



SETH WEINER & SADIE SIEGEL

VANILLA WAS HERE

2023

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MELODIC LIST SCENE		03	23		CLEANING S	SCENE
LOPSIDED SCENE		04	24	C	USTY VOCAL	SCENE
BEDTIME SCENE		05	25	GROOVY	EXPLOSIVES	SCENE
PLEIN AIR SCENE		06	26	HEBI	REW SCHOOL	SCENE
RAFI'S SCENE		07	27	MIDDLE	AGED DANCE	SCENE
80S SCENE		08	28		WARNING	SCENE
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SETH WEINER & SADIE SIEGEL

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1 met Carola about ten years ago when I first moved to Vienna. We were in a show together about pseudonyms and she briefly explained Vanilla to me back then. I mostly forgot about it until we connected through Sira about Bildraum. When we talked it was sunny. I paced up and down the sidewalk like a day trader. We'd been playing phone tag for a couple of days so the initial conversation about the show felt earned somehow. I told her that of course I remembered talking about Cream. How could I not when it was my favorite Wu-Tang song. She told me it was where Bildraum is now on Strauchgasse and it was called Vanilla. I told her I was doing a sound residency there and had been trying to find the melody of the street.

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 We complained about finish fetish and camera-ready objects, preciousness. I told her I was thinking of calling the show 'Bildraum Electric' and she seemed disappointed. We smiled about our kids and teaching. She said she was happy I was working there and treating it like a studio, and that an unsynced soundtrack for the space would've been perfect for Vanilla. She told me she used to go there on Saturdays. I told her that I've also been going there on Saturdays. One Saturday we went there together. She brought a copy of the Vanilla book her mom published, we ate sweets, then sat facing the rainy day through the window. We listened to some tracks I'd made there and stared at Strauchgasse, then recorded the tail end of our conversation.

SETH WEINER



SETH WEINER & CAROLA DERTNIG

SETTI YOU KIND OF GREW UP IN THE SPACE THAT WE'RE IN NOW. THIS WAS VANILLA IN THE 70s, FOR ANYONE THAT'S LISTENING. IT WAS A SEVEN YEAR OR TEN YEAR SPAN?

CAROLA Oh, no. Vanilla was only in here for three or four years. It was a really important place because there wasn't any kind of space where you were able to meet. At the time, Vienna was gray and very conservative, with no colors at all. Everything was kind of black and white. It still had this this post-war flare because of the Iron Curtain, and had this kind of sad, very heavy atmosphere. It wasn't chic like the first district now, with these sort of golden corners with Louis Vuitton and Chanel. It was completely the opposite. In that time we all lived in the first district because apartments were very cheap, or kind of cheap.

- SW WERE THERE HORSES AND CARRIAGES ON THE STREET BACK THEN?
- (D) Well, this was a Wäscherei before. It was called "Habsburg" and was on the whole block.

SW LIKE A COMMERCIAL LAUNDER?

(D) Well, nothing was really commercial, but yes, it was big. It was a kind of famous chain that did the washing for hospitals and at industrial scales. There were hardly any hotels either.

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SW THIS IS KIND OF HARD TO IMAGINE.

Yeah, I had flashbacks when I went through CD the first district during the pandemic. Somehow I liked it much better. At Kärntner Strasse and Graben there were cars back then though. There was heavy traffic, then a few years later it changed, they started with the U-bahn. When Vanilla was here it didn't exist but the Strassenbahn was really important. I remember they even made a Vanilla Strassenbahn party. It went around the ring the whole time and it was really funny and everyone was really drunk. It was this whole artist scene where everyone was young and not famous yet. But there were all these hierarchies of who was talking to whom and who was the better artist.

(D) Walther Pichler was very high up and there was this whole hierarchy. And women also had a very special role. How can I say it? They were always in the second part or the third part of the order. They were supposed to be nice and beautiful but not so independent. I don't even think there was a word for a female artist. I mean there was but...

SW WHEN THEY WERE DOING PERFORMANCES AND SHOWS HERE WERE FEMALE ARTISTS INVITED?

(1) Yes? Hold on...Palais, Strauchgasse. That's the name of the Palais on this block. Palais Ferstel.

