

MIGRATION, SEX, HISTORY: AFRICA/EUROPE

A Research into Labor, Theory, Activism and Migration from Africa into Europe in the 21st Century. (Why is Africa cursed in Europe?)

Marina Gržinić, Aina Šmid, Tjaša Kancler

INTERVIEW WITH CLIFFORD ERINMWIONGHAE, NUMAN MOHAMMAD, MARISSA LÔBO, KHAN ADALAT

by Marina Gržinić and Tjaša Kancler

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Clifford Erinmwionghae is a migrant and activist. He studies Post Conceptual Art Practices at the Academy for fine Arts in Vienna.

Numan Mohammad and Khan Adalat are refugees and activists of the REFUGEE PROTEST CAMP MOVEMENT in Austria.

Marissa Lôbo is a migrant black activist and artist. She co-ordinates the cultural work within a self-organization of migrant women – Maiz, Linz (www.maiz.at). She studies Post Conceptual Art Practices at the Academy for fine Arts in Vienna.

ONE YEAR OF THE REFUGEE PROTEST CAMP MOVEMENT IN AUSTRIA November 2013 – December 2014

Tjaša: Refugee Protest Camp Movement started one year ago, when you decided to go to the Freud's park and to stay there and camp there, and to protest against racist, discriminatory, exclusive, oppressive EU politics. The situation changed through time so now in the beginning of this conversation I think it would be important to start, may be to do a short presentation of each one of you, about what is your situation here in Austria, and then if we can connect this with the question of what is the present situation, what can you comment on the present situation of the Refugee Protest Camp Movement now, here?

Clifford: Thank you. Really, it's been a year and I would say none of us had a suspicion that we are going to be fighting for one year, nonetheless having the believe that after one year we won't be able still to achieve or what we planned to set to achieve. This is not that we didn't do much, it is a simple proof that the asylum policy in this country and elsewhere in Europe is really too tight to penetrate, because they have all their power, and infrastructure, all their laws backing their position, claiming that asylum system, is one of the best in the world and that they are treating the people who are in this process, the nicest way they could imagine, which is in a way completely wrong and this is why we think it is important to question it, and from time to time we see how they come up with different forms of action, to really undermine us, to tell us that this right that we are demanding for

and this quality of life that we think we should enjoy as humans, really is not made for us. Their reasons are not clear, because they didn't put it straight to us to understand, the simple language, they simply just say, yes, your country is safe to live in, you have no reason to be here, and this is proving in the way they are handling the asylum process, till the

way they collaborate... no, that's another statement, they don't collaborate with embassies, in fact they instruct the embassies, in what to do because they know, they have this weapon which is called, corruption, and this weapon they are using it successfully against our countries of origin because our politicians are corrupt. The facts that they know that they can bribe anyone, and they have the money for repression, they will continue to do it, there are a lot of things we are ready to question, but it seems at this point that the whole year we have been in this fight, we have not been able to attract as many members of the civil society to understand how we view this situation. Because they don't see it the way we see it, and we don't have the media strength to tell them how the true situation is.

In fact you have the ministry and every other government body that is in connection with this asylum case, telling the general public that we are trouble makers. And we don't have the strength so to speak to fight back, the way they hit us, we don't have that energy to hit back. But in my opinion, I would say I have seen from time to time, how good it is, to always let them know that we are tired of all this regulation, of all this tactics, of not wanting to give us, this opportunity to involve us in this community, we have seen that people, who are really tired, I have spoken to more than 100 people, immigrants in this country in this past year, if everybody have the same feeling that I have that not only do we need to talk about this issues, we need to work together, and achieve something, I think this country would be hot right now. Because the views police and power have against immigrants in this country, especially refugees, people are really scared. But if we are able to break out of this scared situation, I think they will have enough in their hand to really take it seriously, right now there is a little case in their hand they can squash it, they can throw it away, it is not heavy, they can just hold it there because it's not heavy. Because they could count how many refugees are in this struggle and there is almost out of 60.000 or 50.000 people I don't remember the number that are seeking asylum in this country and you have less than a hundred protesting. This is not a problem, because this is not up to 1%. So this is how the system usually works. They say that we are just few and our case can be handled if not that they are pushing us so to speak, they say they are tolerating us, but this is wrong, they know that the truth is what we are telling...I think we will go on...

