

DIFFERENT WORLDS  
SAME HEART BEATS

THE  
WITCHES  
ARE  
HERE

09

Polle  
nasser



# intro



October 2009

Dear reader,

About a year ago I started making of this 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of Same Heartbeats. A lot of things I was doing at that time seemed to involve zines. Reading zines, making zines, reading about zines, giving zine workshops, organising zine events, doing zine infostands, taking part in zine discussions... I should have changed my name to Zina instead! So, you can read all about my zine explorations in this little publication. And if you want to read more, I suggest these books: *DIY: The Rise Of Lo-fi Culture* by Amy Spencer, *Only A Beginning: An Anarchist Anthology* edited by Allan Antliff, *Indie Publishing: How To Design And Produce Your Own Book* by Ellen Lupton, *Hot Topic: Popfeminismus Heute* edited by Sonja Eismann, *Riot Grrrl: Revolution Girl Style Now* publishing by Black Dog Publishing and Stephen Duncombe's classic *Notes From Underground: Zines And The Politics Of Alternative Culture* (recently republished and updated with a new chapter about the evolution of zines today!).

But life isn't only zines. Life is also... feminism! Haha! Another one of my obvious passions... So recently there are several stacks of feminist books in my room and I don't know where to begin first. These books seem to have an impact on my writing, which already shows in this zine, and probably will in the next issue of SGB too. Apart from reading and writing about feminism, I've become more active - and enjoying it - in groups such as FAB (Feministische ActieBende) and VOK (Vrouwen Overleg Komitee) and the local Riot Grrrl Collectief. While rereading the list for feminist groups in Belgium for the article "Not Waiting For A Wave To Jump In" (p.20) I noticed I could also mention these (new) projects: Dyk'iri (lesbian night at the Rainbow house in Brussels each 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month), the Feminist House (in Gent), Elles Tournent and Pink Screens (film festivals in Brussels), WIDE (European organisation for gender and development based in Brussels), Minette (zine from Brussels) and L-Salon (irregular lesbian-feminist-trans activities in Gent). More feminist projects and groups in Belgium - and worldwide - can be found at [www.rgcollectief.110mb.com/links.html](http://www.rgcollectief.110mb.com/links.html). Actually my own zines and Echo (self-publishing, music and art production project) could fit in that list too.

So, I don't have much more to add here. I suggest you continue reading this zine (or if you don't want to, give it to someone else). Comments and questions are always welcome. (And let me know if you write a zine-too! Zinesters unite!)

Take care,

Nina  
★



PS. Some of my other zines can be downloaded from [www.grassrootsfeminism.net](http://www.grassrootsfeminism.net)  
+ [www.ninanijsten.110mb.com](http://www.ninanijsten.110mb.com) + [www.rgcollectief.110mb.com](http://www.rgcollectief.110mb.com) + [www.aletta.nu](http://www.aletta.nu).

revolution grrrl-style now!

# Content

If you want to learn,  
read. If you want to  
understand, write.  
If you want to  
master, teach. CB3

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# contact

I like feedback, comments and questions! → [flapper\\_grrrl@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:flapper_grrrl@yahoo.co.uk)

Artwork: [www.ninanijsten.110mb.com](http://www.ninanijsten.110mb.com)

Music: [www.myspace.com/lostlunarebelart](http://www.myspace.com/lostlunarebelart)

[WWW.ECHOPROJECT.MOMB.COM](http://WWW.ECHOPROJECT.MOMB.COM)

ECHO: DIY production project (zines, tapes, crafts...) : [www.echoriot.cjb.net](http://www.echoriot.cjb.net)

Riot Grrrl Collectief: [www.rgcollectief.110mb.com](http://www.rgcollectief.110mb.com) (includes our herstory, downloadable zines, links to other feminist groups and projects and more)

Mail to: [genderriot@hotmail.com](mailto:genderriot@hotmail.com) + [riotgrrrlworld@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:riotgrrrlworld@yahoo.co.uk)

We publish a quarterly newsletter called reAXIE (written in Dutch).

## COMMONLY USED WORDS + EXPLANATIONS:

- Feminism: movement, theory and practice/activism to end patriarchy and fight oppressions, inequalities and gender roles
- DIY: "do it yourself", concept that supports anyone to (at least try to) make/do anything themselves (together) and thus encourages self-confidence, self-sufficiency, autonomy and co-operation
- Riot Grrrl: DIY feminist movement/network that started in the US in the early 1990s
- Zine: self-made and self-published magazine, pamphlet, comic or booklet
- Queer: les-bi-gay-trans-intersex/gender, or beyond those labels/categories
- Anarchism: movement, theory and practice/activism to end hierarchy, capitalism and unequal power structures and build a society based on mutual co-operation, equality and freedom without coercion and authority

# buy nothing make something

Saturday November 29th in the squat in Hasselt

The idea for organising a DIY-day was born out of mails between Lolagouine and I. Lolagouine writes and draws Il Pleut Des Gouines ("It's raining dykes"), a French/English DIY queer feminist comic zine. We had been trading zines for a while and a few months ago she announced that she would travel to Europe, where she wanted to do a kind of zine tour. So I asked her if she would be interested in coming to Belgium and do a zine workshop here. Her answer was "yes" so I invited some friends of the Riot Grrrl Collectief to take part (Joke and Hans) and together we organised a DIY afternoon in the squat in Hasselt. The squatters helped out by offering us space and cooking delicious vegetable soup with bread. The DIY-day was called "Buy nothing, make something" because 2 weeks later was the international Buy Nothing Day (November 29th). "BNMS" consisted of several skill-sharing workshops.

We started with a collective comic workshop. I stole this idea from Elke Steiner who gave a "comic jam" workshop at Ladyfest Berlin in 2005. It consisted of a kind of drawing jam session: every participant took part in making a comic together. Every person started by drawing 6 frames on an empty page (there were 6 participants) and filling the first frame with a drawing that was meant to be the first image of a comic story. Then we all passed our pages to the person sitting next to us (clockwise or counter-clockwise). This person continued the comic by drawing in the second frame. Then the pages were passed again to the next person who drew the 3rd image and so on until each comic was finished by the last person. We managed to make each image in around 5 minutes but

you can take more time if you want. In the end we had 6 very original and often very funny comics. We kept them aside to put in the zine we were going to make in the next workshop.



The zine workshop was started by asking if people had heard of zines, if they read any and if they had made any. Everyone had heard of zines, and 2 people were working on their own first zines! Lolagouine and I had put a collection of zines on a table for people to read and look at for inspiration. Then we talked more about zines and we all discussed the political aspects of zines (for example: zines as an alternative to mainstream media, giving outsiders a voice, writing about political issues, doing it yourself, making something instead of consuming, etc). Finally we started making a zine. We decided on an A5 format and on the theme "DIY". Again the contributions were of very high quality, in my opinion. Everyone put their own interests and knowledge into making a few pages to explain how to do/make something yourself. When all the pages were finished we put them in an order and glued them to a master copy

means, right? So that  
ism. By doing things

However in the early nineties, not 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 bloom and some others an extra advantage next to just as well as boys. Empowerment and feminist DIY activism can bring v alternative community but Nowadays v crocheting a make use of themselves, workers in s It is useful instrument, women it is have certain (only womc DIY plays



with page numbers. One participant made a cover for the zine. The next day, Lolagouine and I scanned the pages at my home and made a pdf of the zine so everyone could print copies. We didn't make copies on Saturday because of lack of time. So now the zine includes all the collective comics, the contributions for the zine workshop on the subject of DIY, photos of the workshops (and of one of the squat cats) and an introduction written by Lolagouine and me. You can read, print and copy the DIY or DIE zine from the Riot Grrrl Collectief website: [www.rgcollectief.110mb.com/diydag.html](http://www.rgcollectief.110mb.com/diydag.html)



Plenty of zines to read: ↘



After the zine workshop, Hans gave a workshop on wood sculpture. Because only a limited amount of people could take part, the recy-clothing (reconstructing or recycling clothes) workshop was done at the same time. One of the squatters noticed that all the "boys" did the wood workshop and all the "girls" did the clothes workshop... (I put girls and boys between " " because I don't know if everyone identifies as girls or boys). If we had had more time, we should have switched and "forced" everyone to do both! ☺  
During the wood sculpture workshop, wooden spoons were made. Hans is a professional wood sculptor, self-trained and very dedicated in making wooden artworks and objects, and he had given workshops like this before. Every time he tries to make something different.

The recy-clothing workshop gave participants ideas how to reuse old clothes to make new ones. Joke and I had collected old clothes from the give-away-shop (that doesn't exist anymore at his moment) and some people brought their own clothes. In the zine "DIY or DIE" you can see some ideas you can use to recycle your own clothes.

After all the workshops we were a bit too tired to have a discussion on DIY and skill-sharing which was announced on the programme. Maybe next time we should have the "theoretical" part first and then the practical workshops, but I think we had probably made a very extensive programme and it was simply too much. Afterwards I was pleased with how everything went. There were people who came all the way from Geel and Ghent which was very nice. The atmosphere was cosy and supportive and I hope that everyone left with lots of ideas and inspiration to make and do lots of things. So I'd be up for doing a second edition. (If there's anyone of you, dear readers, interested in helping out or giving a workshop, let us know and mail the RG Collectief at [genderriot@hotmail.com](mailto:genderriot@hotmail.com) and [riotgrrrlworld@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:riotgrrrlworld@yahoo.co.uk)!) Thanks to everyone who took part in one way or another!



