



GENDER, DIVERSITY  
& INTERSECTIONALITY  
RESEARCH CENTRE

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER



**BLACK  
EUROPE IN  
BRUSSELS  
2021**

We are proud to present to you the interdisciplinary conference '**Black Europe in Brussel**'. This conference consist of a range of inspiring activities taking place **between 1-15 July 2021**. The conference brings to the forefront the AfroEuropean communities and Brussels, the capital of Belgium and Europe. This event is part of the international and interdisciplinary AfroEuropeans Network and is organized in

anticipation of the 8th Biennial AfroEuropeans Network Conference “Intersectional Challenges in Afro-European Communities”, which is postponed to 6-9 July 2022 due to COVID-19.

This event is organized with the support of various partners including Africa Platform Ghent University Association, Black Speaks Back, Bozar, Brussels Centre for Urban Studies (BCUS, VUB), Centre for Literary and Intermedial Crossing (CLIC, VUB), Critical Narratives, European Network Against Racism (ENAR), deBuren Vlaams-Nederlands Huis voor Cultuur en Debat, Observatoire du SIDA et des Sexualités (ULB), Pilar House for Arts and Science, Research Centre Gender, Diversity and Intersectionality (RHEA, VUB) and Wetsi Art Gallery.

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## **Launch event - Black Europe in Brussels**

Brussels is known as one of the most cosmopolitan and diverse cities in Europe. Since the relatively late emergence of a Black African population in the 1990s, the city has become host to activist and cultural associations and organizations concerned with community building as well as with issues of coloniality and racism. The city’s decolonization movement, which received a new impetus by the killing of George Floyd in the spring of 2020, has renewed attention for the role of the city’s public space and urban landscape in upholding the rather glorified memory of Belgium’s colonial past. In the past decade Brussels also has become the place of residence for a large number of Black African refugees who were stranded in Belgium by increased travel restrictions imposed by Britain in the context of Brexit but who, as inhabitants of Brussels, are often overlooked. How do these various types of Black communities connect, move, make space, and resist in Brussels? This panel gathers Black locals of Brussels discussing the history, present and future of Black presence in the city. In doing so, they explore the influence of the city’s multilingual, interfederal and international character on Black organizations and communities.

***Convenor: Emma-Lee Amponsah & BLACK SPEAKS BACK***

***Speakers: Dorrie Wilson, Jean-Luc Rwogera & Modi Ntambwe***

***Launch: Black Brussels (panel discussion)***

***20.00 - 20.50, Thursday 1 July 2021***

***Premiering at [Black Speak Back TV](#)***

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## **Doing Black Art in Brussels**

This panel brings into conversation black artists and arts practitioners to reflect on the various ways in which they and their work engage with the city of Brussels, its assets and its downsides. They consider to what extent art can give shape to cultural change, taking their own sources of inspiration and artistic trajectories as points of departure. Mixing literary reading and performance with discussion, this evening gives the floor to talented people who contribute to Brussels being one of the most vibrant cities of the world.

The event also marks the launch of the Black Arts in Brussels website. Devoted to the visual arts, this website is one of the 2021 Black Europe in Brussels initiatives sponsored by the Brussels Centre for Urban Studies.

**Convenors:** *Elisabeth Bekers & Janine Hauthal (VUB, CLIC), in collaboration with Pilar (VUB House for Arts and Science) and deBuren (Vlaams-Nederlands Huis voor Cultuur en Debat).*

**Speakers:** *Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, Wetsi Mpoma, Lisette Ma Neza (& others to be confirmed)*

**Format:** *online panel debate followed by online Q&A (with registration)*

**17.00-18.30, Wednesday 7 July 2021**

**More information:** <https://www.afroEuropeans2021.com/en/black-europe-in-brussels/>

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## **Black Mental Health & Care in and beyond Covid-19 times w/ Glenn Helberg**

How do we care for ourselves and each other in a pandemic? How did Afrodescendant anti-racism gradually arrive at issues of care and health that have long remained marginal? In recent years the African diaspora in Belgium and Europe has increasingly voiced the need for Black mental health care providers. This call seems to have become more urgent since the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic. Several community spaces closed down, Black and Brown bodies have been under more, sometimes fatal, surveillance since lockdown. In other countries, research has shown that the epidemic is affecting Black and other minoritized communities more severely. Due to colour blindness and the long-standing obliteration of black Africans in public policy, no such data are available in Belgium. This panel further explores this trend in a broader discussion on Black mental health and care work. Where are the bottlenecks in mental health care when it comes to the needs of Black people? What can Black care workers, in the broadest sense, provide that other care workers cannot? Are there mental health issues linked to the condition of Black people in Belgium and Europe related to migration, racism, and coloniality? And how does Covid-19 affect Black communities both mentally and physically?

