

DIFFERENT WORLDS

SAME HEART BEATS

#1

COMMUNITY BUILDING, TRAVEL STORIES, MAKE YR OWN ZINE

DIY FEMINIST ACTIVISM, CRAFT-

CULTURE



INTRO

2006-2007
(MORE ABOUT 2007 IN #2?)

Dear readers,

"(Different Worlds,) Same Heartbeats" is named after a mixtape made by Manuela for the Riot Grrrl Archive, that Sara, Coline and me were going to do several years ago as part of an art project (but it was never actually realised). I like the name because "heartbeats" has a rhythmic/musical element, but also, it's what connects us all. We can have the same heartbeats, the same interest/passion for radical change and DIY feminist activism (even though we may live far away from each other or in different kinds of worlds/regions/communities). And when we meet, we can dance to those shared heartbeats, the same songs we whispered in our bedrooms, the strange rhythms we walked in our streets.

I started writing this zine in the autumn of 2006. It had been a very busy inspiring autumn and I wanted to write about my travel experiences. I used to think only summers were reserved for exciting grrrl-fueled activities, activist festivals and cool DIY projects, but now these had expanded to the whole year long.

Taking part in several DIY feminist/queer festivals in the autumn of 2006, I was thinking a lot about temporary free spaces, supportive communities and DIY events. However great I think they are, they always end too soon. Their only flaw is the fact that they are only temporary. (But thank goddess such events seem to take place more and more often nowadays). It would be cool if they became more permanent, if lots spaces and communities existed where we could always go or be, 24/7. Dozens of safe, free and fun places in every town or region, connected but autonomous. Feminist, anarchist, DIY, experimental, artistic, activist...

When setting up the "Ladies' Room" as a part of the art project "Ruimte Te Gebruiken", I was thinking and writing about these kind of spaces even more. And so, this became the theme for this zine: documenting the heartbeats (the passion, enthusiasm, achievements, plans, ideas, etc) of DIY feminist/queer communities and events that I had visited or participated in. There seems to be a lot going on right now, for example the rise of Ladyfests since 2000. I wanted to share those moments in this zine (and hope to know about similar moments that others experienced). I like to report on things that take place, things that inspired me, things I felt a part of. This is one of the things I use zines for, for expressing my excitement of how everything can be different when cool things are being organised, people work together and do it themselves, take their lives in their own hands, make their own world... A different world.

Of course what I write about here is just a tiny little bit of all the treasures and all the scenes/communities (and the beating hearts that live, struggle, take action and build there) that can be found all over the world, but I didn't want these memories to get lost. Everything we do, organise, publish, create... It's part of our herstory! Herstories I find very exciting, but they are not taught in school, so we have to write them down ourselves.

Keep rioting & writing!

Nina

DEC. 2007, HASSELT, BELGIUM, EARTH

Anarcha-feministen
staal
weigeren om met de staat samen te werken omdat ze deze als "da"...

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www.genderriot.cjb.net

www.echoriot.cjb.net (ECHO RIOT: my DIY label, zines, craft)

www.myspace.com/lostlunarebelart (art + music)

www.geocities.com/rqcollectief (riot grrrl collective in Hasselt)

Cool stencil art, spotted in Hasselt
↓
or te

UP THE GRRRLS

FRIDAY-SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 22ND-23RD 2006
 BAR LE ROCHER, PARIS (FRANCE)



Emy, who organised a Ladyfest in Paris several years ago, informed^{me} she was arranging a grrrl-fuelled festival with music, a DIY art exhibition and zine stands in September. I was very excited, especially when she told me that I could take part in the exhibition and make a stand too.

FRIDAY

So on Friday I travelled by train to Paris. I'd only been there once, when I was 11 years old. I had only grey somewhat depressing memories of the city, but I hoped this second visit would change that.

Arriving in Paris, I took the metro to where the festival would take place. It was outside of the city centre in a bar with a small space in the back where bands could play. When I approached the venue, there were some vans parked outside and people loading gear out of them, carrying it inside the bar. I immediately recognised some of those people: the Dutch grrrls and boys of Mexican

Holiday, Dusty Blinds and De Fatwa's! It had been a long time again that I had seen them.

I also met Emy for the first time in real life and the other people helping her to organise the event. Emy also exhibited her artworks: amazing punky silk screens! One of them was used for the publicity poster of the festival. I stuck some of my drawings that I had brought for the exhibition on the window, some turned inwards, some outwards so people could see them from the outside of the bar (and hopefully be lured inside).

It was striking that there were a LOT of distros on the first day of the festival! Not only the distros and merchandise of the bands (besides the Dutch bands, also Happy Home Makers) but other distros as well selling things like spiky punk bracelets, self-made patches, queer zines and DIY indie/riot/crust music. I had a zine/tape/merch stand too and sold all of my zines almost immediately! Also nearly all the other things I had brought with me were sold out that weekend. The people there were lovely, showing a real interest in what I (and the other artists/zinesters/bands) had made. Several of them were concerned, asking if I had a place to sleep, which I didn't yet. It was such a gentle, caring, friendly, supportive atmosphere and very political, DIY and radical at the same time.

When Soazig, a cool French grrrl I had met before at a Ladyfest in Berlin, asked/invited me to go with her and some friends to Ladyfest Toulouse, which would take place the week after Up The Grrrls, I was really tempted (also because she was very convincing). Other people and bands at Up The Grrrls were going as well. I loved the idea to expand my

journey and stay in France for a bit longer. But it felt too complicated and I was nearly broke. I suppose I am/was not adventurous enough.

But anyway, let's take a look at the grrreat bands that played that Friday at Up The Grrrls: Manuela (one of the driving forces of Ladyfest Europe and all-around concert organiser, riot grrrl community builder, member of Bunnies On Strike and performer) screamed and played bass to the surfy punk tunes of her band **Mexican Holiday**. She also managed to dance with Gwenn of Happy Home Makers during one song. Some of the boys in the band shared some of the vocals. www.myspace.com/mexicanholiday



Gijs, the drummer in Mexican Holiday, is also a member of **Dusty Blinds** (www.myspace.com/dustyblinds) who were up next. Here, he played guitar. Dusty Blinds is known in the riot grrrl/indie punk scene in the Netherlands and beyond for their beautiful songs. Tonight they played "Map" about far-away love, "Cut One" and other classics. Gijs was trying out some guitar hero tricks which I managed to capture on camera. Nora was like always drumming with her eyes closed (how does she manage to do that?!) and Maaik was ever cute on guitar and main vocals.

Emy's own band, **10lec6**, was next. Emy sang assisted by percussion, drum and bass. 10lec6' music is very atypical, very rhythmic, angry and fun at the same time. This is the French way of making riot grrrl music! Check their songs on www.10lec6.com.

Happy Home Makers (or HHM as they are also known www.hhm.fr.fm), a French riot growl band from Brest who played at the second Ladyfest in Belgium, dedicated a song to the present riot grrrls (hurray & thanks!). Yeah, let's RIOT! They gave me a copy of their new LP because I made the little drawing in the middle of the vinyl (double hurray!).

The third Dutch-based band of today was **De Fatwa's**. Their cool short fast punk songs ("On The Street", "Go Girl", "Don't Buy", etc) caught the audience immediately. Before and after the show they were selling silk-screened knickers just like HHM. DIY to the "core"! www.defatwas.tk

In between the bands, I was doing my stand and also sitting outside for a while, talking to Sarah, who makes comic zines (La Choriza) and patches. We traded zines of course.

At night when Soazig drove me and some other girls in her full-packed car to our sleeping place, I felt really exhausted. Looking outside the car-window, I saw the lights of Paris which was nice and too many "gendarme: pourquoi pas vous?" (police-officer: why not you?) billboard posters by the roads, which was not nice, though it would have been perfect for an adubst action.

SATURDAY

Saturday was a lazy day. The sun shone so after finally waking up and we realised we were a quite international group of people:



France, Germany, UK and Belgium were represented and we were teaching each other words in our own languages. Then we left the apartment where we stayed and went to the park in Belville. When you climb the stairs in this park, you have a great view over Paris. There was a married straight couple taking wedding pictures so some of my friends did some radical queer/dyke action to shock them ☺. But I don't know if they noticed it. Later, when we were relaxing in the park, Pepe was giving massage to some of us and I was continuing a comic I was working on. It's about "Evil Evy" aka the Muse. She's actually a painted person who climbs out of her painting to take revenge on the elitist patriarchal art world. I'm still working on the story. It should be funny. Then it was getting time to go to the bar for the second night of Up The Grrrls. We were already a bit late and got stuck in traffic jams. On top of that I was feeling car-sick. The grrrls I was with were very kind though and fresh (?) air & raindrops through the car-window were also helpful.

We missed **Lust Control** and the **Konkri Duet** unfortunately. But I was happy to see **The Fa**, a German hardcorepunk band (www.myspace.com/thefa) with a female guitarist and a female singer. It's rare to see a female guitar player in a mixed band! Besides some technical problems, they could really please me.