SW YOU WANT TO GET THE RECORD STRAIGHT?

(D) Yeah, exactly.

SO IT WAS YOUR MOM AND STEP-FATHER RUNNING IT, WERE THE GENDER DYNAMICS REALLY PRONOUNCED OR WAS IT JUST QUIETLY THERE?

(1) Well, I think it was a bit similar to what we were talking about before about kids' education. My mom always said they really tried everything out, in terms of having and thinking about different kinds of relationships. Different kinds of open sexualities, whatever that meant. I was always pretty skeptical as a child but also later. But then I have to say that they really experimented a lot. Also in terms of kids' education with us, there weren't certain rules, they just wanted to make

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everything different and new but they didn't know how yet. And with gender it was the same.

My mom was a very strong, independent, and creative person who led the club. But there were certain power dynamics with the whole system and it was a patriarchal system. I mean, no doubt. Even though she was always really fighting. Also with education. Feminism just started and they were fighting for feminism but still it was a very hierarchical and patriarchal system. Elfriede Gerstl was this amazing writer. She was good friends with Elfriede Jelinek but from a different generation. And she always said, while we were sitting in these kind of male artists groups in daylong coffee meetings where there was a lot of high and fluent discussion going on, we were sitting silently and just writing. It was hard to speak up. We did, but it wasn't easy at all.

- **SW** I JUST WANT TO GO BACK A LITTLE. YOU SAID YOU GREW UP IN THE SPACE TO SOME DEGREE AND WERE SEVEN WHEN YOU MOVED FROM TIROL TO VIENNA, AND THAT'S WHEN VANILLA STARTED?
- (D) Yeah. I think they started it when I was eight or nine.
- *SW* **QUITE FORMATIVE YEARS...**
- (1) Yeah. So the funny thing was that Vanilla was set up as an association but not to create a sort of elite group. They really had this marxist, democratic idea.

H For example, everything had the same price. If it was a whiskey, or you bought a sandwich or a coffee, it was something like ten Schilling. And the same thing was with this association, you had to pay a membership, always for three months, and that was like three-hundred shilling. That was kind of a lot of money, but for that you got a key to come in whenever you wanted. The idea was to keep the police out but actually it happened in the end. There were all these newspaper articles that these young kids smoke and they do the drugs. But it was not a druggie place at all, my stepfather and mother were really very strict about that.

I mean, the association membership sounds very elite but it was not. It was more about having a space in this weird, conservative, strict, and very nasty time. About creating a sort of distance from this feeling of National Socialism that was still around. You know you had these Nazi teachers, it was this poison you were trying to flee. Then all of a sudden there was just this kind of island with a different feeling. A space where something else could happen.

The CI design was by Haus - Rucker - CO, there were a lot of artists and it had this very experimental explosion. It was just after Art & Revolution at Hörsaal I with Peter Weibel, Günter Brus, Oswald Wiener and Otto Muehl. Weibel was here a lot but Brus had already left to Berlin, so Vanilla just opened a little bit after that time.

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In the interior everything was kind of simple. The walls were purple. The bar was silver. Everything was made out of nothing, but the space was huge. It was almost along the whole street and there were so many empty spaces at the time but not because of shopping malls or gentrification. Palais Ferstel hadn't been restored in any sense, the walls were coming down and it still had this leftover, post-war feeling in a way.

Inside, the seating blocks were made out of purple styrofoam. People were smoking. You were still allowed to smoke in the space. I think in one space, not in the TV space or the exhibition space. The club members were always putting their cigarettes out in the styrofoam. So it was really actually disgusting if I think of it now.

We always had this children's Saturday though with all my friends and kids from the Vanilla members. And we built big houses with the styrofoam blocks, you know, with the cigarette butts in them, and would knock them down. It was just such a different time. I mean, now this would be a whole thing. Can you imagine eight or nine year old kids...

- **SW** PLAYING WITH CIGARETTE BUTTS...I CAN IMAGINE IT. AS A KID WOULD YOU COME A LOT AND JUST HANG AROUND, OR MOSTLY ON THESE SATURDAYS?
- (*D* Mostly I came on the weekend.

