

**ART FOR THE  
YOUNG, THE  
QUEER, THE  
FEMINISTS OF  
THE EASTERN  
EUROPE**

# ART FOR THE YOUNG, THE QUEER, THE FEMINISTS OF THE EASTERN EUROPE

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# INTRODUCTION

Dear reader,

2020 showed us once again how unsustainable, unstable and dysfunctional the system we live in is. Across Europe, people of different genders and sexualities were differently affected by the pandemic, as well as young people who were already living in precarious conditions. Gender-based violence has increased and access to art through museums, drama and movie theatres decreased. The space for youth to express their positions through demonstrations and participation in civic life diminished in an already shrunk space for civic activism, particularly in the Eastern Europe.

With this project we wanted to answer to challenges that were already present in society. Unfortunately, we did not manage to meet live and implement the planned International Activities (IA). Instead, we made an Online Course (OC), that will stay on the Green Academy learning platform for the next generations. This was the first time we used the platform and we were surprised by the level of interactivity that it provides - it helped us to bring the event a bit closer to the International Activity. The learning was supported by a number of webinars that touched on EU and Council of Europe gender policies, as well as concrete experiences from women and LGBTQ+ individuals in politics and public speaking. These can be found on CDN's Youtube channel.

The Local Actions that followed the OC played a big role in the whole project - this is why we dedicated the whole first section to it. We hope they provide concrete inspiration to future generations of Green Academy learners, empowering them to push for change in their own countries and at the European level. In addition, to ensure continued discussion about gender, sexuality, inclusion and art, we are publishing several articles connected to these topics from the Editorial Team.

This project builds on the previous work of the CDN and the Green European Foundation on gender, art and inclusion.

We hope you enjoy this publication and use it to learn about gender and art, with an added Eastern European perspective and feel empowered to fight for a better future for all!

Editorial Team,  
Kateryna, Selma, Maja, Elena and Masha

**L O C A L      A C T I O N S**



## Azerbaijan, online Queer AF

*Nafas LGBTI Azerbaijan Alliance:*

Over the last couple of years, queer and feminist themes have become part of some art projects and events in Azerbaijan. But, unfortunately, mostly western artists have been visiting the country and presenting their exhibitions. The same opportunity had to be given to the local artists and photographers as well and this is how “Queer Art Festival” was born. Practices from recent years in the field of feminist and queer activism were repetitive and social justice activism needed to take a new path by meeting art. Queer AF and the opportunity given to the local artists to freely express themselves was meant to bring new perspectives to the local community.

Queer Art Festival is an online platform where local artists can collaborate together and exhibit their work to tackle the gender issues and representation in private and political spaces in Azerbaijan from both Women’s and LGBT+ perspectives. The Queer Art Festival was aiming to analyse this concept of activism as a tool for change and to explore art as a method to expand the safe space in providing visibility to feminists and LGBT+ people in the country.

Under-represented topics such as gender roles, patriarchy, sexism, women’s emancipation, LGBT+ rights, queer theory (to name a few examples) needed to be explored and addressed in the local artist communities and Queer AF created a platform for that, from which LGBT+ and queer ar-

tivists were benefiting.

To organise the Queer Art Festival online exhibition, Queer AF brought together 8 different artists working with different tools and asked them to create a collective online exhibition. The main



theme of the exhibition was called “**Queer x Azerbaijan: My Body, My Identity, My Heritage, My Environment**”.

Artists created a general storyline and they followed each other’s visual contents and descriptions/stories they told, to ensure that different topics were covered. In every sub-category, the artists explored and visualised the topic from a strictly LGBT+ and feminist perspective and most of the themes of the works were connected to the local queer and feminist issues that communities face. There was a big interest in the website and some pieces got around 300 views!

To check out all the works, go to: [queerartfest.org](http://queerartfest.org)

## Armenia, villages near the conflict region Peace First: March for Women\*

*Frontline Youth Network:*

The march was designed as an awareness raising advocacy intervention aimed at women’s empowerment and tackling post-war and post-crisis mental health issues.

The FYN team visited 16 villages of the Tavush region and talked to local women and youth. The march lasted for 5 days between January 4-8 2021. In 16 villages (day 1/5: Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur, Tavush (Tovuz), Aygepar, day 2/5: Movses, No-

rashen, Choratan, Verin Karmir Aghbyur, day 3/5: Artsvaberd, Chinari, Aygedzor, day 4/5: Navur, It-sakar, Chinchin, day 5/5: Tsakhkavan, Varagavan, Paravakar) we have reached out to approximately 90 women, overall.

As a result, we have developed 16 small stories on people’s voices, available on our social media platforms and on the web: [www.frontlineyouth.net](http://www.frontlineyouth.net)

The project was a really inspirational action not only for the beneficiaries identified earlier, but also for the FYN team. Since we are located in Berd town, most of our community actions are limited geographically, but we aim to reach out to neighboring villages to get more people on board and spread our peace agenda wider. So, this action was the first step of our mobility actions that we, as a team, decided to prioritise.





## Ukraine, Berdyansk Code: Gender

*There is time, Cultural Urbanists*

In Ukraine the attitude towards gender issues is ambiguous. Our state is secular and our constitution guarantees equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender, ethnicity or religion. But in reality, many women and LGBT+ people are still suffering from gender-based violence, economic discrimination, uneven political representation, and, of course, many stereotypes and myths. During the last decade, there have been some improvements in this area, but still there is much work to do on both legislative and mental levels. At the same time, specific political forces and some share of society are considering gender equality as

makers and activists tackle gender problems more rarely than other local issues. But it does not make them less important. On the contrary, gender stereotypes and discrimination on their basis may affect people in small cities more. That's why the members of "There is Time", a civil movement in the medium-sized city of Berdyansk, decided to implement a project named "Code: Gender". The project was aimed at youth of the local community and consisted of three parts: painting a mural, study & art workshops, and an art exhibition.

During the **first part** of the project, a professional artist with the help of volunteers painted a mural (50m<sup>2</sup>) on a wall inside the local Palace of Culture. Palace is a municipal building in the city center for different kinds of leisure and hobbies which is actively visited by youth and children of the city. The mural's theme is gender stereotypes about careers typically regarded as male or female in Ukraine,



something imposed or dismiss it as a low-priority issue. The other dimension of the problem is uneven dissemination of progressive ideas like gender equality or LGBT+ rights in the country: in small cities, unlike regional centers, politicians, policy-

like cellist, florist, programmer or flutist, which is relevant for young people visiting different study groups in the Palace. It is worth noting that the administration of the building was very supportive of the initiative, they even bought the paints and



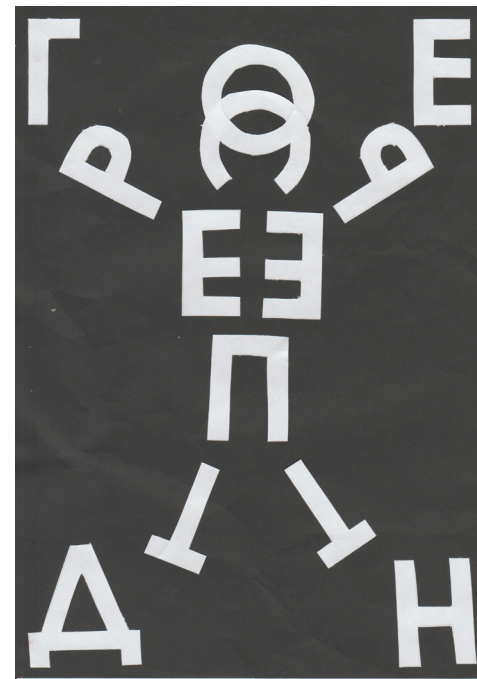
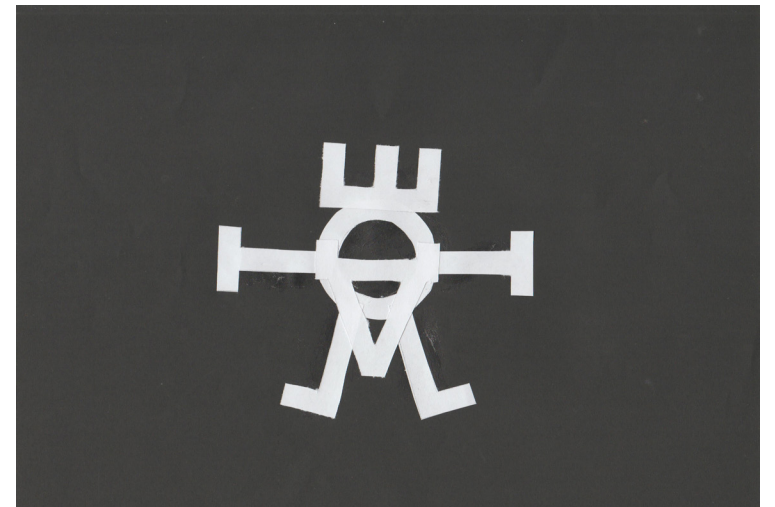
materials for the mural painting.

The **second part** of our project was study and art workshops guided by the experienced trainers on gender studies. During these the team explained the difference between biological sex, gender and sexuality, as well as discussed which gender stereotypes were widespread in their environment and how they affected everyone's lives. After the session all participants had an opportunity to express themselves and their perception of gender stereotypes through creating art objects with the help of materials they received by post. These art objects were collage applications from the letters of words "gender" and "stereotype" (in Ukrainian) with a coded message, which was explained on a separate sheet of paper.

The participants of the workshops were local youth (mainly high school and college/university

students). We didn't make any special selection of participants (except for age) because we wanted to work mainly with people who were mostly or completely unfamiliar with the topic. One of the study groups was held for the youth in difficult life circumstances (mostly boarding school graduates) in cooperation with the project "Self-help group for teenagers". Another group consisted of pupils from a school in a village near Berdyansk. For our NGO, it was the first experience of holding such events in villages and we consider it to have been very productive. Because of the national lockdown, 2 out of 4 of our workshops were held online. Due to this, we provided the participants with tea or coffee and cookies for the common coffee breaks during Zoom meetings to create a more favourable group atmosphere.





## Belarus, Online The Women's Face of Protests in Belarus

The aim of this Local Action was to document HERstory and make the variety of women's involvement in the protests in Belarus visible through the creation of a website with their stories and animated illustrations. We developed personal stories into the publications through conducting the interviews, designing powerful animations that appeal to viewers' emotions, publishing women's stories together with illustrations and widely disseminated it.

The project is a drop in the sea of thousands of women's stories from August - December 2020. Twenty stories show women's experience of life in post-election Belarus from different sides - multi-

faceted, sincere and touching.

The women's marches were a turning point in the history of the post-election movement in Belarus. But besides active participation in rallies, women were involved in volunteer services, supported their loved ones, aspired to do more, and struggled with their fears and anxieties. Despite the fact that the stories include some events, a significant emphasis was placed on the emotional experience of the project's protagonists.

