

Notes for Matthias Dusini
Toronto, January 29, 2009

I was invited in 1999 by art historian/museologist Gottfried Fliedl and curator and scholar Lydia Marinelli to install an exhibition of my work at the Sigmund Freud Museum. In preparation for the exhibition, Dr. Marinelli showed me through the former consulting and living spaces of the family Freud at 19 Berggasse.

A thoughtful and engaging three-way discussion ensued. With insightful support from Dr. Marinelli, I took measurements and photographs in preparation for the installation of *Body Missing*, a six-channel video work on the Kunstpolitik and art collecting fever of the Third Reich. (A larger, six-channel version of a work currently in the MAK *Recollecting: Raub und Restitution* exhibition.)

With Dr. Marinelli and Dr. Fliedl as co-curators, I created a site-specific version of the project, situating each of the six *Body Missing* video stations in relation to a particular space in the apartment, the placement of the work addressing the exile of Freud and his family, as well as the history and present role of the Museum.

As requested, I wrote the attached catalogue text, *A Narrative of Absence and Return*.

Suddenly we learned that the Director, Frau Ingrid Scholz-Strasser, would not permit the installation as planned. Placement of the video stations was forbidden anywhere except the front double room which served as a reference library and occasional exhibition space.

We tried to explain that both conceptually, given the meaning of the work, and practically six video sources generating sound in one space, would not make sense, especially for a work that is a “passage”, in which one is drawn from each station to the next by distant murmurs.

Several meetings took place about which I heard afterwards. Madame Scholz-Strasser, though charming, was adamant. I began to understand why in some quarters she was sometimes referred to as Madame S.-S. The *Body Missing* exhibition took place instead at the Freud Museum in London in conjunction with the symposium on that work: *Body Missing. From Theft to Virtuality: Considerations of the Meaning of Absence*, organized by art historian Griselda Pollock at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), London, England, March 21-22, 2003.

In contrast with the Berggasse experience, I was, of course, permitted to situate the work throughout the Maresfield Gardens house where Freud spent the last eighteen months of his life, and the integration of artwork and context was deeply effective. I nevertheless have always regretted that, despite the careful preparations, the original Sigmund Freud Museum conception could not be realized, and that I was deprived of the opportunity to work closely with the brilliant and empathetic Lydia Marinelli.