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Art, Cinema, and Life Outside the Imperial Ring

A Little History of the Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative

The screen comes to life with a blindingly bright white field illuminating the words: materialaktion mühl; 6/64; mama und papa; copyright kren. It's dark again. A pair of lips appears in the center of frame. Floating. Suspended for a few seconds. The screen goes dark again. When the image re-appears it shows a naked woman (Annie Brus) with her legs splayed open, head thrown forward in an ecstatic pose, and red paint running down her torso. Once her iconically-centered body disappears from the frame, things are set off into a frenzy of movement, not to come to a resting point, like the one offered by Brus' body, for the remainder of the four minutes. The moving image that confronts a viewer in Kurt Kren and Otto Mühl's *Mama und Papa* (1964) is a raucous flurry of flickering parts—mostly body parts—that, more often than not, are almost unrecognizable outside of their gritty yet seductively glistening surface textures. The bodies that appear in the film, including both Mühl's and Brus's, are captured from multiple and continually shifting angles as the two engage in various erotic(ized) gestures, from a dry session of *coitus more ferarum*, to nipple suckling, to indiscernible scenes of fleshiness. These gestures, though, are never shown in their entirety. Instead, they reemerge over

and over again, as fragmented, interrupted, and obsessively repetitive image sequences.

In the 1960s, Vienna was abuzz with the activity of a neo-avant-garde scene that had been developing since the 1950s, when the Wiener Gruppe [Vienna Group] had begun its absurdist literary cabarets on the model of earlier Dada antics. Within this field of activity, in 1964, two Austrian artists met at a café just north of Vienna's central ring—formerly the imperial center of the Hapsburg Empire and known as the Ringstrasse since the late nineteenth century period of cultural consolidation. One was a filmmaker, Kurt Kren, and the other an “action painter,” Otto Mühl. Over the course of a few months, at the end of '64, the two would collaborate on a series of performance-cum-film events in isolation (with only four people present) in the cellar of Mühl's apartment building in the northeast district of the city known as Leopoldstadt. Together, they created three works: *Mama und Papa*, *Leda und der Schwan*, and *O'Tannenbaum*. These would become three of the most controversial works among the fifty-two films that comprised the founding distribution list of the Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative (or AFMC). Formed in 1968, by Austrian artists and filmmakers, VALIE EXPORT, Kurt Kren, Ernst Schmidt, Gottfried Schlemmer, Hans Scheugl, and Peter Weibel, and run out of Scheugl's apartment in Vienna's Währing district, the AFMC was a collective response to the lack of distribution and exhibition opportunities afforded to national experimental film and cinematic practices by either the state-funded or commercial spheres of 1960s Austrian cultural economies.¹

During a recent research trip to Vienna in summer 2014, I attempted to track the counter-formations of spatial memory created by the AFMC's activities in the circulation of the Mühl/Kren collaborations; it is those movements that I endeavor to walk readers through here.² Such counter-formations, I found, developed not only out of the highly

experimental nature of the work produced and distributed under the auspices of the AFMC, whose members operated in the interstices of structural film and expanded cinema,³ but also out of a convergence of infrastructural endpoints that extended into my own experiences in the city during a double anniversary year—100 years since the outbreak of WWI and fifty years since the founding of the country's national film museum. In the phrase, where/when the infrastructures end, I gesture towards several endpoints that converge in the following case study, which draws on my “field notes” taken in the city. I travelled to Vienna, or so I thought, to conduct research on the suite of films produced in 1964 during the short-lived collaboration of Kren and Mühl of which *Mama und Papa*, described above, was one.⁴

Arriving in Vienna, I was immediately struck by the overwhelming official orientation of the city around its first (and former Imperial) district, the Innere Stadt. It was there that the majority of the archives with which I spent time, were housed. I also visited other sites in the city that I had read about in my research—from the cellar where Kren and Mühl's collaboration took place, in 1964, to the house out of which Hans Scheugl ran the Austria Filmmakers Cooperative (AFMC), in 1968, through which Kren's films and, by extension, Mühl's performances, circulated. Though now used to quite different ends (or, one might say, put back in their places), these sites once served as significant “stopping places” in the production and distribution networks of the AFMC. That said, my encounters with them, nearly fifty years later, were, well, wholly unexceptional. Yet I continued with a belief that this program of movement somehow held meaning in relation to understanding the movement of the films themselves. Trips to these sites were what I came to describe to friends and colleagues as pilgrimages—it became as if I was going specifically to experience them in their unexceptional-ness; to see what had become of the material remains of these once, albeit

only momentarily, re-routed paths of movement through the city.