# i don't see you

# as black'

Here are some examples of responses white people in leftist activist communities give when they are confronted with their own racism but are still ignorant to it.

- "I don't care about your skin-colour. I don't see you as black. You're my friend like any other friend. I don't look at you as different."

- "I don't see myself as white. I am just a person. Like you. We're all the same."

- "But I'm not a racist. You know that. I don't mean to do anything bad."

- "I'm against racism. I go to antifa demonstrations."

- "We're all equal now."

- "There's no racism here."

- "... [silence]"

I'm surprised sometimes how white activists or other so-called left-wing progressive people who consider themselves anti-racist, don't notice how racist they can be, or how they contribute to "subtle" -for them invisible- forms of racism. They don't notice their own privileges and the exclusion/lack of access/different treatment/prejudices/undervaluation/ etc that people of colour and immigrants have to deal with. That's how they keep white supremacy as it is instead of really fighting it (in the society and in themselves). They probably don't mean to do anything wrong, but ignorance doesn't equal innocence. Some examples of this kind of subtle racism (some of these can be applied to gender too):

- Images with only white people in them make people of colour and migrants feel less welcome, excluded and alienated. This is something I think about a lot, because I'm very interesting in drawing, art and representation.

- Leaving anti-racist matters to be solved by people of colour and migrants only. Anti-racism struggles are everyone's business and responsibility! White people should fight (their own) racism and privileges too!

- Constantly using language like "non-white" and "non-western" to refer to people of colour and migrants and people of Asia, South America and Africa. This unconsciously means that "white" and "western" is the norm and normal and that everyone else deviates from that standard and all the "others" are the same while there are differences among them too.

I know I have made these mistakes a lot too (and I still make them too often), but we all should be more conscious about it as a start if we really want to erase racism from ourselves, our communities and our world. Fighting neonazis at antifa demos is really not enough!

Learn more from:

- Race Revolt: zine (#2 should be out by now) [racerevolt@riseup.net](mailto:racerevolt@riseup.net)
- Race Privilege Identity: conference [www.raceprivilegeidentity.wordpress.com](http://www.raceprivilegeidentity.wordpress.com)
- Gebroken Wit: project by Next Generation [www.gebrokenwit.be](http://www.gebrokenwit.be)
- Quantify: zine [www.geocities.com/yellowperil77](http://www.geocities.com/yellowperil77)
- De Corbellen Van De Minister by Agnes Verbiest: a book mostly about language and gender, but in some parts it questions language and race too.
- Feminist Theory: From Margin To Center by bell hooks (especially the chapters about black women and the feminist movement)
- Speak: CD + zine <http://www.speakmediacollective.com/>
- and lots of other books, websites and zines...



# Infomania ♀ action

Assez (Anarchist Centre), in Gent.  
Monday November 17<sup>th</sup> 2008

Infomania is a weekly info evening that takes place nearly every Monday in the anarchist centre (short AC or Assez) in Gent.

Most of the time, the info evenings are grouped by a common theme and this time it was feminism. The feminist session of info evenings and discussions contained the following subjects: an introduction to feminism (with the film "Feminism For Dummies" by FC Poppesnor, the feminist café in Antwerp), feminism & economy, beauty standards (with the film "Onbeperkt Houdbaar"), violence to women and feminist activism.

I went to the Infomania about feminist activism, together with Lolagouine. Because Lolagouine doesn't speak Dutch (but several other languages), Evie translated most of it (thanks!) and I made my notes in English so she could follow the discussion that way too. Evie is a founder of FAB (Feministische ActieBende), a new feminist group in Gent.

The Infomania of November 17<sup>th</sup> was mostly about the experiences of FAM, aka Feministisch Anarchistische Madammen/Meiden, a women-only anarchy-feminist group who were active in Gent from around 1996 to around 2003, and FAB also explained shortly what they are doing now. I wanted to record the discussion because I thought it might be interesting to share all the information and experience of these groups with other feminists and anarchists who weren't there, but my portable mic was being repaired... So this little article is based on the notes I made during the info evening and my memories.

While flyers of actions and events organised by FAM, a feminist edition of the anarchist magazine De Nar made by FAM, feminist books, an alterglobalist book that includes a chapter written by FAM, and other documentation was passed along the tables for everyone to take a look at, 4 of the ex-members of FAM explained the plans, actions and accomplishments of their old anarchy-feminist group. At the time FAM was active they had regular meetings and discussions to talk about personal (= political) issues they were dealing with and about certain feminist topics. They used to do actions such as street theatre, witch nights (aka Women Take Back The Night), stickers, making a free public toilet for women during a big cultural event in Gent, turning sexist book covers in bookstores on their backs and putting notes in them and they organised a women's café and benefit parties and much more. One of the FAM women read the year plannings they had made and even though there was a lot on it that they hadn't accomplished, it seemed to me that FAM had still made a big difference in the anarchist scene in Gent. They confronted the sexism that existed there and although this sexism is not entirely gone, by standing up against it, they had become stronger and more vocal women.

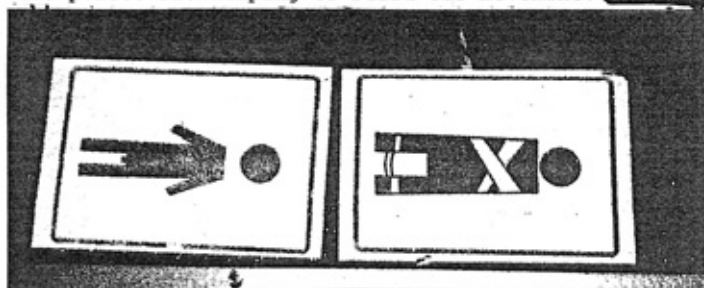
As a women-only group, FAM got a lot of criticism. FAB on the other hand is mixed and has been influenced by the queer movements and groups like Queerilla / Queer Kafee. This queer theory and queer feminism wasn't known yet at the time of FAM in Gent so then there were no discussions about (trans)gender and queer yet. But I have to say that I understand FAM's choice to be all-women and I think it was very much needed to fight against the sexism, machismo and male dominance in their activist communities.

The splitting up of FAM was caused by several reasons. People growing older and starting families, lack of time of some members, various degrees of contributions to the groups and this causing some conflicts, tensions and discussions about the way of working (more practical vs more theoretical focus, feminist vs anarchist actions, etc), and the difficulty to find new members who stayed for a long time. But fortunately this was not the end of



feminist activism in Gent. Sometimes maybe it can help to disband a group and start something new instead. Out of FAM came groups such as the Queer Kafee / Queerilla, several street theatre/cabaret projects and now FAB.

Like FAM, FAB is a group with lots of plans and that's great! They were founded in the summer of 2008 and so far they've done sticker actions against sexist advertisements, started a feminist reading group, are organising witch nights, and arranged this series of Infomanias on feminism. Some of the members met after they were arrested at a ~~demo~~ demonstration and put together in a temporary women's prison. There they could recruit women for their not-yet-existing feminist action group. Yeah, so funny that the police are helping to build our movement!



During the break Lolagouine found out there were stickers of her Gender Poo queer toilet signs at the toilet in the Assez so we went to make pictures of them!

In the discussion that followed questions were raised about the white dominance of the anarchy-feminist and anarchist groups (with some shocking racist and ignorant responses by some of the white men present! There's still a lot to learn in our little autonomous community...), about tools to deal with conflict situations, tensions and hierarchies in groups, working together with migrant women and other feminist organisations as allies, etc. I left feeling inspired by the experiences and actions of FAM and the plans and enthusiasm of FAB, but disappointed by how the discussion went at times. It's something we really need to talk about more, but probably in different circumstances.

## witch night

Tuesday November 25<sup>th</sup> 2008, in Gent

HexeNacht means "witch night" in Dutch; it's a Take Back The Night action against gender violence and sexual abuse to women. November 25<sup>th</sup> was chosen as the date for this action because that day is the international day against violence on women. In the previous years there had been witch nights in Gent too, organised by the group Queerilla. This year the new feminist collective FAB (Feministische ActieBende) were organising it. First there was a march, which was open to people of all genders. Most participants were dressed up as witches, some carried banners, others torches. Some activists, dressed up as bloody brides, were doing performances such as ogling, whistling and calling names to male passer-bys. The traditional roles reversed, hoping that these men would learn from it. At the square where the march ended, ritual burnings of rag dolls representing evil systems such as patriarchy and capitalism were performed. The action ended with empowering songs that were sung around the fire.



# civil media

Jugend & Familiengästehäuser, in Salzburg, Austria  
Thursday - Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> 2008

I was invited by Red and Elke to take part in a presentation and discussion about zines and feminism for the Civil Media 2008 UnConference in Salzburg. During Ladyfest Amsterdam 2008, I met Red for the first time, but we had corresponded and traded zines for some years already. Red used to have a distro and write zines. Now she is doing research on grrrl zines and is involved in several book projects on this topic together with Elke, who runs [www.grrrlzines.net](http://www.grrrlzines.net) and also does university research on grrrl zines. So at Ladyfest Amsterdam, Red told me about the "(Un)Conference" called Civil Media that she and Elke were going to contribute to. Their presentation and discussion would be about grrrl zines, DIY feminist action, the possibilities of Web 2.0 and the online and book projects they are doing. So when they asked me to take part, of course I said yes.

