

TOOLBOX

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INTRODUCTION

This toolbox was created out of the need to bring together the methods of feminist work that we've used during the year-long series of meetings and seminars in the frames of the KASSIA project. During that process academics, artists, activists and curators have been reflecting on feminism - mapping its fields and imagining its possible futures. Although the main goal of the project was to initiate a process of co-thinking between feminists from different disciplines, rather than to create specific events or publications, it resulted in, among other things, workshops open to the public, which were part of the program of the international KASSIA conference held in the fall of 2021.

The toolbox contains the rules we've formulated for our work, fragments of scenarios of thematised meetings (concerning feminist education and queer feminism), exercises and visualisation scenarios. These tools were used to facilitate group work, mapping fields and topics, and developing ways of working together.

We pass the toolbox on with the idea that the contexts in which it will appear will introduce other kinds of movement than those which were specific to our group, and that the exercises and fragments of scenarios will change according to the needs of the new groups they reach.

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Invitation

For the Polish part of the KASSIA project, we've invited researchers, artists and activists whom we knew and whose feminist practices we value. We asked each of them to invite one more feminist activist, regardless of whether they had met before, either privately or professionally. Some chose to include their friends or colleagues in the project, while others approached feminists they did not know and with whom they wanted to establish a relationship. This is how our team was formed.

Zuza Berendt and Ania Majewska, curators of the project

HOW DO WE WANT TO WORK?

During one of the first meetings of our group we've decided to agree on the „rules“ of our work. These are not impassable norms of conduct, but guidelines that had determined the directions of collective action. Some of them we've abandoned during the process of co-thinking, others we've transformed, and others stayed with us and became the basis of our practices and relations in the team.

1. We share tasks, but take joint responsibility for completing them. When someone makes a mistake, we fix it together; when someone needs help, we help.

Questions:

What will be the fields of this responsibility?

What will Ania and Zuza be solely responsible for as curators of the project?

How will we divide meeting moderation tasks?

What do we do if the task assigned to someone starts to grow unexpectedly and becomes too heavy?

2. We are constantly and regularly evaluating the work.

Questions:

In what form will we do the evaluation?

Suggested forms:

- at the beginning of each meeting we do a short evaluation on how do we feel in the project (how we are feeling, if we have any questions, if we are oriented of what is happening in the project, etc.);

- we include time for questions and concerns.in the meeting protocol

What aspects of the work does the evaluation address?

How do we model responsibility for organising and conducting an evaluation?

3. If someone is absent, we inform each other of what has happened. At the end of the meeting, we are deciding who informs whom from the absentees.

4. We try to build a safer space to take risks. We are constantly looking for ways to create it.

5. We think about how we work, not just about the topic of the project - how = what.

6. Practising archives together. Collectively created documentation will be one of collaborative thinking methods, not an additional task.
7. We get rid of the shame of not being experts in something. We cross boundaries between disciplines in our interactions. We share authorship.
8. We ask ourselves questions and see if we understand each other (especially in the context of foreign languages, from which we translate into Polish, if necessary). All questions are good.
9. We share tools generously.
10. We think about the purpose of our actions.

Questions:

What is a conference for us?

Who are we doing it for?

How do we include those who will be a part of the conference?

How do we invite?

11. We take over the moderation of the meetings on a rotating basis.

Suggested forms of moderation:

- In alternating duets
- Moderator + note taker
- At the beginning of each session, we write down the questions and create a work schedule

Questions:

Do people who take care of the meeting organise it also?

12. We are stepping out of our bubbles.

MEETING ENTRY PRACTICES

While working, an invisible bond and empathy formed between us. The loose structure of meetings, the fluidity of roles, the openness to changes - these are a few associations that come to my mind when I think about how our zooms used to begin.

The first practice for starting meetings that I recall were rounds (I like the name „emorounds“). They've helped me to understand the energy of the group and what the dynamics of our work would be that day.

We are from different cities, from different worlds. A few words at the beginning of a meeting allowed us to look behind the scenes of each other's daily lives, to get to know „what's up“. In the first weeks of our work it also helped us to get to know each other better. I remember very well my stress related to new acquaintances made on zoom. Talking about everyday life and our mood brought us closer together.

The second practice was working with imagination. Perhaps it came up because of the artistic background of some of us? Or maybe it was needed in order to overcome the difficulty of describing feminist terms only verbally. We looked for metaphors, images appeared, visualisations, exercises that I associate with „starting“. First, it was often simple tasks that sparked creative imagination which then activated the next stages of work.

The third practice was the assignment of variable roles - the rotation of who runs the meeting, who takes notes, who moderates. I felt that our way of working was slipping out from the rules of classical work organisation. There was something empathetic about it, not task-based. „Checking“ who could take care of particular activities today brought something inclusive and democratising our process.

When I think about how I start meetings in many teams/collectives, my first association is stress. How's it going to be? What's going to happen? Have I forgotten something? The understanding and gentleness of our practices were giving me peace.

FEMINIST EDUCATION

As we began working on the feminist education exercise, we were aware that a definition of such a term does not exist, and that education as we know it is definitely not feminist. We wanted to develop feminist education practices in our collective action processes. We knew that it is not only about what we teach (ourselves), but also how we do it. We were also aware that feminist education reaches both back to the past and forward to the future, that our actions in the present have an impact on designing a better feminist future. The exercises we propose play out in those three temporal orders.