The next band had a violin, drums, bass and eye masks and was called **Revengers** (<http://revengers.free.fr>). With the masks they looked like superheroes, hiding their true identity. Again this band was a discovery with an original sound.

As I wrote before, the people participating and attending this festival were supernice. However there always seems to be one or a few guys to spoil (a little part of) the fun. Also this time there was - especially one- annoying guy in the audience. He was probably drunk, and kind of aggressive, but removed by some of the grrrls.

Soazig and Pepe were already leaving for Ladyfest Toulouse with a stop in

Tour on their way. So this night I found a sleeping place at the apartment of Alice and a friend. After a short visit to a pub in the centre of Paris, we went to their place. They were having a little house-party but I was too tired and went to sleep. The cat of Alice hid in the bedroom to keep me company.



SUNDAY

Again a lazy start of the day with a late breakfast, looking through art books and talking to Alice, her friends, her flatmate and the other Up The Grrrls guests. In the afternoon we went to a very inspiring dolls exhibition. All kinds of artistic dolls were shown in a small art gallery called **l'Art Du Rien**. It made me want to make dolls too (so later back home I did). Then I said goodbye to Julie, Emma and Alice and took the train home. I did not know yet that I would see them, as well as Soazig and Pepe, again soon.



Some places I want to check next time I'm in Paris: **Le Kiosk**, an info shop, **Quilombo** and **Publico**, 2 anarchist bookstores and **Violette & Co**, a feminist bookstore.



Arrache Toi Un Oeil, the collective that organised Up The Grrrls: <http://arrachetoionoeil.free.fr/>

CRAFTCORE

CRAFTCORE MEANS RADICAL CREATIVITY. CRAFT IS ART (WITH AN ANARCHIST A, NOT A CAPITAL(ST) A). CRAFTCORE REFERS TO D.I.Y. "I CAN DO/MAKE THIS!"-REBELLION. CRAFT CAN BE INVENTIVE, PLAYFUL, FUN, ACTIVIST (FOR EXAMPLE IN A SELF-SUFFICIENT AUTONOMOUS ANTI-CONSUMERIST WAY) AND RECLAIMING IT IS FEMINIST AND SUBVERSIVE. CRAFT GRRRLS QUEERS BOIZ UNITE AND START A CRAFT-CORE RIOT!

HOW TO CROCHET A LITTLE BAG

WHAT YOU NEED:

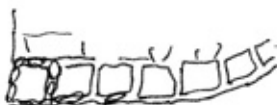
- CROCHET HOOK
- COTTON YARN
- SOME FELT OR OTHER CLOTH/TEXTILE + SEWING THREAD AND NEEDLE OR PEARLS FOR DECORATION

INSTRUCTIONS:

START TO CROCHET A THREAD OF ± 28 STITCHES. CLOSE IT WITH A SLIP STITCH TO A CIRCLE. THEN CROCHET 2 ROWS OF SINGLE CROCHET.

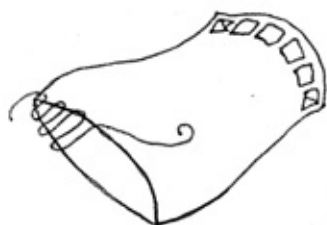


THEN CROCHET 1 ROW IN AJOUR: DOUBLE CROCHET + CHAIN STITCH: IT LOOKS LIKE THIS: (SORT OF LIKE HOLES)



THEN CONTINUE TO CROCHET ± 20 ROWS IN SINGLE CROCHET. AT THE END CROCHET OR SEW THE BAG TOGETHER AT THE BOTTOM. WHEN THIS IS DONE, TURN THE BAG INSIDE OUT.

CROCHET A CHAIN OF LOTS OF STITCHES TO PULL THROUGH THE HOLES OF THE BAG (FOR THE DRAW-STRING EFFECT).



DECORATE THE BAG HOWEVER YOU LIKE, WITH ALL SORTS OF THINGS YOU CAN FIND.

WAW, YOU MADE YOUR OWN DRAW-STRING BAG!

LADYFEST ROTTERDAM

FRIDAY-SUNDAY OCTOBER 27TH-29TH 2006
WATERFRONT, ROTTERDAM (NETHERLANDS)

Ladyfests are non-profit DIY feminist festivals organised by lots of different people (mostly women) all over the world since 2000. There is some variation in all the Ladyfests that have been taken place so far, but the concept remains more or less the same: creating a feminist space and offering a stage to (especially) female and transgender artists. (With the exception of a cancelled Ladyfest in Groningen) it had been 3 years since the last Ladyfest took place in the Netherlands so I was very happy when I heard that Hilde, one of the Ladyfest Amsterdam 2002 and 2003 organisers, was putting up a new one with a few friends, Rianne, Valesca and Kim, this time in Rotterdam. Hilde was also one of the founders of the Riot Grrrl Europe website and mailing list, and I know her for a few years now. She also played with her (now ex-)band Lady!Die at Ladyfest Liège in 2003 which I helped organise.



think it lies even below sea level), so it's probably hard to find a location not near any river.

As I entered the Waterfront, I asked around for Hilde because she was the only one I knew. I had also mailed with Rianne a little bit before, but I had never met her. Everyone was really sweet and helpful and Hilde showed me around in the venue.

Kim Coster who designed the flyer of Ladyfest Rotterdam took care of the organisation of the exhibition. She was sooo friendly, giving lots of compliments about my drawings and zines, and being supportive and super-helpful. The other girls' art looked really good: paintings, photographs, drawings and a bag (!)... When I put my drawings on the wall, there was much space left so I made some new drawings at the spot to place next to them. Kim was very enthusiastic about this. ☺ In the café I went to talk to and have cinnamon tea with Nora, the drummer of Dusty Blinds, who were

FRIDAY

I was quite nervous on Friday, but not for the Ladyfest. I had to do a presentation for school, there were some personal problems and I had to prepare for my info stand and exhibition at Ladyfest so the past few days I felt quite tense. The presentation went fine, my teacher showed a great interest when I told her about Ladyfest and the drawings I was going to exhibit there. I could calm down now and relax.

On the train to Rotterdam I nearly fell asleep. I was very tired and my eyes itched from getting up too early and not sleeping enough lately. In Rotterdam I didn't have to walk far from the train station to the venue. The Waterfront is situated right near the water, which was really nice, because from the café you had a view over one of the many rivers in the city. Rotterdam seems to exist mostly of water (it's a harbour city and I

going to play tonight. We also ate some of the delicious food that was prepared backstage, while DJs Ovary Action (who also do a zine and radio show under the same name -> see later) played songs like "Mind your own business". Later the French grrrls Soazig, Alice and Julie arrived with Pepe. Also some of the Dutch riot grrrls such as Maaïke and Carolien were there. It was so nice to see them all again.

There were several stands during the festival: from craft stands to food tables and from political info stands to zine distros and band merch. I remember especially the strawberries with chocolate on a stick (and other vegan food), Sas Knits It Again (a Stitch & Bitch knitting stand + permanent knitting workshop), SVZV (an organisation for female refugees; they were also selling cocktails for female asylum seekers: for once getting drunk could be political), and dresses by Merek and the band Lushus. I set up my Echo zines + tapes stand too, and similarly to Up The Grrrls in Paris, sold most of my things very quickly. It was very encouraging to receive nice comments about my work and also meet lots of great new people from different European countries!

All the bands tonight were introduced by a crazy "host", a very wild lady. The band that opened the festival was **Lushus**. They are from the Netherlands, but sing in German and English. I had heard a few of their songs and they are on one of my Echo compilation tapes, but I had never seen them live. But really, this is a band you have to see LIVE to understand how great they are. They consist of a male drummer/vocalist and two female bassists/vocalists, but sometimes one of the girls plays guitar and the other tambourine. The bassists always dance a lot and clearly have fun. The drummer does opera-like vocals and makes funny noises. It's hard to describe what kind of music they play: it's danceable, rhythmic, somewhat arty, punky and jazzy. This description might sound strange but believe me, they are a lot of fun.

The next band was **Dusty Blinds**, who played a little longer than allowed (naughty), but that didn't bother me! **Marie Celeste** is Hilde's current band. The recordings I had heard so far were beautiful melodic songs in an indierock style. Live it sounded more metal, but I didn't mind. I had the impression Hilde felt totally at ease with this heavier sound, and so did the rest of the band.

I missed **Kevin Blechdom & Ching Chong Song**, being too busy with my stand at the time, but I heard from others that they were brilliant.

A group of people including me went to sleep in the Poortgebouw squat which was a building over a road near a small bridge. At night we could hear the cars driving over the bridge. It was a lovely squat, not messy like a lot of other squats, but still cosy and decorated with anarchist/punk flyers and posters. On the way to the squat we passed strange trees with "eyes", and we couldn't make out whether they were scratched on the wood by humans or part of the trees themselves.

