



**CITIZENSHIP
AWARD
CEREMONY
OF THE P&V
FOUNDATION
2022**



FOUNDATION P&V

*emancipation participation
citizenship solidarity*



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THE CITIZENSHIP AWARD

2022



◀ Olivier Servais

Jessy Siongers ▶



Olivier Servais and Jessy Siongers, co-presidents of the P&V Foundation

Olivier Servais is a professor of anthropology and Dean of the Faculty of Economic, Political, Social and Communication Sciences at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL). He heads the international journal *Social Compass*, SAGE, London. He also teaches at L'Université Saint-Louis-Bruxelles and at L'Institut des Arts de Diffusion in Louvain-la-Neuve. He's co-founder of the *Carta Academica Network* which defends the commitment of academics in the public debate. In addition to his academic career, he is also

active in civil society. He has served as chairman of the Pluralist Scouts and Guides and is administrator of various social and cultural institutions.

Jessy Siongers is coordinator of the Knowledge Center for Culture and Media Participation at Ghent University and co-supervisor of the Youth Research Platform for the Free University of Brussels (VUB). She contributed to the COVID-19 Supplement of *Children's Worlds*, an international sur-

vey of children's well-being in corona times, and is co-editor of different books on young people.

She is also an editorial member of the *Tijdschrift voor Jeugd en Kinderrechten*, national correspondent for the Youth Wiki (EU), an online database on national structures, policies and actions in support of young people in Europe.



The Citizenship Prize rewards people who put into practice the Foundation's objectives and ideals in an exemplary way by promoting a society of active, committed citizens who stand up for the welfare and happiness of others and who contribute to a more just, tolerant and respectful society for all.

The Foundation has asked a panel of 35 persons with different backgrounds (media, politics, economics, culture, social work, science) to nominate candidates for the Citizenship Award. This resulted in a list of 19 candidates. The names of the candidates who were most often nominated by this panel were gathered in a shortlist with 10 candidates. The panel convened virtually in June to select the laureate for 2022 out of this shortlist (jury).

The jury chose to reward a Hungarian academic and activist: ***Dorottya Rédei***.

Dorottya Rédei is an independent scholar affiliated with the Central European University (CEU), where she received her PhD in Comparative Gender Studies in 2015. Based on her thesis, the book «Exploring Sexuality in Schools».

The Intersectional Reproduction of Inequality» was published in 2019 by Palgrave Macmillan. Since 2015 she has worked as a researcher and trainer in several international education research and development projects at CEU, ELTE and Anthropolisz. She has worked as a gender studies' tutor in the CEU Roma Access Programmes and currently works at the CEU Centre for Policy Studies.

In addition to her academic activities, she is an active member of the Labrisz Lesbian Association, where she works as a trainer in the «Get to know LGBT people» school programme, and as the coordinator of the book project «Meseország mindenkié» (A Fairytale for Everyone), which incorporates LGBTI+ characters in new interpretations of traditional fairy tales. «A Fairytale for Everyone» shows the diversity of modern society. Gender; religion, origin, sexual preference, social class, skin colour: Respect is due to everyone. The storybook is a plea against exclusion and an encouragement for everyone to be who they are.

The fairy tale book has prompted Orban's government in Hungary to pass an anti-LGBTI

law in the summer of 2021 prohibiting 'the promotion' of homosexuality among minors. In addition, the book must be sold in a package and in the adult section of bookstores. Across Europe, the book, translated into several languages, echoed the LGBTIQ+ struggle and the advocates of fundamental rights. Dorottya Rédei has turned research on gender and social inequality into a strong and courageous commitment as a social activist.

Dorottya Rédei plays a key role in the struggle for LGBTIQ+ rights and social inclusion. Through her work, she supports many people who are often fighting alone in their country to safeguard fundamental rights and freedoms, and she contributes to a more open attitude that embraces diversity. She is committed to an important issue with a high risk-taking in the Hungarian context. This is a unique opportunity to show our solidarity and explain this struggle from the inside. She also works to raise awareness of these issues among children and young people, which we as a Foundation consider very important. Therefore, we decided to financially support her advocacy work which includes communication and awareness-raising activities in

schools aimed at improving the social acceptance of the LGBTIQ+-community. Through her work, Dorottya Rédei has emphasised the importance of early socialisation in the development of democratic, tolerant and inclusive attitudes, including the fight against prejudice.

Besides this financial support of her work, the laureate will receive an etching from the artist Philip Aguirre y Otegui.



THE P&V FOUNDATION

The P&V Insurance Group, which originated from the cooperative movement, established the P&V Foundation in 2000 and is its main sponsor. The Foundation operates in total independence and its mission is to fight the social exclusion of young people. Based on the most important values of the social economy, the Foundation emphasises active participation, independence and social responsibility among young people. The P&V Foundation was recognised as a foundation for public utility in 2005.



