

**ATGENDER**



**ATGender 2024 Conference:**

**GENDER STUDIES AND THE PRECARIOUS LABOUR OF  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

**September 27-29 2024  
Utrecht, Netherlands**

**THE BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

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Conferencing Otherwise

# WELCOME

The **2024 ATGENDER** conference aims to explore the theme of **Gender Studies and the Precarious Labour of Making a Difference: (Un)paid Jobs, Internships, and Volunteering in the Worlds of Activism, Profit, and Non-profit**. Our conference provides a platform for scholars, researchers, and activists to share their insights and knowledge, and engage in meaningful discussions on issues related to gender, labour, and activism.

# STREAM 1: LABOUR OF FEMINIST ACTIVISM IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Coordinators: Ingrid Hoofd, Karolina Szpyrko and Emma Rainey

27 September 12:30-14:00  
Vergaderlokaal

**Activism for change in academia and beyond**  
Chair: Ingrid Hoofd

Feminist disability reflections on the scholar-activist labour of organising and facilitating an online ADHD Reading Group  
*Dyi Diewertje Huijg*

Although intersectionality and feminist studies and activism have expanded significantly over the last years in terms of categories of analysis, there is a loud lacuna of disability and neurodiversity engagement. Privileging abledness and neuronormativity, crip concerns still do not seem to reach beyond the outer margins of feminist and intersectional labour, thought and practice. Disabled and neurodivergent initiatives and perspectives responding to such gaps are diverse and longstanding, but are rarely picked up by non-disabled and neurotypical feminist and intersectional activist and scholars beyond tokenism. One of such responses has been the Intersectional Neurodiversity and Disability Reading Groups. They have run, respectively, from July 2019 and Jan 2020, each on a monthly basis. With the pandemic, both reading groups moved and stayed online and the reading groups turned in truly international meetings with a substantive number of ~regular participants. The reading groups are open to academics and students, and also, and explicitly so, to activists and community members. While there are some, if you will, adjacent institutional engagements, the reading groups are mostly and purposefully organised outside the HEI industry. In doing so, they operate on the boundary of academic and activist organising and knowledge creation. Out of these reading groups the ADHD Reading Group (ADHD-RG) developed. There is very little critical and intersectional academic literature on ADHD " which neither denies ADHDness nor employs the ~medical model of ADHD " and the field of ADHD Studies is dominated by non-ADHDers. Against these developments, the objective of the ADHD-RG is to dedicate ~isolated time grounded in ADHD situatedness to read critical and intersectional publications from ADHD research to have conversations with each other to develop our own critical and intersectional thinking about ADHD and ADHDness. There is a clear need for this: while the ADHD-RG is open to ADHDers as well as non-ADHDers, there has been a significant increase in ADHD participants " academics and community members " joining since its start. The ADHD-RG is organised and facilitated by the author (Dr Dyi Huijg) of this paper. Huijg is an ADHD researcher, with a background in intersectional and feminist research and activism, and is an ADHDer herself too.

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On the labour of speaking when  
there is a lack of listening:  
countering epistemic  
marginalization with the CEE  
Feminist Research Network  
*Tereza Hendl*

In this session, we will explore the epistemic marginalization and exclusion of Central and Eastern European voices from feminist debates and scholarship. We will look at empirical evidence of stark East-West inequalities within feminist knowledge production in/on Europe and their implications. Building on the rich pool of CEE scholarship, critically exploring persistent East-West inequalities and unequal power relations in feminist research, academic institutions and West-Eurocentric knowledge production, we will ask why so little has changed since so many powerful CEE critiques were already loudly raised in the 90s. We will discuss how the older and contemporary CEE critiques resonate with critiques of predominantly white Western feminism voiced by feminist scholars from the global South(s) and explore the synergies and dialogues among peripheralized knowledges. We will particularly do so through the exploration of digital activism and the labour of amplifying CEE feminist voices and inter-connecting them with broader global debates as done via the CEE Feminist Research Network.

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Affective subjectifications and  
social media. Malian-diasporic  
negotiations of intersectional  
gender relations through physical,  
emotional, and digital  
dis/connectiveness  
*Synthia Hasenöhl*

While anti-racist movements are on the rise around the world and have become more popular through the Black Lives Matter protests, also Black feminist, decolonial feminist, and Afrofeminist movements are instrumental in the fight against racism, often in connection with sexism and capitalism. Especially in the French context, however, fighting against racism has become increasingly risky. As many have shown, anti-racist criticism provokes constructions as enemies of the Republic. In this contribution, I show in which ways political and media elites who engage in these constructions of enemies of three feminist actors who are engaged against racism, namely Mame-Fatou Niang, Rokhaya Diallo, and Fatima Ouassak, and who have faced public denigration because of their activism. I analyse (social) media documents that trace these public disputes in order to find commonalities and differences in argumentations that criticise these activists. This contributes to our knowledge about the specific intersectional risks and dangers that anti-racist, feminist actors face in a state that features itself as the cradle of equity, liberty, and fraternity.

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28 September 09.00-10:30  
Utrecht University Science Park 111

**Abortion care and reproductive  
labour: digital and  
communicational labour**  
Chair: Karolina Szpyrko

**Between rage and euphoria: the  
emotions surrounding the practice  
of digital feminist media activism**

*Mariana Fagundes Ausani*

The aim is to analyze the emotions of media activists and audiences of feminist publications in relation to the experiences of the group and the bonds that these people create in the face of engagement from a gender perspective. To understand the practice of producing feminist information, the sociology of emotions is used to support the analysis of the interviewees' forms of engagement and action. Actresses make sense of activist interactions based on the emotions they experience in the context of work or information consumption, through community exchanges and experiences. Understanding the adherence and permanence of individuals in the digital feminist media activism environment through emotional expressions contributes to understanding collective engagement. The research is based on the analysis of 63 in-depth interviews with people who make up the space of feminist media activism in Brazil and France. The interviews show that the individuals' trajectories give rise to different emotions and encourage the group to embark on engaged feminist practices and digital activism. The feelings linked to the group's feminist engagement stem from emotions of fear, insecurity, and incapacity extracted from social interaction. However, there is an emotional work of affective re-signification, a process by which the individual tries to change the level or quality of an emotion or feeling (Hochschild, 2003). The elements that generate suffering for these actresses instigate them to engage in activism. Recognizing oneself as part of the feminist movement is a process of collective immersion and aspiration for socio-cultural change.

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Reshaping the Women's  
Movement: Feminist Influencers  
and Affective Labour in  
Contemporary Iran  
*Azadeh Shamsi*

My research investigates the blurring line between feminist activism and the influencer creative industry to examine the gendered, sociocultural, and political aspects of Iranian feminist influencers labour. Focusing on the affective labour, this research asks how Iranian feminist influencers gain visibility for their activism and how their labour informs and affects the reconfiguration of the womens movement in Iran, reshaping womens political participation and transforming the prioritisation of their political demands, and their collective imagination of the future. Affective labour is defined by the user's affective binding with their labour and employability of their emotions, their lived experiences and their identity into their labour (Jarrett, 2016; Hochschild, 2012). This research will draw upon feminist qualitative research methods including discourse analysis of an archive of Instagram materials and semi-structured in-depth interviews with feminist influencers inside the country and in the diaspora.

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## Voices of Cyberfeminist Activism: Communication Strategies and Challenges in the Portuguese 8M Movement

*Camila Lamartine*

The 8M Movement (International Feminist Strike) has emerged as a transnational phenomenon reshaping the landscape of contemporary feminist movements, distinguished by its hybrid nature and fundamental interrogation of historically unpaid care work (Aruzza et al., 2019; Gago, 2020). Behind this movement, volunteer women activists play a crucial role in mobilization and communication, facing significant challenges. Therefore, this study aims to examine communication practices and perceptions of cyberfeminist activists involved in the 8M Movement in Portugal, employing a combined approach of netnography and semi-structured interviews. Given the country's history, marked by over 40 years of dictatorship, the Portuguese feminist movement presents particularities and vulnerabilities that it has been attempting to address through various communication and action strategies (Tavares, 2011; Cerqueira et al., 2017). To this end, we analyzed the Instagram of the Rede 8 de Março, responsible for organizing the strike in the country since its inception, during the first four months of 2020 and 2021, and conducted interviews with five collective activists. Our findings highlight the central role of WhatsApp in organizational and internal communication, as well as the difficulties faced by volunteers in maintaining constant and cohesive communication due to demands and negotiations between their professional, personal, and activist lives. This study aligns directly with the theme of the conference, from the choice of the movement, which seeks to problematize the notion of what constitutes work, to the concern of promoting situated knowledge (Haraway, 1998) and the idea of a *o*place of speech

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28 September 11.00-12:30  
Utrecht University Science Park 114

**Abortion care and reproductive  
labour: the ethics and power  
dynamics of care**  
Chair: Sarah Trottier

**The Ethics of Care in Nepali  
Citizenship-Equality Activism**  
*Deirdre Brennan*

Paper presents the experiences of Nepali feminist activists campaigning, both on- and offline, for equal citizenship laws. Gender discriminatory nationality laws prevent a woman from passing citizenship to her child on an equal basis with men thus creating childhood statelessness in over twenty countries today. Within statelessness scholarship, attention has mostly been paid to the 'why' questions of statelessness: why stateless children have a right to a nationality under international law. However, the intricacies and meaning of activism by stateless people, and mothers unable to pass on their citizenship, has so far been unattended to within the statelessness canon. Less concerned with the 'why', my paper unpacks the 'how' questions: how do activists, practitioners, and people affected by statelessness conduct and sustain their work towards legal reform and citizenship rights? While my research was carried out during the outbreak of the pandemic, the importance of online activism, and the impact of trolling on feminist activists, formed a central part of the research. As this paper will reveal, there is an under-acknowledgement and undervaluation of an intricate web of care, costs, compromises, labour, emotions, and community amongst activists. This care web, I will suggest, sustains and reproduces the "labour power"™ required of campaigning, be it local, global and/or online.

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Digital universality and embodied costs of feminism: multi-dimensional abuse in non-metropolitan feminist activism in Poland

*Karolina Szpyrko*

Building on the growing area of studies in activist labour, this paper explores the abuse endured by activist organizers outside metropolitan political culture, mediated through the hybrid media landscape of contemporary social movements. While the online abuse and harassment in feminist activism have been extensively researched and reflected upon as part of the scholarship of digital feminist activism (e.g. Gleeson, 2016; Mendes, 2022), the spatial dimension and the complexity of multi-sided, hybrid activism have not received adequate attention. As such, this paper enters a conversation with the scholarly prevalence to differentiate the digital sphere from the material conditions of activists' locations, falling into a fallacy of the spatial universality of social media. In doing so, it highlights the need to recognize the geographic, political, and economic divisions that shape the realities of embodied activist experiences in contemporary, digital-based social movements.

Drawing on extensive research conducted since 2016 within the contemporary feminist movement in Poland, consisting of 30 interviews and ethnographic fieldwork, this study focuses on the personal and embodied costs faced by small-town activists. It reveals that these activists, particularly feminist organizers, endure public criticism and scapegoating in the church, face repercussions in their family and professional lives, and witness the stigmatization of their children in school. The lack of anonymity in small towns exacerbates challenges associated with activism, highlighting the isolation and absence of privacy experienced by feminist activists outside the metropolitan areas (Muszel & Piotrowski, 2020, 2022).

This paper argues that the sense of universality of activism facilitated through social media is based on the assumption that emancipatory social movements, and especially feminist activism, are akin to the practices, values, and political life of urban, metropolitan centres. This urban-centric view, or what Pruitt (2007, p. 484) calls 'the society's pervasive urban presumption', disregards activism and political engagement outside of metropolises, disavowing the territoriality of digital activism and presenting it as a universal feature of default urbanism.

In conclusion, this research emphasises the distinctive nature of feminist activism across perceived political centres and peripheries, shedding light on the sense of injustice experienced by small-town activists whose labour often goes unnoticed and who face punishment for their engagement in activism. It furthermore reveals the extractive disposition of hyper-mediatised feminist activism, which mirrors existing social, economic, and political divisions, exacerbating coloniser/colonised identity across global and national spaces. By addressing these issues, the paper contributes to a geographically nuanced understanding of the complexities and inequalities embedded in contemporary online activist practices.

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The multifaceted labour of pro-abortion activists under restrictive abortion laws. Case Studies of Polish Organisations

*Dagmara Rode and  
Krystyna Dzwonkowska-  
Godula*

Our paper aims to characterise the labour within selected organizations working for access to abortion in Poland (such as Aborcystyczny Dream Team, Kobiety w Sieci, Legalna Aborcja and others). We focus on various forms of digital activism including abortion self-help, dissemination of information, education, discursive activism. In communicative capitalism such activities require a significant amount of time and effort, but popular perceptions of both digital activism and care work often render them invisible. Labour, understood as the physical, mental, and social effort used to produce goods and services, has been analysed in two dimensions. First, we reconstruct the forms of activist work through the digital media content produced by organisations. We are particularly interested in what kind of labour is visible and communicated, how the activists spread the message about their work and its products on the Internet, and who they target. Secondly, based on qualitative interviews with representatives of the organizations, we learn the behind-the-scenes of their activities and identify what kind of efforts, skills, and resources are required from abortion activists. The analysis of the experiences and subjective perspectives of the social actors allows us to determine whether and how their activity is perceived by themselves as labour, how they characterise their engagement in this kind of work, what challenges, benefits and costs they experience. As the result of our research, we will propose the set of categories that can be applied in describing labour related to abortion activism in Poland.

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29 September 09.00-10:30  
Utrecht University Science Park  
0.02

## Digital activism, neoliberalism, and authenticity

Chair: Karolina Szpyrko

Economies of Feminism:  
Exploring Monetisation Within  
(Digital) Feminism  
*Carys Hill*

Feminist subscription memberships, alternative funding models, and Patreon Subscription-based platforms like Patreon and Substack, where audiences can be charged a monthly subscription fee in exchange for paywalled content and services, are quickly growing in popularity among content creators and others working in the digital sphere. While the motivations behind this shift vary, they often relate to a crisis of funding: with the precarity of platform revenue and waning funding opportunities for the cultural and creative industries. However, subscriptions also develop audiences into paying consumers, and this gives rise to several tensions. In this paper, I reflect on findings from interviews and workshops with feminist individuals providing subscriptions as a way of building community and sustaining feminist work, and those paying for them. What emerges is that subscriptions ostensibly provide a form of care and support among otherwise uncaring funding models, but at the same time generate powerful tensions between building forms of voluntary, participatory communities, and the kinds of relationships that emerge. Namely, participants felt they were owed a service, “buying” their way out of mainstream social media but also opting out, through paying for a service, of the labour that is required to build a community resource and space “consumer demands and expectations which ultimately reproduce the forms of precarity, scrutiny and uncertainty subscription providers seek to escape. Building on scholarship which explores the relationship between entrepreneurialism, labour, consumption, community and care more broadly, participants’ experiences offer a compelling example of the effects of monetisation and consumption on labour practices within digital feminist work.

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Doing Feminist Activism in the  
Neoliberal Context: Resisting  
from Within

*Liridona Sjarina*

In this paper, I will explore the roles that class, ideological affiliations, and social status play in the establishment and sustainability of non-formalized activism in Kosovo. The paper will be built upon the experiences of a small informal collective named 'The Collective for Feminist Thought and Action' in Prishtina, of which I am a co-founder and activist. Positioned as anticapitalist, this collective is an informal group self-sustained by its members and refuses any donations from formalized entities within and outside of Kosovo. Using autoethnography and interviews as methods of inquiry, the paper will analyze the preconditions that enable such a collective to persist, and how ideology and material reality on one hand, and geography, social, and economic status of its members on the other hand, inform its structure, scope, and positioning within the feminist movement. The paper seeks to shed light on the complicated relationship between activism, labor, resistance, and financing by exploring the implications of neoliberal restructuring of civil society in Kosovo and resistances to it.

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Women in Tech Communities:  
results of a doctoral research in  
Brazil and Portugal with a decolonial  
approach

*Renata Frade*

Over the last fifteen years, female technology communities have been the main catalysts for women in IT inclusion in Brazil and Portugal. Despite different social, cultural, political and economic contexts, these groups have similarities in education, empowerment and diversity objectives in STEM, as well as in operational, organizational and communication structures. This paper will present the results of a doctoral research that will be completed in 2024 on technological feminist activism in both countries. Mapping and classification of over 120 communities were carried out, four of them were case studies with digital platforms ethnography, more than 15 interviews, observer participation in 50 events, focus groups. Activism and feminism carried out in Brazilian groups will be focused, similar to those in countries in the global south. The activist exercise of minorities, such as women, was strongly impacted by the Web with the online communities emergence. The mediation of this communication and interaction occurs on platforms developed by Big Techs. It is not known whether this activism occurs free through the mediation of exchanges occurring on these platforms, whose algorithms shape suggestions. Algorithmic categorization threatens the activist online communities work, such as women's, in platform society (van Dijck, Poell, Waal, 2018). Technological feminism finds in data feminism (D'Ágnazio, Klein, 2020) a new theoretical front to open and deepen proposals to combat algorithmic oppression (Noble, 2018). A proposal for these collectives would be a feminist decolonial imagination (Ricaurte, 2022), which aims to eradicate the multidimensional socio-technical violence of oppressive systems. It seeks to uncover how the AI lifecycle and associated social processes operate to construct worldviews and ways of relating and conceiving social existence

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Abortion Platformization  
Between Italy and Argentina  
The Role of Femtech Activism in  
Abortion Care  
*Martina Facincani and Tamara  
Roma*

From a critical trans/feminism cyberlaw perspective, the paper aims to compare two TelAbortion case studies related to Italian and Argentinian activism dimension. Given the pervasiveness and de-localization of the digital context the paper assumes a glocal lens of analysis (Haraway, 1985; Braidotti, 2021; Brandell, Vanbenschoten et. al. 2022; Meister & Levy forthcoming). The Italian case of Obiezione Respinta shows a digital national form of activism embedded in the meantime both in national and territorial contexts. The platforms, composed by activists from all over Italy, work on a practical level on the barriers in abortion access monitoring the conscientious objection, the fetus heartbeat practice, and on the accompaniments for person who need it; and on a cultural level on the renegotiation of the Socorristas en Red (SenRed), a network present across the federal territory provides information and accompaniments for pregnant person who have decided to terminate pregnancies. SenRed played a key advocacy role in the lobbying campaign for the promulgation of the law 27.610 and in monitoring and collecting data, serving as a connection between the healthcare system and the needs of those excluded from this system (Fernández Vázquez & Szwarc 2018; SenRed 2021, 2022). Through a critical comparison, the paper aims to determine the similarities, differences borrowing between the two contexts and forms of activism. In addition, the analysis highlights the role of social dimension in the construction of a different idea of health built on a community care perspective and in the expansion strategies of abortion access both in a legal and extra-legal dimension (Ziegler & King 2023; Clarke & Haraway 2018; Belfrage 2022).

