

WOMEN WITHOUT BORDERS

The comic stories are inspired by the real lives of migrant women who've come to the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia, or have left for a variety of reasons.

In 2016, the topic of migration in these countries has often been linked to the protection of the rights of "our women". This theme played the main role in the argumentation that emphasized the negative attitude towards the welcoming of refugees from African and Arab countries. It could've been seen and heard on television, newspapers, radio, social networks, and even from a few politicians. This argumentation was directed against the masses of migrants, who were portrayed as a horde of men threatening European values, including women's rights in particular. However, the voice of the women who have their own experience with migration is almost unheard of. Women who, due to the war, life threatening events or limitation of their rights, come to countries in Central Europe. Or those who, due to the impossibility to exercise their rights then go elsewhere. The exhibition presents the artistic view on four life stories of women from Tunisia, Syria, Chechnya and the Czech Republic. Discover some of the aspects of the lives of the women who are not giving up, and despite both the physical and psychological barriers they have faced, they are still looking for a better future for themselves and their children.

In some stories, the names of the women and the countries where they are currently living have been altered for protection.

This exhibition is a part of the Migration through the lens of gender and art project, supported by the International Visegrad Fund. Its implementation was preceded by the collecting of twenty life stories of women who are from the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia or those who currently live there. The interviews took place from September 2016 to February 2017. It was done in cooperation with the Hungarian organization Pécsi SzínTér Egyesület, the Slovak Institute for Human Rights and Prof. Dr. Hab. Halina Grzymała Moszczyńska from the Jagiellonian University in Krakow.

ABOUT NESEHNUTI

The exhibition was organized by the Independent Social-Ecological Movement (NESEHNUTÍ). The aim of our environmental and human-rights activities is to show that a change in the society considering the respect for humans, animals, and nature is possible. We also believe that this change must come mainly from us, the common people. That is why we support committed people who are interested in their surroundings and who consider the responsibility for the life on our planet as an integral part of their freedom. In the Women's Rights Are Human Rights program of NESEHNUTI organization, we care about the gender equality in society. That's why we say NO to sexism in advertising and in public space. We organize an anti-award Sexistické prasátečko (Sexist Piggy) and cooperate with authorities and advertising agencies in order to improve the practice of advertising assessment in the Czech Republic. We are dealing with the stories of everyday sexism on the website www.sexismy.cz, or the experiences of marginalized women. The question of inequality is not indifferent to us. Women earn 22% less than men. That's why we're organizing a Day for Equal Income when affiliated businesses offer women a 22% discount on their products. We're also engaged in the research that focuses on eliminating the salary inequality.

We are feminists and with our activities, we try to debunk a number of myths about feminism that many people in our society believe in.

ABOUT TOY BOX

She's a comic book writer and a street artist. In her work, she's been dealing with the topic of people whose voice is missing in the society for quite a long time. It could be girls who left Ukraine to pursue happiness and then have to provide for themselves as prostitutes. Or homeless people who live under the bridge in Prague, Libeň. Or wage laborers who work for a ridiculously small amount of money per hour, and without any social security. Toy Box is the holder of the Muriel Prize, the only comics award in our country. She received the prize for the comic book My Book Vinnetou in the category of Best Comic Book and the Best Drawing. She is also a holder of the Golden Ribbon Award for Best Comics for Children and Youth. The project Women without Borders is her first collaboration with the organization NESEHNUTI based in Brno. "What convinced me to get involved in the project was the fact that it focuses on the stories of that kind of women I'm trying to portray in my work. I'm also interested in the subject of refugees," says the author.

In 2016, Toy Box collaborated with the Hlavák Initiative to help people escape through the Prague Central Station. From this collaboration, a series of large-scale drawings was created and was exhibited in the Kunsthalle in Bratislava and in Prague at the Fear of the Unknown Exhibition. "In recent years, there has been an increase of xenophobia. We need to stand up to racism and xenophobia in everyday life and speak up," says Toy Box. Her way of fighting the prejudices is to tell the stories of the people through art - in the case of the Women Without Borders project, through the comics.



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