## WEDNESDAY

Taking the train to Salzburg took about 12 hours. Even though I had 3 books to read and plenty of food, it was still a very long trip. The last few hours were the hardest because it hurt to sit still for so long (aw...). I had to change trains twice, first in Liege and then in Frankfurt. From Tongeren (Belgium) to about Aachen (Germany) the view was filled with snow. It was beautiful to look outside and imagine how snowy Salzburg would be. But in Salzburg there was no snow at all, apart from on the tops of the highest mountains. So strange! It wasn't that cold either, even though it was December. Climate change is very real... But still the city was very pretty. It's a perfect city to visit during the winter, with all the Christmas lights, fairytale-like decorations and cosy streets, at least if you can

stand the tourists and all-around consumerism (but I don't know if there are many cities without that). I liked the buildings of the old city

centre and the castles and mountains. It's really all still like in Mozart's time, or like The Sound Of Music film.

I had agreed to meet up with Emca at the train station in Salzburg because our trains arrived around the same time, at 22:00. She was travelling from the Czech Republic, a long trip as well. Emca is the editor of Bloody Mary, a riot grrrl/anarcha-feminist zine, and she was there to give a presentation about power structures and decision-making in alternative media projects. When Emca and I got to the youth house and checked in, we bumped into Red and Debi, who was going to give a presentation about media and no borders activism (and she also makes zines - well, who doesn't?). We talked a bit and then went to our rooms.

Emca and I were in separate dorm rooms. Pity, but at least we were "neighbours". However I suspect that there was a misunderstanding, a gender mistake (due to my somewhat boyish/genderqueer look/identity?) or a strange coincidence that we were not in the same room. In my dorm room there were only guys, every night, and in hers only girls, so maybe I was in the wrong room? But the receptionist assured me that the rooms were mixed and that I was in the right room. Anyway, it was no big problem, except that it would have been more fun to be in the girls' room (nice people!) and there were terribly loud snorers and bad air in my room! Luckily Anna (another participant in the zines and feminism presentation/discussion who stayed in Emca's dorm room) gave me earplugs! Still, I think it's strange that the toilets and showers were separate,



while the dorm rooms were mixed...  
Anyway, enough about the bed rooms...  
Let me tell you about the conference  
and other more interesting things...

#### THURSDAY

The Civil Media UnConference 2008 was organised by Radiofabrik, a non-commercial community radio station from Salzburg whose studios were situated right next to the youth hostel. The conference itself was taking place in the youth hostel which was very convenient.

After the opening speech of the Civil Media conference, Debi gave her presentation about **free media, deportations of asylum-seekers and no borders activism**. It consisted of a critique of free newspapers in the UK which are often racist and hostile towards asylum-seekers and normalising and sympathising with the border police violence and raids. Then Debi explained how using Web 2.0 media gave possibilities to address and inform the public about no borders activism. One example was videos showing interviews with refugees who told their own stories to raise awareness and appeal directly to an audience for support. This has proven to be effective already (more than normal petitions) although there's also a risk of exposure.

The second lecture in the big conference room was entitled "Civil Media: For, Within or Against Capitalism? Towards a theory of critical media" which was clearly influenced by Marxist thought. The speakers were comparing participatory media with alternative media and they noted that even though participatory media may be democratic, its content may not be alternative or left-wing. It may even contribute to capitalist profit and control (such as "participatory" web 2.0 tools like youtube, flickr and myspace). Ideally alternative media functions outside of capitalist structures. But "radical" media can also exist in radical right wing movements. So the speakers called for critical and non-consumer media and raised awareness

of the limitations of capitalist media and Web 2.0. And then it was time for lunch...

There were two Spanish women (although I probably shouldn't say "Spanish" because one of them is Basque) at the conference who had a great interest in feminism, art, DIY and zines too: Azucena and Maria José. Obviously all the zinesters and feminists went to Azucena's presentation about **collages** during which she showed slides of her artwork and her exhibitions and explained the meaning of collages, repetition (such as in silk-screening) and inspiration (such as LTRR) in her work. Azucena has also worked on some cool publications like *Erreakzioa-Reacción* and she designed the cover for *New Feminism: Worlds of Feminism, Queer and Networking Conditions* (Maria José wrote an essay for it).

New Feminism book  
EDITED BY MARINA  
GRZINIC & ROSA REITSAMER  
PUBLISHED BY LÖCKER



After Azucena's presentation, I stayed for a lecture about "(h)activism", which discussed the activist possibilities of hacking, free radio, copyleft, open source and cyber-activism and reported on activist and open source meetings and festivals. Very interesting!

Emca and I decided to visit the historical centre of Salzburg. We walked over hills and passed castles and other beautiful old buildings. I love it when the architecture of a city I visit - and is not even that far from Belgium - is so different from what I'm used to. What is surprising and hopeful was that ugly McDollar fastfood restos or mall chain stores had not ruined the view yet. But capitalism and consumerism took another shape in the old city centre. Souvenir shops and Christmas markets were trying to make buying more authentic and stylish and cosy. Lots of (often fur-coated) tourists were keen to be fooled by it - while we hid in and were persuaded by bookshops (I bought Orlando by Virginia Woolf and Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister - for my mom - and a few postcards). Still, I have to admit that walking around the old

buildings and statues in Salzburg reminded me of going back in time or being on a charming movie set or in a dream. It didn't seem as fake as Disneyland or the new Maasmeechelen shopping centre; these were real houses and streets. While climbing the hills and enjoying the view, Emca and I were talking about how capitalist ideology and consumerist attitudes had taken over Eastern Europe as well as Western Europe and how buying things was a substitute for finding real happiness and pleasure and how it kept people passive and submissive - and even as we fought it, we also recognised it in our lives. Then it was getting late and we were getting hungry, so we went back to the youth hostel.

Dinner took place in a restaurant in the city, paid for by the organisers of Civil Media. All the feminists gathered around one big table waiting patiently for the food which included pancakes with spinach, filled tomatoes and potatoes. Yum!

Back in my room in the youth hostel, I had a nice chat with an Australian backpack tourist boy, talking about comics such as Tintin and Asterix and different English accents, while writing my travel diary and reading Emca's Bloody Mary zines.



#### FRIDAY

After breakfast with Red and Debi, I went to the presentation by Nico Carpentier who works for a university in Brussels (I don't know him though). He talked about "participatory media and discourses of quality". He had conducted a research of 16 plus, a Flemish wannabe youtube clone for teenagers (I never heard of it). For a science week a group of children were handed cameras to make their own video reports. But the result was not what the project leaders had hoped for or expected. According to certain professional standards and aesthetics the videos that were made lacked "quality". But at the same time they were original, critical and funny. Nico analysed the responses of the children and introduced other definitions of quality. He also pointed at the relevance of democratic media, participation and reclaiming the media.

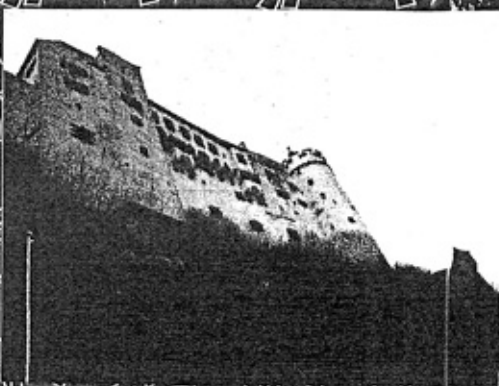




Up next were we: Elke, Red, Anna and I for the presentation called **"DIY Feminist Action"**. First we shortly introduced ourselves and our involvement in the world of zines. Then I went up to the laptop that was connected to a big screen to start my visual introduction to the DIY feminist network and zines. It consisted of slides shaped as a comic, told as a personal story to introduce common concepts related to DIY, feminism and zines. I played my Lost Luna song "Pink Bloc" while the slides were shown, so it looked a bit like an animation film with sound. [Later I turned it into a real film: [www.ninanijsten.110mb.com/stripsDIYfem.html](http://www.ninanijsten.110mb.com/stripsDIYfem.html) and see: reports of Ladyfest Liège and Elles Tournent.]. Then Red explained some more about grrrl zines or feminist zines and showed some examples to the audience. She mentioned the book that she's making together with Elke about zines and feminist activism. Anna introduced the (maga)zine she's part of, Plotki, which means "rumors" in Polish. Plotki is made collectively by people from Central and Eastern Europe. Finally, Elke took the microphone to talk about her websites: [www.grrrlzines.net](http://www.grrrlzines.net) (database and information about feminist/female/queer/trans zines) and [www.grassrootsfeminism.net](http://www.grassrootsfeminism.net) (new participatory documentation project). You should check out both! The questions from the audience were interesting, covering the language of zines, possible harmful competition of zines for feminist magazines and how to finance zines.

After lunch, Emca did her presentation **"ideology and practice of the alternative media"** about her research of organisational routines of autonomous media collectives. She used the definition (by Hamilton) of alternative media, that it must be decapitalised, deinstitutionalised and deprofessionalised at the same time. She mentioned the problems that alternative media collectives may face during production such as gate-keeping, content selection and informal power structures among its members ("the tyranny of the structurelessness", a concept by Jo Freeman) that go against the ideas of equality and non-hierarchy that such collectives stand for. At the end Emca gave some solutions to stop these problems from happening. Emca's sister Marta has done a similar research on the anarchist movement in Czech Republic. You can download and read her dissertation here: [www.csaf.cz/obrazky/gender-czech-anarchism.pdf](http://www.csaf.cz/obrazky/gender-czech-anarchism.pdf).

