



Z+46 Young Roma in Sweden, 80 years after the Holocaust.



In the concentration camps of the Holocaust, Roma people were tattooed with a “Z” followed by a combination of numbers. It was part of the systematic dehumanization where people were reduced to numbers. The “Z” symbolizes a dark chapter in Roma history and is as a reminder of the persecution and genocide of Roma people.

How are we, young Roma, living in Sweden today? In what ways has history shaped us? What are our thoughts and dreams?

We want to explore these questions through an exhibition created by and about young Roma. +46 is Sweden’s country code, and in our works, we – four young Roma from three different Swedish cities – examine what anti-Romani racism means to us and how it impacts our living conditions.

Anti-Romani racism is a form of discrimination based on prejudice against Roma people. Across Europe, Roma are often

denied fundamental rights such as access to education, employment, housing, and healthcare. Since the year 2000, Roma are recognized as one of as one of Sweden’s national minorities, and thus have statutory rights.

Roma are not a single ethnic group but many, sharing a common origin. The red wheel on the Roma flag symbolizes the long journey from India. Despite a dark history, Roma have preserved a strong identity and pride in their culture.

In the Romani language, “Rom” means “human”.



**ELIN
BENGTSSON**

AGE 20

When I was a child, I didn't know much about my Roma history. But as a teenager, I joined a Roma association, where I learned more and became engaged. Participating in activities and get-togethers helped me grow. Now, I want to contribute to creating opportunities for other young Roma. It feels meaningful to help highlight Roma culture and history. I also want to spread knowledge about what Roma were exposed to during the Holocaust, and I want to keep telling about it.

I want to give a voice to my people and make our culture visible in a society where we are often forgotten. My goal is to contribute to a more just future where Roma are recognized as an integral part of Sweden's history and future. Through my work, I want to help others understand the strength and pain that characterize our people – the pride of our culture and our language, but also the struggle we are forced to wage to be heard. My goal is to break down prejudices so that future generations of Roma can be proud of who they are and where they come from.



**ANABELLA
KATIC**

AGE 17



ANTONIA DUȚĂ

AGE 21

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I was born in Romania and moved to Sweden when I was 13. I don't speak Romani, but I know my origins trace back to a group of Roma who worked with textiles and silk. I want to learn more about my Roma identity.

My work explores the experience of being a young Roma woman who feels the need to hide her ethnicity. I have taken the pictures in my hometown of Gothenburg, in places I frequently visit and that mean a lot for me.

I'm a Finnish Roma, and I live in Västerås. I'm dedicated to Roma inclusion and take great pride in my work, striving to drive positive change on issues impacting our community. If I get the chance to participate in any project to combat racism against Roma, I won't say no! My text is about anti-Gypsyism in Sweden and emphasizes that we Roma must stick together and support each other. We should be proud of who we are and inspire one another. That's also my message in the photograph, where Roma from different ethnic groups stand side by side, holding each other's hands.

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AILA SVART

AGE 23



Z+46 is part of the government assignment
“To Prevent and Counter Anti-Roma discrimination”
managed by the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF).

The exhibition was produced in collaboration with the Association of Common Roma International Federation (GRIF).

Four young Roma were engaged as ambassadors. They participated in workshops to learn about Roma history and exchange ideas and experiences.

Other partners, such as Sweden’s Holocaust Museum, Forum for Living History, Länsstyrelsen Stockholm and Radio Romano, provided valuable educational support.

Young Roma voices are important to achieving the goals of Sweden’s 20-year strategy for Roma inclusion. The overarching goal is for Roma turning 20 in 2032 to have equal opportunities in life as non-Roma.

The exhibition is owned and managed by GRIF. If you wish to bring the exhibition to your community or have other inquiries, contact the GRIF chairperson abedin.denaj@grif.se

Photographer: George Grigoriadis
www.storytimeproductions.se



Scan the QR code for a free digital download of the exhibition.

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