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Accessing Utopia





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The First Three Steps

Accessing utopia presents empirical material from *Bathutäs* on-going collaborative artistic research project. This particular project is based on interviews with young Swedish activists with minority background, mainly from suburbs in two main cities in Sweden; Stockholm and Gothenburg. Using artistic research methodology the project attempts to bring forward a form of political narrativity within hyperpoliticized social environments, articulated here through the young people's own understanding of their activism, and hence their political subjectivity.

By bringing forward the young activists narrations about and from contemporary Sweden and its current political complexity, the project also works with the notion of the politics of listening as a method of engagement in relation to the viewers. Through a dialogical approach in the format of a polyphonic multi-channel video installation, *Accessing Utopia* addresses questions of accessibility, institutional involvement and societal knowledge production, arguing for the necessity of critical perspectives on the power structures of knowledge production in society. It attempts to combine a visibilisation – i.e. the visual production of silences, listening and articulations – of the politics of identifications of the group through the notion of art and the materiality of it.

First step

The party

Imagine a party. A typical, simple, friendly and informal party, like a birthday party, yet there is no signs of a birthday's attributes; it is just an excuse to invite friends who don't have any direct relationship to one another. You know the host, but none of the other guests. You are the new arrival. Holding a beer and trying to communicate with the others, you say who you are, what you are doing there and talk about your interests and knowledge. Nobody asks the very obvious question: where are you from? Perhaps this crucial question is postponed because of their appreciation of a person's individuality and identification regardless of his or her geopolitical context. But there is no possibility of ignoring or escaping the question: "Where are you from, by the way?"

Let's imagine that the response is Iran or Syria, or Palestine, Somalia, Chile after the 1973 coup d'état, one of the Balkan countries during the war in the 90s, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.

Five seconds of silence.

From personal experience, in this situation there is almost always, without fail, a five second silence. Lets call it 'active silence'. Your new acquaintance looks at you directly and in their dreamy eyes you can see REM (rapid eye movement). You can sense the activity in their brain, reviewing archives and memories and trying to match the phenomenon in front of them.

Usually, over the next few hours you must answer very specific questions about sweeping political agendas from deep in the past to the present. You must carefully position yourself with regard to any conflict or political issue on a macro level, from

west to east, and through this positioning purify yourself in the new political context. There is no escape from not being political according to the agreed-upon conventions.

We would like to call this an experience of Hyper-Politics.

The hyper-politics is taking place where any action or motion is immediately associated with either side of a previous or current political conflicts.

The notion of hyper-politics hence connects geo-political global discourses with the making of differences in everyday life. Hyper-politics is a part of the making of geo-political identities negotiated through a social and political coercive positioning, presenting itself as a norm in the everyday life: you have to tell the truth about yourself, you have to be clear, you have to position yourself within dichotomized order. From this perspective, Macro-politics are crucial to the construction of individual agencies. It is a process that can go beyond generations from first generation of immigrants to the post-migrant generations, from stigmatized countries in conflict or political crisis to stigmatized suburbs in Europe with a majority population originating from places narrated as dystopias.

Second step ***Purification***

As a country, Sweden evokes many positive associations worldwide, such as: prosperity and equality, health and wellbeing, the Nobel Prize and a picturesque nature. For many migrants, Sweden is a goal that is associated with the possibility of a better life, a secure life. For refugees Sweden is conceptually intertwined with the idea of escaping dystopia: finding a place where the experience of freedom, progress, equality and other such utopian ideals exist or, at least, seem possible. The essence of their migration is finding such a place; a place whose historical narration has a direct link to 'other places' in our collective fantasies and imaginations.

But their children often find that the utopia their parents sought is closed to them. They live in the middle of it, but on the margin. Their experience of Sweden does not correspond to the image of Sweden that dominates globally. Their situation resembles the faith of the guest in the guest bedroom in the mansions of Brazil and South America. A bedroom that is completely separate from the home where the host family lives. The guest is here seen as a traveller and never really invited in. In other world they live in what can be describe as Heterotopia, a place of otherness. Foucault, in his article *Of other spaces* (1967), describes places and spaces that function in non-hegemonic conditions. These are liminal spaces of *otherness*, that are simultaneously physical and mental, are not easily accessible.

