



International Photo Exhibition



**Rainbow
Cities
Network**



International Photo Exhibition

Dear Reader,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the 7th edition of the International Photo Exhibition organized by the Rainbow Cities Network. The network has a presence on four continents, the Americas (North and South), Asia, and Europe. With 42 cities around the world, a great number of perspectives are represented with a common view of social justice for the LGBTIQ communities. The network aims to discuss local approaches in equality and anti-discrimination work for LGBTIQ persons, to learn from each other, and to develop joint strategies to effectively stop discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer people, and to promote the equal participation of LGBTIQ persons in all areas of society.

We live in turbulent times. Immersed in what is happening around us, we often do not notice major shifts we are part of, even when we substantially contribute to them. This year's exposition **Queer Refugees** is about recognition and the long struggle of a group of people to be acknowledged and included as equal members of diverse societies wherever they are around the world. Not all, but many of those societies have promised equal rights, opportunities, and chances to make something of their lives to thrive and rise, including the opportunity to give back to the communities they are part of.

This group's struggle has reached places where we spend a lot of time and that are not only essential to existence, but also to purpose, creativity, and productivity: workplaces, families, and economies.



The board
Rainbow Cities Network

This is not to say the world has become a better place for Queer Refugees. It has not. For diverse reasons like power, legal, religious, and cultural, often rooted historically in many parts of the world – including liberal western societies – still do not recognize them and their struggle for recognition and respect. The struggle is not over yet.

However, the next images portray part of this promise of recognition and inclusion fulfilled. The city members of Rainbow Cities Network are taking the lead in including Queer Refugees in the activities they pursue.

We warmly welcome you and hope you enjoy it!



International Photo Exhibition

The RCN exhibition “Queer Refugees”

The topic of this year’s RCN photo exhibition is “Queer Refugees”, which calls up a variety of associations in our heads. Different countries have different approaches to the topic of refugees. Some countries are known as places that refugees typically flee from, other countries are primarily known as places that give refugees a new home. There are also many countries that have been known for both in the course of their eventful history.

As much as a peaceful world for all people is and will always be our goal, it currently seems like a goal that is far out of reach. Disasters, wars, social inequalities and regimes of injustice force people around the globe to leave their homes and start a new life in another country, often even on another continent.

This affects LGBTIQ people just as much as heterosexual people. However, LGBTIQ people often have even more reason to flee their homelands because homosexuality is criminalized, sometimes even punishable by death, in many countries.

The asylum system does not, or not adequately, consider the needs of queer refugees. Asylum centers often do not offer protection from violence, persecution, homophobia, transphobia, or interphobia. Therefore, many refugees keep their true gender identity or sexual orientation hidden for their own protection.

Many cities have recognized the special requirements that are needed to enable queer refugees to settle down adequate-

ly in their new homelands. They support LGBTIQ organizations and groups of volunteers. In addition to support and counselling, they mainly provide respect, friendship and a bit of home.

In safe spaces, in relaxed and friendly atmospheres, queer refugees can escape their multiple discriminations for a moment and share common experiences with other queer refugees. Cooking and celebrating together are great opportunities of socializing with locals, who can learn about the realities and challenges of migratory journeys. They learn that queer refugees are individuals and often violence survivors, human beings with stories, lived experiences, broken hearts – and often even broken bodies.

Some queer refugees are ready to show themselves in this exhibition. We are grateful that they are so brave because they prove to us that migration and the topic of refugees is not about populism, headlines, or anonymous statistics but about individual stories, about lives, and ultimately, about people. At the same time, we respect the wish of others, who do not want to appear in front of the camera, as the fear of having to expose themselves to further discrimination through visibility is still too big.

This exhibition shows that as a community we are global and use the power of love to enable everybody to live their life without discrimination, stigma, prejudice or sanction, but accepted in freedom and together with friends – as a global community we do take care!



Photo: Georg Wilke

Wolfgang Wilhelm, Vienna
Curator of the exhibition



Here we are by Thomas Sanson

Erykah Gasaida Werner is a Rwandan Canadian Decolonial Black Queer Feminist Advocate, and was once a refugee (Bordeaux, France).

“Queer refugees are not a monolith. We are individuals with stories, lived experiences, broken hearts and often broken bodies. We ARE queers and we are also refugees/newcomers/permanent residents/citizens/city dwellers/ancestors. We are scientists, artists, athletes, skilled workers, teachers, students, money makers, taxpayers.

Invisible is where we thrive, it is also where we break free.

