

# BI+ FORUM

## CONNECTIVITY AND CREATIVITY

Welcome to this forum where we will reflect upon and celebrate the diversity and creativity of human expression regarding sexuality and romantic attachments. The forum aims to raise awareness, connect people, and celebrate bi+ community. We'll be looking at the interconnection between creativity and wellbeing, and challenging stereotypes about sexuality in the mainstream as well as in LGBTQ+ contexts. Let us envision a future where identities are not limited by categories but enriched by the freedom to express desire and oneself freely.

### Date & Time:

Saturday,  
September 30th, 2023,  
10am-5pm

### Venue & Address:

Stora salen, Elite Hotel  
Savoy, Norra Vallgatan 62,  
Malmö

### Who is the forum for?

For curious and creative  
people, BLGTQ+ people,  
activists, professionals, and  
other stakeholders.

### Language

Bi+ Forum will be held in  
English.

Next page for  
registration



10.00-10.30

### (MC) Heidi Avellan

Heidi Avellan, journalist,  
political editor in chief  
Sydsvenskan &  
Helsingborgs Dagblad



## Opening Remarks

10.30-11.30

### Robyn Ochs

Educator, speaker,  
grassroots activist, and  
editor of *Bi Women*  
Quarterly



## Beyond Binaries

How do we assign labels to our complex experiences of identity? In this interactive workshop, we will explore the landscape of sexuality, conduct a thought-provoking anonymous survey of those present, and look at the data together. [...]

*Read more on page 3*

11.30-11.50

Coffee and Sandwich

11.50-12.30

### Ritch C. Savin-Williams

Developmental  
psychology professor  
emeritus of Human  
Development, Cornell  
University and a  
licensed clinical  
psychologist



## The New Bisexual: Young, Progressive, Creative

When we are more inclusive by including both sexual and romantic attractions and behaviors as to who "counts" as bisexual, the percentage is closer to 20% and equally prevalent among women and men. [...] Perhaps because of their bisexuality, individuals have something unique to contribute to our national wellbeing, such as creativity, artistic skills, cognitive flexibility, and tolerance for differences.[...]

*Read more on page 4*

12.30-13.30

Lunch at participants' own  
expense

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## CONNECTIVITY AND CREATIVITY

13.30-14.30

### Eileen Laurie

Malmö based artist who explores storytelling and connection



### Land Art – Making art with Nature

In this workshop we will invite nature indoors and make Land Art with natural materials. You will participate in a creative process with other people. No previous knowledge or experience is required. Let go of perfectionism and draw on curiosity and the simple joy of making.[...]

*Read more on page 5*

14.30-15.10

### Sara Edenheim

Associate professor in History and lecturer at the Umeå Center for Gender Studies.



### Being Lyrical. Beyond Identities as We Know Them?

What if being non-heterosexual could be experienced in other ways than through the identitarian terms we know of today (homo and bi)? [...] Historians who study sexuality usually refer to Foucault's claim that the sexual identities we know today (hetero, homo, and bi) did not exist before 1870's; before that, same-sex desire was not seen as defining an individual's identity, it was just an act anyone could (but should not) commit. However, this was perhaps not Foucault's point.

*Read more on page 6*

15.10-15.30

Coffee and Cake

15.30-16.15

### Panel Discussion: The (Im)Possibility of Bi+ Politics?

**Moderator:** Heidi Avellan journalist, political editor in chief *Sydsvenskan & Helsingborgs Dagblad*  
**Participants:** Ritch Savin-Williams developmental psychology professor emeritus, Robyn Ochs educator and grassroots activist, Sara Edenheim associate professor in history & U.S. Ambassador Erik D. Ramanathan

There is a need to emphasize the richness of human expressions regarding sexuality that are not confined by rigid identity categories as well as increasing bi+ visibility. However, are we running the risk of pathologizing bi+ behaviors and identities when we point to mental health issues? Are we cultivating identity politics that rest on victimization and resentment [...]

*Read more on page 7*

16.15-16.45

### Group Discussions

The forum participants will have the opportunity to share experiences and reflect upon the themes of the forum.