In these stories, every person from Belarus will recognise themselves or their loved ones whose lives changed forever after August 2020.

Those stories are in Russian and Belarusian, but illustrated with powerful animated images. Most of them speak without words. So, do not hesitate to open [odnaiznas.com](http://odnaiznas.com) and take a look at the illustrations even if you do not read Russian.



## Latvia, Riga Rising Beyond the Hate - Being Queer in Latvia

*Protests:*

The Latvian young green organisation "Protests" facilitated a transformative art experience for the queer community of Latvia.

A run-down industrial space was transformed into a piece of art and a video was filmed displaying anti-queer slurs spray-painted on the walls, letting members add more slurs and other traumatising anti-queer things said about them to the walls, and finally covering up the negative wall scribbles with positive artwork, confirming the values held by the queer community of Latvia. The art process was documented in a video, showing a change from dismissal and abuse, to hope, recognition and pride; from vandalism to art; from

trauma to healing; from negative things people say about them to who they really are. The action involved out and proud LGBT+ people of Latvia — influencers, activists, and all-round active community members.

Since the project proposal, the Constitutional Court of Latvia came out with a ruling, proclaiming that the Constitution does indeed protect all families in Latvia, even though there was a previous attempt to exclude same-sex partner/parent families. After this ruling though, the National Alliance proposed to amend the Constitution, to exclude such families and transgender people from protection. These developments and the heated public debate fuelled the project - we briefly refer to these developments in the video and the final artwork was an affirmation of our values. It illustrates the ongoing hate speech directed towards LGBT+ people, and LGBT+ people and allies working relentlessly for a better future, despite everything.





*I have felt less safe in Latvia since the National Alliance proposed to redefine the term “family” in the Constitution of the State specifically to exclude same sex families. Since we are all occupying internet spaces, the situation has worsened online. More hate comments are written under pro-LGBT+ posts, one of the biggest Latvian influencers said on her instagram that she doesn’t support gay marriage, and a petition has been created to prevent Samanta Tina’s song from entering the Eurovision competition, because her video showcased two women kissing for almost a whole second. Not to mention the anti-LGBT+ stickers that have been appearing spradically in the city center.*

*One thing that I understood from working on this project: we need to learn to ask for help from our supporters and create similar projects, providing work for other people and just normalising LGBT+ stories in the media and in our culture and society. Our voices are small because we lack resources, but with the help of our friends we can do it.*

This project was intended to amplify the voices of LGBT+ people in Latvia and to showcase their struggles and frustrations living in an often-close-minded society, providing also a more positive outlook on the future and encouraging people not to lose hope in themselves and in their situation. This video was made to show that, although there are a lot of people who stand against the LGBT+ community, we as a community are stronger together and the fight is not over.

Check the whole video on “Protests” Social Media:

Facebook - @Jaunatnes organizācija “Protests”

Instagram - @protestsjaunatne

Twitter - @ProtestsYouth

## Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tuzla Queer Life Stories

Tuzla Open Center:

The project Queer Life Stories was created as an answer to the invisibility of LGBT+ identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Throughout our lives, mainstream culture has given all of us a destructive and inaccurate narrative about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, enveloped in homo/bi/transphobic notes.

Heteropatriarchy imperatively dehumanizes and pathologises everything that doesn’t fit inside the box meant for cisgender and heterosexual identities, creating space for discrimination and all forms of violence towards LGBTI+ people. We believe everything begins with perception – the public narrative never even had a chance to present the lives of LGBTI+ people in an authentic and hu-



manizing way. Absence of role models as such has a negative impact on the mental health of persons in the LGBTI+ community, either through personal struggle to explore and accept our own identities, or through struggle with belonging inside the homo/bi/transphobic society.

As a first book of its own type in Bosnia and Herzegovina, “Pričam ti u duginim bojama” (english: “Talking to you through rainbow colors”) is a book that aims to correct that problem. It’s a collection of personal stories of queer people talking about various moments in their life – hopes, love

stories, fears, coming out and experiences with family, friends and colleagues.

We have to admit, while reading and editing the stories during the creation process, on different occasions we would burst into tears from all the vulnerability and emotional nakedness that queer people so bravely presented. When we read the stories, they were with us in the same room, speaking of their experiences, the hardships, the hopes and the strength. We could feel their smiles, their tears, fears and love there with us. And that’s why we’re so grateful to all the people who contributed to this. Because we know that all the tears and laughs caused by these stories reflect something inside us, and that’s what we even wrote inside the introduction – that a piece of our heart has hugged a piece of another’s heart, and they finally told each other: I’ve found you, I see you.

The process of collecting stories from LGBTI+ persons has been both hard and rewarding. We found out that it’s not very easy to self-reflect on our own experiences, because they often carry a lot of unprocessed pain caused by all the rejection, shame and violence that happened simply because we were different from the dominant norm. And that’s why we feel gratitude to all people who were brave enough to share such vulnerable parts of their lives with us. Despite all hardships, we managed to gather around fifty stories.

On the 20th of February 2021, we hosted a promotion of the book where we presented the project, the purpose of the book, and read a few stories. A few people read their own stories as well, and even the physical distance couldn’t keep us from feeling connected in a space where we shared our authenticity. In other words, the atmosphere was warm and people felt happy for the book, and a lot of them shared the need to pass the book to people who might want to, or need to, read it. After the promotion, we distributed the book to our donors, NGOs and individuals of interest and local institutions that showed interest in collaborating with Tuzla Open Center.



## Serbia, Belgrade LGBTQ+ Mural

### Serbian Green Youth:

**L** - Local Action with which we decided to implement was an LGBTQ+ (topically oriented) mural in the narrow city center of Belgrade.

**G** - Goal we expect to accomplish is empowering LGBTQ+ youth to step out of their closed safe spaces by promoting diversity, equality, equity and fighting for our rights through publicly displayed artwork.

**B** - Being a perfect mix of artistic and political, we see this mural as an art piece that can have a long-lasting effect.

**T** - Together with Pride Info Center we have developed a better understanding of the issue we wanted to tackle, thus, we decided to enrich the public space with a mural, sending a peace message, and calling for solidarity among people.

**Q** - Queer events in Serbia are almost always internal which helps with empowering the youth within the community but often does not reach the wider public, which we intend to break by presenting and promoting this mural.

**+** - Plus, along with the mural itself, the process of painting was captured in a video format, which we will be using for additional promotion and advocacy for inclusion & equality on our social media.



**A R T I C L E S**



# FREEDOM OF COMING OUT

Maja Klimentic

According to ILGA Europe research (<https://rainbow-europe.org/country-ranking>), Bosnia and Herzegovina is ranked 22nd in Europe, with only 37% of set criteria respected. They track each country using a wide range of indicators, covering everything from equality, family issues and hate speech to legal gender recognition, freedom of expression and asylum rights. The rankings are based on how the laws and policies of each country impact on the lives of LGBT+ people.

One of the main organisations working to support women and the LGBT+ community through different programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina is Sarajevo Open Center (SOC). They play a big role in advocacy and policies regarding LGBT+ rights, gender equality and direct support through community gatherings, educational events as well as health and legal support. This interview is with Amina Imamović (she/her/they/them), who is an LGBT+ activist, programme coordinator of SOC and one of the organisers of the first (and second!) Pride March in the country.

*Bosnia and Herzegovina held its first Pride in September 2019. Here's how it started.*

“The initiator of the idea of the first Pride March came from the community itself, but the official organization of Pride March began in 2018. with 15 activists from all parts of BiH.

My fellow activist, dear friend and at that time work colleague (since we both worked in Sarajevo Open Center), Lejla Huremović, asked me if I

would like to be part of the Organising Committee (OC) and I happily said yes. The idea that I would participate in organizing something that is one of the biggest milestones for the LGBT+ movement in BiH was HUGE for me. And at that time, I was pretty new to LGBT+ activism - I was 19 when I came to OC and 20 when Pride March happened. Right now, I can say I was not prepared for all the work and emotions that I have had, but I am so honored, privileged, and glad that I have had been one of the organisers of our first Pride March.”

*At the time there was low visibility of the community. The announcement of Pride March shook up traditional communities and organisers faced many difficulties and discrimination. Can you reflect on the event in terms of Freedom of public gathering? What were the restrictions and how does it compare to other public gatherings?*

“One of the main problems for organizing protests, such as Pride March, is the current freedom of public gathering of the Sarajevo Canton, which is very broad and leaves room for different interpretations. This year, as last year, the Pride March was characterised as a high-risk gathering, but it is not the only such gathering in the Sarajevo Canton.

The additional security measures of The Ministry of the Interior of the Sarajevo Canton were not imposed on any other protest. By placing these security measures at the expense of the organisers, it is said that the state does not have the capacity or does not want to provide full security protection to LGBT+ persons and other participants in the



Ljubav  
nije  
privilegija





pride parade. In practice, in the Sarajevo Canton, only LGBT+ protests are charged with such additional measures. These measures condition the use of public space to protest against violence, discrimination, and the unequal position of LGBT+ people. By not fulfilling these conditions, we cannot take to the streets and fight for human rights.

The state has an obligation to provide and protect people at public gatherings. We are the ones who need to be protected by the state and not to pay additional security for our own protection.

“Honestly, I did not expect 3,000 people to come to our Pride March. We hoped for 500, 1,000 tops. The important thing is that a lot of our LGBT+ community came to Pride, some covered their faces not to be outed, but they came because it was important for them to be there on that special day. We even had grannies waving from their windows, people from cafés who were waving at us and saying “Ima izać!” as we were passing by. It was a magical day.

On the other hand, on the same day as Pride, 8th September, we had a counter-protest of religious

Muslim people. Thankfully it was a peaceful protest, with some problematic and homophobic messages on their banners.

Since there was one more counter-protest before Pride March, it is pretty clear that a lot of people did not want the Pride to happen and they were against it. That is, not just regular people, there were politicians such as Samra Čosović-Hajdarević, a deputy of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) in Sarajevo Canton, who drew criticism when she described the March as a “terrible” idea aimed at “destroying the state and its people” on her Facebook page. This only tells us that we have a long way to go to fight homophobia in this country.”

Since there was one more counter-protest before Pride March, it’s pretty clear that a lot of people did not want the Pride to happen and they were against it. That is, not just regular people, there were politicians such as Samra Čosović-Hajdarević, a deputy of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) in Sarajevo Canton, who drew criticism when she described the March as a “terrible” idea aimed at “destroying the state and its people” on

her Facebook page.

*Visibility and attitudes toward the community changed after the march, which was empowering and political. What was the impact of the Pride on local politics? Can you compare the visibility of LGBT+ topics in public discourse before and after Pride?*

“The perception that LGBT+ people demand additional rights or a privileged position in society stems from the fact that a large number of citizens are not aware of which rights LGBT+ people lack. Being part of the LGBT+ community does not mean, as it is often perceived in our society, “being different”, “being sick”, and ultimately being doomed to the impossibility of living one’s authentic life in public. But to change the perception of LGBT+ people, for LGBT+ people to be integrated into society, you need above all legal equality, public support, and protection of institutions.