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29 September 13.30-15.00  
Utrecht University Science Park  
114

**Crisis management, affect and  
storytelling**  
Chair: Ingrid Hoofd

On and off: Navigating feminist  
activism through online/offline  
art practice and open/closed  
community building amid  
COVID-19 China

*Yichi Zhang*

In October 2021, our grassroots feminist group VaginaProject (VP) 阴道项目 based on true life stories of Chinese women and LGBT+ people collected by volunteers. The journey of landing the project in Beijing took almost two years, during which the preparation were done both online and offline, publicly and privately. The constant switch between on and off (line) is more like a strategy than an act of convenience to navigate our project to its launch, protect participants, provide support to the community and ultimately make a social impact. Our volunteers, scattered across the globe, worked online most of the time with collecting stories and crowdfunding. The humanistic nature of art practice and community building, however, required physical presence and interaction. Therefore, we organised in-person script reading events in various cities for community outreach. Facing precarities caused by heavy censorship and covid lockdown, many of our initial public promotional endeavours were forced to transition to “underground”, with information passed by private chats and face-to-face contacts. In the end, we successfully established a world of care and friendship for our participants through our artistic feminist practices. But this world became too confined due to the constant switching and seemed to fail to reach many outside our bubble. The social environment surrounding which was also turbulent: under political, financial, ideological pressure, there were overloaded conflicts, anxiety and emotional labour that left us with trauma and sadness. Our voice might be heard, but it was never easy.

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Doomscrolling in the trans  
affective commons: social media  
experiences of UK trans youth

*Drew Simms*

Trans youth and their use of the internet have been under increasing scrutiny in recent years, with anti-trans social contagion fears reaching the level of government in the UK, e.g. recent draft school guidance recommends frequent social media use be counted against any child seeking to transition. In this context, of being frequently talked about but rarely heard from, I sought to ask trans young people in the UK about their experiences of using social media by holding asynchronous online focus groups with 17 self-identified trans youth, aged 17-24, over 2023. Findings revealed, rather than an echo chamber of queer utopia made up of a combination of bad news, transphobic hostility, and other trans people expressing negative emotions. They attributed this to a combination of algorithms that prioritise engagement over wellbeing, and the obligation felt by trans people to raise awareness of doomscrolling out on the many positives of online trans networks. Using Malatino's (2022) model of a trans affective commons, these findings produce a picture of trans youth bound by shared negative affect, seeking to bear witness to and uplift each other, but attempts to manage their wellbeing within this are stifled by algorithmic forces and hostility. Cavalcante, A. (2020). *Tumbling into queer utopias and vortexes: Experiences of LGBTQ social media users on Tumblr*. In *LGBTQ Culture* (pp. 77-97). Routledge. Malatino, H. (2022). *Side affects: On being trans and feeling bad*. U of Minnesota Press.

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## Feminist Autobiography in the Digital Era

*Shafeq (Şəfəq) Dadaşova*

This study explores the dynamic landscape of feminist activism through autobiographical writing and self-expression in the digital age. Delving into the precarious labor inherent in various activist expressions, we examine autobiographies written after the 2000s that provide insights into the multifaceted dimensions of contemporary activism. Autobiographical narratives serve as a powerful medium to capture the essence of diverse forms of activist labor. Examples from these autobiographies illuminate the complexities of affective and task-oriented labor, such as Roxane Gay's "Hunger," which explores the emotional toll of advocating for body positivity. In the realm of productive and reproductive labor, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "Dear Ijeawele" offers reflections on raising a feminist daughter, addressing the intersectionality of gender and motherhood. The study delves into managerial, administrative, archival, and intellectual labor by drawing on the experiences of activists like Malala Yousafzai, whose autobiography "I Am Malala" chronicles her intellectual labor in advocating for girls' education. The autobiographies further shed light on the labor of resistance and radical wit, with examples like Lindy West's "Shrill," providing a poignant account of challenging societal norms through humor and resilience. The inherently conflictual social phenomena inspired by activism are explored through autobiographies like Monica Lewinsky's "Monica: Her Story," revealing the impact of defamation and celebrityization on an individual's life. Additionally, the autobiographies of climate activists like Greta Thunberg and indigenous rights advocate Winona LaDuke exemplify the challenges of navigating intellectual property rights and cancel culture within activist movements. This study transcends traditional gender-focused activism, embracing autobiographies that span racial equality (e.g., Michelle Obama's "Becoming"), abolition movements, animal rights (e.g., Temple Grandin's "Thinking in Pictures"), climate justice, labor unionism (e.g., Dolores Huerta's "Dolores Huerta: An Organizer's Tale"), work conditions, poverty, decolonial, anti-war, and anti-genocide movements. In summary, this talk will explore into the diverse narratives of contemporary activists, unraveling the threads that connect personal experiences with broader societal challenges and triumphs.

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# STREAM 2: MAKING A FEMINIST DIFFERENCE WITHIN INSTITUTIONS

Coordinators: Berteke  
Waaldijk, Irina Gewinner,  
Carys Hill, Laurence  
Herfs and Lucie Naude

27 September 12.30-14.00  
Christinazaal

Chairs: Carys Hill and Lucie Naude

UU students making a difference:  
roundtable

Participants:  
Larisa van Rijn, Albert Solanes, Rosa Oomen,  
Michele Bertoni, Joana Rita da Silva Cavaco

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28 September 09.00-10.30  
Utrecht University Science Park  
0.02

**Emotions and Care(ing) in Uncaring  
Contexts**  
Chair: Carys Hill

**Emotionally Demanding  
Research: The Call for a Feminist  
Transformation**

*Lorraine Hayman & Stacey  
Scriver*

“Responding to the call to be the change we want to see by making a feminist difference within academic institutions in Ireland and beyond, our paper delves into ongoing research exploring the concept and impact of emotionally demanding research (EDR) and the support mechanisms requested by early career researchers at the University of Galway engaged in such work. EDR includes research that is expected to be emotionally demanding due to the topic or fieldwork location and that unexpectedly takes a toll on researchers’ health/well-being. Despite the prevalence of EDR across various disciplines, from women’s studies to medicine to engineering, academic institutions in Ireland lack sufficient support for researchers, particularly those in the early stages of their careers, to navigate the demands of EDR. We investigate the EDR concept, highlighting the impact identified by early career researchers, and assess the value of peer-to-peer support in addressing emergent mental health and well-being challenges. Our findings utilise a University of Galway-wide survey, focus group insights, and reflections on the effectiveness of the voluntarily established Peer Support Group (PSG) support mechanism. This research and PSG emerged from the shared realisation of a doctoral researcher and her supervisor (represented as ‘we’ in this paper) that tangible support for researchers undertaking EDR in Ireland is notably lacking. Our findings underscore the need for a feminist transformation within academia, emphasising the emotional demands of research and advocating for robust support structures that enable early career researchers to flourish.”

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A micro phenomenological study  
of affirmative experiences in  
academia

*Jennifer Branlat; Suneetha  
Saggurthi; Siri Øyslebø  
Sørensen; Katrin Heimann;  
Sophia Karlson*

Western universities continue to be portrayed negatively as gendered and racialized institutions, governed according to neo-liberal values, with competition and meritocracy as prominent centerpieces. Within the now abundant literature on exclusion mechanisms, discrimination, and harmful experiences such as micro-inequities and microaggressions, we answer to an emerging call for attention towards possible counter actions. Our aim is to examine that which might help us to thrive and build inclusive cultures within academic institutions. We do so by exploring lived experiences of receiving a microaffirmation.

The analysis of 12 micro-phenomenological interviews with scholars of different genders, social backgrounds, and different positionings in academic hierarchies, indicate that all experiences reported, despite concerning a range of different interactions, shared similar dynamics: an immediate elevation of wellbeing is often followed by a significant shift in the interpretation of the receiver's own situation in academia marked by a strengthened feeling of belonging and the anticipation of a personal future in the field.

Furthermore, interviewees report an emotional response of gratitude and appreciation towards the affirming person that can be accompanied by the urge to reciprocate kindness beyond the content of the microaffirmation. The significance of an affirmation was amplified by a heightened vulnerability of the interviewee. We view the findings in light of feminist theorizing of care and discuss the potential of microaffirmations as disruptive actions that center relationality, connection and responsiveness.."

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Care(er)ing: Queer Feminist  
Career Cares

*Yvette Taylor & Maddie Breeze*

This paper is about feminist practices of care across the academic career course. Caring is readily positioned as oppositional to 'careering', but we bring the two together. We attend to how universities require a wide variety of caring labours, and how feminists negotiate care as it entwines with the career course. The gendered dynamics of devalued caring work sits at the centre of feminist ambivalences, as working care-fully is positioned both as a hindrance to career course success, and as a feminist strategy for negotiating and resisting the care-less university. Feminist practices of collegiality and relationality can be co-opted by the institution, which depends upon devalued feminised caring work and social reproduction just as it disavows their necessity, leaving the feminist and her cares behind. We wonder what feminists can do when feminist care and collectivity are at risk of being recaptured by the institution and misrecognised within normative gender regimes. In this context we explore (1) Who is expected to care for others across the career course, when embracing (or demanding) care-full collaboration as feminist praxis risks repeating over-burdening feminist academics with devalued work. (2) The (mis)recognition of queer feminist cares in dominant care frameworks, as these interrupt normative (re)productive family forms, and unsettle the gender essentialism and heteronormativity of care. (3) How in failing care queerly, feminists can care (and not care) across the career course in ways that resist recapture by greedy institutions ever hungry for feminist, as well as feminized, labour.

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28 September 09.00-10.30  
Utrecht University Science Park  
0.05

**Changing institutional norms:  
supporting feminist & queer  
knowledge and expertise by  
experience**

Chair: Silvia Protino, Zeynep Kurt

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**Promoting gender justice at  
the International Criminal  
Court: Non-state resistance  
against the SGBV prohibition  
norm's misrecognition**

*Inga Kravchik*

Social constructivist research on the evolution of international norms has widely studied the role of transnational advocacy in strengthening the international human rights regime. While it has mainly focused on norm entrepreneurship in cases of states' socialization with internationally recognized norms, cases of institutional socialization have not been much scrutinized so far. By undertaking a conjunction of social constructivist findings with the analytical framework of Madsen et al. (2018) on cases of resistance against international courts, this piece focuses on the constellation, strategies, tools and agency of gender justice advocates in their resistance against the misrecognition of the SGBV prohibition norm in the ICC's first case, against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo. My analysis identifies their central role in the evolution of this norm in ICL by tracing the stages, dynamics and effects of their resistance, which, as I argue, has fostered the ICC's institutional processes of learning and socialization with the norm's appropriate application. Although the Court had virtually failed to apply the norm in Lubanga, its responsible organs ultimately considered the critique directed against them and subsequently applied learned lessons on both institutional and legal levels of their operation. While the ICC's second Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda initiated relevant institutional changes with regard to the prosecution of SGBV, she also fostered legal implementation of those aspirations. What's more, the progressive prosecution of SGBV eventually reverberated with the judicial adjudication, which has in turn strengthened the legal status and content of the norm.

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Negotiating Narratives:  
Discourse, Representation, and  
Associations in Turkey's LGBTI+  
Movement

*Bengisu Öten and İrem İnceoğlu*

Changes in the political climate in Turkey, starting from 2013 by the Gezi Resistance and characterized in 2015, paved the way for the LGBTI+ movement to gain political agency. However, this process revealed a paradoxical impact, as the movement's increased visibility coincided with the surge of anti-gender and anti-LGBTI discourse in political rhetoric. This discourse, co-opted by politicians as a strategic tool, has portrayed the movement as a component of the opposition within the authoritarian regime, framing individuals as 'LGBTIst.' This newfound visibility in the political arena has led to diversification in the action domains and representation tools employed by the associations that constitute part of the movement. This research explores the dynamics of visibility, political action, and representation within the LGBTI+ context in Turkey, focusing on two distinct campaigns from two associations: Kaos GL's withdrawn promotional film "Hand in Hand Against Hate" and SPoD's political participation campaign "Turkey is Ready for This", along with the subsequent documentary "Us and Similar". This paper considers these campaigns as a space for hope within the LGBTI+ community by countering narratives of isolation and marginalization. Grounded in Arendtian politics, the objective of this research is to comprehend how the LGBTI+ associations in Turkey persistently generate policies amid the reigning authoritarian regime. While Kaos GL creates documentative policies involving actual bodies and aims to build a community, SPoD adopts a more indirect and prolonged policy approach through political bodies and intents to make policy changes. In exploring these two approaches, the analysis focuses on disparities in visibility, examines initiated campaigns to comprehend alternative areas for negotiation, and scrutinizes them through various mediums, including social media interactions, discourses, reports, and political meetings.

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28 September 11.00-12.30  
Utrecht University Science Park 111

**Reforming Art Academies Through  
Feminist Intervention**, Chair: Laurence  
Herfs

Why Is Reforming the Academy  
Challenging? Polish Art  
Academies as Feudal-  
Patriarchal Structures

*Marta Kosińska*

Artistic higher education in Poland has often been depicted as 'feudal', endorsing hierarchical and discriminatory labor relations and maintaining slower promotion paths for women, among others. Several reforms aimed at implementing the academic capitalism and the performance-based system have not only failed to address these issues but have also reinforced the negative features of governance at Polish universities, further entrenching the power of professional elites and perpetuating pre-existing inequalities rather than mitigating them.

**Methods and data:** The paper is based on an analysis of 22 in-depth interviews conducted with both female and male employees of 6 art universities and academies across Poland in the years 2020-2022. The participants, particularly female lecturers, were selected based on their demonstrated public engagement to feminist principles, equality, and anti-discrimination values within both the university and the broader social settings.

**Objective:** The objective of the paper is to analyze the feudal and inherently patriarchal nature of power relations in Polish art universities, where women's positions are structurally disadvantaged. Over the years, the feudal-patriarchal system has thrived on the precarious employment conditions of women in lower assistant positions, burdening them with extra administrative and organizational tasks. Additionally, women bear a disproportionate emotional burden in teaching compared to men. Furthermore, universities often co-opt symbolic forms of female resistance to gender inequality as tokens of their supposedly progressive policies. Ultimately, the paper aims to explore the transformative potential for overcoming this doubly oppressive structure.

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**‘We break you before we make  
you’: practices of resistance and  
care at the Royal Academy of  
Arts**

*Laurence Herfs*

In recent years, the Royal Academy of Arts in the Hague has been in the news for various allegations of sexual harassment and power abuse by both former and current staff and students: in 2020, extensive reporting was done by NRC on alumnus Julian Andeweg, whom they titled the ‘Harvey Weinstein’ of the Dutch art world; in 2021, three Fine Arts teachers were asked to leave after an online #MeToo complaint campaign, set up anonymously by former and current students, led to an inconclusive official external investigation; and, in 2022, a fourth Fine Arts teacher was arrested when he was caught trying to take an indecent picture of an unaware woman in a clothing stall, after which many such photos, including those of KABK students, were discovered at his home. While newspaper outlets have externally reported on these events, internal forms of academic and artistic forms of feminist resistance have not been recorded. Having been a student of these times and these teachers, I propose a paper on the forms of care and resistance that I witnessed around me and developed myself during this time, in an effort to historicize this moment of student defiance against an uncaring and unsafe neoliberal institute.

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28 September 13.30-15.00  
Utrecht University Science Park 119

**Beyond "Good" and "Bad" Feminist Interventions: Negotiating Complicity, Tension and Critique in Feminist Work, Chair: Carys Hill**

**GILL (Gendered Innovation Living Labs): Challenging the presumption that 'women are good for entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship is good for women'**

*Melissa Tanti and Oihane Ballesteros*

The paper considers the dilemmas and opportunities that arise when a project is aligned with national or institutional research priorities that conflict with feminist anticolonial imperatives for systemic change and cultural transformation. GILL is an EU-funded collaboration of 17 partners across 10 countries. Living Labs are hubs for community-engaged research that foster co-creation and co-design among transdisciplinary teams including academic researchers and community experts. GILL's goal is to enable Gender Responsive Smart Innovation and Entrepreneurship (GRSIE) in response to both the European and global priorities of diversity and gender equality across sectors and professions.

Entrepreneurship is increasingly held up as "a universal 'solution'" (Ojediran et al. 87) for numerous problems in the Global South and North alike. However, Calàs et al. caution that 'the act of bringing more women to entrepreneurship is not necessarily a straightforward solution, and it may even be a distraction from real social change' (558). Race-conscious and intersectional approaches are crucial to understanding both women's entrepreneurial activity and the conditions under which it might flourish. For example, Holly Slay Ferraro shows that key tensions must be accounted for between Black enterprise and capitalism as a racist institution (48), as must the specificity of Indigenous women businessowners and those in other late-colonial contexts. This presentation will share findings from participatory action research from within the GILL project including interviews, a co-creation event, and a literature review that centred the lived experience of women entrepreneurs and contradict the very terms upon which the project is funded. This paper builds upon a long-standing feminist strategy to constantly question the grounds upon which we stand, to interrogate the languages and frameworks being used outside and within feminist criticism, to check in with for whom and how common terms are working, and to create new terms when needed.

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**'Jordanizing' SGBV  
Interventions?: Contestations  
and contradictions amongst  
local feminist consultants,  
practitioners, and refugee  
women**  
*Sarah Nandi*

In humanitarian settings, international organizations and governments have gradually begun to acknowledge the significance of transnational feminist advocacy, emphasizing the urgent need to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) as a global priority (World Bank, 2023). Nonetheless, scholars have highlighted the presence of orientalist and masculinist assumptions ingrained within humanitarian organizations (Daigle, 2020), the disproportionate representation of white feminist and neoliberal perspectives (Veit, 2019), and the paradoxical role of humanitarian organizations as sometimes being the perpetrators of the violence they aim to alleviate (Donovan, 2015). Embedded within these critiques, this article investigates the nuanced contributions of consultants, practitioners, and refugees themselves in shaping and undertaking feminist humanitarianism within protracted refugee situations in Jordan. The Kingdom of Jordan stands out as a prominent example of "refugee rentierism," wherein the host state exploits refugees to attract aid and development investments as part of neoliberal policies, particularly during interstate negotiations with European and other Global North actors, with the promised outcome of discouraging onward migration (Morris, 2020). In this context, gender programming, particularly focused on the treatment and prevention of SGBV, has emerged as lucrative and pivotal domains where both international and local consultants compete for contracts to deliver SGBV prevention trainings, evaluations, and advisory services. Within this dynamic, the selection of "gender experts" has the result of prioritizing specific expertise and ontological frameworks over others. Based on six months of ethnographic fieldwork, drawing from interviews with these actors and participant observation of their encounters, I argue that local actors are defining and implementing feminist humanitarianism in pluralistic, at times contradictory, ways that speaks to the need to incorporate these localized and everyday feminist humanitarianism into account.

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Undoing the moralized  
professionalization critique,  
acknowledging the unequal  
labor division in feminism

*Lucie Naudé*

Since the 1990s, many critiques have targeted the category of “professional feminists” at the forefront of the processes of institutionalization and NGOization of feminism. These critiques have finely described and analyzed the narrowing of social transformation prospects in different sociopolitical contexts, through the restrictive frameworks of global agendas, and the rationalized logic of development projects. These critiques have also resonated within feminist movements beyond the academic sphere, as shown by the heated debates that marked the 1990s Latin-American feminist encounters between the “feministas autónomas” and “feministas institucionales”.

This contribution takes stock of these debates and draws on ethnographic research with a group of feminist NGO workers who have been at the forefront of important political changes in Colombia over the last ten years. It first unpacks the moralized assumptions underlying the professionalization critique, about who constitutes a good or a bad feminist subject and which feminist practices are deemed legitimate and appropriate. It then develops the idea of the transnational division of labor in feminism to go beyond the frameworks of professionalization and institutionalization of feminism. This framework offers an analytical perspective that acknowledges the power imbalances and the transformations at play without downplaying professional feminists’ attachments to feminism as a political and ethical project. It thus opens the possibility of ethical dialogue in the dynamic field of feminism, beyond strict demarcations of what constitutes legitimate activism and who is deemed as a good feminist subject.

