composer

**CONCERT | MONDAY APR 20, 7:30 pm**

"Living Room" Line up: Manu Delago (Hang), Christoph Pepe AUER (bass clarinet)

"The New York Session" Line up: Christoph Pepe AUER (saxophone), Art Hirahara (piano), Nicolas Letman-Burtinovic (bass), Ziv Ravitz (drums)

### ACFNY

Christoph "Pepe" AUER (b. Tyrol, Austria, 1981) began studying music at the age of 5, and in 2001 he enrolled at the University for Music in Graz to study Jazz Saxophone where he concluded his studies with a Master of Fine Arts degree in 2005. Christoph studied with Dick Oatts, George Garzone, Donny McCaslin, Branford Marsalis, David Binney, Tony Malaby, Marcus Strickland, Jason Lindner and others. He has played with musicians Adam Holzman (keyboard, Miles Davis Band), Joseph Bowie as well as the Vienna Art Orchestra. In 2005 he took part in the I.A.S.J. meeting, directed by David Liebman, a representative of the University of Graz. This influenced him to work more intensely on composition. In 2005 he received The

Hans Koller Prize, which gave him the opportunity to travel to New York, where he worked with Tony Malaby, Donny McCaslin, Marcus Strickland and Branford Marsalis and recorded his Album „The New York Sessions“. Auer lives in New York, Stockholm and Vienna.

### **Patrizia FERRARA**

Singer

**CONCERT | MONDAY APR 27, 7:30 pm**

Patrizia FERRARA (vocals, guitar, bass, and percussion) and special guest on vocals. A neo jazz - Brazilian - Latin experience.

**ACFNY**

Patrizia FERRARA was born into the bicultural family of a Sicilian father and an Austrian mother. She began singing at the age of 18, and later moved to Vienna, where she began to connect with musicians and soon performed on a regular basis with the Brazilian singer Celia Mara. She studied voice and piano at the Gustav Mahler Conservatory in Vienna and graduated with honors in 2002. Patrizia FERRARA's voice and music is often described as soothing and intimate. Her music is inspirational, hearty, and warm. It is firmly rooted in Nu-Jazz, R&B, and Acoustic Brazilian Rhythms and performed in English, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish, with two nylon string guitars and percussion.

Since she moved to New York in 2005, Patrizia has been part of various singer/songwriter showcases and performed with her group at the Blue Note late night groove series, 55 Bar, Zinc Bar, Smoke, Sweet Rhythm, and at the Austrian Cultural Forum.

### **Walter FISCHBACHER**

Jazz Musician, Piano/Keyboard

**CONCERT | WEDNESDAY APR 29, 7:30 pm**

Walter FISCHBACHER and Band Phishbacher. Line up: Walter FISCHBACHER (keyboard/piano), Dan Brantigan (trumpet), Nathan Peck (bass), Yutaka Uchida (drums). Special guests: Patrizia FERRARA (vocals), and Elisabeth Lohninger (vocals).

**ACFNY**

New York City based pianist and keyboarder Walter FISCHBACHER is an internationally acclaimed touring and recording artist, whose most recent release, "Infinity Ltd." (Lofish Music) has been hailed by the European and American press as "exciting" and "surprising". Walter FISCHBACHER's performance and recording credits include internationally acclaimed musicians such as Randy Brecker, George Garzone, Ingrid Jensen, Wolfgang Muthspiel, Vienna Art Orchestra, Tim Lebevre, Billy Harper, etc.

Originally from Austria, FISCHBACHER relocated to New York in 1994. In his recording studio, Lofish Productions Inc, which he co-owns with vocalist Elisabeth Lohninger, Walter FISCHBACHER works as a producer and Mastering engineer. Over the years he has issued 6 albums under his own name, all of which he also produced. His busy touring schedule takes him to Europe several times a year, while he continues to work as a side man and band leader in the jazz club scene in New York. His latest CD, "Proof That", which features Bill Evans drummer Joel Rosenblatt and German trumpet export Thomas Siffling, was released in the fall of 2008.

## **MELANIE MAAR**

Choreographer & Dancer

**PERFORMANCE | TUESDAY APR 21, 7:00 pm**

Live performance by Melanie MAAR and migrating guests Edith Greutmann, Mariangela Lopez, Marilyn Maywald, Kenta Nagai, Maria PETSCHNIG, Annette SONNEWEND, and Michael STRASSER.

### **ACFNY**

Originally from Vienna, Austria, Melanie MAAR has been living in New York as a choreographer and dancer for more than 12 years. Among the many reasons why she left Vienna at the age of eighteen was the underlying curiosity about the intensity of living, and greater opportunities as a performing artist.

MAAR's mother was her first teacher of ballet and flamenco and greatly shaped her physical language. But as she became more and more interested in experimental performance, in approaching the body in terms of sensation and ideas, rather than in terms of beauty and form, like in more traditional dance - the scene in Vienna didn't seem broad or stimulating enough. She immediately fell in love with the pace, rawness and diversity of New York's cultural and artistic life.

MAAR feels that experimental dance performance still has a relatively small audience and low funding in the US, which makes it a challenging place to live as a choreographer. But being part of the un-homogeneous social landscape and resulting experiences we engage in by living in this city provides an endless source of inspiration for her as an artist and a person.

She is dedicated to exploring intelligence in movement and dance as a basis for this human phenomenon: what lies underneath the social body, the known body and how to identify embodied cognition artistically. MAAR works with strong feminine imagery, transformation, spontaneity and exploration of the idiosyncrasy in unison choreography; creating live performances that grow out of a particular situation, spatial architecture and performers

dynamic and ability. In the work she is presenting within the framework of OPEN SPACE UNCURATED, she performs with a musician and dancer addressing the physicality of sound, transformation within emotional rhythm and inherent body culture.

## **MARIA NECKAM**

Vocalist & Composer

**CONCERT | THURSDAY APR 23, 7:30 pm**

Line up: Maria NECKAM (vocals and composition), Lars Dietrich (alto sax), Samir Zarif (tenor sax), Aaron Goldberg (piano), Zack Lober (bass), Colin Stranahan (drums)

### **ACFNY**

A native of Austria, Maria NECKAM now lives in Brooklyn. Born in Vienna, Maria grew up surrounded by the constant presence of the city's music and rhythms. Immersed in the rich musical traditions around her, she developed a deep passion for all kinds of music and sound - from opera to pop, from stage musicals to rock and punk, from church music to jazz. NECKAM absorbed herself in the piano, guitar and electric bass, composed songs, set up a diverse range of bands, and performed in a city choir. As a teenager she performed and recorded regularly with the rock-band Sounds of Silence and solo as a singer-songwriter under the name Knecke. This early and long chain of experiences guided her heart to follow the unpredictable and exciting life of a musician, which led her to move to Amsterdam. Here she met musicians from all over the world and embraced a wide range of musical traditions, resulting in projects characterized by their extensive and hybrid range of styles: from Jazz to Contemporary Classical Music, from Free Improvisation to Drum N´ Bass, from Pop to Indian music. After graduating from the Conservatory of Amsterdam, she moved to New York City. There she studied with Luciana Souza, Peter Eldridge, Theo Bleckmann and Kate McGarry (voice), Samir Chatterjee (Indian Music) and Nils Vigeland (Classical Composition) and graduated from Manhattan School of Music in 2007 (MM).