SATURDAY

Today's zine workshop was done by Val and Ingvild of the Ovary Action zine (a queer feminist music publication, written partly in English and partly in Norwegian) and DIY girl-positive radio show from Norway/France. We didn't actually make a zine, but made drawings, comics and collages, that were intended more as posters, which we put up on a wall in the concert space. Ingvild and Val gave away free copies of their zine too.



The radical cheerleading workshop overlapped the zine workshop and was done by Tanja of Bunnies On Strike. Bunnies On Strike is a collective of activists and artists who made music, wrote zines, did performances and of course radical cheerleading, founded by Tanja and her friends. I'm not sure if Bunnies On Strike still exists though. At the Ladyfest Tanja gave me a box full of old Bunnies On Strike zines, stickers and 7"s (and I gave the double things away so apart from me there were lots of other happy bunnies around)!

In the café the Driepvries Dames DJs hosted a fun game: Female Music Heroines Bingo! Instead of numbers, female band names were used. The DJs/game mistresses played songs by those bands and everyone had to guess which band it was. I guessed Zap Mama! ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Displayed played in the café. Suzanne seems to feel at home on stage, wearing a beautiful dress as always, screaming in the microphone... The boys wore T-shirts that said "I'm a lady..." I do wonder if the small café was the right place to have a punky band like Displayed. The audience did not seem to move much, whereas their music would require this. It's hard to start dancing/moshing when you're surrounded by tables and chairs...

Tigerstring Ensemble played next in the café. They are a duo playing bluesy garage rock'n'roll. They sounded very rough and heartfelt. They fitted better in the café than Displayed. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Unfortunately Link had to cancel their gig today (I was curious to see them, the singer used to sing in Makiladoras). But Lushus proposed to play instead again! Hurray! Lushus twice in one weekend = party! The Dutch band **Cheap Thrills** played classic hardrock 'n roll, not really my cup of tea (also because their act seemed a bit too focused on "looking cute and pleasing the boys"), though they were good musicians.

I've seen **De Fatwa's** several times already, but never too much! Yasmina had brought her little daughter to sing on stage and she had a great growling voice! Maybe she can soon start her own band?

Time for the surprise act! According

to the promo flyer **Elle Bandita** (the stage name of one of the organisers, Ryanne) was supposed to DJ only, but I was glad she also performed a few of her songs. The radical cheerleaders (the participants of the workshop) announced her, but I was too late to see them and felt really bad about it. Fortunately I had seen them rehearse a bit before. One of my highlights of the festival was when Elle Bandita played a medley of Team Dresch's "Uncle Phranc" and Sleater-Kinney's "Youth Decay", on her guitar and drum computer while people in the audience were singing along. Cool!!!

Sweet Sweet was sweet indeed, but at the same time they were rebellious: a barefooted drummer, all 3 dressed in eye-masks, a self-made Sweet Sweet adventure film projection about Sweet Sweet as test animals escaping from a laboratory... Think Cadallaca + Chicks On Speed music-wise and humour/creativity-wise. The band includes Maaikje of Dusty Blinds and if I'm not mistaken, Bianca used to play drums for Bunnies On Strike.

SUNDAY
This morning I had breakfast with Ingvild and Val at the attic of the squat. We had fun with a box ball and a little go-car.

In the Waterfront I watched the Tribe 8 documentary but I missed the queer/gender workshop by nOodles. The interviews in the documentary about Tribe 8 were very personal, about growing up as queer, drug abuse, their performances and the responses they got to it. The other films/DVDs didn't work unfortunately. I also missed the self-defence workshop by Yasmina of De Fatwa's (sorry!).

A funny band called **Oops-a-daisies** played several times in the café today. They looked like they got out of a film about the 1930s. Their old-fashioned outfits, haircuts and instruments (ukuleles, contrabass, slide guitar, etc), choir-like vocals and country-inspired music created an original atmosphere. It all fit perfectly.

Later I kind of by accident watched a rehearsal of the band Mindsan that was gonna play today, together with Hilde and Ryanne/Elle Bandita. What they were playing or rehearsing together for? Read on and find out!

Legoparty was the first band on the main stage. They are a Belgian band, but I never saw them live before (I did briefly meet some of them at a Sleater-Kinney gig in Brussels not so long ago and there were some Dutch girls too, so that's probably how their contact was passed on to the Ladyfest Rotterdam organisers). I was pleasantly surprised! Their music is kinda 80s stylish arty electro rock. They radiated coolness and looked like stars, but in a positive way (like **Elastica**, but with a French touch and a bit more glittery). They thanked **noodles** for the "discover your gender" workshop. It was fun, when the drummer switched to playing guitar and one of the singer/guitarists hit the cymbals. They covered "Ice Bear", which fitted their set list perfectly.

In between the bands, it was cool to see a feminist boy (Gijs of **Dusty Blinds**) DJing in the café. It didn't seem strange at all (in fact I'm only thinking about it now while writing this). He is a "lady" of course and has an excellent music taste.

Siren is from Maastricht (that's near where I used to live) and it showed in the attitude of the singer. She seemed a bit too *macha*, comparing the moshpit in Rotterdam with that in Maastricht (who cares?). **Siren** played very decent hardcore though, gave away free buttons and if they'll play somewhere near me, I'll probably

check them out again (but it's too bad that only the drummer considers herself a feminist/riotgrrrrl).

Robotnicka is a French band. They all dressed up in crazy outfits (Viking helmets, skirts, panties, pyjama suits with patches, fake beards) and played crazy music as well (electro pop noise). The French girls in the audience were very pleased to see them play.

Mandy of **Mindscan** used to play in Lady!Die with Hilde and Ruth. **Mindscan** are 2 boys and 2 girls delivering metalcore, dressed as nurses. The guitarists and bassist posed and moved a lot, which made them great photographic targets. Towards the end they played a cover of L7's "shitlist" together with Hilde and RYANNE/Elle Bandita on vocals! Part of the audience went crazy (me too).

After the bands, the audience was reduced in size quite quickly. It was obvious that it was Sunday and people had to work or go to school the next morning. (But not me, lucky me)

MONDAY

The next morning we woke up very late again in the Poortgebouw. One of the squatters made us (**Robotnicka**, **Ovary Action**, **Soazig** and me) delicious banana pancakes for breakfast!

In the Waterfront I collected my drawings from a room backstage, drank more tea, gave away the last zine left that I had brought with me and



Mindscan with Hilde & RYANNE screaming...

watched the photos and short-films **Soazig** had made during the festival on her laptop. Val and Ingild of **Ovary Action** were interviewing the Ladyfest organisers and I took a group photo when they were done. Then we said "goodbye, see you soon", and we all went home. Each our way... I was happy to have been present at and

part of such a great festival, a temporary free & feminist space: supportive, inspiring, creative, DIY ... and happy to see my Dutch and other (riot grrrl) friends again. Because Soazig was heading to Germany in a few days, she had asked if she could stay at my home until then. So off we went, on the train to Belgium. There, full dumpsters waited to be skipped... While we were reflecting on the festival and enjoying our recent memories, some annoying man welcomed/pushed us back into the "real world"... We left the temporary utopia that Ladyfest offered and were shocked at how it differed from the outside world ("back into reality"). When we changed trains in Antwerp, a woman and a man of foreign origin came and sat next to us. I don't know whether they lived here or just temporary visited the region (but that's not of any importance). A white middleclass-looking man sat on the benches across of us. He started asking the couple annoying/personal questions and remarks. Soazig, even though she

didn't understand Dutch, understood the racist undertone of his comments. It was not so much what he said (no direct racist speech) but the way he said it, seemingly intended to annoy the woman and the man and not "minding his own business". At one point I couldn't stand it any longer and spoke up against him. He felt defensive claiming he "voted left-wing" to try to convince me he identified as non-racist. Maybe he didn't even realise what he was doing... Soazig made a comic about the situation to support the woman and the man. A bit later the white man was also harassing a white girl. Grrr! This whole situation made me feel disappointed that the nice friendly supportive vibe of Ladyfest doesn't exist yet outside of its safe cocoon. We still have a lot of work to do...

www.ladyfestrotterdam.org/



RECIPE BOOK: WWW.MYSPACE.COM/THE_RECIPE_BOOK

COOL SCHMOOL:

POXY TOXIC:

WWW.MYSPACE.COM/TOXICOLTOBEPOXY

cool grrrl
stuff in the
Netherlands

→ Soaz, Valeria, Val, Ingerild, Ryzanne, Hilde, Kim outside the Waterfront after Ladyfest Rotterdam.

FREAK OUT**QUEER-A-LICIOUS
ART FESTIVAL****FRIDAY-SATURDAY DECEMBER 1st - 2nd 2006
ROME (ITALY)**

I was so honoured to be invited by Veruska to exhibit at the queer arts festival she and her friend Sarah were organising in Rome! We had been talking over email for a while about doing some kind of art project together and this is what came out of it (and more is being planned for the near future!). Veruska is a zine writer (most known from her zine "Clit Rocket"), visual artist and queer event organiser. She used to do a feminist radio show called Queen Bee and also recorded her own spoken word & experimental music/sounds under the name Die Bitch. We had met for the first time in real life during Ladyfest Berlin in 2005 but were email pen pals before that.