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I went to school and then maybe came sometimes when they had to order things or bring things, or kind of specific cleanings or whatever. At that time I lived just down the road and could walk up and down. So that was pretty easy...But coming back to the space. So there was this room where you could sort of hangout and drink and discuss and talk and listen to music that was really important.

 δW This is where the record player was? And where the playlist you sent me came from?

(D) Yeah, this list with the Doors, Vanilla Fudge, and Bowie. I remember I had this record box for a long time and then I gave it to someone. Ughh, I'm a little angry about it but that's okay. My mother would say it's just material stuff don't bother with it.

SW YEAH EXACTLY. I'LL INCLUDE THE LIST SOMEWHERE IN THE PRINT VERSION OF THIS INTERVIEW. MY DAD HAD A LOT OF THESE RECORDS. HE ALWAYS SAID THE DOORS WERE BUBBLEGUM POP.

(1) The music was okay. In an interview twentyfive years later, some critical members of Vanilla said the music was more mainstream. But back then it was not easy to get this kind of music in Vienna. We could ask Edek Bartz about it, he knows. He had the record store 3/4 on Ballgasse.

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Marlene Dietrich Zarah Leander (Wunderbar) Heinz Rühmann Austropop started here... André Heller Erika Pluhar Wolfgang Ambros Georg Danzer VANILLA Fudge (played one night this is where the name came from) Bob Dylan Cat Stevens Leonard Cohen Joan Mitchell The Kinks The Supremes Janis Joplin Cream

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The Mothers of Invention - Zappa Clockwork Orange (a must) Grateful Dead Steppenwolf Santana Stevie Wonder Wilson Pickett Sam and Dave James Brown Joan Baez The Velvet Underground (was always the last number before Vanilla closed) Lou Reed Nico The Grateful Dead Pink Floyd Jethro Tull The Who (sell out)

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Jefferson Airplane (Surrealistic Pillow) T. Rex (super important) Roxy Music Je/r CAROLA DERTNIG / SENT FEB 28 2023 14.57H 22 23 PRINT_Vanilla-Was-Here_Liner-Notes_01-07-2023.indd 22-23 01.07.23 12:41

- SW YOU TOLD ME THERE WAS ALSO A GAME ROOM WITH PINBALL AND A FILM SCREENING ROOM?
- ^(J) Yeah, there was the bar and it was kind of like this wide...
- SW ABOUT THE SIZE OF THIS METAL DESK?

^(D) Yeah. And it was really long and went through this whole space.

SW FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER END?

^(J) Yeah, in the big space I think. The big space was about three of these rooms long. It was huge and there was this little space next door. Now it comes back. You could walk through into it and that's where the game room was, where you could gamble, play the flipper, soccer thing. *SW* IS THIS WHERE YOU'D PLAY CHESS?

(1) That's a good question. Where did they play chess? There was another room that was the library with forbidden books and that's where they'd play chess. The housekeepers or people who looked after the Palais came nearly every night to play and they were really good friends. I think they felt bored over there, so they'd rather come over here. Palais Ferstel was just an empty something. There was nothing. It was pretty creepy to walk through.

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(D) I'm not even sure. I think maybe some Amt (government office) was in there, but not really. I remember that Dieter Roth had an exhibition up there sometime in the nineties long after Vanilla was here. I remember that pretty well and I think he had like ten rooms with his work and installations. Till then it was pretty much nothing and then they started to renovate it. I'm not even sure who owns it. Now there's all these shops in the arcades and Café Central on the corner.

- *SW* BUT THAT WASN'T THERE WHEN VANILLA WAS HERE. OR WAS IT?
- (D) That's a really good question.

SW THERE WEREN'T TOURISTS LINED UP TO BUY A CUP OF COFFEE OR SIT IN FAMOUS CHAIRS...

() No, no, no!

SW I'M JUST CURIOUS TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF INTERACTION THERE WOULD'VE BEEN BETWEEN THIS KIND OF ICONIC, HISTORIC COFFEE HOUSE AND A SPACE LIKE VANILLA. ON WIKI IT SAYS THAT IN JANUARY OF 1913, STRONGMEN LIKE TITO, FREUD AND STALIN VISITED THE CAFE. NOT TOGETHER THOUGH. APPARENTLY IT CLOSED AT THE END OF WWII AND REOPENED IN A DIFFERENT PART OF THE BUILDING WHEN PALAIS FERSTEL WAS RENOVATED IN 1975. THEN IN '86 IT MOVED BACK TO THE CORNER WHERE IT'S NOW.

