



New World Embassy

Rojava
روج أفلا
رؤيا

The *New World Embassy: Rojava* is a temporary embassy in the Oslo City Hall, which represents, through cultural means, the ideals of “stateless democracy” developed by the communities of the autonomous region of Rojava, northern Syria. The embassy consists of a large-scale oval shaped architectural structure, designed as an “ideological planetarium.”

The embassy will operate for two consecutive days, bringing representatives from Rojava together with international politicians, diplomats, academics, journalists, students, and artists. Through open deliberation and public discussion the *New World Embassy: Rojava* proposes a platform to build new transnational relationships and explore alternative models of people’s diplomacy. This includes an analysis of the history, ideals, and implementation of stateless democracy; of the successes of Rojava in building a new civil society in a war-torn region; and finally the alternative that Rojava proposes in order to confront the crises of democracy seen on a global scale.

The *New World Embassy: Rojava* is a collaboration between the Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava and Studio Jonas Staal.

The project is part of the Oslo Architecture Triennale 2016, *After Belonging: A Triennale In Residence, On Residence and the Ways We Stay in Transit*, and funded and co-produced by KORO, Public Art Norway / URO.



New World Embassy

Rojava

روج آفا
ژەڵا

Saturday November 26
13:00 — 19:00

13:00

- Welcome by **Marianne Borgen** (Mayor of Oslo)
- Welcome by **Seher Aydar** and **Refik Gefur** (Kurdish Communities of Oslo)
- Introduction by **Jonas Staal** (Artist and founder of the New World Summit)

13:40

Keynote by Co-Ambassador **Asya Abdullah** (Co-Chair Democratic Union Party, PYD)

14:05

Short break (10 min.)

14:15

Panel I—History & Politics
Chaired by **Joost Jongerden** (University of Wageningen)

- **Asya Abdullah**,
- **Macer Gifford** (People's Protection Units, YPG)
- **Bassam Said Ishak** (Syriac National Council)
- **Kariane Westrheim** (University of Bergen)

15:30

Break (1 hour)

16:30

- Welcome by **Refik Gefur** and **Seher Aydar**
- Welcome by **Marina Otero** (After Belonging Agency)

16:50

Keynote by Co-Ambassador **Sinem Mohammed** (Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava)

17:20

Short break (10 min.)

17:30

Panel II—Culture & Self-Determination
Chaired by **Maria Hlavajova** (BAK, basis voor actuele kunst Utrecht)

- **Sinem Mohammed**
- **Moussa Ag Assarid** (Free Azawad)
- **Laura Raicovich** (Queens Museum)
- **Shela Sheikh** (Goldsmiths, University of London)

19:00

Conclusion

Sunday November 27
13:00 — 19:00

13:00

- Welcome by **Refik Gefur** and **Seher Aydar**
- Welcome by **Hanna Dencik Petersson** (Oslo Architecture Triennale, OAT)
- Introduction by **Jonas Staal**

13:30

Keynote by Co-Ambassador **Aldar Xalil** (Movement for a Democratic Society, Tev-Dem)

13:55

Short break (10 min.)

14:05

Panel III—Conflict & Diplomacy
Chaired by **Radha D'Souza** (University of Westminster)

- **Aldar Xalil**
- **Runar Myrnes Balto** (Political advisor to the Sámi Parliament)
- **Sana Soleman Elmansouri** (World Amazigh Congress)
- **Hanne Sophie Greve** (Judge at the Gulating High Court of Western Norway, and former judge at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg)

15:30

Break (1 hour)

16:30

Welcome by **KORO Public Art Norway/ URO**

16:50

Keynote by Co-Ambassador **Salih Muslim** (Co-Chair Democratic Union Party, PYD)

17:15

Short break (10 min.)

17:25

Panel IV—Solidarity & Transdemocracy
Chaired by **Radha D'Souza**

- **Salih Muslim**
- **Kate Shae Baird** (Barcelona en Comú)
- **Despina Koutsoumba** (The Front of the Anticapitalist Left, ANTARSYA)
- **Lorenzo Marsili** (DiEM25/ European Alternatives)
- **Katerin Mendez** (Feminist Initiative!)

19:00

Closing words by **Refik Gefur** and **Seher Aydar**

Panel I — History & Politics
Saturday November 26
13:00 - 15:30

This opening panel focuses on the history of the Kurdish Revolutionary Movement, the recent history of Kurdistan, and in particular the situation in Rojava following the declaration of autonomy in 2012. It will address the fight against the Assad regime and jihadist organizations such as the Islamic State, and the implementation of the Rojavan model of democratic confederalism. How and why was the idea of a “democracy without a state”—a stateless democracy—as Kurdish revolutionary Abdullah Öcalan described it, developed in the first place? In what way has this stateless democracy been able to unify the different peoples in the Rojava region, and how should we understand its day-to-day practice?

Panel II — Culture & Self-Determination
Saturday November 26
16:30 - 19:00

In Rojava, the struggle for autonomy is simultaneously an armed struggle and a cultural struggle. In the case of the Kurdish struggle, Kurdish cultural identity was long denied and suppressed. Art and culture became a means of resistance; through clandestine poetry, literature, and music, a Kurdish identity has been kept alive. Since the start of the Rojava Revolution in 2012, art and culture have gained a central role for all peoples in expressing and celebrating the cultural plurality of Rojava while rejecting homogenous nation-state policies. What is the role of art and culture in imagining new models of democracy? And how does the cultural struggle of Rojava relate to other struggles, from the struggle of the Kel Tamasheq (Tuareg) peoples in the Sahara and Sahel regions to civil uprisings in the form of the Occupy movement and Black Lives Matter in the United States?

Panel III — Conflict & Diplomacy
Sunday November 27
13:00 - 15:30

Rojava has developed its own unique model of democratic confederalism—also known as stateless democracy. The Rojava embassy in this light should be considered as a stateless embassy: not aimed solely at establishing relations between states, but rather between peoples. Norway has led peace negotiations relating to the struggles for self-determination in Palestine, Colombia, and the Philippines. How does the future of people's diplomacy as proposed by Rojava relate to these endeavors? And how do other stateless movements, such as that of the Sámi and Amazigh peoples, relate to the ideal of stateless diplomacy?

Panel IV — Solidarity & Transdemocracy
Sunday November 27
16:30 - 19:00

Out of the Syrian Civil War, the autonomous government of Rojava emerged, bringing into practice an alternative model of stateless democracy. Crisis can produce utter devastation, while at the same time, creating the conditions for radical political alternatives. What can international emancipatory political organizations, platforms, and movements learn from the Rojava Revolution? What can be learned from the economic and refugee crises in Greece, the rise of ultranationalism and even fascist organizations in Europe, and the politics of misogyny and patriarchy now emerging on a global scale? What are the alliances and processes of mutual learning between Rojava's stateless democracy and the new municipal democracies, pan-European movements, and feminist platforms emerging throughout Europe and the world?