FOUNDATION P&V

*emancipation participation
citizenship solidarity*



A FOUNDATION AT YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE!

The cornerstone of the P&V Foundation is the fight against the exclusion of young people. The Foundation wants to guide young people regarding different aspects of social life. By giving them the necessary opportunities and by actively involving them, it helps them take their lives into their own hands.

The objective of the P&V Foundation is therefore to provide young people with a range of resources that appeal to their talents and convictions. It wants to encourage young people to show solidarity, to develop their sense of citizenship by helping them to express their ideas, to cooperate, to respect each other and to increase their sense of responsibility. Because young people are the adults of tomorrow, the P&V Foundation aims to increase their opportunities for development by means of projects young people select themselves and in which they participate.



BELGIUM

CONNECTING YOU(TH)

Do we still meet or do we live mostly in our own bubbles? With its multi-year project ConnectingYou(th), the P&V Foundation wants to combine the need for social contacts and exchanges of young people with the societal need for diversified contacts, encounters, and mutual understanding. In this way, it is possible to promote not only mental well-being, but also societal well-being and cohesion in society. The project consists of two components: a call for projects and a youth forum.

Following the launch of the call for projects, the P&V Foundation initiated a youth forum, so as to offer twenty young people aged 16 to 23, from diverse backgrounds, the opportunity to gain experience in active citizenship and be part of the entire selection and evaluation process of the call for projects.

The Youth Forum of the Foundation P&V thus selected 14 non-profit organisations whose projects aim to facilitate mutual encounters

between young people with different backgrounds and to overcome social and educational divides through projects in the fields of inclusion, entrepreneurship and citizenship education, culture and media, and sport.





INCLUSION

Gratte: The 'Melting Potes' project aims to organise activities and camps for and by young people aged 17 to 25, whether they are able-bodied, mentally disabled, in a precarious situation and/or socially isolated, in order to promote inclusion and encounters.

iDrops: 'Inclusively wired' is a connection and inclusion project that brings together young people (12 to 18 years old) from different backgrounds and develops, in an innovative and co-creative process, solutions around the challenges of neurodiversity (autism, hyperactivity, dyslexia...).

LEJO & FOS: FOS Open Scouting and LEJO jointly organise camps for young people aged 12 to 18 to encourage encounters between young people with and without an experience in youth care. In this way, the project brings together young people from different backgrounds, experiences and contexts, both among the monitors of the camp and the participants.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Ambassadeurs d'expression citoyenne:

The 'Réciproque' project gives the younger generations the opportunity to express themselves and carry their voices. The project organises dialogues and speaking events in and between different schools, paying attention to the variation in school styles, tracks, and socio-economic levels of schools.

Impact Shakers Labs: With 'Odds Connection', young people with different perspectives are brought together and set out to solve a problem that connects them, as opposed to what divides them. The project wants to offer opportunities to a new generation of social entrepreneurs.

Solidarité: The project 'Année citoyenne' offers young people from all walks of life the opportunity to join a team of 8 to 10 volunteers aged 16 to 25. For 6 to 9 months, under the supervision and guidance of an educator; they will engage in a dynamic project with all kinds of activities.

Step2you: The MoWo project (Molenbeek-Woluwe) brings pupils of the 7th year of

secondary vocational education together with higher education students in management studies to create an entrepreneurial project. The encounters of young people who live in a different reality, in another part of Brussels, whom they have never met, generate significant awareness among both the vocational and the management students.



CULTURE AND MEDIA

Centre Culturel de Namur: The project aims to organise encounters between young people from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds, artists and professionals from theatre institutions in order to inform them about training and jobs in the performing arts sector.

Compas Format: Production of a weekly radio programme by young people with educational and social disadvantages, who will gather the views of other young people and youth-related actors. The themes addressed will enable them to cross views, encourage mutual listening and sharing on subjects that concern and bring together young people.

Larf! : De 'Kazematten' is a creative and inspiring cross-sectoral meeting place where young people aged 16 to 25 can express their creativity and establish encounters and dialogue between various and diverse groups of young people.

Made by Brussels: Creation of a podcast where various topics relevant in Brussels are discussed by young Brussels' residents. With the podcasts, the project aims to spark

debate, break down divisions and facilitate coexistence within Brussels, but also with other regions.

SPORT

Aide Aux Personnes Déplacées: 'APD Braine-le-Comte' is a football team with unaccompanied foreign minors from different countries aged 15 to 18, with which they create an intercultural experience, integration by meeting other teams from the region, and intergenerational exchange.

Ghent Basketball: 'Play Ball & Have Fun' are weekly basketball sessions for 9- to 17-year-olds in different neighbourhoods in Ghent. The sessions are very accessible and free for all. Once a month, each group meets a group from another Ghent neighbourhood with whom they play a real game.

