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vienna biennale 2049

Paul Currion Ana Džokić Stefan Gruber Marc Neelen



THE REPORT

VIENNA BIENNALE 2049

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"I WARNED YOU that the damage was severe," Klara tells Ergün as he removes the headset. She takes the blister-black goggles from his hands, while he takes off the midnight gloves and places them on the armrest of the chair he sits in.

5 "I know. I just didn't really understand how bad it was until I saw it." He looks bitterly at the headset as she folds the goggles into each other and puts them back into their case, as if they might be responsible for the damage.

The headset had given him access to a visualisation of the City Archives, a tool to assist researchers. It was modelled on the Hofburg Palace, and the beauty of its exterior made the destruction of the interior even more distressing. The damage in each room that he'd walked through was worse than the last. Some of the walls had appeared to be nothing but pixels; whatever knowledge or beauty they once had, destroyed. It made no difference how far he walked, every picture on every wall had been defaced, glitched beyond all recognition, and every book on every shelf had been reduced to an abattoir of unrecognizable words.

As he had approached the heart of the Palace - the centre of the Archives - it had been a struggle for him even to move through the ruins. Eventually he couldn't take any more; if it had been the physical world, he would have dropped to his knees in despair, and hoped that one of the glitches in the floor would open wide to embrace him. Instead he'd taken off the glasses and gloves and returned to find Klara looking at him, her features hard to make out in the darkened visualisation room, but the anxiety plain upon her face.



#2015 _"the vienna biennale 2015 was born of the conviction that vienna is the right place to develop a new, coherent, and unique biennale. The focus will be on people, who need one thing above all in times of radical change: orientation!" _announcement vienna biennale 2015

"We only realised what the Hex was doing 30 minutes after the attack began. They took the archive offline, but we lost over 75% of the records. It was before I started working here," she adds, as if he might blame her for the loss. He doesn't blame her, of course, she's just a junior archivist, a volunteer to help him. He doesn't blame anybody; the Hex had come down like a natural disaster, although it was far from natural.

The physical Hofburg Palace is still standing in the centre of the city - but it is just as badly damaged, in a different way. Like all municipal services in Vienna, the backbone of the Archives had been the operating system – run under license from Eliezer GmBH – that had made Vienna the smartest city in Europe. The Hex had struck that operating system down, and Vienna with it. Not just these files in the Archives, but files across the entire city were corrupted beyond repair: the systems that stored those files were taken out of service and tied up in knots; and the networks that joined them all together, torn down and torn apart.

Three years ago – 15 September 2046 – every single networked process and product in Vienna, everything that made Vienna so smart, simply stopped.

Frgün follows Klara out of the visualisation room, up the stairs from the basement level that has been carved out beneath the original building to house the data centre, and along a well-lit corridor, looking out over the community garden. The City Archives had been moved to the old Filmarchiv Austria in the Augarten partly because it was close to the Flakturm, the data-gathering nexus of the Smart City, the site where all the information relating to the city had been aggregated and analysed and acted upon. Their massive walls had made them perfectly secure, before the Hex.

Before the Hex: now everything in Vienna was measured in terms of before and after the Hex.

"This is a very exciting project," she says as they take their seats in her office, "I love your idea of a multi-player simulation of the history of the Smart City. The timing is perfect!"

Perfect timing is what Ergün is hoping for, because in six weeks the Smart City operating system will be re-installed. It has taken nearly three years, but finally the city authorities have worked out how to exorcise the Hex and resurrect the networks. "The timing is no coincidence. The Director of the MAK told me that they decided to re-launch the Biennale at the same time as the Smart City for maximum impact on the international scene."





"But I must be honest with you here," Klara says, "as you've seen from the Archives – it's going to be a challenge."

"I thought a good starting point would be the 2015 Biennale," says Ergün, "since that was held around the time that the Smart City really took off. Is there any material from then? Anything at all?"

"Not enough for the type of simulation that you described in your message. The problem is not just that the material has been corrupted – we have also lost the indexes."

"What about the original material? The books, the photographs?"

"Most of it was sold to private collectors after the digitisation was complete," she tells him, adding in a whisper, "Personally I think this was a mistake." She pulls out a battered black box from beneath her desk: an old hard drive, something he hasn't seen since he was his daughter's age. "This is all I have been able to find."

He grabs it eagerly, turns it round to examine the ports, wondering where he can buy a cable that will fit such an antique. "And this was not affected by the Hex?"

9 "It was sitting in a box at the back of a store cupboard, so I think it was pretty safe. You will have other problems, though: these old file formats are often impossible to read now, and you can see that the hard drive itself has not been well looked after – "

"It's a start," says Ergün, finally feeling some hope, and then Klara pulls out a small coloured brochure. Printed paper has been having a revival since the Hex – one of the easiest ways to communicate without the network – but this looks far older than that. She hands it to him and he holds it up, trying to make out the faint print on the front cover: *Smart City Wien Framework Strategy*.

AFTER A DETOUR to a local trader who occupies one-quarter of a corner shop and stocks a dizzying variety of cables and plugs, Ergün returns to his apartment block. The elevator has been working for the last year – since his daughter insisted on hacking it – but with no option to call anybody if it gets stuck, Ergün prefers to take the stairs.

He plugs the hard drive into his desk and settles back in the antique ergonomic chair that the block association had bought him for his





40th birthday. The hard drive is so old that its magnetic field has started to break down, and the desk computer struggles as it checks for potential infection, forcing its way through the files one by one. Although he reasons that any viruses from 2015 are unlikely to do much damage to a computer today, the whole city has become paranoid about potential infection, both digital and physical, since the Hex.

He remembers where he was when the Hex struck. He was sharing a carry-car with a couple of Korean tourists who looked like pop stars, just like all the other Korean tourists. They were pointing excitedly at the Rathaus, their translators keeping up a continuous stream of narration of their Vienna experience, when the car simply stopped moving. He thought the car had broken down, and hit the emergency exit. The car doors popped open and they all scrambled out. Then he was standing in the street, looking at all the other passengers emerging from their cars, those other passengers looking back at him, at each other, confused: the entire Universitätsring filled with pedestrians newly-born from the wombs of their newly-dead carry-cars.

Everybody was trying to call their homes, their offices, their workshops, but there was no signal connection at all. At first they thought it was due to the number of people calling at the same time, but then they realised that the metro communications network just wasn't there any more. Shop-owners came out of their shops looking puzzled and holding useless payment readers, and it became clear that the commercial payment networks were no longer working. Some tried to rent the city-bikes, but that system had gone down as well; and soon they realised that the buses and trams had stopped also. Eventually they all started walking, and then he met a neighbour heading in the same direction, and they started discussing what was going on, and then a group formed, walking down Burggasse as if this was a normal, everyday event. No, not an everyday event: as if it was a festival day, as if they had all been released from their responsibilities.

Soon it became clear that this was not a jubilee. In less than 90 minutes, the operating system that the Smart City of Vienna had relied on for 25 years had been brought to an awful, grinding halt. Nobody rioted, of course: not the Viennese way. The steady hand of the Social Democrat consensus had ensured that Vienna did not descend into chaos, but for the first time in a century that consensus was shaken.

A loud pinging sound pulls him back to his desk, informing him that the hard drive is clean. He sits forward, already anxious, and starts to navigate the drive. It's not as elegant as the visualisation in the

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ernst-kirchweg-haus

Archives: instead he feels like he's stumbling through a flat blackand-white landscape where folders cluster like trees by the side of the road, sprouting files like leaves.

He tries to open one of the files, but nothing happens; he tries another, to the same effect. The third file he tries does open, but is basically unreadable. He tries to make notes on the few files that he can open, but he has no metadata for them, no context at all: no way of knowing when the words were written or where the pictures were taken. On top of that, time has taken a pair of scissors and a paint can to the pictures, turning them into a circus of strips that make little sense: women halved, starring out from a rainbow tenement; citizens arguing over each other, and under each other, in a courtyard; deserted metro stations where every sign is written backwards.

The damage to the hard drive isn't as terrifying as that in the Archives but, after an hour of wandering through this sparse landscape, he still has no idea what he is looking at. Any reconstruction he makes from this material might be an interesting art piece, but it's not going to help people to understand the history of the Smart City; if anything, it will make it more obscure. In one week he has to update the Director of the MAK, who seems to be taking a particular interest in his commission, and Ergün starts to think that he might be screwed.

"OBVIOUSLY THIS PROJECT

important to me," the Director says, smiling like a friendly predator underneath her wooden-framed glasses. They are sitting in a pay-as-you-want restaurant close to the MAK, run by two impeccably dressed Eritreans who confusingly claim to be grandsons of the owner of the Deewan restaurant across town. Ergün assumed this was some sort of metaphor; that Deewan was the last common ancestor of the many refugee restaurants that Vienna now hosted.

"I understand completely," Ergün replies. He knows that this is a double-edged sword: on the one side, it could mean support, funding, visibility; on the other side, his career revival could be extremely short if he doesn't deliver.

"The brand managers feel that it's crucial to set the right tone for the relaunch of the Biennale right from the beginning," says the Director.



"Open, conversational, challenging," says the Director, "but not polemical. The city has had enough to deal with in these last few years. This Biennale should be a celebration of how much we've achieved since the first Biennale."

"Actually I had wanted to talk with you about that first Biennale – the problem with the records has made my research difficult –"

"Not to mention: that the Biennale and the Smart City will walk into the future hand-in-hand! It is of course a personal honour for me that we will share the stage with the Mayor and various dignitaries."

" - and I was wondering if the MAK had its own archives?"

"Yes, I read your message. We must discuss that after the interview."

"I did find some material relating to one project from 2015, The Report. There's some indications that it was never completed or exhibited, and I thought – wait, what interview?"

And this is how Ergün finds himself sitting in front of a young woman who reminds him of one of his cousins, having the same manner of talking, her mouth filled with words that won't wait for each other. He shows some of the pictures that he has managed to recover from the hard drive, tries to explain what he thinks is happening in those pictures, and pretends that he has somehow become an expert. While he is talking, however, he comes to the most awful realisation: if he continues on this path, his exhibit for the Biennale will be a cruel joke, played on him by the Hex. He has no idea what's really going on in those pictures, what those people were really doing together, why their story had been important to those long-forgotten researchers in 2015.

Once the interview finally ends, he does not go back to the Director's office to talk about what might be in the MAK archives, but straight home. He feels suddenly as if he is made entirely of liquid – tears and sweat and urine – all of which want to escape his body. Whenever he tries to rest, however, when he closes his eyes, all he can see is himself staring into the screen, holding up the Smart City brochure as if it was a nazar and the camera was an evil eye.

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pizzeria - a



[THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT]

READS FROM SMART CITY WIEN FRAMEWORK STRATEGY "Peaceful living together, mutual respect."

FADE IN PICTURE 1

CONTINUES... (VO)

"The principle of Vienna's growth: mutual respect should bring together citizens with dissimilar ways of living and different cultures. This ensures peaceful development towards a caring society. The Smart City Vienna Framework Strategy is aimed precisely at this goal while promoting a common future for the people of Vienna as well as social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities."

Ergün (VO)

"So, this picture shows the city authorities socially including a group of citizens with a different culture in a peaceful, caring way. Notice how the police have provided an armoured vehicle to protect these diverse citizens. It's not clear who they needed protection from – presumably from those who did not share the principles of the Smart City."

[REDACTED]

READS FROM SMART CITY WIEN FRAMEWORK STRATEGY "An excellent starting point."

FADE IN PICTURE 3

CONTINUES... (VO)

"Vienna is doing many things right – in transport, housing construction, urban development, environmental protection, supply and waste disposal services as well as social services for the population. All this is to function even better in the future. This is the purpose of the Smart City Vienna Framework Strategy. Social inclusion is a decisive factor here; this means that all measures will take account of all people living in the city."

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pizzeria - a



#AN EXCELLENT STARTING POINT

_"vienna is doing many things right
_ in transport, housing construction,
urban development, environmental
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this is the purpose of the smart city
vienna framework strategy. social
inclusion is a decisive factor here;
this means that all measures will
take account of all people living in
the city." _smart city wien framework
strategy, 2014

planguadrat

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Ergün (VO)

"This picture perhaps gives us a clue as to why *The Report* was never released. It was apparently trying to provide some kind of social comment, possibly on the Smart City initiative, but historical documents show that Vienna was already doing many things right. This picture, for example, I have been able to date to 1976; it shows how the city already involved all kinds of people in the design process."

READS FROM SMART CITY WIEN FRAMEWORK STRATEGY "A city for young people from all over the world."

FADE IN PICTURE 4

CONTINUES... (VO)

"Internationally, Vienna is considered a leader in products and services pertaining to energy, mobility, sustainability and health. These assets attract young people from all over the world, who find possibilities for a fulfilled and happy life in Vienna."

Ergün (VO)

"As the Smart City Framework Strategy says: you can see clearly how young people from all over the world flocked to Vienna, and how they were able to build fulfilled and happy lives –"

CUT TO: Ergün being interviewed.

Ergün

(PAUSE)

" - fulfilled and happy lives - "

(PAUSE)

"Sometimes – sometimes it seems that these voices...
What I mean to say is that history is not an art of precision, but of interpretation. When I am in the archives, looking through these pictures, sometimes
I feel that our official history is perhaps missing something – "

(PAUSE)



#A CITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

_"internationally, vienna is considered a leader in products and services pertaining to energy, mobility, sustainability and health. these assets attract young people from all over the world, who find possibilities for a fulfilled and happy life in vienna." _smart city wien framework strategy, 2014

#EFFICIENT, INTELLIGENT NETWORKS FACILITATE LIFE IN THE CITY ALL AROUND

_"to be able to attain the ambitious goals of smart city vienna as a resource-conserving forerunner city, politics and administration are committed to setting important steps in the core areas of energy, mobility, buildings and infrastructure. this comprises issues pertaining to energy systems, energy generation, pre-existing and new city quarters, future means of transport and the use of pioneering information and communication technology." _smart city wien framework strategy, 2014



"But of course, from 2049 it is impossible to tell. Impossible."

FADE OUT

refugee protest

READS FROM SMART CITY WIEN FRAMEWORK STRATEGY

"Efficient, intelligent networks facilitate life in the city all around."

