



MARIAHILF STREET, VIENNA 2007



ST.MARX, VIENNA 2007

Wolfgang Kos, Director of Wien Museum  
*The chapped skin of urbanity*  
*Paul Albert Leitner's photographs of Vienna*

It has been many years since Paul Albert Leitner left behind the confinement of the Tyrolean mountains to roam through Vienna and other grand cities. Yet he has not turned into a zippy city slicker, deftly going after his business. He has retained a circuitous and stubborn cautiousness, an outside viewpoint, an almost child-like sense of wonder, a very sensual joy of discovery. The city of Vienna, where he has been living since 1986, has never become his home – it has remained an alien, exotic place. Leitner is able to photograph things, even those familiar to him, as if he has seen them for the very first time. An artist, then, who with stoical ease watches the city getting on with being a city. Leitner's city images are sensual micro-flirts with seeing and finding, triggered by small details in the scruffy and chapped skin of urbanity. Paul Albert Leitner, the poetic recordist, gets involved neither with psychologising interpretations nor any duties of documentation. His images – especially the ones that he has collected in Vienna, where he has been living since the 1990s – form a travelogue.

# VIENNA, CITY VIEWS FROM INSIDE

## PAUL ALBERT LEITNER



„CAFE“, VIENNA 2005

a project by:

**X-CHANGE**  
 culture-science  
 www.x-change.at



Lagos State Government



Austrian Embassy  
 Abuja/Nigeria

### BIOGRAPHY

Born in North tyrol (Austria) in 1957, 1973-1976 study in commercial photography, freelance artist since 1986, lives in Vienna (Austria), different prices in Austria, a lot of catalogues and books. Solo and group exhibitions: Vienna, Prague, Innsbruck, Paris, Mexico-City, New York, Teheran, Rome, Nizhny Novgorod, Dakar, Warsaw, Bologna, Havana, Frankfurt, Helsinki, Salzburg, Bolzano, Torino, Bratislava, Lausanne, Graz, Santa Rosa, Strasbourg, Berlin, Belgrade, Bucharest.

In this exhibition pictures of the renowned artistic photographer Paul Albert Leitner will be combined with snapshots taken by ordinary people in Vienna. Both share the analogue technique and approach. Some motives can be found in both parts of the exhibition. But what impression stays with the observer from outside through these views from inside?

Stephan Schwarz , Curator  
 (X-CHANGE culture-science)

### PHOTO EXHIBITION

opening on  
 Monday, 8th of December, 2008  
 at 6.00 pm

at  
 City Hall, Magnolia Hall (opp Muson Center)  
 King George The 5th Avenue Onikan  
 Lagos Island



DAWN IN A PETROLSTATION



WÜRSTELPRATER“



„THE NEW WORLD“, VIENNA 1999

Leitner's Vienna does not align with the glamorous imperial Vienna that presents itself so magnificently to the tourist. Neither does one find the grey and morbid gloom, which many cultural pessimists time and again have described as the essence of Vienna. No, when Paul Albert Leitner saunters through the city, he always has the sun on his back. In the alcoves and behind the façades of a wealthy city he finds cheap, garish, almost tropical colours that tell stories about improvisation, coincidence, vitality, poverty and immigration. It is possible that this openness for the pure energy of the ephemeral is connected to Leitner's frequent photo expeditions to places such as Dakar (Senegal) and Havanna (Cuba). It is noticeable how Leitner stays clear of the heroic single image. The artist compares his photographic work in the city to the pages of a book; he draws 'moments' from his vast collection and combines them into series: façades, wasteland, signs and advertisements, typefaces. Ultimately every city is a depot of essentially abstract shapes and colours. The art of the magical realist Paul Albert Leitner consists in allowing us to realise that this is not unimportant, dead stuff, but rather are more or less mysterious signs of life. Much in Leitner's images seems makeshift, just as Vienna itself is not eternal and static, but a city in perpetual flux.





PHILIPP NOWATSCHKE, VIENNA 2006



GERD BRUUS, VIENNA 2006

# VIENNA, CITY VIEWS FROM INSIDE

## SNAPSHOTS



MUHAMMAD EMIN DEMIREL, VIENNA 2006

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EMANUEL MAUTHE



SOPHIE HROBY



MARTINA LEOPOLD, VIENNA 2006

Isabella Marboe, Architectural Journalist  
*Urban Culture in Focus*

Cities are conurbations of people, power and capital: the more of all those elements there are, the more pulsating it is, and the number of big cities with millions of inhabitants is constantly growing all over the world. Every city is a complex system, complete with arterial roads and infrastructure channels, comprising rows of houses and streets, wasteland, gardens, parks, industrial plants, places for strolling, sacred buildings, exclusive and notorious districts, and it is this mixture of plethora and idiosyncrasy that makes up the specific quality of a city. It gradually creates its own basic architectural and typological structure, which is the covering that gives the individual the freedom to design his own life among the anonymity of the mass.

Every city is a living organism in its own right, each one growing differently and in the process obeying its own laws. Its mass is not dead: within its historical, architectural and topographical framework, the city gradually reinvents itself from the sum of all the activities of each of its inhabitants. At every step of the way, human beings leave traces behind them, strike out along new paths, develop their own personal systems of coordinates from favourite places, meeting points and squares, and in this way their city becomes accessible. This finely-woven network reflects both individual and social forms of behaviour, although these differ from city to city.

At its places of intersection, pulsating centres develop, focal points and hot-spots, while the trail of the individual becomes lost in the intimacy of the protected private living-room. All of this is what comprises urban culture and it is well worth examining it more closely. In the Camera Project, the TRANS URBAN team stuck doggedly to the heels of the inhabitants of Vienna, in order to get closer to their personal systems of coordinates and thus to the respective pulse of the city. 120 easy-to-use disposable cameras were distributed, along with a questionnaire which requested the project participants to take photographs over a period of 10 days, of the places in which they like to go to, meet friends, spend their free time, go to with their families etc.

The Camera Project is more than a collection of pictures: it is a collection of faces that touch one another, setting up vibrations and giving an intimation of the network that comprises urban culture. If one looks more closely it becomes a journey, allowing the many threads that here meet, are lost and unexpectedly meet again to continue to be spun.