Touché: The project reaches out to all young people aged 12 to 25 to help them become 'Anger Heroes' through boxing. Boxing is a way to let off steam, have fun, respect yourself, control yourself and feel good about yourself.

An Anger Hero is someone who stands for who she or he is, is proud of this and uses the energy contained in anger to make the world a more inclusive, warm and opportunity-creating place.

FINAL CONFERENCE

The Youth Forum will visit these winning projects and organize a final conference on 19 April 2023, presenting the most important results and recommendations to bridge divides between young people in society.

EUROPE

KEEP

The Foundation P&V participates in a consortium of 6 institutions coordinated by France Education International from 4 countries (Belgium, France, Greece and Poland) in the framework of an Erasmus+ project. The title of the two-year project is: «Key Engaging Educational Practices used by secondary school teachers to keep connected with their students following the COVID-19 pandemic» (KEEP).

The P&V Foundation was in charge of compiling a «Situational review», which aims to provide an overview of the evolution and impact of education policies and digital strategies in the four partner countries since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This first deliverable identifies the main challenges faced by the education systems of the partner countries during the pandemic, including absenteeism, learning gaps and digital divides in distance learning situations.



The study will conclude with a European good practice report on innovative methodologies used by secondary teachers to keep in touch with learners from a distance, and the obstacles and enablers of remote education in the fight against early school leaving.

Scan this QR-code for more information and download the situational review on:



Partners: France Education International, University of Paris, GIP Formation tout au long de la vie - Rectorat de Nancy-Metz, University of Patras, Educational Research Institute (IBE), P&V Foundation.



With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



A CITIZENSHIP AWARD WITH AN EYE FOR VALUES

In order to emphasise and add resonance to its ideal of citizenship, the P&V Foundation organises its annual Citizenship award, which is awarded to Belgian or foreign persons, initiatives or organisations that have contributed to an open, democratic and tolerant society in an exemplary way.

2005

Fadéla Amara (Ni Putes Ni Soumises) and Job Cohen (Mayor of Amsterdam) were the first to receive the Citizenship Award in 2005.



2005

2006

In 2006 the prize was awarded to singer, writer and sculptor Wannes Van de Velde and director duo Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne.



2006

2007

Senegalese human rights activist Khady Koita, president of the European Network for the Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation and author of *Mutilée*, received the award in 2007.



2007

2008

In 2008 the prize was awarded to two ladies: Jeanne Devos, human rights activist and founder of the National Domestic Workers' Movement (NDWM), and Simone Süsskind, president of Actions dans la Méditerranée.



2008

2009

In 2009 two Belgian organisations were rewarded for their efforts to promote intercultural dialogue and awareness of citizenship: Kif Kif and Les Territoires de la Mémoire.



2009

2010

In 2010 the panel selected a duo that was awarded for its endeavours to promote the reintegration of prisoners. Jacqueline Rousseau founded Adeppi (Atelier d'Education Permanente pour Personnes Incarcérées) in 1981 and Guido Verschueren has provided humane leadership at the prison in Leuven for 30 years.



2010

2011

In 2011 the Citizenship Prize was awarded to Stéphane Hessel, diplomat, human rights activist and author of *Indignez-vous!* (Time for Outrage!), which was sold over four million copies worldwide.



2011

2012

In 2012, the P&V Foundation awarded its 8th prize to Dr Izzeldin Abuelaish, author of the book "I Shall Not Hate"



2012

2013

Jan Goossens, the artistic director of the KVS (the Brussels Royal Flemish Theatre), received the award in 2013. He has led the KVS to an urban and contemporary theatre, focusing on diversity in his own country and on cultural wealth elsewhere in the world.



2013

2014

In 2014, the Citizenship Award was given out to two people who give, on a daily basis, opportunities to socially vulnerable people to participate in society: Reinhilde Decler, actress and instigator of the Theater Company «Tutti Fratelli» and Ho Chul Chantraine, Founder of Agricover, a cooperative company with social and ecological objectives.



2014

2015

The Citizenship Award 2015 has been accorded to Eric Domb, founder of Pairi Daiza, and Frans De Clerck, co-founder of Triodos bank Belgium.



2015

2016

In 2016, Michel Claise, investigating magistrate specialised in financial crime, and Jan Nolf, honorary justice of the peace and critical observer, were the designated laureates for the 12th citizenship award.



2016

2017

In 2017, the Citizenship Prize was awarded to Paul Collier, professor of economics at the University of Oxford and influential thinker on migration and development economics.



2017

2018

Michel Pradolini received the Citizenship Award in 2018. He is the driving force behind and chairman of the widely supported social football club City Pirates.



2018

2019

In 2019, the Citizenship Prize was awarded to journalists Virginie Nguyen and Geert Mak. Two laureates who bring out a broader story and vision of society in an accessible way, by means of testimonials and portraits of ordinary people.



2019

2020

In 2020, the Citizenship Award went to a female journalist for her active and militant citizenship: Waad al-Kateab.