In traversing the unexceptional spaces through which the AFMC operated, a recount of my own movement through the city proposes a counter-reading of space-as-view—or, space as a “built up” view, as “something artificial, posed.”⁵ The views I offer here turn away from the infrastructurally marked paths within the Ring towards endpoints, but endpoints that I imagine as scenes opened up elsewhere. The mechanisms of distribution and exhibition, established by the AFMC specifically, and the filmmakers’ cooperatives more broadly, constituted a new infrastructure of display for time-based art, which did not easily fit into the film museum or the commercial movie house, nor had it yet transitioned into the institutional frameworks of the art museum.⁶ The cooperative formation created networks, activated spaces, and convened diverse communities with the goal of creating and exhibiting experimental work. This often meant an engagement with urban space that lead away from an official site and, in the case of the AFMC, away from the grand spectacle of Vienna’s Innere Stadt. In tracking scenes of activity in other parts of the city, I work in the wandering spirit of Walter Benjamin’s project in “Little History of Photography.”⁷ To cite Benjamin’s reflections on Atget’s contribution, not just to a history of photography but, importantly, to a history of constructing views of the city: “He [Atget] looked for what was unremarked, forgotten, cast adrift. And thus such pictures, too, work against the exotic, romantically sonorous names of the cities...”⁸

Following Benjamin’s textual lead (and Atget’s visual one), this critical travelogue foregrounds structural links between the moving image and the movement of the image, in the process of its circulation, by turning to those unremarked and often unremarkable details. Like the frantic movements of *Mama und Papa’s* rapid jump cuts that deeply fracture a stable sense of spatial-temporal linearity within the frame,

the movements of the film, framed by the city's unexceptional spaces, disrupted official narratives of cultural memory production, turning attention towards scenes of activity operating at the endpoint, beyond the endpoint, and in spite of the endpoint—scenes structured by (and quite literally housed in) the remnants, rebuilding, and wreckage of/ from the past and enacted in the day-to-day movements and power differentials of present experience. Thus, the infrastructural endpoints I offer here are accompanied by a series of scenes. Telling of a life outside the (imperial) Ring, or the Ringstrasse, and the officially supported means of circulation and frameworks of cultural memory, such scenes can key us into the early spatial histories of alternative transnational distribution networks. What kind of fragmented and interrupted topographies of the city emerge—those that might chart the gaps, fissures, and excesses of official circuits of the market *place* and rhetorics of *place*-making—when the lateral movements of unofficial networks are brought into view?

The first infrastructural endpoint, the one that initially drew me, as a visual culture researcher, to the particular site of Vienna, was film distribution in Austria in the 1960s, in both the commercial and aesthetic spheres. In the former, the dominance of West German production companies and distributors, in addition to the introduction of television, led to a rapid decrease in film production and audiences. In 1967, as Robert Van Dassonowsky has carefully tracked, only twelve films were produced in the country and the majority were co-productions with West Germany; moreover, cinema theater attendance had declined enormously, with box office numbers falling by nearly ten million in a single year.⁹ In the aesthetic sphere, the situation was also bleak. With priority given to fostering connections with an international scene, contemporary Austrian production was excluded from these networks, which resulted in the establishment of the AFMC in 1968.¹⁰