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Corporatising the Streets - the  
institutional dynamics of  
professional Sudanese feminist  
and queer movement building  
*Seraf Sidig*

In the context of the Global South, particularly in countries affected by conflict and authoritarian governance, like in the case of Sudan, The NGO model is often the only allowed form of political institution. The corporate framework of the NGO, coupled with the looming threat of the state, creates an environment where NGOs and INGOs become gatekeepers and exploit young and inexperienced feminists, human rights activists, and resistance movements. Feminist NGOs in Sudan have a record of failing to apply labour rights - especially for service and internship level workers - as well as other ethics related to the protection of the activist communities they support. Activists, in particular, who are eager to work, are exploited in the areas of knowledge production and community organising without lasting increased capacities for these communities. This dynamic is detrimental to the well-being of the activist and contributes to halting lasting grassroots movement building in its effort to co-opt it. On a personal level, activists speak of intellectual and emotional burnout and disenchantment with civic life. In order to explore these dynamics, the paper will present four Sudanese feminist organisations during the height of mobilisation around the December 2018 revolution, the following transitional government phase, and current grassroots response work in the midst of the April 15th 2023 Sudanese war. The research will also highlight how factors such as class and sexual orientation further single out LGBTQ+ and poor activists and often place them in harm's way.

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28 September 13.30-15.00  
Utrecht University Science Park 114

**Feminist Knowledge Productions**  
Chair: Laurence Herfs

Shifting boundaries, dismantling  
brick walls: Feminist economic  
expertise and the boundary-  
work of socioeconomic  
transformation

*Emma Lamberg*

This paper contributes to ongoing debates on the politics and practices of feminist knowledge transfer by considering how feminist professionals advocate transformative economic thinking and policies. Drawing on interviews with an under-researched group – namely, feminist professionals with specialised knowledge about the economy and economic policy – I assess how feminist experts seek to establish the legitimacy of feminist knowledge-based demands and how such demands are received in different institutional contexts. As analytical lenses, I employ feminist scholarship on scientific boundary-work and Sara Ahmed's work on how feminist claims for change often come up against institutional 'brick walls'. The paper explores the practices that the participants employed to increase their claims' chances of entering the broader policy discourse. The results show that although their boundary-work often came up against institutional brick walls and ended up being non-performative, its purpose was to gradually dismantle such walls. However, several shifts in policy and discourse have to occur for the participants' demands to become fully effective.



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## Deconstructing Dirtiness: A Study on Stigmatization in Sexuality Research within Italian Academia

*Martina Rolandi & Lucia Cucchi*

Despite the academic setting not fitting Hughes's definition of "dirty work" as an "occupation that is viewed by society as physically, socially, or morally tainted," certain forms of stigmatization arise, especially in sexuality research, which is often perceived as illegitimate or inconvenient. Drawing on this concept of dirty work, Irvine (2014) argues that practices of stigmatization and isolation contribute to enduring patterns of institutional inequality, shaping a social construction of "dirtiness." Sex and sexual researchers frequently encounter systematic and institutionalized stigma, leading to a sense of isolation in the academic environment (Israel, 2002). To cope with this stigma, researchers engage in emotional and identity work (Grandy, 2008; Hochschild, 1979) and may strategically present their work under broader categories, such as "gender issues," to avoid controversies (Israel, 2002). This research aims to investigate the institutional role of Italian Universities in endorsing or refraining from supporting academic freedom, particularly regarding sexuality studies. In Italy, it seems like the gender perspective and approach are considered acceptable until research is bounded within a conventional moral framework (e.g., gender mainstreaming). The study seeks to explore the narratives of early female researchers specializing in sexuality-related issues within the Departments of Social Sciences of different Italian Universities. Through a narrative methodology employing semi-structured interviews, the paper aims to uncover how these researchers navigate their experiences of disempowerment in academia, addressing the significance of the gender and feminist perspective, strategies for building positive professional identities, and the challenges in their academic journey.

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**Beyond Binary Boundaries:  
Rethinking Gender Advocacy in a  
Turkish University Context**  
*Gülçin Con Wright & Kerem  
Selçuk*

In recent years, Turkey has witnessed a significant backlash against gender and feminist advocacy in academia, civil society, and the state. This has led to strict regulations that threaten academics and activists associated with gender centers. Many of these centers have been renamed 'Women and Family Centers' and pressured to avoid gender-related activities, especially those related to LGBTI+ issues. Previous research has categorized gender equality efforts in Turkish universities into three typologies: top-down, bottom-up and individual scattered efforts. However, there has been limited focus on how different actors interact and whether they share a common understanding of gender equality. Drawing on our experiences as gender scholars at a private university, we focus on three critical issues: a) absence of any meaningful interaction among top administration, gender scholars, and students, b) reproduction of binary gender equality definitions through the initiatives within the Gender Studies Centre, c) lack of acknowledgment of bottom-up efforts of students advocating for LGBTI+ rights and inclusion. In such a fragmented environment, gender equality efforts involve different actors with different discourses on the concept. This leads to multiple and complex layers of marginalization between agents of gender advocacy in a university environment due to unequal power relations established within the administrative and academic hierarchy. Our aim is to stimulate discussion on how to foster greater inclusivity allowing the participation of diverse actors in the negotiation of gender equality efforts in academia.

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28 September 13.30-15.00  
Utrecht University Science Park WIT

Chairs: Edyta Just & Berteke Waaldijk

Making a feminist difference  
in organizations &  
institutions

Caroline Paoli, Rosa Matthis,  
Maayke Botman, Anoushka Boet

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29 September 09.00-10.30  
Utrecht University Science Park  
0.05

**Unliveable productivity & strategies  
to cope**, Chair: Irina Gewinner

Slow (it) down! The costs of  
feminist education, unlivable  
academic speeds, and other  
breakdowns (of productivity)  
*Domitilla (Domi) Olivieri & Iraia  
Elorduy Alverde*

This paper is part of a broader collaborative, action-research-oriented study on slowness and slowing down (in) academia.

Grounded in interviews with graduate students and university teachers (mostly but not exclusively active in the field of gender studies), and in conversations with scientific studies, we discuss the embodied effects, discriminations, and tensions of the fast speed of the neoliberal university. The paper articulates how this academic logic produces a careless model of academic success, and assumes a very specific kind of (autonomous and independent) 'ideal' subject. This kind of institutional logic also results in teachers and students being overloaded, overworked, and without the time/possibility to process the impact this speed has on their lives and health. We present some of these stories, and we argue that this neoliberal rationality is in contrast with a feminist, careful and caring pedagogy.

Questions at the core of this paper are: how do we negotiate our feminist politics while being caught or implicated in institutional exclusions to do with financial constraints and normative assumptions? What are the expectations, tensions and potentialities of gender studies and other social-justice-oriented programmes existing within the University? How can we practice a politics of care in an uncaring institution such as contemporary (western) academia?

Aim of the paper is to further our understanding of the normative habits of the university in terms of speeds and time-management. In doing so, we wish to contribute to imagining and plotting new feminist strategies to (refuse to) live in the neoliberal university.

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Collective Responsibility in  
Peopled Institutions: Resisting  
the Commodification of  
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in  
Education and the Workplace  
*Sterre van der Pijl*

Social constructivist research on the evolution of international norms has widely studied the role of transnational advocacy in strengthening the international human rights regime. While it has mainly focused on norm entrepreneurship in cases of states' socialization with internationally recognized norms, cases of institutional socialization have not been much scrutinized so far. By undertaking a conjunction of social constructivist findings with the analytical framework of Madsen et al. (2018) on cases of resistance against international courts, this piece focuses on the constellation, strategies, tools and agency of gender justice advocates in their resistance against the misrecognition of the SGBV prohibition norm in the ICC's first case, against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo. My analysis identifies their central role in the evolution of this norm in ICL by tracing the stages, dynamics and effects of their resistance, which, as I argue, has fostered the ICC's institutional processes of learning and socialization with the norm's appropriate application. Although the Court had virtually failed to apply the norm in Lubanga, its responsible organs ultimately considered the critique directed against them and subsequently applied learned lessons on both institutional and legal levels of their operation. While the ICC's second Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda initiated relevant institutional changes with regard to the prosecution of SGBV, she also fostered legal implementation of those aspirations. What's more, the progressive prosecution of SGBV eventually reverberated with the judicial adjudication, which has in turn strengthened the legal status and content of the norm.

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Gendered and intersectional  
precarity in the marketised  
university

*Lena Wånggren and Krista  
Bonello*

Precarious working conditions are rising across sectors in the Global North, including in higher education. In the UK, around half of all academic staff are precariously employed, that is to say working on insecure hourly-paid, fixed-term, or ad-hoc contracts. While a generation ago, these contracts may have been part of a 'rite of passage' before permanency, the precarisation of work has become the defining feature of a majority of academic workers' lives. This paper, sharing seven years of collaborative feminist work, provides a snapshot of the experiences of a generation of teachers and researchers for whom insecurity and ill health is the norm. It demonstrates how contractual precarity invades all areas of life, threatening feminist knowledges and careers. Crucially, contractual precarity has specific intersectional gendered and racialised impacts, with women and/or people of colour more likely to be employed on such insecure contracts, and more acutely impacted. Combining employment statistics with qualitative data from interviews with precariously employed workers in the UK, the paper will share experiences of insecure work but also strategies of resistance, including community-building and trade union organising.

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29 September 11.00-12.30  
Utrecht University Science Park  
0.05

**Feminist agendas in non-feminist spaces**, Chair: Lucie Naude

Who's afraid of feminism and why?: Making a feminist difference in STEM institutions in India

*Sre Ratha*

Gender disparity continues to be embedded in STEM academia. As per data from the World Bank, in 107 of 114 economies, there are fewer female than male STEM graduates. Globally, 33% of STEM researchers are women. Comparatively, India fares better as 43% of India's STEM graduates are women. Despite such high statistics, gender inequality in Indian STEM academia is a grim reality. Moreover, increased representation of women in STEM academia has done little to change the "masculinist" institutional culture. Often this means that systemic challenges to women's participation and career growth in the institutions remain largely unchanged. While bureaucratic gender-based committees exist, making a feminist impact still remains a challenge in STEM institutions. In this paper, through detailed ethnographies among women in STEM academia in India, I seek to unpack challenges towards feminist consciousness raising within Indian STEM institutions. Predominantly seeking to answer why despite a staunch feminist consciousness, women hesitate to describe themselves as feminists within the institutions, I also pay attention to the ways women negotiate with the masculinist culture to lobby for gender-based concessions and policies. Borrowing inspiration from feminist critiques of individualism and radical feminist consciousness raising activities, I attempt to draw a framework to empower women in these institutions to make feminist interventions in policy and culture.

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The enemy is inside: Feminists of  
colour navigate the nonprofit  
industrial complex

*Manjeet Birk*

Adding to a growing field of literature in critical race studies in education, and gender studies, this presentation looks to understand cracks in feminist nonprofit organizations, specifically as they relate to services offered for racialized and Indigenous communities. Using data from 15 interviews with racialized and Indigenous activists with experience in mainstream nonprofit feminist organizations on unceded Coast Salish territory in the Greater Vancouver area, I compile the activists' experiences in a composite counterstory drawing upon critical race theory methodologies. This article examines the structural racism that defines experiences of systemic exclusion in feminist nonprofit organizations. Informed by critical race theory, composite counterstories shed light on activist experiences of race, racism and systemic whiteness. Beti, the protagonist of the counterstory, reveals the many structural barriers that exist within these organizations. This includes: tokenized use of racialized and Indigenous bodies to hold strategic positions maintaining "diversity" projects or fulfilling well-intentioned organizational policies only to come up against longstanding institutional barriers committed to racist and colonial white settler structures. This research indicates that these organizations had and continue to have a longstanding history of maintaining the nonprofit industrial complex.

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Endurance and advocacy:  
organizational and  
communication tactics employed  
by activists in Portuguese  
feminist institutions in their  
struggle to survive

*Camila Lamartine*

In order to survive, feminist institutions (formal and informal groups, collectives and/or associations), must overcome a number of obstacles, such as the need for volunteer work and balancing of institutional, care, and paid labor. Within the framework of the FEMglocal research project, which uses a situated knowledge approach to analyze, among other things, the history of glocal (global and local) feminist movements in Portugal, as well as the communication strategies central to their work, an investigation concerning the organizational and communication strategies used by Portuguese feminist institutions is currently in progress. Acknowledging national distinctive features, such as the late emergence of feminisms and the residual effects of a protracted dictatorship and conservatism, this study examines the organization and communication strategies employed by activists in feminists organizations to amplify their demands and agendas. In order to better understand internal work dynamics, external and internal communication strategies, the use of traditional media to disseminate activities and agendas, and the difficulties in handling paid work, volunteer work, caregiving, and reproductive work, we conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with members of feminist entities (formal and non-formal groups, collectives and associations). Through a content analysis of the conducted interviews, this article seeks to investigate the challenges faced by salaried and volunteer activists in advancing feminist agendas, as well as the possible implications of this low - or no-pay - work for the public perception and dissemination of national feminist agendas.

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29 September 11.00-12.30  
Utrecht University Science Park 114

**Leadership: how women navigate hierarchies/leadership**  
Chair: TBA

**Beyond boundaries: Women's resilience in STEM leadership Amidst precarity**  
*Greta Gober & Lotta Snickare*

In 2015 we've embarked on an action research project aimed at increasing the number of women in senior research positions at a large STEM faculty in Norway. As a part of the project, a number of women in various stages of their careers, participated (during 2016-2018) in activities aimed to not only improve their skills in writing articles and research applications, but also to get an opportunity to share experiences and research-based knowledge on the significance of gender in academia (Snickare, Elvin-Nowak, Gober, 2022; Holter, Snickare, Gober 2022; Snickare, Wahl, 2024). In-depth biographic-narrative interviews (Wengraf, 2001) with 12 women revealed that widespread precarity had greatly impacted these women's academic prospects, regardless of leadership position many of them assumed at the faculty. In 2024 we revisited some of these women to deepen our understanding of the impacts and implications widespread precarity has on women's academic lives. We propose to bring the results of our investigation into stream 2 on 'Making a feminist difference within institutions'. More specifically we aim to interrogate the potential for resistance and agency among these women in challenging and transforming the structures perpetuating gendered precarity in academia. By revisiting participants of the action research project after six years, we capture the nuances and complexities of their lived experience, facilitating a better understanding of the long-term impacts precarity has on individuals and their leadership abilities to transform institutions, and the broader academic community.

Leadership in precarious  
research organisations:  
Promoting diversity?  
*Irina V. Gewinner*

While there is a solid body of research and practical manuals concerning the role of leadership in promoting diversity in commercial organizations, the scope of knowledge on leadership in research/academic organizations is relatively scarce. Leadership in academia is a dynamic field due to its interdisciplinary nature, involving elements of education, management, psychology, sociology, and other fields. Professors as academic leaders, contrary to their counterparts in other economic branches, not only represent the middle management of research organizations, but also incorporate different roles simultaneously, such as researcher, teacher, manager, and innovator (Gewinner 2020). This role complexity leads to gaps in knowledge on how academic leaders act to foster diversity not only in their teams, in particular, but also in higher education institutions, in general. Currently, a centralized body of literature that integrates perspectives on ways of promoting diversity in academic context barely exists. Moreover, current research does not fully capture the experiences and perspectives of underrepresented groups in academia, such as women, minorities, and individuals from non-traditional backgrounds. This underrepresentation results in gaps in our understanding of the role of academic leadership in advancing diversity in research organizations. This study provides a comprehensive literature review since 2010 on the role of professors as academic leaders in advancing diversity in research/academic organizations. The main topic of the review is twofold: firstly, it analyses the conceptualizations of professors as academic leaders to understand to what extent diversity advancement plays a role in the agency of the latter. Secondly, it delves into the certain practices professors apply to promote and advance diversity in academic institutions. Overall, the role of professors in promoting diversity in research organizations is a multifaceted and critical aspect of fostering inclusivity. However, the study finds that in the literature, this issue is largely impacted by the gender of professors under consideration. Gender differences play a significant role in the context of promoting diversity in academic settings, since the experiences of male and female professors vary. Publications often address diversity advancement if female professors constitute the scope of investigations; studies focussing on male professors address this topic more rarely. As to the concrete practices applied to advance diversity, most studies concentrate on mentorship and representation, encouragement to balance public and private roles, and research collaborations.

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**Building Bridges for Gender  
Equality: The Role of NGOs in  
Strengthening  
Interdepartmental Coordination  
for Women's Empowerment in  
Pakistan**

*Angella Nalwanga and  
Muhammad Ali Awan*

This research was designed to explore how Khyber Pakhtunkhwa commission on the status of women (KPCSW) in Pakistan established their position to perform the roles given by its mandate and how Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) facilitated the commission for its effective functioning. This research is based on qualitative research methodology and data was collected in 2022 through in-depth and key informant interviews. The findings of this research reveal that the commission initially faced resistance from sister departments since public sector department were not sensitive to the gender and were unfamiliar with the developed made at structural level specifically in relation to relevant gender laws and policies. The study reveal that NGOs played pivotal role in enhancing the Commission's institutional capacity and fostering collaboration with diverse stakeholders. Through capacity-building initiatives and knowledge transfer, NGOs facilitated the Commission in fulfilling its mandate, enabling it to engage with academia, media, planning bodies, welfare agencies, and law enforcement. Resulting the Commission navigated a complex landscape to promote gender mainstreaming and sensitivity across various government entities. The developed capacities of the commission also facilitated them to perform their role at grass root level through establishing district committees and engaging with local communities. By shedding light on the transformative impact of NGO support, this research contributes to understanding effective strategies for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through intersectoral collaboration in developing countries.

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29 September 13.30-15.00  
Utrecht University Science Park 116

**Careers and community  
(Institutional collective strategies),**  
Chair: Irina Gewinner

**"Promoting Equality and Equity  
as Work" - A career training  
course for Gender Studies  
master students in Finland**  
*Aino-Maija Elonheimo &  
Hannareeta Seling*

In this paper, we discuss the importance of a career training course aimed for Gender Studies students interested in work promoting equality and equity. The course has been organized by the Gender Studies Network Hilma in Finland since 2008. The purpose of the course is to familiarize students with the equality/equity field and to empower them to find career paths within it. Even though the course is organized in an academic context, it has a hands-on approach. It partners with organizations that promote equality and equity, including the Council for Gender Equality and other authorities, NGOs, and equality and DEI consulting firms. During the course, students participate in short work projects in the organizations. They interview different professionals on their career paths. Gender Studies alumni advise students on managing their work lives. Students also participate in the Equality Days, an event providing a broad view on what occurs in the field currently. Based on students' feedback, the course has made a difference by bringing hope and confidence to its participants, who may feel discouraged by the precarious labor market, by offering examples of good work life experiences and different career paths. Moreover, by connecting with Gender Studies alumni, the students receive support on how not only to survive but to thrive in their future work life. In addition, we discuss how the course relates to the Finnish equality/equity field at-large, as we have recognized changes in the field and state feminism – a unique pattern in Nordic countries – during these years.

