EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE

Romagic

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A Celebration of Romani LGBTIQ+ Life



Introduction



THIS PROJECT IS DEEPLY PERSONAL TO ME. IT IS AN IMMENSE HONOUR. **OPPORTUNITY, AND PRIVILEGE** TO SHARE A SPACE WHERE OTHERS CAN EXPERIENCE THE WORLD THROUGH THE EYES, **BODY, AND MIND OF SOMEONE** WHOM SOCIETY OFTEN FEARS, HATES, SEEKS TO TORTURE, OR EVEN ERASE. AS A QUEER **ROMANI PERSON, MY OWN** PATH HAS BEEN SHAPED BY FEAR, GUILT, OPPRESSION, **BULLYING, AND VIOLENCE.** YET ALONG THIS ROAD, I HAVE ALSO LEARNED TO FORGIVE AND TO SEE BEAUTY IN WHAT IS, UNDENIABLY, A UNIQUE **EXPERIENCE, THAT IS WHY I** AM SO PROUD TO PRESENT AN INITIATIVE THAT CELEBRATES AN EXISTENCE, AND A KIND OF LOVE, THAT MANY INSIST WE SHOULD REJECT.

FOR ME, THE VERY FACT OF ROMANI LGBTIQ+ EXISTENCE IS ALREADY AN ACT OF RESISTANCE. ROMAGIC IS MAGICAL PRECISELY BECAUSE IT BRINGS US TOGETHER AS LGBTIQ+ ROMA. THE ERRC IS NOT A CULTURAL OR ARTS ORGANISATION. WE ARE A LEGAL ORGANISATION: WE USE PUBLIC LAW IN COURTROOMS TO EXPOSE HOW GOVERNMENTS DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THEIR OWN CITIZENS, PARTICULARLY ON THE BASIS OF ETHNICITY.

LGBTIQ+ ROMA ARE SO MARGINALISED, SO INVISIBLE IN THE PUBLIC IMAGINATION, THAT THE FIRST STEP MUST SIMPLY BE TO AFFIRM THAT WE EXIST.

FROM THERE, WE CAN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE STRUGGLES, IDENTIFY SYSTEMIC INJUSTICES, AND CONFRONT THESE THINGS THROUGH THE LAW.

WE BELIEVE ONLY LEGALLY BINDING DECISIONS CREATE LASTING CHANGE.

ANYTHING ELSE IS MERELY
A PROMISE, DEPENDENT ON
GOODWILL—SOFT ADVOCACY
AGAINST A HARSH REALITY.
AND TOO OFTEN, SUCH
EFFORTS FAIL.

THIS PROJECT WAS CREATED
BY ACTIVISTS, SO OUR FIRST
CONSIDERATIONS WERE
PRACTICAL, NOT STYLISTIC.
WE DID NOT ALWAYS FOLLOW
THE PRESCRIBED METHODS OF
DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY.
MANY OF THE PEOPLE
PHOTOGRAPHED OR
INTERVIEWED ARE FELLOW
ACTIVISTS.

BUT THIS IS ALSO ART, AND ART HAS A LIFE OF ITS OWN. FOR ME, HOWEVER, ART WITHOUT ACTIVISM IS ONLY DECORATION. THROUGH ART WE DISTIL THE ESSENCE OF HUMANITY. WE REVEAL THE SIMPLE TRUTH OF HUMAN LIFE AND PRESENT IT AS A CALL TO SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER IN THE MOST NATURAL AND UNIVERSAL WAY.

THE INEQUALITIES LGBTIQ+
ROMA FACE ARE NOT THE
PRODUCT OF SCARCITY; OUR
PLANET HAS ENOUGH SPACE,
RESOURCES, AND
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.
THEY STEM INSTEAD FROM
PEOPLE TAKING MORE THAN
THEIR SHARE, TO DELIBERATELY

KEEP OTHERS IN THE DARK.
PREJUDICE AND HATE,
FUELLED BY GREED AND FEAR,
DRIVE HARM WHERE HELP IS
POSSIBLE.