The main output is that we have put queer issues on the agenda in public and we achieved visibility that none of the previous events or actions managed. Even though Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019 made a little improvement in protecting human rights, the holding of its first LGBT+ Pride was a welcome development, even if queer people still continue to face discrimination.

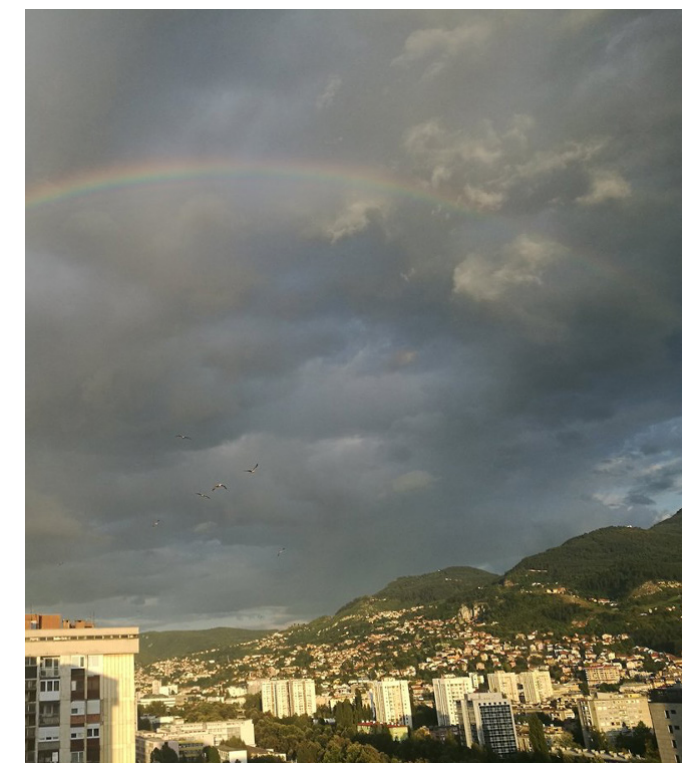
The fact is that the most important issues such as the lack of legal family rights of same-sex couples, lack of available medical procedures for transition and legal basis for gender reassignment, and the inability to freely express their sexual orientation and gender identity without fear of violence still remain, but have been noticed in a more serious manner by local policy makers.”

*To the LGBT+ community itself, the process was empowering and liberating. What did the Pride mean to the community in the region, can you compare the overall visibility and freedoms before and after Pride?*

“Our first Pride March was the last first pride march in the region, we did what communities did a few years back in their countries. Personally, I wouldn’t say that freedoms change, but having a sense of freedom did. I think the community saw some very visible people who are members of LGBT+ community being very proud and loud about who they are and I think that gave them the affirmation that it’s okay to be queer. A lot of support from the public did help in that.

Between April and September 2019, we had more media coverage about the LGBT+ community, Pride March, and discussions about LGBT+ issues than the whole previous year. In that period LGBT+ discussions could be heard in every household in BiH, and that is a big thing.”

*In the end, BiH’s first pride passed successfully and reached many people. The march ended with a song, and the same day there was a rainbow above Sarajevo.*





# STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO GENDER EQUALITY IN THE LABOUR SPHERE

Elena Petrovska

*\*This article is referring to reports and articles that have data about discrimination women are facing; this article is not meant to be disregarding towards other gender identities and their struggles.*

**S**tructural discrimination is woven into the ways our societies function, and operates through norms, routines, patterns of attitudes and behaviour that create obstacles in achieving equal opportunities and real equality. All people have multiple layers to their identity and may define themselves according to various criteria (including gender, sex, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, social status, ability, religion and other) - they might experience discrimination on the basis of more than one perceived characteristic, which leads to multiple, or intersectional discrimination. At the Eastern European level specifically, there is lack of data and legal mechanisms dealing with **intersectional discrimination**. Moreover, certain countries have discriminatory practices embodied into their legal frameworks, preventing equal opportunities and participation, especially for women and genderqueer people. Some of these legal obstacles can be found in labor-related laws, with, for example, labor codes defining lists of *jobs that are banned for women*.

Even though over the last century there have been many improvements in regards to equalizing job opportunities and work conditions, taking a further look into the sphere of labor, there's still a considerable amount of *direct discrimination* that women and genderqueer people are facing at workplaces:

- prejudiced treatment in hiring or firing processes on account of gender
- being passed over for a promotion on account of gender; also known as the "glass ceiling"
- getting paid less than a cis-gender man who works the same job
- forms of sexual harassment
- being given less paid sick leave or denied employee benefits on account of gender
- being written up for a behavior that does not result in disciplinary action when performed by an employee of another sex
- being referred to by a name or gender that a person doesn't identify with
- being the subject of derogatory language or slurs on account of being of another gender/sex/sexual orientation

These oppressive and harmful mechanisms can leave long-term damaging effects on someone. In

the least, they can lead to low self-esteem, mental health issues, workplace conflict, feeling unsafe or fearful, isolated and so on. Taking into consideration the global health crisis caused by Covid-19 in 2020, the workspace became a less safe space for many, and in addition, a great number of people across the world lost their job. The pandemic, however, affected women and genderqueer employees disproportionately, leaving them disadvantaged in society and furthering the gender disparity.

*Quick global overview of the pandemic consequences and the current general state:*

- Women\* spend more time performing unpaid work (such as childcare and house-

work); women\* are now spending 15 hours more in unpaid labor each week than men.

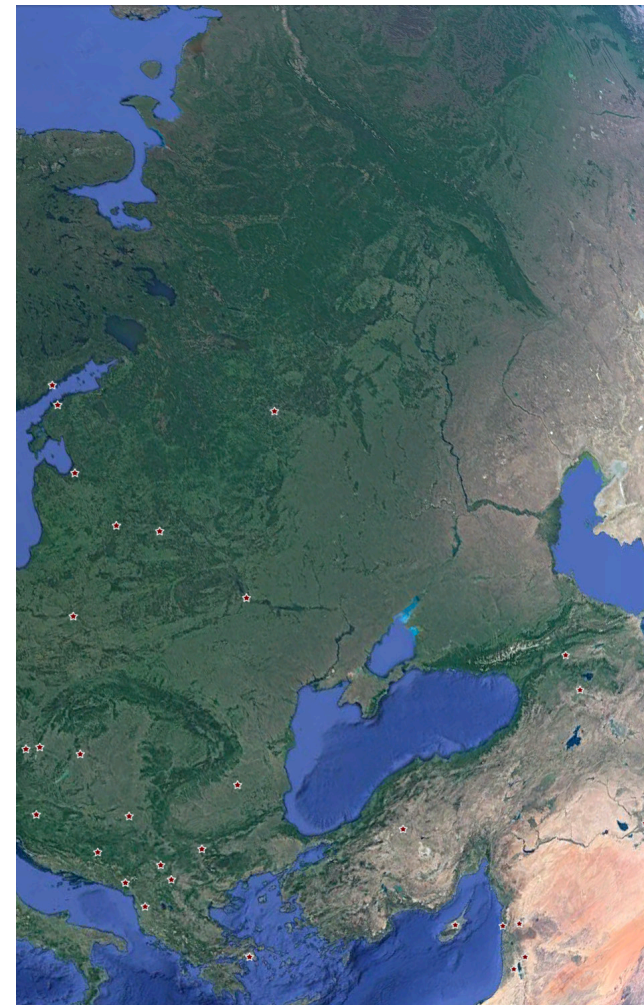
- **Very few women\* are CEOs of the world's largest corporations.** As of the August 2020 *Fortune Global* list, only 13 women (2.6%) were CEOs of Fortune Global 500 companies and all of them were white.
- Wage losses resulting from Covid-19 are disproportionately affecting women\*. In Europe, for example, women\* are experiencing a total wage bill loss of about 8.1% compared to just 5.4% for men.

How can countries close the existing divide in the economic participation between workers of all genders? Even though there is often a large gap between laws in the books and their implementation, the first crucial step would have to be formal: **ensuring equality under the law.**

## In the pursuit of work in Eastern Europe

In 2012, Svetlana Medvedeva, a navigation officer from Russia's southeastern Samara region, applied for a job as a ship's captain at Samara River Passenger Enterprise. When the company decided to hire her, they had to withdraw their decision because of the law. The same legislation in the country that sent the first woman in space, denies women the opportunity to become train drivers, carpenters, truck drivers, or professional drivers. This list extended to as many as 456 banned jobs in total in 2018, arguing that they are too "dangerous" or "harmful" to women's health, specifically their reproductive health.

Medvedeva fought for her rights in court, but her claim was rejected. Later in 2013, Medvedeva registered a complaint before the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, arguing her rights had been violated because of her gender. The committee found in favor of Medvedeva and urged the Russian authorities to grant her compensation and allow her to take the job.



These discriminatory gender-based restrictions were present widely across Eastern Europe, but thanks to the efforts of human rights defenders, many bans have been lifted in the recent years, and these notorious lists grew shorter.

In 2017, just 6 months after the launch of the campaign #Alljobs4allwomen, Moldova became the first country to change its Labor Code, lifting banned professions. Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia followed by repealing their lists as well, some of them being still applicable to certain groups of women\* (pregnant and new mothers). Still many countries hold similar patriarchal views of the “suitability” of women\* and are reluctant to grant equal access to all types of work for everyone.

As we can see and read on a daily basis, there are multiple levels of discrimination that people are facing in their professional lives. Any discriminatory behavior we are witnessing should be condemned from our side and support for victims of inequity should be provided. Today, we are still far from a fair and equal society but we are growing re-

silient together and hopeful that rights and justice will prevail, because we won't stop fighting for it.



# THE JOURNEY OF THE LATVIAN LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY: From the Streets to the Parliament

Selma Levrence

Latvia does not have a good reputation regarding LGBTQ+ rights— it has repeatedly ranked worst in the EU according to ILGA's Rainbow Europe. There has been no legal improvement for years, and it took the establishment of the infamous LGBT free zones in Poland to move Latvia up to the second last place.

Even though there are no improvements on paper just yet, socially, the situation is slowly but steadily improving.

The recent attempt by the far-right National Alliance to amend the constitution to take away family rights from LGBTQ+ families was met by widespread opposition from both coalition and opposition lawmakers, social activists and celebrities, as well as leaders of liberal churches and theology professors.

As we celebrate the 15th anniversary of Association of LGBT and their friends Mozaika, the first LGBTQ+ rights organisation in Latvia on March 10, 2021, we look back on 15 years of struggle- an unfortunate mix of post-Soviet social conserva-

tism, the influence of American church movements and populist politics means that Latvia is still one of Europe's least LGBTQ+ friendly countries.