Numan: In my point of view, the achievement when I came to Vienna and met you, Clifford, at that time, at that moment we were feeling in this so called democratic country, there was nothing going on like this, if we make resistance against the systems from where the idea came to make a long march and to create a movement bigger and broader, and to connect with different countries. Because we were having this feeling that we have different demands, because we were living in a specific space area. When we came out of that and we realized if we are going to achieve this demands, it's not going to help us who are living out of that place, because once you have to go out of this *lager*, the system should be changed there, actually it is very important steps, but in order to see there is only

150.000 people are living, if we see all over the country there are more than 500.000 refugees, asylum seekers, and how they are feeling the problems, there is much more bigger in figures, if we say our politicians are corrupt, I don't think so, I will say our politicians are selfish, they just think about their own bank accounts, if they are making a deal from here to bring persons back to Pakistan or Africa, or to Syria or another different country where they are going to be deported, because this government is paying for another government

and which money comes to our countries, it is not moving to the public but just to politicians bank accounts, and it has happened in the past, it was a scandal in Pakistan as well, the Swiss accounts, even the Supreme Court does not have the right to open the account of our politicians, the scandal is what they have. If I'm employed I'm earning 1000€ per month in one year I cannot be in charge of the field pump station, from where that money is coming? I think these western politicians are making more corruption on it, they are *bringing*? the crime, to do in our countries, if our politicians are taking our rights from the public, of course the public will go on the street to kill each other, to snap some things, the crime will be increased. If you don't have right laws which says these laws is mentioned for everyone, even to my family, to my sisters, to my children, comparable to a country where is a king, he says whatever happens, if somebody has broken the laws even my brothers, or sisters you have to give him punishment and everything is maintained, but I don't think here in Austria is maintained like that, it is a democratic, and it was true that if we are going on like this with this movement for the next 20 years we are not going to achieve, because people who are living here they are illegal, and this blue uniforms they are the criminals, but they have a uniform and the right to do this jobs, nobody is going to ask them it is the same like to shoot the guy with the uniform and shoot the guy without the uniform. With the uniform he is not going to get arrested, but the other is going to get arrested for 20 years maybe, I see totally different ways, I think so this movement should not be over in any way, it should go on somehow, because it is now at the moment very small, but I hope that people will get more into this, that is my hope, it will go on somehow.

SUPPORTERS-ALLIANCES-STRATEGIES

Marina: Actually I also wanted to ask Marissa because you are one of the most prominent from our estimation in the movement as a supporter, from the first day on, and with others, and with others working continuously, so what is your point of view about, of the one year of the Refugee Protest Camp, and also maybe because of the connection with other in the Academy of Fine Arts, what was the result of the failed let's say or maybe not, entering at the Academy of Fine Arts, as one possibility of turn and make another strategic move in the Refugee Protest Movement?

Marissa: At first I would say that actually I have to correct you, prominent I would not say, it was for me from the beginning a kind of strategy to be visible, even though I know I was not talking from the position of the refugee, but when I took the decision to be part of the protest was coming from this connection of being migrant because you cannot separate this, and I think this is a big mistake to try to make this separation, refugees, migration. It's about migration; refugee case it's about migration, global migration, and that is why. And then I was, since the beginning dealing with my position, I wasn't refugee, but I saw, it was

very clear to me that this protest was the first time in Austria, that refugees were speaking for themselves. And this is something that is coming from my political background, coming from the self-organization of migrants, my experience of articulation, of speaking for myself, trying to not having this position of always being objectified so this was very clear that here it was for me the decision to be part of the protest was the most important thing. Because actually if you connect again the refugees, if you make this kind of division again, the refugees are those who are supposed not to be here. If you as migrant are facing discrimination, everyday racism, as a refugee, being part of these *lagers*,

detention centers, you are totally isolated, you are not visible, so it's coming from the process, of those who are not really allowed to exist, so it's then the process of legal system is functioning on this legalization process, the concept of citizenship, or the concept of being part of the system, so they are those who are totally denied of existing here in Europe.

