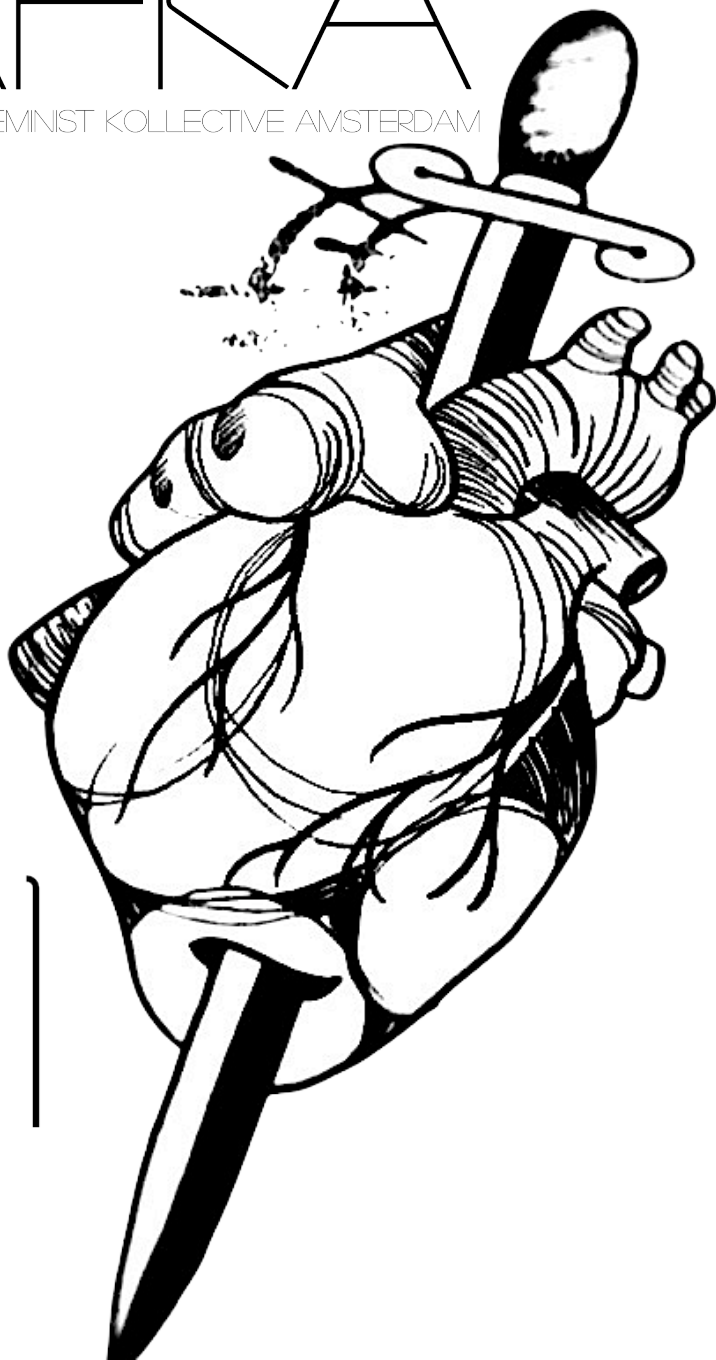


AFKA

ANARCHA FEMINIST KOLLECTIVE AMSTERDAM



ISSUE

White men do not perceive aggression the same way a woman or a person of color does. When we experience aggression and speak out against it, to them, we are the ones being aggressive, without

provocation. A comparable example of this is when westerners are shocked by people who eat dog and dolphin meat, while at the same time being offended when vegans/vegetarians confront them about eating cow, pig and chicken meat.

When women speakout against sexual aggression, too often they are accused of just being “crazy” and acting out for no reason. As a result, the women are the ones who are perceived as aggressive.

When someone experiences marginalization based on their gender, race or class, the most privileged members of society are the first to dismiss the other’s experience of

marginalization.