^(D) During daytime, people went to the *Br, and of course to Cafe Hawelka. That's where they all went to meet in the beginning.

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CD Café Central was completely down graded, the whole area felt pretty grey and cold with rotten buildings and was postwarish. Vanilla was kind of next to Café Central. First the exhibition space, then some tunnel inbetween. And then the next space was the library. The library was for forbidden books, or ones you couldn't get. You were able to read in there and it had to be quiet. Since books got stolen they had chains on them. Something like twenty years after it closed, my mother made this Vanilla book where I did the photos and helped. There was a big launch party at the MAK and someone brought an anonymous, silver parcel, and gave it to my mom. It was the Schwarze Book from Peter Weibel, and it had a

stamp from Vanilla. All the books were stamped and I think I still have the stamp.

SW WOULD YOU AND YOUR BUDDIES RIFLE THROUGH ALL OF THE FORBIDDEN BOOKS?

(1) There were Robert Crumb comics and I looked at them and I was always like, whatever. But yeah, of course we looked at everything. I remember that there were quite interesting books, and that I liked to look at them and to be in the library. There was another room that was the film room. They showed films you were not able to see and I remember I loved being there. A friend of mine told me the first image he has of me at Vanilla was with cinema seats and in between

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them you see a tiny blonde mop of hair watching very serious slapstick movies. There's also an image of me dancing and performing between the rows of the cinema. On these children's Saturdays they showed things like Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton films for us. Once they showed some kind of Czech children's films which were really interesting. I remember them still because they were sort of surreal in a way. So that was a good thing about this time, that they were thinking there has to be a children's Saturday, and that they were thinking about education and how we're living. They were really trying to renew everything, but it was also a bit naive and still the structure was how it was. Does that make sense?

- SW YEAH. I'M SURPRISED PEOPLE WEREN'T ALSO LIVING HERE.
- ℓp No, you couldn't live here that wasn't possible.
- SW IT SOUNDS LIKE IT WAS A KIND OF EXPERIMENTAL COMMUNITY CENTER...
- ℓp Yes, absolutely.
- SW AND REALLY CONTEMPORARY IN HOW IT MIXED ALL THESE DIFFERENT PROGRAMS. THERE WAS THE BAR, THE GAME ROOM, THE FORBIDDEN BOOKS LIBRARY, THE FILM SCREENING ROOM. WAS THERE A SPACE SPECIFICALLY FOR EXHIBITIONS?

(1) So there was the library, the film room, and I'm not sure if there was something like a TV room. There was only black and white TV back then and there was this movement going on

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With experimental TV. A lot of the artists who worked here and lived in the same house that we lived in, we moved a lot but that's another story, they studied painting at the Academy but they were more interested in performance. Even though the name performance didn't really exist in German. It was more sort of doing actions. For example, Struppi and Heidi, they were sort of dressed up every day in a different way. And Struppi was actually the reason why I started to work on the book "Let's Twist Again: If You Can Think it Dance it". When I lived with Struppi in this house, every day when I came home from school, they left the apartment in a different, performative outfit. One day they went out

dressed up as a nurse with a cold, or in fishnet stockings from London, or the next day dressed up as sisters with Heidi. Actually Struppi really wanted to go to London, and then to New York to the Warhol Factory. But they were too scared in a way or didn't want to leave. Once Struppi was wearing a black suit and I remember thinking, my god this is so conservative. It's funny that I thought this, but somehow, I did. When I was walking away I felt this big urge to turn around and look at the suit again, but thought, no, this isn't cool. But then of course I turned around, and on the back of Struppi's head was a skull. At that time, doing something like that was a big deal.