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## Teaching Leadership with Roma women in Academia and in the Community

*Laura Corradi*

The paper presents the experience of a small group of Roma students and teachers in the 'start up' of a Gypsy Summer School in 2018 with a majority of Roma women.

The program of the full-immersion Gypsy Summer School – open to Roma and pro-Roma people, with neither pre-requisite nor title bars – was ambitious: to leap forward and achieve some degrees of professionalization in local and non local activism, facilitating alliances, leadership and cooperating attitudes. Besides classes on Roma, Sinti, and other groups' history, culture, language, the program included workshops on communication, feminism, anti-gypsyism, how to defend yourself from hate speech, legal help, visits to the local Roma community, and an interesting movie/documentaries selection. All of this, with financial resources from my department – just enough - and 16 volunteer teachers recruited within the university and in the community.

The Gypsy Summer School was a residential experience and lasted two years: it came to a stop because of Covid pandemic. Recently we found a new name and space, choosing the form of a School of Leadership to Contrast Anti-ziganism, offering open seminars to the public. Critical aspects emerged (around issues of Lgbtqia\*, ethnicization and politics of belonging/exclusion vs alliances). Also un-resolved knots around differences and inequalities became visible both in the full-immersion learning spaces and with regard to some aspects of the relationship with academia.

After Covid lockdowns, and institutional acts of neglect, an extramural leadership training specifically geared to Roma women and girls started in the local community – nomadically moving from a kitchen to another, similarly to the tradition of 'consciousness raising' feminism in the '70. The results were impressive. Yet the proving ground of collectively relating with public administrations, health and education institutions, despite a detailed preparation, did not work. Results were at the individual level, with the commitment of a growing Roma feminist identity.

Which contradictions did we meet? Which types of tensions emerged in the full-immersion classes about different axis of privilege? Did a politics of 'inclusion' - whatever it means – take place? Or maybe something else, such as cooptation? What about the specific impact over the academic institution: was it a transformative experience? And how did we, as scholars and activists, elaborated our own change in terms of power relations?

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## Networks of Gender: Connecting PGRs Through Gender Research Day

*Kayden Schumacher*

In response to the isolating and precarious nature of academic research, a group of postgraduate research students initiated a "Networks of Gender: Connecting PGRs Through Gender Research Day." This grassroots event, devoid of financial compensation for speakers, prioritized creating a supportive space for collaboration. The gathering featured networking sessions, work-in-progress discussions, and a panel with established researchers, fostering idea exchange and collaboration.

"Networks of Gender" aimed to transcend conventional conferences, prioritizing inclusivity through word-of-mouth participant invitations. Despite a minimal budget for refreshments, the event successfully provided a platform for postgraduate researchers to establish meaningful connections and develop innovative ideas.

The thematic focus spanned various gender-related topics, including sexism, feminism, masculinities, transphobia, and more. Workshops addressed key research aspects such as ethics considerations, participant recruitment, creative methodologies, and dissemination strategies.

This initiative sought to redefine the conference experience, offering a holistic environment for postgraduate researchers to navigate academic challenges, build relationships, and contribute collectively to gender research advancement. "Networks of Gender" emerged as a testament to the power of community-driven initiatives in fostering a supportive and collaborative research culture.

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Careless Edging: An Account of  
Arrhythmia in Impact Spaces  
*Hanish Srinivasan*

I write this after having travelled 50 kilometres, worked for over 13 hours and spent much of my day in questioning turmoil. What follows is a response to work rather than an analysis. I am concerned with two primary and interconnected themes: care at work, complaint as a means. This paper interrogates feminist practice within institutions committed to 'large-scale transformation'. Departing from traditional paradigms, my study focuses on the cost of 'impact work,' which I believe comes with asymmetric gains and personal arrhythmia. Can feminist interventions acknowledge and redress precocity or is the success and health of such engagement rest on the vector of privilege and vector? (Ex: Grant organisations in the global north supporting NGOs based in the global south) Invoking Sara Ahmed's work, we must rethink our complaints as an instrument to probe institutional crevices and strategise feminist reformation. The path to reformation and improvement, even in the mundane, comes through complaint. In my paper, I argue that PPP or public private partnerships are characterised by the negligence of care, which is un-feminist. My hope is to pose a compelling challenge to the notion of feminist practices needn't only entail the application of theoretical framework, but, albeit unsettling, a shift towards honest and receptive efforts to become something akin to 'institutional killjoys'. I rather advocate for safe spaces where mutual complaints are expressed and listened to. Moving beyond removed contexts, I also zoom out to interrogate the labour economy within international feminist organisations, particularly those which offer 'high-impact', 'work-from-home' opportunities. I critique the dissonance between organisational goals and work conditions, to bring to sharp relief the challenges individuals face to meet institutional demands. With this presentation, I hope to evoke the spirit of complaint as a testament to making feminist work possible, where precarity isn't simply inevitable but is something that can be managed.

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# STREAM 3: UNEQUAL POWER RELATIONS WITHIN GENDER STUDIES

Coordinators: Angeliki Sifaki,  
Andromachi Koutsoulenti, Liz  
Ablett, Maria do Mar Pereira  
and Maria Elena Indelicato

27 September 12:30-14:00  
Vergaderlokaal Colour Kitchen

## Difficult (but necessary) Feminist Conversations: Addressing unequal power relations within Gender Studies

*Dr Liz Ablett, Prof Maria do Mar  
Pereira, Dr Angeliki Sifaki, Dr  
Maria Elena Indelicato*

This presentation explores 'difficult conversations' in feminist theory as an integral part of social and theoretical transformations. Drawing on the edited collection *Difficult Conversations: A feminist dialogue* and focusing on intersectionality within feminist theory, it critically addresses questions of power and difference as a central feminist concern. It addresses ethical, political, social, and emotional dilemmas while negotiating difficult conversations, particularly in terms of sexuality, class, 'race', ethnicity and cross-identification between the researcher and researched. Topics covered include challenging cultural relativism; queer marginalisation; research and affect; and feminism and the digital realm. The presentation also explores the experience of being LGBTQ in higher education through the lens of an incident of homophobic harassment. It considers the implications of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives for queer staff in HE environments and examines queer life within the academy.

28 September 9.00-10.30  
Utrecht University Science Park 0.11

**Trajectories of disobedience:  
complicity and safety in the  
aftermath of complaining about  
abuse in academia**, Chair: Maria  
Elena Indelicato

After disobedience, can safety  
be the norm? Lessons from my  
academic experiences

*Sara Araújo*

My relevant academic experience began when I was 24 with long research periods in Mozambique to study legal pluralism. More than a decade later, I proceeded studying legal pluralism in East-Timor. One of the main debates in that academic field is focused on the violence against women that is allegedly legitimized by customary law. This means that while western academic women face naturalized sexism in their own workplaces, they try to teach women all over the world what violence looks like. Being critical of the Eurocentric feminist work that approaches women's rights through western questions, hierarchies and concepts, I always refused universalist approaches, though I was never sure how to avoid relativism. When in 2023 I was forced to face the trauma that results from decades of naturalized violence in the academy, I revisited all my experiences and found important lessons in the margins of my work. In this presentation I will not discuss processes of complaint or how to punish abusers. I will focus on my own experience as a woman in the academy – what I lived and what I learned – and discuss what safety looks like from where I stand today. The ethnographic work I produced is not only in the countless notebook pages, but in my personal processes of unlearning and relearning about myself and my condition as a woman. When I see myself and the culture in which I was raised through the lenses of the women from Mozambique or East-Timor, I do not see freedom or safety, I see individualism, delusion and silence. By exposing my experiences of violence to unfamiliar terms of reference, I try to denaturalize my certainties, expand political imagination and rethink what safety looks like in the academy.

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Can a feminist academy exist?  
Reflections between reality and  
utopia  
*Sara Cagliero*

As many feminists have pointed out, spaces of scientific production emerged and have remained as phallogocentric (Braidotti, 2004) and elitist, excluding different subjectivities from the possibility of being knowing subjects. Some have also invited us to do science from the “belly of the monster” (Haraway, 1991). But have we achieved this? Have we managed to imbue the academy with feminist values, such as care? The following contribution is the result of experiential knowledge of – and reflection on – the power dynamics present in feminist research spaces in the Catalan context, acquired firsthand in the last 10 years. Based on every day, individual and collective knowledge, our aim is to debate academic feminist spaces’ real ability/desire to interrupt or transform current university spaces. Critical reflections will then be presented on what is happening in day-to-day practices in university research groups and specifically, feminist ones, how care “horizontality and equality” is (not) considered in the collective spaces of scientific production, and our (in)ability to work in a healthy, conscious and coherent way in a space where power relations, violence and abuse of all kinds are the order of the day. Likewise, we intend to raise the question of whether these spaces end up operating as spaces of counterhegemonic knowledge production or, on the contrary, reproduce dynamics of inequality in research. This contribution is not intended as just a cry of condemnation or a sterile complaint. It is presented as a wake-up call, a collectivization of discomfort that allows us to reflect and think together about collective transformative strategies.

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28 September 13.30-15.00  
Utrecht University Science Park 116

**Liberation for whom?: (in) justice, epistemic exclusions and marginality in feminisms and critical scholarship**, Chair: Silvia Protino

Silence: the first element to be addressed in abusive experiences in gender studies

*Paula Hollstein*

Stories of abuse are often ignored, simplified, or redefined (McLane, 1996:109). This phenomenon occurs not only through the actions of archetypal perpetrators but also through unexpected individuals: leftist activists, mentors, and even feminist scholars in academia. In this case, the redescrptions of abuse are led by authorities in the field of liberation and anti-oppression narratives. For this reason, these groups might be even more effective in suppressing the voices of less powerful people. Victims, precarious workers, and students hold an odd story, one that is really difficult to tell. This is the main challenge of this abuse. A sort of internalized censorship constitutes a fundamental aspect of the abusive encounter. This silence is usually established through refined methods, such as reshaping or revalorizing the abusive experience. The openness for meaningful expression is foreclosed, as the reputation of abusers contradicts the reality of victims. To better understand the presence of silence around abuse, it is essential to take a step back and analyse what has been considered the 'preconditions for speaking'. According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, speaking can only take place within an 'open experience' or 'empty space' (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 196). This idea suggests that the speaker might need a certain level of unguarded disposition, from which some level of fluidity or spontaneity can emerge. Support and acknowledgment, rather than the presence of punitive measures, are essential for them to speak up. It is real openness and trust, the necessary preconditions to address abuse in the context of our own communities.

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Between whispers and protocol:  
collective accountability among  
gender studies scholars

*Pilar d'Alò and Heather Proctor*

Power relations, Foucault teaches us, are neither static nor universal, but unfold contingently in different situations. In this sense, while we can trace structuring power dynamics that define our experiences, power relations play out in unique ways each time. This is furthermore complicated by the intersection of gender, sexuality, class, race, legal status, religion, etc., as different axes of power inequality. Higher Education institutions have put in place several mechanisms to address these problems, but these initiatives have often resulted in tokenistic, performative, and oversimplified approaches to addressing inequalities. As universities are usually relieved of their structural complicities, the people committed to these issues are often left to solve complex situations without a working framework to aid them. Against the idea of a standardised experience or solution, this paper draws upon the Critical Race Theory method of counter-storytelling to propose three composite testimonials in and around the institutional fields of gender studies, anti-racism, and decoloniality. Each vignette highlights how power relations are embodied and managed in different settings, pointing to how harm, resistance, and disruption never look the same. Aside from empirical or theoretical intentions, the paper highlights the importance of understanding our own histories, as each of our own social lives carries differential potential for enacting as well as suffering harm. The result of these stories combined is the importance of crafting forms of accountability (to which we will give an example) that encourage caring forms of collective reflection and, if needed, reparative action.

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Working in/on Gender Studies as an  
“Outsider Within”: A Transfeminist  
Perspective  
*Luana Pesarini*

The conference paper explores how transfeminist perspectives remain marginalized within gender studies and feminist politics, inhabiting the status of an “outsider within.” By mobilizing Patricia Hill Collins' analytical tool, I present transfeminist thinking as a perspective situated in a liminal space between unequal power relations. I argue that transfeminism's status as an “outsider within” stems from the idea that a) trans studies serve as a possible add-on to gender studies, and b) trans studies is the ‘lesser sibling’ of queer studies. Thus, while the former frames trans studies as only contributing to trans-specific issues, the latter marks the preference in gender studies to draw on queer studies rather than transfeminist thought. This marginalized status of transfeminist thought fosters conditions of gatekeeping as well as unequal labor conditions, career opportunities, and power relations in academia. After presenting transfeminist thought as centered around the intersections of sexist, transphobic, and racist oppression and examining its key themes, I highlight how they shape and shift core concepts of gender studies and feminist politics. By doing so, I hope to contribute to undoing transfeminism's status as an “outsider within” gender studies while upholding a productive tension.

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28 September 13.30-15.00  
Utrecht University Science Park 0.05

**Within and beyond academic precarity: Doing feminist and LGBTI+ research in an era of the far right and in contexts of deepening neoliberalism**, Chair: Maria do Mar Pereira

## What is a University?

*Mia Liinason*

This presentation traces some of the changes and continuities that characterize the ongoing institutionalization of gender studies into the university. Starting from a set of exemplary scenes of feminist academic work, I recognize three broader, intersecting, challenges for feminist and lgbti+ research, as intellectual activity, institutional work, and as subjective location, one's academic home. I highlight how far-right policies, deepened modes of neoliberalization, and acts of violence have placed gender studies at a crossroad, in between a growing popularity of the far-right, and the further advancement of neoliberalism. In this context, the very vulnerability of gender studies is frequently used to justify a silencing of critical positions and voices. These multiple vulnerabilities - from the entangled vulnerabilities imposed on researchers, to the threats and institutional constraints encountered by gender studies as a field - brings attention to academic precarity as a condition which not only concerns individual scholars, but more broadly relates to the university as an institution of knowledge production. To this end, I draw on existing debates about the university as a space for collective and critical intellectual thinking and acting (Connell 2022; Collins 2012), for opening up a discussion about concrete-utopian (Muñoz 2009) imaginations of other universities, collaborations, and intellectual futures, that can change the world.

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The vicious circle of being  
caught between fascist border  
regimes and academic precarity:  
Strategic outsideness and  
continuous vulnerabilities  
*Sama Khosravi Ooryad*

In late 2020, after I graduated from Gender Studies at Utrecht University, I was stuck in the Netherlands due to border closures and my precarious passport, and the Dutch discriminatory system that refused my extension application. I later theorized my experience of exclusion and precarity during my studies and within the Dutch system as that of an strategic outsider within toxic substructures (Khosravi Ooryad 2023). Almost four years ahead, I have continued to resist border regimes and to build solidarity networks with feminist allies. In this panel discussion, I aim to discuss my continuous current complex and vulnerable situation as a feminist socialist of color from Iran and my positionality as an exile academic activist. Building on debates on keeping safe while doing research on extremism and far-right (Conway 2021), I aim to show —through my own experience as a researcher of the far-right & manosphere from Iran—the entangled intersectional issues that are imposed on researchers in these fields that go beyond mere topic of their research, with added layers of vulnerability and unsafety due to precarious passports, temporary job contracts and visas. Such vicious circle of entangled academic precarity, I argue, are not only results of systematic inequalities within increasing neoliberal and right-wing governments across Europe, but also signals the globalization of these issues and its devastating and frustrating impact on the most marginalized amongst us. Therefore, in this panel discussion, I take a chance to call my feminist antifascist allies towards more sustained solidarities and support beyond mere critique of the system, and to build more affective and supportive ways of togetherness and keeping safe in an increasingly dysfunctional and necropolitical global system.

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**Just Feminisms: Tackling the  
Tension between Penal  
Abolitionism and Carceral  
Favouritism**  
*Ece Canli*

In our age of mass incarceration, expanding police surveillance and carceral capitalism (Davis, 2003; Wang 2018) which disproportionately impact marginalised communities including women, juveniles and LGBTQI+ individuals, an unresolved tension and contention between different opinions regarding justice-making keep growing, especially when it comes to addressing gender- and sexual-based violence. While some feminists – namely, “carceral feminists” (Bernstein 2007; Richie 2012) – favour punitive measures and imprisonment, particularly for harms such as sexual offence, domestic violence, hate crimes, and child abuse, others – namely, “abolition feminists” (Thuma 2019; Levine and Meiners 2020; Davis et al. 2022) – call a definite end to confinement, criminalisation, and all aspects of the criminal justice system by advocating for a justice paradigm rooted in transformation, accountability, and healing rather than punishment and retribution. Instead of reading the issue through the multifaceted lens of strategies and fostering dialogue, these two different worldviews consider each other erroneous, harmful and even inferior, and risk creating a political hierarchy within feminist activism. In the meantime, harmful behaviour and unequal power relations also take place in activist groups, including those dealing with penal abolitionism and transformative justice (Dixon and Piepzna-Samarasinha 2020; Kaba 2021). Looking critically both at these disputes and impasses rendered as binary oppositions, and at specific cases/incidents/examples coming from different geographies and contexts, this presentation aims to offer a comparative analysis of penal abolitionism and carceral favouritism to speculate about the possible sustainable harm-reducing approaches in the context of gender and sexual violence.

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Transformative approaches to  
emotional workplace abuse  
(EWA) in feminist and queer  
feminist academic spaces

*Elina Penttinen*

In this paper, we address the issue of emotional workplace abuse (EWA) within feminist and queer feminist academic spaces and propose transformative approaches to address workplace violence, building on a victim-centered approach (Sanderson 2021) and drawing on transformative justice models to addressing violence (Davis et al 2022; Levine and Meiners 2020; Russo 2019; Whynacht 2021). This paper is based on Penttinen Research on emotional workplace abuse (Penttinen, Jyrkinen, Wide 2019) including feminist activist spaces (Penttinen 2023) that focus on the experiences of EWA and challenges in naming and identifying abuse within institutions. This research is brought into conversation with Kouri-Towe's research on transformative approaches to education (forthcoming) and her work on trigger warnings (2022). In this paper we outline the difficulties for targets to disclose the abuse specifically in feminist and queer feminist academic spaces, which thus lead to self-silencing and often prolongs enduring the abuse. These include the incapacity of institutions of higher education to respond to workplace abuse effectively; cultures of complicity within feminist academic spaces; the blurring of the boundaries between personal/professional/political within feminist communities; and the impact of asymmetrical concerns over the risks for feminist/queer feminist abusers if cases go public. Developing transformative approaches to EWA, we envision possibilities beyond mediation or complaint, which tend to favor and protect the abuser rather than the victim. For instance, how to build better models of accountability and transparency to disrupt the structures that enable abuse in the first place. We discuss how building a culture that normalizes addressing how power is wielded at an institutional and individual level can demystify abusive dynamics and remove the opacity that hides abusive behaviour. Likewise, we propose that making clearer the pathways to accountability and outcomes can help colleagues and peers respond to situations of abuse as bystanders or witnesses.