This heterotopic 'place' brings about a paradox of character and expression for the guest. This type of expression is noticeable in art. The guest sees his existence upon the first phase of

entering heterotopia as *purification*. This is connected, with emphasis, with processes of disclosure, extension, exaggeration and criticism of the dystopia of their origin. They have to produce images of the less than fortunate places and identities they have left behind, which, when viewed by the native inhabitants of “utopian” land, heightens their sense of superiority. And, in fact, it creates a pornographical representation (Zolghadr 2006) in order to feed a falsification of social preeminence.

They – the poor non-white newcomers – in some way try to blend in with the heterotopia that they have entered and at the same time insist on suppressing an exaggerated critical point of view of their overt differences and ever increasing distancing from their point of origin (dystopia). At the same time, however, they are aiding to the mystification behind what is created as *real utopia* by renouncing to denounce its heterotopic nature; this condemns them to a perpetual answering to coercive questions, answers that are the needed, ever lasting performance that their new social/political agencies demands: Who are these ‘others’? Who is more ‘other’ than others? Who is the better “other” in the realm of utopia?

We here claim that purification is performed through certain mores. There are connections between how nationstates practice the notion of purification built on the bureaucratic systems and regimes of representation. The systems which divide certain people in a certain times and spaces, giving permission to some and denying the others, politically otherizing and victimizing them, while at the same time practicing *hospitality* (Derrida 2000) in order to defend a moral social position. How are we as artists following the unconscious regime of aesthetic based on the

purification apparatus?

Purification, pragmatically, suggests a tangible form of relationship in the regime of representation:

1: Simple art, with simple messages for easy understanding, tangible and affirmative narration; artworks that express overt contrast such as images in black or white, and good versus evil. Mostly, this type of imagery presents itself as “political art” and is somewhat critically following the expected and historical accepted narration in relation to utopia/dystopia order. It is an affirmative act with an unconscious hypo-tautology of pornographical narration.

2: It must use of symbols or signs that classical Western culture recognizes as having roots in “other cultures”, for instance the Orient or Middle East, well-received representation of poverty in Africa, Latin American history of valiance and “carnavalesco” sexualities, etc. in short the habitués of the so-called historical representations of the others from western point of views.

3: The use of authenticity making tropes, such as exotic lettering and calligraphy for illustrations. This is not a basic necessity, yet it increases sales and gives an exotic value to political claims.

4: Materials, illustrations and even narration must be of the highest quality. Photographs must show details. The narrative must be distinct and professional. In fact, the quality of the art should be hyper-realistically lyrical/political in order to alleviate the weakness resulting from the shortcomings of its content and narrative. In other words, the art must be beautiful; or simply *good art*. However, the notion of good art could be modified following the gravity of the aesthetic field. It could transform from hyperrealism to minimal art or even abstraction, but the content

should affirmatively follow the expected and accepted narration in relation to dystopia/utopia.

5: Exaggeration should stem from necessity; exaggeration in the portrayal of poverty, beauty, political strife.

In other words, your audience has neither the time and energy, nor the boundless curiosity, to go further than the existing narrative and explore new realms. You are making art for a lazy audience.

In this type of narrative art, the artwork attempts to document an informative (pseudo-academic) literature. Or, in other words, what we understand should be visualised in the simplest form possible. The various levels of art should basically simplify an idea or concept, or perhaps methodological complexity, in relation to artistic research.

In this reading, purification plays a double role in relation to the audiences'. On the one hand, the artist presents his/her pornographical narration to be accepted by majority eye, and on the other hand "clean" native inhabitants of utopia purify themselves by looking at the dystopian narration in order to feel solidarity. In some such way, by looking at the chaotic representation in the name of political art, of course with the best intentions, they experience a paradoxical physiological relationship between feelings of superiority while simultaneously engaging socially for something "morally right".

What would one do, when one is not accepted by the utopia? And doesn't have the capacity or enough cultural capital to purify from the wild characteristics of a dystopian and stigmatized land? Surrender to shame and depression? Anger? Or rage?

