

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE & LISTING

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Exhibition:

## THE VIENNA MODEL

### HOUSING FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CITY

**APR 17 - SEP 2, 2013**

Austrian Cultural Forum New York  
11 East 52nd Street, New York

**APR 16 | EXHIBITION OPENING**

**CURATORS: Wolfgang Förster & William Menking**

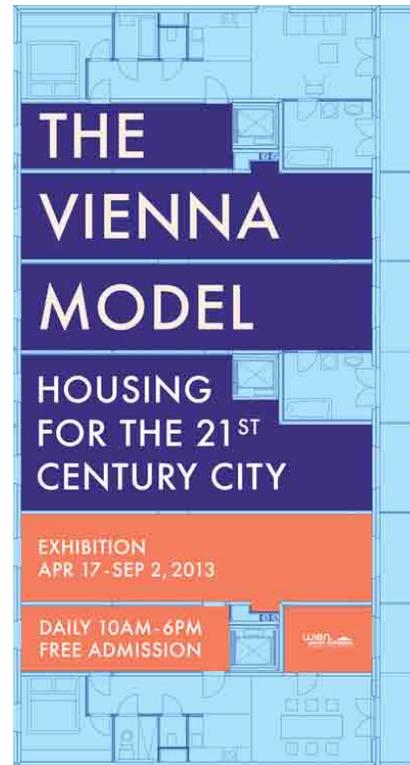
**CURATORIAL ADVISORS & EXHIBITION DESIGN: Sabine Bitter & Helmut Weber**

**GRAPHIC DESIGN: Thumb**

New York, March 2013 - A new exhibition at the **Austrian Cultural Forum New York** presents **THE VIENNA MODEL**, a survey of public housing design in the Austrian capital of Vienna curated by Wolfgang Förster and William Menking. The exhibition will feature 37 case studies in Viennese public housing by dozens of architects, accompanied by a responsive series of images of artworks curated by the Austrian collaborative duo **Sabine Bitter** and **Helmut Weber**. The exhibition will highlight these projects for an American audience as it debuts in New York and tours Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington, D.C., before returning to Vienna from 2013 to 2014.

The City of Vienna has achieved extraordinary milestones with regard to public housing: today, about 60% of the Viennese population lives in municipally built, owned, or managed housing, and the city is clearly in control of the housing market. This stands in stark contrast to the United States, where, in most cases, the private market is the provider of housing and is often even relied upon to rehabilitate existing neighborhoods and create new communities. Vienna's housing model contributes to a tangible positive impact; for the past four consecutive years, Vienna topped the Mercer "Quality of Living" survey as the city boasting the world's highest quality of life in the world, was ranked second in *The Economist's* 2012 "World's Most Livable City", and number eight in *Monocle's* 2012 "World's Most Livable Cities".

Their successful model dates back to the days of "Red Vienna", in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the socialist government took an active interest in designing for the masses. That interest has since evolved into a housing-policy that is not only exemplary in its consideration for quality-of-life issues, but has also produced works by a host of prolific architects and studios over the years, such as those of Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, Richard Neutra, and Margarete Schütte Lihotzky. Multiple housing projects spread across the capital show just how unique they are as examples of architecture, urban habitation, neighborhood revitalization, and the creation of new communities.



**THE VIENNA MODEL** examines aspects such as continuity, innovation, social cohesion, urban development, responses to demographic changes, diversity, integration, civic participation, environmental aspects, and inner city densification. The projects featured in the exhibition are characteristic for contemporary Viennese public housing trends, some little-known outside the city: The Kabelwerk Estate, which involved turning the grounds of an old electrical cable & wiring factory into an entirely new urban area (completed in 2007, Hermann & Valentiny & Partners, Mascha & Seethaler, Schwalm-Theiss-Gressenbauer, Martin Wurnig, pool Architektur, Werkstatt Wien Spiegelfeld, Holnsteiner & Co.). Other examples include an Inter-ethnic housing complex (Peter Scheinfinger and Partners, 1998-2000), Bike City (königlarch architects, 2005 - 2008), and the Sargfabrik (BKK-2, Johnny Winter, 1996 - 2001), a former coffin manufacturing plant turned into a housing complex: this project was planned by a residents' group in Vienna's densely built-up fourteenth district, and has since received international acclaim for its outstanding architecture as well as its social concept of introducing a new communal infrastructure into a low-profile urban area.