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# STREAM 4: UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN CHALLENGES, THREATS, AND PERSONAL COSTS PAID BY FEMINIST AND QUEER ACTIVISTS

Coordinators: Helen  
Aadnesgaard, Maryna  
Shevtsova and Åsa Ekvall

27 September 14.30-16.00  
Christinazaal

**Resistance and resilience in  
conservative societies, Chair: TBA**

**Resilience and Activism Among  
Queer Women in Pakistan**  
*Natasha Gilani*

In Pakistan's conservative Islamic context, queer women face unique challenges. This study delves into their lived experiences, focusing on their covert strategies for resistance and resilience while navigating multiple intersecting identities. Given the societal compulsion to remain closeted, these strategies are crucial for their survival and self-expression. The research is anchored in queer theory and intersectionality, providing a framework to analyse the interplay between sexual orientation, cultural norms, and religious beliefs. This multidisciplinary approach is enriched by insights from South Asian studies and Islamic studies, contextualising the specific societal backdrop of Pakistan. Employing qualitative methods, the study involves in-depth interviews with queer women across various regions of Pakistan. These narratives are examined through thematic coding, unveiling common and distinct tactics of resistance, such as coded language, symbolic gestures, and discreet community involvement. The findings reveal the nuanced ways in which these women assert their identities and foster solidarity within a restrictive societal framework. This research aims to contribute significantly to the understanding of queer identities in non-Western, conservative Islamic societies. It highlights the often-overlooked experiences of queer women in Pakistan, challenging conventional notions of activism in conservative settings. By bringing these experiences into academic discourse, the study offers vital insights for policy development and supports advocacy efforts for queer communities in similar cultural contexts. The study's implications extend beyond academic scholarship, providing a foundation for informed policy-making and community support initiatives, thereby advocating for a more inclusive and understanding society.

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Raising voices against sexual  
violence: Obstacles to informal  
feminist activism in the post-  
Yugoslav space

*Laura Meier*

This empirical paper investigates informal collectives dedicated to addressing sexual violence in the post-Yugoslav space inscribed in a long tradition of feminist activism in this region. The activities of these informal collectives, which range from organizing reading circles to larger protests, have been an integral part of the fight against sexual violence in the region since 2019. Moreover, it can be understood as a continuation of a global tendency of feminist resistance to sexual violence in recent years. The main aim of the empirical paper is to examine the risks and obstacles the informal collectives face and to elicit the strategies they use to overcome these challenges. The paper draws on my doctoral research project using a multi-site qualitative ethnographic research approach. Specifically, the paper is based on 14 semi-structured in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations conducted during my fieldwork with members of four informal collectives in Belgrade (SRB), Sarajevo (BiH), Zagreb (HRV) and Pristina (KOS). My research is guided by the constructivist grounded theory method (Charmaz 2014) and feminist methodologies. The empirical results emerge from a context marked by the professionalisation of feminist activism (e.g., Bias 2019, Danaj 2018, Irvine 2018), shrinking spaces for activism, and increasing risks for activists (e.g., Toepler, Zimmer, Fröhlich und Obuch 2020), due in part to a backlash against women's and LGBTQ+ rights (e.g., Kuhar and Paternotte 2017). In this way, the paper intends to contribute to the broader discussion about risks, dangers, and the price feminist activists pay in their pursuit of social change.

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Forms of women's activism and  
political participation in Belarus:  
violence, survival and solidarity  
*Alena Aharelysheva*

Belarusian Revolution 2020 is known as the "Revolution with the Women's Face." Women occupied all public spaces, marching for freedom against dictatorship and torture, demanding the release of political prisoners and fair elections. Although women were the driving force of the revolution, their role at the latter stage was diminished, and women became invisible again, volunteering and providing support on the ground. To better understand the needs and concerns of women involved in protesting against the political regime, I conducted Quantitative online surveys in September-October 2020 (906 female respondents) and June 2022 (1126 female respondents). The studies contained questions about the hardships women activists face, changes in their workload, and mental and emotional state. In other words, I wanted to know how their participation in the transformation processes manifested and how much time it took them to be active in bringing about political and social change. The questionnaire was disseminated via Telegram channels, covering women's protests and social networks. In the presentation, I will discuss what has changed in two years and the challenges female activists are facing now.

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Intersectional Risks and Building  
Solidarity in Berlin's Feminist  
Activism

*Dilara Hadroviç*

This ethnographic research aims to present intersectional risks taken by different refugee and migrant actors in diverse feminist activist settings in Berlin. I have been part of Berlin's activist scene for two years, starting this research with the question of "How affective relations are creating urban infrastructures for refugee, migrant and asylum seeker women and queer persons in Berlin". The paper builds on personal accounts, semi-structured interviews and active participation. Embedded in different fields, International Women\* Space and its extensive network, the research delves into the dangers of being visible and taking action in the public and urban space and how it requires affective labour and infrastructures. The concepts such as urban mobility and solidarity networks are used to discuss how people self-organise and share the information they bring from their own social and cultural contexts, making the emergent movement more inclusive and appealing to different and complex geographies, and creating a strong community. This paper will explore how the community created based on shared meanings help navigate the risks and dangers brought about by queer feminist activism and its occupation of public space.

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## Activism Under Fire: Navigating Risks and Building Solidarity

*Khushboo Jain*

This paper delves into the harrowing realities faced by activists, as exemplified by the kidnapping attempt on a counsellor from TARA[1], a gender rights organisation in India. This incident, driven by vengeful motives due to the organisation's refusal to surrender survivors of violence to perpetrators, sheds light on the systemic failures and inherent risks in activism. TARA's ongoing struggle against threats and attacks, compounded by police apathy and societal indifference, is not an isolated incident but rather a current challenge underscoring the urgent need for collective action and solidarity. The paper explores the challenges faced by the organisation and the strategies it has employed to compel the state system to respond. Furthermore, it highlights the formation of a Solidarity group comprising 35+ organisations and various individuals, currently working collectively towards a multi-pronged approach, including sectoral responses to violence, public advocacy, and the channelling of narratives through media and the arts. The strategies already in motion encompass assessing frontline workers' needs, mobilising youth groups and media to amplify marginalised voices, and advocating for strengthened collectives to protect field staff and advance social justice.

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Sustainable activism: Cultures of care and burnout within professionalised feminist activism

*Sophia Marthine Kleist Karlson*

Within feminist activism, a collective sense of urgency can add to a culture of giving ever more of oneself to the cause, while disregarding activists' needs for seemingly time-wasting care practices. Such "Martyr-syndrome" (Gorski, 2015) puts activists at risk of burnout and creates unsustainable feminist movements. Following a feminist ethics of care, the focus of this study is care practices between activists, rather than activist burnout. Such care practices are explored through fieldwork at a museum of gender and sexuality with roots in the feminist movement of the 1970's. Self-declared activists working at the museum are invited to explore their lived experiences of receiving a "micro-affirmation" through the method of micro-phenomenology (Petitmengin, 2006; Rowe, 2008). Through semi-structured interviews, activists further reflect on the museum's work environment, as well as on their approach to activism within and outside the now quite professionalised museum. This paper will present the findings resulting from the data analysis as well as the museum's perceptions of them.

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Writing About Sexual  
Misconduct In Academia:  
Stories, Silences And Solidarity  
*Erin Pritchard*

Connecting to professionalisation of activism, this presentation will focus on writing about sexual misconduct in academia: stories, silences and solidarity. According to Tutchell and Edmonds (2020), sexual abuse is a serious problem in academia. As a result, myself and another academic, both victims of sexual misconduct in academia, decided to edit a book with the aim to explore what we can learn from cases of sexual misconduct experienced in the everyday spaces of academia. In 2023, *Sexual Misconduct in Academia: Informing an ethics of care in Higher Education* was published. Each of the chapters offered not only opportunities for conversation and reflection, but addressed and suggested what responses to academic sexual misconduct could and should involve. However, shortly after publication it was taken down after a professor felt he was being referred to in one of the chapters, and threatened the authors with legal actions in the press. The authors were also warned to not speak out. The aim of this paper is to explore how structures silence victims, whilst supporting perpetrators, making it difficult to be an activist against sexual misconduct within academia.

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## Travelling theory and women's movements: Imagining Europe

*Demet Gülçiçek*

This presentation will introduce the main arguments of my recent book that unpacks the imaginations of Europe in demanding women's rights. I analyse how discourses on women's rights can be negotiated during its travel and how it articulates to the local power dynamics, inspired by feminist travelling theory and by politics of location discussions. Focusing on a women's rights magazine published in the early 20th century Istanbul, I analyse the production of Occidentalism, to understand the complex and often contradictory imaginations of Europe by a self-defined 'non-European' context. In other words, the presentation is interested in discussing how 'Other' positions can be inhabited by the 'Self' and in unpacking sexual and normative dimensions of demanding women's rights. Although paying attention to the importance of local power dynamics, the presentation will not focus on a descriptive context yet will discuss how to theoretically and methodologically analyse risks, dangers and prices paid in feminist movements.

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The in-betweenness of feminist  
anti-colonial ethnography in  
Palestine and self- reflexivity  
*Manal Shqair*

I am currently undertaking an activist PhD research in which I examine the role of Palestinian semi-nomadic women in Masafer Yatta, West Bank in resisting an interlocking settler colonialism with patriarchy and capitalism. My experience of conducting ethnographic work to produce anti-colonial feminist knowledge in Masafer Yatta situates me in a unique in-between space in relation to the female participants in the study. The in-betweenness of my positionality and the knowledge produced lies in the blurred line between my identification as an activist and a researcher through joining women in confrontational, direct, non-violent acts of resistance to Israeli violence during my stay in the area to gather data. In the proposed paper, I wish to draw on how my in-between positionality yields knowledge that is both insightful and dangerous. It is insightful in the sense that it is experimental produced through my first-hand involvement in anti-colonial resistance beyond theoretical thought. The danger of such knowledge lies in the fact that it has the potential of silencing the participants' voices by granting me an authoritative voice and legitimacy through an insider lens. That said, I also intend to touch on how, through self-reflexivity, I embrace the discomforts- rather than the comforts- of my familiarity and insider position to maintain a more reciprocal relationship of meaning-making with the participants. By doing so I align with the principles of PAR to produce transformative knowledge that challenges mainstream narration of imagined and enacted spaces of female agencies, particularly concerning the Palestinian context.

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29 September 11.00-12.30  
Utrecht University Science Park 0.02

**Narrative and discursive  
perspectives on anti-gender  
politics in Turkey: experiences of  
activists and NGOs, Chair: Sevcan  
Tiftik**

**Turkey's NGOs' Struggle  
Against the Anti-Gender  
Narratives that Affect Our Lives**  
*Sevcan Tiftik*

Today, in Turkey, many aggressive practices and actions target the lives and journeys of individuals and institutions that struggle for gender equality, including targeting, violence, deprivation of rights, exclusion, stigmatisation, discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, criminalization, rights violations, hate crimes, and hate speech. In this paper, I focus on the historical background of the political moves to narrow the civil space in Turkey since 2015 and how these narratives affect civil society working in this field. Through in-depth interviews with 16 interviewees from 12 civil society organisations working in the fields of gender, LGBTI+, women, HIV, peace, neurodiversity, memory, and sexual violence, I analyse a report titled 'Combating Anti-Gender Narratives: Experiences of Civil Society Organizations and Activists'; which is about to be published by DEMOS Research Association. In this study, I aim to make visible how NGOs construct gender narratives, how they struggle against negative narratives, the tools they use in their struggle, coping strategies, solidarity opportunities, and institutional experiences. All this is achieved by listening to the individual and institutional identity and journey stories told by the interviewees. In this way, I show the impact of these narratives on our highly fragile lives by revealing their potential to both empower and demotivate subjects who have rights.

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## Unveiling Agency: Narrative Strategies of Queer and Feminist Activists

*Elif Balci*

In Turkey's complex socio-political landscape, I want to delve into the resilient narratives crafted by queer and feminist activists as they confront anti-gender, xenophobic, and racist discourses rooted in gendered and colonial power dynamics. Employing a qualitative approach, I drew upon interviews conducted with 25 individuals (16 of them representing NGOs) engaged in civic activities, as part of the research project titled 'Combating Anti-Gender Narratives: Experiences of Civil Society Organizations and Activists' led by the DEMOS Research Association. I aim to explore how experiences of migration, language acquisition, and community engagement contribute to the cultivation of resilience and hope, underscoring the significance of diverse narratives within collective struggles. Particularly, I examine the impact of anti-gender and colonial forces—including orientalist, xenophobic, and racist narratives—on individuals' narrative construction and self-perception. Rather than solely highlighting the adverse effects of existing power dynamics, I seek to understand how queer, feminist, and racialized people assert agency in crafting their own narratives, examining how these narratives evolve based on both audience and context. By examining narratives that encompass not only victimisation but also resistance, anger, and hope, I underscore the complexity of narrative formation and its varied emotional and collective impacts.

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Anti-LGBT Movement in Turkey:  
Big Family Meetings  
*Soner Cem Gür*

Anti-gender and anti-LGBTQIA+ movements have been rising worldwide in the last decade, and Turkey is no exception, with a growing anti-gender movement and state policies that limit access to or violate a wide spectrum of human rights for women and LGBTQIA+ individuals. In September 2022, a platform called Union in Idea and Struggle organised a series of events named Big Family Meeting(s) with the slogan "Say No to LGBT Imposition" in nine cities of Turkey, including the largest cities such as İstanbul and Ankara. First, I situate the event in the context of Turkey by summarising the policies against LGBTQIA+ visibility and the violation of human rights regarding LGBTQIA+ individuals and associations in Turkey. Then, by analysing the YouTube video of the İstanbul meeting and the platform's website, I identify the major discursive strategies and the accompanying moral emotions of the Big Family Meeting, including efforts to avoid hate-speech charges, the victimhood frame, focus on children, and the (anti)imperialism link. By analysing the movement's actors and the event's aftermath, I aim to show how the movement and the government cooperate in working towards an anti-LGBTQIA+ ideal.

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Making a difference, but at what cost? Funding regimes and precarity among young menstrual health activists in the UK and Uganda

*Jennifer Moore*

This paper explores the experiences of young activists who are employed by, or volunteer for, a small, multinational charity focused on menstrual health and empowerment in both the UK and Uganda. Drawing on multi-sited anthropological fieldwork, I take seriously the institutional constraints of the development sector and its associated funding regimes, analysing how these constraints perpetuate precarious working conditions. My ethnographic research in the north of England and Uganda gives texture to the lives of young activists who work towards menstrual equity under these funding regimes, exploring their experiences of precarious labour, and their resultant frustrations, satisfactions, contestations, and imaginings of a future. I will demonstrate how funder requirements that increasingly ask small organisations to 'do more with less' are at risk of perpetuating the very kind of marginalisation they ostensibly seek to overcome; a marginalisation experienced particularly keenly by young activists in Uganda. This research is of significance for both scholars and practitioners within the international development community, as well as those concerned with feminist activism more broadly.

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## Unheard and Unseen- Vulnerabilities And Risks among WHRDs in India

*Sweta Dash, Surekha Garimella  
and Nandita Shiva*

In 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted a landmark resolution on the protection of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) where it acknowledged them as “women of all ages who engage in the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and all people who engage in the defence of the rights of women and gender equality...” In India, WHRDs who work with working women play a very essential role in supporting the myriad issues that working women face in all aspects of their lives. The experiences and distress that working women face is never limited to just their ‘working’ aspects but also permeates into their everyday realities and access to the basic human rights. Especially in dealing with health and empowerment of working women, WHRDs themselves are subjected to both secondary trauma since this often involves re-living similar experiences that they might have been subjected to in their own lives, as well as primary trauma with threats from perpetrators for supporting the survivors/victims. What then happens to these WHRDs in terms of their mental health is seldom accounted for. While global bodies like the United Nations or coalitions like The Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) do provide some guidelines for supporting WHRDs, and sometimes even funding support, it is hardly ever reflected on the ground and is never legally-binding. Donors do not account for mental health support of WHRDs, and practitioners of mental health support are not equipped with adequate training on the intersectional forms of systemic violence and trauma. Our paper will be a dialogical and reflective writing based on conversation with and between WHRDs. In doing so, we hope to interrogate what forms of vulnerabilities they face, how, and why. We shall situate this within the discourse of both gender and human rights defence to explore how women’s issues are always already interconnected with gender and work.

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**Cruel Activism: Precarity and  
Affect of Chinese Feminist and  
LGBT NGO Activist Workers**  
*Stephanie Yingyi Wang*

Using labour and affect as analytic categories, this paper goes beyond a western-centric and state-centred framework of understanding Chinese feminist and LGBT rights NGO activism. It theorises NGO work as an emerging form of precarious labour in two ways: first, NGO work is contingent upon hierarchical global funding politics and limited-term labour contracts due to shifting funder orientation and is constrained by state governance; second, NGO work centres the reproduction of human relations and consists of a series of reproductive labour including mental, emotional, communicative, and caring labour that is devalued in the current neoliberal market matrix. At the same time, this paper establishes the connection between precarity as an unstable labour condition NGO activist workers experience, and the ontological condition of precariousness that manifests in their feelings and affect. It suggests that the care and solidarity between activist workers and their colleagues, donors and beneficiaries are shaped by their intersectional identities undergirded by the multiple unequal relations between the transnational and the local, the urban and the rural, and the institutional and internal politics, and can be easily compromised by affective and material constraints. It argues that the contradictory affect of hope is precisely how Chinese feminist and LGBT rights NGO activist workers are exploited as the feelings that fuel the resistance can also serve to make invisible and erase the workers' emotional labour and legitimise power inequalities and disputes in NGO work.

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# STREAM 5: PRECARITY OF PAID/UNPAID CARE WORK

Coordinators: Guanqin He,  
Eva Schömer, Ece Canli  
and Melpomeni Paida

27 September 14.30-16.00  
Vergaderlokaal

**Gendered Labor in Global Crises:  
Insights from the Pandemic and  
Beyond**, Chair: Guanqin He

Unpaid Care Work during the  
Pandemic: Reflections from  
Kerala, India  
*Niyathi R. Krishna*

In this article, I highlight the facets of gender disparities in care work and emotional labour within dual earning households that have aggravated during the Covid-19 pandemic. Qualitative Online Survey and In-Depth interviews carried out among 50 heterosexual working parents in Kerala, India, in the post pandemic period indicate that working mothers faced time poverty and additional work burden during the lockdown period, whilst they tussled between paid work from home (WFH) and care works at home, as external support mechanisms were suspended during the crisis. The findings illustrate that the disparities in division of labour are immense associated with more feminized labour such as cooking and child care responsibilities and the spouses normalise them. Highlighting the disparity in care work estimation by the spouses, I argue that the glorification and magnification of voluntary involvement of men in care work further problematize the dichotomy. I construe that the egalitarian gender perspectives expressed by the respondents are premised on the concept of gender equality as something to be achieved outside the family, and not within. Apart from the emotional labour and bondage associated with care work, women—even, without enthusiastic choice—deliberately take up cooking and child rearing to find work-life balance. Here, I illustrate how the socio-cultural backlash prevalent to working wives and mothers compel them to over-compensate femininity and motherliness of a domesticated housewife, through this ‘imposed volunteering’ of care work, especially with rearing of children.