Marina: self-organization, self-determination was one of the key moments, of the whole movement...

Marissa: yes, so then I choose this strategy of visibility because I thought I knew from my experience that sometimes it's better to show your face, to be present then to hide, so when I saw that many of the refugees were doing this, showing their face, talking, not being afraid of showing themselves, now we want, as you said before, you both, it was making this moment and showing, remembering Europe, that they are here, that they exist here, because they started from the first day with the statement, "We demand our rights!". So this was something very new in the history of Austria, because we have to say it's not the first movement of illegalized people in Europe, but in Austria, like as a movement was the first time. And I have to correct I think, because before Traiskirchen it was the Somalian community one month before, that was going to the street and demonstration, so this was already a kind of influence on that, it was the inspiration to connect with Traiskirchen. So, coming back to your question, it was by chance that I'm studying here at the Academy, because this was never for me the background that I was trying to put inside of the protest. Because when I was there I wasn't there as an artist, I was there as an activist, and it was in this connection I told you before. But actually, being part of this institution can give you many kind of privilege that you can use, and this was a kind of connections with the Academy, since the beginning, they were coming here to give lectures, to change this paradigm, of them speaking for themselves, and to use this space. So this was always the connection for me that was very important of how to use this space of the big institution like Academy that has a name, and with the development of these protests we have many artists inside of the protest, and people that are studying art and are interested in the political struggle. They were there for many different reasons I don't want to say here because it's not the case. So they were like inside of the protests. Again, I divide myself from this concept of being a supporter because I don't like this, I'm not a supporter, I'm an political activist. I think it's the relation of power when you say that somebody is supporting someone, it's more about solidarity and how you put this in praxis, in a practical way, this solidarity. Because I think it starts here when you start to talk about refugees and the others who are not refugees are like supporting them, so this relation lead us to a very paternalistic relation.

So just to be more clear, yes, I think this was a reason how I took part and how are historically the elements of self-articulation and I think the Academy was always very present, like students who were part of the protests, because they were here, many meetings, many lectures that they gave here, so it was clear when it happened here, and also it's strange to say it was an occupation, because I mean they were not saying themselves that this was an occupation. But when this happened almost one month ago, I think they never said, the refugees, that they want to occupy and live here, but I think it was the strategy of, one of the institutions that since of the beginning was having space, having professors like you, this was almost like the affectivity for the refugees, this was not fake this construction of solidarity for them, because this was

always a kind of cooperation, but that is why for them it was clear that they could come here and to have a space with students and professors, could make visible now the moment that is like that you said before, a moment with a lot of frustration. Because you start the protest with many people, and then you have like this reduction. And we are not talking about 50% of reduction, it's like, almost 70% or 80%, so this is a process that have many arguments; for sure people started to be tired, or the conditions of living together is not always easy, so it's the same with the repression, you know, this movement now, being accused of human trafficking in the last three months, this was for sure leading to a lot of insecurity while being part of this protests. Because people started to question themselves if they are going to pay, not only with their life, of losing the possibility to change the *status quo*, but being criminalized, being some years in jail because of the accusation that can have very serious consequences for their lives.

I would say that actually the Academy, I think my position is position that if you talk about solidarity, it's something very serious, it's a very serious word. From where I come from, from South America, this was, I think that the concept of solidarity changed a lot in the last years, you know, because I remember with my socialization, solidarity was almost like, you have to take the responsibility, it's a lot of responsibility, it's the kind of ... You have to take, you understand the need of the other, the so called other, and you have to, it's not only the relation of power, of helping, but it's the way of how to think together, and to be really behind of it. Not like our situation at the Academy came that they were asking for a kind of visibility because I think it was almost a kind of misunderstanding of what was really the need of them to be at the Academy. Because from the beginning it was not a need of occupation, because they said that, but it was a kind of panic here that they will stay and not leave, and then I ask again, ok, solidarity is welcome but not when you come to our home?