Continuing where the DIY Feminist Action presentation stopped, a working group discussion talked some more about the same subject. This discussion focussed specifically on the book about **DIY queer feminist zines** that Red and Elke are working on. They wanted feedback from the other zinesters, feminists and media activists that were present. On [www.feministzinebook.wikispaces.com](http://www.feministzinebook.wikispaces.com), a wiki website, you can also write suggestions and comments for the book. During the discussion, I found out that there even exist video zines!





Later, Emca and I went to a gallery exhibition about globalisation and second-hand clothing business that we passed the day before. And then to another bookshop. Did I already tell you I'm a book addict? When it got darker we climbed the Kapuziner mountain and abbey. It was a magical view from up there!



At dinner time we went to the culture space Arge where the conference people all went for a meal and the feminists hung out together again.

## SATURDAY

The first presentation I went to today was by Jenny about the research she was doing on **feminist blogs in Sweden**. She showed 2 examples: the blog of F! (the Swedish feminist

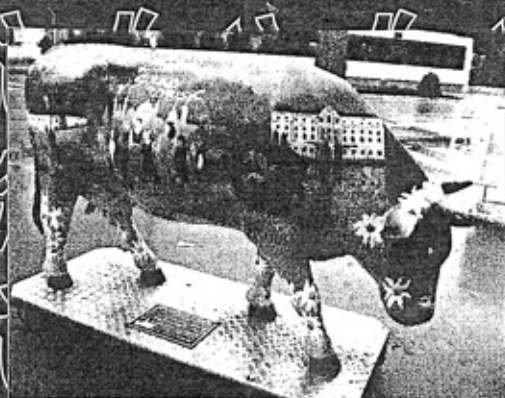
political party) and Bara Brost. Bara Brost (= bare breast) was started as a reaction and support for women who refused to cover their breasts in swimming pools. Because of this blog there are now at least 5 swimming pools in Sweden which allow women to swim topless. The blog of F! is mainly dedicated to party politics, most space is reserved to the party leader and comments are not possible. The blog of Bara Brost on the other hand does allow comments, but unfortunately many of them are very aggressive and sexist. Nevertheless, they don't remove these comments. Hostile and anti-feminist comments are of course a problem on a lot of blogs and some have considered deleting them or closing the comment function.

Rosa and Maria José presented **Dig Me Out**, a DVD about contemporary feminist culture (in the broad sense) that they were making. [It's out now, so check [www.digmeout.org](http://www.digmeout.org)]. The DVD contains information about feminist and queer artists, collectives, performers, activists, film makers, musicians, bands, journalists, writers, zine makers, fashion designers, etc from different countries and backgrounds. Rosa and Maria José felt inspired by riot grrrl, punk, radical politics, second wave feminism, dada, situationists, surrealists and contemporary practices. Sounds good, doesn't it? Rosa is also one of the editors of the book **New Feminism** that I mentioned before.





SALZBURG IS THE CITY OF THE SOUND OF MUSIC. IT'S EVERYWHERE, EVEN ON THIS COW THERE ARE IMAGES OF THE VON TRAPP FAMILY:



While the last presentations and discussions of Civil Media 2008 were taking place, Elke, Rosa, Maria José, Azucena, Jenny and I got ready to go... to the highest mountain of Salzburg! Elke, being the only local, explained that the sharp mountains we saw in the landscape were among the highest mountains of Germany. The Austrian mountains on the other hand had round tops. On a small road, Elke drove us all the way up. When we got there, we could finally see and feel some real Austrian snow. But especially the view was amazing. We walked to the highest point and took pictures. We would see the centre of Salzburg, the river, the castles and tiny buildings, and behind that the sharp German mountains. It looked like a picture for a postcard or a tourist brochure. Strange feeling to stand there... On the top of the mountain was a restaurant - very convenient - where we went to have lunch. Then we left to go to Elke's place. She lives outside of the centre of Salzburg in a very beautiful self-made wooden house. Elke wanted to show her zine collection. It was spread over 2 rooms. I noticed some Flapper Gatherings (my old zine) and took pictures of all the zines that I

wanted to check out. It was simply too much to read or even look through right there. She also had a lot of interesting books on DIY feminism and zines and activism. It was pretty overwhelming for me! ☺ While we were drinking tea and eating biscuits that Elke's mother had made, stories were told about Judith Butler, Rosi Braidotti and the Guerrilla Girls. In the evening Azucena, Maria José and I took the bus back to the youth hostel. But first we had dinner at a nearby pizzeria. Cosy.

### SUNDAY

During my last breakfast at the youth hostel, I shared a table with Azucena, Maria José, Debi and Red. Debi was playing enthusiastically on some little instruments she had bought in Salzburg, but the other guests didn't like it very much. She gave me a CD of her solo music project Voice Tribe, which consists of very beautiful, sparkling acoustic guitar melodies and freely flowing enchanting vocals and it's all DIY of course!

Before heading to the train station, I walked around a bit through the centre of Salzburg looking for presents and things, but I couldn't find anything I really liked in the souvenirs shops and Christmas markets and the book stores were closed on Sunday. Apart from buying lots of books, I'm a bad consumer I think... (which is probably really good and shouldn't be changed).

The train ride was again quite long, but this time I had even more to read. I finished reading *Off The Map*, a book published by Crimethinc that I had taken to Salzburg and that is about two American girls travelling through Europe without a map and without any fixed destinations or schedule. Even though my travel had been more scheduled and was much shorter and I had a self-drawn map, I did recognise certain things in their story. The mentioning of Prague and Liège made me smile. It was the perfect book to read on the train to and from Salzburg.

[www.civilmedia.eu](http://www.civilmedia.eu)

# diy vs. professional artist

## passion vs. profession ?

A few years ago, I graduated in visual arts with a specialisation in illustration and in 2007/2008 I did a course about the "business side" of art production because I was interested in making a living out of illustrating. I wanted to do this, not only because this is what I studied and so it seems logical that I make it my profession, but also because I think I can do it and I like to do it. Although it isn't so obvious... Apart from the difficulties of finding commissions and getting paid for making artwork (because often it isn't a well-respected occupation and treated as just a hobby), I find being a "professional artist" (= making art as a job, a profession) also a bit complicated in other ways.

During and after that course I had lots of questions spinning in my head: When I'm a professional artist, can I still make illustrations for free for friends or for no-budget non-profit projects like zines? I want to. Can I still be part of the DIY art network and make DIY art? I hope so. Will it be accepted by the DIY community that I get paid for making art and that I contribute to a commercial art industry? I hope this won't cause any problems or conflicts. Can I still publish zines cheaply and can I find enough time and energy to make them? Will I get bored of drawing when it becomes a "job"? Will I have to change my drawing style and subjects in order to be accepted by the professional art industry? Can I make use of different styles at the same time? Is being published in a book a sell-out for a zine artist? Is making money as a band different from making money as an illustrator? Are publishing companies as evil as mainstream music labels (and therefore one shouldn't cooperate with them in any way) or are neither that bad? How can I choose a good publishing company (eco-friendly printing and paper, social topics in books, gender+race+class-conscious stories, respecting workers' rights, etc) and do they exist here in Belgium or can I stimulate the ones that don't fulfil my needs yet to evolve in this way? Is it a contradiction to identify as anti-capitalist and to be paid by publishing companies at the same time? Should I get a "real" job (= a shitty boring job?) instead of being a professional artist? Would this be valued differently by DIY artists and anti-capitalist/anarchist activists? But at least I'm doing something I like and I can still choose for which company or organisation I make illustrations. And isn't it typical for women to always work voluntarily, and feel guilty when we do get paid? Will I still be welcome and accepted in participating in underground art exhibitions in squats that are meant for DIY artists? After having published and exhibited a lot in the mainstream illustration/art culture, can I still make cheap or free art (like cards, street-art, zines, etc) without it being (re)sold for high(er) prices by others (sorry if this sounds pretentious)? Will my books be affordable for everyone? (Luckily the entrance to exhibitions, even the non-DIY ones, is often for free). Is it silly or elitist or spoiled to ask



all these questions? Perhaps I will not even get published by a professional publishing company at all.\* And if I do, maybe I should just be grateful.

I'm wondering about these things and how it will be for me. I do believe I can make DIY art (such as zines and comix) while also illustrating children's books, comic books or magazines that are widely distributed by commercial/professional publishing companies. I like the idea of taking part in exhibitions in certain contemporary art centres as well as in artistic squats and other DIY activist spaces. I don't think one should exclude the other. And I hope I don't have to make a choice.

It's funny that as a musician and songwriter, I don't want to be a professional (partly because I'm more interested in drawing than in making music). It seems to me that it's much more difficult to stay yourself and make what you want as a professional musician than as an illustrator, comic artist or visual artist. Maybe it's because the music industry seems much more exploitative, its products are much more consumerist/sexist/etc (although the graphic/visual art world is not free from that either!) and you have to follow certain trends to "make it". The music industry also seems to focus much more on "stardom" and "fandom" and "image". But maybe in some parts of the contemporary visual high art scene, stardom and image also play a big role. Think about "The Great Gifted Genius Artist Who Is Born A Great Gifted Genius Artist And Is Nothing Like The Common People" illusion. (Anyone can make art! Anyone can draw! Anyone can make music!) However, I get the impression that illustrators and comic artists can be real people. Illustration comes across as a nicer, softer and more down-to-earth branch. I guess I'll have to find out if this is true.