We build bridges in the gaps, we connect, we intersect, we redefine, we reinvent, we rebuild. Yet **HERE WE ARE!**”



Love knows no boundaries

by Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights (TAPCPR)

Same-sex marriage law in Taiwan does not allow its citizens to marry to their partner from the country where gay marriage is not legalized. This situation makes transnational same-sex couples as refugees. Without legal recognition, they have been forced to be separated for months, even years, especially when the COVID-19 pandemic strikes.

TAPCPR, the committee member of Taipei Gender Equality Commission, has been working hard on this issue. They won at least four lawsuits over transnational same-sex marriage. After initial success by TAPCPR, Taipei City Government accepted the results instead of filing appeals. However, many couples still fight for their rights to meet, to love, and to live together on this island till the law is amended.



Ibrahim

by Danny Frede

I am Ibrahim: gay activist and violence survivor from Lebanon. My personal experience to flee my home country because of my sexual orientation and to seek asylum in Germany motivated me

to advocate for LGBT refugees. My gay activism has resulted in remarkable achievements: we established the first Safe Housing project for LGBT refugees with the City of Cologne as well as “SOFRA – Queer Migrants e.V”, the first LGBT organisation in our state that is run by LGBT refugees and migrants.



Swiss residents welcome!

by www.asile-lgbt.ch

© Bettina Jocot-Descombes

With the funding of the City of Geneva, the organisation “Asile LGBTIQ+” provides support and safe space for queer refugees, training and good practices for professionals working in the asylum field and public sensitization. This picture was taken during the last “Mig’s Bar”, a monthly event when staff and members of the organisation cook together and welcome the public to share their diner. In a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, visitors can learn from their hosts the realities and challenges of migratory journeys, while refugees can connect and socialize with the locals.



Support

by Michael Wallmueller

The City of Hanover has recognized the special requirements that are needed to enable queer refugees to settle down adequately in their new homeland. For this reason, since 2016 there has been a counseling service specifically for LGBTIQ* people, which focuses on the special protection rights of those seeking advice.

Based on this conviction, we respect the wish of this client group not wanting to appear in front of the camera themselves. For many, the

fear of having to expose themselves to further discrimination through visibility is still too great.

Matthias Zyzik represents the people he works with who seek advice and gives them a face for the exhibition. He is a social worker and runs the counseling service for queer refugees people. It is important to Matthias that his city can be a place where everyone can live their unique identity and have a desirable future for them.



„Queer refugees at Frankfurt Pride“ by Mara Monetti for Stadt Frankfurt/AmkA

In Frankfurt, a large group of volunteers supports queer refugees. The „Rainbow Refugee Support“ includes, among other things, asylum procedure counselling, initial clarification of questions regarding residence law, labour law, social law and economic matters and initial assessment of psychosocial and medical needs.

In Frankfurt there has been a safe house for queer refugees since the beginning of 2017. Chosen by the residents themselves, the Safe House has been called „La Villa“. A group of queer refugees took part in the pride parade in Frankfurt in 2021.



Proud of my journey by Tengbeh Kamara

For the exhibition 'TLOTS' at Natuurhistorisch Museum in Rotterdam, this colourful and expressive photograph was taken of drag queen Licka Lolly by Tengbeh Kamara in collaboration with Rotterdam Pride. Licka Lolly is one of the Rotterdam Pride ambassadors for LGBTIQ+ refugees and migrants. The aim of the portraits is to show the diversity of Rotterdam's LGBTIQ+ community, which is enhanced by the unique floral installations provided by Sophie Engels.



„As a community we are global“

by Daniel Massow

As a community we are global: Our strength lies in togetherness, our persistence in overcoming and our power in love.



Bulelani ProudAF

by Vanessa
Ifediora

© Gay Project CLG

Bulelani is an asylum rights activist and law student. He is proud to be a Black, Gay African man. He lives in a Direct Provision centre. Direct provision is the name used to describe accommodation, food, money, and medical services you get while your international protection application is being assessed as an asylum seeker in Ireland. Bulelani wants to be free to live his life, without discrimination, stigma, prejudice, or sanction.



Cooking Love

by © City of Mannheim, Sören Landmann

New friendships are made especially well when cooking and eating together. At the regular cooking event “Cooking Love” by the queer non-profit association PLUS e.V. and supported by the City of Mannheim, LGBTIQ refugees come together with

other people from Mannheim’s urban society to share culinary specialties from different countries of origin and get to know each other better. A good opportunity to break down prejudices, discover commonalities and simply have a good time together.