Of course, the privilege comes from not experiencing this marginalization.

If they don’t experience it themselves, does that mean it doesn’t exist at all? What does it take for people to

acknowledge their privileges and relativize experiences?

Too often, even in this politically active/anarchist community, white people and men can act in extremely patronizing ways towards women

and people of color from “developing countries”. As women we are either flirted with or taught. Or both. For “global southerners” even when we speak about our own countries and culture, Western Europeans try to educate us on politics and the situation in our own former homes.

It’s time to address these issues within our own communities, instead of pointing the finger at the “other”, the alienated mainstream world that we for some reason think we’re separate from.

In order to decolonize our minds and to fight sexism within, we can’t turn a blind eye to abuses of power inside anarchist anti-hierarchical circles.

With this Zine we would like to address some of these anarcha feminist concerns, focusing on Amsterdam’s politically active social spaces that still perpetuate the aggression we claim to be fighting against. ♦

perceptions of aggression



the woody allen analogy

The inspiration for this zine came from a stranger's email titled "feminist help".

A woman who felt sexually harassed, disrespected and marginalized at Joe's Garage was asking for support.

She wasn't the only one, Joe's Garage has not been a safe space to many young women, that's why we keep leaving. I know first hand what it's like to be patronized and diminished after turning down a man's sexual advances there.

When we heard of a yet another young woman leaving Joe's for similar reasons we decided to take action.

This is not a smear campaign, this is an attempt to start a conversation that will hopefully lead to important changes in our community.

These things don't only happen at Joe's, but it was uncomfortably appropriate to find out that in addition to all these allegations, Joe's Garage is screening a Woody Allen movie.

Why is this problematic?

Woody Allen sexually assaulted his adoptive daughter, Dylan, and in the 90's married his other adoptive daughter Soon-Yi (Who is 35 years younger than him).

Making a public event calling him a genius and his work a masterpiece,

is an act of dismissing this woman's allegations, glorifying his legacy and participating in the source of why he has come out of all these scandals unscathed.



In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter, when he was asked in what ways his wife has changed him, he answered in what ways he has changed her. He mentions how he rescued her from precarious conditions in Korea, put her

through college, and traveled with her all over Europe. Because of him "she has just become a different person". After the interviewer pointed out that he was "saying how [he] changed her," and asked again "How has she changed you?" He said "Well, she's given me a lot of pleasure" but "I don't know if you could say she changed me. I don't know if I've changed. I might be the same person I was when I was 20".