2020

2021

In 2021, the Citizenship Prize was awarded to Jean Drèze, a Belgian-born Indian development economist and social activist.



2021



2022

THE LAUREATE

DOROTTYA RÉDAI

It is not easy these days to make an appointment with Hungarian activist Dorottya Rédei. She has to run from one media appearance to the next debate, discussing gender, heteronormativity and the threat to democracy. TIME named Rédei one of the most influential people of 2021, while for the Orban government she is one of its most fearsome opponents.

Interview by Gie Goris



'I became a spokesperson for the resistance in spite of myself,' she says. 'Actually, I am introverted and I would rather work on long-term academic research on gender and education.' But if you want to improve the world, you cannot always choose your own timing or contribution. As the Belgian P&V Foundation awarded the Hungarian activist and academic the Citizenship Award 2022, she was happy to free up a few hours for an interview.

The interview had to be rescheduled at the eleventh hour, though, because Rédei received an invitation to a roundtable meeting at the Dutch embassy in Budapest. 'It was a fascinating meeting with some companies represented by women. That's a very different world from the one I usually move in,' she says. 'Those business leaders underpin the plea for diversity with the observation that it brings better productivity and thus more profit. But then, what should we do, when politics marches in the opposite

direction and the voice of civil society is stifled? At the end of the day, these companies are workplaces where equality and diversity policies matter for female and minority employees, so they do have a role in social change.'

'In a lot of areas, we observe regression,' Rédei adds. 'Neo-conservative political forces are trying to push back women into traditional roles of mother and housewife, idealizing and romanticizing these roles, and any ambitions that clash with that ideology are dismissed as alien to national culture.' She continues to oppose this, along with a broad spectrum of activists. 'At the same time, it is important to see that society continues to evolve. There is more gender equality today than there was 30 years ago. There are more women leading companies or organisations. There are more men doing their part in the household and caring for children. These are gains, the process is slow but we should acknowledge that it is happening.'

“DICTATORS FEAR
FAIRYTALES MORE THAN
DEMONSTRATIONS”

DOROTTYA RÉDAI



The legally elected dictatorship

Dorottya Rédei is a combative woman. Her big dream is a world without patriarchal oppression, externally imposed norms or inequality. She is committed to equality, not inclusion, because 'who includes whom, finally? Who is the norm and what does a minority have to do to belong? Inclusion is like tolerance: who tolerates whom? Those terms are too hierarchical, too unequal. That's why we need to work on other structures, with less inequality.'

When some like-minded women founded a lesbian organization, they chose Labrisz as their name and symbol: the double-edged axe of the mythical Amazons. 'It is a weapon with which we will not attack anyone, but with which we want to defend ourselves and show the regime our strength.'

«The regime» is more than the current majority in power. In Hungary, the regime carries the face of Viktor Orbán, who has led the Hungarian government since 2010, but the conservative counter-revolution is broader and deeply ideological. In the course of the conversation, Dorottya Rédei also describes the current rulers

as a «legally elected authoritarian government» that actively fights gender equality and sexual diversity. Asked whether the Church also plays an important role in this, Rédei shakes her head: 'Hungary is not like Poland. Here the Church is less powerful, although it is doing its best to regain prestige and impact on the waves of the conservative movement. But it definitely is the government which is taking the lead.'

Hungary is not the only country dealing with a legally elected authoritarian government, quite the contrary: it seems to be a global trend anno 2022. Today's authoritarian leaders use their parliamentary majority to restrict and roll back minority rights through legislative means. And they occasionally create a moral panic,





in order to vote laws criminalizing all those who deviate from the - conservative - norm. In Hungary, the Fidesz party rushed a new family law and a new definition of marriage, as a union between a man and a woman, through parliament as early as 2011. A ban on adoption by gay couples followed in 2013, procedures for gender reassignment surgery were suspended and university gender studies were scrapped in 2018. In 2020, legal gender recognition for trans people was withdrawn. And so on.

'In the context of growing authoritarianism in Hungary, it sometimes seems as if human rights organisations and the LGBT movement are the last form of organised opposition,' writes Dorottya Rédei in a recent academic paper. That does not mean that those movements could win elections or reverse the balance of power in the short term, she adds. 'No one can do that, including us,' she says. 'But what we can do is make citizens think. Make them think differently. We can also make young people see that there are more possibilities in life than slavishly adopting the norms of a patriarchal tradition.' 'The key question is: how do you create visibility for your cause? Because that is the way

to introduce new ideas to a large audience. Then: how do you ensure that this visibility is translated into social mobilization and public support?' Rédei and Labrisz bet on cultural action and education, 'because the government completely ignores us, or actively fights us. In any case, it does not think of engaging with us. Lobbying, organising petitions or demonstrating have therefore become useless.'