16.45-17.00

### Closing Remarks

#### Registration:

Register via <https://link.webropolsurvey.com/EP/79C204FE65F635DA>

Registration is open until September 18th, 2023. Attendance at Bi+ forum is free. If you need to cancel your registration, send an email to Žana Dončić, [zana.doncic@skane.rfsl.se](mailto:zana.doncic@skane.rfsl.se)

#### Organizer:

RFSL Rådgivningen Skåne. The Bi+ Forum is funded by the U.S. Embassy in Sweden

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## CONNECTIVITY AND CREATIVITY

10.30-11.30

### Beyond Binaries

**Robyn Ochs**



How do we assign labels to our complex experiences of identity? How do we identify, both privately and publicly? Where do we locate ourselves on sexuality and gender continua? How old were we when we came to our identities? How a/sexual are we? How well do our friends/family members understand us?

In this interactive workshop, we will explore the landscape of sexuality, conduct a thought-provoking anonymous survey of those present, and look at the data together. How do we identify, both privately and publicly? Where do we locate ourselves on sexuality and gender continua? How old were we when we came to our identities? How a/sexual are we? How well do our friends/family members understand us? This workshop will change the way you think about labels and will deconstruct binary systems of identity.

Robyn Ochs is an educator, speaker, grassroots activist, and editor of *Bi Women Quarterly* and two anthologies: the 42-country collection *Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World* and *RECOGNIZE: The Voices of Bisexual Men*. Among other things, she crafted the definition of bisexuality that is used by many bi+ activists around the world: “I call myself bisexual because I acknowledge in myself the potential to be attracted — romantically and/or sexually — to people of more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.”

Robyn is deeply committed to intersectional and sustainable activism, to working with others to build coalitions across identities and across social movements, to supporting emerging leaders, and to learning and growing. She is particularly interested in bi+ health, the experiences of bi+ people in the workplace, the global bi+ movement, and bi and LGBTQ+ youth. An activist for 50 years (so far), she is in it for the long haul.

# BI+ FORUM

## CONNECTIVITY AND CREATIVITY

11.50-12.30

Ritch C.  
Savin-Williams

### The New Bisexual: Young, Progressive, Creative



When we are more inclusive by including both sexual and romantic attractions and behaviors as to who “counts” as bisexual, the percentage is closer to 20% and equally prevalent among women and men.

This considerably higher prevalence is driven in large part by young people who are increasingly inventing labels and descriptions that best reflect who they are. Many are eschewing sexual labels altogether by referring to “bisexuality” less as a category and more as a spectrum of sex and romance to multiple sexes. Common identities that fall under a bisexual umbrella include fluid, pansexual, queer, and “something else” (unlabeled) and other descriptions are being created every day. This is a promising tendency because it reflects a progressive spirit on the part of young people to not be trapped by labels but to be sexually and romantically free to embrace whatever is best or true for them. On the other hand, these developments complicate our tasks as researchers and clinicians; yet we should adapt to them rather than expect them to follow our lead. Perhaps because of their bisexuality, individuals have something unique to contribute to our national wellbeing, such as creativity, artistic skills, cognitive flexibility, and tolerance for differences.

Ritch C. Savin-Williams is a developmental psychology professor emeritus of Human Development, Cornell University and a licensed clinical psychologist with a private practice specializing in identity, relationship, and family issues among sexual-minority young adults. Dr. Savin-Williams most recent book is *Bi: Bisexual, Pansexual, Fluid and Nonbinary Youth*. Savin-Williams offers us a way to think about bisexuality as part of a continuum. He shows that many of the young people who identify as bisexual often defy traditional views, dispute false notions, and reimagine sexuality with regard to both practice and identity.

Dr. Savin-Williams’ research focuses on the experiences of growing up with same-sex attractions, the resiliency and mental health of sexual-minority youth, the sexual continuum, and the sexual development of youth. His work on differential developmental trajectories attempts to supplant our generic, stage models of identity development with a perspective that explores the similarities of sexual-minority youth with all youth and the ways in which sexual-minority adolescents vary among themselves and from heterosexual youth.