Third Step

You Gotta Say Yes to another Access

A new social justice movement has emerged among young activists from Sweden's disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods and from minorities (Léon Rosales & Ålund 2017). It brings into focus a post-migrant youths claims for social justice, as citizens and as a response to economic and ethnic segregation in society. Many of the central actors within this movement are young people from some of the most socio-economically disadvantaged metropolitan neighbourhoods of Sweden. They live in often stigmatized neighbourhoods affected by welfare cuts, high levels of unemployment and poverty, areas with a majority of residents from so called 'visible minorities'; that is to say migrants and post-migrants with backgrounds in Asian, African and Latin American countries (Socialstyrelsen 2010). This embodies a development of racialized urban geographies that deeply affect how different neighbourhoods are perceived, as well as how identities are formed within these segregated landscapes, not least among children and young people (Lundström 2007; León Rosales 2010). In other words; the young activists interviewed in *Accessing Utopia* live in racialised urban geographies, a central part of the narratives on the "suburb" [förorter] in Sweden today.

The young people interviewed in *Accessing Utopias* are all deeply involved in groups that are organizing and raising awareness on societal issues among youth, to counteract cultural stigmatization and the politically orchestrated dismantling of welfare services. Their organizations have successfully managed to win struggles like putting pressure on local authorities for the opening of youth centres in vulnerable areas and organizing a

opposition to the privatization of public housing. They have also upheld a constant struggle against the stigmatization of their neighbourhoods and groups.

Activists in these organizations are for the most children of migrants. Through their experiences, reflections and analyses they express a political subjectivity connected to a will to deconstruct and transcend a subordinated position as racialized “migrants” in Swedish society. This political subjectivity is also formed by the experiences and hybrid identity processes connected to the ‘new ethnicities’ that develop in marginalized multi-ethnic urban areas (Hall 1992). Our critical theoretical understanding of *political subjectivity* is here informed by the work of Michel Foucault and later research inspired by Foucault. We see individual subjectivities, and thereby political agency, as contingent on historical and societal power-relationships. Foucault (1983) sees power as a relational force that “circulates” through social interactions, which helps us to understand the *productive* aspects of relations of power, i.e. the *production* of individuals and groups as political subjects, through complex and contingent relations of dominance and resistance. As Foucault explains: ‘There are two meanings of the word “subject”: subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to’ (Foucault 1983: 212).

This duality opens up the options to analyse identification and dis-identification as well as submission and resistance, in complex interlinked relations within the same processes of subjectification (Butler 1993: 219). Hence, by exploring the subject positions articulated by the young activists in *Accessing Utopia*,

this project also explore how they try to do just that, access utopia. We see the articulations of their political subjectivities as indications of greater national and global discursive and material struggles, by which they are creating themselves as subject through an activism that ultimately is an indication that for them another more just world is possible.

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We sit down; we put words to our reality, our lives. And suddenly they become visible, our lives become visible. Suddenly one can speak about things that prior to that one could not speak of. So that's one part. Not so strange then that the first thing, one of the first associations created from such an organisation or group is an association that puts words to experiences, to one's own reality.

—Lewend Tasin







You know, when the experience of being a refugee is inherited from generation to generation, in some way you lose a basis for your identity, something that raises a lot of questions. Me and my parents we share experiences of being refugees, but the difference is that they are born and raised in a country where they looked like the majority.

—Sabrin Maysa Jaja

Then we have, of course, the issue of how we are going to get more young people to find their form of organization and to be able in some way to channel their energy in a positive way. I believe this will be a big challenge ahead of us. So we have a lot of great challenges indeed. The low school results in our suburbs are a very big challenge. Child poverty as a result of parents' unemployment and low school results in our suburbs. There is also a very big challenge.

—Rashid Musa





Today, in this decade, it's about pushing back fascism, more than anything. We've seen how right wing extremism, how everyday racism, and how that connection makes the situation worse for non-whites in Sweden. This is the issue above all today. But also to make the connection of how we have an increasingly racialized working class. How migrants are treated, and so on.

—Araia Ghirmai Sebhatu



I remember that our Gender study courses in high school were really, really Eurocentric. We were supposed to talk about gender equality, and they showed the movie “Not without my daughter” in my school.