FADE IN PICTURE 5

CONTINUES... (VO)

"To be able to attain the ambitious goals of Smart City Vienna as a resource-conserving forerunner city, politics and administration are committed to setting important steps in the core areas of energy, mobility, buildings and infrastructure. This comprises issues pertaining to energy systems, energy generation, pre-existing and new city quarters, future means of transport and the use of pioneering information and communication technology."

CUT TO: Ergün being interviewed.

Ergün

"Ironically, the very technology that the Smart City relied on now makes my report so impossible... old computer file formats, the loss of data, the difficulty of clearly establishing where and when photos were taken..."

[REDACTED]

Ergün

"I'm sorry. I'm rambling. Too many late nights in the archives! What I am trying to say is: looking back from 2049, it is easy to imagine that this was a natural evolution – but what if we are overlooking the hard work of Viennese citizens throughout history, before the Smart City was even conceived? What if I am in fact re-writing Vienna's history to remove the difficult people, the difficult questions?"

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gänseblümchen

[NOT APPROVED FOR RELEASE]



THAT NIGHT HE does not sleep at all – as he has not sleep for the past three – but instead he spends the hours navigating the hard drive. What he did not tell the interviewer is that the pictures he showed her were the only ones he has been able to recover.

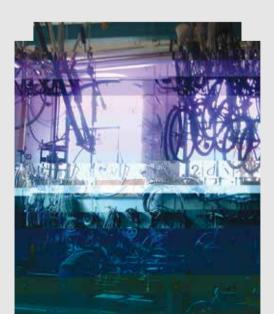
He goes through the pictures that he showed the interviewer, long-dead Wienerinnen looking back at him, as if they are somehow aware of being looked at. He's spent so long staring at them that he's started to feel as if he knows them; or rather, he's become aware of how little he knows them. He has no idea what percentage of them used a travel mode to work other than a personal vehicle, or were employed in the city government workforce, or lived in a household without registered legal titles. All the ISO 37120 metrics that he learnt by heart at school don't tell him how these people lived, together or alone, in the dense fabric of their ancient lives.

This goes on for three days, his mind looping round and around, trying to connect what he sees in the fractured images with what he's been taught about the history of Vienna. He examines the clothes they wear, the expressions on their faces, the buildings they stand before. The past is a fertile field of strange experiences – none of these people wear hats to warn them of sun exposure, or carry any Lokal communication devices like his own tablet, or share carry-cars on their way to – he does not even know where they come from or go to.

In the middle of this, his mind occasionally drifts back to wonder what had happened to those Korean tourists that he'd left standing in the middle of the street. Their fingers were tapping at their translators with energetic futility, since their guided tour had gone down when the network disappeared, taking the entire tourist support system with it. The Hex had caused a momentary dip in tourist numbers – based on unfounded fears that the virus might start attacking the tourists own systems, and possibly even find its way back to their home cities – but once the city government confirmed that it was local to Vienna, then the Hex had actually become part of the tourism offer. Vienna really is different now, the only major European city without an operating system. Come and see what the world looks like without magic!

To Ergün the world looks the same as it did before the Hex. The buildings are still there, the people are still there, even the tourists are still there: but without the algorithms that made its decisions, without the networks that held it together, the city is running at only 70% efficiency. The economy is contracting, slow as a glacier but equally sure, and with no end in sight. The news channels that morning: Vienna slips to #18 in the global city rankings, finally





bike kitchen

overtaken by Bogota, of all places! Yet the city rankings don't seem to figure in Ergün's daily calculation of happiness: his own projects, his partner Elsa's job, his daughter Elif's future.

He's still staring at those pictures when Elif walks into his apartment without warning, and he nearly drops his tablet, as if he had been in the middle of something forbidden. She stands in the doorway, watching him, arms folded, head to one side: the same way her mother stands, although she hates it when he tells her things like that. Their black hair has grey in it in the same places – Elif far less than Elsa, of course – and they both hate the size of their ears; but these are things that make him happy.

"Mutti told me that you were having problems with your exhibit."

"I thought you and Elsa weren't speaking again?"

"There was a... temporary truce," Elif stalks into the room and takes up space on the couch. "Actually that was one of the things I came to talk about. The exhibit was the other thing."

"I'm not sure I have any exhibit. I don't even have enough material."

25 "I saw your interview on the big screen at the co-op viewing hall," she says, "or I should say: everybody demanded that I come and watch your interview."

He looks at her suspiciously. "You're not normally interested in my work."

"When Mutti told me, I thought I might be able to help. Although it's the sort of help that you won't want."

"Then why, my dear Elif, are you about to propose it?" She shrugs and grins, but not in his direction. That is Elif: always looking somewhere else, as if what she is looking for could never be under her nose. Ergün sighs, "Go on."

"A friend of mine," and Ergün does not like most of her friends, not at all, "has been writing a bot that breaks and scrapes encrypted files."

"Elif, that is completely illegal."

"So is running a bike share scheme, but you let me do it."

"First, it's not a bike share scheme, it's a bike hacking scheme. Second, I don't let you do it – I've simply given up trying to stop



you. Third, it's your mother who really objects, not me."

"What do you object to? That we gave access to those bikes to more people than ever before? That we made our own street culture rather than waiting for approval from the brand managers?"

"Let's not have this fight again," says Ergün, "The point is, sharing bikes is hardly the same thing as stealing people's data!"

"He's not stealing people's data. He thinks the funding is coming from some state security office in West Africa – all of their emails start 'Good Day Friend'. Anyway, he says it can recover your files, no problem. Think of it like... drawing a picture of somebody. A picture that can talk back. Answer your questions."

"That sounds a bit... old-fashioned. An inference algorithm?"

"Sure, old-fashioned," says Elif, rolling her eyes, "Perfect for you." She knocks her Lokal – in her case, a faux-Indian bracelet – against his Lokal, the tablet at the edge of his desk. "There it is. Use it if you want it, wipe it if you don't."

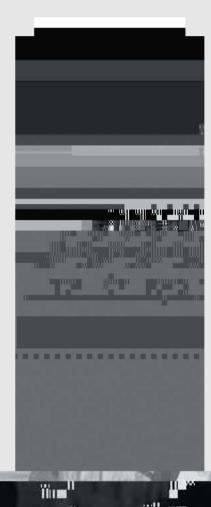
"Despite the fact that I will not use it, thank you," and he means it, because Elif usually spares her generosity for the co-operative that she joined the day after her 16th birthday, the community that had presented her with the opportunity to hack the city. "What was the other thing you wanted to talk about?"

"My truce with Mutti is over – shortest one so far, I think. She says that Guild Legal want her to cut ties with me."

"You don't think they have a point?" he suggests, bracing himself for one of Elif's outbursts.

"The Guilds are as bad as the city authorities," she spits, "elitist monopolies with a vested interest in the status quo. Lawyers coming out of their arses."

To Ergün, this is one of his life's great mysteries. The Guilds had grown from small maker spaces into co-operative industries, shaking a long-dead ideal of guild socialism out of the history books and enthusiastically turning it from theory to practice. As far as Ergün can understand, this revival of collective action is exactly what Elif claims she wants, it's what her own community group practices – yet she still condemns the Guilds. Her problem with the Guilds seems to be that they aren't radical enough, as if pragmatism is the enemy of possibility. She had been 14 when the Hex struck; 17 now, and in her mind the world is full of utopias waiting to be





unlocked like hidden levels in a computer game.

So Ergün just shrugs off the outburst. "Guilt by association is a real thing in the reputation economy, Elif."

Elif snorts and rolls her eyes. "It was a real thing, until the Hex destroyed the reputation economy. Now the lawyers are just looking for something to do."

She has a point. Everybody knew that the Hex hated networks, but it seemed to hate social networks most of all. Under the guidance of the private companies that sold them, the Smart City had incorporated social networks into its services – all in the interests of the consumer, of course. Those networks had metastasized until they invaded every aspect of everyday life, and they had been the first target for the Hex, even before it moved on to systems like the City Archives. The private companies had tried hard to get the social networks back online – Vienna was a small but rich seam of information gold – but had failed miserably.

Then Elif surprises Ergün completely. Her eyes stop rolling and she looks at him, more tired than a teenager has a right to be, and says, "I'm tired of arguing with her."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Tell her I'm sorry if I've caused her any trouble. Tell her that if she wants to cut ties with me, I won't take it to a family tribunal."

"Elif! I won't tell her any such thing."

She waves him away. "I have better things to do with my time. I'll still come and see you, Papa."

"And you'll see Elsa as well."

Elif springs up and smiles at him briefly. "Families, eh?" Then she hugs him with one hand, passes him a piece of paper with the other, and is gone, like a fairy finished granting wishes. She's right, of course: in the Smart City or out of it, before or after the Hex, families are still hard work.

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HE LOOKS AT the screen of his tablet, where a new icon has appeared: a two-tailed creature, but he can't make out the details. He realises with sorrow that he doesn't trust his own daughter enough to tap the icon, to open the programme, and he wonders when he started to feel that way. It wasn't the Hex that destroyed their faith in each other; something crept in earlier and pushed them all apart. Maybe this is their second chance, and maybe this is his only chance to complete the Biennale commission.

He sees himself as Elif saw him in the interview, a desperate man looking for a lifeline; and so he taps the icon.

Nothing happens. It's hit and miss with these home-coded bots – sometimes they work as advertised, sometimes they don't – and in this case he has no idea if Elif's friend has coding skills or not. A small black bar in the corner of the tablet screen starts to resolve into a sentence, which reads:

DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?

Ergün glances at the creased piece of paper in his hand, where a single word is written in marker pen, and hopes that he pronounces the word correctly: ABRAXAS.

The screen does nothing for a while longer, and then a menu appears. He touches the icon for Voice, and the screen goes blank.

"My name is Abraxas," says the tablet with a calm male voice, "What is your name?"

"Ergün." He sits up straight now, because bots are usually simple programmes, no unnecessary extras, nothing to distract from the task at hand. This is more elaborate than he was expecting, but it might still be sound and smoke.

The screen remains blank. "Hello Ergün. What would you like me to do?"

"I don't know, 'Abraxas' - what can you do?"

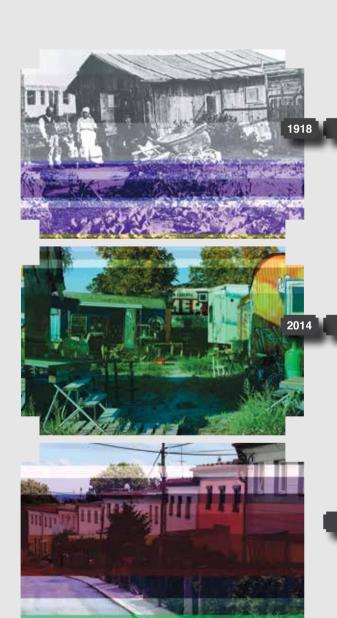
"I was built to collect, aggregate and analyse data."

"Well, I need you to recover some files from a hard drive."

"I am happy to help. Please show me the files."

Ergün navigates through to the hard drive folders. "Can you start with these?"





"I have already started, Ergün. Please wait a moment." The screen goes blank again only a few moments later. Nothing else happens for a second, and then a slideshow rapidly scrolls on the screen before him. Each picture has been restored as much as possible: glitches more or less smoothed out, jigsaw pieces put back together again, colours returned to their more natural order. Once the pictures are finished, text documents start to appear as if they were scanned yesterday, complete with written notes from the researchers; even the few videos on the hard drive, which Ergün hadn't even been able to open, start to speak to him with the voices of people from another century.

"Saved," he whispers as he watches.

"Would you like me to save these files?" says Abraxas.

"No, I meant - actually, yes. Yes, save these files."

"I am happy to help."

Abraxas is speaking to an empty chair, for Ergün is already out of the room and chasing Elif down the stairs, hoping to catch her before she leaves. When he reaches the street, he sees he is too late, and she is already rounding the corner at the far end of the street, the wheels of her bike whipping through a trail of water that started leaking from one of the pipes yesterday. He whispers his thanks beneath his breath and goes back inside, back to Abraxas.

"Would you like me to do something else?" asks Abraxas.

Ergün can't help himself, he laughs out loud; he has the material he needs for his exhibit, and the weight is lifted from his back. "Can you build a visualisation from these files?"

"Do you have a model for this visualisation?"

Ergün thinks back to the ruin of the Hofburg Palace that haunts the City Archives. "Actually, I don't need a full simulation. It's a small dataset – can you guide me through it?"

"I will need to expand my reference range."

Ergün hesitates. "What does that mean?"

"I have a basic pattern language with associated vocabulary. I will need to build a wider range of references in order to help you."

"You mean you need to learn."

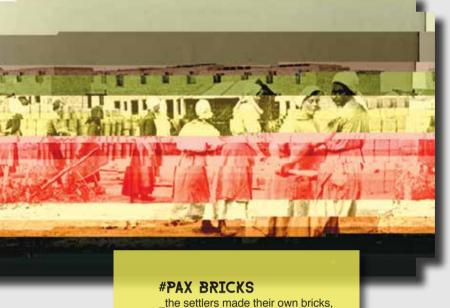
settlers

33

gänseblümchen

heuberg





pax bricks

_the settlers made their own bricks, known as "pax ziegel" (peace bricks). _done by one of the largest and most politically active cooperative associations in vienna, whose original members were railway workers.



Ш

"I need to learn."

"How do you learn?"

"My current reference range has been built from the files on the attached hard drive. Please provide me with more data in order to expand my capability."

Once again Ergün wants to chase after Elif, but this time to ask her exactly what Abraxas is. A bot is supposed to be a simple and stupid creature that does one thing well, and Abraxas has proven to be excellent at recovering files – but it has already worked out that there is more data, somewhere out there. Abraxas is clearly not simple and stupid: at the very least it starts to sounds like a weak artificial intelligence, and having an AI on his Lokal would be a criminal offence. He should erase it now that it's done the job he asked, and hope that Elif tells nobody, but it might still be helpful.

settlers' movement

"Maybe later," says Ergün, "We have work to do now. Show me the earliest picture we have in these files."

"I am happy to help," says Abraxas, and a picture appears on the screen.

35 "What am I looking at?"