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**Navigating Crisis: Unraveling  
Dynamics in Migrant Domestic  
and Care Work Amidst  
Pandemic Challenges in Turkey**  
*Ulaş Sunata and Umut Beşpınar*

This study aims to explore the multifaceted effects of the pandemic on migrant domestic and care workers, considering the dimensions of (i) space/migration, (ii) gender, and (iii) class. The research encompasses 98 interviews conducted with migrant women from 14 different countries, including the Philippines, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, and Syria, employed in the Turkish domestic labor market. The interviews took place in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Konya. Recent years in Turkey have witnessed significant economic crises, arising not only from the consequences of the Corona pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war but also from a dramatic depreciation of the Turkish Lira and high inflation. The enduring impacts of these crises have disrupted various aspects of the daily lives of middle-class families, particularly their struggles with work-life balance, which extends to the negotiation and conflict areas inherent in the employment of migrant domestic workers. A key finding of the study is that the pandemic crisis, intensified by the domestic space, coupled with other recent crises, has led to differentiation within both middle-class structures and the negotiation and conflict areas between employers and workers in the domain of domestic and care labor. The study reveals that vulnerable groups become further marginalized in the intersectionality of migration, gender, and class during times of crisis, particularly in the context of the pandemic. The significance of this study lies in its elucidation of an intertwined scheme of strategies among the three primary actors—migrant workers, employers, and intermediaries/agencies—under increasingly uncertain circumstances, shedding light on the complex dynamics that unfold during crises and contributing valuable insights to our understanding of the intricate relationships within the negotiation and conflict areas of the domestic and care labor sector in Turkey. This study is based on the project called “Post-Pandemic Migration Experiences, Work-Home Dynamics, and Domestic Relations: The Case of Migrant Domestic Workers” (TUBITAK 121K295).

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28 September 9.00-10.30  
Utrecht University Science Park 114

**Cross-Cultural Perspectives on  
Women in Care Work: Struggles,  
Systems, and Social Change,**  
Chair: Ece Canli

**Who Cares about the Care  
workers? The Case of ASHA  
Workers in India**  
*Madhura Naniwadekar*

Care work across the world has often been the assumed domain of women and girls. In the world of healthcare too, there is a disproportionately high percentage of women who are actively involved in all forms of care work and nursing. In the case of India, the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers are community health workers appointed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, act as health educators, and are meant to be a bridge between the government healthcare system and ordinary people. The range of functions performed by ASHA workers range from spreading awareness about contraception, providing necessary drugs to women, to escorting women for institutional deliveries, community mobilization, etc. Despite the range of responsibilities shouldered by them, ASHA workers do not have financial security. Their salaries are low, and work on incentives, leading to protests and demands for a uniform wage across many Indian states in the last few years. Furthermore, they work long hours, and must often accompany pregnant women to hospitals in the middle of the night, for which they receive little to no support from the system. The long working hours, poor remuneration, stigma attached to working women in villages, often contribute to their poor physical and mental well-being. Through the course of this paper, the aim is to recognise the kind of paid care work being done by ASHA workers, the challenges they face, and the precarious nature of this form of employment despite how important their work is.

**Hidden Architectures of  
Cleaning: A woman's labour in  
the contestant site of  
posthuman domesticity**  
*Liana Psarologaki*

The proposed paper explores the complex entanglements created by the gendered labour in domestic cleaning. It addresses the commonly and perhaps systematically overlooked symptomatology of fatigue in women associated with the technics, ethics, and ecologies of cleaning the home and connecting with homely space/objecthood. In response I will address notions of homeliness and cleanness and highlight the hidden architectures of labour in domestic cleaning often assigned to "the other" (i.e. the woman) traditionally called the housewife who is working under precarious conditions. Via posthuman humanities theories and literary criticism I will explore methodological opportunities created by seeing domestic cleaning as a creative act, tool for self-reflection and connectedness. I will bring together primary data from an interdisciplinary workshop at the Connective Symposium Fontys University Tilburg (2022) and self-reflective practice as case study to construct new theoretical avenues in creating an architecture of cleaning, out of women's labour in the contestant site of the home. The paper is developed in the context of the collaborative project SpringCleaning presented at the RA: ACT Symposium for the London Festival after attracting more than 2,000 visitors as part of Bodfa Continuum exhibition in Anglesey (2022) with award winning novelist Dr Amanda Hodgkinson.

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Precarity/ies of care work in  
urban space: Women in Nea  
Smyrne-Athens, Greece  
*Christina Marouli*

Care work takes place both in the public sector (i.e. economy, formal and informal) and in the private sector of the household and it is a prerequisite for the economy and society, but it is undervalued in comparison to production. This is reflected in urban space and contributes to increased precarities for care workers. This paper investigates how the organization of urban space influences women's care work at the private sector, leading to a variety of precarities for care providers. It is based on interviews with women in the municipality of Nea Smyrne, a middle-class municipality, in the Greater Athens area. It builds on the experiences of women of different situations – like housewife, retired woman taking care of a family member, grandmothers supporting their working sons or daughters with childcare for their grandchildren, paid household care. The findings of the study indicate that care work continues being mainly women's responsibility, although men – especially younger ones – may 'help'; and care work and its facilitation in the city remains a secondary concern in urban planning. Two main precarities in relation to women's care work and urban space are identified: a precarious and tight time balance between work and care work at home, and precarious 'care mobilities' in space leading to health and safety issues as well.

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Affective Labor, Precarization,  
Commoning: Three Cases from  
Turkey

*Derya Özkan, Güldem Baykal  
Büyüksaraç*

This paper focuses on the accounts of three worker subjects from urban Turkey, a domestic worker, a sex worker, and a freelance culture worker, to understand the role of affect in the complex interplay between precarization and commoning. We look at this interplay from a feminist perspective, register the “feminine” qualities of affective labor and analyze how capitalism makes worker subjects vulnerable by instrumentalizing affect. A feminist rethinking of the origins of capitalism demonstrates that women’s everyday paid/unpaid and invisible labor, including providing care, love and affection to their partners, lovers, elderly and children, is “the rock upon which society is built” (Federici 2010). In care-related forms of work, the worker mobilizes their body’s affective capacity to produce exchange value in the capitalist marketplace.

We discuss the post-industrial conditions of precarization through affective exploitation, as well as the emergent networks of commoning that challenge these conditions. We observe how our three study participants activate the affirmative potential of affective labor, transform how they perceive themselves and their relationship to others, and become political subjects. We explore the possibilities of living labor that exceeds dead labor, and that capital fails to capture and domesticate. We argue that we can overcome isolation and individualization imposed by neoliberal capitalism if we discover the “common notions” that make us simultaneously vulnerable and powerful.

A domestic worker, a sex worker and a freelance cultural worker, who look very different at first sight, have a lot in common – not just problems, troubles, but also desires and a shared will to create another world. Their commoning practices foster a non-capitalist ethic and constitute an alternative to capitalism’s models of the family, corporation, nation, that is, social institutions that embody the corrupt forms of the common.

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29 September 9.00-10.30  
Utrecht University Science Park 114

**Emotional Labour and Precarities:  
Gendered Narratives from  
Festivals to Childcare**, Chair: Ece  
Canli, Guanqin He, Melpomeni Paida  
and Zeynep Kurt

**Parental Leave, Cognitive and  
Emotional Labor: Gendered  
Parenting Attitudes and the  
Primacy of Paid Work**  
*Gerlinde Maurer*

In my contribution, I focus on unpaid care work in the private sphere and its gender dimensions. In a longitudinal study, I interviewed Austrian parents regarding their ways and strategies in dually reconciling (un-)paid childcare, unpaid domestic work, and paid work. In a first empirical wave, I conducted couple interviews, followed by individual interviews with parents of the previous sample after two years.

The results show that fathers in Austria mainly share (early) childcare in the well-paid short form of childcare benefits, whereas mothers often take up unpaid childcare thereafter. By contrast, Austrian mothers to a much higher extent claim flat-rate childcare benefits, accompanied, or followed, by a maternal part-time employment. This leads to the fact that mothers continue to take up higher burden in mental load, even if they have previously shared child-care tasks with a partner. In my presentation, I want to focus on several aspects of this seemingly “automatic” persistence of, or return to, gendered influences in the distribution of un/paid work.

Concluding, I present my interim empirical results and theoretical reflections on mental load and its effects on maternal follow-up tasks and responsibilities. They are closely connected with female connotated (selfless) images in the provision of emotional care, and with perceiving women as first addressees, respondents and “experts, in correspondence with traditional gender imbalances in being aware of as well as performing cognitive labour. This will finally be discussed with a focus on perceiving and evaluating the necessity, planning, distributing, and performance of un/paid care work.



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The Role of Gender in the  
“Professionalization” of Care  
Work: Birth Doula Support in  
Türkiye  
*Eylem Mercimek Göğüş*

This paper explores the dynamics of (un)paid birth doula support in Türkiye, with a focus on the relationship between gender and care work. The term "doula," derived from ancient Greek, denotes a woman who serves or assists. Over the past decade, doulas have increasingly gained prominence in the childbirth setting of Türkiye, sparking notable discussions among particularly OB/GYNs and midwives. Birth doulas provide physical, emotional, and informational support to the birthers before, during, and after childbirth. Their support encompasses a wide range of activities, including providing childbirth preparation training, accompanying mothers on doctor visits, arranging the physical conditions of the hospital room, and assisting with bathing the baby. This paper focuses on how the care provided by birth doulas in Türkiye is shaped by expectations and stereotypes regarding gender. Preliminary findings from an ongoing qualitative fieldwork, including seven semi-structured in-depth interviews with birth doulas, suggest that doulas perpetuate the gendered construction of care work by associating their profession with essentialist notions of femininity. Their narratives often revolve around characteristics such as compassion and intimacy, framing doula support as a form of "mothering the mother" characterized by nurturing, encouraging, and comforting. This perception of care work as inherently emotional and based on altruism poses a challenge for doulas in reconciling emotional satisfaction with financial compensation, as they feel their work should be driven by genuine care rather than monetary gain.

Key words: doula, care, gender, (un)paid work

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Precar(e)ious Festivals: On the Intersections of Precarity and Care Work at TranScreen (Amsterdam) and Transforming Cinema (Sheffield)  
*Cyd Sturgess*

Transgender film festivals (TFFs) in Europe operate within a 'double bind of precarity' (Ivancheva & Keating, 2020). At a commercial level, they are unable to attract large-scale corporate sponsorship (Loist, 2011), which means that they are subject to annual cycles of economic insecurity. At a structural level, these festivals also rely fundamentally on the labour of trans and queer volunteers who are disproportionately represented in unpaid/low paid cultural sectors (McKinsey Diversity and Inclusion Report, 2021).

Rather than perceiving precarity to be in all instances a vulnerability, however, this paper suggests that we might consider TFFs to be leading examples of "caring communities" (The Care Collective, 2020). Situated at the margins of festival ecosystems, TFFs arguably offer us a unique perspective on the problem of the "commercial carelessness" of festival industries, especially as they often manage to value people over profit, while still creating commercially successful festivals.

Drawing on interviews and observational fieldwork from the festivals TranScreen (Amsterdam) and Transforming Cinema (Sheffield), this paper explores the possibilities and limits of centring care practices within precarity. Here, I follow the work of Joan Tronto (1998) and the recent manifesto of The Care Collective to present examples of how (minority) festival workers carry out important affective and emotional duties for their communities. By comparing TFFs in Amsterdam and Sheffield, this paper will consider the cultural specificities of care/precarity, while more broadly imagining how the incorporation of care into festival work might serve to alleviate some of the problems of precarity in the first instance.

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29 September 13.30-15.00  
Utrecht University Science Park 0.02

**Intersectionality in Action:  
Disability, Immigration, and  
Gender in Care Work,** Chair:  
Melpomeni Paidá

This [care] work was a taboo for me when I came to Finland»: female immigrants within the system of the Finnish elderly care services

*Anna Sjödal*

Nowadays, Finland faces a significant shortage of workers in social care and especially in elderly care sector. Finnish authorities and experts perceive foreign-background care workers as a promising labour pool that can solve this growing need. The share of foreign-born people in the population of Finland is growing. People born in the former Soviet Union and Russia constitute the majority of the foreign-background citizens in Finland and the second biggest Finnish minority. Many of them come from the societies where the major responsibility for elder kinfolks is ascribed to a family, which confronts the Finnish idea of the state responsibility for social care and the principle of universalism. Also, statistics reveals that many of them hold university degree. So, what does (and does not) to care work at the lower positions bring to them?

In my presentation, I analyse how the vulnerable position within the Finnish society composed by the precarious position at the labor market and of the legal status, gender hierarchies, and system discrimination, constitute both the elderly care services and the personal and professional trajectories of the immigrant women in Finland. I discuss what employment in the care sector, seen by many actors responsible for the provision of care services as «win-win» situation in regard to the immigrant care workers, actually means for the female immigrants in Finland.

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Catching Disability And  
Femininity in the Web of Unpaid  
Labor: Lived Experiences of Care  
Work by Disabled Women in  
Pakistan

*Mahvish Nazar*

In her book "Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice", disability writer and activist Leah Lakshmi Piepzna Samarasinha powerfully analyzes the unpaid labor expected of femme and feminine people by a white, capitalist, colonialist, ableist hetero-patriarchal society. She claims, "I remain, with many other femme and feminine people, harmed by misogyny - where endless free care work and emotional labor is simply the role my community and the world has for us. We are supposed to wipe the asses of the world without ceasing" (2018, pg 138).

Using this analysis as the foundation, this paper proposes to put forward an examination of unpaid care work in relation to disability and femininity in Pakistan. I place my own experiences as a disabled feminine woman who is expected to carry out unpaid care work inside and outside the home in conversation with lived experiences of other disabled Pakistani women and disability advocates. With the help of this contextualization of the personal against the collective, I hope to discover specific ways in which disabled feminine Pakistani women find themselves being unpaid care workers and how do they accede or resist these expectations.

I believe this paper will appropriately speak directly to the theme of the 2024 ATGender Conference as it is tied to complex ideas of gender, labor and precarity. This paper, providing insights into how unpaid labor is shaped by disability and femininity in a country in the Global South, will also enrich the deep conversations already taking place at this eminent conference.

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# STREAM 6: AFFECTIVE, CULTURAL AND MORE THAN HUMAN RELATIONS

Coordinators: Demet  
Gülçiçek, Teresa Masini,  
Federica Castelli, Sanne  
Koevoets and Cecilia Heil

27 September 14.30-16.00  
Lokaal Noordeinde

**Feminist and Queer Encounters**  
Chair: Cecilia Heil

Feeling the engagement:  
Narratives on becoming part of a  
feminist collective  
*Yonca Cingöz*

One of the organizational forms of the feminist movement in Turkey in the 2000s was the "independent feminist organizations" in Istanbul including Amargi (2001) and the Socialist Feminist Collective (2008). In their manifestos, these organizations defined themselves on the basis of common goals such as opposition to power and hierarchy, horizontality, participation, pluralism, coexistence with differences. During the years following the Gezi resistance, these organizations experienced internal debates and moments of rupture, many feminists distanced themselves, and between 2011 and 2014, both organizations ceased their activities. This study is a reflection on the 15 in-depth interviews that I made with activists from Amargi and the Socialist Feminist Collective as part of my PhD thesis. Drawing upon these interviews, I will investigate how the participants felt from the moment they begin to engage with the organization to the moment they truly felt included in it. I will focus on how feeling confident and intimate helps a sense of belonging flourish.

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**Feminist(s) Organizing: Affective  
Solidarities and Building  
Resilient Spaces of Activism in  
Turkey**  
*Aslı Aygüneş*

While in principle, feminist organizing is founded on fostering safe, inclusive, intersectional and participatory activist spaces, it also posits a conflictual and confrontational structure full of emotional and ideological clashes. For instance, in Turkey today we encounter activists publicly calling out and shaming other feminists/activists and feminist organizations for being homophobic, TERF, sexist, radical or too liberal. Though one can attest that these negotiations enrich the feminist discussion and expand feminist knowledge, it also creates discomfort and contradiction within the community. Taking a closer look at this confrontational and at times emotionally challenging feminist activist space, this study critically focuses on the role of emotions in motivating feminist activists to continue their activism despite emotional and ideological struggles experienced within the feminist movement itself. Based on thirty in-depth interviews conducted with feminist activist women in Turkey doing online/offline activism in various forms of feminist organizational spaces such as initiatives, collectives, and foundations; this study examines the reasons and the ways in which feminist activists maintain their activism while also navigating intra-personal and ideological disagreements within the community. Adding to Claire Hemmings' assertion that affective solidarity is crucial in creating transformative feminist publics, I argue that feminist activists also develop a form of affective belonging to the movement and to the people they are volunteering with. The affective connection and meaning they attach to their volunteering/activism, mostly articulated as "feeling responsible to" or "having your heart in the cause," plays a vital role in motivating activists to emotionally define and continue their activism in organized or unorganized ways. I contend that these affective negotiations of solidarity and belonging makes resilient counter-publics and resistance possible in an authoritarian, oppressive, conservative civil, social, and political country. This research contributes to limited literature on feminist organizing in Turkey, which does not go beyond analyzing the development of feminist movement historically and politically.

28 September 09.00-10.30  
Utrecht University (Science Park) 116

**Thinking Feminist Genealogies,**  
Chair: Demet Gülçiçek

**They have made me a princess,  
I wish they had given me a  
salary': considering the first  
woman professor of  
mathematics in modern Europe**  
*Maria Tamboukou*

In this paper I retrace the academic career of Sofia Kovalevskaya, the first woman to hold a chair in mathematics in modern Europe. While Kovalevskaya's life and work has been celebrated, little attention has been paid to the challenges she faced in obtaining an academic position after the completion of her PhD, as well as her struggle to be accepted as a professor of mathematics, even in the liberal new university of Stockholm. The fact that she started her academic career without a salary not only speaks tons of the gendered regimes of academic institutions in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, but also traces a genealogical line of precarious academic work that reaches our days. The paper draws on a wider project of writing a feminist genealogy of automathographies, tracing the long process of becoming a woman mathematician, scientist and philosopher in the early and late modern period in Europe.

**Moving Margins: Writing in  
relation as liberatory practice**

*Saba Hamza, Kolar Aparna*

How are we refusing to be the bridge in “diversity” responses in academia? What processes open up when we refuse the word and the singular language of “borders” circulating in border studies and gender studies? Where are we refusing from? Who is the subject-object of refusal? What is the language of refusal? How to speak from our burning guts that refuse to refuse in a language that doesn’t speak to our daily lives and struggles? How are we refusing the violence of research processes promoting the individual ‘trophy’ academic/artist in academic and cultural institutions while holding one’s own and each other’s bodies and power asymmetries shaping our writing processes for healing? How does one listen to the silences in histories of slavery, war, patriarchy, colonial trauma, and gender violence passing through our bodies while writing? In this essay we reflect on these questions by interspersing pieces of texts, experiences, excerpts (from thesis/thesis-related events), visuals, and poetry, by entangling biographies, traumas and memories situated in our everyday contexts and processes of teaching, writing for healing and for a living. Linguaging becomes a location where we speak from, inspired and yet in tension with Anzaldúa (Hamzah 2020). Linguaging (Kramtsch, Aparna, Degu 2015) is our practice of refusal to refuse in one dominant language. We language a call for a poetics of refusal. We intentionally make the fleeting process known to each other and open it up to the reader, in holding each other’s bodies as they are collapsing. In doing so we invite the reader to struggle with us in the process of naming our struggles that emerge from refusing to refuse singularly in English, refusing to write by partitioning our guts and everyday battles with patriarchy, refusing the writing subject as fully knowing what one is refusing.



