

Vadim Fishkin at FRANZ JOSEFS KAI 3

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Critics' Picks



Vadim Fishkin, *Choose Your Day*, 2005, armchair, buttons, reflectors, data projector, video player, audio, ventilator, hair dryer. Dimensions variable. Installation view. Photo: Simon Veres.

Vienna

Vadim Fishkin

FRANZ JOSEFS KAI 3

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“The Island of the Day Before” is the first survey in Austria of Vadim Fishkin, the artist who, for the 1996 installation *Lighthouse*, live-transmitted his vital signs to a beacon positioned on top of the Vienna Secession building, resulting in the famous cupola pulsating to the rhythm of his heart. A similar playfulness—and play with light—characterizes his current presentation, beginning with the sound installation *Dictionary of Imaginary Places*, 2020. Initially realized as an intervention in public space as part of *steirischer herbst*, the work features two streetlamps (in the version here from Vienna’s Stadtpark) that recite the names of fictional places from the eponymous book by Alberto

Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi. It's not only geography that Fishkin likes to question. *Stretched time*, 2016, a pair of clock hands mounted on springs, and *Dark times*, 2019–20, a brigade of blacked-out wall-clocks, both threaten to overturn traditional notions of timekeeping, while the installation *Choose Your Day*, 2005, allows viewers to change their surroundings with the press of a button via a simple projection of sound, light, and video. Marked by a yearning for something other than the here and now, and by a looking back at the past while already turning toward the future, Fishkin's works exist somewhere in between.

To innovate is “to re-evaluate the value of what we have always seen and known,” argues Boris Groys. There seems to be something very familiar within Fishkin's generously accessible artistic practice: a sense of anachronism tied not solely to his interest in the self-evident or low-fi, but to the everyday paradoxes, contradictions, and humor fueling his artistic inquiry. What is actual magic other than a break between cause and effect? Fishkin's poetics, which elude categorization, remain a refreshing constant amid the thicket of contemporary art trends.

— [Hana Ostan Ožbolt](#)

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