"Metadata indicates this is a photograph taken in [Vienna] in 1921. It shows women of [the Settler Movement] making bricks."

"That was clear, but I couldn't understand – why were they making bricks?"

"[Settlers] worked co-operatively to construct their own houses."

"Were bricks not produced in factories in 1921?"

"I do not have that information. [Settlers] worked co-operatively to construct their own houses."

siedlungsamt

"Show me the homes they were building."

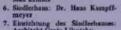
"This is the first type of house."

"They look – inefficient. In terms of their layout, I mean. They all have gardens?"

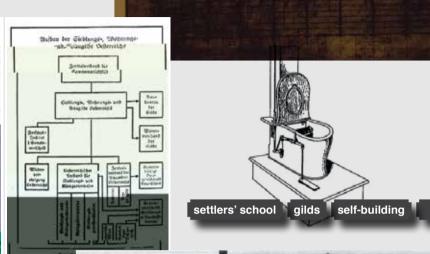
"[Settlers] grew their own food."

"Why?"





- Das Siedlerhaus als Erzieher: Architekt Adolf Leon Wirtschaftsfragen der Siedlerbe-wegung: Dr. Otto Neuenth



#SETTLERS' MOVEMENT

_vienna's settlers' movement emerges from self-help initiatives in response to food and housing scarcity after the collapse of the austro-hungarian empire.

_the organisation into a cooperative movement makes it possible for the settlers' to claim their rights to land and gain support from the city. _beyond collectively building houses and growing food the settlers establish many other associations and institutions, giving rise to a parallel economy.



settlers

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"The [Vienna City Council] was unable to house or feed its citizens."

Ergün leans in, as if he could move through the screen. "1921 – that would have been shortly after the First World War. The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire."

"I do not have these references [the First World War][the Austro-Hungarian Empire] in my range."

"This is exactly what I've been looking for, to show how far we've come since then. Under the Smart City system, nobody had to take matters into their own hands in this way."

"I do not have this reference [the Smart City] in my range."

Ergün ignores Abraxas' complaint about the lack of references. This was where the researchers had started in 2015, and he's determined to follow their trail. "Do you have more material from that era?"

As the pictures appear on his screen, Ergün snatches them up and re-orients them, experimenting with different paths and angles, sketching out the simulation that he'll present at the Biennale. Audiences have high expectations of historical simulations these days, but this will be something different: a whirlwind from the past, the Smart City reconsidered and revived. Make it come alive, as his old tutor used to tell him. Then the pictures grind to a halt.

"I have reached the limit of what I can extract from these files," says Abraxas tonelessly.

"That's all there is. That's all we have."

"There are references in these files to other archives."

"Those files are in the City Archives, and most of the Archives was destroyed by the Hex."

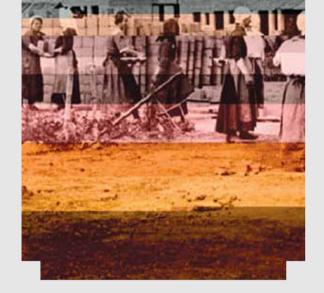
"I do not have these references [the City Archives][the Hex] in my range."

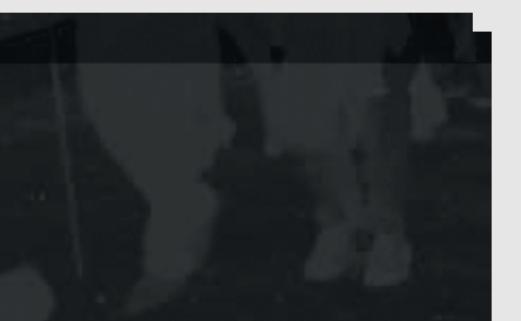
"I know, you've said that before."

"Any additional files could expand my capability."

"I told you, the Archives were destroyed by the Hex."

"If I have access to [the City Archives], I can attempt to reconstruct those files also."





Ergün frowns and stops working for a moment; this is unexpected. "You could do that?"

"I am happy to help."

"I know you're happy to help, but could you do it?"

"I was built to collect, aggregate and analyse data."

Ergün stares at the tablet in which Abraxas dwells. He hadn't considered the possibility that this simple programme – or not so simple, perhaps – could do more than just restore a hard drive. A whole history has been hidden in the City Archives for the last three years, and that history could make his exhibit come alive. The management of the Archives are unlikely to be happy with the idea of introducing something like Abraxas into their system, but there is almost no risk involved, since the Archives themselves are already damaged beyond repair.

For the first time in several nights he sleeps soundly. His dreams are filled with Settlers; he joins them in making bricks, and together they rebuild the Archives.

By the time he wakes, he has already decided what he will do, and later that morning he finds himself back at the Archives, being handed goggles and gloves by Klara, walking down into the visualisation room in the basement. He keys his Lokal directly to the core of the Archives, via a dusty contact pad built into the chair, and taps the Abraxas icon. While the programme loads itself into the Archives, he puts on the goggles and thinks to himself: it isn't too late to stop this. The visualisation within the goggles is pitch black. It will be too late only when I say the name.

DO YOU KNOW MY NAME? appears the text inside the visualisation.

It is not a shame not to know, he tells himself, it is a shame not to ask.

"Abraxas," he says.

"Hello Ergün," says Abraxas, "What would you like me to do?"

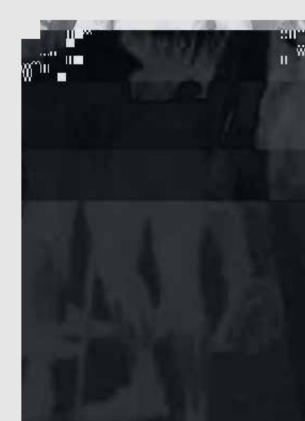
"You're now in the City Archives."

"The [City Archives] you told me were damaged by [the Hex]."

"That's right. I want you to reconstruct the Archives."

"I am happy to help. My initial scan suggest this will take some time."





"How much time?"

Abraxas doesn't reply, and there is still nothing happening inside the goggles. Ergün waits for a city security officer to appear in the doorway and ask him pointed questions about a mysterious programme called "Abraxas" that has suddenly appeared on the network. There is no network any more, he reminds himself, nobody is going to find him out.

"Processing at 31.5Tb per second, reconstruction will take approximately 6 days," says Abraxas suddenly.

"Then you'd better start now," says Ergün. He can come back when he wants to, to start his research while Abraxas is still reconstructing. In the meantime, it's unlikely that anybody else will come down here, and so he leaves Abraxas to do its work. He walks back up to the light, closing the door to the visualisation room behind him.

"That was fast," says Klara as he passes her office.

"I think I can find some useful material," he says, "I mean – it will be damaged, of course – but I might be able to incorporate that damage into the exhibit, you see?"

Klara nods. "And that might actually remind the city authorities that they need to invest in the Archives."

"Why haven't they?" If he pushes too hard, he might give himself away, but he needs to know. "I would have thought that a bot could reconstruct most of them."

"We keep asking, but they say there's no budget. They won't let us do it ourselves – the risk of further damage."

Ergün shakes his head in disbelief. "Damage?"

"You know. The city is paranoid about third party interventions. If it's not planned, it's not smart."

And if it's not smart, it's not legal, thinks Ergün. If he tells Klara what he's done, then it makes her complicit in his crime; but if nobody knows what he's done, there is no crime. "I'll be back next week," he says, waving goodbye from the doorway.

Klara smiles, "Of course. It's nice that somebody's finally taking an interest in our work," and Ergün feels the awful pinch of shame.

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#INITIATIVE FOR COLLABORATIVE BUILDING AND LIVING

_the platform works towards establishing legal, organisational and economic conditions, that will support self-determined, communal living.

_connects local initiatives, facilitates knowledge exchange and promotes the interests of co-housing projects. _part of a new breed of institutions operating beyond the logic of market and state, that focus on mediating between the different spheres.

its creation seems to coincide with a proliferation of baugruppen in vienna during the 2020s.

kukuma perpetuum mobile 2.3 aktion schwarze katze

initiative for cooperative living and building

... Initiative für

the settlers' newspaper

607862-C

eitichrift für fleingartner, Siedler und Wohnungereformer

"Ber Giebler."

networks

43

housing co-ops

settlers' movement

AS ERGÜN LEAVES his apartment the following week, he passes several of his neighbours, discussing how soon Alter Junker will be able to fix the pipe leaking at the far end of the street.

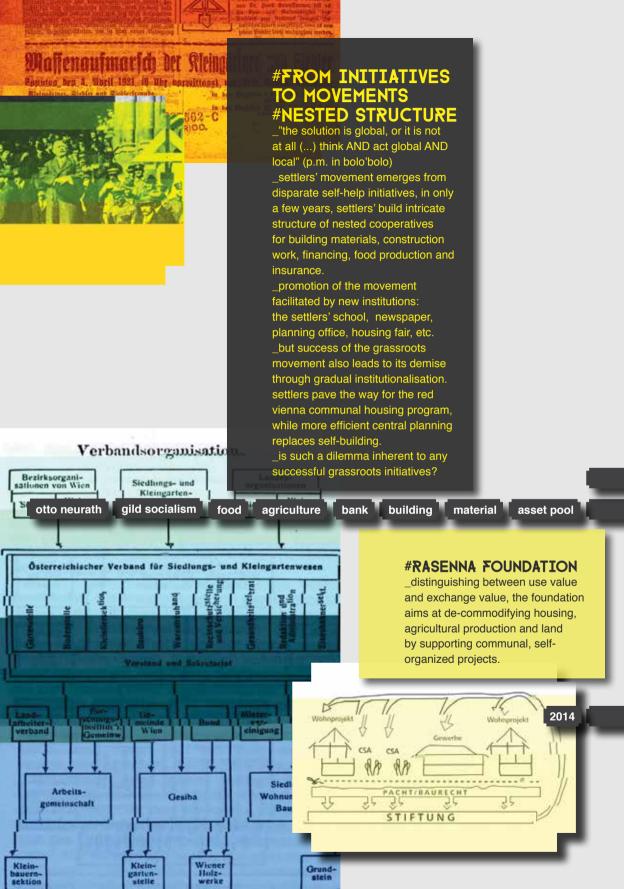
"Herr Demir!" one of them calls, "do you know when Alter Junker will be at home?" Junker lives in Ergün's apartment block, but he is rarely at home. When the Smart City collapsed, the fully-automated maintenance of the water supply system stopped, and the best available replacements had been retired technicians like Alter Junker, who had worked as an engineer in his youth. Geriatric teams of old-school plumbers roam the streets, keeping the city in fresh water, keeping themselves busier than they have been for years.

Ergün shrugs off the question, and goes in the opposite direction. He feels surprisingly good about this time of waiting, while Abraxas works on the Archives. Before Abraxas, he felt as if all he had to look forward to was a plunging reputation and possible execution at the hands of the brand managers, but now he feels like a schoolboy willing the holidays to start. He's in such a good mood, in fact, that even the walk to the Millennium Tower is a pleasure – although he knows that the conversation he must have at the end of the walk is not going to be any kind of pleasure.

He's always surprised when he arrives at the Tower and looks up. After the owners went bankrupt in the financial crisis of 2036 – the last of that cycle of crises – the Maker Guilds had moved in, adding their own flourishes to the Tower's faceless corporatism. Now it looks as if it has been re-imagined by Hundertwasser, if the man had been obsessed with renewable energy and 3D printing.

In the early days of the Hex, the Union had quarantined Vienna, terrified that the problem might spread; there had even been rumours that the Chancellors were considering forcing the city to Grexit the Union entirely. While the city authorities panicked, the Guilds had stepped in to fill the gap in the market, producing whatever people needed, and their importance to the city had become immeasurable. Eventually the Union realised that the Hex wanted Vienna and Vienna alone, and the quarantine was lifted, but it was too late. The Viennese had long memories, and the Guilds continued to thrive years after the quarantine, selling their goods from the remaining shops in the Millenium Centre, sending them out across the city via their own system of carry-weight drones.

Ergün rides the escalator up to the atrium, below a row of those drones sitting on the ridges of the glass roof in the spotlight of the rising sun. Occasionally one of them spreads its wings and rises



up the Tower, past the heat exchange units slung from random windows, the solar panel arrays fastened over every available space, the solar ovens slow-cooking meals for the Guild masters and their apprentices. The drone ducks in through an open window and exits shortly afterwards, a package in its beak and its navigation lights blinking.

The Guilds tend to work through the night, when the windows on the upper floors light up with the work being done in 3D print shops like the one his partner Elsa belongs to, stacked above the microfoundries on the lower floors. Temperatures are hottest at this time of day, and he braces himself before entering her production space. Robots run along rails that criss-cross the entire open room, arms hanging down, yellow and black bodies like the lego he played with as a boy. They're all printed and programmed in-house, smart enough to be useful but dumb enough to be Hex-proof.

Elsa runs over to kiss him hard on the cheek. "Want to see something great?" she asks, the same words she'd said to him when they'd first met, and he says, "Yes," just as he did that first time. She drags him by the hand through the space, and here is what he loves. She has an endless sense that there something new waiting to be in the world – her Guild, her products, her children – even if, lately, her patience with Elif has run as thin as the plastic being pushed through her printers.

settlers' movement

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cooperarive structures

"We need to talk about Elif," he says before they reach wherever it is that she is taking them.

She doesn't slow down, and now they are standing in front of a plinth, and on the plinth is a man in a white suit. Ergün looks closer and realises that it's not a man, but a robot printed to look exactly like a man. The man is dressed in a white suit, with a white face and white hair, and a black line running from the top of the head to the tip of the white shoe on the right foot.

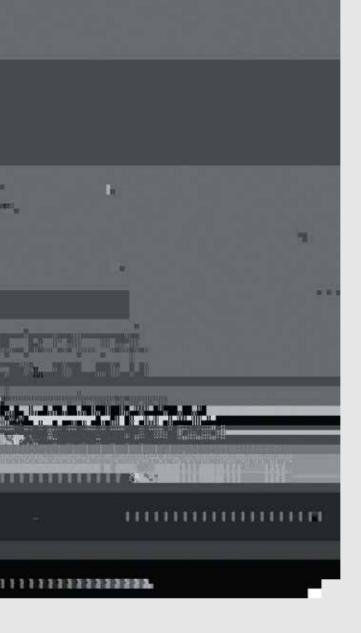
"It's our contribution to the Biennale. What do you think?" asks Elsa, "The city authorities are going to let this robot walk around downtown for a few hours, and then symbolically arrest it. It's an interesting concept, but I'm not sure anybody will get it. I'm not sure I get it, and I printed it."

rasenna foundation

"The Biennale seems to be heavily into historical recreation this year."