—Behrang Miri











Ailin Noval Mirlashari

SAMUEL GIRMA

James Baldwin once said:
“To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time.”

And that is exactly how I feel. In rage against what I see as a threat against justice. My activism and struggle against all kinds of oppression is partly a result of my life as Black Queer man in Sweden. I do not seek to educate white people regarding the matters of racism. I seek not to educate people regarding homo- and transphobia. My activism is firstly done by the fact that I live my life as I want. But in doing so in a white dominated society I face challenges, at times that dangers my life and many others. I can honestly say what I would like to change and challenge in society. I also can honestly say I sometimes do not know how. But I organize. I write. I shout. I resist. I refuse to give in to status quo. I refuse to accept shit in any forms. I am a part of a movement, a struggle that seeks noting less than a revolution, a real change. In 2016 together with a friend, we created Black Queers Sweden which is a separatist, feminist and anti-racist group and movement by and for black Afro-Swedish LGBTQ people. This Black activist movement has

existed since August 2015 with another name and Black Queers Sweden was formed in 2016 to make the movement completely independent by itself. In addition to being a support for Black LGBT people, and a safe space, the organization also criticizes the white-normativity of the wider LGBT movement and as well the heteronormative aspects of the wider anti-racist movement. We organize meetings, offer support, help and share experiences, tips and advice. And it is vital and important to our community. We stand in solidarity with people facing injustice on a daily basis. Black Queers Sweden is one of my outlets for disturbing the status quo in society. We stand in solidarity with our Muslim siblings facing an ever-growing islamophobia. We stand in solidarity with refugees seeking safety and a better life and are met by closed borders.

BLACK LIVES MATTER!

BLACK QUEER LIVES MATTER!

BLACK TRANS LIVES MATTER!

EMMA DOMINGUEZ

Should I waste away art on just being myself?

Despite my strategy, I still feel guilt and shame from the privilege that I have.

I had dreamt of being an artist since I was a kid. When I got into art school after the many trials and tribulations that life took me through, I was overwhelmed. Finally I had gotten my hands on three years worth of student loans to make art!

The first thing we had to do was exhibit an art piece – which we had submitted as a sample of our work – in an exhibition at school. I chose a series of photographs of the militarization of the socioeconomically disadvantaged suburb as the theme. But right away I felt that this was not the audience I wanted to see my photos. An audience with the

same experience of oppression would probably have recognized itself, understood and gotten its emotions stirred up. But for most of the audience, which usually visits this college of arts or is attending it, those things are not part of their every day life. And I felt like their eyes would just revel in the misery, feel pity and continue to see the suburb with their stereotyping and objectifying gaze. Instead, I chose to bring in two actors who would play plain clothes police officers, without anyone knowing, to race profile the audience based on their whiteness while they looked at the works of art about police repression in the suburb.

It felt good to be able to take control of the room in that way and actually get space to experiment and try to make art, but the longer I spend here at school, the more I think of what kind of art I should focus on.

Before I started school, a smart girl told me she hoped I would not become one of those artists who only makes art about racism just because they expect me to make art about racism. Yet I get tremendous guilt when I think that I might want to do a piece about love. Or flowers, like a friend of mine always says. Or anything that is not really political. But how

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could I? When I am finally allowed to take up space, resources, time and a student loan, should I really get to "waste it" on being myself?

The guilt I wrestle with is so big it takes up so much of my energy. After a while, I have tried to find a strategy: in white spaces, I will make art in resistance, and in other spaces I will make art for the audience I care about. Art that can hopefully heal our wounds as well as instill strength and hope.

Despite my strategy, I continue to feel guilt and shame from the privilege I have, just to be able to have the time to make art, any art, when week after week I hear about another person who has died in the suburb. News headlines about politicians who either turn a blind eye or just want to send in even more police officers. Politicians that dehumanize our existence and take the right to bring even more violence into our neighborhoods, while saying that they want to stop the violence. Who has ever heard of fire being put out with fire?