YET EVEN FOR THOSE PEOPLE, ROMAGIC OFFERS A CHANCE: AN INVITATION TO REFLECT, TO CHANGE BEHAVIOURS THAT ENDANGER LIVES. AT ITS HEART, THIS PROJECT CARRIES A SIMPLE MESSAGE: DO NOT HURT PEOPLE SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY MAY BE DIFFERENT FROM YOU.

THIS INITIATIVE SPEAKS TO THE WELFARE OF US ALL. IT ASKS US TO CONFRONT THE MEANING OF HUMANITY IN OUR TIME, A QUESTION THAT SHOULD BE SIMPLE, BUT FEELS IMPOSSIBLE WHEN, EVEN AS I WRITE THESE LINES, A GENOCIDE CONTINUES IN PALESTINE WITHOUT EVEN A POLITICAL CONSENSUS TO STOP IT.

I HOPE THIS PROJECT OFFERS NEW, POSITIVE NARRATIVES. I HOPE IT GIVES OUR FAMILIES – OUR MOTHERS, FATHERS, GRANDPARENTS, AND ALL
WHO LOVE US - WORDS OF
COURAGE WHEN NEIGHBOURS
ASK IF THEY FEAR THEIR
QUEER ROMANI CHILDREN
WILL BURN IN HELL. I HOPE
IT STRENGTHENS YOUNGER
GENERATIONS OF QUEER ROMA,
SO THEY CHOOSE LIFE EVEN
WHEN THE STRUGGLE FEELS
UNBEARABLE.

ABOVE ALL, I EXTEND MY
DEEPEST GRATITUDE TO
EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED
TO THIS PROJECT. YOUR
COURAGE HAS MADE IT
POSSIBLE, AND TODAY YOU
SHOULD BE CELEBRATED.

ĐORĐE JOVANOVIĆ

WE HAVE WALKED THAT PATH; NOW WE STAND READY TO WALK BESIDE THEM, OFFERING SUPPORT AND CARE, EVEN WITH WHAT FEW RESOURCES WE HAVE.

ROMAGIC IS A CALL TO REJECT THE FORCES THAT VIOLATE AND OPPRESS, AND TO STAND WITH THOSE THAT PROTECT. IT IS A CALL FOR SOLIDARITY NOT COMPETITION IN SUFFERING.

LET ROMA RIGHTS UNITE US.
LET LGBTIQ+ RIGHTS UNITE US.
LET ROMANI AND LGBTIQ+
PEOPLE TOGETHER SHOW
US ANOTHER PATH: ONE
OF JUSTICE, DIGNITY, AND
HUMANITY.



Antonella Zerka Buchhares Annia



JUST BEING ATRANS WOMAN, IT'S A KIND OF ACTIVISM.

YOU HAVE TO HAVE THE COURAGE TO GO OUT AGAINST EVERYONE, AGAINST... PEOPLE, AGAINST YOUR OWN COMMUNITY, AGAINST SOCIETY, AGAINST EVERYONE.

IN MY CHILDHOOD, I STARTED MY ACTIVISM WHEN I WAS 14 YEARS OLD AND I STOOD UP IN FRONT OF THEM AND I SAID, I AM A WOMAN.