It's a fairy tale

Out of the darkest nights are often born the most creative ideas. That old truth was confirmed once again when Labrisz came up with the plan to create an initiative for young children, to make the broad spectrum of gender choices and experiences accessible for them in an appropriate way. That idea took the form of *A Fairytale for Everyone*, a selection of 17 specially written fairy tales in which princes marry each other and princesses live together happily ever after; in which Roma children are heroes and other children survive family violence; in which a girl fights dragons while her boyfriend sings love songs...

Margaret, for example, learns that to become



the hero she always wanted to be, she must defeat the Giant who has been rampaging through the land for centuries. In the final confrontation, the Giant tries to convince her that she can have all the beauty, all the goodness and all the charm in the world if she puts down her sword, and then everyone will know her as Margaret the Beautiful. But she does not mellow, and even her friend, Simon the Storyteller, would rather continue with Margaret the Giant Killer - because that is what she herself wants. (And they lived happily and adventurously ever after...)

The book became a national and international success, with more than 33,000 copies sold in Hungary and a host of awards and nominations. 'Publishing a fairy-tale book may seem apolitical, but it reaches many more people than a demonstration', says Dorottya Rédei. 'Moreover, in this way we plant seeds in the minds of young people, who can later help create really different political power relations in Hungary.' Incidentally, the Orban government and conservative forces in Hungary found *Meseország mindenkié*, as its original title reads, anything but apolitical. Labrisz activists had not seen the storm created by

the fairy tale book coming. And Rédei remains convinced even today that the fairy tales were not the trigger for the tsunami of new laws and attacks, but rather the pretext.

Labrisz and other gender-oriented movements were accused of threatening innocent children with their LGBT propaganda. 'The children that conservative politicians and opinion-makers are so concerned about, 'are always white middle-class children, able-bodied, naturally heterosexual but at the same time asexual,' observes Dorottya Rédei. 'Perhaps that is the real problem with these fairy tales: they acknowledge true diversity in society and they help parents talk about it with their children.'

Daddy Cool? No thanks!

The importance of childhood takes our conversation towards Budapest in the 1970s and 1980s, Dorottya Rédei's own wonder years. Budapest in the 1980s was still behind the Iron Curtain. Hungarian youth built their own resistance against all kinds of unfreedom with the bits and pieces of Western culture seeping into the Eastern Bloc. Dorottya, who was 16



when the Wall crumbled in Berlin, first tried out 1970s glam rock and then experimented with rock'n'roll, rhythm and blues and a hippie look. Back in the '70s, Abba and Boney M in particular topped her personal charts. That is, until she saw the cover of Boney M's 1976 debut album (which included the hit single Daddy Cool) when she was 8 years old. The singer towers menacingly and authoritatively over the three female band members who are lying on the floor in lingerie. 'They were in chains on the floor,' says Rédei. The reference to slavery she

remembers may not be accurate, but the masculine violence, patriarchal power and rape fantasy do stare you in the face. Little Dorottyia never forgave Boney M. End of story, you might say, but it's the other way around. This was the kind of shock that started the story that would make her, unsolicited, one of the icons of both the democratic opposition and the gender struggle in Hungary.

That she would become such an important voice was anything but written in the stars. 'We

did discuss politics a lot in high school, but I certainly wasn't very active during the period of the fall of communism.' Still, she was frustrated that she was too young to vote in the first free elections in 1990. 'Everyone was bursting with desire for capitalism and consumerism,' says Rédei, shaking her head. Because in the meantime, she knows that capitalism mainly produces inequality. 'Neoliberalism is the contemporary face of long-standing patriarchal oppression,' she says later in the conversation. But in 1990, then, it was mostly about freedom.

Why can he do what I cannot?

Freedom and gender equality was a very personal issue for Rédei. Her fight for it as a child was not with the government but within her family and because of her health condition. Her freedom was curtailed by the very strict rules imposed on her life by a diabetic condition from the age of seven, and the worried mother who didn't allow her to do a lot of things she would have liked to do for fear of life-threatening hypoglycaemic fits of her daughter when out of her sight.

But what would really stick with her was that

her brother was given more freedom than herself. That he was allowed behaviour that was absolutely not tolerated if it was her. That, in other words, boys were not simply treated differently from girls, but that girls were constantly given less space and fewer opportunities than boys.

'I realised very early on that my life would be a lot easier if I had been a boy. Not that I longed to physically become a boy, I just wanted the same rights, opportunities and freedoms that were apparently very common for boys.' And, as she bitterly relates, 'my privileged brother grew up to be a devout Christian and homophobe who stopped talking to me about 20 years ago when I came out as a lesbian.' 'It's hard not to see the connection between sexism, heteronormativity, religious beliefs and homophobia', she points out.

Yet it was not until Dorottya studied at university that her intuitive dissatisfaction with gender inequality was translated into clear insight and then activism. A course on gender and language turned out to be a basic introduction in feminist theory, which helped her see the emotions she had as a child, her adolescent frustrations and ambitions as part of a larger, structural given.