Marina: but I have another question regarding the question of solidarity, because we were recently in Greece and we talked in Athens with migrants organizations and those who really went through this process and now are in charge, and they made a clear distinction simply to say between solidarity and alliances, and they were very much exposing that maybe the possibilities of reorganization of the strategies today is into alliances, so strategically alliances also with those who maybe will have some other interest, but in the political and economic moment they can be used with them, so my question will be what can be a difference or how you see and they really put a difference between the solidarity on one side, and question of alliances on the other, as possibility and difference in strategy?

Marissa: I think it is very important to have alliances, I think, but I don't see it as a long process, because alliances is as you said, it comes from the need to make alliances, but I don't think it's possible, between, in this case, between refugees, migrants and the alliance with the majority of Europeans, I don't believe that can function for a long process. I think it's a need of space, because if you want still to articulate ourselves, or be in position of power, so we cannot do these alliances in a long process, with the majority. But I think it's very important, this is the way I see it, as you said before. Even those who may be don't share the same political but strategic alliances is a moment when in our case, coming from the minority position, that even we can use the access and the power, that the majority have to show solidarity, not to

show, but to act in solidarity I would say.

Numan: because I would like to say just a few sentences about the migrants and asylum seekers cannot separate, but the thing is that even if you are a migrant you will never going to have the right as a citizen of Austria, or as a citizen of Germany, but I think we should combine this three parts together. If you are going to live 20 years as a migrant here, as a student, or as an employed person, if you are coming for employment as a migrant, you are never going to stay more than your contract. You cannot stay, you have to leave and go away from your friends, or which relation you are going to create in that short time. Because in the asylum seekers living 10 years here, speaking perfect German language, working here, but once the decision is coming you should leave this country and go away, and it is also with migrants. Why not to combine what is different between citizens are doing and non-citizens are doing, the equal jobs, the equal pays, why they have different stuff, one day they have to leave and go back, why they cannot continue here their lives, because I am an asylum seeker, and now I'm out of this program and I am moving back voluntarily, because I don't want to get deported by force, it is better to go by respect. And if I come as a migrant here again for a short time, 3 years, 5 years, 10 years, then they will say ok, now you will have to leave. But until when, we the non-citizens of this country, Western countries, until when we have to play with it?

MIGRANTS DEPORTATIONS, REGULATIONS DUBLIN II

Marissa: can I ask you something? Just very shortly, there is a statement by Numan that I have on my mind now, that is like, actually it's the other way of what you are saying now but you said like, you can deport us, you can send us back, but we are going to come back, and we are going to come back, and come back, and come back. And I remember this statement that you did in a very emotional way, we are going to come back, we multiply ourselves and we are going to come back, and we come back. I think this was a very strong statement that you were saying, because until when we have to play this, but people are not, Europe has to understand that people are not going to stop to come here, and stay here, so this is how you said. You can try to kill us, send us back, you can try to put us in this situation that you think we are not going to come back, but we are always going to come back.

Numan: When I said that we are going to come back, I meant that you cannot stop us coming here. If the person is deported to Hungary and Hungary is putting person in a

prison, **Dublin II** and Hungary is never going to give you the asylum there not a status, the person is trying to be deported to Serbia and then to come back again. It is the same if you are deporting from here to Pakistan even to Africa, if he has friends here and family here, he don't want to leave and he will come here by his own. But the thing is that until when we have to survive? To take the risk to go away from the families, or to go away from your relations, or when you are integrated. Because once we were integrated in our countries, we had to flee from there, we had to break away from our families, from our friends, and the way we came we risk our lives, we arrived, and again we are risking a lot, losing our time, not achieving anything and then to have relations and get back to bad systems.