The guilt is suffocating, but I try to find peace and strength in the idea that art and all forms of culture have the power to affect change. It has the power to touch people on a personal level. That you can use theater to raise awareness

and selfawareness, music to put out a message, channel emotions, art performances to heal and fix our broken souls. I want to believe, and I will fight for the right of every young person who wants to make art to release their emotions and do what they dream about. And I believe, from the bottom of my heart, that our neighborhoods will one day heal themselves with art and culture as one of the primary tools.

Emma Dominguez

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RAMI AL-KHAMISI

With our backgrounds and experiences there were many reasons to divide us, the children of Arabs, Somalis, Kurds, Eritreans, Turks, Chileans and Iranians, grown up in the suburbs of Sweden, in the One Million Dwelling projects where millions of emotions and thoughts were buried, but where money and self-esteem was always scarce. Some of us were fed the prejudice of our parents at home. The fact that some of them had fought wars against each other in the home countries perhaps set the stage for conflict here, because now their children would have to grow up together in a new country, with a new language, and a new culture.

Many of us felt lost in being Swedish, others never seemed to fit in, but now we became the generation which taught our parents to deal with their prejudice. Their food and warmth would feed us all, or none at all. In exchange we acknowledged their struggle. The place and the conditions, in which we grew up, made invisible and at times seemed to erase our differences, in spite of problems being everywhere present. In our language, our bodies, and our hopes for the future. Some of us romanticized

the suburb and the increased prevalence of unemployment, cutting class, drugs and the crab mentality sprung from being at risk. Yes, that form of mentality that does not want anyone from the suburb to succeed. But then there were others that couldn't or didn't want to romanticize lives, bodies and neighbourhoods that grew up in a segregated city. We were forced to dare to see reality and the problems facing us, how we were looked upon, and how we looked upon each other.

The constant feeling was that it was someone else's place, dissimilar to our way of being, talking, and our appearance. We were chameleons, but here our existence seemed to come at a cost. It was said that life was better there, so some made an effort to be on time. For those of us who dared to make our way out there were varying consequences. Some gave up early on, others got even, and some adjusted. But most stayed at home. There was a price for all to pay. We became aware of who we were, our place and our worth. With time we began to put words to our experiences, the story of our bodies, and the challenges facing us. We criticized feelings of inferiority, discrimination, and made demands for equality – but

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were first belittled, then embraced, and finally accused of being the oppressive, the violent and the extreme. With time we realized we never were the self-segregated and intolerant generation. We had been tested, succeeding and failing, but there we stood, 40 nations later facing tomorrow together. Sometimes in joy, and sometimes in tears over the violence which had wracked us.

It has to be said that the feelings of despondency and powerlessness have made their presence felt through the years, but me and my peers are forced to push these destructive feelings aside, there is no other option. Passivity and fear are no option for me, for those of us who have to deal with the reality of our times. We have an obligation, to organize and fight for a better, more just society, each according to our own abilities. For the sake of our existence today, and for that of future generations.

In my activism, writing, and future profession as a lawyer, I want to share such thoughts and experiences that I myself wish I could have partaken of years ago, in my youth. As a student of law. As an organiser. To be strengthened and inspired. To acquire knowledge and tools. To push

back the social injustice which has washed over us for so long. But the report is being written now. And not a day too soon. The need to act, for resistance, is greater than ever. But also the need to dare to build something new.

NACHLA LIBRE

STOCKTOWN BLUES

Railway dreams, gloomy visions
& roots that are not rooted in your soil.
Umbilical attachments I breathe these streets.
Concrete inhalations, every station has a blurred
memory attached to it.
This is a one way trip to a center that is centered
around neoclassical, rococo & renaissance.

Delightful ambiance where different periods of
time collapse into each other
making my current surroundings a masterpiece
for the tourist's gallery.
Postcard fantasy.
Stockholm you are truly a rare Scandinavian
beauty with a twisted soul.

Seeking for my essence in the middle of nowhere?
Where can I find someone like me?
But this heavenly environment got me
mesmerized.
Daydreaming while I walk on these boulevards
holding my mental & spiritual guard up high.

Tired of this pressure of being better & stronger.
I have the obligation to speak louder.
My vocal cords are fighting the voice
of white money that echoes against restrictive
buildings.
Structures that are aligning themselves against
me, against us, against liberty.

