

Exhibition text

Forming Force

To study the relationship between the city of Krems and the Donau river, I turned my attention to modern times and organized my photographic investigation using the concept of «valley section» as a narrative structure: a line to follow. The representative instrument of the section helped me to recompose fragments of the city in a logical sequence and to observe how the urban planning of the Nazis profoundly marked the city and its relation to the river. Alternating between a review of urban plans of Krems (1934, 1941, 1942, and 1943) in the city archive and a topographical exploration, I understand how two approaches can be complementary. Approaching the city as an open-air archive – lived in, modified, and imagined by different actors – I ask to myself how the forms of the modern city provoke a ‘state of memory’.

A sequence of situations is stretched between two great forces that operated here during World War II: the force of the Danube, seen as a functional and strategic entity, and the force of the prisoners of war (POW) detained in the Stalag XVIIIB; as one of the largest Forced Labour Camps in Europe, the prisoners’ labour was the driving force behind the mechanized development of the capital (Gauhauptstadt). The buildings on this section built by prisoners of war include: the harbour, the steel plant (Schmid & Co, today Voestalpine) built near the harbour, and the Lerchenfeld settlement (GEDESAG) where many people from Styria lived, who worked in the factory.

Images taken by walking the valley section, are spatialised in the ORTE library. A tension between framed photographs on the wall and a more free editorial work of images on the table give an order, and suggest points of view and movements in the space of the library. The classical authority of the ‘tableau’, fixed in one position, is provoked by the ‘tabla’ of montage (Georges Didi-Huberman), where the heterogeneity and the disposition of images reflect on the dynamics of a working space.

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Exhibition space:

ORTE Architekturnetzwerk Niederösterreich
Baukultur-Galerie Österreichs / Walter Zschokke
Bibliothek

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