[text]

Dublin II regulation – is the way how the European immigration control FOREX is functioning under the agreement called Dublin II, which forces immigrants and asylum seekers to do quite bizarre things—including them being sent back to dangerous countries in handcuffs.

The Dublin II regulation is determining which of the countries in the “Dublin area” is responsible for examining an asylum application. If you want to be sure that a certain country of asylum is responsible for your application you must know more about Dublin II. The “Dublin area” or “Dublin II area” includes Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden. Denmark does not participate to the Dublin II system. Norway and Iceland do participate though they are not EU Member States.

Why it is not only to move further in future, that is my question to the public, as well to understand concrete situations, me as Numan, he as Clifford and you as Marissa, and as a professor Marina, we have a different status. You can stay here as many years you want, Marissa only can stay here until she is in a contract, as long as she has a visa, as a migrant. We as asylum seekers, as Clifford is working, paying taxes, everything and having family, and being a political person, and once his embassy will going to give his travelling documents to the Austrians, and they will say ok, just go back. And this is the fight that should be over, and continue as a piece of love and to stay united. The law is saying you have to separate, but why? In which circumstances? The society does not have a problem with him, nobody...

Marina: It's neoliberal global capitalism that changed and some positions and bodies are simply to say becoming dispensable, some force of labor and some redefinition of humanity as well, so this is why, simply to say.

Clifford: Again, the struggle for migrants is really a tough one, like you said before you cannot separate the word migration from asylum seeking, because the way they succeeded in building it, it's from one level to the other so at the end of the day, you see this hierarchy kind of relation is something you cannot take away from society as well because it is built upon this structure, the society that some are more equal than the others, and so are our countries, so that is why you have this label, “developing countries”, “advanced countries”,

then once you fall into the lower class, the one in the upper class will do anything to put you there, because, I will give you one example, like there was an online discussion, about two or three years ago, there were questions asked by a lot of people, why is it that when you have a European, an American or Australian working in Nigerian oil company they are paid higher than the Nigerians who have the same qualification? There were a lot of talks and turnings but one answer really stroked me, that is that it was decided before they found oil in Nigeria that it will never be the same to be paid an African the same amount they pay a European, because their sole interest is not to have a bunch of millionaires running in the streets of Africa, it is the challenge for the West, so when you look at it critically you will see that is not going to be an easy war, in any way you question the power of the West be sure something big is going to happen the next morning.

As for me I understand that this struggle that we are in right now, would not see the worse of the consequences yet, they are still to come, and in as much as I am aware of that if it is going to take my life I will keep fighting, but I'm not going to take my life myself, I'm not going to hurt myself to prove the point because, there is no point you are going to prove that will change their mind, but fighting we reach the other steps, until they will find no other way out because, I as an asylum seeker here in Europe, I can already see in the streets of Europe that the new generation thinks completely differently, the pop culture is motivating the younger generation to think in a different direction and this is what the law can never stop. I have hopes that things are going to change, but if we keep quiet today, that means, we are wasting our opportunities to do something, for the future generation because what we are enjoying now, the good once that created the social system in Europe, fight hard for it because it was not also easy for them to create this social system, but this is what we are all enjoying right now... If we put it on a scale to live as an asylum seeker in Europe is completely different as living as an asylum seeker in Africa.

I had the opportunity to see asylum seekers in Nigeria when there was a war in Liberia that is never the same, living as a Nigerian inside Nigeria, it was never the same, and I saw at firsthand what the conditions were. Now I'm also here living as an alien, but the society here is completely different in so many ways, because the way we think and the way we relate to issues, if I'm discussing here now with my fellow Africans I know what the reposes are going to look like, I know the difference already so this gives me the edge, when I'm in a situation to think about what to do to improve whatever struggle we are in right now, this knowledge cannot be taken away even if I'm send to Africa today, I will keep fighting from there, because the people there need the same information the people here need. If we all keep quiet, go to the office, get back, get paid at the end of the month, go to the shop, live, eat, sleep, at the end of the day we are all going down to the grave. So what do you have to achieve for your generation? The only way I can achieve for my generation is to make sure that this struggle continue, in which ever form I can improve this generation and other generation, I'm ready to take the ideas from you, from you, from you, from everybody, and get myself improved.