However, social attitudes are steadily changing- the first two pride parades in Latvia were met by threats and violent mobs throwing eggs, tomatoes and even feces, similar to recent events in Bialystok and Tbilisi. A couple hundred LGBTQ+ people and allies marched against a violent army of homophobes.

The situation seemed hopeless, as homophobia was turned into a social and political movement by one of the ruling parties- the oligarch-sponsored Latvijas Pirmā partija, commonly known as the priests' party.

Members of this party didn't hesitate to spread hate both verbally and politically. In a book on homophobic hate speech published by Mozaika, horrendous quotes from the lawmakers of this party can be found. LGBTQ+ people were publicly compared to a plague, fleas, virus and dehumanised in other ways by members of parliament when



debating in the plenary.

LPP went further than this, again highlighting how hate speech directly leads to action. Together with other parties, they infamously amended the Latvian Constitution in 2005, defining marriage as a union of a man and a woman.

Despite state-sponsored homophobia, the situation steadily improved. After the two hardest years for the LGBTQ+ community in Latvia, 2005 and 2006, things took a turn for the better. Each pride parade since has been attended by more supporters and less opponents.

In 2014, Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs publicly came out as gay on Twitter, becoming the first politician in not only Latvia, but the entirety of the former Soviet Union to do so. Despite raising a lot of negative attention at first, he has remained very popular and this year will mark 10 years in power for him.

This goes to show how important visibility is—since Rinkēvičs' announcement, more and more celebrities have also come out and for each one, society has been more accepting.

Europride was hosted in Riga in 2015, attended by thousands of participants and only a handful of counter-protesters. The violent hordes of homophobes that had stormed the streets just 10 years prior had disappeared.

Despite the improving social attitudes (surveys show that up to 2/3 of Latvia's population support a gender-neutral partnership law), the legal situation hasn't changed much. However, now there

are three major political parties supporting civil unions and wider LGBTQ+ rights, New Unity (EPP), Development/For! (Renew Europe) and The Progressives (Greens/EFA)- a situation that would have been unimaginable just 5 years ago.

The leader of the Development/For! Faction in the parliament, Marija Golubeva, elected in 2018, is the second openly queer politician and a fierce advocate of a civil partnership law protecting same-sex couples.

This proposed civil partnership law has been rejected by the parliament several times, but each time, the 10 000 citizen signatures needed to re-submit the proposal were collected, the last time in less than a week.

Considering liberal and green parties' success in the Riga City Council elections, as well as the Constitutional Court's ruling in late 2020 stating that the current lack of protection for same-sex couples and their families is anti-constitutional, it is almost safe to say that there will soon be major improvements in the legal situation of LGBTQ+ people in Latvia.

Living in Eastern Europe, where homophobia is widespread and often state-backed, the situation for LGBTQ+ people can seem hopeless. However, it is worth noting that with activism and with visibility of the queer community, social change can be brought about in just a couple of years. In order to turn social change into political change, we must foster visibility of queer issues and encourage political participation.



# WOMEN OF SOUTH CAUCASUS IN POLITICS

Masha Pashkova-Dzneladze

South Caucasus is the most homophobic and misogynist region out of all the Eastern Europe. We interviewed young women that are actively participating in politics and civil society in the countries of South Caucasus - Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Liza Zhvania is the Executive Committee member of the Greens of Georgia - a newly established proto-party in the country. She is also a founder of Maudi - a contemporary arts space. Vafa Naghiyeva is a feminist activist and member of the municipality in the village of Neftchala region in Azerbaijan, where she was born. She graduated with a degree in Political Science and International Relations at Sabahattin Zaim University in Istanbul. Lusine Kosakyan is a human rights specialist and long-time CDN activist currently working as Project Director and Co-founder at Frontline Youth Network.



Liza Zhvania



Lusine Kosakyan



Vafa Naghiyeva

*How is it to be a woman in your country? What are the cultural, economic and political challenges that women face?*

**Liza Zhvania:** To be a woman in Georgia is a complex matter. On the one hand, many women, especially in the last decades, have taken on the economic and social responsibility for their families, while the traditional, patriarchal notions, which

our society keeps holding on to, undermine women's role - both socially and politically. While many women are brought up to learn hard work, have patience and humility, society does not stimulate us to be ambitious. Despite the fact that women, mothers, carry most responsibility in many families, where fathers could be missing, their role socially and politically is not fully recognised.

**Lusine Kosakyan:** My personal experience as a woman and my professional practice with working on women's rights sphere, make me think that there is a differentiated attitude towards women in Armenia (similar to other post-Soviet countries) distinguished often according to their marital status, and sometimes their social and educational background. Married women with children get most of the encouragement and gratitude as "a woman." This is the status perceived as the most successful and fulfilled for women socially. Strong women who pursue their career are always being questioned and challenged to fulfil their "role" as wives and mothers, however, once they fight with all the sexism, ageism etc, and reach the stage when certain achievements are obvious, they are also welcomed in the society. Women of young age (often men too) are perceived as kids who need to be controlled by parents. This is the attitude that can be observed through personal experience. Politically, Armenia applies gender neutral policies. On the other hand, domestic violence and femicide as such is an issue in Armenia.

A number of women's rights organizations work in the field to promote gender equality and a gender sensitive agenda in all the spheres.

**Vafa Naghiyeva:** Being a woman in Azerbaijan means that you should always fight for your and other women's rights. These times domestic violence and suicide rates of women are increasing and women are brutally murdered by their fathers, sons and husbands, even their fathers-in-law. Being a woman in my country means you should struggle. It is difficult for women to be represented in high positions in the political arena. Even if they are appointed to certain positions, they have no independent decision-making rights.

*How did you become involved in the activism that you do today? Why is it important for you?*

**Lusine Kosakyan:** I have a professional background in human rights. I have years of work experience in the local non-profits working on women's

rights. Currently, I am sharing leading positions in organizations that focus on human rights and peace. Both my academic and professional experience helped me to prioritise this specific issue and apply gender mainstreaming to all the projects implemented by my represented organizations.

**Liza Zhvania:** I became involved in activism because I saw a lot of potential in growth, together with these endeavours, and somehow the turn of events, interpersonal relationships, common experiences brought me together with the people I work with. In both spaces, Maudi and the Greens, I work with close friends and allies. In both cases these organisations slowly fill the need for the surrounding communities, and have both cultural and political meaning which resonates with the society at large. Thus, I consider my work to be primarily social.

**Vafa Naghiyeva:** I worked as a journalist ten years ago at human rights organisation. Most of the time I was making interviews with people on the streets. After, I worked as a journalist at TV channel which was financially supported by the government. I travelled to the regions of Azerbaijan and saw many problems, not only in terms of Gender, but other perspectives.

I wanted to contribute somehow to improving gender equality in Azerbaijan. Because I am a woman and I know how difficult is to be one. I also face difficulties because of my gender. But, in the rural areas the situation is much harder. Women here face domestic violence and they need professional support, education, and financial independence. For this reason, I opened a sewing atelier in my village in 2019. We had difficulties continuing the work, especially after pandemic, but I am going to try to improve the entrepreneurship and continue again. In addition, to help more people in my village, I ran in the municipality elections and made it to the council. It is difficult to win any election in my country because of a shrunk political space. I was the only person who was elected according to democratic processes. Me and my team could fight

# თავისუფლება azadiq აզատობა

against fraud and ensured that the democratic elections take place in my small village.

*How are people of different genders represented on different levels of government?*

**Liza Zhvania:** There is a serious problem in gender representation in government, and in cases when women are holding higher positions, the power usually seems to be nominal. For example, we have our first woman president, but it is largely perceived, and I share this belief, that her actions and decisions are seldom independent, but rather show the position of the ruling party. A huge problem is also the manner in which women politicians are often blackmailed by footage representing their personal, often sexual life. Public discussion of personal life becomes a huge risk for almost any woman stepping into politics and these discussions often shape the public opinion around the given figure.

**Vafa Naghiyeva:** In Azerbaijan, it is difficult to speak about this. There is no place for different genders on different levels of governance. If there are women officials, they were probably not elected and they don't have any role, they only exist for formality.

**Lusine Kosakyan:** As for the politics and decision making, there are statistics on gender representa-

tiveness. To note, the statistics apply a gender binary approach to all the data. So hence, according to research by UNDP, women's representation in decision-making domains remains low.

Currently the representation of women stands for:

- Less than 2% as community heads;
- Around 10 % as local council members (data of 2019);
- 24% as National Assembly members; 8% of Government Ministers and 26% as Deputy Ministers;
- 0% as female governors, 18% as vice-governors.

*Do you think women in politics are stigmatised in your country? If yes, what are the factors contributing to this process?*

**Lusine Kosakyan:** While women are important actors in education and social affairs, and are well represented in academia, in politics certain barriers remain intact. For example, at local level there are limitations in affirmative measures or engagement of political parties to advance women. Stereotypical attitudes on the roles of women and men and lack of confidence among women add to barriers for women's political participation. Due to their limited representation in leadership positions, women have very little influence over policy decisions. While a 25% quota system ensures

women are represented in political parties, they face distinct barriers to entering office at the local and national levels.

The political sphere remains a male domain due to barriers such as the need to balance political careers with family responsibilities and public perceptions, aka stereotypes, that men make better leaders. Women are more than half of civil servants, but only 15% of those are in the most senior levels. More efforts are needed to promote women's active participation in higher levels of government policy-making.

**Vafa Naghiyeva:** Unfortunately, yes, like in many other strongly patriarchal countries, our society does not want to allow women to represent themselves in different areas, especially politics.

For example, when I gave in my candidacy to be elected as a member of municipality, I was threatened by our mayor of municipality and they called me to polling station to check ballot boxes. When I went to that place they closed the door, kept me in a room with 9 unknown men and tried to force me to withdraw my candidacy. Then when I was elected and required transparency from the mayor of our municipality, he took my pictures of me on a beach from my instagram account. He glued those pictures on the bus stops, entrance of the village and post office, in front of a hospital where there are always lots of people. In addition, another picture was made in a café, my friend and I are having beers. He wanted to use this method to evict, embarrass and drive me out of the village, to make me look immoral. Police also did not do anything about this whole story because they are supporting pillars to the patriarchy. So, it was very difficult to fight as a woman, especially in a country like ours. As a woman you can always face stigmatisation and they target your gender of course.

*What do you think could be a way to motivate more people of various Genders and Sexualities to run for office in our countries?*

**Liza Zhvania:** A lack of solidarity with women and people of various sexualities is a large issue in Georgia, which needs to be overcome in the general public cognitive realm in order to empower these individuals. Examples of courage, solidarity, and most of all, public recognition of issues which we are facing is crucial in the formation of this solidarity. Many socially accepted norms must be challenged, in a rather aggressive manner, in order to create the conditions for gender and sexual justice.

