

Kulturverein KiK, Altaussee, Austria

**Body Missing** by Vera Frenkel / Opening 6:00 PM, Sept. 8th, 2017

## Introduction

This six-channel multimedia artwork by Vera Frenkel on Third Reich art theft was first installed at the Offenes Kulturhaus, Linz, 1994, for the international exhibition, **Andere Körper** (*Other Bodies*), curated by art historian and editor, Prof. Dr. Sigrid Schade.

Since then, **Body Missing** has travelled widely - from Vienna to Stockholm, Toronto to Paris, Warsaw to London, and many points between, returning to Austria in 2008, as part of **Tiefenrausch** (Depth Addiction) and installed in the *Aktienkeller* under the City of Linz.

Recognized as the central work of the multimedia trilogy that began with "... from the *Transit Bar*" (Frenkel's multi-channel video installation and functional piano bar at documenta IX, 1992), and completed by **The Blue Train** (34-channel installation, shown most recently at the Toronto International Film Festival, 2017)

## **Body Missing and two Freud Museums**

Between two very different but beautifully installed versions of Body Missing in Vienna - at the Georg Kargl Gallery, 2001, and at the MAK, 2009 - a special installation of the work was planned for the Freud Museum Vienna by the brilliant historian and curator Lydia Marinelli, but the exhibition was suddenly cancelled without warning. The only evidence of Dr. Marinelli's intentions is her compelling text, "Body Missing at 19 Berggasse" which was to be published in the Freud Museum's Fall, 2001, Bulletin.

Instead, the project was welcomed in 2003 by the Freud Museum London, as described below by then Director Erica Davies. (The work has developed further since her enthusiastic response, and now includes six evocative photomurals, one for each video station, and the [www.yorku.ca/BodyMissing](http://www.yorku.ca/BodyMissing) website - all visible in the Altaussee installation.)

"Vera Frenkel's extraordinary work, Body Missing, has, with great acclaim, transited the world, but few places resonate so powerfully with it than the Freud Museum London. Here we discover two parallel universes now enmeshed ....

Enthralled by the discoveries of archaeology, Freud used the process of excavation as one of his favourite metaphors for the process of psychoanalysis. Vera Frenkel has, in a similar process of search and excavation, uncovered the evidence for the accumulation and theft of art intended for Adolf Hitler's Fuehrermuseum in his boyhood hometown, Linz ...."

... Taking the Kunstraub (art theft) project of the Third Reich as a point of departure for considering a range of issues, from collective madness to the nature of memory, Vera Frenkel's Body Missing project has taken a number of different forms, yet its basic elements remain a cycle of six short videos; a group of window-sized images on translucent film drawn from the videos or their sources (originally set into the windows

of the three-story façade of the Offenes Kulturhaus in Linz), and now into light-boxes; two old chairs at each video ...."

[Erica Davies, *Body Missing* catalogue, Freud Museum, London, and at: [www.freud.org.uk/exhibitions/10540/body-missing](http://www.freud.org.uk/exhibitions/10540/body-missing)]

The artist has always regretted that this special resonance between theme and context was prevented from happening at the Freud Museum Vienna, and that historian Lydia Marinelli's vision was not realized there.

## Dedication

In an unexpected and uncanny nudge of fate, September 8th, the opening date of the Altaussee exhibition, coincides exactly with the anniversary of Lydia Marinelli's death. This meaningful convergence lends weight to a growing perception that the Kulturverein KiK, in contributing its own remarkably resonant context, is, in a sense, hosting the missing exhibition.

It's true that Freud and his family loved their holidays in Altaussee, but what is inevitable for anyone aware of the history and scale of WW II Kunstraub is the significance of this site in relation to the **Sonderauftrag Linz** (Hitler's Special Assignment, Linz), and its role in the service of his Führermuseum fantasy. In short, Kulturverein KiK offers a truly compelling bond between artwork and place, a truth that Lydia would have greatly appreciated.

For these reasons, marking an exhibition planned for a previous convergence of art and site that now finds a home at Altaussee, the artist is dedicating this special installation of to the memory of the late Lydia Marinelli, in honour of a visionary curator whose legacy continues to inform this work.

## Note of thanks

Vera Frenkel also wishes to express gratitude to art historian Karina Simbürger for suggesting this venue; to Production Manager Norbert Schweizer who has helped to realize key iterations of this work in all its aspects from the very beginning, and who has worked with Master Technician Matt Smith to bring playback and website into benign complicity with current technology; and of course to curator and art historian, Sigrid Schade, who first commissioned the work for **Andere Körper** at the Offenes Kulturhaus in 1994, and will introduce its Altaussee exhibition in 2017.

**"From Theft to Virtuality"** - Panel Discussion: Sept. 9th 2017, 2 to 4 PM

**Vera Frenkel, Hans Fuchs, Sigrid Schade, Birgit Schwartz**

Borrowing the title of the panel on Body Missing organized at the I.C.A. London in March 2003, by art historian Griselda Pollock, the Kulturverein KiK will host a panel on September 9th that will explore issues ranging from the moral dilemmas of provenance that art theft imposes, to the role of new media in exploring and diagnosing this haunting and formative historic narrative.