What are we fighting for? Our rights, our freedom. Because the way they keep us it is like if I compare it with the cage I won't be wrong. Because personally I have never been to Traiskirchen since 9 and a half years I have been in this country but last year, I saw that house, it was horrible, then I compared it to some housing facilities for asylum seekers

within the city of Vienna, you can also see that some living conditions, are better, are more improved comparing to other houses. I have been in three houses in Vienna, the living conditions are never the same, and the way the social workers relate to you are never the same. What really make me angry is that you don't see the authority around, they don't come around at all, they go to the office or send them a letter "how is everything going, how are you, you need the house?" They say, "yes, everybody is happy we are giving them the best..." how would you see it when the good people, the good civil society who are sympathizing with the lives of the refugees decided to go to the shop and make an order to contribute to the house, "please give this to the occupants of this house", and you see the social workers taking this stuff home simply because they are too good for the refugees. It happened everywhere in Vienna, and again sometimes they call us, please bring this stuff in, there has been a donation, they will not share we saw it in a few occasions.

The only time they would bring these goods, wears out of their store room will be when the expiring date is near. This is sick. There are a lot of problems, our people is going through in this country, we don't talk about it, nobody asks us about it, but if we have the opportunity to talk about it, we also need the motivation to talk about it because so many people are scared to talk, nonetheless, ask people to come to the street to demonstrate, against the inhuman treatment they receive from time to time in these *lagers*.

HISTORY/PRESENT: MARCUS OMOFUMA (1999-2014)

Marissa:

I think this is very important Clifford, because now the film can contextualize the situation here in Austria, because you are a Nigerian living here for ten years, and now you said something very important and I think it is important to understand, the context here, like how since Omofuma, may be you can explain more about the case of Omofuma and Operation Spring, with the Black community, specifically the Nigerian community, that I think it is important to say how is really the situation here in Austria, because as you said many people here are scared to demonstrate here because there is a history.

[text]

On May 1st 1999 the 25 year old Marcus Omofuma (originally from Nigeria) was being deported from Austria. He had come to Austria in September 1998, in order to seek asylum, as he was being persecuted and threatened in Nigeria. In December 1998 the answer he got on his asylum proposal was negative. On the same day Marcus was being put into deportation-prison, in order to be expelled some time later. Marcus' appeal on this decision was also being denied. The deportation plane with Marcus should have gone to Lagos in Nigeria, with a short interruption in Sofia (Bulgaria). As Marcus was protesting against his deportation, some passengers in the plane complained about his loud cries. So the cops, escorting Marcus to his unknown future in Nigeria, closed his mouth with some adhesive tape. They had already fixed his hands and feet before. Marcus was suffering of bronchitis, a disease of which you normally don't die. When the cops took of the adhesive tape in Sofia, they noticed that Marcus had died of asphyxiation. Unfortunately Marcus is not the first one to die because of such inhuman, extreme deportation practices.

Marcus Omofuma is the story of Black African immigrants and their experiences with European immigration politics.

Clifford: Interestingly, I wasn't here yet when the Omofuma incident happened, but I listen from time to time when people talk about it, but it has produced one very clear picture, about how Austria deals with uprisings, with people demanding justice, how they are prepared to tell you, this is not your country, you don't have the right to demand anything. The Marcus Omofuma incident really it did a lot to bring people out of this struggle, it brought the people out of this struggle, simply because you could see, people who saw it then can testify the amount of repression, the tactics, the lies and the allegations, the police used to imprison the innocent people. A lot of people if you speak to them today, they tell you, you don't question this country, they