THURSDAY

I went to Rome by plane, but I had never flown before. So I was a bit nervous about going to the airport by myself. I wasn't afraid for the actual flight, but since the airport was in the French-speaking part of Belgium and it was my first time flying, I was a bit worried if I would find everything well and know what to do and where to go. Normally a friend/neighbour would go with me to the festival (to also exhibit there and do a craft stand with me), but she was ill. But I was lucky her dad still drove me to the airport, because there was no public transport this early in the morning.

Because my plane arrived more than an hour too late in Rome and I had agreed to meet up with Veruska at the train station I was a bit worried whether she would still be there. I walked through the main hall but couldn't find her. I decided to wait for a little while and if she still had not turned up, I would call her. Time passed so I cued to buy a calling card (I don't have a mobile phone and can manage without one).

But then someone patted my shoulder. It was not Veruska, but Pepe (from Germany) who I knew would arrive around the same time in Rome as me. She said Veruska could not come to pick us up but she knew how to get to a meeting spot in the city-centre where we would meet up with Veruska. We just had to wait a little bit longer until Janet (also from Germany) arrived. Then we took the bus together.

At a train station in the city-centre we met Veruska and Soazig (from France). Veruska explained how to get to the Ateneo squat where the second day of the festival would take place and where we could sleep. Soazig had been travelling to various Ladyfests in the summer and fall and I had met her a few times already as you may have read in this travel diary (the first time also at Ladyfest Berlin in 2005). At Freak Out she was going to demonstrate her DJane-talents. It was cool to see her and Pepe again!

After a tram/metro/local train (?) and bus ride and a short walk we arrived at the squat. It was a beautiful old farm, situated outside of the city-centre. Outside dogs and cats were walking around. Vegetables and fruits were lying in boxes for all to take and eat. Graffiti in Italian decorated the walls. We were guided around and to our common bedroom. I went for a nap (my eyes hurt from exhaustion) while the others were lying in the grass in the garden. The sun was still shining brightly and it was warm for this time of the year. "Ciao" and "gracias" were about the only Italian words I knew before coming here. They are still the only Italian words I know. But it was enough to manage to communicate. The people we met tried their best to talk in English.

Later today Jenni (from Poland), Elena (from Germany) and Emma (from the UK) arrived too. It was quite an

international company again! Some went to visit the city-centre. I stayed with some others at the squat, where a band was recording their songs. At night we watched films and video clips on Soazig's laptop.



FRIDAY

Nice: waking up with the sun shining as if it was summer and sounds of kids playing soccer in a nearby field. We had breakfast (very late) and tea made by the tea-lady Pepe. The first day of the festival took place in a cultural space, Cinema Detour, in the city-centre. We had to take the public transport to get there, but there was a strike. Luckily it ended in time for us to get to Cinema Detour before the festival started.

We greeted Veruska and other (foreign) friends (Connie from Germany, Alice from France) that had recently arrived, dropped our stuff at the venue and went looking for food nearby, because there was still plenty of time left. After walking around a lot I bought some pizza with Jenni and Soazig which we ate in the doorway of a deserted house in a small street. It all looked very cosy, like we were in a film or so. We talked about hardcore, straight edge and squatting empty buildings. Back at the venue the festival had just started. Jenni and I put up our distro stands while we watched the documentary "Equator" about the bands Dominatrix and the Haggard. After that more films were shown in another

room: Transazione, Dragkinging, Queer + Words + Beats II... All very interesting.

Then it was time for performances: The drag kings from Rome stole everyone's heart. They magnificently managed to imitate the poses and expressions of typical tough machos in their choreographies and short plays but added queer charm, wit and sexiness.

Bleisspony from Germany were a band consisting of 3 girls who played experimental naïve pop tunes and wore crafty clothing made by the drummer (who was going to do a fashion show the next day).

Afterwards Jenni, Soazig and I took the night bus back to the squat. It was getting very cold outside and we were very tired (it was quite late already). In the bus we passed the Colosseum, but that's about all that I saw of the tourist attractions in Rome.

SATURDAY

We had yummy fruit salad for breakfast (in the early afternoon) today. The second day of Freak Out festival would take place in the Ateneo squat. The visual artists among us and their helping friends, started putting up the artworks and building the exhibition. Some of the squatters were making a catwalk for the performances tonight.

There were several people doing a zine/craft/distro/info stand, some with self-made clothes, some with zines and music and others with self-printed patches or painted rocks. I displayed my zines, tapes and crafty creations next to Jenni's Emancypunk Records stand and Veruska's zines and books.

The first performance was a DIY recycled fashion show with clothes of Ragarella (Rag Treasure) and Janet (shown by volunteers and the designers themselves).

Then Pepe, dressed as an old-fashioned boy/man, took the stage with her street theatre performance. She was assisted by an Italian guy (who translated her text into Italian).

It made it a bit difficult to follow sometimes but for the Italians it

must prove myself so that others would trust me. It's sort of hierarchy

seemed to add to the fun (judging by their laughter).

Afterwards there was a party in another room with Soazig and Katherina as DJanes Robot Magique and Ladyshake and several Italian guys were dancing enthusiastically. By then it was getting very cold in the exhibition space, but the party room felt better.



PEPE AS DIE HELMUT DURING FREAK OUT FESTIVAL

SUNDAY

There was a black women's conference in Rome this weekend that I would have loved to have gone to. But some of us (including me) also really wanted to go to the beach. In the end we didn't manage to go to the conference anymore. Pity...

So on Sunday evening, after saying goodbye to the squatters and the cats, we went to the beach. Backpacked with all our baggage we took the tram/train because the sea was somewhat outside of Rome. It was strange there. I suppose I expected a highly commercialised area and fully build coast line, but it seemed deserted. The beaches appeared to be private so we were lucky we went there when it was getting dark. We moved through the fences, put our bags on the ground and ran in the sand towards the water. Some of us

went night swimming (reminds me of the REM song). But the water was cold, so I just went in for a short while up until my ankles. I did want to feel the sea and breathe the air. Then Soazig and I went looking for sea shells. It made me feel like a little kid again (or maybe I'm always a little kid).

After a while we went to the train station in the city-centre where we were waiting for Veruska. To pass the time we visited to bookstore nearby, read zines (Clitocore and ChaosXGrrrls), talked, invented games we could play and Soazig drew portraits. Then Veruska arrived. She was feeling bad because some of the festival's participants/guests had been complaining about the squat and the festival. We tried to comfort her, saying we were totally pleased with the squat and its inhabitants and very happy to have attended the festival. I can't imagine what they could have disliked about it. We thanked Veruska for all the effort she put in organising Freak Out (only together with one other friend!) and then said goodbye. We also said goodbye to Pepe who was leaving very early in the morning by plane, so she was going to spend the night at the airport.



Then the rest of us left too. While waiting for the bus and on the bus we were playing the game "mafia". Veruska had given us an address of a squat that was more central in the city so it would be easier to catch our flights back home in the morning. It took us a while before we found the squat where we were going to spend the night (squat L38). It was well-hidden. But we were so happy when we found it and when they opened the door for us. It was situated over a street and we had to enter through a tower-like gate with stairs going round. Inside there was an internet connection (so we could check our myspace websites ☺), real comfortable beds, warmth (ah, a radiator!), rock & roll and activist posters and flyers on the walls and a somewhat trashy bathroom (well, at least there was a toilet) The guys of the squat were helpful and friendly, asking us if we needed more beds and offering us vodka (not for me thanks). I fell asleep listening to the music of Soazig's laptop (I remember specifically her own ex-band Les Grognasses and the last song on their demo).

MONDAY

We only slept a few hours, and then Jenni, Connie and I had to get up already to catch our flights back home. It was very early in the morning so obviously we were all still very tired. We took the bus and the metro together and then Jenni and I went to the airport by train and bus. We separately checked in and said goodbye just before I had to take my plane.

When the plane took off, I slowly starting feeling very sick. I often get nauseous in cars, but I didn't know plane-sickness existed as well. I was feeling really bad, nearly puking when we (finally!) landed. It was probably partly caused by my lack of sleep, and also the narrow seats and feeling captured in a warm space without fresh air and the slight moving of the plane. Even though I was very glad to put my feet on the ground after the plane had landed, I still felt very tired and sick. When I was feeling slightly better, I took

the bus to the train station and then the train home, still a more than 2-hour trip. (Actually now I'm glad I hated the flight so much, because it's an extra motivation for me to never to take a plane again, next to the environmental reasons.) I was happy to be home to be able to rest and recover. But apart from the awful flight back home, my trip to Rome and the Freak Out Festival were certainly queer-a-licious!



www.myspace.com/clitrocket
www.tmcrow.org/ateneo/

Vern & Pepe

We are from everywhere!