It was no longer little Dorottya's fight against her bossy environment, it became a fight for a different world.

Progress is a spiral

After a master's degree in English, Dorottya Rédei left academia for several years, only to return for a master's degree in Gender Studies - a field in which she is still active and hopes to do more research again in the coming years. Around 2003, she joined Labrizs, an advocacy group for lesbian women. Not that she had



always been attracted to girls, but she had never really felt at home in relationships with boys. 'It wasn't about a lack of emotional or sexual commitment,' she says. 'I just didn't feel at home in the gender roles that were apparently ingrained in those relationships. I felt unhappy having to be «the woman in the relationship».' When the first crush on a girl followed, it felt like a liberation for her because the experience confirmed that roles, patterns and expectations can be broken. 'In my first lesbian relationship, I was able to define my womanhood myself.' This reinforced the conviction that norms and structures can also be changed for the better: Nothing comes naturally, Rédei realises all too well. 'Just because you are in a lesbian relationship doesn't mean you are magically relieved of all the expectations the world projects on your body and your life. I have also been in a relationship where my girlfriend turned into a «husband» and I ended up «the woman in the relationship» again.' It is an experience that surfaces not only in small circles but also in the larger world. The progress to freely define and experience gender for oneself, emancipated from heteronorms and patriarchal power relations, has increasingly had to deal with a

strong backlash in recent years. Authoritarian populists, from Hungary to Brazil, want to do everything they can to push back that progress. Rédai: 'My grandmother always told me that progress is not a straight, but a spiral line, with progress, regression, struggle and success.'

The breakthrough of freedom and democracy in the 1990s was a great leap forward for Rédai's generation, but in several Central European states the backlash came surprisingly fast and hard - and in few places did tradition strike back as hard as in Hungary. 'The old socialist system had a lot of provisions, designed to give women equal employment opportunities, through education and by making childcare and kindergartens accessible. But the fundamental inequality between men and women, in politics or family, was never questioned. Women were supported, but men were never asked to take on more caring roles. This resulted in better participation of women in the labour market, but also in unacknowledged double or triple burden for those same women.' Today, Rédai adds, 'patriarchy has taken the form of a neoliberal system worldwide. In this dominant ideology, traditional gender patterns are confirmed in

new forms and with new arguments.'

Real freedom requires structural change

At a deeper level, Dorottya Rédai challenges neoliberal dogma because it places the responsibility of human actions entirely on the individual. Whether you are rich or poor: it is your responsibility. And even sexual violence or gender-based exclusion is seen exclusively as an individual choice or responsibility. As if power structures do not exist and as if the state or dominant institutions play no role. When I point out that her own struggle is

also to allow each individual to choose his or her own interpretation of gender or sexuality, Rédai replies: 'Our struggle does not focus on each individual, but on the structures that are oppressive and unfree. This means that we do emphasise structures and another system as a condition for giving each citizen freedom of choice. Neoliberalism denies the importance of this, which is why it also fails to give vulnerable people freedom of choice.'

This focus on structures of oppression rather than on individual experience only, is not something every feminist or LGBT group is convinced of. Dorottya Rédai knows that. But she is very reluctant to go into detail about





these internal discussions, if only because the new traditionalists are all too happy to play a divide and conquer game. 'Yes, there are feminists who are transphobic, or LGBT activists who are racist or Islamophobic. And that actually reinforces the violence of patriarchy,' she stresses.

Inequality has many faces and causes

Gender is not an isolated issue. That is a crucial insight for Rédei. Gender inequalities overlap with inequalities in class, ethnicity, sexual orientation ... And these overlaps reinforce existing inequalities. A Roma pupil facing inappropriate sexual behaviour from a Hungarian teacher; for example, is even more vulnerable than a Hungarian girl in the same situation. And if that pupil comes from a poor family, her chances of protection are completely minimal.

Rédei: 'These inequalities reinforce each other; but the different perspectives weaken resistance. The confusion about this made it difficult for a long time to build a better world together. Often it seemed each was on their

own, and mutual differences stood in the way of cooperation around shared struggles. But the current regime's offensive in Hungary is, paradoxically, creating a broad awareness that solidarity is needed beyond the boundaries of one's own group or community. After all, many feminists are also workers, many teachers are lesbians, many workers are Roma, many Roma are women, and so on.'

An intersectional struggle for a just world cannot wait until all groups support each other in all demands. That was the conviction of Audre Lorde, the black feminist American author; about the women's movement, says Dorottya Rédei: 'Lorde said that there cannot be a single united women's movement, because women are not a monolithic group and there are power differences among women, for example between black and white women. But there are some common causes and different women's groups should work in coalitions around certain common causes. "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives", she said. I agree with that. That is why forming coalitions around common struggles is so important. Sometimes LGBT

movements need the support of trade unions and human rights organisations, other times LGBT movements and women's organisations need to speak out on migrants' rights or the need to give teachers decent wages.'