28 September 11.00-12.30  
Utrecht University Science  
Park 0.02

**Complaint is/as/in/and  
activism: A collective  
autoethnography on the  
relationship between  
complaint and activism, Chair:  
Melisa Ersoy**

**Speakers: Melisa Ersoy, Hasret  
Emine, Nena Maria Ackerl**

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Inspired by an in-depth study of Sara Ahmed's work *Complaint!*, this paper homes in on the relationship of complaint and activism through a collective (auto)ethnography of ourselves; three young flinta\* activists and community organisers in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. The paper is based on 1-1 and 3-3 conversations, collective reading sessions, collective and individual writing and drawing. During these meetings and moments we have collected and cultivated a lot of knowledge about ourselves and each other, specifically with regards to the questions how we experience complaints in different spheres and stages of our lives and how we experience and perceive the relationship of complaint and activism as activists. Our approach to this topic has not only yielded knowledge on abstract ideas about the relationship between the concepts complaint and activism, but also how these are understood and experienced in a personal and multi-local context. We would like to submit this paper for theme 6 of the conference ("Affective, cultural and more than human relations") since it deals with "affects, emotions and moods", but also personal and cultural histories in a concrete and localised way. We believe that our paper fits well with the themes of this conference as it offers a personal and emotional account of the experience of 3 activists trying to make a difference within and outside of the university.

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28 September 13.30-15.00  
Utrecht University Science  
Park 0.11

**Bodies, Spaces, and practices  
of resistance**, Chair: Federica  
Castelli

The unexpected space as a  
space of creation. Artist  
resistance practices from the  
margins

*Sara Pierallini*

Inspired by Carla Lonzi, a feminist activist in Rivolta Femminile during the Seventies, who conceptualized the unexpected subject as a revolutionary force, I extend the notion of the unexpected space as reintroduced by Martha Palacio Avendaño based on Frantz Fanon's ideas. I propose that the act of creation, specifically artistic production, is an unexpected act that can only emerge from non-normative relationships within spaces that defy the binary constructs falsely imposed on our realities. This space exists at the border of our dualisms, in the BETWEEN, where recognition and visibility are crucial. From this border, we must emphasize the existence of the unexpected, the marginal, the unforeseen. According to Carla Lonzi, I am not talking about something new; it is not about The New Individual or the new space. Instead, I speak of the unexpected individual and space — something different that asserts its presence and demands its own space. This space is one that our dual culture, rooted in opposing concepts, has failed to acknowledge. The BETWEEN takes unexpected forms and is shaped by the complex diversity of its existence, its Otherness. Through unexpected relationships and self-organization, a form of resistance is born — a firm resistance that brings visibility and creates new political categories based on gender, biological sex, desires, and (dis)abilities. These categories generate new spaces, transforming and redefining existing ones. The potentiality of the “otherness” is in the unexpected, something that knowledge-power cannot notice because the unexpected individual is outside of history, living in the unexpected space. The art that is created within social centers, the reappropriated spaces, is an art without apparent rules that arises from counter-hegemonic relationships, aimed at changing the regulated reality. This art forms imaginaries of unexplored worlds, assigning new names to resistant practices and creating new categories within the space-time we inhabit.

**Affective Geographies of The  
Right to The City for Women in  
Newcastle Upon Tyne**  
*Molly Taylor*

Paper proposal, 'Affective Geographies of The Right to The City for Women in Newcastle Upon Tyne', Drawing on an intersectional approach to the layered inequalities that women are made subject to in the urban environment, provisional PhD findings on the affective right to the city for women in Newcastle Upon Tyne are presented. With its history of civic pride and collective social endeavour, it is worth exploring how well Newcastle affords a 'right to the city', as outlined by spatial sociologist Henri Lefebvre, for all its citizens. The right to the city framework has been adopted by several organisational and governmental bodies with a view to increase participation in the governance of the city, but these act within what Lefebvrian scholar Mark Purcell terms the 'machinery of the state'. To consider a right to the city in the Lefebvrian sense is to imagine a move beyond such restrictions, while remaining conscious of their current role in the production of space. In imagining a right to the city for women, a liberationist approach must be taken which explores the affective and emotional relationships women have with city spaces. This imagining relies on an understanding of the body as it is inhabited through gendered subjectivities and the dialectical relationship between the gendered body and the ownership of space. The current project applies this in the work of women's organisations throughout the city, and uses creative and space-based methods in the form of focus groups, mobile interviews and photo-voice to explore the affective ways in which emotions and spatial contexts intertwine.

Women's Politics of the  
Common at the Junction of  
Shelters and Thresholds

*Demet Bolat*

In this paper, I aim to focus the theme of "feeling at home" emerged as an ambivalent concept through the in-depth interviews I conducted with women who participated in common spaces in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Muğla/Fethiye and Batman. These common spaces were established amidst the political enthusiasm that arose during the Gezi protests to meet different needs and desires. Women felt "at home" in these spaces because they could be "themselves". In this paper, I will first attempt to analyze the concept of being oneself. To do so, I will focus on how women transform common spaces into "places of being herself" as a means of resisting masculine displacement procedures. Afterward, I will emphasize that common spaces are threshold places (regarding Stavrides) that allow encounters with otherness. Because of the intricate emotions that surface in these encounters, I will explore the idea that these spaces are not only spaces of being herself for women but also sites of self-dispossession (regarding Butler and Athanasiou). Through these discussions about the interplay between being herself and self-dispossession, I will focus the question of whether the sense of home can acquire new feminist meanings. In the final part of the presentation, I will illustrate the transformation of communist communities into closed units driven by the escalating authoritarianism in Turkey. By critically discussing the transformation of these spaces from thresholds to shelters, I will focus on the disempowering aspects of feeling at home for women from a feminist perspective.

Silence of the Well, 'Aur Mein  
Bhi' (and me too): Women's  
Silence and the Unsaid in  
Contemporary Narratives in  
India

*Bindu Mehra*

My research explores the impact of British Colonialism and post-Partition decoloniality on Indian women's voices, and how they have instituted new forms of silence. Through an interwoven exploration of theory and practice, my research includes interviews of women affected by gender-violence and interrogates memory, archives and moving image practices. I mobilise an archive of film and historical and theoretical elements through inter-related practices of filmmaking, writing and performance lectures, unlocking the possibility of occupying time and history differently, from which 'a new material witness' and order of 'affective associations' can emerge. It serves to activate new forms of knowledge and cultural production, forming a counter-archive referencing semi-forgotten feminine histories.

29 September 09.00-10.30  
Utrecht University (Science  
Park) 116

**Non-human agencies and  
feminist spaces**, Chair: Teresa  
Masini

Thinking Human- Non-Human  
Entanglements with  
Şafak Şule Kemancı's "Bütün  
Kuşlar Benim Bahçeme Gelir"  
Exhibition

*Dijan Özkurt*

Non-human agency has been discussed especially under the influence of affective turn and animal turn and continues to be discussed in a multidimensional way under the influence of posthumanism and new materialism. The line of thought in question has not only remained as a theoretical discussion, but also in the field of art, many events and exhibitions are organized on this subject and new works of art continue to be produced in many parts of the world. In the field of contemporary art in Turkey, many exhibitions focusing on non-humans are being organized and many artists are producing works focusing on non-humans. In this respect, in this presentation I will talk about the solo exhibition Bütün Kuşlar Benim Bahçeme Gelir (2021) by Turkish contemporary artist Şafak Şule Kemancı. The title of the exhibition is taken from a line of a poem by the Turkish queer poet Küçük İskender. In her works, the artist expresses sexuality in a way in which the boundaries of nature and human, human and non-human are entangled. She achieves this form of expression in which the boundaries of human and non-human are intertwined through the materials she uses. I think the artist creates this entanglement by using many different materials such as clay, plastic, fabric and many traditional techniques such as glass painting. In this presentation, I will consider about the exhibition from a feminist new materialist perspective and with the concept of queer ecology(Morton, 2010). In doing so, I will focus on the artist's use of materials, and her relationship with them and the effect of the exhibition on me while visiting the exhibition.

Weaving life from precarious  
everything  
*Ezgi Hamzaçebi*

In my presentation, I will explore the works of Pinar Ögünç, a journalist and fiction writer, and her way of caring and efforts to make a difference for the precarious in both her article series and fictional writings. I argue that these writings belong to the same universe—the precariat cosmos—and share similar ethical and aesthetic concerns.

During the pandemic, Pinar Ögünç authored a series of article-stories that focused on the precariousness of individuals across various business sectors. She metaphorically likens the virus to a chemical substance, stating, "Whatever inequality exists, when you pour [the chemical] on it, it seems to darken it." Ögünç created a space not only for those who lost their jobs to share their experiences of waiting indefinitely but also for the animals that became more visible when humans stayed inside. She initially published these stories in the online newspaper Gazeteduvar. Subsequently, she compiled them into a book titled *Pandemi Zayıtı: Bir Yıldan 35 Hayat Hikâyesi* (Casualties of the Pandemic: 35 Life Stories from One Year). Additionally, she produced a documentary podcast series titled *Sen Ben O* (You Me It), described as "a collection of lives, an album of voices" featuring real people. Both her short story collection *Beterotu* (2019) and her latest novel *Şu Anda Burada Mıyız?* (2023) inhabit the same cosmos of the precariat.

Through her nonfictional and fictional writings, Ögünç endeavors to capture the "structure of feeling" of the precarious and seeks to discover the "appropriate" language of it. In my presentation, I will highlight excerpts from her various writings, illustrating how she intertwines diverse states of precarious existence, including more-than-human worlds. I will delve into her ethico-aesthetic approach to mutual care, examining the parallels and distinctions within her fictional and nonfictional works.

29 September 09.00-10.30  
Utrecht University (Science  
Park) 111

**Speaking, Silences, Distances  
and Intimacies, Chair: Cecilia Heil**

To accord. The reverberance of a  
verb

*Marion Schulze*

"May I say a few words?" asked Sojourner Truth before she spoke at the Ohio Women's Convention in 1851. Frances Dana Barker Gage, who chaired the event, later recalled attendees pleading with her: "Don't let her speak." As we know, Truth's few words were heard. Were they heard well enough? To speak or to be spoken for, to be heard or left unheard, to be able to respond or to be responded to, to listen well or to be silenced are only a few variations of sound metaphors through which feminist concerns have been captured and understood since the 1970s at the latest. These are concerns about responsible knowledge production and, more precisely, about the inclusion and exclusion of the unheard, the unarticulated. Initially this concerned women in androcentric scientific knowledge production as well as unheard voices in feminist knowledges, and later the absence of more-than-human beings and entities.

Drawing on the importance of sound in earlier feminist proposals for knowing and living well, I intend in this talk to revive the verb 'to accord' as a conceptual, didactic, and practical tool. Its double etymological rootedness in sound and law allows for thinking and acting across dualisms as much as it obliges to delve into hierarchies, contradictions, and ambiguities within and among theoretical strands as well as non/academic settings; one of the concerns of strand 6 of this conference.



Young women, dating apps, and affective assemblages in the time of pandemic: none relationship is a linear transition to a fixed point.

*Arianna Mainardi, Sveva Magaraggia*

The article aims to explore the centrality in young women's life of the affective assemblages that took shape in their relationship with digital media during the pandemic, particularly fostered by the use of dating apps. Emotional and affective connection has been prevented by the pandemic in the form of physical distancing and the risk of contagion, but also by regulations that in some states, such as Italy, have only recognized legitimate familial relationships to grant permission to mobility (like marriage, birth family). What happens when people cannot take care and be sustained by their affective relationships? This negative situation limited desire and mutual sharing, at the same time it opened up new mediated spaces in which to cultivate different and unexpected affects and relationships. We look at the role of affective realm as a political space linked to social change (following Berlant), and explores the use of dating apps by young women during the pandemic as an element of a broader affective assemblage. Paper follows a subgroup of young women (encountered as a part of a longitudinal research project on the transition to adulthood in Italy) who used dating apps during the covid lockdown over the three waves of interviews. Paper analyzes the unexpected uses of dating apps not only centered in erotic or romantic purpose, and the online/offline relationships that ensue: e.g. making sense of rarefied and solitary time, building relations of care in everyday life. These assemblages - made up of bodies, digital media and affects - intervene in the current context of normalized crisis and precarity, characterized by a digitally saturated environment, giving the possibility to young people to produce and enjoy spaces for non-normative/linear/straight desire and sharing.

The Bawso BME Oral Stories  
Project: Multi- Modal  
Storytelling and the  
Complexities of Portraying  
Violence, Migration and  
Belonging  
*Sophia Kier-Byfield*

This paper will present the “Bawso Stories” project, a partnership project delivered by the University of South Wales’s George Ewart Evans Centre of Storytelling, Amgueddfa Cymru (Museum Wales), and frontline domestic abuse service Bawso. Bawso is a specialist service delivering expert support to over 6,000 survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, human trafficking, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage annually. The “Bawso Stories” project works with Bawso service users to facilitate storytelling about their lives and heritage, stories which will eventually be archived in the national collection of Wales and be used to diversify representations of contemporary identity and belonging in Wales.

The paper will first explore the methodological challenges in finding appropriate and accessible ways to enable individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage to tell their stories and have control over how these are shaped and shared. The paper will then focus particularly on how the team has endeavoured to convey the construction of complex and surprising affects, emotions and moods in the project’s oral history and digital story outputs, ultimately demonstrating a model for nuanced research and engagement when working with participants in challenging circumstances. The paper contributes to the overall questions and themes of the conference by offering an example from doing gender-related work and producing feminist knowledge both within and outside academia that involves community-based collaboration and the expertise of multiple sectors working for equality.

29 September 11.00-12.30  
Utrecht University (Science  
Park) 116

**Imagining Multispecies Ecologies  
through Feminist Perspectives,**  
Chair: Teresa Masini

**Not Blood, but Milk Bond:  
Multispecies Motherhood in the  
Highlands of Turkey's Black Sea  
Region**  
*Ezgi Burgan Kiyak*

In the highland animal husbandry traditions of Turkey's Eastern Black Sea region, the notion of motherhood encompasses multispecies meanings. Women farmers often refer to cows as their 'daughters', highlighting a multispecies bond that is evident in the relationships between women and cows, as well as the nurturing connections between cows and their offspring. However, the relationships of motherhood between women and cows are not solely focused on "making kin" (Donna Haraway), but also intertwine with the economic objectives of dairy farming.

Drawing from field research employing participatory observation, interviews, and multispecies ethnography techniques conducted in three highland areas within the region, this paper primarily focuses on the following inquiries: Can these complex relationships be comprehended beyond the sanctification of patriarchal motherhood and the boundaries of anthropomorphism, which distorts reality? How can the conceptual and methodological tools offered by feminist thought be mobilized to interpret motherhood as a diverse realm of experience within a relational network not limited to humans? This paper deliberates on the insights derived from ecofeminist theory/practice as both a scientific approach and a life strategy, enabling the exploration of these questions.

**Affective atmospheres of care in  
gender studies: the complexities  
of bodily practices and more-  
than-human encounters in  
urban gardens**

*Maria Teresa Braga Bizarria*

Building on findings from my PhD, in this paper I explore the ways women interact with different affective atmospheres embedded in urban gardens, and how these atmospheres relate to practices of care. Working in gardens with a majority of White middle-class women with children, the motivation of most participants to engage in urban agriculture was to alleviate from the women's burden from multiple (un)paid workloads. In dialogue with studies arguing about the risks of social reproduction from the employment of unpaid citizens workforce for neoliberal strategies of governance, I suggest that gardening also opened opportunities for women to increase their agency, and self-care. Therefore, aligned with the conference theme, I focus on the complexity, potentials and ambiguities of how the affective exchange and the bodily interactions with the gardens can be approached both from a critical feminist and gender agenda around caregiving work, while it also points to feminist projects of becoming based on ecologies of care. And, since the spatial and affective interactions are non-linear and embedded with power relations, I also shed light on the participants' sometimes exclusive interactions with non-humans. These dynamics suggest that while volunteers resist the system, to certain extent they also enact dynamics of othering towards different beings, breaking with idyllic notions of affective encounters.

29 September 11.00-12.30  
Utrecht University (Science  
Park) BLAUW

**Following Narratives through  
Cooking**, Chair: Sanne Koevoets

**What's Cooking? Mobilizing  
Women's Life Narratives in  
Diasporic Cookbooks**  
*Arththi Sathananthar*

Over recent years there has been a proliferation of cookbooks by diasporic women authors containing a wealth of traditional family recipes. Today's cookbooks focus on experiencing transnational traditions and transculturalism through women's voices and intergenerational stories. More often than not, due to the gendered aspect of cooking and nurturing in the family home, it is women who are the gatekeepers to these family recipes. This paper elucidates how cookbooks, as a form of life writing, materialise 'mobile lives' (Elliot and Urry, 2009) through a focus on women's histories, narratives and activism. In shaping intergenerational women's life storytelling, these cookbooks represent identity markers of the geopolitics of migration. I will examine two cookbooks that explore women's diasporic ancestries: Cynthia Shanmugalingam's 'Rambutan: Recipes from Sri Lanka' (2022) and Reem Assil's 'Arrabiya: Recipes from the Life of an Arab in Diaspora' (2022).

In order to examine the cookbook as a site of activism, I turn to bell hooks' construct of the 'homeplace'. She argues that home becomes 'a site for resistance and liberation struggle' (Hooks, 1990). In *Rambutan* and *Arrabiya*, the authors foreground the act of remembrance by memorializing maternal family recipes which reveal a sustained link to the ancestral homeland. The authors pay homage to their homeland through culinary expression. The cookbooks includes heartfelt essays that convey the importance of documenting oral food histories in order to preserve their distinct gustatory cultures in an environment where the physical land is threatened or erased from national consciousness. The cookbook is an ideal site for mobilizing the oral to the textual while also stressing on the intimacy and distinctness of these diasporic family accounts. Therefore, these cookbooks mediate the interconnected acts of diasporic writing, reading and cooking while also demonstrating the 'role of mobilities in connecting – and disconnecting nations' (Aguiar, Mathieson & Pearce, 2019).

**“You put your love and soul into  
it:” Cooking with(out)  
technology**

**Defne Karaosmanođlu, Leyla  
Bektař Ata, Bahar Emgin**

Feminist scholars of technology have been influential in reconstructing the relationship between gender and technology and placing home and everyday life at the center. Following these studies, this paper focuses on the discourses, promises, and experiences brought by domestic technologies and their place and role in women’s everyday lives. As part of a bigger project which focuses historically on the representations of and experiences with domestic technologies in Turkey, this paper particularly explores how kitchen technologies shape and change people’s lives, and their cooking practices. We take the kitchen as a space of safety, resistance, play, labor, and struggle and try to understand kitchen technologies through women’s everyday experiences. In this paper, we focus on how women, as users of these technologies, perceive the modern and the traditional, the past, present, and future. We try to find answers to the following questions: How do women interact with technology while cooking? How do they redefine cooking when technology is involved? How do they reconstruct and redefine the relationship between authenticity and the use of technology? How vital is tacit and explicit knowledge in cooking? How important is intuition and rationality? What is the role of affect in cooking with technology? This study is based on interviews with women conducted in five different cities in Turkey between 2021 and 2023.

