

**Come out! Be heard and be seen!  
Join the Preparations for the 2nd CommUnity Carnival 2017**

**Together for equal rights. Let's get loud  
BERLIN 17th September 2017**

**Why a CommUnity Carnival now? – What is the background to the idea of CommUnity?**

Club Al-Hakawati and others call you to join this Carnival! We want to organize a broad and inclusive artistic and political demonstration – we want to bring refugees' stories and perspective into the public debate!

This Carnival is a time to express unity against racist attitudes, against objectification and de-humanization of people, a safe space to share our stories. CommUnity carnival is conceived as a platform for as many activist groups as possible to come together — to create strong stories, images and experiences of solidarity and hope against fear!

More than ever we must stand up for equal rights, we must stand together in solidarity and fight for a better life. We call for unity and want to come together to fight right-wing movements, to smash prejudices, to strive to build a better society where everyone can express her\*self or him\*self and participate fully in the community. The growth of right-wing movements, European migration policy, the spread of hatred and fear — all these challenges demand a common and shared strategy. We need a large alliance based on solidarity and active participation.

**Is my right your right? We want equality!**

Last year more than 5,000 people took to the streets of Berlin for the first Carnival of Refugees and raised up their voices in support of unity, protest and joy. Several activist groups and art collectives came together on the “International Day Against Racism” to support refugees' demands and carry refugees' stories into the streets in order to influence the public debate and change current policies on migration.

We believe that our focus must be on reclaiming rights and raising awareness of how rights are limited in politics and practice. We want to call for more than just improved living conditions for refugees in Germany: that is essential, but it is not enough. We demand equal rights! we demand citizenship rights for everybody who lives here!

The history of the world is the history of migration. People flee from war, from poverty, they flee from countries exploited by colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. That is why we are not begging for charity but calling for solidarity. Migration is a human right without upper limits or quotas, transit zones, third-country regulations, Frontex, Schengen, without work bans, barriers to education, and so on. We want to stop deportation immediately! We want people to be treated with dignity!

**The culture of Carnival**

Mikhail Bakhtin (Russian philosopher and literary critic, 1895 – 1975) analyses carnival as a popular ancient tradition where art and life meet. It is a collectively performed play, allowing moments of acute exaggeration and grotesqueness. Blurring borders between actors and spectators, it reveals a rich variety of voices that join to deny tradition, disobey rank, and stimulate real human exchange. Rather than being isolated atoms, our bodies are part of an ever-evolving, ever-expanding collective participation “in the

potentiality of an other world”. Carnival festively exposes the present system as transitory, changeable and clearly labelled with a sell-by date. The carnivalesque is polyphonic; it has many voices. And many languages. The carnivalesque promotes a culture of laughter, directed from the grassroots at those with power and privilege.

### **Fear and Carnival – “Angst isst die Seele auf/ Fear Eats the Soul”: playing with fear to mock power**

Who is afraid of what?

All over Europe we witness right-wing and populist movements emerging, spreading and growing stronger day by day. We view these movements with concern, in particular the way that they promote racist attitudes, use fear in their programs and spread anti-Muslim racism in order to gain supporters.

Fear is a tool of power; it has always been used to justify right-wing politics and to keep people under control. Fear is used to construct “public enemies”. History shows us how easy it is to create a scapegoat and to deflect attention from real problems.

Whose fears are taken serious and whose fears are ignored? What is called “fear” and which fears are not mentioned? Those “fears”, which are used in mainstream discourse, are mostly based on ignorance, on the idea that the “others” are intrinsically different from us and hostile. Sometimes, we fear what we don’t know, what is kept away from us. Fear makes us stop moving!

We can use the grotesque to mock fear, to reveal real contradictions and inequalities. We shall support critical thinking to overcome false differences and to de-construct public debates and discourses of hate.

**Let us TELL OUR STORIES, let us DO POLITICAL ART AND POLITICS THROUGH ART.  
Let us PLAY WITH FEAR TO TURN IT UPSIDE DOWN.**

Under the motto **WE ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU ARE THERE**, we want to undermine and move beyond the mainstream concept of “integration”. “Integration” implies a de-politicization of our activities here: colonial and post-colonial perspectives cannot be eradicated from political analysis of the current situation in Europe!

Instead of refugees, we want to be called newcomers and storytellers. Different stories can address different problems and then demand different rights. We want to de-colonize our minds and bodies — let’s re-mix cultures!

### **What about you? Don’t let fear rule!**

**YOU CAN:** Join preparations for the Carnival: we need your help create masks and costumes, we need you to develop new stories.

**YOU CAN:** Support and extend our network, helping us spread the news.