I realise it is sort of spoiled of me to think this way and ask these questions. If I can make a living out of art I should be pleased (and I will be!) and not worry about "street credibility" or being a "true DIY artist". I'm guessing the art I make for commercial commissions won't be much different from my DIY work anyway. But I just love to take part and belong to the DIY art community. It feels like a home and I don't want to lose it. It's where I get my strength and inspiration.

So I would be very curious to hear any of your opinions and advice on these topics. What do you think? How do you make your art? Is working as a professional (if you do) a boundary for you? Can you still make your artwork in full freedom? Do you think it is different as a female artist? I'd like to discuss this further.

Some helpful websites if you are an artist in Belgium:

- [www.kunstenloket.be](http://www.kunstenloket.be) (all the legal information you need as an artist)
- [www.gynaika.be](http://www.gynaika.be) (organisation that supports female artists)
- [www.plotstrips.be](http://www.plotstrips.be) (comic magazine, welcomes submissions)
- [www.cultuurnet.be](http://www.cultuurnet.be) (culture and marketing, includes vacancies)
- [www.bamart.be](http://www.bamart.be) (visual, audiovisual and media art)
- [www.podiumkunsten.be](http://www.podiumkunsten.be) (performance arts, includes vacancies)
- [www.vlaamse-illustratoren.com](http://www.vlaamse-illustratoren.com) (illustration arts)
- [www.villakakelbont.be](http://www.villakakelbont.be) (illustration arts)
- [www.auteursvereniging.be](http://www.auteursvereniging.be) (authors organisation)
- [www.stripgilde.be](http://www.stripgilde.be) (comic arts organisation)
- [www.fondsvoordeletteren.be](http://www.fondsvoordeletteren.be) (grants for authors and publications)

\* Some of my zine illustrations were featured in the book *Riot Grrrl: Revolution Girl Style Now* published by Black Dog Publishing (I didn't get paid, but got free copies of the book) and I have illustrated a children's story called "Koekjes" (in English: "biscuits") written by Yvonne Vlugt for a book called *Aan Tafel* that will appear in October 2009.

# zine/diy gathering

Saturday January 31<sup>st</sup> - Sunday February 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 in Espace Ladda in Gent

## SATURDAY

I was feeling tired and a bit ill when I left for Gent. Not a good start for this weekend... But the sun was shining so that was a relief.

Zine/DIY Gathering was born when the people of Ladda were looking for projects and events to take place in their temporary free space Espace Ladda. Ladda is a non-profit organisation that works on projects and activities about youth culture. The small building they named Espace Ladda was theirs for a few months so they asked for initiatives by young people around the themes skills, gathering, ideas and membership. They had sent me an invitation to do something in Espace Ladda so I suggested to organise some kind of zine workshop or happening. Gradually it turned into a DIY-centred weekend with various skill-sharing workshops and meetings. Apart from the Ladda people, Ben of Queerilla helped me a lot to make it happen.

While I was waiting in front of Espace Ladda (where the Zine/DIY Gathering was going to take place), Julia arrived. She's an American visual artist, but lived in the Netherlands then and we met before during Ladyfest Amsterdam. She had just walked around a bit in Gent. I admit it's a very nice city [I wanna move there!]. Ben arrived soon too and we went for a drink in the café of the Vooruit, an art centre next to Espace Ladda. Ben and I started preparing the workshop about zines we were going to do later that day.

Around 13:00 the three of us went to Espace Ladda. Natalie of Ladda showed us around in the rooms. Several familiar faces had showed up for the zine gathering so Ben and I started our workshop / introduction about zines. It went well, I wasn't really nervous and the participants were a nice interested group so it felt more like a group conversation than a lecture or monologue.

After the zine workshop Eva gave a workshop about menstruation. The participants were again very interested, listening carefully to the dangers and alternatives of regular menstruation products that Eva talked about. The workshop about contraception and anticonception by Fien followed. In it she spoke about different kinds of contraceptives and about how to chart your menstrual cycle.

When we went to eat somewhere, I was feeling very tired. No good sign... Thanks to Mo for offering Julia and me a sleeping space at the squat where she lives! Actually it was not just a squat, but 3 squatted houses, surrounded by trees, caravans and a big pond. A number of people live there, along with a cute cat. Mo had fixed the electricity wires and redecorated the building where she lives and there was a DIY-shower inside. She fixes everyone's bikes too.

## SUNDAY

I was feeling even worse in the morning. I tried to sleep as long as possible, but when I got up, I was still tired. It was annoying. Mo made delicious pasta and tea, which helped for my aching throat. I also ate way too many throat comfort candies.

When we got to Espace Ladda, the doors were still closed. Some people were already there, waiting, and they pointed to a note left by the door that said that the Ladda people were getting the front door key. So we went off

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for a drink in a nearby café. On the way we met Eva and Dimitri who came with us and later Ben and Mo joined us in the café too. It was fun hanging out there and I was feeling slightly better.

Back at Espace Ladda, Jab had already arrived and was drawing a powerful and beautiful comic story for the zine. Lotte of Ladda was there to assist us and offered us biscuits. She intends to make a one-time magazine about all the activities and projects that have taken place in Espace Ladda during its existence.

Today, Mare and Dimitri gave a workshop about queer: queer theory and queer activism. They spoke about the different ideas and practices of gender and sexuality in other times and cultures, about its possibilities and about the limits that our society imposes on us and showed examples of deviance and resistance. It was thought-provoking, comforting and inspiring.

Eva, Julia, Jab and I continued working on the zine. We had all the equipment we needed at our disposal, even a copy/scan/print machine. Then most people left to eat something. Fien had brought leftovers from the vegan organic restaurant where she works for the rest of us to eat. Yummy! The zine didn't get finished during the weekend so we continued working on our pages by ourselves at home. [Now it can be downloaded from: [www.rgcollectief.110mb.com/publicaties.html](http://www.rgcollectief.110mb.com/publicaties.html)] We also didn't get to show the films we brought because the equipment didn't work on the first day and there wasn't enough time anyway. Well, hopefully some other time... Still, despite being ill, I had enjoyed the weekend very much.



Some weeks later I went back to Espace Ladda to occupy a wall with drawings for one of their exhibitions. You can see it on my website and on

[www.espaceladda.be](http://www.espaceladda.be).

[www.ninanijsten.110mb.com/zinegathering.html](http://www.ninanijsten.110mb.com/zinegathering.html)



# not waiting for another wave to jump in

## feminist herstory & future

This text is about the history -or herstory as I prefer to call it- of the feminist movement in western countries. When discussing feminist herstory, it is often divided in "waves". These waves consist of periods (like a few decades) of heightened feminist activity, most of the time in the shape of a mass movement. In between the waves there is less (visible) feminist activity and often a return to conservative patriarchal values and laws, while feminist ideas are considered unnecessary, extreme, passé, ridiculous and/or uncool. This is called a "backlash". Still, dividing feminist herstory of the past few centuries in waves is problematic, limiting and simplistic because it suggests that in between the waves no feminists are active anymore, which is obviously not true. Describing feminist herstory as waves is only a construction to try to understand societal tendencies concerning women's struggles but the reality is more complex. Other historical phenomena (such as in art history) are also often described as periods that are reactions to the previous periods. Another problem is that the feminist herstory that we read about is almost exclusively about the western feminist movement. The herstory of women's liberation in other regions can happen in completely different ways. So we can't apply the wave-theory to feminism everywhere and assume that it's a universal phenomenon. What is called the first feminist wave in western countries happened in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the time education for girls, political equality and especially suffrage (the right to vote) were important issues. But not all feminists were pleased with suffrage or even considered it crucial. Anarcha-feminists (feminist anarchists or anarchist feminists) believed that the right to vote for political parties would not solve inequalities and oppression. In Belgium women were finally allowed to vote in 1948. It took so long mainly because the socialist and liberal parties were afraid that women would all vote for catholic parties so they assumed they would lose the elections. During the world wars in Europe and the US, feminists temporarily postponed their activities. Women were doing the jobs that were previously occupied by men who now went off to the war zones. But, when the wars were over, women were expected to "return to the kitchen" because men wanted "their" jobs back. This resulted in conservative backlashes. There was also a relative amount of economic wealth in western countries after WWII which allowed (married middle-class) women "to stay at home" and created a "male breadwinner model", which lasted only a few decades in western history. But at the end of the 1960s women responded and the second feminist wave began. Feminists started to work on issues such as equal pay for equal work (for example the women's strike at FN Herstal in 1966), abortion (illegal in Belgium until 1990) and contraception, lesbianism, violence to women, the



legal rights of women and child care. In Belgium feminist groups and organisations were founded such as Dolle Mina, Marie Mineur, PAG, VOK (Vrouwen Overleg Komitee who organise a women's day on November 11<sup>th</sup> in Flanders/Brussels each year), and Fem-soc groups.

