

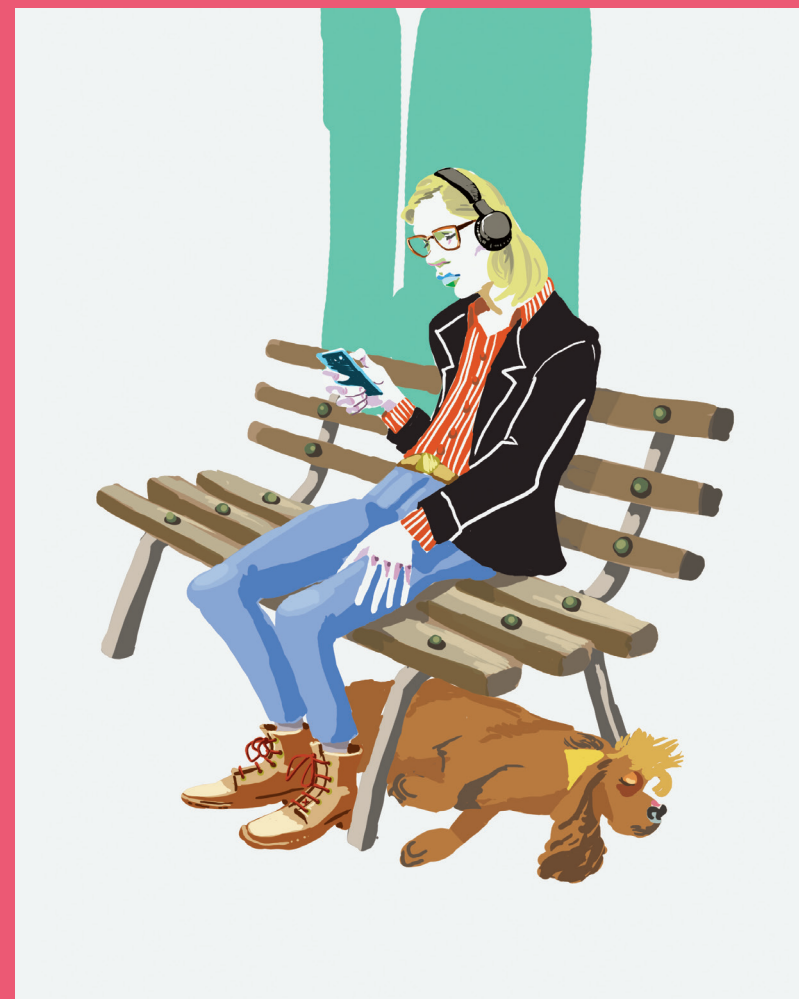
## IMPRINT

RawafedZusammenfluss is a project of offensiv'91 e.V., accompanied by InteraXion, the welcome office for migrants and refugees in Treptow-Köpenick. Our editors are dedicated volunteers.

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Thank you for reading  
our booklet! We would like  
to take this opportunity  
to introduce ourselves:

**RAWAFEDZUSAMMENFLUSS**  
brings old and new  
neighbours together.  
We write, draw and  
photograph about  
Treptow-Köpenick and  
beyond. Why so?  
Our district is a place  
of diversity!

VOWS  
WIDE  
OPEN

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BY GUY



**Having an open relationship** - we never would have tried it back home, but when we came to Berlin, everything was different. Here anything was possible and we now had a child. We felt like what we had was unbreakable. We started talking about it, bit by bit, warming up to the idea.

It was a few months later when my wife woke me in the middle of the night. We have a young child and have had trouble finding and keeping babysitters. Therefore, we go out separately. One night, she came home very late and told me she had brought someone with her. She asked if this person could sleep on the couch. Half asleep, I nodded and continued to dream til morning.

When I awoke and realized the previous night's events had not been a dream, I made breakfast for all four of us. U (which is how I will call our guest) had tremendous difficulty coping with his situation. Here he was, being served breakfast by the husband of the woman he had shared a romantic evening with. Furthermore, his host was not in the least bit angry. I was, however, apprehensive. This was all new to me, but I pride myself on being a good host. Nonetheless, U and I could not make eye contact or carry on a conversation.