By the late 1960s, it had become clear that the Austrian Film Museum (ÖFM) would not exhibit much of contemporary Austrian filmmakers' work, whose practices were increasingly moving into the realm of expanded cinema. Established in 1964—the same year that the collaborations between Kren and Mühl took place—the ÖFM was a non-profit organization that opened under the direction of Peter Kubelka, an internationally recognized Austrian structural filmmaker, and Peter Konlechner, founder of the International Short Film Week in Vienna in 1962. The national film museum functions as an official preservation site and repository for the state's film culture, including, perhaps most importantly, its connections to film abroad.¹¹ Situated approximately one block north of the Vienna State Opera, the first significant building project on the Ringstrasse, erected between 1860 and 1869, and butted up against the Albertina Museum, a former palace first constructed in the mid-sixteenth century which is, today, home to one of the most extensive "Old Master" print collections in the world, the ÖFM sits in a cluster of now state-owned buildings that stand as monuments to the grandeur of the former empire. In particular, they memorialize the moment of the construction of the Ringstrasse (more on this below) and continue to symbolize the city with their ornate and eclectic Historicist style, which is known for its unabashed mixing of Neoclassicist structures, elaborate Baroque façades, and Romantic subject matter. Such a co-mingling has continued into the twentieth century, for instance, with the slick black glass façade and punctuating window portals of the ÖFM, and the titanium steel roof and escalator leading up to the Albertina Museum just steps from the film museum's entrance. Like the close juxtaposition of film and opera within the Ring's spatial plan, the Innere Stadt has continued to accumulate the visual grandeur, as well as the archives, of contemporary cultural life.

The incorporation of film into the Innere Stadt took a distinct

place, as I have suggested thus far, spatially, within the cultural program of the city and, by the postwar period, of the nation-state. Such a highly constructed spatial organization can also point us towards the accompanying highly constructed ideological abstractions housed therein. Conceptually, film also took a distinct place within an officially supported framework of the Arts (including Drawing and Painting at the Albertina and Music and Theatre at the Opera House) in terms of historical and contemporary connections between the young nation-state and the international cultural sphere—for instance, one of the ÖFM's most acclaimed archives is the Dziga Vertov Collection, which has been growing since 1967.¹² While the museum's archive of the Soviet film pioneer is truly a great storehouse of international film history, it also points to the growing gap between the curatorial (read: ideological) mission of the national exhibition and screening space and the experimental film and media projects happening in the city throughout the 1960s and '70s.

Open scene one. Statements made by Kubelka (film museum curator) and Weibel (AFMC co-founder) two years later are symptomatic of this gap. In a 1966 interview, with Jonas Mekas for *Film Culture*, when prompted to discuss avant-garde film in Europe, Kubelka responded, "No, I cannot talk about the European film avant-garde at all, because there is nothing there that I respect."¹³ Reciprocally, in a 2008 interview, Weibel recalled Kubelka's rejection of his work for exhibition at the Film Museum in 1966, describing that "Kubelka said what I'm doing is not cinema at all, and he refused to show it. So I was a little bit shocked..."¹⁴ The disconnect between Kubelka and other Austrian filmmakers, among other factors, led to the recognition that an infrastructural mechanism would not be established for national film distribution and exhibition, even with an avant-garde filmmaker at the helm of the national film culture. In my three to four nights a week in the Film Museum's

theater—itself, interestingly, an iteration of Kubelka’s *Invisible Cinema* installation first installed in 1970 at the American Film Archive in New York—what I saw, when it came to 1960s experimental film, was predominantly that of the American Cinema Group.¹⁵ Even as this gap persists to an extent today, the effect, in 1968, was the formation of the AFMC, which moved out across the city and, from there, into multiple international networks of art and experimental film. *Close scene.*

The second infrastructural endpoint that I encountered, imbricated in the first, concerns transportation access across Vienna, including natural boundaries, public transit lines, and zoning policies, which connect and isolate neighborhoods within the core twenty-three districts of the city. As scenes of activity dispersed across the city in the 1960s, they extended our view to those city districts not viewed as stopping places. In so doing, as I found out in my site visits, they, perhaps unintentionally, foregrounded the infrastructural orientation of the city. The city’s *Innere Stadt*, or inner city, known as the Ring, is the former center of the empire as well as the current center of national cultural life. The Ringstrasse is today a tree-lined road that encircles the *Innere Stadt*. It was, until 1857, a heavy fortification wall that encircled the old city, protecting it, for example, from various sieges beginning with the Turkish invasion of the mid-sixteenth century. Only a few years after the demolition of the old wall, the reconstruction began (at its height between 1860 and 1869); it was one of the largest urban building projects in Europe during the nineteenth century—including the input of over 165 architects, planners, and engineers from across the continent—and resulted in one of the most recognized historical boulevards of Europe.¹⁶ The ornate historicist style that uprooted Classicist sensibilities in favor of the eclectic, known still as the *Ringstrassenstil*, has come to visually define Vienna in the “exotic, romantically sonorous” ways Benjamin gestured.