Since the 1980s a lot of feminist organisations became more professional and bureaucratic. Some received (state) funding so they could hire staff members who can dedicate themselves full time to women's rights. However, the disadvantage is that these organisations were no longer founded on and supported by a large base of activists and their top-down organisation may appear exclusive and alienating. So a large part of the women's movement became institutionalised and we may conclude that there is no longer a mass movement. Conservative tendencies were becoming more dominant and the backlash was supported by politicians such as Reagan and Thatcher. The mainstream (or malestream?) media started to lose interest too, which can also be explained because the actions became more serious and less funny or spectacular from the mid 1970s on. But of course (radical) feminism wasn't over...

The American feminist writer Naomi Wolf launched a call for the third feminist wave in her book: *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century* published in the early 1990s. If this book really caused a third wave is up for debate. According to some, "cyber-feminism" and "girlpower-feminism" (including the riot grrrl movement) belong to this new wave. Other are convinced that a third wave still has to happen because there hasn't been any real mass movement yet. Still, there exist lots of feminist grassroots collectives and projects everywhere today. In Belgium these include FAB (Feministische ActieBende), Feminist Café Poppesnor, Scum Grrrls magazine, Queer Gazet zine, Queer Pink Ponk, VAMOS, Riot Grrrl Collectief, and many others. Older organisations such as VOK and Vrouwenraad / Conseil Des Femmes are also still active.

One criticism on the third wave is that young feminists only work individually to improve the position of women (and themselves) instead of being involved in collective action. I agree that there aren't any mass demonstrations anymore these days, but I think that collective action can take many forms and that contemporary feminists do engage in several sorts of activism, and not only on an individual level. A big problem today is the lack of visibility of feminist activism. I don't think we can count on commercial or state-controlled media to report (objectively) on feminist actions and ideas, so it's up to us to make our own media and publicity. Sometimes it seems as if, when feminist herstory is divided in waves, that the second wave and the third wave stand opposite to each other, instead of forming a continuation. Portraying third wave feminism as "post-feminism", as a reaction against our mother's generation, as individualistic spoiled career-women, is just a caricature and false stereotype. Portraying second wave feminism as old-fashioned and too radical (does that exist?) is just as wrong and ignorant. The third wave is not that different from the second wave and we can all learn from each other. There are probably as much if not more differences within each wave than between the second and third wave. It's necessary to work together, younger and older feminists, and continue to fight.

Some questions we may ask ourselves are: how do we create more continuation in feminist activism and how do we arm ourselves against backlashes, burn-outs and conflicts? How do we move from ebb and flow to a continuous stream of inspiring feminist struggle, a flood that will forever change our society and lives? I think that DIY publicity/propaganda/media will (have to) play a major role as well as organising meetings, discussions, collectives and actions; I must admit though that I prefer quality to quantity, I prefer an inspiring radical feminist movement that is smaller in numbers than a big mass movement that doesn't do much at all nor wants to change much. Margaret Mead once wrote: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed

people can change the world, it's the only thing that ever has." (Still, massive feminist activism would be very fun ☺). So, don't wait, get in touch, start your own collectives, actions and projects, let's make plans and strategies and kick some patriarchal ass! • • • • •  
(May 2009)

This text was intended to be published in the Ladyfest Liège zine, but I was too late. I first started writing it for <http://tweedesekse.wordpress.com>, a feminist blog, but afterwards reworked it into a slightly more extensive Dutch version for the blog.

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## LINKS

Feminist groups in Belgium:

- AFOK (Autonom Feministisch Onderzoekskollektief): [www.feminisme.be/afok/](http://www.feminisme.be/afok/)
- BOEH (Baas Over Eigen Hoofd) in Antwerp: [www.baasovereigenhoofd.be](http://www.baasovereigenhoofd.be)
- FAB (Feministische ActieBende) in Gent: [www.feminisme.be/fab/](http://www.feminisme.be/fab/)
- Famba in Gent: [www.feminisme.be/famba](http://www.feminisme.be/famba)
- FC Poppesnor in Antwerp: [www.feminisme.be/fcoppesnor/](http://www.feminisme.be/fcoppesnor/)
- Feministische Leesgroep in Antwerp: <http://leesgroepje.wikispaces.com/>
- Feministische Leesgroep in Gent: <http://leesgroepgent.wikispaces.com/>
- Gender Action Group: [www.genderactiongroup.net/](http://www.genderactiongroup.net/)
- Genres Pluriels + Drag Kings of Brussels: [www.genrespluriels.be/](http://www.genrespluriels.be/)
- Next Generation Brussels: [www.nextgenderation.net](http://www.nextgenderation.net)
- Queerilla + Queer Gazet in Gent: [www.queerilla.be](http://www.queerilla.be)
- Riot Grrrl Collectief in Hasselt: [www.rgcollectief.110mb.com](http://www.rgcollectief.110mb.com)
- Scum Grrrls in Brussels: [www.scumgrrrls.org](http://www.scumgrrrls.org)
- Tweede Sekse blog: <http://tweedesekse.wordpress.com>
- VAMOS in Brussels: [vamos.zeblog.com/](http://vamos.zeblog.com/)
- Vrouwen Overleg Komitee + Women's Day (November 11th): [www.vrouwendag.be](http://www.vrouwendag.be)

+ much more!

Third Wave Feminism blog: <http://thirdwavefeminism.wordpress.com/>



# diy guitar chords

Playing guitar is not so hard because any note you play, any string you touch, any fret you press is OK. Some combinations may sound better than others, but basically you can play anything. Play a few different notes or combinations in a certain order and you've made a melody. A few melodies make a song! Congratulations, you are now a songwriter!

The following chords are well-known standard note combinations. There exist lots more and you can make up your own, but it's a good start to learn to play these:

A C D E G (in standard tuning)

thinnest string

richest string

the numbers indicate the number of the fret you have to press  
 0 = open string, don't press 1 = first fret x = muted fret

If these chords are a bit too tricky for you to play at first, you can try out power chords. For power chords you only need 2 or 3 fingers and you just move them along the guitar neck. Most punk & rock bands use them. I think they sound better on electric guitars and standard chords - using more strings/fingers - sound better on acoustic guitars.

A5 B5 C5 D5 E5 F5 G5 (again in standard tuning)

Read the book *Rock'n'Roll Camp For Girls: How To Start A Band, Write Songs, Record An Album, And Rock Out*, published by Chronicle Books! It's a great resource guide to learn to play music, book concerts, do a soundcheck, learn self-defence and punk rock aerobics and so on. It features contributions by STS (the Haggard and Cadallaca), Carrie Brownstein (Sleater-Kinney, Excuse 17, the Spells), Beth Ditto (Gossip), Sarah Dougher (Cadallaca) and Kaia Wilson (Team Dresch, the Butchies).

There's also a zine called *Guitar Basics* by Sarah of Bangs that is very useful and fun.

But in fact, you learn the most by just doing and trying out things!

# Ladyfest Liège

Saturday - Sunday May 23<sup>rd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> 2009 in La Zone, Liège (Belgium):

## SATURDAY

From May 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> the third edition of Ladyfest Liège took place in La Zone. This time the volunteers of La Zone organised the 2-day festival. As usual, the Ladyfest was filled with a diverse and feminist program. Ladyfest as a concept and name originated from the US and has grown into a worldwide / widespread festival. The first Ladyfest ever took place in Olympia, WA (US) in the summer of 2000, so next year in 2010, we can celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary!



Ladyfests are always great places to meet old friends and new like-minded people. Doing an info stand or distro table is a good occasion/excuse for talking to the latter. Dominique, Coline and I had agreed to share a stand to sell their CDs and my zines and crafts. Dominique has organised several mini-Ladyfests in Brussel and plays in a lot of bands (probably I don't know all of them but here are a few: Naifu, Keiki and Baby Fire). Coline is making fashion/art and plays music as The Plastic Strawberries Need Stitches. Other tables and distros at Ladyfest Liège were selling zines, crafts, silk-screened patches and stickers, music and books.

During one of the Ladyfest meetings at the squat La Chauve Souris, a zine was made which also served as a programme guide. It featured cut & paste artwork and lay-out, articles in French and English, critical collages and drawings. Various people had contributed creations and contributions to it. In the afternoon on May 23<sup>rd</sup> there were already lots of people in La Zone, looking around, eating, talking or enjoying the workshops, discussions and films. A cosy room upstairs functioned as the projection room, playing non-stop feminist films (including my own short animation film "We are connected by words and wires": [www.ninanijsten.110mb.com/stripsDIYfem.html](http://www.ninanijsten.110mb.com/stripsDIYfem.html)).

During both days there were discussions about genital mutilation, abortion and family planning (in French by Le Centre Louise Michel) to feminism (in English by Women On Barricades, who hold regular discussions in La Barricade in Liège: [www.barricade.be](http://www.barricade.be)). For people who were more interested in learning practical and creative skills there were workshops that ranged from silk-screening and making stencils to drawing comics. For info on the comics workshop, read on.

In the evening it was time for music... in the cool punky basement. Baby Fire (aka Dominique) installed herself in front of the stage for her first live show ever. The songs I heard on myspace sounded very promising: minimalist punky guitar riffs and Dominique's dark nostalgic voice... it worked well in the dark basement of La Zone. Baby Fire's performance was recorded by Eric and Lara of Kool Strings radio and some of the live songs can be heard on her myspace: [www.myspace.com/babyfireburns](http://www.myspace.com/babyfireburns).