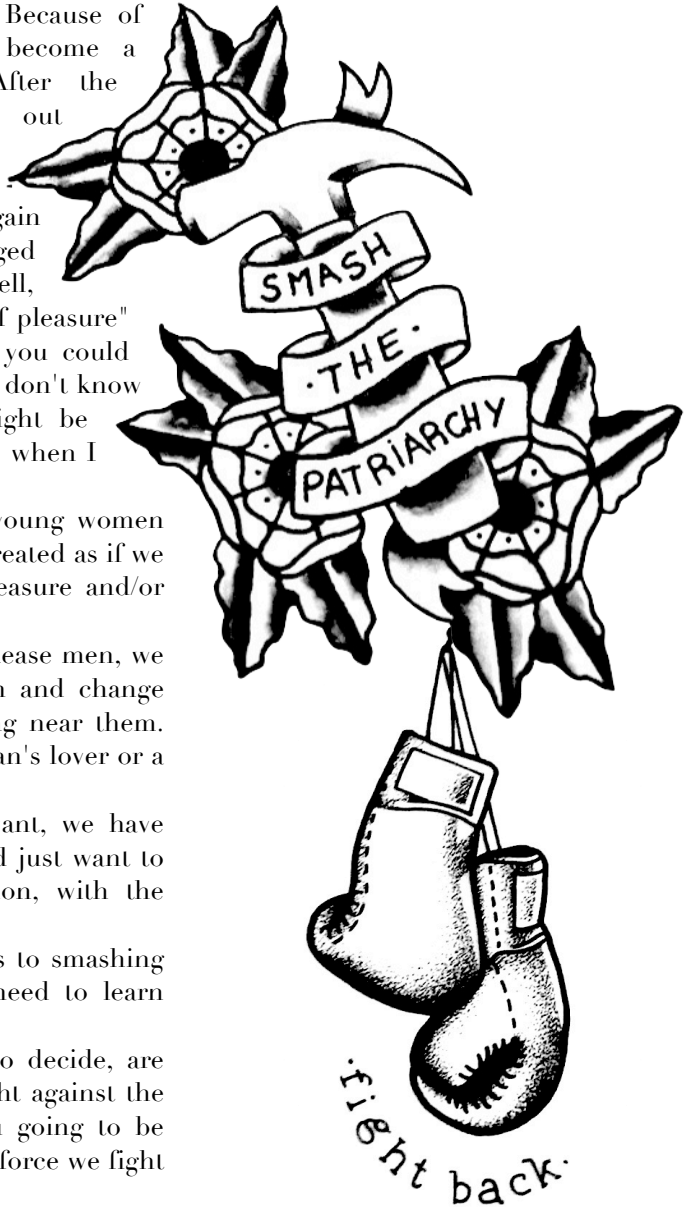
This is the problem young women face at Joe's. We are treated as if we were there to give pleasure and/or learn from men.

We are not there to please men, we are not there to learn and change for the better by being near them. We are not either a man's lover or a man's daughter.

We know what we want, we have our own opinions, and just want to put our work in action, with the help of comrades.

In fact, when it comes to smashing the patriarchy, men need to learn from us.

This is the moment to decide, are you with us in the fight against the patriarchy, or are you going to be part of the patriarchal force we fight against? ♦



Every social interaction leads to an reaction. Of course this is inevitable, and definitely not negative per se, but what should be kept in mind, is that your behavior will affect those around you, and not necessarily in a pleasant way. You may see your behavior as very "normal", while

those same acts may be very triggering to someone else. I think everyone has issues, shit to cope with, and therefore everyone has triggers. Even if you personally feel like you don't, this changes nothing about the triggers and the possibility of your not-on-purpose triggering behavior for other individuals around you, due to their traumas and/or mental health.

Mental health issues are a thing and should be kept in mind while interacting with someone else and while interpreting their behavior. Yes, it has to be possible to interact, trying to do this as

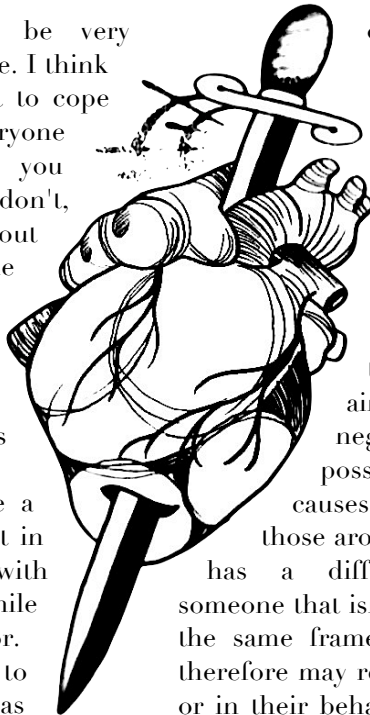
pleasantly as possible evolves through learning about things that insult the ones surrounding you, and adjusting your behavior accordingly. Handling other peoples triggers by avoiding these specific actions is a process you should

definitely go through with your loved ones. However, with your peers that aren't as close it is impossible to avoid every action that may be triggering to an individual.