In addition to defining the city's distinct aesthetic style on the European map, the reconstruction also served as a rigorous program for the systematization of communications within the rapidly expanding industrial city—indeed, the reason for the destruction of the wall in the first place had been the incorporation of territories outside its boundaries (what are, today, the second and ninth districts to the east and south of the Innere Stadt). This orientation of the city, around the Ring as the center of cultural life, infrastructurally instituted during this period of the late nineteenth century, has continued into the present: from the locating of the ÖFM in the 1960s to the construction of the Museums Quarter district in the 2000s, both within its boundaries.¹⁷

For anyone that has ever spent time in Vienna, the first thing a traveler comes to understand is that the entire transit system, both above and below, moves around the Ringstrasse. In this way, the Innere Stadt is demarcated as the stage for cultural activity and the place where infrastructural mechanisms organize spaces into views.¹⁸ Conversely, places, like the eighteenth and twentieth districts of the city, located respectively in the northwest and northeast sectors, remain relatively difficult to access—an unofficial backstage where the infrastructural mechanisms of the tightly constructed center reveal their complex supports. Amid my own efforts to make sense of moving through space in the city, in the summer of 2014, a series of exhibitions endeavoring to take up somewhat of the same task were also on view. The year 2014, as it turned out, was also the centennial anniversary of the start of World War I and, by extension, the birth of the First Federal Republic of Austria. Three exhibitions in particular tracked not only the history of infrastructural and communications development, but also, for me, mapped the spatial organization of the city with which I had become pre-occupied.

The historical development of the Ringstrasse's organization as the city's central stage was charted in the exhibition, "The Metropolis

Experiment: Vienna and the 1873 World Exhibition” at the Wien Museum in Karlsplatz, just southeast of the Ring.¹⁹ Exhibitions, such as “The Metropolis Experiment” and “Trotzdem Kunst! Österreich 1914–1918” at the Leopold Museum²⁰ as well as “Wien–Berlin: Kunst Zweier Metropolen” at the Belvedere,²¹ examined and extended the project of modern nation-state building, constructing, quite literally, upon the ruins of the empire, a narrative of innovation and exchange fitting for an urban metropolis. “The Metropolis Experiment,” in particular, offered a display of historical images, maps, and dioramas that charted the conception and construction of Vienna’s urban infrastructure in the late nineteenth century leading up to the 1873 World Exhibition. The privatization of property on the Ringstrasse (only fifty percent of the buildings were publicly-owned) was closely tied to the rise of the bourgeois class that funded over ninety percent of the building projects. This extensive program created alongside it a booming brick-making industry in the south of the city, from where transit routes still run directly into the Innere Stadt. It also created a need for a water supply, both for the workers’ living areas and for the steam plants that fed energy to the industry. The result was the regulation of the Danube River, beginning in 1869, that, in bringing water to the industrial south of the city, cut off the northeast neighborhoods from the Innere Stadt. Initial ideas of the segmentation were imagined as creating a new “Danube City” in Leopoldstadt and Brigettenau, the second and twentieth districts.