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 ${\it SW} {\rm THESE WERE JUST THESE KIND OF CASUAL ACTIONS} {\rm WITHOUT AN AUDIENCE, A PERFORMATIVE WAY OF BEING IN} {\rm THE CITY AND IN THE WORLD...}$

CD But no one was doing this, you know, it was just them. Then they started doing fashion things with my mother, they had performances here. There was a lot going on in here. It was this community of trying things out, experimenting, and I think they had a lot of fun. But for someone like Struppi, there was no place for that kind of work, even though there was already Actionism. So, in a way they disappeared. I think Struppi was an early AIDS victim. In the 80s, they left, and we never knew where they went. But I always kind of connect this space to Struppi because they were

always also working behind the bar. So, these were the people who were here every day and who they were also showing. They had another space by where the bus stop is now, but somehow it was more connected. And that's where they had an exhibition space.

SW AND WAS IT MOSTLY PEOPLE FROM THE INTERIOR CREW OF VANILLA BEING SHOWN? WAS IT KIND OF PROGRAMMED OR JUST LOOSE?

Nothing was programmed. They were serious about it though. Very serious about everything.

SETH WEINER & CAROLA DERTNIG

CD The architect Hermann Czech, who's representing Austria with AKT at the Biennale this year, said that it was a 'bar-in' and the first residential and club landscape. He didn't think architecture was a priority and that it was about other issues though. About books or movies that you didn't get to see or read elsewhere and a great space for young people. He made a poster of himself from an old passport photo that he put up in Vanilla. He said to my mom Christiane, who was the club owner, that if you needed a membership card to belong, he wanted number 1. And so he got the number I. A few months later he and some friends had a conversation about Vanilla and he proudly pulled out his membership card with the number 1. Then, the artist Ernst Graf pulled the number 0 out of his pocket! My mom told Ernst that the number 1 was already for Hermann. He apparently waited for months until triumphantly throwing the number zero in his face. I love that story. We told the story to each other over the years.

- *SW* I CAN BORROW THIS VANILLA BOOK, RIGHT?
- ()) Yeah, that's for you.
- *SW* AWESOME, THANKS CAROLA!
- (D) So that was really nice...