29 September 13.30-15.00  
Utrecht University (Science  
Park) 0.05

**Narratives and Knowledges,**  
Chair: Defne Karaosmanoğlu

**Self-defense of body-territory**  
*Alessandra Chiricosta*

The notion of "body-territory" has emerged in recent years as a key concept in the feminist discourse. Women's indigenous movements against extractive projects in Latin America have shaped a new political imaginary and struggle. According to this perspective, lands and territories should not be considered mere sources to be deployed for human consumption, but living environments we are part of and dependent on (ecodipendence), and human relations should be understood in terms of interdependence rather than domination. The exploitation of so-called "natural resources" is inherently connected with the oppression of women's lives: these forms of violence are both driven by patriarchal, capitalistic, and colonialist logic. The "body-territory" breaks with the dualisms that sustain the metaphysics of domination in a constant dehumanizing exercise and, in this way, restores their character as active agents in the discussion to all those entities that have been transformed into "raw material" or "natural resources" in the anthropo-/androcentric project. The modern political passion par excellence, i.e. fear, can no longer sustain the political alliances of the body-territory. The audacity of knowing one's territory, and the certainty of being a constellation, are among the "positive passions" that a new understanding of self-defense is based on, which no longer means reproducing the logic of anthropo/androcentric militarization.

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Creative methods as sites of  
knowledge construction  
*Frederique Leresche*

As part of several research projects on homelessness in Switzerland, I'm seeking to understand people's relationship with their rights, and the ways in which they do or don't use the mechanisms available to them and the alternative strategies they put in place. By focusing on systems of values and norms (Fassin, 2012), I seek to make visible the ways in which people negotiate with, understand or interpret the law. To do this, I develop creative and sensitive methods (Pink, 2015) that aim to get away from an overly rational approach to the relationship to rights, instead focusing on imaginaries, the materiality of bodies and emotional subjectivities. This paper will present the epistemological issues at stake in two research projects on homelessness in Switzerland, one of which uses the camera and documentary creation, the other theater, as its investigative methodology.

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## CONFERCING OTHERWISE

In addition to the usual offering of paper presentations, roundtables, and keynotes, this year AtGender has decided to dedicate time and space to “[m]aterialized practices designed to rupture the academic-conference-machine” (Osgood et. al. 2020). In this way, we hope to not only talk and think about the precarious practice(s) of making a difference in and around academic, public, and/or social institutions, by shaking up their conventionalized practices.

We received many proposals, and are proud to present a selection of workshops, exhibitions, and gatherings that “put ‘what if?’” [Haraway 2016] to work, so that we might “[...] bring in the ‘what else?’” [Manning 2016]” (Osgood et. al., 2020).

What if academic knowledge were produced, shared, and enacted differently within and around the conference space? What else may be enabled by material practices and encounters that do not fit in, but instead disrupt or transform the conventional format of the academic conference in some way? Our Conferencing Otherwise program was curated and designed not to propose answers to these questions, but to enable collaborative, embodied and affective – but also supportive and fun! – engagements with these questions through a wide range of practices, ranging from cooking and eating, to mending and repair, and art practices such as fibre art and theatre.

We highly recommend that you take note of the programme, and perhaps decide to participate in some of its activities. Do take note that some workshops have a maximum number of participants and will require you to sign up in advance.

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## Precarious interventions/interventions in precarity – Research-creation in action

Location: Theaterzaal, Colour Kitchen

When: September 27, 12:30

Duration: 180 minutes

Sign up required

Maximum number of participants :10

Facilitators: Sanne Koevoets, Alexandra Broeder

What does precarity feel like? How does the state of precarity shape the reality of your everyday life? How does it show up in your body, in your community, in your dreams or your nightmares? How can artistic techniques serve as a way to explore and reflect on the complexities of precarious labour? How can techniques and practices from theatrical co-creation help us to create disruptions and interventions that create awareness of and connection with experiences of precarity? In this workshop you will explore, share and experiment with theatrical forms to express the experiences of precarity.

The workshop is based on an ongoing practice of collaborative co-creation of theatrical pieces, developed by acclaimed theater maker Alexandra Broeder for theatre collective Tijd van de Wolf. In collaboration with eg. (mental) health, and cultural heritage organisations in Broeder's pieces for Tijd van de Wolf explore, envision, and are aimed at enabling institutional change. This collaborative research-creation process offers a radical and inspiring example of transformative and transdisciplinary knowledge production practices, where action and research are not only connected by way of terminology, but are enacted together, collaboratively, and with an explicit aim towards concrete change in the here and now.

The workshop will kick off with a short introduction of Alexandra's work, and a reflection on the potential of theatre as a transformative practice aimed at enabling institutional and systemic change. Then, participants will be guided in accessing, sharing, and finding theatrical ways of expressing their own experience with precarity in work, life, and activism. The goal is to create a brief, personal or collaborative, performance piece that may be performed as an intervention in or around the conference space. It will be your choice whether you aspire to bring your interventionist piece into the conference, or whether your work will remain in the intimate setting in which you have co-created it.

## WAGES AGAINST INCLUSION! FULL INCLUSION NOW!

Location: Theaterzaal, Colour Kitchen

Duration: 90 minutes

When: 12:30

Sign up required: NO

Facilitator: Maddie Breeze

Making manifestos for a really inclusive university. Title: FULL INCLUSION NOW! Making manifestos against the university. Description: This collaborative, interactive workshop offers participants a framework for developing a collective manifesto that imagines a liberatory futures against the university. Drawing on Breeze & Leigh (2022) Wages Against Inclusion! Full Inclusion Now! Towards a Queer Manifesto Against LGBT+ Inclusion in Universities the workshop invites participants to identify the collective work of 'being included' (Ahmed 2012, 2017) in contemporary universities, according to various intersecting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agendas. Identifying this – often unpaid or underpaid – work allows us to imagine the political potential of demanding wages for being diverse in and for the institution, as well as collectively withdrawing our labour in a strike or strike-like action. In the workshop we will collaborate to make demands of the university, what must the university do to truly be 'inclusive' and how might these demands expose the contradictions and limits of liberal regimes of 'inclusion' and 'access'? We will work together to understand how the labour of gaining access to the university is already collectivised, and to imagine the conditions necessary to building collective power which builds a world where the need for inclusion in the 'elitist and inhumane' (Conrad 2014) university. At the end of the workshop we will have a collaboratively produced manifesto for FULL INCLUSION NOW.

## Co-creating a crocheted, knitted, braided, embroidered sculptural piece

Location: All around the conference

Time: Throughout the conference

Sign up required: NO

Maximum number of participants: NO

Preparation required: not required, but if possible bring your own recycled or leftover yarn, rope, thread, and tools (knitting needles, crochet hooks, handsewing needles, etc.)

Facilitators: Rosalie Custers, Melike Karaslan, Niels van Rijsbergen, Marianne van Bommel, bas van den hurk, Wander Eikelboom

'Precarity is the condition of being vulnerable to others. Unpredictable encounters transform us; we are not in control, even of ourselves. Unable to rely on a stable structure of community, we are thrown into shifting assemblages, which remake us as well as our others.'  
– Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing

Following bell hooks, we investigate these alternatives in co-learning practices with students so that all perspectives matter. Together, we explore the value and meanings of certain notions for creation and innovation within education which include collectivity, delay, precarity, a circular way of thinking, situatedness, an ecological rather than an economic view, and a more-than-human-centred practice.

We see ATGENDER 2024 as a temporary ecosystem where actors from different backgrounds, identities and perspectives form relationships to learn, live, eat, love, laugh, inspire, care, discuss, critique, disrupt, and celebrate together. Every participant brings not only their research but their embodied experiences and perspectives which become part of the assemblages that are formed during these days.

By co-creating a crocheted, knitted, braided, embroidered sculptural piece we will make these entangled relations present and visible at the conference. You can participate in the co-creation of this work by crocheting, knitting, braiding, and/or embroidering during talks, presentations, dinners, walks and breaks. By working together, and taking up or adding to each other's work, we share in each other's expertise, create precarious assemblages or sturdy collective pieces.

Crochet, knitting, braiding and embroidering as activist practice offers alternatives to the dominant male discourse of the *vita activa*. As a metaphor it makes present the ways in which relationships matter. Furthermore, wool, cotton, threads as natural materials make us aware of the precarious ways in which we are entangled with the animal world and the need for care if we are to survive in the Anthropocene. Yarn can be used to connect but also to shield; to protect and to fixate; to communicate and to relate. Needles to create, but also to sting.

During ATGENDER 2024 from all these practices of crochet, knitting, braiding and embroidering, a giant sculptural assemblage will emerge at the central location of the conference (and maybe also spread out beyond). At the end of the three days, we could leave it as a reminder of the conference, or we could untie it in the form of a ritual and let everybody take home pieces for others to hook up and let this ecosystem spread and evolve.

## Tea/Tarot: sensorial labour otherwise

Location: 119, Ruppertgebouw

Time: 90 minutes

When: September 28, 09:00

Facilitators: Yujia Xu, Pilar Morena d'Alò

We invite ATGENDER attendees to join us in cultivating mindfulness within the conference environment. Through a sensorial approach that integrates the practice of mindful Chinese tea drinking with collective Tarot card-making, this workshop offers an exploration of our intersectional identities, and at moving 'beyond text' to unspoken ways of knowing in academic environments. Our objective is for this workshop to nurture a mindful awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, thereby fostering new possibilities for interdisciplinary collaborations.

This session of Conferencing Otherwise invites participants to have fun and co-create. It invites us to come together and explore the themes of the conference from our personal and professional experiences, and collectively make a tarot card to represent the theme of this Spring Conference. The collective crafting asks us to put together a visual image and a text of its interpretation (and, if we feel like it, a soundtrack too).

Part 1: Mindful tea drinking (30 mins). To begin with, we offer a tea-drinking ritual as an opening to welcome our attendees to the session. Mindfulness is rooted in Zen Buddhist meditation practices in China. Within Buddhist traditions, meditation has a long historical association with tea. The traditional Chinese tea ceremony, with its emphasis on ritual and the sharing of tea among guests, acknowledges the importance of embracing a multisensory approach to understanding tea. Yujia will guide participants through the Chinese tea ceremony, offering insights into the sensory aspects of tea appreciation.

This ritual serves as a retreat in a conference setting—a small pause to let participants slow down, appreciate the moment, and acknowledge sensory and emotional connections between mind and body within the conferencing space.

Part 2: Collective Tarot card-making for our research-activist lives. Tarot card reading and other esoteric or spiritual practices are widely popular nowadays, not the least because of the appealing relationship that, it is argued, they can foster for the imagination or experimentation of different utopias, forms of connecting to each other and the non-human world. At the very least, the symbolic universe of Tarot meets us with an immense range of possibilities when it comes to representation of ourselves, our experiences, and our world. Pilar will guide participants through this co-crafting step-by-step, introducing participants to different types of tarot cards and some bits of their history, showing how the symbol is constructed and how myth is represented. As we discuss what brought us to the conference, what are we presenting and/or attending, how we feel, and what experiences are we bringing to the session, we will make a collage representing our collectivised experience in its different facets. As we choose how to symbolise and represent diverse, often divergent rationalities, ways of feeling, and ethics, we will draft an agreed-upon map that might guide us in the future.

## The Year I Became A Tree

Time: ongoing, you can visit the installation at any time throughout the conference

Facilitator: Laurence Herfs

Originally produced as a graduation project for the Royal Academy of Arts (KABK) in the Hague in 2021, the work consists of approx. 20 meters of drawings unfolding like a panelled narrative over the school's majestic high walls, threading personal drawing and writing with polyphonic voices and faces of women from the past. After students had shared hundreds of stories about their experiences with a set of abusive teachers at the school on an anonymous Instagram account, the academy responded in all the expected ways – gaslighting, institutional mazes as complaint structures, we-didn't-know-ism. By making visible and archiving the #MeToo scandal and student protests that had unfolded the year prior, the work performed an act of institutional criticism and resistance from within.

Throughout the art installation, female experiences of abuse are represented on three levels. Firstly, through the metaphor of Daphne, the Ovidian nymph who was turned into a tree so she could not be hurt. Secondly, through a visual narrator that recalls the experiences of the KABK students who were told by the school that they “should have complained differently”, “should have acted differently”, “should have said something before”. Thirdly, I drew and wrote poetry about the year of heavy burnout I experienced as a result of my own personal experiences with abuse. The year I became a tree: unable to move.

Tying these three layers together through the metaphor of the tree, the installation seeks to express the affective consequences of abuse on the body: rage within frozen matter, unable to move or speak, crooked and vined emotions tangled up with grief. But to be a tree also means to be connected to a mycorrhizal network of other stories, a whisper network that gave rise to the Instagram account that eventually led to various abusive teachers leaving the academy after they had been there for over 25 years. In other words: when our collective roots were exposed, our stories held the power of collective resistance and change.

Threading trees and vines, girls from past and present, the work draws a line from mythology to the academy, in order to lay bare the historical roots and simultaneously historicize this event of miraculous female power I witnessed.

## Do(n't) talk while you eat: when feminism sits at the table

Location: 0.02

Time: September 28 September, 13:30

Maximum number of participants: 10 participants; spectators welcome

Facilitator: Belen Cornejo Daza

The concept of the Café emerged during a two-months Erasmus+ Internship at the Portuguese unspecific creative space "A Certain Café". Described by the founder as a "deconstructed and relaxed space where the community could gather" and "food is just an excuse to spend time together, a great excuse", A Certain Café resists conventional representations by constantly transforming and shapeshifting to embrace material and bodily practices that go beyond traditional understandings of a café.

Navigating the contradictions of occupying a vulnerable and precarious position as an unpaid intern, but having the opportunity to take part in a creative space that works to dismantle clear-cut boundaries and to generate response-able (Haraway 2012) inter-relationalities with its surroundings, A Certain Café will be brought to the AtGender conference as a workshop/encounter aimed at exploring the ways in which "food items, eating practices and the various forms of work associated with food are not only shaped by social and cultural contexts and meanings", but they are also "generative, actively forging connections among social beings, linking bodies to organic matter and anchoring human beings in nature" (Lewis 2017).

Our encounter will be organized into three stages. In the first stage, participants will be exposed to a selection of freshly prepared food and asked to bodily relate with it without touching or tasting, just by moving, looking and smelling from the outside. During this stage, participants will be informed of the task to collectively produce an artistic food installation out of the matter provided (freshly prepared food and selected flatware). At the second stage, participants will devote themselves to the artistic practice of creating a food installation, getting to touch the food and handling it with their hands. At the third and final stage, participants will be invited to surrender their body to the act of eating their artistic creation, tasting the food and fully engaging in a bodily encounter with food.

The workshop is aimed to become a horizontal space of knowledge-production where participants are expected, and will be invited, to build knowledge by sharing the affects and effects the intervention may produce in the course of the encounter and reflecting on "the meaning-making and human experiences that food work can generate" (Lewis 2016).

## How to make a feminist difference?

Location: BLAUW

Time: 60 minutes

When: 20 September, 09:00

Sign up required: NO

Maximum number of participants: 40

Facilitators: Edyta Just, Berteke Waaldijk

In this interactive and intergenerational workshop, we create a space where participants may share their successful, unsuccessful, and semi-successful stories with making a feminist difference within organizations and institutions where they work or study. What did they aim to achieve? What did they lose? What was needed? What was missing?

At the same time, we want to invite participants to think about the future: what does require change and what is required for that change to be enacted?

We will look for answers to these questions in a creative and fun form of probing and interviewing through a format we call “reciprocal interviewing” – two groups prepare questions for each other, answering is voluntary, and by creating two groups we play with and subvert different identifiers.



## Making Mends: A visible mending workshop

Location: 119

Duration: 120 minutes

When: 29 September, 11:00

Sign up required?: no, but preferred

Maximum number of participants: 6-10

Preparation required: Bring a personal item to be mended

Facilitators: Danika van Kaathoven, Emma Fukuwatari Huffman

“Making Mends” is a workshop designed to explore visible mending, a style of repairing damaged or worn-out clothing. Visible mending not only restores wear and tear, but is also an act of care that allows a garment to grow and transform with us, taking on a new life and carrying with it the memories of previous ones. The workshop is suitable for individuals of varying levels of experience to actively learn about and engage in visible mending. Participants are encouraged to bring their own personal items that need repairing. This could be anything, such as a pair of jeans or a backpack with holes, or a stained sweater.

Throughout the workshop, we will practice various mending techniques and explore broader meanings of mending and repair as acts of resilience, creative expression, and building long-lasting connections between people and their belongings. The workshop is divided into three parts:

- 1) Icebreaker
- 2) Practicing visible mending
- 3) Mending a personal item

A workbook is used as a leading tool for the participants to work with for the majority of the session. The icebreaker: each participant is given a leaf and instructed to "mend" it. This activity utilizes the natural silhouettes of the leaves to create a connection to the idea of mending, while allowing participants to be creative and contemplate the broader meanings of mending. The icebreaker encourages participants to use their intuition and purely react to what is in their hands, thereby aiming to lower the threshold for hands-on making before any formal instructions are given. The workbook is an essential tool for the participants and serves as the backbone of the workshop. Each individual receives a workbook at the start of the workshop to document their thoughts and plans of mending their item, as well as communicate their ideas to others. After the workshop session, every participant receives their workbook as a keepsake of their mending experience and as a resource to inspire future mending projects.

## breath(e)scape

Location: WIT

When: 29 September, 13:30

Sign up required?: YES

Maximum number of participants: 10-60

“There is not occupation of territory, on the one hand, and independence of persons on the other. It is the country as a whole, its history, its daily pulsation that are contested, disfigured, in the hope of final destruction. Under this condition, the individual’s breathing is an observed and occupied breathing. It is a combat breathing.”

( Fanon 50)

This project emerges as an intimate, corpo-affective intervention to the politics of breathing, responding to the past-present precarity of breath-ability. As an interactive performance that combines sound/video-scape and spoken word, “breath(e)scape” aims to complicate breath as simultaneously a living force and a necropolitical tool through which some are made to thrive in order for others to die. This “occupied breathing” (Fanon 50) extends to soils, oceans, air, and the exterminated peoples/places of Palestine, Kashmir, and indigenous lands across the world. By connecting transregional breaths, “breath(e)scape” emerges as an affective reaction to these enduring states of combat breathing. Yet, amidst this precarity, we find not only ruptures of possibility for survival, but also moments of resistance and an answering back of life forces to the necropolitical command of cease-to-be (Fanon).

“breath(e)scape” explores how to articulate breath as an embodied, affective, and corpomaterial intra-action that is at once constitutive and differential (Barad 815), opening up to the question of what it means to breathe in a suffocating and unbreathable world. How to make a corpo-affective intervention in the (in)visibilisation of breath and breathing? How to grapple with our anxious breath, while responding to the humans and more-than-humans who breathe in states of precarity?

The soundscape recreates the build-up to a state of precarity: from calm to frenetic back to an exhausted calm that resembles an ongoing state of slow, maiming suffocation. The moving images hope to challenge the (in)visibility of breath, as we bring different more-than-human breaths into conversation and affective relation. The video is edited with recurring prompts to the audience, acting as invitations to breathe and release together, incorporating the breaths in the room in their imagined possibilities as well as hardship.

The soundscape of the video is a live, collective voice-recording that directly responds to the edited moving images. Using a loopstation to layer our voices, we point towards the intra-connectivity of breaths exploring how resonance is a process of co-constitutive vibrations that travels through sound, body, rhythm, and image. Thus, “breath(e)scape” asks questions of durability, pointing to how layers upon layers of unbreathable circumstances might be endurable, or maiming, but eventually kill.

During the live performance, the video/soundscape is accompanied by a live reading of

# ATGENDER CONFERENCE 2024

Curated By:  
Silvia Protino  
Zeynep Kurt

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Utrecht, Netherlands