The historical events that transpired reflect a different image: one from the immediate post-World War II period, where the regulated portion of the river became the boundary separating the Soviet sector on its eastern banks from the otherwise ally-occupied portions of the city, to the west of the river. Particularly in the 1960s, not yet a decade after the country had regained its independence in 1955, the isolation of this zone from the rest of the city would have been highly

visible (as in Soviet occupied territories of Germany, little was done to rebuild bombed out and bullet-ridden structures). *Open scene two*. It was here in the cellar of an apartment building just off the one-way street that follows the river, Brigettner Lände, minutes west of the Augarten (where a Flak Tower erected in 1945 still looms over the Baroque gardens), that the collaboration between Mühl and Kren took place, which would produce three of the most controversial works in the AFMC distribution list, including *Papa und Mama*, *Leda und der Schwan*, and *O Tannenbaum*.²² Sitting through the long, hot ride on the U4 to the Friedensbrücke, the graffiti that began to fill the train's overpasses signaled a shift in the space, the demarcation of a different kind of stage. Emerging onto the bridge in Leopoldstadt, I crossed onto the river's east side and walked along its artificial banks, envying the youths that lay, sprawled out, casually smoking a cigarette and reading. I lit a cigarette; it was the closest I could get. Approaching Perinetgasse, I was filled with an excitement—what would the scene look like now? What had happened to the building in the intervening fifty years? It had become home to medical offices for psychotherapy and shiatsu massage; somehow fitting, I thought, although I was not quite sure why. The building, though long since renovated, still bore the marks of the war; as the prominent plaque to the left of the door told passersby, the building had been destroyed, between 1939 and 1945, and rebuilt with funds from the federal ministry in 1960/61. Mühl would have been among the first residents of the city to reoccupy the space following reconstruction (although not filmed by Kren, the first Actionist performance took place there in the spring of 1962). What had been here in the intervening forty years since Mühl had left? I knocked on the door; no one answered. I peered through partially broken windows into the cellar—the cellar where, half a century earlier, Mühl and Kren had made their films. There was nothing but a dark, cavernous space.

A woman in the building across the narrow street leaned out of her window, watching my every move as I investigated the scene. I yelled up to her, "Excuse me!" intending to ask how long she had lived there. She shut the window. I hung around for some time longer, watching the intermittent activity on the sleepy street and wondering. *Close scene.*

Open scene three. On the other side of the city, well beyond where the underground lines stop, sits Antonigasse 57/11, the official mailing address of the AFMC when it was founded in 1968. As I disembarked from tram line nine in the eighteenth district of the city, Währing, after nearly an hour of transfers and jogging around the central ring, I was met, once again, with a series of wholly unexceptional views. Set into a block of residential neighborhoods on the west side of the city that was quickly constructed during the period of growth under the Marshall Plan in the 1960s, the apartment building at Antonigasse is an unidentifiable cool grey box on the corner of another sleepy street. Scheugl had been in apartment eleven. I stared at the buzzer, at number eleven. I had not considered what I would do when I got here. I just knew I needed to come. Spiehs. Could I ring? What would I say? It was someone's private space—could I disturb that? Here, the scenes were very different, very domestic, and very much not organized for my viewing and consumption as a spectator. At one point, this had been a public address. Through apartment eleven, incredibly public networks of correspondence, between the AFMC and screening event organizers, in Brussels, Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg, London, Munich, and New York, had passed. The blurring of public and private, here on Antonigasse, like on Perinetgasse, confused the infrastructural mechanisms that would contain the stage of cultural activity to the first district's imperial ring. *Close scene.*

The final infrastructural endpoint to emerge brings us back to the present, into my 2014 research trip—where we have actually been

all along. *Open scene four.* My site visits to unexceptional spaces were prompted by the absence in the archives of these kinds of scenes. Given the broad, coalitional base of producers situated all across the city and elsewhere (particularly in West Germany and the UK), who shared interests about the circulation of their work, although not necessarily formally-aesthetically aligned, the cooperative's histories remain unaccounted for in disciplinary narratives within the fields of art, film, and media studies.²³ The materials held by the AFMC at the Film Museum, for instance, consist of one three-page document: the original list of films available for distribution in the cooperative—the source from which I was able to obtain the Scheugl's mailing address and thus was able to continue to expand my program of movement. Such movements, in each case, led me out of the imperial ring from where I began, transforming, in the process, into counter-moves: rather than keeping me in, they pushed me ever farther outwards, traveling from stopping place to stopping place and looking for the next scene of possibility. These counter-moves, from my own experience, mirrored those of the cooperative, forming lived maps of Vienna's urban spaces that were either overlooked or disavowed by the infrastructural mechanisms that would organize and maintain such spaces as views and provide clear stage directions for movement within them. *Close scene.*