**Convenor:** *Sarah Demart (Observatoire du sida et des sexualités, ULB) in collaboration with BLACK SPEAKS BACK*

**Speakers:** *Aline Bosuma, Emmanuelle Nsunda, Marc Galo & Zakayo Wandoloh*

**20.00-20.50, Thursday 8 July 2021**

**Premiering at [Black Speak Back TV](#)**

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## **Afropolitan Women and Black Europe at the European Parliament I in collaboration with the Afropolitan Festival at Bozar**

Women's political participation and leadership are critical for the functioning of democracies and social progress across the world. In the European Parliament, women have in recent years increasingly been elected. In 2019, 39,5% of members of the parliament (MEPs) were female. However, the underrepresentation of women of colour continues to be a challenge in the European Parliament, particularly in relation to women of African descent. Of the 705 MEPs, only 5 are women of African descent. This panel discussion is hosted in collaboration with BOZAR's Afropolitan Weekend. The panel highlights the contributions of women of African descent in the European Parliament and provides a

platform to discuss relations between the European Union and Afro-European/black communities. Panellists will discuss the particular challenges and opportunities for female MEPs of African descent and how to engage and build bridges with Afro-European communities across political configurations and geographic borders.

**Convenor: Olivia Gieskes in collaboration with BOZAR, ENAR and ARDI**

**Speakers: Pierrette Gabrielle Herzberger-Fofana, Samira Rafaela, Magid Magid & Ojeaku Nwabuzo**

**14.00 - 16.00, Friday 9 July 2021**

**A video recording of this panel debate will be posted online after the event.**

**Tickets (8-6 euro) at [BOZAR](#)**

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## **Black Joy**

In recent years, the concept of Black Joy has garnered increased attention among Black communities. It is commonly described as a counter practice that combats the unidimensional representations of Black history and contemporary Black life which focus largely on the pain and struggle that Black people experience. The Black Joy movement seems to have grown stronger after the series of global protests following the killing of George Floyd in the spring of 2020. Black Joy responds to the often very explicit media images of violence against and inequality of Black people and addresses the widespread feelings of emotional and political fatigue and the normalization of trauma among Black people. Instead, the practice of joy celebrates, highlights and creates positive Black experiences in the past, present and future. In this panel Black Joy advocates engage in a conversation about the liberatory potential of Black Joy, discussing the dis/advantages of conceptualizing Black people's Joy, and the dangers we may face in a neoliberal climate in which Black people's bodies are prone to being co-opted by institutions and companies for branding and commercial purposes.

**Convenor: Emma-Lee Amponsah & BLACK SPEAKS BACK**

**Speakers: Aimee Mukunde, Jean-Gabriel Tshangala Kabote, Kopano Maroga & Sarah Diedro**

**20.00-20.50, Thursday 15 July 2021**

**Premiering at [Black Speaks Back TV](#)**

## STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE



A statement of solidarity with the people of Palestine was formulated. We speak out against the violence that the Israeli state is committing against the Palestinian population in Gaza, the West Bank and in Israel itself. With this statement, we take a stand against the settler colonialism of the Israeli State and the structural violence against the Palestinian people. We declare our solidarity with Palestinians worldwide, including the millions of refugees, including those who live in Belgium, and those who work or study at our university.

*If you would like to read the whole statement, please visit [RHEA](#). The statement is available in English, Dutch and French.*

*Do you work at the VUB or ULB and endorse this message? Please sign the declaration of solidarity via this [link](#) to Google forms. We would also like to encourage everyone to spread this statement among colleagues at the VUB and ULB.*

## CALL FOR PANELS

### A SECOND WAVE OF ANTIRACISM IN EUROPE?

This workshop is supported by BIRMM, BSOG, EDGE and RHEA at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

We welcome submissions from various academic disciplines, activists, and about different parts of Europe. We welcome single and co-authored pieces, as well as collaborations of activists and academics. Race, racism and antiracism is understood in the plural, meaning these terms may refer to anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, antizyngantism, indigenous peoples and other racialized

communities. It is hoped the conference will amount to future collective academic/non-academic publication(s) and networks.

' writes Philomena Essed in 2014 (p. 141). Whilst Essed writes about Dutch developments during the past decade, we can observe similar developments elsewhere in Europe. The Black Lives Matter movement of 2020 and far earlier calls to act against islamophobia, to decolonize museums, public spaces and educational institutions. This all evidences the resurgence of race and racism as a topic forcefully entering public and political debates. These demonstrations, newly emerged collectives and political discourses do not always make it to the history books let alone become part of our collective memory or cultural archives (Wekker, 2016). Therefore, we feel the urgency to map and archive these developments. We invite contributions from activists and academics alike who have shown a commitment to antiracism in their work and engage with antiracism from an embodied and situated perspective. *We are witnessing the force and momentum of what can be called a new, second wave of Dutch anti-racism, since the 1980s'*

We are pleased to invite paper proposals for the two-day workshop "Antiracism in Europe", that will take place on 9-10 December 2021 at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Belgium. The workshop aims to map, archive and theorize past and present antiracism activism in Europe.