Once he had left for work, my wife filled me in on her evening. She had met U on the train where they had carried on a conversation, due to which U had missed his stop. He ended up alighting with her in Köpenick and they talked and made out until both were tired. She felt bad about sending him on a long trip home so my wife invited him to sleep on our couch.

Other than kissing, they did not do anything else that night out of respect for me.

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## THE REDEFINING OF OUR RELATIONSHIP

Following the encounter, we laid down some ground rules: No sleeping with each others friends. No sleeping with other Israelis (the common bonds of language and culture could lead to undue intimacy). No bringing partners home unless the other is away traveling. We each have the right to veto any partner we want. These rules provided a primary framework that kept us each feeling secure and could be modified should the need arise.

Before we redefined our relationship, we were in a sexual slump. Over the seven years we were together, our sex life had been declining gradually. By the time our son had reached his first birthday we had intercourse approximately once or twice a month. Each of us felt guilty and the guilt led to resentment.

Once we freed ourselves from the structures of monogamy, our sex life skyrocketed. It infinitely improved both in quality and quantity. All the tension, that had built up over seven years melted away and we were, once again, into each other in ways we haven't felt since we've met.

Though we keep a strict separation between our affairs and our marriage, there is no secrecy. We share everything. We show each other texts, pictures, and talk about our experience. We laugh endlessly about each others bedroom antics. Far from creating an atmosphere of jealousy, our policy of openness takes a lot of the stress out of the situation.

I was often asked how we could remain a married couple without boundaries. In which cases, I immediately responded by insisting that there are boundaries. We are no longer forbidden a specific act, but rather are compelled to complete and total honesty. If anything, we know we are together, not because of some sexual ownership we have over each other in the eyes of gods and people, but because we choose to be.

The original article published online is longer than this printed version. You can access it here: <https://bit.ly/2PbBgGh>

MAIL FROM BERLIN

BY RUMEYSA

In my first month in Berlin, I'm trying to observe the differences between this city and my hometown Istanbul.

9 The first thing I've noticed: people ride bikes on the roads. People at all ages, parents carrying their child in a cargo behind their bike – everyone is out on the streets. In Istanbul, we just ride bikes in parks as a weekend activity. It would be way to dangerous to cycle in the daily traffic. Still, I can say, it isn't the most interesting difference I've ever seen in the streets. I see many poor people on the streets, and there is something unconventional for me about what they do. In my hometown, Istanbul, usually, poor people beg to get money



from people roaming the streets or parks. Here, in Berlin, people also collect deposit bottles in any place you can ever think of. For example, people tap the bins with a hand to hear if it has bottles in it. One day while I was going to work, I witnessed something that made me realize how you can help each other that way.

10 A middle-aged man got in the U-Bahn and started to ask people for money. Then, another man gave his empty bottle to him. Maybe for some people, it's easier to give their bottle than giving their money to a stranger. And it's nice! If you don't want people to rummage the garbage, just leave your bottles next to garbage!

# INSIDE THE MIND OF A STORY- TELLER

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BY RUMEYSA

**AN INTERVIEW WITH  
RAWAFEDZUSAMMENFLUSS (RZ), NOEMIA COLONNA (NC)**

**TODAY WE ARE GOING TO TAKE A LOOK INSIDE OF THE MIND OF A STORYTELLER. HER NAME IS NOEMIA COLONNA.**

**RAWAFEDZUSAMMENFLUSS:** Who is Noemia? Can you tell us about yourself?

**NOEMIA COLONNA:** I am a 45-year-old mum, and I have a 14-year-old son. I call myself a storyteller, that shares different perspectives of stories. Growing up in a white world, we're used to hearing stories from just one side. This motivated me to become a journalist. That's why in all of my stories, I'm trying to share every point of view.