NACHLA LIBRE

I am chained to these streets
serving a city that shows no gratitude
but demands me to be thankful.

Powerhouses shout out senseless senses about
unity
but do not make room for more than one identity.
I need to escape this Stocktown tragedy.
S-town, Stresstown move to the beat of fast
footsteps.
My way back home, crooked back; back off I am
leaving to take
the train back to my sanctuary.
My mind sings railway-wagon blues as the
tunnels guide my thoughts to the right direction.
We are transported in this public transport
archipelago were subway lines & train tracks
connect the islands.

Isolated

for we live in the cracks between segregation &
gentrification.
Between old & new/new & old but we have no say
in this do we?
Storytellers from the periphery, raising their fists
and their stories.

Stockholm do you see us?
Do you hear our voice?
or must we raise the volume?

ORGANIZATIONS



StreetGäris

Ailin Moaf is the initiator of *StreetGäris* [Street girls], a nonprofit organization and an intersectional movement for women and non-binary people that supports, teaches and inspires each other through empowerment, solidarity and community building. It aims to be a movement that strengthens democracy and works with public education in order to challenge and redistribute power in society. StreetGäris has a network on Facebook with over 8000 members.



Black Coffee

Araia Ghirmai Sebhatu is one of the founders of *Black Coffee*, an anti-racist separatist Black Africans Swedish organization, (coffee) movement and discussion forum that was founded in January 2015. Black Coffee is a "coffee-movement" meaning that the organization's members meet in groups at cafes and restaurants to have intellectual conversations on societal issues. This, something that might be seen as quite harmless, is however something that is often perceived as unusual and disruptive, while the presence of articulated black people in groups in public spaces can be perceived as a threat in a white hegemonic society. The organization has now subgroups in all major cities in Sweden, and organizes debates and other events on issues such as racism against blacks.

ORGANIZATIONS



Megafonen and rörelsejuridik

Rami Al-Khamisi is one of the co-founders of the urban justice movement *Megafonen* [The Megafone], that started in Husby, a suburb in Stockholm in 2008. The organization quickly played a prominent role in the social movements of the disadvantaged urban areas of Sweden, working with grassroots organizing, development of democracy and social advocacy. As a student of law at the University of Stockholm, Al-Khamisi contacted in 2015 lawyers working within the tradition of *Movement Lawyering* developed by lawyers working within the Civil Rights Movement in the USA. Recognizing in this tradition a possibility to combine lawyering with a work for social justice, Al-Khamisi has introduced the concept of Movement Lawyering to a Swedish audience through the report “Movement Lawyers – The path toward social change through law – on power, civil society and the need for a new breed of lawyers”.



Pantrarna and Hayat



Sabrin Maysa Jaja is the president of the organization *Pantrarna för upprustningen av förorten* [the Panthers for the Restoration of the suburb] that was founded in 2011, and a co-founder of the women's organization *Hayat* from 2014. Both organizations are based in Gothenburg. The Panthers want to counter politics and economic leading to social and economic inequality in the city, where the suburb is created as subordinated areas in relation to more affluent neighborhoods. The organization takes on to represent the suburban interests to reduce the gap and represent the interests of the inhabitants of poorer districts. Hayat is a feminist women's organization based in Gothenburg suburbs that work against Islamophobia from a post-colonial perspective.

ORGANIZATIONS



Alby är inte till salu!

Emma Dominguez is one of the founders of the campaign Alby är inte till Salu! [Alby is not for sale!]. The campaign started as a protest against the decision by that Botkyrka municipality, a municipality in the south of the greater Stockholm area, took to sell 1 300 rental units to a private operator in the municipal district of Alby. Many of the tenants felt that this was done without any dialogue and without clear information. The campaign underlined the democratic shortcomings in the way the decision had been taken, also highlighting that there were possible alternatives to the privatization of public housing. Although the campaign gathered over 6,000 signatures, it did not succeed in stopping the sale of the apartments, but it was central to put on the political agenda in Sweden a discussion about how gentrification and the sale of public housing hits hardest the already most resource-poor.



Black Queers Sweden

“We’re loud! We’re here! We’re black and we’re queer!”