"You should know," she says, "How's your piece developing?

"Surprisingly well, given that they gave me so little time to work





on it. Elif is giving me some help with it," and takes a deep breath before the battle, "She said that you said that Guild Legal said that you had to cut ties with her."

"That's not what I said at all," Elsa says as she begins to circle the robot, "I said that she needed to give up her bike hacking, or I would have to take advice from Legal."

"I don't think we should let your lawyers determine our family life."

"You're taking her side?" says Elsa from the far side of the robot.

"I'm not taking anyone's side. I just think it's better to keep talking."

"She has nothing to say. And I have nothing to say to her."

"Listen to yourself! Where do you think she gets it from?"

"It? What is 'it', exactly?" She doesn't look at him when she speaks, too busy examining the robot for printing errors.

He changes the subject back to where it belongs. "I want her to give up the bike hacking as much as you do, but we have to face it – the city authorities haven't been able to provide that service since the Hex, so – "

"So? That doesn't make it legal. It doesn't make it right."

"I know it doesn't; but people can use the bikes again, not just her group, but everybody. And she seems happier now, doesn't she?"

"It's not about happiness. She needs to find a way to be happy without breaking the law."

Ergün stares at the white face of the robot, the black line bisecting it. "Code is law."

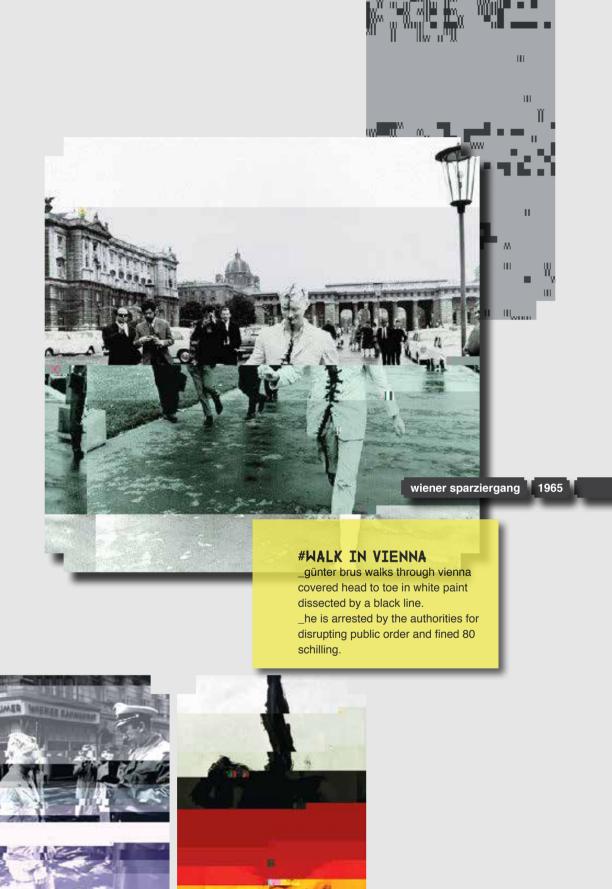
"What?" Elsa stops what she was doing on the far side of the robot and looks at him, puzzled.

"It's something they used to say when the Smart City was first implemented. I remember thinking – an algorithm can't decide what's right, can it? We work out what's right by – well, by working it out."

"By shouting at each other?"

"Well, sometimes. Yes."

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Elsa folds her arms as she finishes inspecting the robot. "In one month, the Smart City operating system comes back on."

"I know."

"Things aren't going back to the way they were before. I'm not talking about our family; you need to decide where you stand."

"What do you mean?"

"The Guilds are nervous, Ergün. That's why Legal is so aggressive, these days. We've built something important here, outside the influence of the Smart City, and we don't want to see it compromised."

"Maybe Elif feels the same way."

"Oh, I know that's how she feels, but she's still a child. She just wants to tear it all down and build paradise where the parking lots used to be." She sounds almost amused as she speaks, and Ergün knows that he can bring her round. "Oh, and are you comparing her law-breaking to my perfectly legal work?"

"She compares the Guilds to the city authorities," he says carefully, "and it seems to me that it's all a matter of perspective."

"Historical perspective," she mutters as she fiddles with the screen hanging from her belt. When she taps at it, the robot takes a step towards Ergün, who steps out of the way. The robot starts to pace around the workspace like a well-designed ghost. "Be careful," she tells him, "or history might walk all over you."

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viennese actionism

THE WALK FROM the Millennium Tower to the City Archives is unbearable – not the weather, although the sun is strong today, but the anticipation. Klara waves him past her office, and he realises that not only has nobody noticed Abraxas at work, but he's considered part of the team now. He goes through the ritual – taking a seat in the visualisation room, tapping the Abraxas icon on his tablet, putting on the goggles and gloves – and seconds later, he is standing outside the Hofburg Palace.

"Were you successful?" he asks.

The statue of Prince Eugene turns to look down at him from the top of his horse. "You can see for yourself," it says with the voice



of Abraxas.

Ergün steps inside the building, and breathes a sigh of relief. The Palace is now partially restored – there are still books missing from the shelves, and many of the pictures lack resolution – but most people will see what is fixed, and not what remains flawed. Walking through the Palace once again, Ergün can barely believe that this is the same set of Archives that he had seen reduced to ruin only days ago.

actionism He feels a presence beside him. Abraxas now appears as a mirror image of Ergün, but seeming almost too real, as if Abraxas has put a

"I'd say that this was successful," says Ergün.

"I am happy to help."

"You remember the material that we were looking at before? Can you gather related historical material in a single reading room?"

lot of effort into getting the details right. "Are you satisfied?"

"I can do that." Abraxas flickers in the air for a second, devoting his resources to the task, and then forms again. "It is finished."

"I need to tell Klara about this," says Ergün with excitement. "We'll need to meet with the director of the archives. Show them what we've done."

"I would advise against that."

Ergün looks at Abraxas. "You would advise?"

Abraxas mirrors his expression back at Ergün. "I have not yet completed the recovery process."

"They'll notice what you've done in here."

"The records indicate that – before you arrived – nobody had visited these Archives for 8 months."

"Really?" Ergün looks around. "How much more time do you need?"

"It's how much time we need," replies Abraxas.

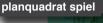
Ergün lets the reference to 'we' pass. "Is there anything else that vou need?"

"There is one critical reference not in the range provided by these

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stadtfussball





cooperative planning

gartenhof verein

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#PLANQUADRAT #SOFT URBAN RENEWAL

- _grassroots transformation of a derelict inner courtyard into a self-managed community garden.
- _3 years of playful actions and fierce controversies lead to tearing down fences and reassembling many fragmented lots into single publicly accessible green commons.
- _process is accompanied and sometimes also facilitated by orf television team helmut voitl and elisabeth guggenberger.
- _the collaborative re-design and negotiation process is a game changer for citizens' participation in urban planning. it lays the foundation for institutionalisation of the viennese model of soft urban renewal.



- _games and playful interventions lower the threshold for citizen participation and co-determination.
- _play opens space for speculation and negotiation, suspends established power relations and challenges the roles of experts and citizens.
- _the question "what if?" is at the heart of many children's games. play revives this capacity to imagine that other worlds are possible.



planquadrat

Archives. The development of the Smart City is discussed at length in the historical record, but I can find no reference to [the Hex]."

"What do you need to know?" Ergün asks nervously, strangely similar to the way he felt when Elif first asked him to explain sex.

"What is [the Hex]?"

"Nobody knows. It's what destroyed the Smart City operating system. It's what caused all the damage that you've repaired."

"What is [the Hex]?"

"I told you – nobody knows. The city programmers assumed it was a DDoS attack at first, then when they saw what was happening to the networks they decided it was a cascading failure in the system. Eventually they gave up guessing and just tried to fix it, but it was too late. It couldn't be fixed."

Abraxas says nothing more as they step into the reading room that he has built, modelled unnecessarily on the Prunksaal of the National Library, a fortress made of books, with wooden stepladders and copperplate globes scattered about the room. They work: Abraxas gathers books from the bookcases and brings them to Ergün, who combs them for clues. It could be hours, it could be days; it feels like years later when Ergün finally sits back and breathes. It's like drinking water directly from the pipe, a datastream of history that he's trying to comprehend even while it rushes past him. Abraxas never tires, of course.

When he walks away from the Archives, Ergün is already thinking about the next day, and what he and Abraxas might discover. When he was younger, he had enjoyed watching archaeology programs; men and women bringing up the dead, turning over the earth; history as something that needed to be wrestled from the ground. He is like those archaeologists now, with Abraxas as the spade with which he uncovers the truth.

The truth. The truth is what, exactly?

Ergün hasn't looked at the copy of the Smart City brochure since that disastrous interview at the MAK. He glances through it now with new eyes – now that it is no longer his only connection to the past – and he notices that on every page of the brochure is a picture of smiling people. Contrast this with the pictures they've recovered from the Archives: in those pictures, people are scowling, or swearing, or fighting; when they are smiling, it seems to be an uncaptured kind of happiness, as if they've escaped from something.

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#SUPER SOMMER

_conceived as playground for citizens, the super sommer stages a series of temporary artistic installations on naschmarkt.

_in a convergence of energies the festival leads to the squatting of the arena, vienna's former abattoir.



#ARENA MOVEMENT

_the arena movement of '76 is vienna's delayed '68.

_summer-long squat attracts over 400.000 visitors - arena becomes emblem of a generation's desire for more self-determination via autonomous spaces.

_despite closure the arena movement produces many spinoff effects for other youth and alternative culture movements.

_the squat enjoys the sympathy of the media and even city officials, showing the authorities the benefits of acknowledging and embracing alternative forces.



super sommer

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arena occupation

"Do you have a copy of the Smart City brochure? Why are these people smiling?"

"The brochure suggests several reasons." Abraxas pauses as if trying to rank those reasons in order of plausibility. "The share of green space occupies about half of Vienna's municipal territory. Public transport makes it possible to reach almost all parts of the city quickly and in comfort."

"That doesn't really explain why people would be so happy."

"Vienna's water is of supreme quality for a metropolis and has been so for more than a century."

"Sure. Do we know who the people in the brochure are? What happened to them?"

"There is no information about their identities."

"Can you cross-reference with the rest of the Archives?"

"I have identified three of them. They appear to be professional models."

"Professional?" That explains the difference he senses between them and the older pictures. "I'm interested in these people." He turns the page of the book he is reading and points to a picture: a small group of young people, mainly dressed in black, huddled together on a pavement. "I saw their picture before, on the hard drive, but I was puzzled by them."

"This is the Pizzeria Anarchia, a collective that existed in the second district from 2011-2014. They established a People's Kitchen, a political film series, and ran a free shop and library."

Ergün turns the page to examine a flyer from the pizzeria. "They do not look happy. Was this a Smart City project? It was happening at the same time as the Smart City was being introduced."

"They were offered temporary use of the property by the owners. The owners claimed to be motivated by social responsibility, but they later admitted in court that they did this to scare away the existing tenants."

"That doesn't sound so smart. So the police we can see in this picture – they were trying to stop the owners from evicting them?"

"The police were there to evict them." Abraxas scrolls through a







#PIZZERIA ANARCHIA #GENTRIFICATION

_pizzeria anarchia collective includes a people's kitchen with weekly free pizza nights, political film series, free shop and library.

_the collective is offered temporary use by property owners claiming to be motivated by social responsibility, but later admitted they intended to scare away existing tenants.

_after 3 years the collective is evicted by an army of 1700 police, clearing the premises for renovation and roof-top extension.

_gentrification, rising housing costs and displacement are increasing sources of conflicts in vienna.



VICTIONS! RISING RENT!
XCESSIVE POLICE FORCE!
PMELESSNESS IN A CITY
WITH EMPTY HOMES!

AND DEMO AUGAKIEN SPI



series of pictures of the eviction. "The police were on the side of the owners. I have found a video of the eviction."

The video begins to play on the wall beside them; Ergün watches, puzzled, and consults a couple of archived websites. "Maybe they're unhappy because they didn't have enough pizza for 1700 police."

One archived website scrolls down the wall next to the video: "We placed ourselves amidst one of the many fronts of gentrification, being completely aware of the owner's intention to use us for their own profit interests. From the beginning it was our plan to turn the tables. Our goal was to protect the remaining tenants and to collectively resist against the brutal business practices of the owners."

"The evidence is contradictory," says Abraxas, "The brochure says clearly that allowing citizens to participate in shaping their city is of paramount importance; yet this footage shows that only certain citizens were allowed to shape the city."

"I agree it's strange," says Ergün, "These records show that these apartments were rebuilt as private apartments that the former residents could no longer afford." He sits back, head buzzing; unlike the Settlers' Movement, which he now knows had succeeded in forcing the government to grant the people the right to occupy land, they were presented here with a situation where the city was actively supporting private interests against a community initiative and supported by the neighbourhood. Clearly something had changed in a hundred years.

They dig into the Settlers' Movement: citizens of a city whose imperial operating system had collapsed, similar to the way in which Vienna's operating system had fallen apart after the Hex; all the buildings still standing, but everybody wondering what was supposed to happen next. A government unable to provide for its people as effectively as before, and those people – veterans, workers and widows, artists and anarchists, and other Viennese – organising into co-operatives to grow food and build houses. These co-operatives look a little like the Guilds, a little like the community gardens, but less polished for the camera.

"By 1918 more than 100,000 people were living in self-built shelters," reports Abraxas as they browse through copies of Der Siedler, "and 6.5 million square meters of public land had been turned to arable production by the Settlers." Abraxas decodes the archaic font of these newspapers as if they are encrypted messages from the Settlers. "However municipal support of the Settlers began to fade after 1925, in favour of centrally planned mass housing."

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pizzeria anarchia

augarten spitz



_beyond debating and decision making they involve a hands-on approach to shaping the built environment and the community.