**RZ:** What does it mean being a woman in this world?

**NC:** I have a Black body, and this body says something. From the day we are born, we learn how to put ourselves in a place we want to be. Germany, Argentina

Picture: Autumn Goodman on Unsplash



or France, no matter where we are, we will have a Black body. We have to put ourselves in a place where we want to be and face everything we have to face.

**RZ:** You are part of a project which supports Black women in technology. Can you tell us about this project?

**NC:** Yes, I'm a participant in the project of Preta Lab. It is about the necessity and pertinence of including Black women in innovation and technology. If women take part in technology, it can help us to become more equal. The research shows that we need to support women more than we do now.

**RZ:** We see most of Black women still don't have the same opportunities as other people. What do you think about that?

**NC:** You are right. For example, I have opportunities that many other Black women don't have. If I'm in a place where many other Black people can't be, then I have to speak for

them. While I'm doing it, I don't even need to open my mouth. When my body is walking down a street or settling down, it is political because having a Black body is political. But of course, I'm here not just for all Black girls, but also for 'others'. I want to show, they are not just 'others', but they are human beings.

**RZ:** Can we change and challenge how things are right now?

**NC:** I think it is possible but not easy. You can lose a job because you don't follow the rules about beauty. I embrace my natural hair, but ten years ago in Brazil, I could never have my natural hair in front of the cameras. I had to straighten my hair. If I wanted to have my natural hair, I could, but who could pay my bills? I left my job because I had respect for myself. Then, I was lucky because I got accepted to public TV and there I had my natural hair. I was good at my work, and my look did not matter more than my work. I'm

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trying to be optimistic. It is possible to challenge the status quo.

But if we want to do it, we need to be in places where the power exists, like media, government and universities. And, we must work together.

RZ: Even if it is not your issue, being together and being a voice for others. What does it mean to you?

NC: I don't believe in fighting alone because history proved it doesn't work. I believe the fight is not just yours because you don't live alone in this world. As a Black person, I say to my non-Black friends, fighting racism is not a Black people's issue, it is everybody's issue. This is because racism was invented by people who were not Black It's the same with gender issues: what is the point if, as women, we change our minds but men don't? Together we are much more able to end bad situations.

RZ: How do you raise your son when it comes to understanding others?

NC: I teach him to listen to girls. Because in our world, no one wants to listen they just want to speak. He has many female friends and when one of his friends says: "But you have more female friends than male friends", he says, "it is normal." I always taught him: you will get more privileges because you are a boy, so he is aware that it is not fair. A girl should have as much privilege as much as he has and he should take action about that.

RZ: Thank you so much for this interview!

The original interview published online is longer than this printed version. You can access it here: <https://bit.ly/32GP3IH>

by  
NOOR

## CREATING A BROCHURE ON REFUGEES' STORIES

The most difficult task of seeking asylum is to build trust in people's lives. Right after coming to the new country, a lot of refugees need to start all over again. Sometimes, neighbours are very welcoming and path the way towards language, culture, meet ups and get togethers. When I lived in a camp in Köpenick, locals held a meeting with newcomers every Friday. There, I got to know Liz Crossley. She helped me immensely to find my way around German society.

During the conversations with her, an idea came up: why not start my very own project? I had the plan to invite refugees to tell me and others about their homeland and current life. In late spring last year, with support of the welcome office InteraXion the project was approved for funding through Partnerschaften für Demokratie. I could finally get started.

The road was still full of obstacles though. People were worried about the consequences they could face when talking about their private lives. So, I decided to allow them to publish the story anonymously. A second issue I faced when I worked on the brochure was to motivate women to participate. In the end, two shared their stories, one woman from Eritrea and another one from Syria. Those two stories touched me the most. They narrated of severe cruelty. The third and last big challenge arose from where I least expected it. I got very sick and even had to stay in hospital for some weeks. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to finish the brochure as there was still so much editing to and the layout unfinished. Fortunately, I was not alone in the process and together we succeeded.