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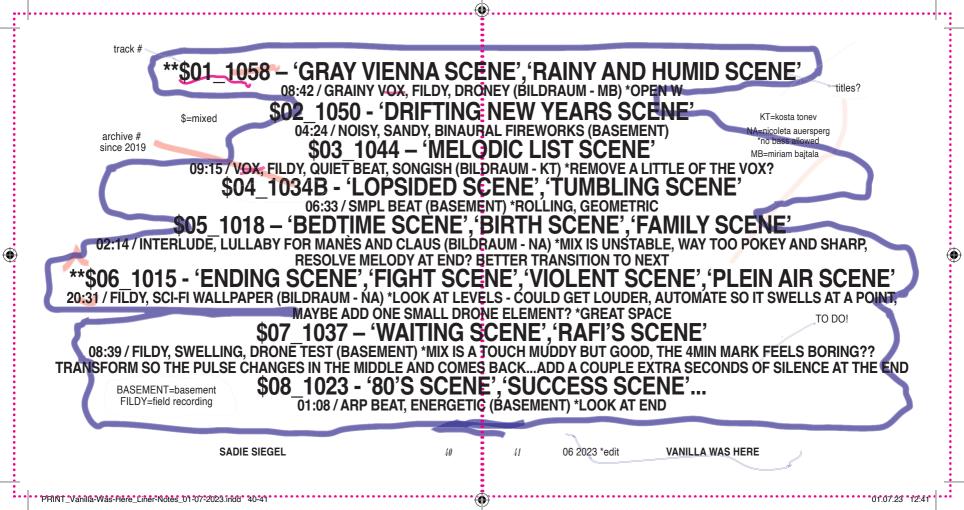
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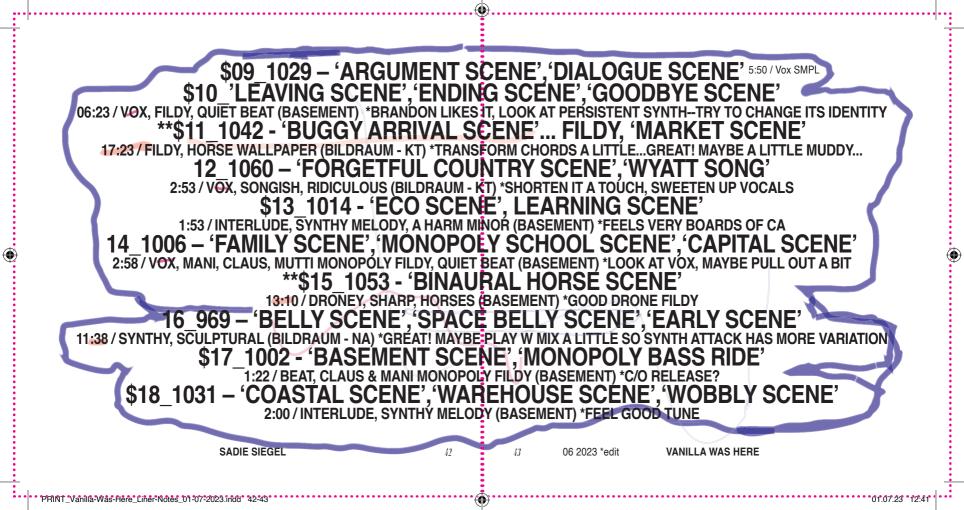
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3:13 / VOX, FILDY, SONGISH, QUIET BEAT (E 20_973 – 'HOPEFUL SCENE', 'LOC 6:27 / DRONEY (BASEMENT) *GOOD AND PLEASANT MELODIC *21_980 - 'PLEASANT CHIRA 13:15 / BUZZY, SHARP, SCULPTURAL 22_998 – 'SLAPSTICK CRII 3:41 / BEAT, CATCHY (BASEMENT) *KINDA AGGRESS 23_1000 - 'CLEANING 1:36 / LOOPY VOX & FILDY BEAT (24_971 – 'DUSTY VOCAL SCENE', 'DUSK 7:28 / VOX, SCULPTURAL NARRATIVE, FIGURATIVE FILDY (BI BOTTLE SOUND, PULL OUT FILDY A BIT MORE, CL 25_1001 - 'GROOVY EXPLOSIVE 4:43 / SANDY, FILDY CLICK, TUNISH (BASEMENT) *HAS / MAYBE BRING IN FIREWOR 26_968 – 'HEBREW SCHOOL S 3:06 / VOX; SCULPTURAL, EMBARRASSING? (BILDRAUM - N	OMESTIC SCENE', 'FAMILY SCENE' ASEMENT) *LOOK AT VOX REPS AND LENGTH OPED SCENE', 'HAIRDRYER OUTRO? MAKE SHORTER DRONE, LOOK AT END? HAIRDRYER OUTRO? MAKE SHORTER STORE, LOOK AT END? HAIRDRYER OUTRO? MAKE SHORTER SCENE', 'VIENNESE SCENE' HIDY (BILDRAUM - NA) *SAIFALI LIKED ME SCENE', 'CLIMAX SCENE' SVE, GREAT BEAT, VERY FIGURATIVESHORTEN A BIT SCENE', 'STICKY SENSE OF TIME VOCAL SCENE', 'HUSKY VOCAL SCENE' BASEMENT) *STICKY SENSE OF TIME VOCAL SCENE', 'HUSKY VOCAL SCENE' LORAUM - NA) *MELLO DRAMATIC, LOOK AT SYNTH STABS AND LAN UP VOX A