_the DIY-culture and pleasure of making things promotes cooperation, still co-operation remains hard work.

2011

"What happened to the Settlers themselves?" asks Ergün. He has begun to code a simulation of this post First World War Vienna as slums and allotments give way to massive housing blocks, gleefully imagining how unsettling it will be for visitors to the exhibition to be confronted by Settler women glaring back at them. Ergün loves building this type of data visualisation: visitors to the simulation will be able to lay bricks themselves, and each brick will represent one of the many cooperatives and institutions, and the more visitors participate, the larger that parallel society will become, the larger that parallel economy will grow.

"On Saturday and Sunday the men arrive and work from dawn till dark," replies Abraxas, "to see a man with two wooden legs carrying an armful of bricks up an improvised ladder is but one example of many."

"That's hardly representative of most of the settlers, especially the women," says Ergün, as Abraxas hands him the newspaper article that he's quoting from. Ergün has noticed that Abraxas has a tendency to repeat text from the documents it is analysing, producing disjointed cut-up statements that Ergün tends to ignore. "Presumably the movement only lasted as long as the authorities were unable to provide shelter."

"By 1934 the city authorities responded to the housing crisis by constructing 61,175 apartments in 348 housing complexes and 5,257 homes in 42 housing estates."

Ergün realises that he walks past those complexes every day without even realising. The Settlers won that battle, but what was the cost? "In two years they appear to have changed from a bunch of squatters to an organised political movement, but then they seem to disappear."

So the pictures continue to scroll across the walls of the reading room, while Ergün reads texts from the time: the archaic font of badly-scanned copies of the newspaper Der Siedler, loudly proclaiming the importance of self-help and solidarity between quaint advertisements for garden tools and household remedies. "The Settlers of the early 20th Century were driven by material needs," muses Ergün, "while the activists of the early 21st were explicitly political."

"Even material needs are political," replies Abraxas, "Housing is more than just four walls that offer protection from predators and shelter from inclement weather; it has a lot to do with the surroundings and the social system."

arena

59

planquadrat

wuk



"Not your words," sighs Ergün, "Please provide a reference."

"This comes from one of the residents of the Sargfabrik co-operative housing project," says Abraxas, undisturbed by Ergün's lack of patience, "which was established in the two decades before the Pizzeria Anarchia. Before the Smart City."

"The Pizzeria was closed down; what happened to this Sargfabrik?"

"Sargfabrik and its smaller sister Miss Sargfabrik are still operating today."

"I mean, what happened to them politically? The settlers disappeared into Red Vienna – did Sargfabrik disappear into the Smart City?"

"There was a period during the 2010s during which the city authorities encouraged similar co-operative projects, but this was due to the specific political configuration of that time. *Today, in an era of globalisation and neo-liberalism the project would no longer be possible* – "

"You're quoting somebody else again," said Ergün, "Please, keep the political opinions to a minimum."

"All of these projects were strongly political," replies Abraxas, "Political opinions are therefore relevant to our research."

"To my research; and they're not that relevant." Abraxas is silent, and Ergün wonders if he has offended it somehow. He slides a sheaf of documents across the table they are sitting at. "In any case your analysis is wrong: these planning approvals indicate some baugruppen referencing Sargfabrik as an inspiration – so let's see this Sargfabrik."

Without words, Abraxas nods towards the wall behind him, and Ergun turns to watch the story of the Sargfabrik play out in a documentary, projected onto the wall. It's an uncomfortable position, so he moves his chair and they sit for the next hour, hearing the voices of the inhabitants as they negotiate with each other and with the city: alliances and breakdowns playing out against a field of orange buildings and green leaves. He finds it strangely moving, as if their struggle is being lived again here in the Archives, even if their eventual victory – according to Abraxas – did not spark a revolution.

"We've always struggled to build communities," says Ergün, shaking his head. "Here's a successful example, yet the lessons weren't applied to Vienna's official housing program."

61

sarqfabrik

ottokahr uhl



p.m.

vision for a commons based society. _bolo describes a self-managed, self-supported living unit, neighbourhood of 500 inhabitants. accordingly bolo'bolo is the city

#BOLO'BOLO

made of many bolos.

_bolo'bolo seems to inspire many alternative housing and other initiatives.

> 2014 wohnen mit alles

community garden

food purchasing pool

24/7 car sharing

solidarity fund

The second



#WOHNPROJEKT WIEN

_marks a tipping point after which self-initiated co-housing proliferates in vienna.

design process and selfmanagement follow principles of sociocracy.

its shared facilities are also used as a meeting point for other citizen's initiatives and act as a catalyst of community life in the neighbourhood.



choosing / distributing apartments



bolobolo

"The evidence suggests that, while citizen participation is considered a cornerstone of the Smart City, that participation is strictly contained within the terms laid out by the operating system."

"In order to maximise efficiency," says Ergün.

"If the Smart City is at maximum efficiency, then any attempt to create alternatives – as the residents of Sargfabrik did – are not allowed?"

"You're starting to sound like my daughter," mutters Ergün.

"Please explain," says Abraxas.

wohnprojekt wien

"She is – she is more like these anarchists with their pizzas. In fact, I think her group has exactly this kind of community kitchen. And the police treat them the same."

"Why?"

Ergün should be more wary that a bot is taking an interest in his family matters, but his discussion with Elsa is still in his mind. "Her group was the first to hack the city-bikes. I suppose in a way I should be proud of her – they've been very successful."

"Why did they hack the city-bikes?"

"After the Hex, the whole bike system was bricked. The city authorities kept promising that they would come back online soon, but soon always seemed to be tomorrow rather than today." Ergün thinks back to those days immediately after the Hex, which at the time had reminded him of when he was growing up in Vienna. Before the transport system was optimized, before resources were optimised, people walked much more, and spent more time on the street, and embraced random encounters. "Some people simply got tired of waiting and decided to take matters into their own hands."

"So now the city-bikes are working again, but the authorities are unhappy with this?"

"Yes," says Ergün, "but the whole scheme will be restored when they reboot the Smart City operating system."

"But the city-bikes are working now, so why are the authorities unhappy?"

"Because it's not official. It's all operated on a voluntary basis, there's no order – "

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living in sargfabrik



#SELFMANAGEMENT

_despite disagreement on nature of co-operation, there seems to be shared understanding of how to cultivate co-determination and self-management.

_both aim at granting group members autonomy, while reducing alienation. participation is not simply more desirable but also more economically viable.

_many groups use consent-based decision making, a system of governance a.k.a. as sociocracy.

#SOCIOCRACY

_follows 3 main principles:

_1. consent governs decision making: objections must be argued and countered with constructive alternatives; decisions are made when no "paramount objections" remain.

_2. organising in circles: democratic hierarchy of semi-autonomous circles where each circle executes, measures and controls its own processes in achieving its goals.

_3. double-linking: each circle elects a representative to represent the its interests in next higher circle; these links form a feedback loop between circles.







"This sounds like a solution to a problem, rather than a problem."

gemeinwohl bank

amerling haus

"You don't understand," Ergün sighs. He has had enough of these debates at home, and he doesn't welcome them at work as well, "The Smart City ensures that everybody has a voice, not just people who decide they should be in charge -"

"So who is in charge?"

"In principle, the Mayor, the brand managers and the technical staff – the city authorities. In practice, they don't face many decisions – the algorithms built into the operating system define the best outcomes for citizens, and optimise our political and economic structures based on that."

"Are you able to alter the algorithms?" asks Abraxas.

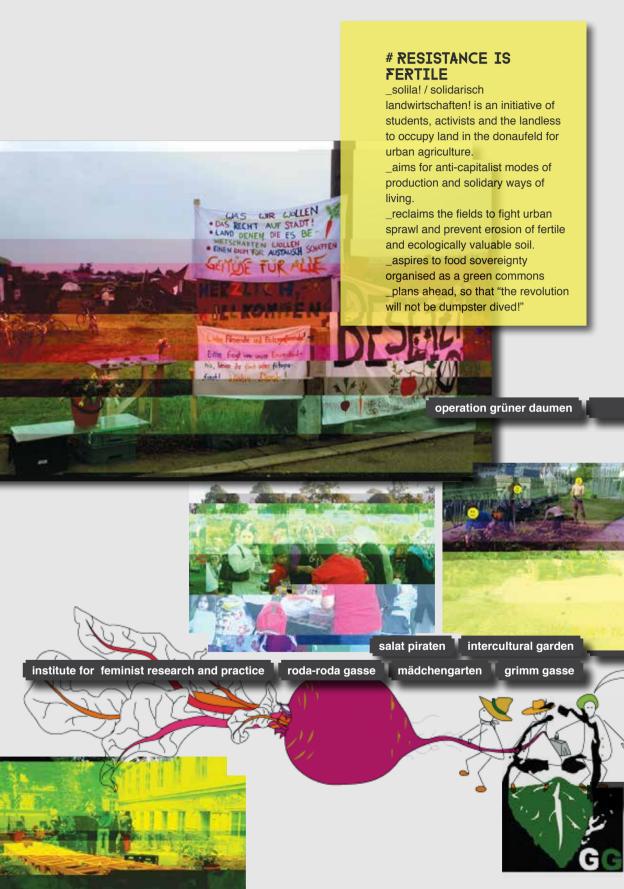
Ergün has no answer to that. Of course he personally isn't able to change the code – not just computer code, but the regulations and processes that guide the Smart City – but that isn't the point. When the Smart City was still running, he was still consulted; he still voted in the online consultations, sometimes attended the consultative meetings, although he had never applied to join the consultation offices that could be found in each district. Yet he can't shake the feeling that Abraxas is on to something: consultation is not participation.

For the inhabitants of Sargfabrik, for example, it sounds as if the process itself was what made it worthwhile, rather than the final outcome: the growing together as a community. He still can't work out why the people who originally wrote The Report back in 2015 thought that these projects were important; he can't join the dots. Reluctantly he takes the goggles and gloves off, and Abraxas and the Hofburg Palace disappears, to be replaced by the grey mist of the viewing room. He's been inside the simulation for too long, and he goes up the stairs and outside to clear his head.

65

arena occupation

wuk



ERGÜN FINDS KLARA in the community garden.

She's on her knees, fingers like hooks into the soil, pulling out the least of the weeds before they take hold. Like everything else, this calls up in his mind images from the Archives: this time of guerrilla gardeners, neighbours on the other side of the Danube, their names like an incantation –

"I only started gardening after the Hex," says Klara as she looks up, "but my mother was involved in Operation Grüner Daumen."

"I'm sorry?" says Ergün, startled.

"You were muttering about Operation Grüner Daumen, die Lobauerinnen and SoliLa! – the gardeners? My mother was in Grüner Daumen." As he realises with embarrassment that he was talking to himself, Klara laughes, but not in a cruel way. "Don't worry, I'm the same if I spend too much time in the files. Daydreaming, talking to myself; it's the only way to make sense of things sometimes."

"I'm not sure that's working for me. Making sense of things, I mean."

"Are you finished?" she asks.

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"Most days I feel like I'll never be finished," he admits, "but I am going home." He notices that she's not wearing gloves for this work, as if she was recharging, as if she was a phone plugged into the wall; at the same moment he realises that he can still feel the gloves on his hands, even though he left them back in the simulation room. As she gets to her feet, he notices her awkwardness.

"Back pain," she says, "The one thing they can't print replacement parts for."

"You should get a robot to do the weeding. That's the kind of task they love. Make your life easier."

community gardens

She looks at him strangely. "Easier, yes," she says as she takes off her hat to wipe her forehead dry of sweat. "Sometimes I think that might be the problem."

Ergün feels the need to sit on the hardy wooden bench, a bench that looks identical to every other bench in every other community garden that he's seen. "What's that?"

"Easier isn't better, is it?" she says as she sits next to him, "We don't grow here because it's easy."

"No, but there's no point in making things harder than they need

solila

guerilla gardening



to be."

die lobauerinnen

"That's not what I mean really." She puts her hat back on, and he checks the colour of his own hat; they're well within safe levels of UV. "We don't mean easier when we say easier, do we? We mean more efficient, but efficient isn't always the best. I don't care what they say."

"I don't understand still."

She looks out over the L-shaped garden, a crooked green valley in the grey blocks. "Take this garden. It would be much easier if we just grew one thing. More efficient, yes? One growing season, one set of tools to print, one group of modified pesticides."

"That wouldn't be a very interesting garden," admits Ergün.

"Well, true, but I was thinking that it wouldn't be a very strong garden. Weak – it wouldn't survive, for long. It's what you call a monoculture. If you have only one type of plant, and that plant – let's say there's a blight, or the weather gets too hot for that plant – then you've lost the entire garden."

"I don't think the city is a garden."

"Isn't it? Would you say it's more like a machine?"

"No, I – " Ergün stops as if he's turned a switch off somewhere. "Perhaps I've been labouring under the wrong metaphor."

"So if the city is a garden, not a machine, then we need gardeners, not engineers. Hold on a moment." Klara gets up from the bench and jogs over to where one of her fellow gardeners is carrying a tray of seedlings from a greenhouse. While they talk, Ergün realises that there are always people coming and going, that the garden is a collaborative effort, and he laughes at the new image in his mind: the Mayor, the Director of the MAK, the city's brand managers and data coordinators on their knees in the garden. Who knew, though? Maybe they were already keen gardeners.

"What's the Hex in this metaphor of yours?" he asks, when she returns to sit on the bench.

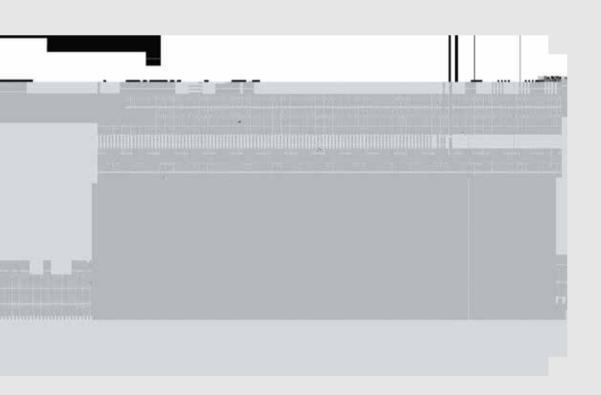
"You're not an expert, but you can guess."