Connie & Soazig



IN THE MEANTIME, CLOSER TO HOME ...

XX EMPORIUM

Friday December 15th
 - Saturday December 16th 2006:
 Nieuwpoorttheater, Gent

First intended as an avant-Ladyfest, XX Emporium became a wonderful festival of its own. At the entrance visitors were welcomed by the Pom-pom Girls, the radical cheerleaders from Brussels shouting Bikini Kill songs, then led to the inspiring DIY library bookshelf and amazed by performances of Hertenkamp, Josie Duflan & Les Ponettes Sauvages, Les Reines Prochaines, several members of Queerilla the queer collective in Gent, Marijs Boulogne, and many others... Although theatre arts were the main focus, also visual arts were present in the form of craft stands and a small exhibition.



CREATION OF

DIY COMMUNITIES / SPACES / EVENTS

AS ACTIVISM

I like the image of DIY communities or free spaces. I like being there. But sometimes they seem merely little islands in an ocean full of sharks, an ocean that sometimes even floods the islands. The contrast is great when I'm thrown back into the water. And sometimes these precious utopian islands are not even that perfect either (for example when sexism or racism occurs in a self-identified anti-sexist and anti-racist environment: we're not always that different from those we despise). But at least they offer the possibility of an alternative. It becomes what we make of it. And it can become really great. At most of the DIY festivals I visited, some are described in this zine, I was struck by their kindness, inclusiveness, relaxedness, enthusiasm... sometimes I didn't want to go home again.

DIY festivals, subculture and grassroots communities can offer alternative ways of living to mainstream society. A safe haven away from the sharks in the ocean. A DIY exhibition as opposed to submission to high art elitism, DIY participatory festivals as opposed to commercial entertainment and passive consumption-based events or DIY workshops for learning instead of competitive schooling systems with grades, marks and faults. This is what a DIY community or space can be. This is what I'm looking for when I'm going to, participating in or organising DIY events.

Sometimes DIY activists concentrating on working on their own communities may be accused of "life-stylism" and not fighting against or changing the outside mainstream society. But we choose between these 2 options? Why not take on both? And by creating a community that you like to live in, isn't that fighting against/changing society as well? Can it not serve as an example as well and thus be a spark that lights a fuse? Or even offer energy and inspiration to carry on fighting and thus prevent burn-out and with-discussing actions? And would it not be hypocritical to demand the outside world to stop their oppressions/discriminations/injustice/privilege when we've not even questioned/fought our own?

Ideally DIY communities let you be who you are, make you feel at ease and give space for (self)expression, creativity and growth. In DIY spaces/events there's a possibility to learn and explore and space to be different and be respected. In squats, temporary activist camps and meetings, non-profit festivals, radical women's centres, anarchist libraries and other free spaces, we can experiment with how we see our ideal world. We can put our non-hierarchical ideas into practice by the way we deal with each other, the way we organise, the way we discuss... We can make our utopia real right here and right now.

LADIES' ROOM

FRIDAY-SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 2ND-4TH 2007
IN 233, HASSELT
BELGIUM

At the XX Emporium festival in Ghent Marthe revealed to me that she was going to be involved in an artistic project in Hasselt in which everyone could participate and do "something". This inclusive low-brow art event would take place in 233 (a big contemporary art venue in Hasselt) during a larger cultural weekend and was called "Ruimte Te Gebruiken" ("Space For Use"). So all of the rooms of 233 could be used by people who wanted to do or organise something there. It could be anything; there was no selection.

I couldn't wait to subscribe and take part. But I wanted to do something more than just exhibit my artworks and do an info/craft stand. This was a great opportunity to organise a small DIY feminist event in one of the rooms of 233 and get other people involved too. So I launched a call for artists, musicians, feminist friends and others who could be interested in taking part in what I had by now named "Ladies' Room". I wanted it to be a free space for feminism activism, DIY art and craft, zines, workshops, sharing skills and information, jam sessions and performances, riot grrrl & foxcore DJanes, spontaneous creativity and riot grrrl meetings (and hopefully another step to a local DIY queer feminist art/activist movement or scene). Thanks to everyone involved, Ladies' Room became that inspiring kind of temporary feminist free space for a weekend in February!

THURSDAY

Today I went to the train station to pick up Coline. I had not seen her in ages! We had worked together in the past for the first 2 Ladyfests in Belgium, but since then I had only seen her once. It was great to co-operate again and to see how enthusiastic she was about the concepts of Ladies' Room and Ruimte Te Gebruiken. Actually we shared some nice memories about 233 too. We went there together with a mutual friend to see Chicks On Speed several years ago. It was during the opening festival of 233 I think. The Ruimte Te Gebruiken weekend would start on Friday evening so on Thursday and Friday we could prepare our rooms. When we arrived in 233 Coline and I put our artworks on the



Mamuka DJ
Pipi Chocolat at work ↑

walls. The DJ system, tables (for the info stands and zine workshop) and seats (for the zine reading and knitting/crocheting corner) were also put in the right place. All the projects/people who "did something" in 233 this weekend got a room or a part of a room and we got a great bright room on the first floor with a huge window. This was going to be the "ladies' headquarter" (all genders included) for the next few days. After walking to the train station with Coline, I went home. There, my mom gave me a book called "De vrouw een godin, de kunst een god" ("The woman a goddess, the art a god"), a present of her friend for me. It's feminist art criticism from the early 1980s and seemed very appropriate for this weekend.



Jessie helped me put a large piece of paper on a wall that would be used as a big collective DIY artwork because everyone could draw/write on it. We also installed our info/craft stands and I put some riot grrrl stickers, the Riot Grrrl Europe manifesto and a Crimethinc text about gender on the room's walls. That Crimethinc text got a lot of interest of (especially male) visitors during Ruimte Te Gebruiken. The exhibition in the Ladies' Room now consisted of Coline's fashion design photographs and punky artistic clothing, an angry sketchy self-portrait by Jessie and my own drawings and comic pages, but there was still some empty space on the walls that needed to be filled during the weekend.

Manu, a friend from Brussels who plays drums and DJs, arrived in the evening and took over the music responsibilities as the Ladies' Room DJane. Her DJ set (under the name Pipi Chocolat) included L7, Babes In Toyland, Nico, My Ruin, Melt Banana, LiliPUT, Katastrophy Wife, Hole, Dada Stunt Girl, Bikini Kill, the Gossip, Lydia Lunch, Sleater-Kinney, Patti Smith... The music really contributed to the atmosphere and concept of the room! Manu also brought some of her artworks: playful creative 3D collage installations that she put on the walls and on the tables.



FRIDAY:

Friday I started getting addicted to eating mandarins, something that was going to last the whole weekend. ~~Myrrin mandarins...~~

In 233 I continued to prepare and decorate the Ladies' Room. I made a small zine-reading corner and an announcement board with old riot grrrl/feminist/queer/ladyfest/zine/flyers and posters for inspiration & information.

Jessie, my neighbour and friend who also participated in Ruimte Te Gebruiken by exhibiting her diverse art, helped me with the Ladies' Room and I helped her with her exhibition, which was right next to the Ladies' Room (coincidence or our secret plan?: this way there were 2 lady spaces!). She was also going to do a stand with her self-made jewellery in the Ladies' Room.

The other rooms in Z33 were used for exhibitions by individual artists and art groups, concerts, film screenings and several other (sometimes very strange) projects. There was a lot happening and lots of people visiting and participating. I don't think Z33 had been this alive before.

SATURDAY:

Manu stayed at my home last night and we had a lazy late breakfast in the morning. When we walked to Z33, I took my guitar and mini-amp with me. Several ladies/friends were already in Z33 when we arrived: Ayla (Enimu), Lis and Kim. Coline arrived a little bit later too and installed her crafty merch stand. Kim is part of the Riot Grrrl collective in Hasselt and a crafty lady (but too modest to bring any of her own work) and Ayla and Lis are 2 sisters who added some of their drawings to the exhibition. Ayla also used to be in the Riot Grrrl collective and was a member of D-Konstruxie, the band I was in. Other friends (Sara, Katrien, Luc...) came to see the Ladies' Room and I met nice new people, like Soizic who is involved in feminist and queer projects in Brussels.

In the afternoon Kim and I gave a workshop about zines. First I explained what zines are (almost none of the workshop participants heard of it; it's very unknown here) and then we focussed on creating a zine. Thematically we decided that it had to be somehow related to the Ladies' Room. Drawings, collages and texts were made. Afterwards Ayla, Lis and me stuck the pages in the right order. The next day we would make copies and give them to all the participants. We had access to free copies because Z33 had moved a copy machine in the Ladies' Room for us to use. That was a real luxury! After the workshop we were getting very hungry. The ladies (and my brother Lukas) went for food that we would eat in the Ladies' Room. I stayed in the room to finish the master copy of the zine. Then Marijs arrived. She is a smart, funny, enthusiastic feminist lady from Brussels and one of the organisers of XX Emporium. She is also a theatre performer (check www.excavations.be), an accordion musician and a crafty artist (she likes to crochet!).

