

## **BitterWeber: LIVE LIKE THIS!**

**Duration:** October 1 – November 18, 2005

**Location:** CAMERA AUSTRIA, Kunsthhaus Graz

### **"LIVE LIKE THIS!"**

traces Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber's long-term engagement with the processes restructuring the city into this uneven landscape of neoliberal spaces, national spaces, and self-organized communities. Launched from multiple geographic scales, these processes are not new but have followed a jagged path toward market discipline and the shift to the city as a monochromatic site of consumptive practices and real-estate opportunities flanked by austerity programs and social exclusion for the under-consumers. This shift, incomplete and in process as it is, has been built on a long process of erosions, exclusions, dispossessions, and reconfigurings of the urban landscape that has gone hand in hand with the global neoliberalizing of production sites, the emergence of the new non-places (such as Free Trade Zones and Guantánamo-type gulags) and a general ideology of the privatization of public goods set in opposition to forms of collectivity. While not uniform in its impact on cities, the urbanization of neoliberalism has made cities the "geographic targets and institutional laboratories" of neoliberalization.

This creative destruction of cities, and the creative resistances it produces, are represented both coolly and analytically in Bitter and Weber's works, mediated through the rationalizing optics and perspectives of architecture and photography and artistic practices more broadly. But it is more accurate and acute to say that the projects in "LIVE LIKE THIS!" represent the sites where the global project of neoliberalism hits localized and nationalized contexts and is either absorbed into the culturally and place-specific contexts of Europe, North America, and South America or is met with forms of living, organizing, and dwelling that reject or confound the market-driven policies and atomizing effects of the neoliberalization of urban space.

A touchstone in Bitter and Weber's investigation has been the transformation of modernist spaces and the widening disjuncture between the beleaguered promises of modernity and the lived effects of neoliberalism. But this transformation is not the replacement of one failed social utopia with a more exclusive economic utopia, rather it traces the transformation of the nature of social promises over the last half century. And the much-criticized history of modernism, particularly of modernist architecture and urban planning, provides a condensed studio for revisiting the modernity debates and understanding the kinds of losses and victories that have seeped into the groundwater of globalization.

*Excerpt of the essay "Making And Breaking Neoliberal Spaces" by Jeff Derksen and Neil Smith, published in **BitterWeber, LIVE LIKE THIS!, Edition Camera Austria, Graz 2005***