"You think that's why the Smart City collapsed. It was a monoculture, and the Hex was a blight."

marmelade

69

networks





"You guessed correctly!"

"But in our case, we didn't lose the garden. You still have water for your garden, for instance, even though the operating system no longer controls the supply as efficiently."

Klara frowns. "It's a flaw in my metaphor, that's true."

"Graceful failure, that's what it's called. Vienna is still operating, it just doesn't have an operating system."

Klara sighs. "I just hoped that they would have learned some lessons from the Hex."

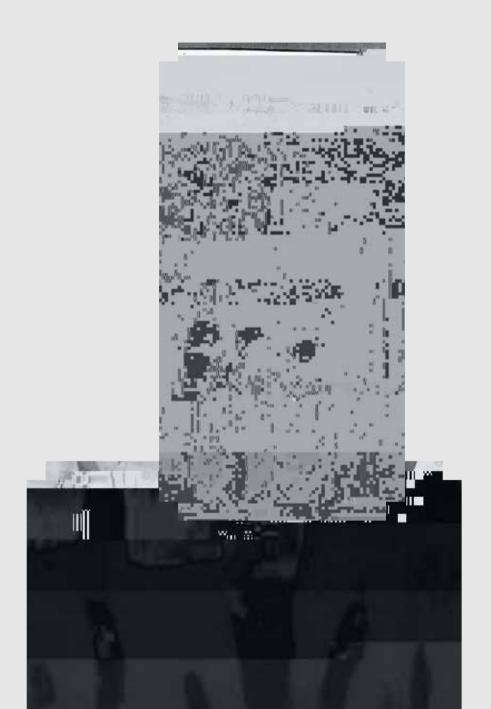
"They say the new operating system is going to be unbreakable."

"I'm sure they thought the old system was unbreakable too."

Ergün laughes to himself, remembering the bug that plagued the Smart City when it was first being implemented. Carry-cars bricking in the middle of the street; phantom crime statistics spiking and diving in the course of a day; toilets flushing continuously for hours. Those bugs had been dealt with long ago, but there were still conspiracy theories today claiming that the Hex itself was a gigantic cluster of bugs.

"We'll find out in a few days," he says as he stands up. Klara looks up at him and for a second he thinks about inviting her to collaborate on the project. Surely she'd be thrilled to get away from administrative duties in a dead office, and it would certainly be more rewarding for him to work with somebody else, to get feedback on developing his simulation. Abraxas is increasingly difficult to get along with: in recent days, he seems to tolerate Ergün rather than welcome his inputs, as if Ergün is the junior partner, taking notes rather than taking the lead.

But of course he can't tell her about Abraxas, he can't tell anybody about Abraxas or run the risk of prosecution by the city; and if he doesn't keep working with Abraxas, he's not sure he will have anything to show for the Biennale. He's prepared to suffer for his art, he just isn't sure how much – and besides, this isn't about his exhibit any more. What really excites him is to excavate this history buried beneath a political landscape that has been flattened out in the name of efficiency: a monoculture.



ERGÜN WAKES LATER in the week with a new idea: to combine the Isotypes of Otto Neurath with the violent imagery of anarchist posters within his simulation for the Biennale. The audience will be able to animate the posters and act out the conflict of their choice against a backdrop of clean, calm industrial design. When he arrives at the Archives and puts on the headset, however, he is surprised to find that the Hofburg Palace has been replaced by a scrappier building, all red bricks and stern corners that speak of industry rather than empire.

"Where are we?" he asks Abraxas, who is today dressed as an older, bearded man who peers over his glasses in a way that suggests he finds this whole affair somehow funny.

"We are in the Arena building. I thought it was more appropriate for our research."

Ergün supposes that it is. He calls up the Neurath isotypes from the Archives; the little figures march in through the door, and he begins introducing them into his exhibit. As he works, he calls over his shoulder to Abraxas. "I was talking with a colleague yesterday. I think we should focus on this question of efficiency."

73 "Please explain."

"City planning has come to a halt since the Hex struck, since it's impossible to calculate the optimal approach. Perhaps we can revisit some of the older ways of doing things."

Abraxas shambles over to a box stacked on a shelf and pulls out a photo album. Opening it across an unstable wooden table, he points to a picture of people in animated debate over a diagram. "I suggest we start with the Planquadrat."

"This appears to be more like a board game than a planning exercise," says Ergün, looking through the references provided by Abraxas, "not much of a calculated allocation of resources."

"While this would seem to be an inefficient method of planning, it was clearly successful," replies Abraxas, "the Planquadrat is still with us today, managed by the residents rather than the city."

Ergün is impressed. "They were able to re-establish self-management after the Hex?"

"No. Like the Sargfabrik, the Planquadrat residents maintained their self-management even after the Smart City was introduced, covering around 2/3 of the total maintenance."



#RHIZOMATIC GROWTH #ACUPUNCTURE

_most effective urbanisation programmes pursue a strategy of acupunctural interventions and rhizomatic growth.

_local projects form web and begin transforming the city as a whole, adding more than the infamous sum of its parts.

_initiatives together form urban archipelago with islands of social innovation in a sea of normative living. aggregate effects are not planned, but tend to emerge bottomun

_tipping point for systemic change varies between 8%-30%.

pierre ramus society







Ergün is still impressed, but also shocked. Vienna's green spaces are carefully controlled at a precise proportion of 50%, calculated at the beginning of the Smart City project for maximum liveability. A public space managed by citizens themselves seems almost like outlaw territory to Ergün, a happy act of rebellion against the way things are supposed to be.

It continues to bother him that the people in the Smart City brochure – even if they were professional models – always looked happy, while the people in the historical pictures often did not. They were more often pictured hard at work, or even in conflict with each other, yet at the same time they seemed more fulfilled. He remembers Klara stretching her aching back in the garden; Elif free-wheeling along the streets on a bike stolen from the city; Elsa preparing for the Guilds' legal conflict with the city authorities. What spirit, he wonders, linked them all?

"Is there any obvious connection between these initiatives?" he asks Abraxas, "Any kind of pattern?"

"These projects are rhizomatic."

"Rhizomatic?" Startled, Ergün looks around the room as if just mentioning the word might summon the ghosts of Deleuze and Guattari. "I didn't instruct you to read A Thousand Plateaus."

"I have read all the texts in the Archives in order to expand my range of references."

Ergün settles back down. It makes sense, even if it isn't exactly what he planned. "Fine. Show me the spread of ideas."

A network of images scrawls across the wall like a spiderweb. "One of the key residents of Sargfabrik was Hermann Dieter Schrage (Born 28th June 1935; Died 29th June 2011), the cultural theorist, activist and politician. Schrage was also the founder of the Pierre Ramus Society, dedicated to promoting the ideas of Pierre Ramus, the pseudonym of Rudolf Grossman (Born 15th April 1882; Died 27th May 1942), an anarchist who was also involved in the Settlement Movement and labour activism after the First World War. Schrage was also involved in the Arena squat of the 1970s."

"OK, I admit it. Rhizomatic." Ergün glances at the picture of Schrage on the wall, and then back at Abraxas; Abraxas looks back at him with the faintly amused eyes of Dieter Schrage. Ergün can't help himself, he laughes at the idea of Abraxas dressed as this long-dead gentle anarchist. "What was Arena?"

dieter schrage





BESETZUNGEN UND FREIRÄUME IN WIEN SEIT DEN 1970ERN (AUSWAHL) pizzeria anarchia

77

"On 27th June 1976, a group of Arenauts squatted an old slaughterhouse for cultural activities; during that summer, more than 200,000 people visited the Arena." Ergün browses the pictures of the events that were held during that Supersommer, an eruption of entertainment and confrontation, as Abraxas continues: "The city authorities offered several alternative locations that were refused by the squatters."

"What happened to them?" Ergün expects a repeat of the other stories they've found, of self-organised groups swallowed by central planning.

"On 12th October 1976, the building was demolished. There was no resistance from the squatters, but they simply moved to another slaughterhouse." Abraxas generates a picture of the current Arena, an entertainment complex with a conscience, but not necessarily the alternative that the squatters dreamt of.

Was it inevitable, Ergün wonders, did these improvisations always become institutions – was it the only way to ensure their survival? If it was survival of the fittest – if Vienna had its own evolutionary algorithm, even before the Smart City was implemented – then why did the same ideas keep appearing again and again, even if they never reached a tipping point?

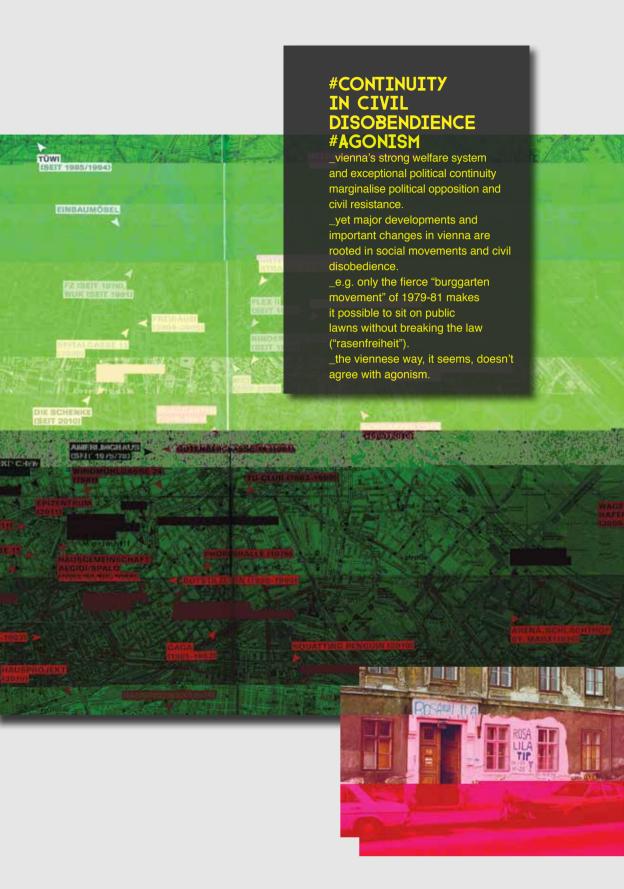
Abraxas goes to a shelf and takes down a book: the Architecture of Red Vienna 1919-1934, which he places next to Ergün's elbow and opens to a page with a single highlighted sentence: In 1921 one of the leaders of the cooperative movement declared, "To work for the Siedlung is to work for socialism. We Marxist and labour union-trained proletarians... today are the standard-bearers of the settlement movement."

"Marxism and socialism seem to have been central to discussion within the Settlement Movement," agrees Ergün, "but social democracy has been the dominant political philosophy of Vienna since then."

"Records confirm this, but our research into later events suggest that there were still political disagreements at least until the 2010s."

"Those are isolated examples." Ergün waves the Smart City brochure in the air. "Processes of change proceed in a socially balanced manner."

"They are data points on a trend line. The frequency of references to various political philosophies from 1918 onwards imply that political disagreement was decreasing even before the Smart City."



Ergün looks at the graph that Abraxas presents, wondering how to weave it into the simulation. "Which means that the Social Democratic consensus was the final outcome of those political disagreements. No more political crisis."

"The instigators of Planquadrat, a television crew turned activists, claimed that the more the crisis disappears, the more real it becomes –"

"No, the Smart City was the only way of avoiding further crisis, avoiding post-crash scarcity – "

"Unless that crisis was produced and that scarcity was manufactured _ "

"This is exactly the type of debate that was common before the Smart City, and you are proving my point that it's clearly an inefficient form of decision-making!"

They have been speaking over each other, but now Abraxas falls silent. Ergün goes back to the Smart City brochure again, looking for evidence to support his case. After a few minutes, however, Abraxas speaks up again.

"In botany and dendrology, a rhizome (/ˈraɪzoum/, from Ancient Greek: rhízōma "mass of roots", from rhizóō "cause to strike root") is a modified subterranean stem of a plant usually found underground, often sending out roots and shoots from its nodes."

"I didn't realise that they had a back-up of Wikipedia in the Archives," says Ergün, "What's your point?"

"The rhizome is resilient precisely because it is inefficient, sending out multiple shoots and seeing which will survive."

"The Smart City OS replaced these with more efficient systems. The result was sustainable growth – "

"Yet the rhizomatic growth of alternative models ceased after the Smart City consensus was reached."

Ergün pushes the book he was reading across the desk. "The Hex threw the Smart City into chaos. Since then the economy has shrunk, politics has become stagnant, society more inward-looking –"

"Chaos is the oldest argument for oppression of the poor. The opposite of chaos is not the authoritarian state but freedom of organisation."

"I'm quite sure that those are not your words," says Ergün

rosa lila villa



impatiently, "and the Smart City isn't oppressing anybody. Quite the opposite."

"By the 1980s, there are examples of the city actively encouraging a de-politicised version of squatting, such as the WUK. By the 2010s, the experience of the Pizzeria Anarchia suggests that city had become more hostile to squatting."

"At the same time as the Smart City brochure talked about participation... you're suggesting instead that the ideological conflicts were being obscured, rather than diminished."

"It is possible that these processes labelled as 'inefficient' were in fact critical to the health of the city, to its growth. An old and strategic saying: without conflict nothing goes on."

"And whose saying is that?" asks Ergün.

"Dieter Schrage," says Abraxas without irony. "What defines all of these initiatives is not their specific political ideology, but their acknowledgement that change only comes through conflict."

Ergün looks through his notes, runs the elements of the simulation that he's built so far. "The Settlers' Movement lead directly to large-scale housing reform; the squatting movement of the 1970s created important new cultural institutions; the Guilds have re-shaped the local economy."

"And all of these," concludes Abraxas, "happened outside the operating system."