**Lusine Kosakyan:** The current approach on seeking equal representation of women and men (the policies are gender binary) is mostly what is called positive discrimination or quota system. However, it cannot be enough to measure this only in numbers and not in terms of "quality". From my perspective, in order to bring gender sensitivity in different aspects of the social and political life, first of all there should be quality gender-wise education (both formal and non-formal). Lots of bottom-up initiatives should be there to break gender stereotypes and challenge gender norms and roles. A great deal of leadership projects should be applied for young women. Everything mentioned should be constant and of a great quality.

**Vafa Naghiyeva:** Actually, it is difficult to answer this question, because there are so many problems about how gender is perceived in Azerbaijan. We still fight for our basic human rights. All the issues I was mentioning before - the domestic violence, suicide rates, mocking - these all have political reasons behind them. How can we find a way to cope with this? - I think to achieve this aim, we should massively raise awareness in society and educate people.

# QUEER ART FESTIVALS IN EE

Maja Klimentic

**A**rt is an important tool for spreading key messages. It can reach wide audiences, motivate, empower and have a great impact on individuals and groups. LGBT+ community, people of different gender identities and sexual orientations often face discrimination, hate speech and oppression because the awareness in the current collective awareness of Eastern Europe about the issues these communities face is low. Queer art festivals provide one way through which visibility of the community can be brought to the public sphere using different art tools. The general public will find understanding, empathy and compassion if reality is presented to them by a third party (art), rather than community vocalising struggles they face. This way, it is shown that we all speak a common language of art.

In this article, different festivals are presented with their aims, locations and activities. This way we make them visible and accessible to communities around EE. If you find yourself close to some of these festivals, now you know you can visit them and get involved - whether with your artistic contribution or as an observer. Apart from the listed queer art festivals, other events or equivalents to festivals are organised in almost every European country.

## Side by Side film festival (Russia)

Side by Side film festival aims to establish free open cultural spaces in which lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer persons are able to affirm, question and extend their identities.

Through the medium of high-quality, intelligent films, they create a forum for discussion with society at large, dismantling myths and obsolete stereotypes that continue to hamper the development of the LGBT+ community in Russia. By generating a positive dialogue, they aim to facilitate change, fostering respect the human rights of LGBT+ people and fundamentally bringing about greater tolerance and broader acceptance of different groups within Russian society.

Side by side film festival has taken place since 2008 and is presenting films in many cities in Russia, from grand producers to local artists, thereby empowering both the community and the artists. More information can be found here <https://bok-o-bok.com/en/>





## Merlinka festival (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro)

The International Queer Film Festival Merlinka or Merlinka Festival is an annual LGBT+-themed film festival which is organised annually in Belgrade, Serbia (since 2009), Sarajevo (since 2013) and Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Podgorica (Montenegro) (since 2014). The Belgrade edition is organised in the Belgrade Youth Center during the second week of December, and it lasts for five days. The Sarajevo and Podgorica editions are organised in January and February of each year, with the former being organised in the Art Cinema Kriterion or Sarajevo/Tuzla Open Center, and the latter being organised in the PR Center. The festival was founded in 2009 by the Gay Lesbian Info Center and Belgrade Youth Center. It screens feature, documentary and short films from all over the world that deal with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex and queer issues.

The festival was named after Vjeran Miladinović Merlinka, a transgender sex worker and actress who was murdered in 2003. The festival was established to promote LGBT+ art and culture. Merlinka is the only active film festival to be organised annually in several countries.



MERLINKA

## Equality Festival (Ukraine)

Equality Festival combines culture, creativity and social activism and creates a space for discussion about diverse identities. The festival is an annual event that brings together various social groups in the fight against prejudice and discrimination. They strive to live in a society where there is dialogue and not violence. They aim to build a social dialogue in Ukraine with the help of art and friendly communication.

The first festival was held in Kyiv in 2014, and since 2016 it is held not only in the capital, but also in the regions. The festival program usually includes film screenings, performances, photo projects, discussions, performances by Ukrainian and foreign artists, social theater, concerts, parties and much more.  
<https://equalityfest.in.ua/pro-festival/>



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## DOTYK (Belarus)

For example, "The Touch (Belarusian: Дотык) is an international annual festival of queer culture. Its goal is to enlarge the knowledge about existing discrimination, to touch upon topical issues such as identity and self-expression, to attract attention to the problem of the different kinds of xenophobia in Belarusian society, to encourage the consolidation between discriminated people, to increase their self-awareness, and to enhance the capacity of the audience for self-reflection.

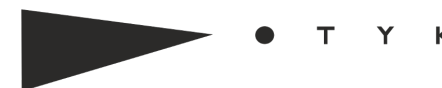
Initially DOTYK was planned as a film festival, accompanied by different events and held once a year, existing for the purpose of reflection upon experience of discriminated and oppressed social groups. DOTYK outgrew the limits of a cinema festival and began to unify various forms of expression, became a festival of queer culture, took place in different venues, and appeared in cities other than the capital.

DOTYK builds communication using the language of liberal arts as it is a universal human language that shows true stories, not diminished to statistical data, for it reflects the world's complexity and diversity.

## Gay Film Nights film festival (Romania)

Gay Film Nights (Romanian: Serile Filmului Gay) film festival is organised annually in Cluj-Napoca, Romania by the LGBT+ association Be An Angel. By presenting a series of films with LGBT+ themes, it seeks to showcase LGBT+ culture and cinema, while also initiating a dialogue with other members of society. The festival was first organised in 2004.

The films shown at the Gay Film Nights are somewhat different from those shown as part of Bucharest's annual GayFest, which also includes a film festival. Gay Film Nights tends to be more mainstream and focused on English-language films in its selection, while GayFest usually presents a greater number of documentaries and European productions, with a greater focus on LGBT+ rights. Additionally, the Gay Film Nights includes a Gay Prize Gala, which seeks to recognise those who have contributed to LGBT+ culture and rights throughout the year, with prizes awarded in several categories. <http://serilefilmuluigay.ro/2020/>



## LGBT+ Film Festival (Poland)

LGBT+ Film Festival is one of the most important events on the cultural map of Poland. It takes place every year and became the biggest celebration of LGBT+ cinema in the country. It's screened in 9 cities in Poland and was held for the 9th time in 2020. The festival is held in a rough political climate, as Poland was pronounced the most homophobic country in Europe (ILGA Europe). Besides screening movies from other festivals, it is also giving opportunity for alternative movies from Polish authors and activists. All of them were created with a common goal – to be seen by a beautifully diverse audience, against any divisions and categories. <https://trafo.art/en/11-lgbt-film-festival-2020/>

## Mezipatra (Czech Republic)

Mezipatra is a Czech queer film festival screening films with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender themes. The name Mezipatra translates as "mezzanine" and refers to the festival's mission: creating space for meeting of people regardless of their gender or sexual identities. Each edition explores a chosen theme and hosts a variety of international guests. The accompanying events range from lectures and debates to art openings and theater performances as well as exciting parties. It takes place annually in November in Prague and Brno with related events in Ostrava, Olomouc and other cities in Czech Republic. <https://www.mezipatra.cz/en/>



## Pink Life QueerFest (Turkey)

Pink Life QueerFest is an international LGBT+ themed film festival held in various cities of Turkey. The Queer Fest, held in 2011 for the first time, is the first LGBT+ themed film festival of Turkey and was organised by Pink Life LGBT+ Solidarity Association in Ankara. The festival was held in Ankara until 2013, before being banned and then transferred to Istanbul, Denizli and Mersin from 2014. It is prohibited indefinitely by the Governorship of Ankara. QueerFest aims at creating grounds for discussion of queer theory and arts in Turkey, drawing attention to discrimination and violence against LGBT+ members of the society. <https://www.pembehayatkuirfest.org/>



## Thessaloniki Queer Arts Festival (Greece)

Thessaloniki Queer Arts Festival (TQAF) is a grassroots initiative that sets out to alter deeply entrenched misconceptions and prejudices toward the LGBT+ community through artistic and cultural practices.

The festival was founded in 2018, and is led by a dedicated team of volunteers who provide queer artists with a platform to investigate sociocultural phenomena relating to queer identities and experiences.

The festival is driven by the belief that art has the power to open new avenues of communication as well as serve as a bridge between a diverse array of individuals and social groups. TQAF aims to foster dialogues and develop alternative methods for addressing social discrimination. <https://queerartsfestival.gr/>

## Queer Wave (Cyprus)

Through the transformative power of cinema, queer wave hopes to share some of the most unique cinematic experiences, promoting a culture of acceptance and solidarity nation-wide. Their aim is to offer an opportunity for people to celebrate diversity and togetherness through some of the world's best award-winning LGBT+ titles, with a focus on films that have never been shown in Cyprus before. <https://queerwave.com/>





# NOW'S NOT THE TIME: Gender-Oriented Media in an Industrial City

Kateryna Andrieieva

This story is about a young digital media specialist from one of the largest industrial centers of Ukraine. *Неначасі* (“Now’s not the time”) promotes the value of human life and helps find support for those who need it by publishing news and stories about social issues and lives of people whose rights are violated. We talked with Kateryna Maiboroda, the founder of the *Неначасі*, about her project and how to work with complex social issues such as LGBT and gender equality.

*Tell us more about the project.*

The idea appeared maybe 5 years ago, when I found a foreign website that combined a media and a resource center for the charity foundations. I liked this concept - to introduce an audience to different non-governmental and charity organisations through personal stories and thus to involve more people into charity and solving social problems.

Earlier I had worked in news and research media and learned to write on conflict-sensitive topics, and only recently I got the courage to create *Неначасі*. By the end of 2020 I received a grant in cooperation with the NGO “Gender Z” from the Democracy Grants Program of the U.S. Embassy to Ukraine. For a start, a 3-month grant is enough.

Currently, because it is a micro-grant, I am the sole member of the core-team. But from time to time, I involve the photographers, and also there are other people ready to help us and sometimes prepare the materials. In addition, people from discriminated groups or with disabilities send us information.

For example, recently I received information from a mother of a child with a disability and special educational needs.

Our little dream is to have almost 30% of user-generated content from the discriminated groups that are interested in highlighting certain topics; the rest is what we create. As well as this, we will create the base of verified organisations, which will look like an online store: a person can select a category and see which organisations are working on a specific topic in Zaporizhzhia and the region. These organisations can provide us with the content, new topics or interviewees. As a result, both components affect each other. *Неначасі* is a social media project at the intersection of journalism and charity. Our project mainly focuses on LGBT+ issues but, in addition, we also cover the topics of gender equality, domestic violence and people with disabilities. And I believe there will be more.

*You started using podcasts as a format for the media recently. Why did you decide this?*



Podcasts are a new format for us, so it is hard to talk about its effectiveness. We have difficulty engaging the audience, but there is a response to the podcasts. This is because, during isolation, people want to hear a voice and feel intimacy.