**THE VIENNA MODEL** was curated by **William Menking**, an architectural historian, critic and writer, as well as the founder and editor-in-chief of *The Architect's Newspaper*, and **Wolfgang Förster**, the head of the Department for Housing Research of the City of Vienna. Vancouver- and Vienna-based artists and cultural researchers **Sabine Bitter** and **Helmut Weber** were invited to look at the communal spaces and concepts in this show, and to speculate on how they resonate within artistic and cultural practices - thus expanding the architectural and urban discussion into a cultural discourse. The projects they selected include works by artists Alfredo Jaar, Ulrike Lienbacher, Sofie Thorsen, Bitter & Weber, and Michael Zinganel, as well as urban initiatives and projects such as *add-on* (2005), and *Kunstgastgeber Gemeindebau* (2012) with are supported by the Viennese Fund for Public Art, KÖR. Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber also developed the unique design of the exhibition, which features graphics by **Luke Bulman** of Thumb.

The exhibition is being mounted as a collaboration between the Austrian Cultural Forum and the Department for Housing Research of the City of Vienna. **THE VIENNA MODEL** will travel to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and finally to Vienna from 2013-2014.

The exhibition aims to open up a space for cross-cultural negotiations between Viennese and American concepts of housing. In each of the cities the exhibition will travel to, the curators and artists will host roundtable discussions with local architects and planning officials to highlight the crosscurrents between the cities and examples highlighted in the exhibit. **THE VIENNA MODEL** is meant to be a point of departure for a discussion on housing for the 21st century.

**OPENING EVENTS**

The opening reception for **THE VIENNA MODEL** will take place on **Tuesday, April 16, 2013**, from **6PM to 8PM**. It will be preceded by a talk that will include curators **Wolfgang Förster** and **William Menking**, artists **Michael Rieper** and **Michael Zinganel**, architect **Mimi Hoang**, and **Abby Hamlin**, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Real Estate Development at Columbia University. **Michael Ludwig**, Vienna City Councillor for Housing, Housing Construction, and Urban Renewal will give brief remarks, and ACFNY Director **Andreas Stadler** will introduce the panel. The talk will take place in the auditorium of the Austrian Cultural Forum from **5PM to 6PM**. Admission is free. Due to limited seating, rsvp for the artist talk is required. Tickets are available by visiting [acfny.org](http://acfny.org) or calling (212) 319-5300 x 46.

## ABOUT THE AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM NEW YORK

With its architectural landmark building in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, the Austrian Cultural Forum New York hosts more than 200 free events annually and showcases Austrian con-temporary art, music, literature, and academic thought. The Austrian Cultural Forum houses around 10,000 volumes in its state-of-the-art library, and enjoys long-standing and flourishing partnerships with many venerable cultural and academic institutions throughout New York and the United States.

## ABOUT THE CURATORIAL TEAM

**William Menking**, is the founder and editor of The Architect's Newspaper and has organized, curated and written catalogues for exhibitions on architecture and urbanism for venues including; Archigram: Experimental Architecture 1961-1974, Superstudio Life Without Object's. He is a professor at Pratt Institute in New York. He has curated and organized international exhibitions, and he served as Commissioner of the U.S. pavilion at the 2008 Venice Biennale.

**Wolfgang Förster** holds a PhD in architecture, planning and political sciences from the Universities of Vienna and Graz. He has worked as an architect and researcher. He was the Deputy Director of the Vienna Housing Fund, and has served as the head of the Vienna Housing Research and International Relations of the City of Vienna since 2001. He is an Austrian delegate to the UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management, and has chaired this committee since 2009. He also chairs the EURO CITIES Working Group on Housing and has coordinated several EU-projects. He publishes frequently on public housing and urban renewal.

Since 1993, Vancouver-based **Sabine Bitter** & Vienna-based **Helmut Weber** have worked on projects addressing cities, architecture, and the politics of representation and of space. Their research-oriented practice which is based mainly in photography and video, engages with specific moments and logics of the global-urban change as they take shape in neighborhoods, architecture, and everyday life.

## MEDIA CONTACTS

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## CONTACT, HOURS AND DIRECTIONS

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### Directions

Subway:  
E, M Train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street  
B, D, F, M Train to 47-50 Street/Rockefeller Center  
E, M, 6 Train to 51st Street/Lexington Avenue

Bus:  
M 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 to 53rd Street

Open Daily, 10 AM – 6 PM | Admission to exhibitions, concerts, and other events is free.  
Reserve tickets online at [www.acfny.org](http://www.acfny.org) or call (212) 319 5300 ext. 46