

# STAATLICHER RASSISMUS

Nicht weit von hier auf der Roßauer Lände nimmt staatlicher Rassismus\* Gestalt an - in Form eines Schubhaftgefängnisses. Das einzige "Verbrechen" der meisten dort eingesperrten (zum Teil noch minderjährigen) Menschen ist es, in Österreich Zuflucht zu suchen. Sie werden ohne Gerichtsverfahren aufgrund ihrer Herkunft und ihrer sozial schwachen Stellung mit bis zu 6 Monaten Freiheitsentzug bestraft:

## SCHUBHAFT IN ÖSTERREICH

Österreichische Schubhaftfassade

# Institutional Racisms

**A project by Martin Krenn & Oliver Ressler**

**Billboard object in front of the Viennese state opera, 1997**

**Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, 1997**

In Austria, Germany, and other EU states the increase in offensive as well as subtle racist discourses and practices in recent years has become obvious. 1997 was declared by the EU as “The European Year against Racism”, whereby state racism played no meaningful role in this context. The emphasis was laid in the first instance on xenophobia and right-wing radicalism. Conceptions of racism as peripheral or fringe phenomena delegate political responsibility for racism onto single groups and persons.





"Institutional Racisms", billboard object in front of the Viennese state opera, Vienna, 1997

Thus, in general, racist institutionalised practices towards migrants, refugees, and members of minorities are little considered. Often it is only extreme and violent racist attacks which draw the attention of the public. Such reduced modes of perception and observation define racism as a trivial problem. Through this process its present socio-political meaning is marginalised and ghettoised. While racism is seen as disassociated from the structure of the power relations in our society, its institutional anchorings remain filtered out. Hand in hand with this goes the disregard for the social consequences of institutional racisms for migrants, refugees, and minorities. These viewpoints contribute to the reproduction and establishment of racisms.



In order to bring institutional racisms (in the form of state regulated racisms) into the focus of public attention, we placed a 3 x 3 x 3 m large poster object in the Viennese city centre on the Herbert-von-Karajan Square in front of the State Opera from 14.10. – 27.11.1997.



"Institutional Racisms", billboard object in front of the Viennese state opera, Vienna, 1997



As this site is visited by numerous tourists, the poster object showed a sober text, superimposed over a photographed house facade, about the Austrian practice of remand pending deportation in German, English, and Italian. This facade is part of a police prison on the Rossauerlände, one of the two Viennese custodies pending deportation, in which 50 % of all prisoners on remand pending deportation are locked up. The fourth side of the poster object informed in more detail (also in three languages) about the practice of remand pending deportation in this country under the headline "Interesting facts worth knowing about Austria".



"Institutional Racisms", billboard object in front of the Viennese state opera, Vienna, 1997



The poster object was part of the project "Institutional Racisms", which was continued as an exhibition in the Kunsthalle Exnergasse in Vienna. Among other things, a video was shown there with leading officials from Austria and Germany who we interviewed on remand pending deportation and other exclusion mechanisms. In it the Head of the Department of Aliens Branch of the Police in the Ministry of the Interior, Dr. Widermann, and the Head of the Austrian Federal Asylum Office, Mag. Taucher, and a Ministerial Director of the Department for Asylum and Alien Affairs, Dr. Lehnguth, and the Ministerial Director in the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Dr. Rupprecht, attempt to justify their work and the exclusion politics of the state.



"Institutional Racisms", billboard object in front of the Viennese state opera, Vienna, 1997

Supplementing the video, selected information materials from anti-racist publications lay freely available for taking on three wood pedestals in the form of pads of sheets stuck together at one side. On a total of 54 pages an offensive stand against different forms of institutional racisms is made, among other things for an immediate abolition of prisons for remand pending deportation. A form of criticism which only independent, radical left, and thus generally low-circulation magazines achieve.



"Institutional Racisms" (solo exhibition), Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, 1997



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