I first got the idea at the beginning of the lockdown (in the spring of 2020), when I decided to read aloud book fragments on my Instagram page at the same time every evening. The feedback was big, people loved to listen and to feel intimacy. They didn’t want these readings to stop when the lockdown ended and requested me to read some-

thing else. During the preparation of the grant application for *Неначасі*, I took this feedback into account. And now, sad or lonely people, or those who are locked with relatives with Covid-19, with children or people with disabilities, can turn on and listen to podcasts and feel intimacy. Besides, there is no censorship in our podcasts, our guests can swear and we don’t cut it out - this is important to us, because this way the conversations are more sincere and intimate without the feeling that people restrain themselves.

*How do you work with the interviewees and their stories?*

I’ve been working on gender and LGBT+ related topics for more than 3 years, so I am in contact with many organisations in Zaporizhzhia, as well as people who are not involved in any organisation but are still willing to share their stories. I try to think of someone who could answer my questions, I follow interesting people on social media, and this way I find the interviewees. For example, soon we will record a podcast with Kostya Andrieiev, who is an activist working in an LGBT organisa-







tion, but we will talk about homosexuality and mass culture - how homosexuality is portrayed in cinema, books, and porn. And all this because I followed his Instagram and saw that he writes interesting observations on culture.

One of our first stories was about a guy who had to quit practicing as a drag queen to get a job and socialise, because it hampered his life and he was not accepted in the LGBT community. I think this story is very emblematic. Another podcast I want to mention is Nataliia Lobach's story - a famous urbanist in Zaporizhzhia who engages in culture, architecture and urbanism. She is a 40-year-old designer and works in an LGBT organisation. Thanks to a big team of enthusiasts and Nataliia in particular, one of the city districts "Social city" was exposed to the wider public as an architectural phenomenon. The Germans architects even held a conference about Bauhaus architecture there.

With all these merits of the city, Nataliia is worried that her homosexual identity will not be accepted

by society. People who contribute a lot to Zaporizhzhia and help us realise the importance of the cultural process and history in the city cannot feel comfortable here. These two stories are the most poignant for me.

As for people with disabilities, there was a story about a very kind girl with autism who teaches music to other children with disabilities. Her father is a priest who was expelled from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate because of his patriotic stance. She was not accepted into music school, so the girl learned to play the bandura in order to enter another music school. Now she helps kids that other teachers do not want to deal with because of their lack of knowledge about how to work with children with mental disorders.

*Who is the audience of your media?*

First came people who already knew what I was writing about and what topics I was working on.

They are our supporters who offered to be interviewees, suggested topics and other help. For example, several photographers offered their help on a voluntary basis. Then random people came who mostly put likes and comments.

Ненацасі currently has different types of audience, but so far, we cannot appeal to each of them in a timely manner. For instance, one type is people already dealing with social issues, such as representatives of NGOs or charity foundations who very often face burnout and feel their work is unavailing and too slow. And we want all these people to see the importance of their contribution through our materials or through communication generated by those materials. Another type is people who have just begun to realise that they belong to discriminated groups and don't know what to do with their lives.

And, of course, haters, because it is very important to reduce aggression. They more often come from targeted advertisements - some people hate on topics about LGBT or domestic violence so much that Facebook targets them with ads on these topics. Haters tell us that "it is unnatural", "it is just a mental disorder" and so on. There are different tactics of dealing with such people. If any of them threaten or encourage violence, we remove these comments without a doubt. If it is stereotypes, we try to talk to that person. We understand that not everyone knows or wants to know about homosexuality, disabilities or reasons of domestic violence. You can talk to these people. In fact, it is the most resourceful audience, thanks to which you can see many topics you can write and talk about. People who work in the field of human rights or in charitable foundations usually believe that so many have already been told, so many articles have already been written about - what else can be said? But when you read the standard set of stereotypes and hate, you realise that all these articles have passed by. It is necessary to talk to such people, to appeal to them and use that communication platform to which the person came. That is why all audiences are needed, all audiences are good.

*Do you think you are promoting the social issues on the city's agenda?*

It is difficult to evaluate the contribution and effectiveness of one media outlet, because this is a part of a large team effort. The lack of adequate feedback makes working in the media more complicated. For example, an interior designer can look at the result of their work and get feedback from clients, but in journalism you do not see whether your publications have affected or changed anything. Sometimes I have thoughts that nothing





changes, all for naught.

But in 2-3 years I see that there are more mass pride parades in Zaporizhzhia (the first was last year and it was amazing). Our citizens now are more familiar with the issue of domestic violence and understand why shelter is needed. Of course, not all of them - the local deputies still don't fully understand. But that number is enough to collect the required number of signatures on a petition to establish a shelter for victims of domestic violence and that is a plus. I believe a small part of these achievements was due to me and due to the media, I'm working in and covering these issues. Another example of the team I have worked with before - they were not very interested in the topic of gender or domestic violence, or they didn't know why sex workers cannot be called prostitutes. But we worked together and we both influenced each other. A year later I saw colleagues start asking how to write something correctly. And it is cool - everything changes bit by bit.

*Do you prefer working on city or country level?*

First of all, there already are media outlets that promote human rights discussions in Ukraine, and I'm glad about that. Very few media outlets in Zaporizhzhia can afford to spend time, resources and

money working on such difficult topics because local media business is focused on themes that are on everyone's lips, like city news or housing and communal services. Secondly, I guess localness is cool. A community-based localness that shows what resources the community has (as NGOs, civil movement, charity foundations). It should be shown to people that there are these resources and people who want to - and struggle to - improve the environment around us - whether that be for a comfortable public transportation, against the dominance of external advertisement, or for the preservation of cultural heritage. This way they destroy a stereotype that no one cares about. When people see different organisations and activists doing something in their city, they feel hope because they are not alone with their thoughts and they have someone to join.

I also like the idea of building a community. I want the realization that something depends on us to spread in our city so that people become more involved in NGOs' activities or donate to charitable foundations on a regular basis. We stand for a sustainable development of charity. It'd be best if people realised that if they donated regularly, not once a year just to make a gesture, they could make a city better.

*Could you tell us more about the local context of Zaporizhzhia?*

At one time, I thought there was a specific local context, but later I read the materials of my colleagues from different cities, and they described the same problems. It might be said there is a tendency in post-soviet countries for gender equality to be among the least prioritised problems.



From another point of view, there are specifics regarding the implementation of changes. Zaporizhzhia is an industrial city, so our local authorities consist mainly of representatives of factories that are set in their own ways of working and thinking. For this reason, it is difficult to implement any progressive changes. For example, citizens have signed a petition to establish a shelter for victims of domestic violence, but the deputies don't understand why it is important and what's the reason for separating victims of domestic violence from other people in need of asylum. The shelter for orphans and families with children has other specifics and victims of domestic violence cannot be sent there, cause in no case aggressors can know where victims are and threaten others too. It is difficult to explain the social issues and to show people in the industrial sector who are in government what exactly must be done for the city. They believe it is enough to build a new square, sidewalks or benches. What else are you lacking?

*Do you have any experience of cooperation with politicians?*

We remain neutral and independent of politicians and political forces. However, I can contact some deputies I have met because of their professional rather than political activities, such as a journal-

ist and an ex-serviceman. In general, cooperation with politicians is very ungrateful. Unfortunately, a person doesn't always act the way they declare to the public. For example, it could be a good idea to cooperate with a politician who supported the creation of a shelter for victims of domestic violence, but at the session this woman voted against the shelter. And if we cooperated with her, I even do not know how we would get out of it. These politicians may provide expertise, comments or do interviews, but they cannot be full-fledged partners.

*Is journalism an art?*

I think there is art in it. Journalism is at the intersection of creativity and craft. Of course, this is 80% craft, because if you do not follow the standards, your art will remain art, not journalism. But with this 20% you can do any experiments. Once you have prepared the information according to the rules, you can decide how to present it best. Maybe it will be a podcast, comics, or a crazy collaboration with photographers. That's why I like to invite photographers and do something cool together, but there are many other formats. With a bigger team I would like to make an Instagram series - more integration between journalism and art. Art is something that hooks in journalism.





Do you have any recommendations for beginners in journalism?

If someone wants to deal with personal stories and work with people from vulnerable groups, they need to learn a lot first. For example, you can participate in trainings on LGBT, gender equality, etc. I recently attended a training on the national preventive mechanism, LGBT and monitoring places of detention (such as jails and prisons). You need to learn and explore everything that may be related to your topics. Because the wider and deeper you are in the context, the better you will be able to understand a person.

Some people have serious health problems and psychological risks. Because of this we are afraid of harming a person by asking something wrong. It can be really scary to talk to a person who is likely to die within a year. Remember that a person talking to you is also scared, and even more so than you. We should respect each other's choices. And, of course, you need to learn to listen and be humane. You should accept the idea that there are many human experiences, as well as that there is no right way to live. Even if you don't like or are angry at someone's choice, you should learn to respect and understand them, and move on. We should thank these people for what they are, for



having such an experience, and for being ready to talk about it, because it is very difficult and very important for them. It is important for them to understand that they have allies.

# HOW SAFE IS SAFE SPACE IN EASTERN EUROPE?

Maja Klimentic

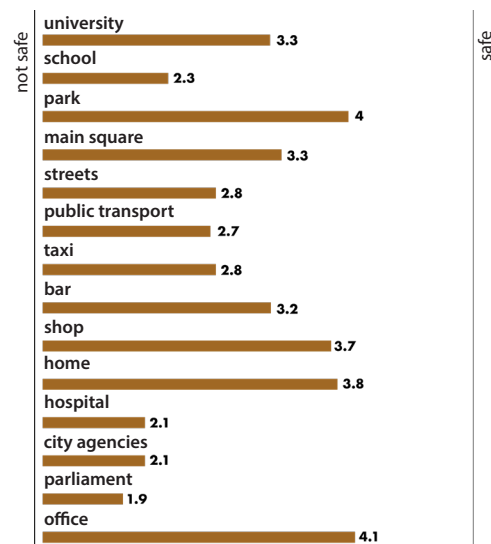
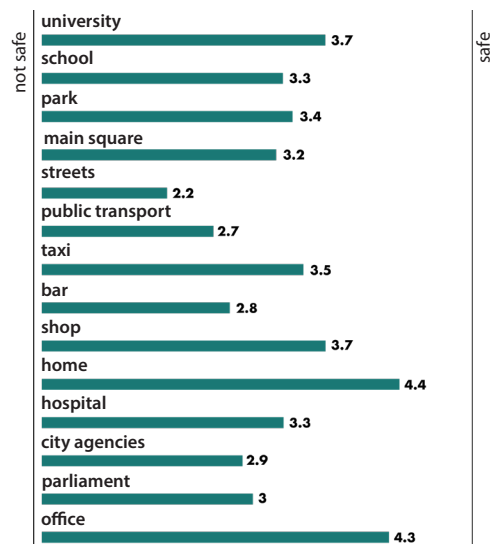
**D**uring the online course “Art for the young, the queer, the feminists of Eastern Europe” implemented in November 2020, we had a chance to have an open discussion between young people from around Eastern Europe (EE) about different safe spaces, their violations and how they affect us. You can do this task privately as well, think about what safe space means to you and think about what your answers would be.

