

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

VIRTUAL
8th ANNUAL RED UMBRELLA MARCH FOR SEX WORK SOLIDARITY
Sex Workers, Allies, Family and Friends Stand Together

RED UMBRELLA MARCH

Following the advice of B.C.'s Provincial Health Officer in response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and in accordance with restrictions imposed by the Province of British Columbia's May 22, 2020 Order on Mass Gatherings which limits public gatherings to no more than 50 people, the organizers of the Red Umbrella March for Sex Work Solidarity have cancelled the in-person component of the event for 2020.

This year, the Red Umbrella March celebrates 20 years of history with the release of a video slideshow which traces its origins from the 49th International Venice Biennale Arte in 2001, and recalls the past eight years of sex workers' public protests against Canada's unjust prostitution laws in Vancouver, B.C.

The right to protest is protected by fundamental freedoms in Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966). These are: freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association and freedom of expression.

FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY IS SPEECH IN ACTION

In 2020, our ability to lawfully exercise our freedom of peaceful assembly has been curtailed by public health order. In a democratic society, government restrictions on exercising peaceful assembly may only be imposed in the interests of: national security, public safety, public order, public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

CODE: RED

Origins of the Red Umbrella March for Sex Work Solidarity

VIDEO: 20 YEARS OF HISTORY!

VENICE, BRUSSELS, SKOPJE, VANCOUVER

WATCH AT: TRIPLE-X.ORG

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Red Umbrella March organizers are proud to present this video slideshow which traces the origins of our march and the use of the red umbrella as a symbol of sex workers' rights.

Venice: 2001

Comitate per I Diritti Civili delle Prostitute from Pordeon organized the World Congress of Sex Workers in collaboration with Slovenian artist Tadej Pogačar for the 49th International Venice Biennale Arte. On June 8, the Red Umbrellas March crossed through the centre of Venice creating a colourful interruption through the public space, drawing attention to the geography of the social history of sex workers. The art installation was part of a series of collaborations with sex workers by Pogačar about parallel economies and self-organization, entitled CODE:RED (1999-2019).

Brussels: 2005

European Conference on Sex Work, Human Rights, Labour and Migration brought together 200 sex workers and associates from 28 European countries to create and present a manifesto to the European Parliament on October 17. Based on her memories of the march in Venice, Giulia Garafalo organized a "Manifestation dans la rue." The hour-long parade of red umbrellas — "a symbol of beauty and the resistance to humans' and sky's attacks" — began at the Place de la Bourse crossing through Brussels following the press conference.

Skopje: 2008

In 2007, Tadej Pogačar collaborated with health and anti-violence organizations and a small group of high school students. CODE:RED Skopje focused on education; "Sex Workers' Rights Are Human Rights." STAR-STAR the first sex workers' collective in the Balkans began in 2007 to improve and promote rights for sex workers. STAR-STAR organized their first Red Umbrella March as a symbol of solidarity in 2008 in front of the national TV station in a district known for streetwalking. Support for the march — held annually on December 17 to mark International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers — continues to grow.

Vancouver: 2013

In 2012 a group of former sex workers and associates formed the Triple-X Workers' Solidarity Association of B.C. On June 8, 2013, a day of protests across Canada was planned to show support for Supreme Court of Canada challenge of Canada's unjust prostitution laws. Based on his memories of the red umbrella march through Brussels, Andrew Sorfleet, president of Triple-X, in partnership with other sex-worker advocacy groups, organized the first Red Umbrella March for Sex Work Solidarity. Held annually on the second Saturday in June, the march has become a popular Vancouver event for sex workers, their allies, family and friends.

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Partners in organizing: Triple-X Workers' Solidarity Association of B.C., Downtown Eastside Sex Workers United Against Violence (SWUAV), Pivot Legal Society, PACE Society, B.C. Coalition of Experiential Communities, FIRST: Feminists Advocating for the Decriminalization of Sex Work, SWAN Society Vancouver.

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For more information visit www.triple-x.org, or contact info@triple-x.org.

Event hashtag: #RUM2020

Connect on social media:

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