Interaction would be impossible, so this isn't what I'm aiming for. Yet neglecting the possibility of triggers causes serious harm to those around you. Everybody

has a different background, someone that isn't you will not have the same frame of reference, and therefore may react (either mentally or in their behavior) different from

on triggering behaviour related to trauma and mental health



the way you would react if the two of you changed roles. When you simply keep in mind interaction gets safer, something that we as politically actives always seem to aim for.

Speaking from my own perspective (white cis-female, receiving mental health help for clinical depression, an eating disorder and my borderline personality disorder), the most common trigger for those coping with mental health issues is the one of not-being-seen. This relates both to the keeping in mind of the different mental situations of those around you, as to the adjusting your behavior avoiding this specific trigger for a lot of people (based on my experiences with myself, friends and therapy group members). In our society, based on capitalism and success, mental issues are almost always at a certain point denied, since they do not fit the system. Not being seen is something everyone has experienced, and everyone knows the way it feels. And when this doesn't concern a single case but a systematic pattern, this isn't simply painful but also creating a lack of safety and help.

Waved away by teachers, parents or peers, the problems that were (not) coped with tend to only grow. Just like a broken bone, if you simply ignore it, it quite often will function again, just with a sensible mutilation.

Mental broken bones may also be coped with by the person experiencing them, but if the coping with doesn't include any form acknowledgment, a sensible mutilation, a trigger, might stay.

Once someone has experienced this, the idea of not being seen either scares the hell out of them or just makes them fucking angry. It makes you sad and creates new triggers, quite enough to be a trigger of itself. Mental health problems are often unseen or ignored. Keep this in mind and try to not do this while interacting with your comrades and interpreting their reactions on your behavior. We don't want to act like the authorities that created the "normal" and the "crazy". Those are the ones we're fighting, and handling stuff like they do makes us one of them, instead of doing better. ♦



The kind of organizing we do requires a lot of different skills and various forms of expertise; ranging from theoretical knowledge of political theories or consensus decision

making to practical skills such as building and breaking. In order to learn these skills,

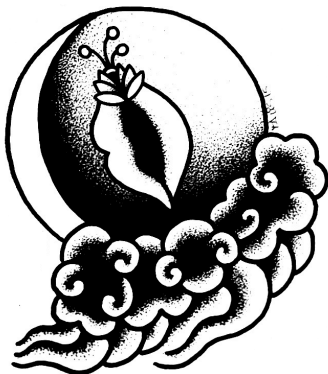
someone has to teach them - a practice commonly referred to as "skill-sharing". But it happens all too often that these skills are not shared, but rather kept in the hands of predominantly cis-men. Even if younger, unexperienced cis-men join a collective and start learning these skills, they will have more access to them because they may act more confidently and/or be trusted more with difficult tasks. The only times when there are active efforts to distribute tasks more equally and include non-cis-men, it happens as

a form of tokenism and results in the non-cis-male person having to carry the weight of their gender(s) on top of learning a new skill. And if there is an attempt at skill-sharing from a cis-male to a non-cis-male,

then this is often not done anti-hierarchically and respectfully but rather in a patronizing manner.