Education is a central concern for Dorottya Rédei. It is the place where young people not only gain knowledge, but also form ideas about citizenship, about gender, about who they want to become. Young people are formed there as well as forming themselves and each other. This often involves verbal or even physical violence, online or tangible pressure, and a lot of wrestling with social norms and expectations. In her academic research, she tries to gain insight into ways in which schools and teachers deal with this. 'Gender patterns and power imbalances underlie most gender-related violence in schools,' she writes in 2019. In contrast, she sees a lack of structural thinking and systemic work. There is, she writes, still far too much belief in explanations focusing on adolescent boys' raging testosterone or girls 'improper' clothing as a cause for sexual violence. In other words, in her academic work too, she bumps up against the need to change structures in thinking and acting,

rather than focusing on the individual only.

Translating is multiplying

Just before we conclude, I ask Dorottya Rédei what the past few years have meant to her: What did the success of *A Fairytale for Everyone* do to her; and how did she process the fierce political reactions? How does she feel, having become the centre of national and international attention? She sighs. 'My whole life was turned upside down. My academic work faded somewhat into the background, and I regret that. At the same time, I realise that my activism achieves much more than an academic paper read by 10 colleagues. But we were not prepared for the sudden attention and, as a result, I was largely left to cope on my own. From one day to the next, I had to exchange my introverted self for a public person participating in media debates. As a result, Labrisz, for the first time started hiring people into paid employment, to cope with all the work and turbulence. But then, how do you finance that employment in the long run? We haven't figured that out yet.'

In mid-October the English and French translations of *Meseország mindenkié* will

be available, with Dorottya Rédei traveling to London for a presentation and later, in November, to Paris. Mid November is also when she will pick up her Citizenship Award in Brussels and has been invited by the European Parliament. Isn't that success becoming too heavy a burden on her life? 'Not at all,' Rédei suddenly responds cheerfully. 'We are now in a phase where it is mainly the nice things that come to the fore: awards, presentations of foreign translations, travelling. I can really enjoy that - especially as it also contributes to spreading much more widely the message we were originally aiming for: we need to get rid of patriarchy with its iron-clad heteronorms to make room for the enormous diversity among people.'

In her drive, one can hear the echo of Margaret the Giantkiller's voice, as she drew her sword: 'Come on then,' she shouted to the Giant who was hidden in milky white mist. 'Show yourself, come out and fight a duel with me.' It takes little imagination to imagine how that fairy tale ends.







Biography

1973: Born in in Budapest

1999: MA in English Language and Literature, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

2003: MA in Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapest

2004: Starts working in Labrisz Lesbian Association

2015: PhD in Comparative Gender Studies at Central European University, Budapest

2019: “Exploring Sexuality in Schools. The Intersectional Reproduction of Inequality”, published by Palgrave Macmillan

2020: Coordinator of the book project “Meseország mindenkié” (A Fairytale for Everyone).

2021: Named by TIME Magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world



LAUDATION

RÉMY BONNY

Hungary inspires. The middle-sized Central European nation once was the centre of a vast European empire. It's a nation state that resembles what today's European Union stands for: united in diversity.

There's no nation like Hungary in Europe. Its Slavic, Germanic and Romanic neighbours have over the years all been flabbergasted of how resilient and proud the nation is. Many have tried to take away that proudness. From the 1552 Siege of Eger where the Hungarians bravely repulsed the Ottomans to the huge land losses after 1920 Trianon Treaty, the Hungarian nation state has gone through rough waters but survived.

They survived the 150 years of Ottoman occupation, they fought for liberal democracy in the 1848 revolution, they were the first to

revolt against the Soviet dictatorship in 1956.

The preservation of the state is part of Hungary's DNA. Therefore, Hungarians have taken both progressive and regressive turns in history. When Budapest hosted the Seventh Conference of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance in 1913, the Central European nation was an example for the democratic emancipation of women. Under the Horthy regime, Hungary formed an alliance with Nazi Germany. Progress and regress have always been there.

This progress and regress are also part of Hungary's contemporary politics. The Orban regime has chosen to form an alliance with evil imperialist forces in this world. He has chosen sexual and gender minorities as his scapegoat to consolidate his power. But this has led to the

development of a well-organised progressive opposition, led by Hungary's LGBTIQ+ communities.

Budapest Pride attracts every year tens of thousands of brave LGBTIQ+ persons and allies fighting for equality, openness, and diversity. And while the Orban regime is trying to propagate anti-LGBTIQ+ rhetoric in the brains of the Hungarian youth, some people are standing up to that. At the forefront of this fight, we have Dorottya Rédei.

