FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Viennese Types: Photographs c. 1910
Edward Rosser
Emil Mayer, photographer
Blind River Editions
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Frozen in the noiseless still of time, the photographs of Dr. Emil Mayer find their tongues in the softened cobblestone of Viennese streets and the faded eyes of market goers to articulate the modest opulence of their humanity. Viennese Types easily transcends its demure cover and the fabric of its slender spine, and swells with the emotions of those who read the whispers of history, nostalgia and art.

These are the nearly forgotten, surviving works of Mayer, a lawyer and Viennese photographer, who secured much of his fame for his technical contribution to the art of photography by successfully mastering the photographic "bromoil process." He himself called it "the most perfect, flexible and noble photographic art process," one which granted him the ability to achieve the haunting, ethereal quality that so richly characterizes his prints. This intricate process, described in the book's introductory essay written by Edward Rosser, allowed Mayer to manipulate the grain appearance, shading and basic expression of his images. In this collection of candid street scenes, he captures the contented air of turn of the century Vienna-of watchful policemen, stout market proprietors and afternoons lost to newspapers, cigarettes and cafes. In the plumes which ornately billow above a woman's hat, a suitor's desires and emotions are seen mirrored in imagery, as is the diligence of a chestnut vendor poised before a gauzy tree-lined street, pausing to return our gaze.

The obscurity of Mayer's prints and himself as an artist are attributed to the hostile acts of the Nazi regime, as his life as a Jew and his art both fell in the shadow of its criminal oppression. Viennese Types, photographed as Mayer neared age forty, is one of only two surviving portfolios of Mayer's work and

has at last met an audience as a published work of art. The foreword by Rudolf Arnheim and introduction by Rosser are remarkably unintrusive upon the body of work, successful in acclimatizing expectant eyes to the murky streetscapes and training ears to the resonant muted bustle of the city.

Sophisticated in its production value, the book boasts the design of Carl Zahn and over fifty photographic reproductions perfected by the Italian printer Stamperia Valdonega. With the greatness of artistic vision matched by the superbness of its presentation, Viennese Types emerges as much a product of its history, as it is a record of it. Images overflow with the warmth of people, exuding from the grains of their guileless postures - people unaware of the harshness of the coming years, as was the photographer who unwittingly underscored the frailty of humanity from behind an unblinking lens.

Karen Wyckoff