Alva, the sing-guitarist of the German band Blockshot, is a concert booker as well and she writes the zine Toilet Paper which is a mix of personal confessions and a strong passion for riot grrrl and music. The members of Blockshot create perfect pop songs but give them the necessary rocking edge to please a punk crowd. Alva is a great stage performer too, which adds encouragement to dance along.



1-2-3-4 punk & roll! Ortigas from Luxembourg offered us classic garagepunk. The audience enjoyed their fun songs and so did I. I can't say much more about it.

The last band was La Biur (and after that DJs Hot Crazy Banana & Nell) but because techno is usually not my cup of tea, I went to the quiet backstage room together with Dominique, Lara, Eric and... chips!

#### SUNDAY

After waking up in the dorm room in La Zone and entering the venue downstairs, I was amazed by the insanely delicious and gigantic breakfast table which had been prepared by the Ladyfest and La Zone volunteers. Yum-yum! ☺

The same workshops as yesterday (silk-screening and stencilling) took place in the afternoon and I gave my workshop about collective comics. The idea was to make a comic story with a group of people. The first person draws the first frame, the second the next one and so on until the comic is finished. If there are few people, they can draw more frames. [See also the review of Buy Nothing, Make Something]. Thanks to those who participated!

Sunday evening was filled with cabaret. Ladyfest Liège's idea of cabaret was very broad, including theatre, spoken word, drag kings and music. But before the performances, Marie Vermeiren presented her film "Not For Sale". This documentary is about the prostitution industry and how women are exploited there. It includes interviews with ex-prostitutes and with pimps (who call themselves "managers"). It was a good idea to show this film before all the cabaret because now everyone was "forced" to see it, even though it's not a "pleasant" film to watch. But this way no one could look away and ignore it; they had to admit/realise how awful the prostitution industry is. You can see "Not For Sale" online here: [www.womenlobby.org/site/video/en.asp](http://www.womenlobby.org/site/video/en.asp). Marie Vermeiren is a very cool film maker ("What are we doing tonight?" was the first film I saw by her; it's about feminist adbusting) and she's also one of the organisers of Elles Tournent, a women's film festival in Brussels. At Ladyfest Liège she asked me if I could send my short film "We are connected by words and wires" to them for consideration.

Then the performers of the evening climbed the stage... One of them was The Plastic Strawberries Need Stitches, Coline's one-grrrl band in which she sings, plays bass and wears her artistic self-designed clothes. Listen to her songs online at [www.myspace.com/theplasticstrawberries](http://www.myspace.com/theplasticstrawberries).

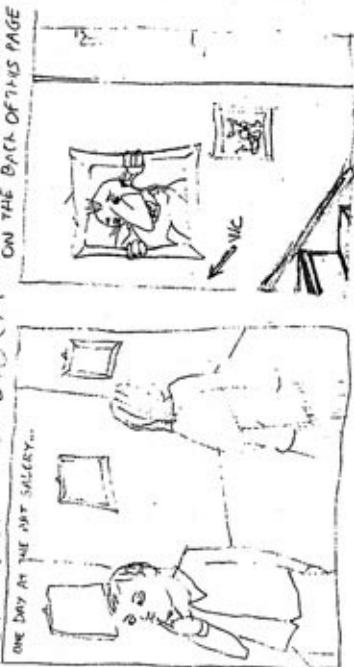
I was especially curious to see the Drag Kings of Brussels. They were less cliché than other drag king collectives I'd seen before (but loved too). They played with gender and with different kinds of performances like playback/karaoke and mime. I think all of them or at least some of them are involved in Genres Pluriels too, a transgender/intersex action group based in Brussels: [www.genrespluriels.be](http://www.genrespluriels.be).



But unfortunately not all the performances were as great. One of the spoken word performers said something anti-abortion and lesbophobic but I had not understood it because my French is too bad. But a girl in the audience hijacked the stage to protest and respond to what the performer had said. It's a pity we have to watch out for anti-abortionists and homophobia at Ladyfests, but at least the actions and responses to them are applauded and welcomed.

I missed some of the other cabaret acts such as Lisa and Françoise Walot et le Monument à la femme inconnue. So I hope to see them at another occasion, maybe at another Ladyfest.

HEY YOU!  
CONTINUE HIS STORY + WRITE YOUR EMAILADDRESS  
ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE



[www.myspace.com/ladyfestliege](http://www.myspace.com/ladyfestliege)  
[www.lazone.be](http://www.lazone.be)

↳ made during the  
comic workshop

# L-salon paroles paroles paroles

Friday June 19<sup>th</sup> 2009 in Gent

L-Salon is a new project that organises irregular activities for and by lesbians, feminists, queers, trans people, women and others in Gent. They are somehow affiliated with L-day (lesbiënnedag) I think. Yes, since L-word, the letter "L" is very hip to use as a replacement of "lesbian". It's funny, but can also appear as an ashamed safe disguise.

The first activity of L-Salon was the screening of a documentary of two lesbians who had travelled by motorcycle through muslim countries. I wasn't there, but I heard it was pretty cool. The second edition of L-Salon on June 19<sup>th</sup> was dedicated to performance and literature. It was entitled "Paroles, paroles, paroles" and took place in someone's garden in Gent.

The performances were very diverse: playful children's songs, various poetry, excerpts of a beautiful lesbian youth book read aloud by its writer, love songs with a diatonic accordion (apparently THE lesbian instrument?), an autobiographic drag king monologue about finding one's gender, love and community, quiet and pop/rock music and visual art exhibited in the garden. Anke, the owner of the garden, closed L-Salon with a very funny version of the song "paroles paroles paroles" together with her boyfriend. The audience was very attentive and cheerful, loving every bit of all the performances.

For me too, it was a very cosy and love-ly evening with racing beats...

<http://www.lweek.be>

## FEMINISTEN:

DE AANVAARDE VERSIE...

EN DE REST...





# elles tournent

Thursday - Monday September 17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>: in Botanique and Cinematek, Brussels:

## SATURDAY 19

In September, the second edition of the women's film festival Elles Tournent took place at the Botanique in Brussels. I couldn't go last year, when they showed films such as "Don't Need You", "Me and You and Everyone We Know", "Womanhouse", "Pour En Finir Avec Le Patriarcat", "Suffragettes in the Silent Cinema" and "The Future of Feminism". But this year I was invited to show my own short-film, so I had to be there. (Not that I needed an obligation or excuse).

The film festival started on Thursday but I went only on Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday the first screening consisted of "Elle" and "No Woman's Land". "Elle" is a short animation film based on an illustrated book made by the film maker. It's about a young girl who falls in love with other girls but is told by her surrounding society that this is not OK. It was a very beautiful and cute film. Anne Smolar made "No Woman's Land". Besides making films, Anne Smolar is an editor of Scum Grrrls, a feminist trilingual magazine from Brussels, very much worth checking out: [www.scumgrrrls.org](http://www.scumgrrrls.org). Her film features stories of women who have left their home lands and moved somewhere else. In interviews they talk about their motivations and reflections. Their words were mixed with excerpts from "The Wizard Of Oz", maps and landscape views. Having moved myself from the place I grew up and planning on moving to another city again sometime soon, I could recognise a lot of what the interviewed women were talking about. Also, the idea of how learning a new language can function as a secret code seemed familiar. After the films it was possible to ask questions and discuss the films because both film makers were present.

Then I went to watch *Les Belg'Animées*, a historical overview of short animation films by Belgian women from the 1980s until now. The films used drawing techniques and clay sculptures as well as more experimental techniques. They were very creative, beautiful and especially very humorous. Before the screening I met a friend Soizic who went see the animation films too. She's involved in the organisation of Pink Screens, a yearly gender film festival that takes place in October this year (it will start soon): [www.pinkscreens.org](http://www.pinkscreens.org).

## SUNDAY 20

The film screenings on Sunday included "Not For Sale" (not to be mistaken with the film about the prostitution industry made by Marie Vermeiren - this film was about female artists in the 1970s by Laura Cottingham and with music by Yoko Ono) and "Beperkt Houdbaar" (by Sunny Bergman, about the beauty industry and women's magazines: [www.beperkthoudbaar.info/docu/](http://www.beperkthoudbaar.info/docu/)).

I went to watch the short film program called *Vive Le Féminisme* (= long live feminism!) in the evening. A women's film festival has to have a special section with feminist films of course! (Although obviously feminist ideas were present in most of the other films too). This screening included my own short animation film "We Are Connected By Words And Wires" too (watch it on my website: [www.ninanijsten.110mb.com/stripsDIYfem.html](http://www.ninanijsten.110mb.com/stripsDIYfem.html)). Other films were "Three Mothers and a Chorus" (strangely funny half-sung film about how mothers are always judged), "What is Clitoris" (with crazy answers from people in the street), "Glass Ceiling" (great symbolic film), "La Barbe La Barbe" (about a feminist action group from France who wear beards at official male-dominated meetings and press conferences), "I'm Involved" (by



Marie Vermeiren, about feminists talking about the motivations of their activism) and "Je Réclame La Liberté a Grands Cris" (a woman screaming everywhere in public - cool!). I was honoured to be part of this screenings (and nervous to speak in public at the end).