[Endnotes]

1. The AFMC was one among many cooperative networks that began to flourish internationally in the 1960s; the first to form was American Cinema Group/The Filmmakers' Cooperative, which formed in New York in 1962. The London Filmmaker's Cooperative followed in 1966, the Austrian Filmmakers Cooperative in 1968, and the Paris Films Coop in 1974, to name only a few. Amid the political upheavals of the 1960s and the growing costs of film production, artists and filmmakers, throughout the West and beyond, began to self-organize. The American Cinema Group has been the topic of many studies, including, for example, Dixon Winston Wheeler's *The Exploding Eye: A Re-Visionary History of 1960s American*

Experimental Cinema (New York, State University of New York Press, 1997), which have tended to take an auteur-based approach in extending the reach of the canon. More recently, Julia Knight and Peter Thomas's *Reaching Audiences: Distribution and Promotion of Alternative Moving Image* (Bristol: Intellect, 2011), on the London Filmmakers' Cooperative, has provided an important examination of the cooperative's links to policy and state funding in the arts, tracing, instead of authorship, the role of the cooperative in larger state infrastructures.

2. My notion of counter-formation here is extrapolated from Guiliano Bruno's work on the museum and memory, which has analyzed the spatial performance of Eisenstein's concept of the montage plan. See Bruno, *Public Intimacies: Architecture and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007); as well as S.M. Eisenstein, "Montage and Architecture," *Assemblage* 10 (December 1989): 111-131.

3. For more on expanded cinema, see: A.L. Rees, ed al., eds., *Expanded Cinema: Art, Performance, Film* (London: Tate Publishing, 2011); and Matthias Michalka, ed., *X-Screen: Film Installations and Actions in the 1960s and 1970s* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2004). For more on the development of expanded cinema in Viennese context, see Hans Scheugl, *Erweitertes Kino: Die Wiener Filme der 60er Jahre* (Wien: Triton Verlag, 2002).

4. Kurt Kren and Otto Mühl are, perhaps, best known for their respective roles in the Austrian art group that came to be known as the Vienna Actionists. Mühl, along with Günter Brus, Hermann Nitsch, and Rudolf Schwarzkogler, comprised the core four members of the group that are, today, remembered for the shocking excesses of their bodily experiments. Kren, together with Ernst Schmidt, Jr., is historicized as one of the primary documentarians of the Actionists' early performances, although Kren is also known within Structuralist film circles for his larger body of work. For more on the Actionists, the monumental publication, *Vienna Actionism: Art and Upheaval in the 1960s' Vienna* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012), brings together a broad overview of their activities.

5. Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," in *Selected Writings, Volume 2, Part 2, 1931-1934*, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 526. Benjamin's writing here is indebted to the influence of Russian film, as he states elsewhere in the essay. The work of S.M. Eisenstein is important to consider alongside Benjamin's assertion here: in Eisenstein's essay, "Montage and Architecture," written slightly later between 1937 and 1940, the notion of 'building up scenes' is explicitly addressed as he describes the montage plan. Not only is it what objects, images, places, and spaces we see and visit that are of importance, then, but *how we should look at them*; how to become a proper spectatorial subject; how to, as Giuliana Bruno has suggested, in her reading of Eisenstein, appropriately "read [the architectural ensemble] as it is traversed" (26)—do we stand here or

there for the right shot, walk right or left from the entrance, and how long should we stay anyway? Eisenstein's montage plan thus proposes the filmic gaze as a visual means of training, enacting, quite explicitly, a coded structure of perspective and timing, for experience, of space as a series of scenes. Such a plan, functioning to reveal space as series of view for consumption, also blurs the lines between the 'real' of architectural space and the 'illusion' of the cinematic. This blurring seems close to what Benjamin calls for at the end of his "Little History of Photography," in his discussion of image captions and "the photography of the literarization of the conditions of life" (527); however Benjamin, as opposed to Eisenstein, seems to be calling for an anti-training potential in works like those of Atget, Krull, Sanders, and others. For more on Eisenstein's montage plan, see S.M. Eisenstein, "Montage and Architecture," *Assemblage* 10 (December 1989): 111-131; and Giuliana Bruno, *Public Intimacies: Architecture and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 3-42.