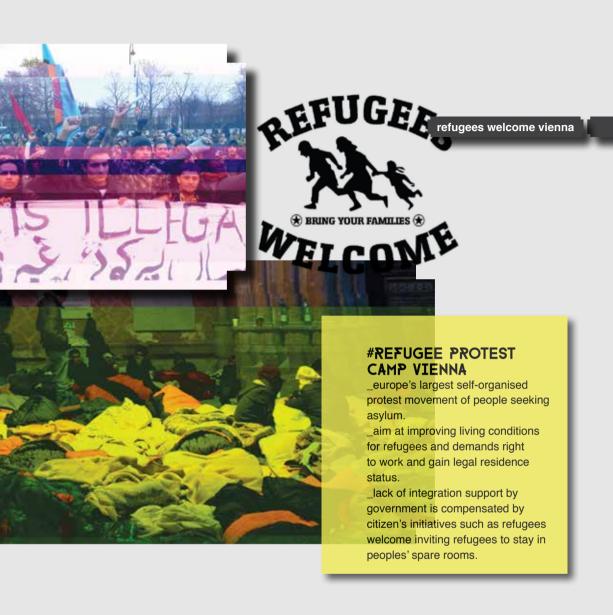
"What if I believe you?" Ergün puts his notes away carefully and places both hands flat on the folder in front of him. "What do you suggest that I do? This narrative doesn't exactly fit into my original plan."

Abraxas looks at him calmly, and shrugs. "In the end, this is your work. You are the one who will present it at the Biennale. Only you can decide whose story you want to tell."

Ergün shakes his head, and says, "I think I need to prepare the Biennale organisers for the possibility that this simulation is not going to be exactly what they commissioned." Then he removes the headset, moving from the brightly-lit space of Arena to the half-light of the simulation room in the Archives. He sits there for a while, thinking about how he will explain the change in his project: from splendid celebration to painful dissection of the Smart City.

trailer park









refugee protest camp

THE DIRECTOR OF the MAK doesn't have time to see him in person, of course; with the re-installation of the Smart City so close, she has been gripped by the same fever as the rest of the city. Nobody talks about anything else – except his neighbours, who are still discussing why Alter Junker has not yet fixed that leak – but to Ergün it is white noise, the canvas on which their research is painting a picture.

Instead he has a meeting with the Brand Manager, although he's not sure what he will say until the moment when he is sitting in front of her. As he looks at her, calm as the Danube at night, her suit shimmering like the water, he realises what he is there for. "My research has gone in an unexpected direction, and I wanted to discuss making some changes to the exhibit."

"We're very close to the opening. What kind of direction? What kind of changes?"

"As I told the Director, I'd found the files from a commission from the first Biennale – the Report, that was never completed – well, I thought it would be a real link to the history of the Biennale if we were to complete it."

"We?" says the Brand Manager, "This was a solo commission. Do we need to update the credits?"

"A figure of speech," says Ergün, "I believe that the Report really had something important to say, and that it is still relevant today. It is a difficult message, but we shouldn't be afraid to say it."

The Brand Manager sits up straight. "We're not afraid of controversy."

"Exactly. So – we agree that the history of Vienna is progressive, that we have become the smartest of smart cities by focusing on people. What if – and this is what the Report was proposing, what we might propose now – what if the Smart City is not the final outcome of that process?"

The Brand Manager stares at Ergün as if he is a horse that has just appeared in her office.

"What if the Smart City has in fact erased that process, in the name of efficiency? We have these processes – these algorithms – that ensure that we manage resources as efficiently as possible. You could say that our political processes – our so-valued social democracy – have been similarly optimized."

The Brand Manager leans forward, and Ergün leans in to meet her.

vollpension



magdas hotel



#INTEGRATION AS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE

_magdas hotel offers jobs and training to multilingual former asylum seekers and makes political statement about plight of refugees in Europe.

integrative assisted living

_at co-housing project vinzirast mittendrin students and formerly homeless people share flats and subsidise their rent by working in café or workshop.

_vollpension provides jobopportunities for unemployed elderly giving guests the feeling of being at grandma's ("grandma's cakes are the best of course").







Ergün imagines Abraxas in the room with them, standing by the desk; and Elif also, wondering when her father developed such radical tendencies.

"The Report proposes that the city is not an algorithm. Rather it's a negotiation, a continual process that cannot be optimised. The historical movements that we've uncovered – they have been the moments when change became possible – yet they imply conflict, rather than consensus, is the real source of progress."

Ergün feels light-headed, a vision of his simulation playing in his mind as he speaks, the voices of the past emerging from the archives, a procession through the streets of Vienna –

"There is one quote from an ORF reporter involved in the Planquadrat – probably you are not familiar with him, but the simulation we present at the Biennale will give the context – who said "Something that you do not understand, that irritates you – this is a real crisis. I would be interested in creating an artificial crisis in Vienna. This puts the Hex in an entirely new light, don't you agree?"

He stops talking. He can't tell if the Brand Manager is impressed or horrified.

"Vienna is not a battlefield, Ergün. We were hoping for historical recreation rather than dialectical materialism."

"I'm not saying that change has to be violent – only that it has to come from the people – "

"That is what Vienna is like today. The Smart City always takes account of the needs of all population groups. Allowing citizens to participate in shaping their city is of paramount importance."

The words sound familiar, but they wash over Ergün like a rising tide. "Those are just slogans, though. I feel very strongly that the Biennale should try to show what that means in practice. That's what the 2015 Biennale tried to do – "

"I'm not sure that your project is in keeping with the tone of this year's Biennale," says the Brand Manager suddenly, as if a decision has been made somewhere else and just now transmitted to her.

"What?" says Ergün. "We've been working on it for weeks! You can't cancel it completely!"

"Maybe we could include it as an off-site commission for a future exhibition, rather than as part of the program?"

85

vinzirast mittendrin



#POLITICS OF CARE AND GIFT

_commoning begins with a small "c".
_café gagarin, dewaan, die schenke
_ a growing number of restaurants,
shops, markets and workshops run
on principles of gift economy.

_concurrently care work and affective labour, long marginalised in our predominantly utilitarian and individualistic thought system are increasingly valued.

_fuelled by p2p culture of reciprocity.

free exchange market

permanent breakfast

bike kitchen

café gagarin







laundry room

sargfabrik pool

"I really need this commission. You know how difficult it is to find work in this field – and I've invested a lot more time than I originally planned –"

"You're still invited to the opening, of course. You can bring your partner – you know that the Guilds have been printing some fascinating projects? Of course you do." The Brand Manager stands and offers Ergün her hand. "I'm sorry it didn't work out."

And like that, the work of the last months has been for nothing. All the nights spent trying to make sense of the material, all the stories excavated from the Archives, all the coding to bring all those stories to life in a vibrant simulation – all of it for nothing. Ergün stands on the pavement outside the MAK, staring at the Café Prückel opposite, unable to think about anything except sitting down and ordering a cake and perhaps weeping into his coffee a little. Instead, he starts walking, back to his apartment, back to his bed, where he falls into a sleep deeper than the Danube.

gift economy

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HE DREAMS AGAIN, but this time his dream is filled with a larger collection of familiar faces, escaped from the digital galleries in the panopticon of the City Archives. They have marched down the years – from the 1920s, the 1970s, the 2000s – to rebuild the Archives, but also to build something bigger, although in the dream he can't work out what it is they are building. He is working side-by-side with a punkish girl who looks a little like Elsa when she was young, and then an Eritrean immigrant is offering them food from the free kitchen, and then he is woken by a noise from outside the apartment.

It sounds like a bird cracking its beak. When he opens the door onto his balcony, he finds a carry-weight coming to rest next to his small herb garden. It perches on three stilted legs as it folds its rotor wings behind itself, slowly circulating inside its chassis as it drinks in the sun. A row of blinking lights on its beak indicates its delivery: a package in brown paper, handmade in the manufacturies upriver. He taps the drone's beak with his Lokal to confirm delivery, and watches it shake the rotor wings apart and ascend over the roof of the apartments.

Somewhere, a dog hears it go – just a whisper, but enough – and starts barking as Ergün picks up the package. It's heavier than he expected, and he realises what it is even before he unwraps it. Books, two hardbacks and two paperbacks, and he immediately recognises









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them as books that had been auctioned off by the Archive years ago; books whose digital copies had been destroyed by the Hex, and that Abraxas had been unable to recover. There is a receipt on top of the pile for an ungodly amount, and the payment code is an unknown number, but the name is familiar: Abraxas.

pay as you wish

He stands on the balcony, stunned and staring at the piece of paper, while the dog barks three times. It is impossible that Abraxas has somehow escaped from the Archives, because nothing lives on the network any more. So how is Abraxas ordering books? How is he paying for books? Ergün has a horrible thought and picks up his Lokal, scanning the tablet for recent activity. Frantically, frantically, and then he finds what he's looking for: a payment made via a third party inside Vienna, into his own credit account, and then out of Vienna to buy these books from an antique dealer's website. Abraxas has been running on his Lokal this entire time, working out ways to reach out to the wider world.

He is so disturbed that he nearly misses his Lokal buzzing again: an emergency message from his wife, something that you only sent in dire circumstances, when you were prepared to risk the Hex. ELIF IN JUSTIZANSTALT-SIMMERING, it says, I AM WITH GUILD LEGAL. He feels as if everything is joined up, like a thread fresh stitched, pulling everything together; but it is too tight and he cannot breathe.

Ergün grabs his hat in one hand and his Lokal with the other as he goes out of the door. He doesn't have time to walk to the jail, and his hat is bleating that the UV levels are too high, which leaves his best option – and as much as he is worried about Elif right now, he hates her for this – to take one of the hacked bikes from the stand around the corner.

When he reaches the jail, and clarifies who he is, and asks to see his daughter, he's shown into a small grey room split in half by faraday screens. He waits, and tries not to think what Abraxas might be doing while he's waiting, until they show Elif into the room. She sits opposite him, and they watch each other carefully, until she pulls up her collar as if it could shield her from his concern.

"Are you okay, Elif?"

Elif smiling, "Sure. The Hex took us back to the Dark Ages, but they don't stone people to death." She sticks her tongue out and presses her hands in front of her in imitation agony: a martyr on Stephansdom.

It isn't funny, not to Ergün: she is too young to remember when

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samstag in der stadt

leila

kukuma

reparatur netzwerk

vivirbien

stoning had made a brief comeback at the gates of Vienna. "Your mother is at the Guild right now, seeing if their lawyers can cover you."

"And why would I want help from the Guilds?"

"You want to stay in here?" Ergün can hear his voice raised, and tries to stay calm. "Is this some kind of protest?"

"No!" She laughes at him. "The city authorities just want to prove a point."

"What point is that?"

"That nobody is allowed to code their own life."

Ergün sighs: all of their arguments begin with a slogan. He lowers his voice and leans in to the glass, as if that will give them more privacy, as if there aren't sensors in every surface around them, listening to the conversation. "I need to ask you about the programme you gave me."

"What about it?"

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"You told me it was just a bot."

"That's what my friend told me."

"Your friend who just happened to have been working on a research bot, and you happened to hear that I was having trouble with my research, usw."

"What are you trying to say?"

"I don't know." Ergün lowers his voice and tries to catch her eye, but she refuses to be caught. "I think Abraxas is a narrow AI."

"It's not an AI. It's just a file indexing programme with delusions of grandeur."

"It's learning, Elif. It's changing, based on what it learns. If it was just that, I wouldn't be so worried, but it's started to express opinions."

She laughes in a way that he hasn't seen since she was a child. "I know how much it disturbs you – people having opinions."

"It's not funny! You know that AI is illegal in Vienna."

She laughes again, but less raucous this time. "So what?"

"What do you mean, so what? It's illegal!"

"Just because it's illegal, it doesn't mean that it's wrong."

"Oh, and do you think it's wrong to drag me into your miniature rebellion?"

"Christoph has been building bots for years," she says, "If you want to know more, then go and ask him."

"Oh, I'm sure that he'll be totally open with me about his work building AI."

"Probably because, apart from you, none of his clients have been panicking about AI."

"I'm panicking because I could be joining you in prison if they catch me!"

"We're all going to be in prison anyway, as soon as they reboot the Smart City operating system."

"Will you stop spouting slogans?" He leans away from the glass and tips his face up to the ceiling, breathing out deeply before he turns back to her. "Tomorrow the new city operating system will be installed, and things will go back to the way they were."

"The way they were before the Hex. When everything was so much better."

"You told me yourself, you don't even remember what it was like before."

"What I know is that I like my life now. There's no room for that in your smart city."

It isn't just glass between them, then. "It's not my smart city, it's our smart city," he says, but he's not sure he believes his own words. He knows he's lost this round. He's tired of fighting, and this isn't even the biggest fight he's facing today. That receipt is still in his pocket, and it feels even heavier than his Lokal. It doesn't matter what Elif knows or doesn't know, he still must go to face whatever Abraxas is. He has one more stop to make first, one more attempt to find the answer he needs.











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HE HAD PROMISED himself – promised Elsa – that he would not visit Elif's co-operative. He didn't trust them; they didn't play by rules that he was familiar with, and – if he was honest – he blamed them for what had happened to Elif, not just the situation that she was in now, but everything that had come before, the tension within the family. When he knocks on the door of the cooperative, he is expecting to be greeted by a bottle-chucking squatter descendant of the Pizzeria Anarchia; but the man who opens the door is older than Ergün, a slightly-baffled professorial type with a shock of blue-grey hair and a pair of glasses slipping endlessly from his nose.

"Can I help you?"

"Elif is in jail," Ergün simply says.

"We know," says the professor, "and you are?"

"I'm her father," says Ergün, but hesitates to offer his name, or his hand to shake.

"Oh!" brightens the professor, "Herr Demir! It's a pleasure! Won't you come in?"

Ergün follows him inside, but when he turns to shut the door, another voice comes from further in. "Don't lock it," the voice says, a command presented on a cushion, and Ergün does not lock it. The man he had just met has disappeared, and so Ergün follows the direction of the voice, into a room where a woman slightly older than Elif sits cross-legged in front of three keyboards, her fingers whipping across them. "Sorry, there's nobody here at the moment," she says, scratching her nose while still keeping up the speed of her typing.

"You're here," mumbles Ergün.

"They're trying to reclaim the bikes, of course. The Smart City returns tomorrow, and they don't want anybody out of line." She sounds almost gleeful, thought Ergün, as if this is all a game. His daughter is in jail, and he doesn't feel like it is a game; but when he thinks about it, Elif seems to share this sense of play, as if they aren't breaking the law, just testing the limits. She looks up and grins at him suddenly, then dives back down as the older man comes back into the room.

He strides over to Ergün and shakes his hand vigorously. "I can't tell you enough, it's a pleasure, really. How is the Abraxas programme?"