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13.30-14.30

**Eileen Laurie**

### **Land Art – Making art with Nature**



What if we imagined a world where everyone felt safe, welcome, and appreciated? What if bi+ people did not have to deal with invisibility, isolation, as well as discrimination and violence?

Collective artistic processes cannot solve every issue in society. They can however give strength to explore and find new ways of facing challenges, both as individuals and as a collective.

This workshop is led by the artist Eileen Laurie. We will invite nature indoors and make Land Art with natural materials. You will participate in a creative process with other people. No previous knowledge or experience is required. Let go of perfectionism and draw on curiosity and the simple joy of making.

Eileen Laurie is a visual artist based in Malmö. She explores storytelling and connection as well as the relationship of humans to each other and the more-than-human world. She often works with media like Land Art, watercolor, printmaking, and textile art. Participatory processes are integral to her art practice. When working with others, Eileen Laurie curates a space of curiosity and opportunity. A space where artmakers – professional or not – can develop and grow, both individually and as participants in co-creative process.

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## CONNECTIVITY AND CREATIVITY

14.30-15.10

Sara Edenheim



### Being Lyrical. Beyond Identities as We Know Them?

What if being non-heterosexual could be experienced in other ways than through the identitarian terms we know of today (homo and bi)? What if other sensations than those brought forward by the struggle for legal recognition in relation to medical classification could be attached to sexual identities?

What consequences could this have for the LGBTQ+ movement and political alliances? Historians who study sexuality usually refer to Foucault's claim that the sexual identities we know today (hetero, homo, and bi) did not exist before 1870's; before that, same-sex desire was not seen as defining an individual's identity, it was just an act anyone could (but should not) commit.

However, this was perhaps not Foucault's point. What happened in 1870's and onwards was indeed a medicalization of deviant sexualities and, later, a political struggle to be recognized "for who you are". However, this does not automatically exclude a previous sense of "being different" and Foucault does give us a brief example of this pre-identitarian way of existence. I will attempt to present this fleeting and alluring example and try to discuss what we can do with it today.

Sara Edenheim is associate professor in history and lecturer at the Umeå Center for Gender Studies. Among other things, she has written *Laws of Desire: Modern state investigations and the genealogy of heteronormativity*, (published by Symposion, 2005) and *Anachronism: against the historical craze*, (published by Glänta, 2011). In addition, Edenheim has written a number of articles on the theme of queer archives (and their impossibility), feminist theory (and its necessity), as well as various articles on the value and meaning of psychoanalysis in research, activism and everyday life.

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## CONNECTIVITY AND CREATIVITY

15.30-16.15

### Panel Discussion: The (Im)Possibility of Bi+ Politics?

Heidi Avellan



There is a need to emphasize the richness of human expressions regarding sexuality that are not confined by rigid identity categories as well as increasing bi+ visibility. However, are we running the risk of pathologizing bi+ behaviors and identities when we point to mental health issues?

Ritch Savin-Williams



Are we cultivating identity politics that rest on victimization and resentment and how do LGBTQ+ organizations finance their work if not by adapting to state views and opinions about oppressed minorities? At the same time, young people are rejecting labels altogether and express themselves more freely. What does this shift mean? What kind of politics are needed? Are LGBTQ+ organizations able to envision these politics? Can a movement historically identifying as gay/lesbian meet the needs of the young? Is it time to look beyond oneself/identity and imagine a society where our mutual interdependency is acknowledged? Are we ready to take up responsibility individually and collectively for that society?

**Moderator:**

Heidi Avellan journalist, political editor in chief *Sydsvenskan* and *Helsingborgs Dagblad*

Robyn Ochs



**Participants:**

Ritch Savin-Williams developmental psychology professor emeritus,  
Robyn Ochs educator and grassroots activist,  
Sara Edenheim associate professor in history,  
Erik D. Ramanathan U.S. Ambassador in Sweden.

Sara Edenheim



Erik D. Ramanathan