The LADIES' ROOM during the zine workshop:
The copy machine



After dinner, Jessie and I decided to do the jam session. We both played electric guitar and Ayla played on my mini-harmonica (and sung very quietly) and later Marijs played accordion with me on guitar. It was fun to play together! ...Until a sudden male/macho take-over happened... Don't get me wrong, I didn't mind boys jamming along, but in this case it really was a "take-over" + "invasion" of lady space. A guy asked to play my guitar and the accordion of Marijs. I felt uneasy but unable to define what bothered me when I handed over my instrument. Shortly after, some other guys joined in which changed the atmosphere completely. People were supposed to bring and play their own instruments and we especially wanted to encourage female/transgenderqueer musicians to jam because they are so rare and invisible in public spaces and on stages. Situations with (macho) guys wanting to play on our (my) instruments are happening so often. As if macho musicians always feel the urge to show how great they are and how much better they can play. The guy wanted to "steal the show" and didn't stop after one (or a few) song(s). He came across as arrogant, a cockrockstar in need of attention and approval, but also as "gentle" which made it difficult to say anything or ask our instruments back, because of fear and feeling guilty for appearing hostile, bitchy and unfriendly and being blamed. (Women are taught to always please others, be content, be friendly, smile, don't say anything when something bothers us, just wait and see and don't take action). I was unprepared to respond to such intrusions. Next time I will not give anyone my guitar, even when I stop playing it, even if this may seem mean and possessive. (I can't imagine me, a girl/queer asking to play some macho guy's holy untouchable guitar). We were waiting until they were done (which took a long time) because we wanted to go home and sleep. Finally they gave back our instruments when a performance group needed the Ladies' Room. I know we should have asked (or taken) our instruments back. This

situation showed we are still in need of lady(-friendly) space, but we also have to learn how to keep and defend it.

Anyway, we didn't let it spoil our evening... At my home Marijs was telling wonderful true (bedtime) stories before we went to sleep.

SUNDAY:

I walked Enimu and Lis to the train station and then had breakfast at home with Manu and Marijs.

It was very crowded in Z33 today. I made copies of the Ladies' Room Zine (+ some scams for Marthe and some other friends...) and gave the zines to the participants.

Pity we had to stop and move away our things already by 18:00. But all good things come to an end too soon.

Marthe said she was feeling the weight of 3 days and 2 nights at Z33 with hardly any sleep. But she also seemed very pleased with how Ruimte Te Gebruiken went. And so was I. I was happy to have taken part in the project and together with several great ladies organised something fun in one of the rooms in Z33. I hope to continue making Ladies' Rooms in other buildings on other occasions in the future. Recently Marthe told me about an exhibition called "If I can't dance it's not my revolution" (named after the Emma Goldman quote, though I don't think it will be an anarchy-feminist exhibition at all) in Antwerp that she plans to do something for (or against). Sounds promising!

www.ladiesroom.cjb.net

Jessie + me



WHY THE LADIES' ROOM?

-Because we are inspired by the hundreds of Ladyfests that have taken place all over the world and more and more are being organised today (in fact THIS weekend during Ladies' Room there was one taking place in Mexico). Some of us attended, participated and/or organised some of these Ladyfests. Ladies' Room is not a Ladyfest, but it has the same pro-feminist DIY ideals and practice and we aspire to be part of the same beautiful international network of DIY artists, anarchy-feminists, women's liberation activists, riot grrrls, queer punks and gender-free ladies.

-Because we want to play with words such as "lady", laugh at it, tear it apart, glue its pieces back together but in a different order, reconstruct it, deconstruct it, reclaim it, redefine it. We know/realise it's a joke (name) and have fun with it, but at the same time we use it to address gender issues which we take very seriously because they are serious.

-Because even though there ARE queer/trans/women artists and musicians and writers and activists and performers and film makers etc, there seems to be a lack of space for them to show their talents and brilliance (as well as a lack of space to connect, network and co-operate). Their/our work is invisible to many. We have to keep digging to find role models, inspiration and soulsisters, passed the gate keepers, stereotyped gender roles and boring patriarchal* commercial entertainment images that say "consume, don't create" and "genius/artist = male elite".

-Because as one of the earliest riot grrrl manifestos says: we don't want to be measured by patriarchal standards. In fact we don't want to be measured or judged by any standards at all. And we know some men/boys are tired of this shit as well. We welcome them. We want (art) communities that are supportive and inclusive.

-Because as Virginia Woolf already stated 80 years ago, having a "room of one's own" is of enormous importance for women's (and everyone else's) creativity and artistic development and expression. In the Ladies' Room and similar spaces we can explore our own creative talents, co-operate, experiment, try out, share skills and support each other's work/art/projects. I think (political/artistic) squats can and do play an important role in offering and (re)claiming space for creative projects, activism and building of a community in a longer run.

-Because even though Ladies' Room is only a temporary room, we hope to build more spaces for creativity and action in the (very near) future. Temporary events/communities such as Ladyfest and Ladies' Room need to expand to our EVERYday-life. (When we go out, we go to Ladyfest AND when we go home, we go to Ladyfest.) Therefore all hierarchy, privilege and power inequalities have to be questioned and fought against within the (activist) communities we are part of. Because the world won't change if we won't change. We are creating revolution and action here and now.

-Because we don't only want to build a counter-culture or alternative community, but we also want to address and smash the sexism/homophobia/racism/pollution/animal torture/violence/etc of the current society of which we are -whether we like it or not- are still a part. We also need to question our own role in the injustices/oppressions we want to destroy.

-Because we are tired of explaining why we are -still- feminists. Look around! Think! Read! Do research! Question your privilege! Question your own sexism! Do you really need a list of reasons?

* Patriarchy = a male/masculine-dominated society which excludes and oppresses women and queers. Like capitalism is a system based on class-hierarchy, patriarchy is based on gender-hierarchy.

Die kunnen we alleen vatten als we ook aandacht hebben voor de momenten waarop Klees werk niet naar zijn tijd verwijst, er naast prenten van Daumier te leggen - zoals Osamu Okuda in Paul Klee 1933 doet -



START A ZINE REVOLUTION NOW!

LATELY SOME FRIENDS OF MINE TOLD ME
TO MAKE THEIR OWN ZINE AND ASKED
SO I THOUGHT ABOUT WRITING /
HOW-TO GUIDE TO EXPLAIN HOW
MAKE MY ZINES, NOT HOW ZINES
MADE. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND
"STOLEN SHARPIE REVOLUTION"
(LOTS OF USEFUL INFO) AND
UNDERGROUND ZINES" BY
DUNCOMBE (DETAILED BACK-
ZINES) BUT THERE ARE TONS
INSPIRING ZINES, WEBSITES
ZINES AS WELL. I HOPE THIS
CAN BE HELPFUL TOO!

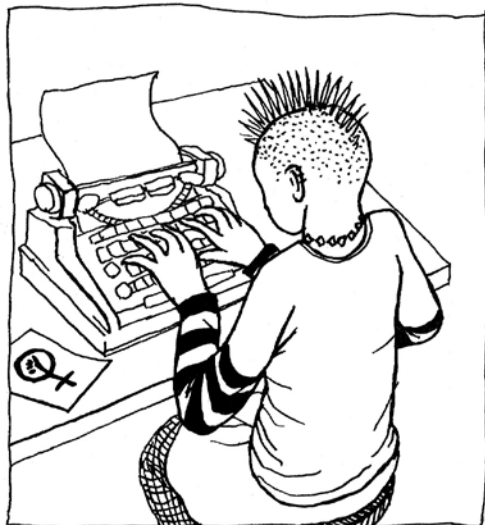
THAT THEY WANTED
FOR SOME ADVICE.
DRAWING A LITTLE
I WORK WHEN I
SHOULD BE
READING
BY ALEX WREKK
"NOTES FROM
STEPHEN
GROUND ON
OF OTHER
AND BOOKS ON
LITTLE DIY GUIDE



SOME DIY STUFF
AND RESOURCE
INFO.
BUT THAT WAS ONLY
THE BEGINNING...
I GOT ADDICTED TO
BOTH READING &
WRITING ZINES
AND BECAME A
REAL "ZINE FREAK!"

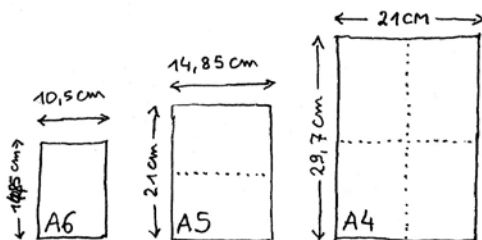
THE EARLIEST ZINES DATE FROM THE 1930s (SCIENCE-FICTION FANZINES) BUT ZINES HAVE HISTORICAL LINKS WITH SELF-PUBLISHED RADICAL PAMPHLETS TOO. MORE RECENTLY ZINES HAVE BEEN USED BY PUNKS, FEMINISTS, RIOT GRRRLS AND ARTISTS.