Paris is proud of its actions with LGBT migrant NGOs

by Elisa Chauveau, Communication Department of the City of Paris

This photo was taken during the 2022 Paris Pride Parade: On the right side, we can see the bus of the City of Paris with the message “Paris is proud”, which is the slogan for the Paris Queer/LGBT Campaign of communication. On the left side, we see the march of the association ARDHIS. This organisation is the main actor working with Queer/LGBT migrants in Paris.

A strong collaboration between the City of Paris and the ARDHIS has made possible the creation of a place dedicated to Queer/LGBT migrants, in the heart of Paris. Its opening is planned for the end of 2022.



A Haven for Angels

by Yanrong Lu

Mayumi was born in the Philippines, now working at an electronics factory in New Taipei City (NTPC). She's open to share her trans identity. In Sep 2022, she attended the 2nd Miss Gay Queen Universe in Taiwan, held by The Biggest Show, the Triskelion International, and the Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association. She also visited the first "all-gender" public restroom in NTPC.

Foreign workers in Taiwan, especially queers with intersectional identities, can be at higher risks of labor inequality and irregularities. To help Mayumi and the city's 90k foreign workers establish healthy and safe lives, NTPC keeps providing legal consultation services and support for the LGBTQ+ community.



Chat and advice at the Welcome Café Zurich by Queeramnesty / Thomas Vinzenz

HAZ Queer Zurich has been organizing the Welcome Café for Queer Refugees in collaboration with Queeramnesty Switzerland since November 2015. Once a month, LGBT asylum seekers and refugees, migrants and locals meet here in a safe space over

coffee and cake. The asylum seekers who come here live dispersed all over Switzerland. Most of them usually keep their true gender identity or sexual orientation hidden for their own protection.



Safe Space for queer refugees in Bern

by Danielle Liniger, www.danielleliniger.com

Rey (she/her), age 34, is a journalist and human rights activist from the Philippines and has lived in Switzerland for two years. Anton Boginya (she/her), age 34, a Russian trans artist, LGBTQ+ performer, art/creative director and stylist, has only been in

Switzerland for a short time. The two met at the monthly meeting place for LGBTQ+ migrants Safe Space in Bern, a place where they can escape their multiple discrimination for a moment and share common experiences with other queer refugees.



Starting from scratch

by Nele Prinz

In most parts of the world being gay means being in danger. Although many LGBT people have careers and good livelihoods, they are constantly afraid of being beaten up, arrested, or even killed. They give up everything just to be free: Being a refugee means starting from scratch again. Being strangers, most want to become full part of the society.

A country that welcomes people with open arms and supports them will be rewarded by grateful citizens who contribute their share to a colourful society.



Queer activist & performer Rzouga Selmi

by Alexander Kästel

Rzouga Selmi is a queer activist & performer. They were born & raised in Tunisia, now living in Heidelberg, Germany. For years now, they have been working for the bettering of the lives of lgbtiq+ people in both countries & they do so on many levels – locally,

nationally & globally. Their activist work is manifold & crosses boundaries of politics, arts & pop culture. While working on projects, for example, with DAMJ, UNESCO or Arabic BBC News, there is always time for their local community.



International Photo Exhibition

References

No. 1, Bordeaux

“Here we are” by Thomas Sanson

No. 2, Taipei

“Love knows no boundaries” by Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights (TAPCPR)

No. 3, Cologne

“Ibrahim”, by Danny Frede

No. 4, Geneva

“Swiss residents welcome!” by www.asile-lgbt.ch
© Bettina Jocot-Descombes

No. 5, Hanover

“Support” by Michael Wallmueller

No. 6, Frankfurt am Main

„Queer refugees at Frankfurt Pride“ by Mara Monetti for Stadt Frankfurt/AmkA

No. 7, Rotterdam

“Proud of my journey” by Tengbeh Kamara

No. 8, Vienna

„As a community we are global“ by Daniel Massow

No. 9, Cork

“Bulelani ProudAF” by Vanessa Ifediora
© Gay Project CLG

No. 10, Mannheim

“Cooking Love” by © City of Mannheim, Sören Landmann

No. 11, Paris

“Paris is proud of its actions with LGBT migrant NGOs” by Elisa Chauveau, Communication Department of the City of Paris

No. 12, New Taipei City

“A Haven for Angels” by Yanrong Lu

No. 13, Zurich

“Chat and advice at the Welcome Café Zurich” by Queeramnesty / Thomas Vinzenz

No. 14, Bern

“Safe Space for queer refugees in Bern” by Danielle Liniger

No. 15, Wiesbaden

“Starting from scratch” by Nele Prinz

No. 16, Heidelberg

“Queer activist & performer Rzouga Selmi” by Alexander Kästel

Graphic design: Christian Högl, Vienna (www.creativbox.at)