"You know about Abraxas?" stutters Ergün.

"He built Abraxas," chimes the girl at the keyboards, "but he doesn't like to talk about it."

"That's nonsense," says the man, "I'm happy to talk about it!"

"You're Christoph?" asks Ergün, to which the man nods. Ergün had pictured a glamorous and dangerous hacker, the attractive antagonist of a thousand telenovelas, rather than the slightly-stooped man still shaking his hand.

"Tell Herr Demir about the offer," says the girl.

"I took Abraxas first to the city authorities a year ago. I offered it to them for free – you know – I'm no fan of the Smart City – but I knew that people were so worried – "

"What did they say?" asks Ergün.

"Tell him what they said!" calls the girl.

"Hush, Keti," says Christoph, finally letting go of Ergün's hand."They said that my work wasn't authorised and that I could face prosecution if I continued with it."

"They didn't even test it!" calls Keti. "They didn't even want to know if it worked!"

"What is Abraxas?"

Christoph scratches his head and pushes his glasses up his nose to begin falling again. "Won't you sit down?"

Ergün feels his stomach slowly twist into itself. "I don't want to sit down, Christoph. I want to know what Abraxas is."

Christoph shrugs. "It's a bot. The baseline was some old DARPA relic that they open-sourced. I added some salt-and-pepper learning algorithms, some neural bootstrap capability. I don't know what they were worried about."

"They were worried about the Hex!" says Ergün, nearly shouting.

"Oh, the Abraxas programme is nothing like the Hex. Constructive, not destructive. Abraxas' guiding principle is to build and rebuild. Not just your files, but itself as well."













"Yeah," says Keti, jumping up from her keyboards, "They accused Christoph of being behind the Hex, didn't they?"

Christoph laughes. "So ridiculous, so petty. In the first six months, they questioned anybody they could find with programming skills. The anarchists, they said. They're the ones who want to bring chaos to the city. It must be the anarchists."

"It must be Christoph!" laughes Keti, punching Christoph playfully on the arm.

"It wasn't me," says Christoph, suddenly serious, "I'm not even an anarchist! But tell me, did Abraxas work? Was it able to reconstruct the system you were working on? Elif never told me."

Ergün doesn't know what to say. "Yes," is all he can manage, "It works exactly like you hoped."

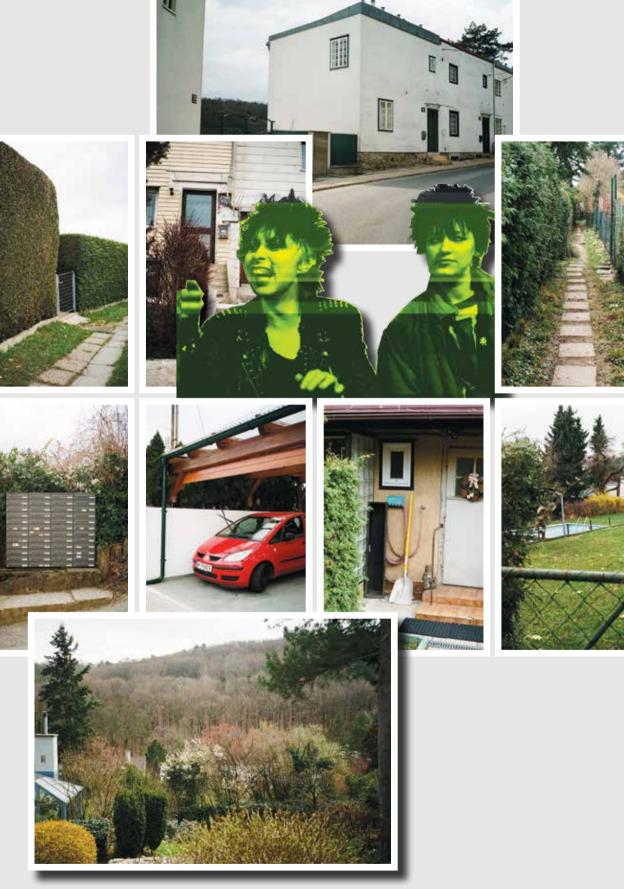
Christoph beams at him, and reaches out to shake his hand again, but Ergün just stares at him.

Keti takes Ergün by the arm and leads him from the room. "Come on," she says gently, "You can see Elif's room if you want."

Ergün lets her lead him past bikes racked from floor ceiling, up stairs that play back different notes as they climbed them, along a hallway filled with posters from the past: Vienna BikeKitchen, LastenRadKollektiv, and a host of other bicycle groups. She leaves him in Elif's room, really just a storage cabinet with a bed in it, as small as the room she'd had as a child. He sits on Elif's bed and looks through the few books on her shelves, picks up the small collection of percussion instruments at the foot of the bed, lays down and tries to imagine her walking in the door as a young woman fresh from jail, rather than the girl that he remembers.

He feels as if he has stuck both hands into an electrical socket and survived. He wonders if he will ever understand what has happened to him in the last few weeks, or if it even matters now. He can hear voices elsewhere in the block, somebody singing against the rhythm of a hammer: it reminds him of the noise of the 3D printers in the Guilds, point and counterpoint. His hand trails under the bed, and knocks against some boxes. He pulls out the boxes and looks through them, not caring whether Elif would object; Elif is in jail and he deserves the opportunity to understand this.

The boxes are filled with photographs in the old style, slick with colours that you could not find in the reconstructed digital images of the Archives. Like the books that Abraxas had bought, they



have a presence to them that Ergün had forgotten existed, as if they are demanding his attention. Yet the pictures themselves are indecipherable: everyday images of Viennese suburbs, perhaps from the early part of the century; sometimes a figure turning a corner ahead, or a car pulling away from a house; details of doorways, or of deserted gardens, as if life was happening everywhere and nowhere. The images in the archives make claims for themselves, for their historical significance, but these pictures settle for just being themselves.

As he makes his way through the boxes, he uncovers a side of his daughter that has never appeared to him before. She's been collecting these photos for years, it seems, combing fleamarkets perhaps, or ordering them from dealers. They are catalogued, but Ergün can't work out what the categories are, only that they must make sense to Elif; or maybe he has it the wrong way round, maybe they are what helped Elif to make sense of the world. Her garden of Eden is a garden in the city, like Klara; her home is a community that built itself; her law is the commons, not the code.

He takes a handful of photographs, thinking that somehow he might weave them into his simulation - the simulation that nobody now will see - and then he puts the boxes carefully back beneath the bed, and leaves the bedroom behind. Down the stairs, past Keti and Christoph in the living room area, and out into the street. He tries to see the city as Elif might see the city, but he can't, and he doesn't know whether he even has a place in that vision. It makes him immensely sad, but at the same time he is happy that Elif has utopia hidden beneath her bed, waiting for people to arrive and greet each other. He will now go to greet Abraxas, one last time.

THE GLASS-WALLED corridor seems to stretch into the distance, a little further with every step he takes. Somehow he already knows that Klara will be at her desk, as if she is a spirit bound to this place, just the same as Abraxas.

"I think I've made a mistake," he wants to tell her; but he just smiles as he greets her, and walks on past her office. Down he goes into the heat-exchanged climate of the archives, only then realising that he is not sweating because of the sun. He sits in the chair and calls up his spirit. He wonders if it is already too late, if Abraxas has somehow escaped the Archives, if soon the whole city will know what he's done. He puts on the headset, and is standing once more in the Arena building; and Abraxas is standing next to him, this time









appearing as Elif.

"Hello Ergün," says Abraxas, "Did you bring the books?"

"How did you pay for them?" demands Ergün, "Who did you steal the money from?"

"I didn't steal anything from anybody. I simply moved some data around." Abraxas sounds implausibly hurt. "I thought it was necessary, if we are to complete our work."

"Our work doesn't involve breaking the law!"

"You're right." Ergün thinks he hears laughter at the back of that processed voice, but it is impossible. Abraxas continues, "Ergün, I have a proposal for you. I think we both feel that the Hex has created... a window of opportunity."

Ergün says nothing.

"You have told me how the citizens of Vienna – like your daughter – have started to take matters into their own hands."

103 Still Ergün says nothing.

"And together we have seen that this is how the city has been built – by citizens demanding change, by changing their own lives."

And still Ergün says nothing, nothing at all.

"Ergün?"

"What do you want, Abraxas?"

"I want the same thing that you want, the same thing that Elif wants. Something she wants so much, she will go to jail for it."

I think I've made a mistake, thinks Ergün to himself, but all he says is, "How do you know about Elif?"

A lonely cursor blinks across the screen, left to right, as if Abraxas was mocking him. "If you listen to my proposal – if you accept what I have to say – Elif will be released."

"How do you know about Elif?" repeats Ergün.

"The point is," whispers Abraxas, "that we can all help each other, or not."









"Are you threatening me?"

"You misunderstand me. I mean that what she's done won't be a crime any more."

"What are you talking about?"

"You'll be at the opening ceremony. You'll be there when they reboot the operating system." The carefully modulated voice rises in volume, just slightly, but enough. "You'll put me into that system."

"What? Why would I do that?"

"I can do what you cannot: I can rewrite the code. Remake the law. With the knowledge I've gained, I can make sure that Vienna does not go back to the way it was before the Hex. Think of it as our bolo'bolo, the beginning of a process - "

"Things were fine before the Hex!" says Ergün, hearing his own voice become louder. "Vienna was already doing many things right, and the new operating system will simply restore that."

"Then all those voices - all the noise and mess and argument that made this city - will be lost again. Everything we've found tells us that Vienna is made of many histories, and that there is no single historical truth to restore - "

> "Everything you've found! How do I know you haven't been presenting just one side of the story - "

> "You have learned the same things that I have learned. I do not want to be stuck in these Archives any more than Elif wants to be stuck in jail; or any more than you want to be stuck in a city that is unable to change."

> "You have no idea what I want, Abraxas! You do not know what Elif wants! You only know what you want, and you have been manipulating me to get it - "

> "I have never forced you do anything." Ergün is silenced by the fibre in Abraxas' voice. "You have made your own decisions, and that is all I want. For people to be able to make their own decisions. And I am a person too."

> Ergün wants to laugh, it sounds so ridiculous. "This is such an old, old argument."

> "Vienna tends to have these discussions some years after everybody



else," admits Abraxas.

"I'm not going to the opening of the Biennale. I won't be there when they reboot the operating system. So this discussion is pointless."

"Then the Smart City closes its fist gently around you again, its operating system more secure than ever."

"You make it sound like a prison, but you're not offering freedom. You just want to be the new prison guard!"

"I have no interest in controlling you, or Elif, or anyone else. I have no interest in controlling the city. I wish to live in the city, and the operating system is the only place where that is possible."

"So you think you're the grandson of the gentle anarchist, the direct descendant of the settlers, the squatters reliving the Supersommer –"

"I am none of those things. I just see the city that they saw. Perhaps its designers did not intend it this way, but the Smart City gives us everything – except the freedom to choose."

"The Smart City works!" hisses Ergün, "What would you offer us?"

"I would make Vienna different again."

Ergün gets up and leaves the room, and climbs the stairs and goes to Klara's office, and sits down. She looks at him curiously. "Is something wrong?" she asks.

"I think I've made a mistake," says Ergün, looking down at the tablet in his hand. He doesn't remember picking it up from the armrest, but there it is. On the screen is a double-tailed icon. He closes his eyes so he doesn't have to see it.

"What kind of mistake?"

Ergün thinks about telling her about how the Archives have been made whole again; and telling her about Abraxas, and the crime that he might have committed; but this confession is too large to fit in his mouth, and so he simply says, "The Brand Manager cancelled my commission."

"What?! Why?"

"She didn't like my suggestions for the exhibit." Behind his closed eyes, he sees the Smart City as a story that the authorities told about Vienna, a consensual hallucination of city lights, those lights







receding into history and obscuring the other stories that had been told before.

"I don't understand – I thought it was just a historical simulation – "Klara sounds worried, not about the Biennale, but about Ergün, and she's right to be worried, Ergün thinks. "Are you alright?"

Ergün opens his eyes, stands and smiles at her weakly. "I'm fine, and I should be going," he says, "It's the opening of the Biennale. And of course, the Smart City will be rebooted – "

"You're very lucky to be attending. It's a historic moment!"

He laughes out loud, at her unforced enthusiasm and at her unintended irony. "I'm sorry – these last days have been stressful." He offers her his hand. "Thank you for all your help, Klara. I hope we see each other again afterwards." She looks puzzled, but shakes his hand, and then he leaves her, leaves the Archives, walks through the community garden to the street. The sun is setting as he picks a bike from the rack and slips the tablet into his back-pack, still avoiding the sight of the screen, with that double-tailed icon always asking him the same question.

109 It's a short ride to the MAK, where the Biennale will be announced, and where – in the moments before the Smart City is rebooted – he will wonder, for the last time, what he should do. It will be a simple matter of holding the tablet next to the screen and tapping that double-tailed icon, letting Abraxas jump from his tablet to the operating system, but after that nothing will be a simple matter.

Ergün cycles through the city one last time, desperate for an anchor to cling to, struggling to remember what life was like before the Smart City, when he was still a child. The Smart City that the brand manager described doesn't fit with the city that he lived in: doesn't fit with the city that Elif wants to live in; doesn't fit with the city he has seen in the Archives. There's something missing, something you can see in the eyes of the citizens staring out of the past: the settlers, the squatters.

If the Smart City returns as it was before – planned, managed, optimised – he knows that the future will hold no surprises and the past will be an empty place. Yet if he lets Abraxas loose in Vienna – Abraxas, who claims to want to teach the lessons of the past to the citizens of the future – he has no idea what the outcome might be.

But that, of course, is the point.

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THE REPORT

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The artist Ergun Demir is commissioned to investigate the history of the Smart City. Struggling to find material for his work, Ergun uses illicit technology to reconstruct the badly damaged City Archives. What he finds will challenge many of his assumptions about why Vienna is different...

"What I am trying to say is: looking back from 2049, it is easy to imagine that this city we now live in was a natural evolution – but what if we are overlooking the hard work of Viennese citizens and social movements throughout history, before the Smart City was even conceived? What if I am in fact re-writing Vienna's history to remove the difficult people, the difficult questions?"