the patriarchal power dynamics of skill-sharing

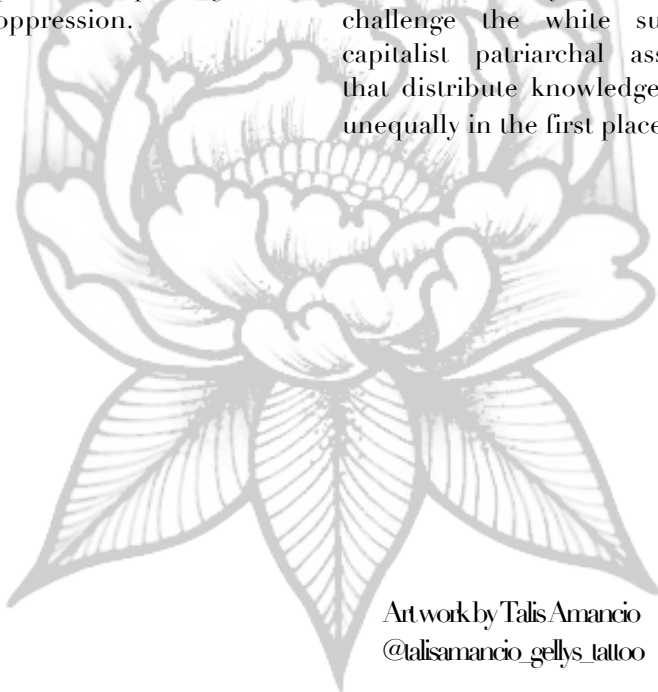
My experience as a white cis-woman has been that even after years of organizing I still feel like a "little girl" unable to do many of the tasks required. I realize that this is a form of internalized patriarchy and actively try to fight this, but it is very hard to do if there is little access to the skills that mostly cis-men have expertise of. The power dynamic of learning and teaching is too much entrenched with machismo and toxic masculinity for me to want to engage with it. This loops back, making me feel inadequate and useless in activist spaces. My experience is mostly in terms of gender, but there are probably many other people who experience different forms of oppression and have a similar experience about the monopolization of expertise.



This dynamic is not only about gender. It also intersects with (perceived) age, class, race, ability and many other forms of stratification. Knowledge and Skill are a source of power, and therefore skill-sharing is an exercise of power. One way of making the power dynamics of skill-sharing explicit and simultaneously challenging them is by letting the person learning the skill have the upper hand, while the person teaching the skill puts themselves in a subordinate position, catering towards the needs of the person learning the skill. This makes up for the fact that teaching a skill from an elevated position would be an exercise of power and privilege that re-inforces oppression.

If, for example, it is mostly cis-men who know how to break houses for squatting, then it is up to them to "offer" their skills and not up to all the others to "ask" for it. This offer has to be completely free from any pressure, and non-cis-men can always decide they would prefer to teach it to themselves. But this is just an example of how the power dynamics of skill-sharing can be subverted.

We have to acknowledge that power plays a role in the way we teach and learn from another and not erase it or make it invisible. We have to fight these oppressive power dynamics on every level, especially if it concerns our interpersonal interactions. Only this way can we challenge the white supremacist capitalist patriarchal assumptions that distribute knowledge and skill unequally in the first place. ♦



Artwork by Talis Amancio
@talisamancio_gellys_tattoo

AUGUST



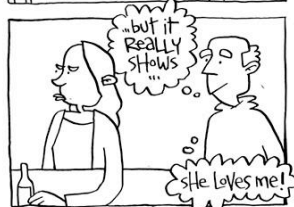
SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



this account is a call-out from Nina to
Dimitri. the characters in this comic
are not meant to resemble the people involved.

AFKA contact
diyworkshop.wix.com/afka
diyworkshop@riseup.net

This is one of several accounts of harassment at this social space. An Iranian woman stopped organizing there after ongoing flirting and condescending behavior by white men. Dutch men told her more than once how to cook her own Iranian family recipes. For instance, telling her to use soy sauce, an ingredient that is just not used in that cuisine. Kicking her out of her own event for using Facebook and being marginalized for not participating in squatting actions (overlooking the fact that she doesn't participate because of her fragile legal status in the Netherlands). She organized an Iranian new wave cinema night that has massive political significance, and yet she was treated as a mainstream leech of the space and the movement. I personally stopped organizing workshops there after turning down a sexual advance and being continuously patronized. An American woman of color wrote her PhD thesis of contemporary anarchist studies at Yale University covering exactly this topic of white patriarchy and contradictory abuses of power within the Amsterdam squatting scene*. This white patriarchal environment is just not safe for women of color and we need to have this conversation in order to restructure this movement and lead it away from hypocrisy, white patriarchy we all claim to fight against.

*The autonomous life? Paradoxes of hierarchy and authority in the squatters movement in Amsterdam
by Nazima Kadir.