6. The majority of work on the cooperative structure in the 1960s has tended to focus on the American Cinema Group/Filmmakers' Cooperative, the American Film Archive, and the figure of Jonas Mekas in particular; see, for instance, David E. James, ed., *To Free the Cinema: Jonas Mekas & the New York Underground* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992). A key exception to this trend is Julia Knight and Peter Thomas's *Reaching Audiences: Distribution and Promotion of Alternative Moving Image* (Bristol, UK: Intellect Books, 2011), which provides a detailed structural history of alternative distribution networks and arts activism in state funding matters in the context of British film.

7. My reading of Benjamin here is also, of course, greatly influenced by his constellation of works, including the important unfinished *Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), as well as the earlier 1928 *One-Way Street* (London: Penguin Classics, 2008).

8. Benjamin, LHP, 518.

9. See Robert von Dassanowsky, "The Missed Wave: 1960-1979" in *Austrian Cinema: A History*, 178-208 (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2005), 192. In 1967, as von Dassanowsky reports, attendance at the movie theaters in Vienna fell from 65.8 million to 57.6 million from 1966 to '67. By 1968, the number of Austrian film productions had fallen to seven, six of which were only co-productions for a West German-oriented market. Given the drastic situation, Actionism and the Filmmakers' Cooperative worked predominantly to overcome financial and legal export barriers that blocked the cooperative's material from entering international networks, restricting it to only local circulation.

10. The AFMC was one among many cooperatives' networks that began to flourish internationally in the 1960s; the first to form was American Cinema Group/The Filmmakers' Cooperative, which formed in New York in 1962; the London

Filmmaker's Cooperative followed in 1966, the Austrian Filmmakers Cooperative in 1968, and the Paris Films Coop in 1974, to name only a few. Amid the political upheavals of the 1960s and the growing costs of film production, artists and filmmakers throughout the West and beyond began to self-organize. The American Cinema Group has been the topic of many studies, including, for example, Dixon Winston Wheeler's *The Exploding Eye: A Re-Visionary History of 1960s American Experimental Cinema* (New York, State University of New York Press, 1997), which have tended to take an auteur-based approach in extending the reach of the canon. More recently, though, Julia Knight and Peter Thomas's *Reaching Audiences: Distribution and Promotion of Alternative Moving Image* (Bristol: Intellect, 2011) on the London Filmmakers' Cooperative has provided an important examination of the cooperative's links to policy and state funding in the arts, tracing, instead of authorship, the role of the cooperative in larger state infrastructures.

11. Even at the time, Kubelka was an international figure. With close ties to the New York scene since the early 1960s, he also became a key figure in the New American Cinema Group founded by Jonas Mekas and others in 1962. The American Cinema Group's cooperative model would become the template for the other cooperatives that followed, including the AFMC. For more on the founding of the Austrian Film Museum, see the recent three-volume fiftieth anniversary publication: Horwath, Alexander, et al., eds., *Fünfzig Jahre Österreichisches Filmmuseum: 1964–2014* (Wien: Österreichisches Filmmuseum, 2014).

12. For more on the collection, visit: https://www.filmmuseum.at/en/collections/dziga_vertov_collection_1. A legend in early experimental film, the Vertov bibliography is vast, even extending into contemporary new media literature, with figures like Lev Manovich in his *The Language of New Media*. For an overview of Vertov's own writings and filmic work, as well as the vast body of literature written about his oeuvre, see "Great Directors: Dziga Vertov" in *Senses of Cinema* 25 (March 2003): np. <http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/great-directors/vertov/>.

13. Kubelka in Kubelka and Jonas Mekas, "Interview with Peter Kubelka" in *Film Culture Reader*, edited by P. Adams Sitney, 285–299 (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), 285.

14. Peter Weibel in Weibel and Duncan White, "On the Origins of Expanded Cinema" in *Expanded Cinema: Art Performance Film*, 191.