TOUCH SO THEY AREN'T SO SLOPPY SSCENE', 'NEW YEAR'S SCENE' A KIND OF IRISH DANCE TUNE FEEL, LOOK AT MIX, MUDDY, KS MOREEXPLODE ENDING? SCENE', 'B'NAI MITZVAH SCENE' MA'LOOK AT SOME OF THE VOX EDITS, IT'S A LITTLE DRY AND UND 2:20ISH?LOOPS WELL TO 01_1058, BRANDON LIKES IT
SADIE SIEGEL 44	45 06 2023 *edit VANILLA WAS HERE
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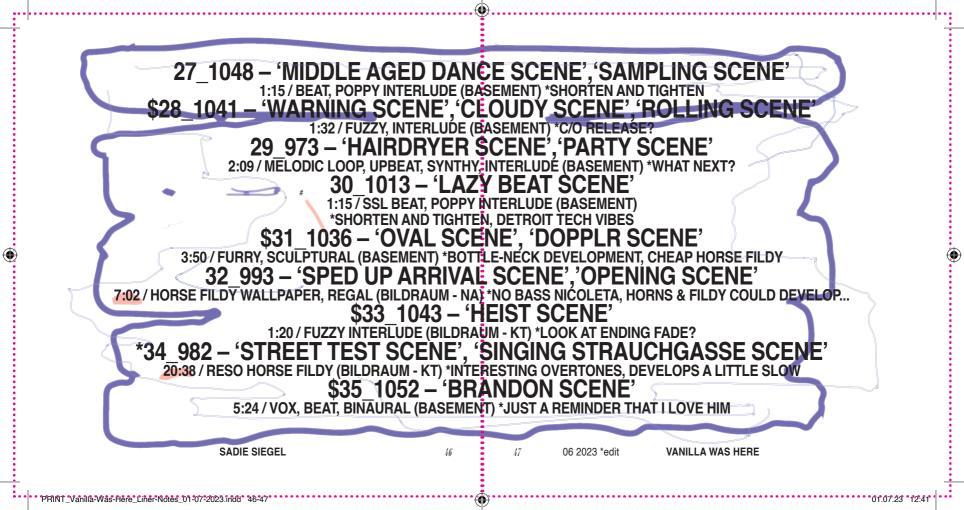
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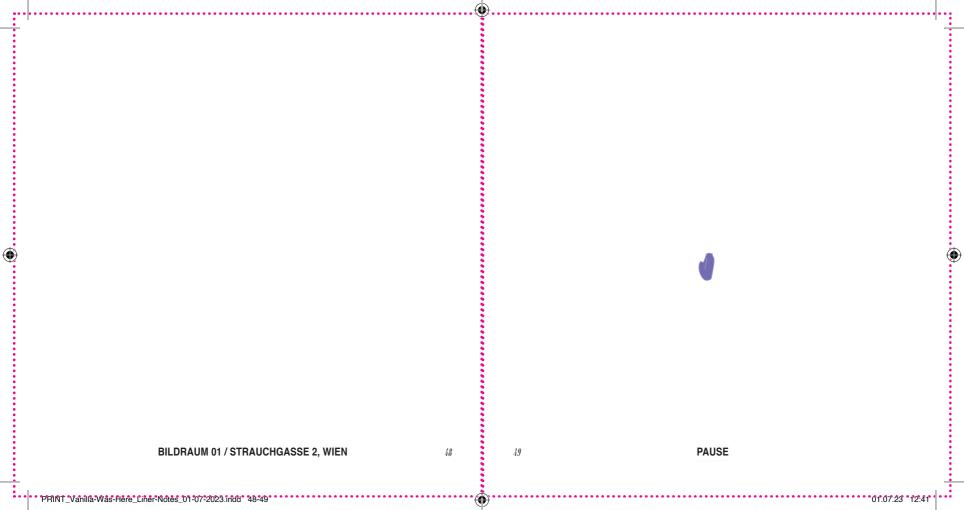
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SOME EXTERIOR IMAGES OF VANILLA W AI

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SOME INTERIOR IMAGES OF VANILLA W AI

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THANKS SIRA! **THANKS CAROLA!** THANKS CLAUS! THANKS PORKCHOP! **THANKS MULTI! THANKS HUGGY! THANKS BUNZ & WAMZ!** THANKS GPA ALBY! **THANKS BERNIE!** THANKS PAUL! THANKS LD! THANKS ALRESCO! THANKS BUTTERCUP! THANKS TUGS! THANKS RHONDA! THANKS RAFI! THANKS GUI! **THANKS SAIFALI!** THANKS SIMONE! THANKS ANTOINE! THANKS ANNA! THANKS LARRY! **THANKS CELESTE!** THANKS BILDRAUM! THANKS VIENNA? **THANKS PAPER BAGS!**

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VANILLA WAS HERE SETH WEINER & SADIE SIEGEL 6. JULY 2023 - 25. AUGUST 2023

CURATED BY SIRA-ZOÉ SCHMID

BILDRAUM 01 STRAUCHGASSE 2, 1010 WIEN

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