While Orban is trying to ban any form of inclusive education, Rédei published a fairytale book for children that has awaken Hungary's society. She has spent her life researching and advocating for more inclusive future generations in the Central European republic. She combines research, as a research fellow

at the renowned Central European University, with high-level activism, as a founder of Labrizs Lesbian Association. This golden combination is trendsetting in a world where disinformation is more and more common by so-called right-wing activists.

The Labrizs Lesbian Association was already created in 1996. They have been leading in community organising, creating spaces for lesbian art and literature, organising the annual Lesbian Identities Festival. One of their most important programs was the “getting to know

LGBTQ people” school education program - which was holding school classes from 2001 right until they were banned from schools by the Russia-style anti-LGBTIQ+ propaganda law that was introduced in 2021.

Therefore, Réдай resembles everything the Citizenship Award represents. She fights for a Hungary & Europe that is working for all its citizens. A Europe that is united in diversity.



Rémy Bonny, born in Ostend in 1995, is the executive director of «Forbidden Colours», an EU-wide fund dedicated to making LGBTIQ+ organisations more stable and sustainable. It serves as an advocacy group on defending LGBTIQ+ communities that are scapegoated by autocratic governments in Europe.

He graduated as a political scientist at the VUB and attended the postgraduate programme

of the Global Campus for Human Rights in Venice with a thesis «Outsourcing autocratic anti-LGBTI soft power: The Case of the Russian Federation in Hungary». He is an internationally active Belgian LGBTIQ+ activist, specialised in the way the LGBTIQ+ movement’s demands construct international relations – specifically in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

In recent years, Rémy has been conducting research to the interactions between illiberal

states like Vladimir Putin’s Russian Federation and the European Union and former Soviet Republics. Therefore, he has been living in Budapest, Brussels, Warsaw and Venice.

He travels around the world as an expert to raise awareness of the (political) situation of European LGBTIQ+ persons among policy makers, organisations and academics. His work has been featured in many international media.

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CEO P&V Group

Mirjam Zomersztajn

Coordinator social program 'Un pont entre deux mondes' - La Monnaie (Federal opera house)

THE ARTIST | PHILIP AGUIRRE Y OTEGUI

Internationally renowned sculptor Philip Aguirre y Otegui (1961) lives and works in Antwerp. He studied at the Antwerp Academy of Fine Arts. He has been strongly influenced by many trips and stays, first in Rome, Florence and Spain, and later on in Latin America and Africa. A number of his pieces are part of important collections, and many are on display in public spaces. He regularly participates in individual or group exhibitions both in Belgium and abroad. On 17 March 2017, he received the International Award for Public Art for this work in Hong Kong. From October 2022 until the end of January 2023, his work is shown in the Plantin-Moretusmuseum in Antwerp: "L'invitation au voyage". A selection of his drawings and graphic works is presented in a new book published on the occasion of this exposition.

<http://www.philipaguirre.be/>

Philip Aguirre has stood out from the artistic and conceptual flows of his time since the early 1980s. He is interested in classical art, cubists and modernists, as well as other cultures - African art, in particular. In his own words, his work contains: «References to cubism, Greek art or a baroque sculpture - these can all be seen in my work, but I try to absorb them into a personal style. To my mind, beauty is neither good nor lovely. True beauty also depicts the cruelty of life. This is why I strive for a kind of poetry - one that isn't abstract, but rather tries to make elements of our world readable.»

Versatile artist Aguirre has built up a rich body of work in various art disciplines over the past 40 years. He is best known for his sculptures, installations and monumental works in public spaces. His extensive oeuvre of drawings and graphic works is much less known. The focus on drawing forms the start of his thought process but techniques such as etchings and woodcuts





also often feature in his work. Human figures and, more recently, landscapes, are his main source of inspiration. «My images abstract personal traits, and link social issues to the universal concept of humanity.»

His focus is on the world, and his works radiate with a certain kind of thoughtfulness: they are powerful and poetic at the same time. He is sensitive to societal issues such as

water shortages, migration, social injustice, and poverty. He is guided by images of the world today, people in situations of violence, people fleeing, and protests, among other things, as well as by concrete issues such as the Israeli-Palestine conflict, or young migrants risking the journey to Europe in a rickety boat, seeking a better life.

While Philip Aguirre's art is consistent and personal, it is also evolving on an ongoing basis and is always particularly engaged and humanistic in nature.



Palm

Dorottya Rédei will receive a 1986 etching, 32.5 cm x 24.5 cm, called "Palm". A woman stands next to a palm tree, meditative, thinking, introspective. The palm tree has traditionally symbolised justice, victory, life and fertility. In this etching, (wo)man and nature relate to each other in a reflective and poetic way. The work is featured in his book "L'invitation au voyage" (Mercatorfonds, 2022)

*This text is based on Philip Aguirre y Otegui (2008)
– "Sculptures, 1985–2007", Mercatorfonds, as
well as texts by the artist himself.*



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