MAYBE SOME PEOPLE ASSUMED THAT BECAUSE OF THE RISE OF ONLINE PUBLICATION FORMS (BLOGS, FORUMS, WEBSITES, INDYMEDIA, MYSPACE ETC), PAPER ZINES WOULD VANISH. FORTUNATELY THEY DIDN'T.



DE-MYSTIFYING ZINE-MAKING

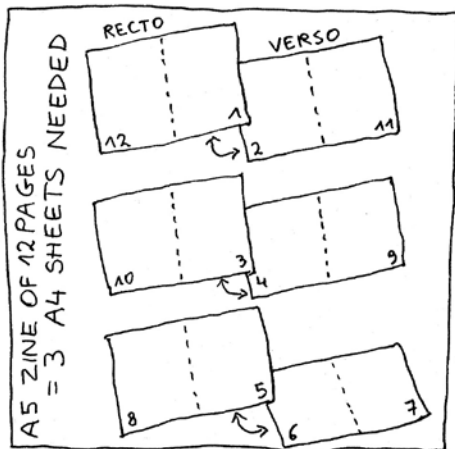
NOW I'LL TELL YOU HOW I MAKE MY ZINES! FIRST I THINK ABOUT WHAT I WANT TO SAY. I DRAW OR WRITE DOWN SOME IDEAS, ON PAPER, IN A SKETCH BOOK OR IN A TEXT FILE ON MY COMPUTER. I DECIDE ON THE SIZE AND THE NUMBER OF PAGES OF THE ZINE. ZINES CAN BE MADE IN ALL KINDS OF SIZES AND FORMATS/SHAPES. I HAVE USED A4, A5 AND A6. I'LL USE A5 FOR THE EXAMPLE.



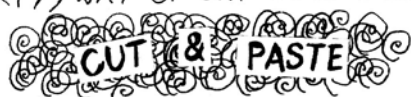
I TRY TO ESTIMATE THE AMOUNT OF PAGES FOR EACH ARTICLE, INTERVIEW, COMIC, ... AND START WRITING THE CONTENT ON MY COMPUTER (OR ON PAPER OR ON A COOL TYPEWRITER IF YOU HAVE ONE).



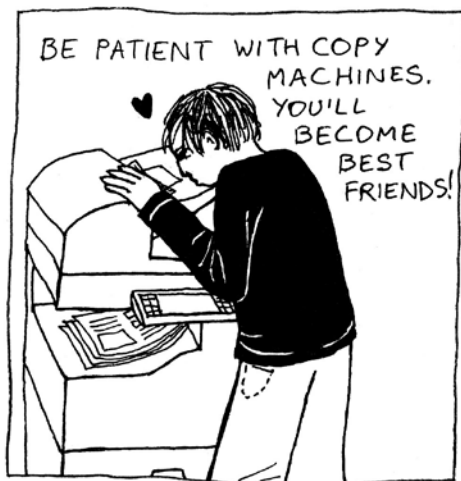
WRITING & EDITING THE TEXTS FOR YOUR ZINE MIGHT TAKE A LOT OF TIME. I USUALLY SPEND MONTHS WRITING ARTICLES, BIT BY BIT. BUT SOME PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO FINISH A ZINE IN 1 DAY!



WHAT ALSO TAKES ME A LOT OF TIME IS MAKING THE LAY-OUT, MOSTLY BECAUSE I USE A TIME-CONSUMING (BUT FUN & PUNKY/ARTY) WAY OF LAY-OUTING ZINES:



BASICALLY, THIS MEANS CUTTING THE (PRINTED OR HAND-WRITTEN) TEXT AND GLUEING THE WORDS/LINES/PARAGRAPHS ON A BACKGROUND, WHICH IS GLUED ON THE EMPTY NUMBERED PAGES SHOWN IN THE EXAMPLE ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE.



WHEN YOU HAVE WRITTEN, DRAWN AND/OR COLLAGED EVERYTHING, YOUR MASTER VERSION IS DONE! NOW MAKE A DOUBLE-SIDED COPY (=FLAT COPY) OF YOUR MASTER PAGES. THEN YOU CAN MAKE AS MANY COPIES OF THE FLAT COPY AS YOU WANT.

FOLDING & BINDING THE ZINE CAN BE DONE AT COPY CENTRES BUT IT'S CHEAPER IF YOU DO IT YOURSELF. I BIND MY ZINES WITH RIBBON/ROPE, BUT YOU CAN ALSO USE STAPLES OR MAKE USE OF BOOK BINDING TECHNIQUES (SEWING, GLUEING)... BE CREATIVE! SO NOW YOUR ZINE IS FINISHED! AND WHAT **NOW?**



UNLESS YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR ZINE A SECRET FOR THE WHOLE WORLD, YOU WILL NOW TRY TO SPREAD YOUR PUBLICATION AND FIND READERS. TRY THESE FOR THE PROMOTION, DISTRIBUTION AND TRADING OF YOUR ZINE:



WWW.GRRRLZINES.NET
WWW.ZINEWIKI.COM
WWW.QZAP.ORG



I HOPE TO READ YOUR ZINE TOO, ONE FINE DAY!
CONGRATS & WELCOME TO THE ZINE SCENE, FELLOW **ZINESTER!**

MINI-

LADYFEST BRUSSELS

Saturday March 3rd 2007:
Peniche Fulmart, Brussels

It had been more than 4 years since the last Ladyfest in Belgium took place... until indierock queen Dominique was in charge! On the first edition of a series of mini-Ladyfests she intends to organise, one of her own bands Keiki played, as well as Tsuki Moon (rocking one-girl band of Geraldine) and Seesayle (enchanted solo project by Cécile who used to play drums for Naifu). The night was closed by a wild DJ set of Pipi Chocolat who dances while she plays records. The art exhibition consisted of works by Jessica Locca, Pipi Chocolat and myself. Take note: on December 1st is the next mini-Ladyfest in Brussels!



Dominique singing + playing a wizard instrument.

L'UNIVERS DU QUEER

Friday March 16th 2007:

Ateliers Mommén, Brussels

Exhibition, party, projections and craft stands (most of them with self-made arty dolls), organised by the queer boyz of Brussels.

QUEER PARTY

Friday April 20th 2007: RTT, Brussels

Bigger event by the queer BXL crew including concerts (Rosa Park, Crête Et Paquerette and La Veru Berlue), a big art exhibition and infostands in a legalised squatted area. Another queer festival is in planning stage!



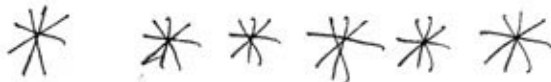
WE CAN DO IT OURSELVES: FEMINISM MEETS DIY ACTIVISM

INTRODUCTION

DIY stands for do-it-yourself. It means taking your life and/or your art/craft in your own hands, instead of relying on ("superior", "more qualified", "more powerful", etc) others for things to happen, change or get done/made. DIY as a strategy has been used by some activists in the current alterglobalisation movement, such as anarchists, to reach their goals here and now, without compromise. There are also feminists making use of DIY activism instead of relying on the state to make laws and other measures that should benefit women. These feminists prefer their autonomy and freedom instead of playing the game of hierarchical patriarchal institutions such as governments to improve the situation for women.

In this short essay I want to explain how I define DIY activism and investigate how it can be of use for feminists: how it can contribute to women's liberation and why I think it can be a "feminist" kind of activism. This article is not at all a complete story or research. Just my look at things at this moment. In the bibliography you can find some tips for other texts if you want to read more.

D.I.WHAT?



You may know DIY (do-it-yourself) as a punk slogan calling for starting your own band, founding your own label, writing your own zine... something that started in the 70s. But DIY activism has been practiced since many centuries (see texts by Saskia Poldervaart who wrote more about this); punk didn't invent it. This is interesting because it means we can learn from those who came before us.

In the underground punk definition of DIY, you can be independent from major labels and the mainstream music industry and keep control over your own art/music. You make all the decisions and you have 100% creative freedom and no obligations. Making and releasing your own music and making your own media (zine, website, radio show or whatever) can be considered a form of activism. Because by working in a DIY way, you are (consciously) refusing to be part of the commercial music business, elite art world and mainstream media. OK, maybe making music isn't going to change the world (entirely), but it's a start (and it's fun too). It can also teach you that you don't need big companies behind you to release a CD (or do anything else for you). DIY activism could be defined as an alternative form of activism or resistance that doesn't rely on existing political power structures. By creating your own non-hierarchically organised community together with others and by working on alternatives (and showing them to others so they can make use of it as well and in this way spread ideas and tools), you can look for solutions to problems yourself and change things right here and now, independent of the current political system. DIY activism is similar to direct action. Both cut out the middlemen. You don't need to ask any politician or rich guy if -please- he wants to give you equal rights or freedom or whatever. You take and make what you need.