Samuel Girma is one of the co-founders of Black Queers Sweden, a separatist, feminist and anti-racist group and movement by and for black Afro-Swedish LGBTQ people. This Black activist movement has existed since August 2015 with another name and Black Queers Sweden was formed in 2016 to make the movement completely independent by itself. In addition to being a support for black LGBT people, and a safe space, the organization also criticizes the white-normativity of the wider LGBT movement and as well the heteronormative aspects of the wider anti-racist movement. They organize meetings, offer support, help and share experiences, tips and advice.

ORGANIZATIONS



**Rådet av enade kreoler
and Grammofonen**

Lewend Tasin is one of the founders of the organisations *Rådet av enade kreoler* [The Council of United Creols] and *Grammofonen* [The Gramofone], grounded in the suburbs Hässelby and Vällingby, Stockholm. *Rådet av enade Kreoler*, a collective of young activists for social justice, starts from an understanding of their situation in a society that is based on postcolonial analyses, emphasizing the need to work with processes of collective empowering and conscience raising with young people in their neighborhood, in order to counter the negative effects of racialization and segregation. The same activists have also created the hip-hop collective *Grammofonen*, which specializes in creating music as a way of working and disseminating their postcolonial analysis in Swedish society.



Revolution Poetry

Nachla "Libre" Vargas Alaeb is one of the founders of *Revolutionary Poetry*, a Spoken Word Organization, movement and stage from Stockholm, Sweden, which started in 2009. The aim of the organization is to take the stories from the suburbs to the established cultural scenes. The founders of *Revolutionary Poetry* could not recognize themselves in the Poetry Slam scene, which at that time was mainly kept to restaurant environments, and they were not interested in competing either. Today the organization has grown and is part of a larger movement that makes visible and upgrades the local culture of the Swedish suburbs. *Revolutionary Poetry* organizes shows, performing arts experiments and workshops in lyric writing and performance. They work with some of Sweden's most prominent Spoken Word & hip-hop artists and they draw a big audience at their shows.

ORGANIZATIONS



RGRA **Rörelsen Gatans Röst och Ansikte**

Behrang Miri is the founder of *Rörelsen Gatans Röst och Ansikte* (RGRA), [Movement Street Voice and Face] a youth organization started in 2004 in Malmö, with inspiration from the work of hip-hop activists from the favelas of Brazil. RGRA works with activities and projects by, for and with young people who are interested in Hip Hop, media, culture, and with the aim of empowering them to influence their surroundings following the liberating pedagogy of Paulo Freire. With urban art expression as the basis for engagement RGRA wants to create a platform where more young people get the opportunity to be seen, heard and communicate their thoughts and feelings in a constructive way and in dialog with a greater public.



sveriges unga muslimer

Young Muslims in Sweden **(SUM)**

Rashid Musa is president for the organization Young Muslims in Sweden (SUM). It is an organization that brings together local associations run by and for Muslim youth across Sweden. SUM works to give boys and girls from Muslim backgrounds the possibility to get to organize and engage for social and political justice. As a natural part of Sweden, the organization promotes also its members' positive participation and involvement in society and its institutions. Through knowledge sharing and broad cooperation it also aims to fight institutional racism and inaccuracies about Muslims.

René León-Rosales, Ph. D in ethnology, works as Head of research at the Mångkulturellt centrum (www.mkcentrum.se), Botkyrka, Stockholm. His doctoral dissertation was an ethnographical study of the impact of economic and ethnic segregation, policies and masculine ideals on boy's identity formations in a multiethnic school in northern Botkyrka. Current research project deals with the emergence and politicization of youth movements from disadvantaged multiethnic neighborhoods in Sweden's urban areas.

Behzad Khosravi Noori is an artist and writer based in Stockholm and Tehran. He graduated from Tarbiat Modares University in Tehran, with a Master in Motion Picture and Master in Art in Public Realm at Konstfack University College of Art and Design. In his artistic research, he focuses on multiple identities within the discourse of European multiculturalism and hyper-politicized socio-political environments. Currently he is holding a Ph. D position at Konstfack/KTH in Stockholm.

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Bathutä is an artistic research platform that works with video, text and ideas within a tradition of critical knowledge production. For now.

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