I also loved the "introduction / publicity" film that was shown before each screening. I had seen it a few times but didn't grow tired of it at all. The combination of its images and the music made me feel involved and inspired. For me it was refreshing to go to a film festival full of films made by women, especially when the films are so empowering, fun and feminist. At the end, it gave me the encouragement to try and make another film. So we'll see what the future brings...

## MONDAY 21

But Elles Tournent was not over yet... On Monday there was a film night at the Cinematek film cinema called "Make More Noise", a suitable name for a special screening in collaboration with Elles Tournent. It was filled with short old films about the suffragettes and was introduced by a British expert in film history (and a funny feminist too). Some of the films were news reels from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The suffragettes used action tactics that were practically unseen in those days, especially for "ladies". There were images of huge demonstrations and of burning houses. But not everyone liked the suffragettes in those days. They were often mocked in comedies (typically portrayed as raging ugly women while their men were left looking after the children), some of which were shown during "Make More Noise". In the discussion afterwards someone asked if there are still suffragettes today. Well, maybe they aren't fighting for voting rights anymore (we finally got those in Belgium in 1948), but surely there still are lots of kick-ass feminist activists out there! So watch out for those noisy ladies!

17-20/09  
BOTANIQUE



FESTIVAL  
DEFILMS  
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BOTANIQUE

CONSEIL DES FEMMES  
BRUXELLES

# self-publishing + feminism

This text deals with paper media such as zines and their link with feminism. I'm going to try to mix examples from different countries and avoid focussing only on American feminism and American zines because they already get covered a lot in research and alternative press.

Feminist media such as zines didn't come from nowhere, appearing all of the sudden from a void. Feminists have always written down their ideas and published their writings. If they couldn't find a publishing company they did it themselves. In the second wave of feminism which took place between the 1960s and the 1980s, feminists even started their own publishing companies and edited their own books, magazines and pamphlets. Examples of Dutch-speaking publishing companies were De Bonte Was and Feministische Uitgeverij Sarah. A section of the left-feminist group Dolle Mina made their own "Red Booklet" Of The Woman/Women and cheaply self-published magazines called De Grote Kuis around 1970 (it's remarkable how much they're alike today's zines!). Also feminist book shops started to flourish, but unfortunately most of them are gone today. Some examples of contemporary feminist magazines include Scum Grrrls (Belgium), Emma (Germany), Bitch (US) and Lover (Netherlands). Often, feminist organisations publish their own newsletter or magazine, such as the Belgian organisations Gynaika (magazine under the same name), De Madam (newsletter under the same name), RoSa (magazine called Uitgelezen, RoSa is a feminist archive and library with lots of feminist magazines and other publications), De Vrouwenraad (Vrouwenraad) and Vie Féminine (Axelle). A Dutch publishing company run by women that's been active for a few decades is Atalanta. They focus on anarchist, philosophical and ecological books and booklets and have also published some feminist publications. There are others as well such as Virago Press.

In the 1960s feminists and other revolutionaries already practiced the "DIY" concept that later got linked to the punk movement. "DIY" means "do it yourself", reclaiming autonomy, creative freedom, making your life and the world as you want it to be, getting confidence from doing/making things (happen)... Other movements in previous centuries also did things themselves and used this kind of DIY activism. For punks, since the 1970s, DIY was central to their music and life. They wrote and recorded their own music and put it out themselves. Releasing their own albums and singles was not only a necessity for them (because record companies showed no interest) but also a conscious choice. Punks didn't want to be involved in the capitalist music industry and tried to be as independent as possible from commercial record companies, distribution channels, recording studios and mainstream press. To be able to avoid mainstream media attention, punks make their own media in which they report on their music, activities and political ideas. So this caused the birth of punk fanzines (non-profit low-budget self-made magazines or booklets). But fanzines or zines weren't new then. Science-fiction fans had been writing zines since the 1930s. Since the rise of punk, zines only grew in size. Technological developments also made it easier and cheaper to reproduce booklets.

In those days, the majority of zines was written by men. But when the riot grrrl movement started in the early 1990s, more and more women and girls started using pens, paper and copy machines to express themselves. Some examples of riot grrrl zines from the 1990s are Bikini Kill (also the name of a band consisting of the editors of the zine), Channel Seven and Girl Germs. Riot grrrl zines dealt with all sorts of subjects and mixed the personal with the political (and as the famous feminist slogan goes: "the personal IS political"). Zinesters - as zine writers are often called - wrote about sexual abuse, every-day sexism, racism and white supremacy within the riot grrrl movement, addiction, etc. In zines, riot grrrls criticised beauty standards by making collages of advertisements and fashion magazines. The mainstream media did not write about these subjects, so riot grrrls did it themselves. Zines gave them a voice, a way to express themselves and share their ideas, their anger and sadness. But zines didn't only offer an alternative to mainstream media because of its different content and images; also the fact that non-professional, often marginalised people made these publications, contributes to the importance of zines. Riot grrrl arose partly as a reaction to the sexism in the punk movement. But it also created a young new kind of feminism that was accessible to young women and girls who felt alienated by liberal bureaucratic feminism that dominated the 1980s and who were little informed about previous similar

kinds of grassroots feminism. The concept of "DIY" was important because these women were making and defining their own feminism. They felt something was missing and instead of waiting or consuming passively, they creatively filled that void themselves. "DIY" meant that they could and did write down their ideas and stories and that their writings were worth being published and read. This contributed to the self-confidence of zine writers, especially when they got constructive or positive feedback from readers and other writers.

Another important aspect of zines is that its writers form a sort of supportive international network. Zines are swapped or "traded" with other zines, often between writers from different countries or regions. By swapping zines and writing letters, friendships are constructed which can develop into collaborations in other feminist projects and groups. Distros, non-commercial distribution projects for zines, crafts and DIY music, help getting zines spread in different countries and continents.

Nowadays there are still a lot of zines - including feminist zines - being made and read. Still, I think there is a slight decrease in the number of zines being produced. This is probably at least partly caused by the publication and communication possibilities that internet offers such as blogs, e-zines and online communities. On the other hand, internet and computers make zine writing, lay-outing, printing, distributing and advertising easier. And lots of people still prefer to read long texts on paper instead of on a screen.

Some interesting (recent) web projects that I think contributed and contribute to the spreading and supporting of paper feminist zines and zines made by women/girls/queers/trans-people are: Grrrl Zines Network: [www.grrrlzines.net](http://www.grrrlzines.net), Grassroots Feminism: [www.grassrootsfeminism.net](http://www.grassrootsfeminism.net), Queer Zine Archive Project: [www.qzap.org](http://www.qzap.org), Zine Library: [www.zinelibrary.info](http://www.zinelibrary.info) and Zine Wiki: [www.zinewiki.com](http://www.zinewiki.com). Here are some examples of recent feminist/female/queer/trans zines: Fight Together (Italian queer-feminist zine), Hausfrau (hand-written autobiographical zine with lots of drawings about motherhood), the Rag (by an anarcha-feminist group from Dublin), Erinyen (anarcha-feminist zine from Germany with space for world-wide activism) and Race Revolt (questions whiteness, privileges and racism in DIY/queer/feminist communities). Subjects that are written about in

contemporary zines include: menstruation, creative direct action, sexism in activist groups, transgender identities, femicide, music by women and queers, feminist herstory, violence and self-defence, sexuality, illness, abortion, etc.

I think that paper zines are still relevant today for the feminist movement. Writing and publishing our own media is important to counter-balance sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic and capitalist media and advertisements that can be seen - and bought - everywhere. Zines can also help to construct feminist networks which are urgently needed. Even though one can probably reach more people by using internet tools, zines can reach other people who would otherwise never get to a feminist website. On top of that, zines offer a means which can be used by everyone to write and publish, without having to depend on professional publishing companies, a large budget, a computer with graphic skills or a degree in journalism. Pen, paper, some ideas, opinions and creativity and a copy centre nearby are all you need. In my opinion, feminists should make use of it!

## REVOLUTION

(A part of this text will be used for a zine called "Self-Publishing and Empowerment: A Guide for Community Groups" and the original slightly different version of this text - written in Dutch - has appeared on De Tweede Sekse blog: <http://tweedesekse.wordpress.com>)

### Some links to Belgian zines:

[www.queerilla.be](http://www.queerilla.be) (Queer Gazet)

[www.scumgrrrls.org](http://www.scumgrrrls.org) (Scum Grrrls)

[www.echoriot.cjb.net](http://www.echoriot.cjb.net) (Same Heartbeats, Coma To Action, Radix)

[www.rgcollectief.110mb.com/publicaties.html](http://www.rgcollectief.110mb.com/publicaties.html) (Riot Not Diet, Ladies' Room, Be All You Can Be)

[www.siscalocca.org/blog/](http://www.siscalocca.org/blog/) (Minette)

[www.myspace.com/jacqueline\\_fanzine](http://www.myspace.com/jacqueline_fanzine) (Jacqueline)

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Sonja Eismann (ed). *Hot Topic: Popfeminismus Heute.*

Nadine Monem (ed). *Riot Grrrl: Revolution Girl Style Now.*

McQuiston, Liz. *Suffragettes to She-devils: Women's Liberation and Beyond.*

[WWW.ECHOPROJECT.110MB.COM](http://WWW.ECHOPROJECT.110MB.COM)  
[WWW.ECHORIOT.CJB.NET](http://WWW.ECHORIOT.CJB.NET)

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