Fore more information: [RHEA](#)

## RHEA IN THE NEWS

### **Transitioning from online to in-person academic conferences: which pandemic-induced experiences should we keep? Mariska Jung**

The pandemic has cost us a lot, but it has also given us experiences we would otherwise not have. It has changed the format of academic conferences for the better: moving from on-site to online. With the hope of keeping what worked well during the pandemic, I reflect on my recent conference experiences.. Please read more [here!](#)

### **Heeft de seksismewet iets veranderd op straat? 'Catcalling is nog altijd dagelijkse kost'. Interview met o.a. Karen Celis**

Catcalling is een wijdverspreid fenomeen in grote steden. In 2014 kwam er naar aanleiding van de documentaire 'Femme de la rue' van Sofie Peeters een wet om seksuele straatintimidatie aan banden te leggen, de seksismewet. Maar wat is er sindsdien veranderd? Politie, ngo's en slachtoffers getuigen. Lees meer in [Weekend Knack](#).

### **Taboe rond het verzamelen van etnische gegevens vervaagt. Ilke Adam**

Het verzamelen van cijfers op basis van afkomst of etniciteit lag lange tijd gevoelig. Vandaag lijken de geesten te rijpen voor structurele etnische dataverzameling. 'Als we racisme willen onderzoeken, moeten we etniciteit duidelijk benoemen.' Lees het Plus-artikel uit De Standaard [op de BIRRM-website](#)

## NEW RHEA PUBLICATIONS

Over three centuries of scholarly publishing

### Gendering the Portuguese-Speaking World From the Middle Ages to the Present

Edited by Francisco Bethencourt, King's College London

This book explores the significance of gender in shaping the Portuguese-speaking world from the Middle Ages to the present. Sixteen scholars from disciplines including history, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, literature and cultural studies analyse different configurations and literary representations of women's rights and patriarchal constraints. Unstable constructions of masculinity, femininity, queer, homosexual, bisexual, and transgender identities and behaviours are placed in historical context. The volume pioneers in gendering the Portuguese expansion in Africa, Asia, and the New World and pays particular attention to an inclusive account of indigenous agencies.

Contributors are: Darlene Abreu-Ferreira, Vanda Anastácio, Francisco Bethencourt, Dorothee Boulanger, Rosa Maria dos Santos Capelão, Maria Judite Mário Chipenembe, Gily Coene, Philip J. Hawk, Ben James, Anna M. Klobucka, Chia Longman, Amélia Polónia, Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, Ana Cristina Santos, and João Paulo Silvestre.

#### Readership

The book is addressed both to an academic audience of social sciences and humanities studying the Portuguese-Speaking World, and to a wider cultivated public interested in gender studies.

Francisco Bethencourt, Ph.D. (1992), European University Institute, is Charles Boxer Professor of History at King's College London. He is the author of *Racisms From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century* (2003) and *The Inquisition: a Global History, 1478-1854* (2009). He is completing a new monograph on *The New Christian Trading Elite, 1497-1773*.



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Volume 33*

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For more information,  
[brill.com/euro](http://brill.com/euro)

Across the Copperbelt: Urban & Social Change in Central Africa's Borderland Communities. Henriët, B. (ed.), Larmer, M. (ed.), Pesa, I. (ed.), Taylor, R. (ed.) & Guene, E. (ed.), 18 Jun 2021, Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer. 380 p.

Bijstand door een jeugdadvocaat aan Roma-minderjarigen in als misdrijf omschreven feiten: geen sinecure? De Bus, S., 9 Jun 2021, Juridische meesterwerken 2018-2019. Alofs, E., François, A., Smis, S., Van Doninck, J. & Van Limberghen, G. (eds.). Antwerpen: Intersentia Cambridge, p. 57-100 .

Een stem geven aan Roma door visueel onderzoek: Voordelen en valkuilen van photovoice; De Bus, S. & Nuytiens, A., 11 May 2021, In : Panopticon. 42, 3.

Everyday Racism in Social Science research: A Systematic Review and Future Directions. Bourabain, D. & Verhaeghe, P-P., Apr 2021, In: Du Bois Review. p. 1-30.

Gendering the Portuguese-Speaking World. From the Middle Ages to the Present. Bethencourt, F. (ed.), 22 May 2021, Brill.

## AGENDA

### Keep it organized!

#### Launch event: Black Brussels

Thursday 1/07/2021

Time: 20.00-20.50

*Black Europe in Brussels*

#### Doing Black Art in Brussels

Wednesday 7/07/2021

Time: 17.00-18.30

*Black Europe in Brussels*

#### Black Mental Health & Care in and beyond Covid-19 times w/Glenn Helberg

Thursday 8/07/2021

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Time: 20.00-20.50

*Black Europe in Brussels*

**Afropolitan Women and Black Europe at the European Parliament - in collaboration with the Afropolitan Festival at Bozar**

Friday 9/07/2021

Time: 14.00-16.00

*Black Europe in Brussels*

**Black Joy**

Thursday 15/07/2021

Time: 20.00-20.50

*Black Europe in Brussels*

## YOUR NEWS IN THE NEWSLETTER?

If you have some interesting RHEA-related news that you would want to include in our newsletter or you would like to organize an event in collaboration with us, do not hesitate to contact us at [rhea@vub.be](mailto:rhea@vub.be)



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