The first question in the discussion was: *What are the first 3 words you associate with safe space?*



Physical and emotional perceptions of safe space are different, and they depend on various factors, like the community we are in, the people we are with, locations, experiences and so on. From the results, we can see that streets are the place we feel least safe at, while at our homes, offices, and universities we feel physically safe. This is perception of how likely we are to be a part of an uncomfortable or violent situation. Why is it that we feel cer-

tain ways in crowded places? What does a regular walk in the street mean for Women and Queer people? In the following picture you can see how different locations affect physical safe space. When we look at the spaces from an emotional safety perspective, the situation seems a bit different. Emotional safe space is much more nuanced and is not easily created, however, it is easily violated. When we are not in our emotional safe space, we



feel anxious, depressed and our general well-being suffers. We cannot be authentic, as there is a feeling of judgement, shaming or some other negative reaction. The following picture shows how safe or unsafe we perceive different locations to be when it comes to our emotional safe spaces. So, how do we make any space safer? Different methods exist, whether we are discussing emotional or physical safe space, and they vary from the type of situations and individuals or groups in question. These ideas were collected at the brainstorming session from the participants of the online course.

- Provide help on a personal level: Be an active ally and react when you see that someone feels uncomfortable. Communicate on a personal level and don't be afraid to share your emotions and experiences as long as they will provide support. If a stranger is in danger (for example if someone is following them on the street and they are not aware or seem unwell), present yourself as a friend and walk along so they are not alone and vulnerable.
- Educate yourself and others on how to recognise safe space violations and react.
- Be practical and innovative. As an individual, you can join or organise different support groups for people who have survived some sort of violence. If you gather a group of people or an organization you can open a call center for reporting violence and connect with other institutions working on prevention and reacting. As community activists you can put up mirrors in the streets to ensure wide angles of view. These are just examples: keep your mind and options open.
- Take up space and be comfortable with it! Motivate others to be present and visible, it will be empowering for everyone and can have a wide public effect.
- Don't be afraid of legislation! Take the fight for safe spaces to the political level and propose policies or other practical solutions for ensuring safety in streets, institutions and similar.
- There are so many ideas and solutions that we can implement on a personal and on a much wider level. Raise your voice, talk about this and fight for justice!

# SONGS FOR PROTESTS

Masha Pashkova-Dzneladze

This is an interview Tata Jakeli, a member of the initial preteam for the 1st event "Art as Shelter". She is Green and Feminist. She could be spotted with her megaphone and sometimes her guitar at the protests related to the environmental and social justice in Georgia. She worked in Georgian Young Greens as a Gender project coordinator and in her free time enjoys being outdoors. She writes songs for protests and not only. She lived and studied in Easton, Pennsylvania, USA for five years and now continues her studies in Lund, Sweden.



Tata Jakeli

*Tell us about yourself and what you do.*

I am currently a master's student of Human Ecology: Culture, Power and Sustainability at Lund University in Sweden. However, I am from Tbilisi, Georgia and in the past two years, I was actively involved in the Georgian Young Greens, working in the Secretariat of the organization, coordinating several projects, and contributing to the organiz-

ing of several campaigns and protests.

*What is your connection to music?*

One of my childhood dreams was to become a musician. I asked my family to let me take guitar lessons at the age of seven, but I was deemed too young to even hold the instrument. Thus, it was only when I turned 14 that I took guitar lessons for a few months. Since then, playing guitar and singing have helped me to express myself in joy and in sadness. At 17, I started writing songs as well. I have written more than 10 original songs, but I have not exactly gone public with my songwriting, as my songs tend to be quite personal. The only song I have shared with a wide audience is not my own song, but the version of "We Will Rock You" by Queen that I turned into a protest song for our climate strikes, "Gamodi Garemostvis" (which can be translated as "Come outside for the environment").

*Do you remember the first time you decided to redo a popular song into a song for protest?*

I transformed "We Will Rock You" into "Gamodi Garemostvis" for the first major climate strike that we (Georgian Young Greens and the informal ini-





# ART IN SMALL CITIES. MISSION: POSSIBLE

Kateryna Andrieieva

tiative "Vin'me") held in April of 2019 in Tbilisi, Georgia. As I remember, the song just came to me a few days before the strike. I was randomly playing "We Will Rock You" on a small hand drum and suddenly I just started singing some of the words that later became incorporated in my version of the song. My cousin, Mari, who was also a member of both groups that had organised the climate strike, was with me at the time. She joined me in singing and in the next hour, we had written the majority of the lyrics, which we shared with the rest of the strike organisers. Before the strike, we recorded the song in a tunnel (for good acoustics) on a friend's iPhone and we uploaded it to Facebook. The song was shared by hundreds and became super catchy for a brief moment. We even sang it in the Tbilisi subway and other public areas several times. On the actual day of the strike, we marched the streets of Tbilisi singing the song and urging other students and youth to come to the streets for the environment.

*Do you have any process when you want to modify an already existing song?*

Because my own modification happened so spontaneously, I do not exactly have a process that can be applicable to other situations. However, my one advice would be to choose a song that people already know and like, so that your song can become catchy instantly.

*Do you have any recommendations for how to look for rhymes and how to make your song fun?*

My first recommendation would be to approach the process of songwriting or song transformation as a fun activity, because it is. The moment you lose yourself in the playfulness of the process, you will surprise yourself with really good results. As for rhyming, it helps to have someone else around. I find that two or more people can find better rhymes than just one. Again, it is a process, and if you are passionate and if you have like-minded people around you, within an hour you may produce a song that will become a minor hit.

*Why do you think music and art in general are important for activism?*

They are vital to the spirit of activism, which otherwise can be difficult, too serious and sometimes even depressing. As most of activism is against something problematic, it is easy to feel down or overwhelmed. After all, most times, we are just young people against an oppressive state and evil corporations. It is a wonder that we do as much as we do in this repressive or apathetic political climate. Through music and art, we can rally others and motivate them to join, while also giving ourselves daily positivity, courage and confidence that something will definitely change for the better. Music can be a candle in dark times that lights our way.

Large cities, especially capitals, are often overcrowded with urban and cultural activities, while people in smaller cities suffer from a lack of opportunities for cultural leisure. But there are people who prove that the development of cultural initiatives is not just an advantage of big cities. There are activists who implement projects in small towns, learn to establish communication between citizens and local authorities, and liven up the local community through culture.

One such initiative is located in Ukrainian seaside town Berdyansk with a population of about 100k people. Six years ago, Ksenia Kleinos opened a small anti-café "There is a Time", which subsequently has formed the community of like-minded people - NGO "The Cultural Urbanists". The main areas of focus for their activities are urban development, educational projects and art campaigns. We talked with the NGO's team members - Ksenia Kleinos and Kyrylo Pelivanov about the latter.

*So why did you start activism in Berdyansk and how big is your team?*

We had lived in large cities for about ten years, so when we moved to our hometown, we felt a lack of cultural life and decided to create it ourselves. It was our answer to the emptiness. Fortunately, now the situation is gradually improving.

Now our organization has grown and we are expanding our own community of cultural urbanists, gathering people who want to develop their city, but don't know how to do it. The core team consists of four people, and many volunteers periodically help us with the projects. We try to work in such a way that citizens understand us, looking for the formats and methods that appeal to them. Art is effective in this sense.

*Could you provide some examples of art projects implemented by your organization?*





Some of our projects are purely artistic pursuits, which help us to form a community around the organization. Through others we communicate the social issues, using art as a tool.

To illustrate: in 2020, we invited a famous Ukrainian artist Hamlet Zinkovskiy, who created 8 murals within seven days. His solo exhibition was also opened, and a number of events were held to draw attention to new art objects and to accustom citizens to modern art. Another example is the Museum on the Beach - together with a local artist, we painted the wall of the sea port, which borders on the popular beach. We depicted the reproductions of paintings by Ukrainian artists. Then the local art museum conducted a special tour for schoolchildren and city guests. Now a public space is beginning to shape around this wall. The money for the paints for "The Museum on the Beach" was collected by crowdfunding (about 1,300 euro).

We also founded a festival of animation "Ravlyk-Fest", which has been promoting animation as a tool for social change, in particular for activism, for 5 years already. As part of this festival, we presented a digital exhibition about prejudice in society toward people with disabilities, and also taught activists to create their own cartoons to promote socially important issues. While implementing another initiative, we met with students of the local university and created art projects aimed at overcoming gender stereotypes. Later, the exhibition traveled throughout Ukraine. Earlier, we held forum theaters about conflict resolution and non-violent communication for internally displaced persons, as well as about gender-based violence.

*How do city residents respond to such new progressive concepts and ideas?*

Historically, our city developed rapidly and therefore turned out to be very multicultural. But today it is typical for the locals to call Berdyansk "a dead-end city". The city is the terminal point of many transport routes - people do not visit our city in transit, like Dnipro or Kyiv. If someone visits

Berdyansk, it is on purpose. In general, it is a characteristic of many places that are not mega-cities.

Moreover, a significant number of young people leave and go to other cities in search of education or work, and most of them never return. For example, many young people constantly go to Kharkiv due to the variety of universities, and because of this process its population remains very young. Berdyansk, on the contrary, is much older. More progressive youth, who are ready to accept changes, most often migrate from our city. This is one of the reasons why Berdyansk is quite conservative. This problem is relevant for many small towns without active cultural life. As a result, when it comes to many innovative topics or projects, like gender equality, people tend to reject them. For example, the very word "gender" is a trigger for them - they are afraid of it and repeat "we do not need this, it should be prohibited." In small cities progressive initiatives should be implemented smoothly, step by step, without something provocative in the beginning.

*Is it difficult to implement such projects in a small city?*

The local authorities supported us on paper, but actually they did not even mention the name of the organization in the controlled local media when describing our projects.

Today the situation has improved a bit (we assume it is because of an absence of political ambitions after local elections) - now our relationships can be described as "don't cause any difficulties".

It is noteworthy that in small cities a good reputation spreads faster. But at the same time, mistakes may have a stronger negative impact. Local businesses know our team members well and are ready to help without any special conditions. In our case the city size did not affect our ability to receive sponsorship.

Among the hardships, we can mention the low integration of modern processes in the daily life



of the city, both technical and organisational. For example, people are not very familiar with various online tools like crowd-funding.

Here, it is more difficult to find and engage participants, even in free events (it is interesting that middle-aged people are more active than the youth). The activists had to spend more time, and both human and financial resources on advertising to gather a larger audience. Personal communication in our city is the most effective.