believe that the only thing you need to do is to live quietly, don't question nobody, like it's a military and dictatorship regime, you dare not question. But I tried to let them know, I came here in 2004 and what was going on in this country at that time, has really changed a lot. Because in the streets of Vienna, as a black person, when you got out of the bus or the *Straßenbahn*, you really need to prey not to be controlled before entering to the next one, they come to you everywhere, harass you, embarrass you, several times I have been kicked against the wall, I have heard the testimonies from people they have been stripped naked in the street, this didn't happen to me, even inside of the police station, they stripped naked both men and women, police officers looking at your nakedness and started laughing at you, that was how bad Vienna was, and that was how bad the country was because, it was not only Marcus Omofuma they killed, a lot of other people who took their lives because of the hard life, we didn't get to hear their story.

Life isn't good at your country of origin and life isn't welcoming you here at all, where will you go to? To the moon? It's not possible; a lot of people took their lives simply because our home was lost. We didn't hear their story and nobody can remember them, for anything. So Marcus Omofuma, it is also a very big case study, because if you take Marcus Omofuma case and put it on the table it will have so many branches. If you have many people discussing here I guarantee you they will tell you different ways it affected their lives. To start with there were activists who were very outspoken in that era, who can never stand in front of camera today, why? Because what they have suffered in the hands of Austrian justice. There were activists who even didn't do anything at that time but at the end they suffered a lot. I have heard people send messages to me, some came to me telling me, hey, slow down, you don't know this country. I used to be like you and I'm really scared for you, I'm scared for your life, but deep down inside me, I kind of take the frames of, a great Mao once said: "Freedom can never be given to you by your oppressor, you must demand it." And with that Martin Luther King lives on in our lives, because of this I'm never going to listen to anybody because I also believe that these people who fought for us, fought for ways of making our living conditions better.

Numan: I would like to say, what has happened to Omofuma, many years ago, if I see to put away the people of Black community, because the Black community is a lot in Austria, is a lot all over EU, and Western cultures, Black is a lot, Nigerians, Africans, from everywhere, but the coincidence of the last summer of this Refugee's movement when 8

people got deported at the same time. 6 people were accused for the human trafficking charges, it was also connected, and it seems to me it is also the pressure not to build this movement bigger. If the refugees want to join it, they are going to face criminalization or they are going to be deported. I think so the police has the equal structures of like Omofuma, they killed him, all the Black community is gone away, because they were disappointed, because they lost their families, they lost their lives here, their images, and I think this was the same plan, for this Refugee Protest Movement, the Operation Spring is happened to this equally...

Clifford: on the smaller scale...

Numan: on the smaller scale because the movement was on a smaller scale, it was not so big

Marissa: I think it's great that you are saying this Numan, I think here are two different facts but I have to say that you are talking about the continuation, so it's about the continuity of the same way of repression, of activists and social movements in Austria. So it's very good that we are making the connection now to the question of how it was, what happened to Omofuma, the question of, very specifically, of the Black community and then now 13 years later that like it's almost breaking this silence that it was here after Omofuma, you did not have so much like, presence like, I was going to many demonstrations, antifascists and antiracists demonstrations in the last years and it was, I mean I could count how many black people I could see, how much I was visible, I could say 4 or 5, or migrants or people of color. I could see this very visible, that is why for me it's like the march from Traiskirchen was so important, to see 600 or 700 people I don't know how much but for me it was 10.000 of positions of people of color and black people, refugees and migrants, this was something that it was in the last 13 years, was not a fact, so I think it is very important to connect the history, and the continuation of the history.

THE HUNGER STRIKE AS PART OF THE REFUGEE PROTEST CAMP MOVEMENT IN AUSTRIA January 2013

Marina: so until now we discussed an overview of the refugee protest movement and also political statements, but also the connections to recent history in Austria, and we asked also about the evaluation of the refugee protest. We are actually now interested specifically if you can talk about the hunger strike in this part of the refugee protest in Vienna, and also how you think, you were one in a process, you are one of the key figure of what was going on, how do you think this refugee protest and hunger strike and place of hunger strike and the protest actually functioned? What we can learn?

