

## Chapter 05

### Afterwork at Kunsthalle Wien

Towards the end of 2022, Andrea Hubin and Michael Simku, who oversee the educational program at Kunsthalle Wien, developed an educational program titled “*What to do After Work?*”. The program “*What to do after work?*” at Kunsthalle Wien was part of the exhibition “*In the meantime, midday comes around*” and created a space for the public to think together about the role of work in everyday life and what might come after it.

This exhibition, curated by What, How & for Whom / WHW (Ivet Ćurlin, Nataša Ilić and Sabina Sabolović), focused on the question of “How did it come about that we don’t work to live but rather live to work, and that we can scarcely imagine other forms of living?” (WHW 2023) It presented works that look “at the changes to the field of work in the last decades, made more visible by the Covid-19 pandemic [while considering] the modalities of collective action and political imagination such global events carry to affect work” (Ibid.), while the educational program would end up bringing a clear focus on post-work and questions centered around what a post-work society could look like. Held every two weeks, the series invited people to reflect on how work shapes society and to imagine what a future with less work (or even without it) could look like. The artist Ana de Almeida created the LARP titled Afterwork as a contribution to this program.

The first iteration of Afterwork took place in March and April 2023 under the form of an online LARP and a workshop following later on. Altogether nine participants took part by responding to an open call launched by the Kunsthalle Wien. They were primarily from Vienna and with backgrounds in art, literature, and curation, reflecting a community already engaged with cultural discourse. Each participant engaged in five consecutive chat sessions, during one hour each and Ana de Almeida played the role of the chatbot ELIZZA 2.0 The participants could decide to join already in character or to develop a character only later on in the process of writing. The goal of the game was for each player to write a first person narrative in the context of a post-work scenario, using ELIZZA 2.0 as an automated writing assistant.

The narratives generated through these sessions spanned multiple temporal and spatial contexts, from near-future societies to distant planetary settings. Some focused on macroeconomic transformations, others on shifts in kinship and gender relations. While most stories unfold in times located in the future, a notable contribution evolved around a character living in a post-industrial region of the Czech Republic which could be situated at present times.

The story explored the idea of contemporary post-work societies existing in the form of “post-work bubbles” shaped by structural unemployment. While not all stories explicitly dealt with automation or AI, the collective reflection that emerged offered rich insights into how people imagine and negotiate futures beyond work.

The following workshop with Ana de Almeida and the LARP participants took place on April 15, 2023. It unfolded over the course of a full day, structured to guide participants from introduction and orientation toward collective storytelling and imaginative speculation. The workshop began with a short welcome by artist and facilitator Ana de Almeida, who set the tone for the day by

outlining the aims and methods of the session. This was followed by a brief presentation by Andrea Hubin and Michael Simku from Kunsthalle Wien, who introduced the *What to do after work?* educational program and situated the workshop within the broader context of the institution's public engagement strategy.

Once the framework was established, participants were invited to introduce themselves and the fictional characters they would inhabit throughout the session. This playful yet structured exercise created a shared imaginative space in which participants could share the narratives they developed individually with ELIZZA 2.0 and explore post-work scenarios from different perspectives. A short reading session followed, giving everyone a moment to settle in while engaging with the textual materials produced by other players. Afterwards, working with scenario cards, the group examined selected bibliographic sources (ranging from historical studies of unemployment to speculative fiction and critical theory) to spark discussion and develop shared reference points.

Participants then split into smaller groups for focused work, returning to a forum-style discussion to exchange insights and emerging ideas. In the final stages, participants collaborated on story plots, weaving together the characters, scenarios, and ideas generated throughout the day into coherent narratives. The session closed with a brief wrap-up, reflecting on the day's imaginative work and the insights it generated.

## References

What, How & for Whom / WHW (Ivet Ćurlin, Nataša Ilić and Sabina Sabolović). "In the meantime, midday comes around." *Kunsthalle Wien*, 2023. Accessed October 3, 2025.  
<https://kunsthallewien.at/en/exhibition/in-the-meantime-midday-comes-around/>