In addition, there is a lack of services for organizing large events, like catering, portable toilets, electrical services, etc. It can also be difficult to find a location for seminars or trainings - there are only a few such places and they are not always available and accessible.

We also should mention that in all small cities there are not as many experts as in large ones, and if the organisation wants to invite them to a lecture or a workshop, it involves additional expenses for travel and accommodation.

A big pro is that the audience is not as high-fed as in large cities - it is easier to surprise the citizens. Each event in Berdyansk is unique, notable and important. Due to this, activists can just adapt the

experience of other cities and communities to the city's reality and achieve a wow-effect.

*What are your plans for the future?*

We are going to continue our urban movement and popularise art in Berdyansk. Speaking of the next projects, we want to make a sound design for the local art museum's paintings in order to draw attention to people with visual impairments. We are also interested in promoting new members of our community who will initiate projects themselves. We are waiting for the new young teams to form in the city, who can be our competitors in future.

*What advice would you give to young people who live in small cities and want to start practicing activism?*

We would like to recommend starting not from the form, but from the goals and essence. Let's say, if you need a gallery, you can negotiate with a local cafe to hold an exhibition. If you need a youth space, then you can hold the first meeting in a college lecture hall, and try to form a community that will be ready to create and maintain such a space. The fact that there is a room called "a youth space" does not create a youth space as an institution. By



the way, these obstacles can stimulate you to be more creative in your actions.

And if you want something, you need to do it! At the very beginning, just a few people believed in our anti-cafe, but it is better to focus on posi-

tive feedback, not negative. Everyone always has doubts and fears of not being understood by casual friends. But by acting, you will change your environment and you will certainly find the people who are ready to create something with you.



# PHOTOGRAPHY AS A TOOL FOR MAKING A POLITICAL STATEMENT

Maja Klimentic, Kateryna Andrieieva

The first ever photograph was taken by a primitive camera back in the 1826. It was a view from the window of a building – a rooftop lit by the sun, captured by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce in France. Today, the art of photography has come so far, we captured images of galaxies, surfaces of other planets and microscopic images of living organisms, even atoms. The science of photography has come far, not only from the viewpoint of equipment, but also from the point of what the photography is used for. It is not only for capturing landscapes and portraits. Photography nowadays can be used as a tool for activism, spreading your messages and for making political statements. It is one of the most powerful visual tools, and it is accessible, easy to use and fast to spread.

Photography has become a globally used art tool. You don't need an expensive professional camera to capture images - almost all new phones have cameras that enable high quality of photographs. Capturing a photo is easy, you just press a button. What the camera actually captures depends on your sole idea, imagination and creativity. Photography is great when you want to capture moments with your friends, family, or when you travel and see beautiful landscapes. You take a picture, and it

inspires you - until you delete it.

But how can we use photography for activism and creating our political statement? We live in a world where in every corner of the street you can find something wrong and painful. Troubles are not only in the streets, but also in institutions, governments, and our homes. Plenty of ideas and visuals to choose from. However, ideas don't necessarily need to come out of social problems: they can be born from any life situation, whether positive or negative. How you capture it, and how you perceive, it will be the main impact the photograph makes. Photography has become an increasingly important tool in global politics and everyday newscasts. Social media thrives on the power of photography – from clickbait news to massive political and activist campaigns.

The main power that photography gives and thrives on is human emotion. Our brains naturally connect certain visuals to emotions. Imagine, for example, photos from war or photos of meadows and forests - how do these two visuals make you feel? This same cognitive ability is what enables photographers to make a statement. Seeing is believing. And this is the most important fact for



your political photography.

When you're using photography as a tool to make a statement, you need to be careful and aware that it can be manipulated. We live in a visual age, and everything that you put out there can be copied, edited, misused, deconstructed and misinterpreted. If you search for the works of some of the most iconic political photography, you will likely find names of people you have never heard of. When you look at their photographs, you will probably realise you have seen it somewhere before, as they are shared and used for all kinds of purposes. Something originally meant to raise awareness about gender-based violence can be later be interpreted by someone as an excuse or motivation to

continue violent actions.

Additionally, in order to make sure your photograph is spreading the targeted message, you can use the power of captions. The caption is a few words, or a sentence or two about the context of the photograph. By using this you will make sure the message is clear and strong, and will prevent potential misuse of it. The caption can reflect on the reality the photo was taken in, or simply explain the broader issue presented in the photo. For examples of political photography, you can look up the term, or go to sites like [lensculture.com](http://lensculture.com), [worldphoto.org](http://worldphoto.org), [Visual Global Politics](http://Visual Global Politics) (and similar). And here are some for inspiration.



Photo: "Who owns you?"  
by Naida Hodzić/Dharma Photography

Caption: Do we own technology and all the gadgets and accounts that we could not imagine our life without anymore, or do they own us?

Photo: "View" by Studio XIII



Photo by Serhii Babenko



# WHAT IF???

Elena Petrovska, Masha Pashkova-Dzneladze

What if we sat down and imagined how the life would look like if we would have different approach to art?

What if we valued art as much as we value technical subjects?

What if the art subjects were not optional for kids to study in school?

What if technical subjects were optional for kids to study in school?

What if kids wanting to practice arts wouldn't have to spend money on the art supplies?

What if we would have access to movies from all over the world equally?

What if the movies would be made all over the world equally?

What if the actors in the most popular movies were not white?

What if the main protagonists in mainstream movies were not men?

What if the movie and theater industry was less based on nepotism?

What if the women movie directors would be respected and appreciated as much as men?

What if there was no gender-based division in the awards for the actors in main and supportive roles?

What if women were not allowed to perform in the theater, as it was a long time ago?

What if the theater industry was free from sexual assault?

What if we would have theater plays made only by women, transgender and gender-queer people?

What if any art piece would be made only by women, transgender and gender-queer people?

What if we would see art in more spheres?

What if we would consider design and architecture an art, even though there are technical aspects in them?

What if we wouldn't have only cisgender men in the list of top famous architects in the world?

What if we wouldn't think that only men can do well with technical subjects?

What if we wouldn't make assumptions about people's capabilities based on their gender?

What if women, transgender and gender-queer people would make designs for everyday items?

What if women, transgender and gender-queer people would make plans for the

main square of your city?

What if architecture students wouldn't have to buy all the materials and supplies for their studies?

What if musical instruments were granted for free to anyone expressing interest in pursuing music?

What if young classical musicians' careers didn't depend on their success in musical competitions that cheer on rivalry?

What if children without parents with musical backgrounds were receiving the same amount of support to study music?

What if all genres of music were taken seriously and with respect towards the artists?

What if artists were granted a basic income regardless of how often they create?

What if cultural centers and small galleries were thriving instead of being crushed under the lack of funds?

What if arts and culture were slightly higher in the lists of priorities in countries worldwide?

What if there were no time-sensitive exam periods in art schools and we gave freedom to creators to express themselves when they feel like doing so?

What if we had open and free healing art classes in every city for all ages?

What if artists were free to create art in their urban spaces without having to go through long and demanding bureaucratic procedures?

What if musical composition and production were not restricted by the terms and obligations of record labels?

What if we sat down and imagined how the life would look like if we would have different approach to art?





# TEAM BEHIND THE PROJECT

## Prepteam of the event "Art as Shelter":

Anastasija Stosic, Tamar Jakeli, Lusine Kosakyan, Katya Andrieieva, Selma Levrence, Masha Pashkova-Dzneladze.

**Editorial Team:** Katya Andrieieva, Selma Levrence, Maja Klimentic, Elena Petrovska and Masha Pashkova-Dzneladze.

## Prepteam of the Online Course "Art for the Young, the Queer, the Feminists of Eastern Europe":

Lusine Kosakyan, Katya Andrieieva, Selma Levrence, Maja Klimentic, Hanna Filistovich, Kamran Azizli, Elena Petrovska and Masha Pashkova-Dzneladze.



**Anastasija Stosic** is a second-year management student. She is a former Serbian Young Greens board member who's recently become very interested in sustainable fashion. She is also an avid supporter of local handmade businesses and likes to spend her free time taking long walks around the neighbourhood.



**Hanna Filistovic** studied Media and Communication at European Humanities University in Lithuania, then worked for a feminist organisation 'Her Rights Center' for 2.5 years. Hanna is a feminist activist from Belarus who organises events like feminist stand-up and conducts lectures on gender-related topics and trainings on combating internalised misogyny. In her free time, she joyfully rides a bike, practices yoga and experiments with various cinema forms.



**Kateryna Andrieieva** is a member of RUMB Working group. She got MA in Public Policy and Governance. For a long time, she used to work for an educational charity, as well as for a non-governmental think tank. Kateryna believes that a strong and sustainable country should be built from strong small communities. Her main areas of interest are politics, evidence-based policies and fair urban development.



**Kamran Azizli** is co-coordinator for the Gender Working Group (WG). He has been actively involved in LGBT+ activism since 2018 and has implemented several queer projects in Azerbaijan until now. He is interested in project management, gender issues and economics. He enjoys spending time with queer friends, dancing and being outdoors.



**Lusine Kosakyan** is a human rights defender and activist from Armenia. She is the Project Director at Frontline Youth Network and a member of the Gender WG. She is passionate about women's human rights. Her academic interests are conflict and peace studies. She believes that small choices and actions make a big difference.



**Selma Levrence** is a green and human rights activist from Riga, Latvia, currently serving as spokesperson for the youth organization "Protests". She is passionate about LGBTQ+ rights and environmental activism in Eastern Europe and is working as a political assistant in Riga City Council while being in her last year of Political Science and Communications studies.



**Tamar (Tata) Jakeli** is a Green and Feminist activist. She can be spotted with her megaphone and sometimes her guitar at protests related to the Environmental and Social Justice in Georgia. She worked in Georgian Young Greens as a Gender Project Coordinator and in her free time enjoys being outdoors. She writes songs for protests and not only. She lived and studied in Easton, Pennsylvania, USA for five years and now continues her studies in Lund, Sweden.



**Maja Klimentic** is a former CDN Executive Committee member and a member of the Gender WG coming from Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and has been active in NGO life in the community through activism and volunteering in Revolt and local feminist organisations. She works on educating children about gender equality and is involved in different projects about the prevention of gender-based violence. Through her studies, she is interested in green technologies and an environmental protection approach to engineering in the food industry.



**Elena Petrovska** is a Project Assistant at CDN. She is a young Green enthusiast, studying Environmental Sciences and exploring possible ways to help strengthen the Green movement in Eastern Europe. In her free time, she enjoys reading, exploring different art mediums and recharging her batteries in the nature.



**Masha Pashkova-Dzneladze** is Project Coordinator of CDN. She started activism in Georgian Young Greens in 2012 and then was the CDN EC responsible for the Alternative Urbanisation WG. She is also interested in digital rights, gender, climate, education and anti-capitalism. She enjoys reading fiction and drawing.

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