Taking space, making things instead of buying them, not-participating in what you think is wrong and putting your ideals into practice, is contributing to an everyday revolution. And by showing your example to

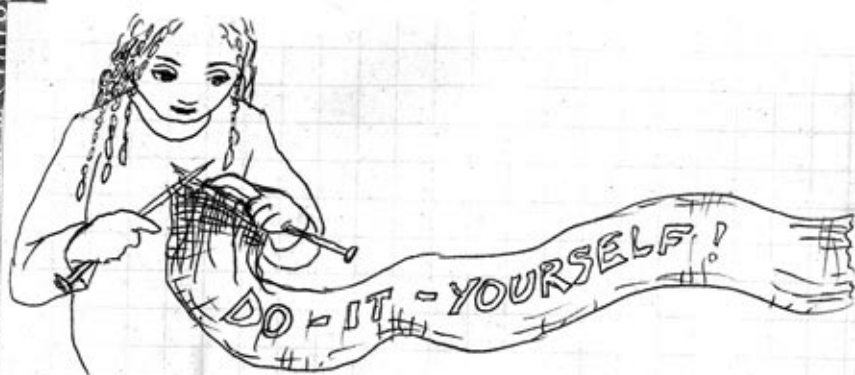
others, this revolution can spread. Doing-things-yourself can mean living self-sufficiently and autonomously, refusing to buy from non-ethical and environmentally-unfriendly companies by doing, making and building everything you need yourself (and with friends and like-minded collectives). Let's call this daily-life activism. For example you can squat empty buildings to live in, grow your own food in the garden and sew/knit your own clothes. Independence from capitalist companies and structures is our power. Not only by boycotting but also by making/doing what you need by yourself or in a collective, learning skills and learning to work together in non-hierarchical ways that mirror our utopia.



HERSTORY OF FEMINIST DIY ACTIVISM

Direct and DIY activism has been practiced by feminists worldwide since the beginning of the feminist movement. From a women's peace camp in Germany in the 1980s to girls worldwide sewing their own reusable cotton pads, from publishing feminist magazines and pamphlets to teaching each other self-defence techniques, from squatting our own free spaces to making art/craft/music/literature however we want while keeping control on every part of the production process, there are plenty of examples. In the herstory of feminism we can see the relevance of the DIY concept mainly in the second feminist wave in the 1970s. Women's liberation feminists started their own bookstores, publishing companies, feminist printing presses and distros, women's shelters, cultural centres and women's centres in squats, action groups, meetings, etc. The possibilities were and are endless! There are all sorts of things one can do oneself that contribute to "improving the world", slowly step by step, making capitalist patriarchal society useless. These second wave feminists in the 1970s worked independently from the state and other patriarchal institutions. For example, women's health centres providing safe abortions started out run entirely by volunteers and were organised in a non-hierarchical way. Unfortunately most of the women-run projects were slowly institutionalised afterwards. The unconsciously anarchistic DIY idea was replaced by state funds, hierarchical structures and capitalist concerns which meant a less radical approach, dependence on and control by the state and alienation of a lot of participants. However in the early nineties, riot grrrls used DIY in a similar way to make their own zines, bands, labels, art shows, festivals... Following their punk feminist roots, they didn't give in when advertisers and big label bosses

waved their dollar bills. Currently there are also lots of anarchy-feminist initiatives blooming and some other feminists within the alterglobalisation movement discover the advantages of DIY activism. For riot grrrls, DIY happened to have an extra advantage next to keeping control over their own art/music. It also empowered girls and showed them they can play in a band (or do anything else) just as well as boys.



EMPOWERMENT & FEMINISM

DIY activism can bring various benefits. I see 4 gains that it offers: 1) self-confidence and empowerment, 2) independence from bad companies and multinationals, 3) alternative community building and 4) fast solutions to problems, without any middlemen or compromise.

Nowadays women and girls are reclaiming craft techniques, digging up and using formally "uncool" and "old-fashioned" occupations such as knitting, crocheting and embroidery, often calling their creations art and thus expanding elitist patriarchal definitions of art. With these techniques the people who make use of them (regardless of gender or age) are at the same time making "old" & "feminine" occupations cool AND using them to make-things-themselves, therefore ignoring/boycotting the fashion industry that's based on consumerism, unhealthy/unrealistic beauty standards and exploitation of poor workers in sweatshops.

It is useful to learn and practice craft techniques as well as other skills such as basic electricity, gardening, carpentry, creative writing, playing an instrument, computer programs, drawing, bike repair, etc. The more you know, the less you have to rely on so-called experts or companies. Especially for women it is important to learn and practice to grow confidence by realising they can do something. Women are not supposed to know certain techniques or have certain so-called masculine skills, let alone excel in them, so it's good to break those gender roles! We can teach each other in small non-hierarchical skill-sharing groups (only women/transgenderqueers or mixed) or learn it by ourselves.

DIY plays an important role in the punk, riot grrrl, zine and current craft (sub/counter)cultures. Punk is largely built on the DIY-idea. Everyone can make punk music, learn to play a few chords on guitar and write a song. Doing-it-yourself in the riot grrrl movement has given girls tools to express themselves, especially within music, art and media. It has increased their self-confidence to be able to create, just like cyber-feminism when it encouraged women to participate in the cyber/technology world. It is

empowering to know you can do or make something completely by yourself, something you might not have considered yourself capable of before. DIY also enabled and empowered girls to get themselves organised: riot grrrls set up meetings, cultural events, actions, etc.

CONCLUSION: DIY+FEMINISM=DIY FEMINISM=COOL

Maybe not everything can be achieved by creating a small different "ideal" society next to the society we don't like and restricting our actions to changes in our own lives. This capitalist patriarchal society needs to be changed as well (change the world + yourself). But this essay is not about how the whole world can be changed instantly. (Also, because I don't know, I've got no 5-step plan to an eco-anarcha-feminist world unfortunately). As I see it there are different kinds of activism and I think most of them contribute to each other: a combination of personally and publicly criticising and stopping the things we don't like, plus creating good alternatives for them. That last part is what DIY activism can do. Feminism for me becomes even more interesting when it's DIY feminism. Sure state feminism and liberal feminism can achieve some gains for women, but this is not the way I prefer to work, because I think it is contradictory, using (in my opinion) "unfeminist" methods and partners. "Equal rights for women and men under the current system based on exploitation" (meaning privileged women can as much as privileged men exploit other unprivileged people) is not my ultimate goal. I'm not interested in female/trans bureaucrats, female/trans soldiers, female/trans presidents... Bureaucracy and feminism, capitalism and feminism, hierarchy and feminism, how can they fit together??? I don't want to fit in and achieve a high status in a system I want to destroy. For me doing-it-ourselves is crucial for feminism, to stay independent from patriarchal institutions as much as possible. Even though it may be difficult sometimes, I prefer to take action and organise in ways that do not contradict my goals. The ends must equal the means, right? So that's why I think it's interesting to look for FEMINIST means and ways towards a feminist world. In my opinion this includes DIY activism. By doing-things-ourselves we take our lives in our own hands and realise our dreams here and now. This way we are taking action, every day again.

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Luikerpoort

LINKS

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temporary Autonomous Zone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temporary_Autonomous_Zone) (TAZ)
www.grrrlzines.net/resources/ladyfests.htm (Ladyfests worldwide)
www.myspace.com/ladyfesteurope (online headquarter of European Ladyfests)
www.aro.ecobytes.net/lovekills/home_en.html (Lovekills Fest in Romania)

www.pinksterlanddagen.nl (anarchist camp/festival in the Netherlands)
www.anfemafest.tk
(Anarcha-feminist festival in Croatia)
www.myspace.com/nocwalpurgii (Polish festival against sexism and homophobia)
www.aboekenbeurs.be
(anarchist bookfair in Gent, Belgium)
www.a-camp.info/
(Anarchist camp in Austria)
<http://eyfa.org/ecotopia> (environmental and social activist youth gathering)

www.schwarzerkanal.squat.net/ (squatted transqueerfeminist wagon place)
www.radicalroutes.org.uk/
(Radical co-ops network)
<http://gen.ecovillage.org/>
(Eco-villages worldwide)
www.myspace.com/travelqueeries and
www.travelqueeries.com/
www.squat.net
(homepage for and about squatting)

www.craftivism.com/ (craft + activism)
www.craftster.org
(forum for crafty people)

www.crimethinc.com (Crimethinc, includes downloadable DIY guides)
www.crimethinc.net/ (forum)

↳ cool stencil art, spotted in Hasselt



<http://ayp.subvert.info/>
(anarchist yellow guide)
www.anarcha.org
(anarcha-feminist resource website)

www.grrrlzines.net
(about zines by feminists, women, girls and transgenders)
www.gzap.org
(online queer zine archive: all downloadable + printable!)