12



SCAN HERE TO LISTEN TO THE INTERVIEW



13







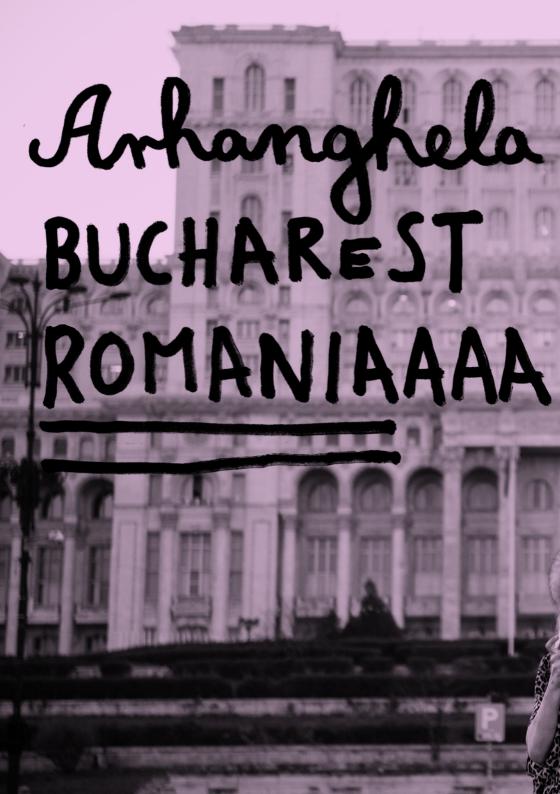














EVEN THOUGH I PORTRAY
THIS MEAN BITCH, I ALWAYS
LIKE TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE
AND BE NICE FOR THEM,
ESPECIALLY THE ONES IN
NEED...

ONCE THE GLAM IS OFF,
I FEEL LIKE IT'S SO IMPORTANT
TO VIEW YOURSELF AND ACT
AS A HUMAN BEING AND
NOT BE DRIVEN BY EGO.























LATURA CHISINAU,
MOLDOVA



I AM ROMA, I AM LESBIAN.
I AM FROM A VILLAGE, I AM
A WOMAN, AND IT CAN
EXIST TOGETHER, YES!

AND IT'S HARD BECAUSE YOU'RE FACING INTERSECTIONAL PROBLEMS, BUT WE EXIST, AND PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THIS.





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David Bicskel BUDAPEST, HUNGARY



IF ANYONE THINKS THAT I'M A THREATH TO THEM, OR I'M ANY DIFFERENT THAN THEM, THEN...

I DON'T CARE ABOUT THEM, BECAUSE, WHY WOULD YOU THINK THAT I AM ANY DIFFERENT? LIKE I AM A PERSON, GIVE ME A CHANCE.























clonhie MALL HARALLE GERMA

Johnel 1900.

SOPHIE

I BELIEVE VERY STRONGLY AND PASSIONATELY THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE EQUAL, AND I TRY TO TEACH PEOPLE WHO DON'T SEE THAT TO SEPARATE FACT FROM EMOTION.





& GABRIEL

EVERY TIME I WOULD ACHIEVE SOMETHING, BECAUSE I CONSIDER THAT I HAVE ACHIEVED VERY, VERY MUCH IN MY LIFE, DESPITE THIS WHOLE STORY, I AM VERY PROUD TO BE ROMA.

AND WHENEVER I WOULD DO SOMETHING REALLY GREAT, WHICH NO ONE EXPECTED FROM ME, I WOULD BE LIKE: YES, AND I'M ROMA.

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5

















A LANGE Damir Komina BELGRADE, SERBIA



MYSEXUALITY IS MY PRIVACY, I CAN'T INFLUENCE ANYONE, NOR WILL I FORCE ANYONE TO DO SOMETHING, IT'S NOTADISEASE, IT'S SOMETHING, WE'RE BORN WITH.

BEING ROMA IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING IN LIFE AND I WOULD NEVER CHANGE THAT.























Hamona Falti BARCELONA, SPAIN



NORD ACCEPTING BECAUSE IT'S SO WEIRD THAT
SOMEONE HAS TO ACCEPT SOMETHING THAT IS PRIVATE.

LIKE, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT.

IT'S MY THING, WHY?
IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT
YOU TAKE.

IT'S, YOU DON'T HAVE TO ACCEPT IT.

84



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ranova JOVI SA ERBIA



THAT SOMEONE OUT THERE CAN HEAR EVERYTHING I'VE EXPERIENCED AND SURVIVED AND THAT IT MOTIVATES THAT PERSON TO "COME OUT" AND MAKE SOME CHANGES IN HIS OR HER LIFE.

108



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WHEN I AM DYING, NO ONE WILL CARE WHETHER I WAS ROMA, OR WHETHER I WAS ANYTHING ELSE... NO...

I WAS A HUMAN BEING ON THIS PLANET.

THAT IS WHAT I WAS.

nothing more, nothing less.





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TO LISTEN TO
THE INTERVIEW



















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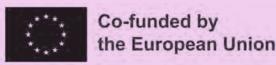
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DROUDLY QUEER. UNAPOLOGETICALLY ROMA

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