Khan: Thank you very much. The decision about the hunger strike in my personal opinion this is the last option in non-violence way in which we explain to the society and to the authority, to the political people, it means the system is Austrian, the history in the past time you can talk about that some groups can talk with authority and political people so we have a different kind of situation to the region, and this is the reason sometimes they talk about in my personal opinion that we don't care about hunger and thirst and we don't care about cold and hot weather and shelter, so this is the reason we decided to challenge and

show the real situation to the region, the refugee lives in Austria and Europe also, and to show the society the real situation, the regional problem, and the European asylum problem, to show to the people.

Marina: and actually it brought the turning point. It was a turning point in that historical moment, it's possible to say this, for the Refugee Protest Movement?

Khan: Yes, that is why so many people wanted to come and to join, to protests and just to show the real situation of the refugees, what is the matter and what is the problem...Why the people they make means, occupation and disturbance to the society and political people. So this is the big reason that the group of refugees, I think at this moment is the refugees, but some people they can blame one community, the Pakistani community and this is there reason that we can pressing the region, so much disturbance and problem, and we just want to explain the real situation to the region and civil society and to the authority, that this is the reason that we decided to

go to hunger strike, and to go to occupation, we have different kind of options, in this one year, from the beginning time and in this year, the cold temperature (minus) of weather, then we went inside of Votive church, than we can go on a long hunger strike, if I remember now it's like how can we just go there inside in one of the coldest church in Austria I think, and manage to stay 50 or 60 days on hunger strike also, enough to begin the negotiations with the church and different organizations.

But they can promise so much, but they did not give anything, to do something, and the legal status and the legal advisory, to give facilities to change the living conditions to some ..it means there are so many people living here in Austria for a long time and we have a lot of examples, ten years, nine years, twelve years without any answer and question. They don't change anything I think that we are lost about this 8 or 7 months and then we could come back, we went to the Art Academy, we can go again to the media, and to civil society to show again that there is nothing, there is no concrete solution, and we just start again with the mobilization, talking about the real situation, and about the group, how can we manage it...

Marina: I just have to say that now when I'm listening to you I just have to think that just recording it has no sense in a certain way, because when you listen to this things, and you think that you will make the film, and practically nothing will be changed...

Clifford: nothing, yes.. **Marina:** yes, now when I was listening to all this words that you were saying I thought it's really crazy.

Khan: but my political position is, as a political worker, that we can do our responsibility. Some responsibility have important people in a society for example professors, teachers, students and the civil society, we can do our responsibility and this is a political struggle and this is not a past time that we can do this just only here in Austria. I'm a refugee for 10 years, I can do this everywhere, my political responsibility and my political position increased also, my political position and of my family is not possible in this region because we can talk about the real situation sometimes to the region, so the region it means also that

we cannot do our political activity and just start a normal life, and start some business, or something...so my example is just one example, there are thousands of people living in Europe, the African communities, Arab communities and Asian communities, and yes the system is - the system is old, the bloody system is 30 years old and they need to change something...and if we are looking that we did not change anything until now so they have a lot of changes but not basic changes they just want us now to living conditions of the refugees and especially in Austria and everywhere in Europe now, and they just want to change the legal program, the legal status program and they just bring more news and articles and more new laws, and I think they will start now in 2014 to change something so this is the whole protests, the reason that the people, the authority and the political people they can think about let's change something to the living conditions to the legal status so many time so that the people can live long time without any answer and question and then this is the reason to protests that we can protests and show and we describe this problems, this is not that we just want to fight against this system, this whole system is very strong system and very old system, ...before it was not possible that simply the refugees mean that refugee lives are weak and poor, life that is not possible without the society support, without the students and

famous people supporting, this is not possible, so this is the supporting and this is the help from the civil society and from different kind of political people and organization, that we can do this. And we hope that we can change more than a legal status. Disturbance, where is disturbance? Political struggle it means that you can show to the authority and you can show to the political people to have disturbance so that you must stop and change this system...