15. As part of the fifty-year anniversary of the museum, 2014 also saw a background glance on the history of cinema and its history in programming, such as "Carte Blanche für Peter Konlechner" and "Was ist Film?" Of the 1960s and 1970s experimental works included, the emphasis was put on those of the New American Cinema Group. A few examples include: Jonas and Adolf Mekas's 1964 *The Brig* (filmed theater of a Living Theatre production), Andy Warhol's 1966 *The Chelsea Girls* (in double project), and Paul Sharits's *Razor Blades* (1968) and *Epileptic*

Seizure Comparison (1976).

16. The scale of the building project in Vienna, at the time, is comparable, for instance, to the restructuring of Paris, under Haussmanization, that would occur almost contemporaneous to the changes in Vienna's urban center, and to the changes undergone in nearly every major urban center across Europe during the period of Industrialization and the shifting of populations into cities, theretofore, primarily the residence of only a small few. For more on this process and period of "metropolitanism" as well as the urban planning history by which it is accompanied, see Donald J. Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986); Thomas Hall, *Planning Europe's Capital Cities: Aspects of Nineteenth Century Urban Development* (London: Routledge, 1997); and Robert Rotenberg, "Metropolitanism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Metropoles," *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 1 (March 2001): 7-15.

17. The MuseumsQuartier district in the Ring, just to the southwest of the Hofburg Palace complex, is a massive complex in its own right. Beginning its initial planning phases in the early 1980s, the complex of buildings houses some of the nation's major museums, as well as numerous studios and educational centers for dance, design, music, and visual arts, and plays host to cultural and arts festivals throughout the year, including, for example ImPuls Tanz, Vienna International Dance Festival and the Electronic Beats Festival Vienna. The complex opened in 2001, following an eighteen-year redevelopment project and has become a model for contemporary urban cultural consolidation, much as the Ringstrasse had been more than a century earlier. For more on the history of this project, see: Simon Roodhouse and Monika Mokre, "The MuseumsQuartier, Vienna: An Austrian Cultural Experiment," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 10, no. 2 (2004): 193-207; Monika De Frantz, "From Cultural Regeneration to Discursive Governance: Constructing the Flagship of the 'MuseumsQuartier, Vienna' as a Plural Symbol of Change," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 1 (March 2005): 50-66; and Monika Mokre, "GovernCreativity, or, Creative Industries Austrian Style," in *Critique of Creativity: Precarity, Subjectivity, and Resistance in the 'Creative Industries'*, edited by Gerald Raunig, Gene Ray, and Ulf Wuggenig, 109-118 (London: MayFly Books, 2011).

18. See my discussion of Eisenstein, "Montage as Architecture" in footnote three.

19. Karlsplatz is known for Karlskirche, a Baroque-style church from the late eighteenth century, the Otto Wagner Pavilion, originally the grand entrance to the city's metro system (though it was moved, in 1960, from its original position a few meters south to this current location), and the Secession Building, a monument to the *Jugendstil* style erected in 1898.

20. The Albertina is a key example of the architecture of MuseumsQuartier. Using

local materials from the Danube River, it is a white shell and limestone cube, which was completed in 2001, along with the numerous other building projects of the MuseumsQuartier complex.

21. The Belvedere is an eighteenth century Baroque style summer palatial compound, including two palaces (an upper and a lower), an Orangery garden, and stables, which was constructed in the early eighteenth century. The Upper Belvedere was first used to house the imperial painting collection in the late eighteenth century and was converted, along with the lower Belvedere, into a national exhibition space in 1919 following the formation of the First Austrian Republic.

22. As listed in the document "Austria Filmmakers' Cooperative." Sammlung Österreichisches Filmmuseum

bzw. Collection Austrian Film Museum.

23. Most recently, a 2012 special issue of *Cinema Journal* has addressed this issue. In the issue, Tess Takahashi suggests a framework for thinking in terms of "microcinema movements" as a means of bridging the gaps that have emerged between, for instance, experimental video and performance, avant-garde film, and television. See Takahashi, "Experimental Screens in the 1960s and 1970s: The Site of Community," *Cinema Journal* 51, no. 2 (Winter 2012): 162-167.