Case study

We've built this exercise on the basis of our own past experiences. It was created as a result of a conversation during which we discussed problems, affects and emotions connected with education, attitudes we adopted ourselves and together we looked for solutions to specific problems we faced. Thanks to this, we broke the regime of individual responsibility assumed in the educational relation.

Provide one case study for group discussion, such as:

In class, I discuss Rafał Urbacki's play Mt 9:7 - strongly attacking the Church for ableism and homophobia. One of the students begins to enter into a sharp polemic with Urbacki, defending the Catholic Church. The discussion goes beyond the interpretation of the art work. How to direct the conversation so as not to offend the student's religious feelings, not to interrupt, but not to turn the class into a series of religious declarations by individual participants?

We then briefly discuss the case, offering different scenarios for responding to the problem presented.

We split into pairs. Each person thinks of a situation from his/her/they life correlating with the subject of the exercise that he/she/they found problematic and writes it down in a few sentences (according to the example above) and then passes it to the person he/she/they is paired with. Time: 7 minutes.

After receiving the case study, we have 5 minutes to think about it.

In pairs, we talk about the received descriptions of situations, trying to propose possible solutions. Time: 10 minutes.

We come back to the group, one by one, present the case studies we've received and talk about the solutions worked out in pairs. Next, we discuss each case together. If someone doesn't agree to present their story to the group, we name the general problem it addresses and share the solutions developed in the group. Time: 40 minutes.

II. A Feminist Map of Inspiration

Feminist education is not systemic, it comes from a continuous search for patterns, learning to be attentive, building knowledge, relationships, it is also a continuous engagement with reality, an active attitude. Reciprocity and exchange are essential features of feminist education. The map of inspiration is ever final and finished.

The starting question: what inspires us in thinking about and practicing feminist education?

Everyone has about 5 minutes to reflect on 2-3 phenomena, practices, theories, attitudes that make education feminist.

One by one, we share our inspirations and explain why we chose those and not the others.

We write our inspirations in a shared document (you can include references to materials that will allow others to learn more about the topic). We can use Miro or Jamboard for this.

III. Feminist Practices of the Future in Education

This is an exercise that helps to concretise and rethink the categories and associations that come almost automatically to mind when we invoke the phrase „feminist education“ (or any other). This exercise allows you to show in action – first individually, and then in a group – what traps we can fall into when projecting an ideal vision of the future. While doing this exercise, it is important to be attentive to the language we use, the thinking process and the emotions that accompany it.

Write an answer to the question: „In what direction should education move to become feminist?“.

Try to write non-stop. Time: 7 minutes.

Turn the answer into a question. For example, if in your response you wrote about how education should become more empathetic, you could turn that response into the following question, „What will make education empathetic?“. Time: 7 minutes.

Turn these questions into imperatives. For example, „Be empathetic!“/“Think about what it means to be empathetic in the educational process!“). Time: 7 minutes.

Summary: Together we read the written imperatives and reflect on their meaning, what emotions, opportunities and dangers they bring. Time: 20 minutes.

!@#%& QUEER FEMINISMS

The starting point for the queer feminism workshop was the desire to share experiences of otherness, queerness, and the desire to practice affirmative dissent from imposed normativity, openness to otherness and difference, and fluidity of identity. Queering feminism for us means questioning the fixed categories of social roles, cultural gender, beyond the opposition of male/female - consent to the constant shifting of concepts, categories, values that we operate with.

!!!! Meeting Entry

The meeting began with asking each other three questions.

To answer each of them, we randomly divided ourselves into twos three times on Zoom. We answered each question in twos for about 5 min. We then had a joint conversation that lasted about 20 min.

Question 1: From what place do you speak? How does your personal experience influence your actions, activist and professional practice?

Question 2: Do you remember a moment of personal mismatch with norm? What did you feel at the time?

Question 3: What is a pleasure for you? Would you be willing to share at least one experience of pleasure (preferably sensual pleasure)?

&&&& What Does Queer Mean for Us?

Starting from our own experience helped us to talk about queer feminism theories in a more personal, relational way.

We've discussed on how we understand the term „queer“ and the difficulties we encounter in using the word in Polish.

Queer as an:

open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, Duke University Press, Durham 1993, p. 7

...queer as not about who you're having sex with, that can be a dimension of it, but queer as being about the self that is at odds with everything around it and has to invent and create and find a place to speak and to thrive and to live

bell hooks – found on the internet

@@@@@ Call To Action

The meeting ended with an exchange of recommendations concerning small gestures, ways of being in the world

How do we practice queer feminism every day? How do we unseal language, make identities fluid, give space?

How to notice discriminatory/homophobic/transphobic gestures, words, actions? how to react to them?

How to be aware of oppression and its consequences? How to unlearn a normativising language? how to sensitise?

How to recognise and support queer initiatives?

How to practise pleasure, sexual freedom, sex positivity?

Additional Questions

Are you or have you been a part of communities based on ties alternative to normative ones?

What emotions do you associate with being a part of those communities?

If a revolution, what kind of revolution?

Is queer an important category for you?

In what moments/situations have you felt disagreement with socially imposed norms of behaviour, life?

What forms of resistance to norms and normativity do you use in your life?

FEMINIST PRACTISES OF THE FUTURE

Visualisation

Hi, it's Róż and Żegluga. We invite you to feminist visualisation. At the beginning of the „Feminist Practices of the Future“ workshop held during the conference, we've invited participants to do embodied imagination practice. We've invited individuals to imagine the world five years from now, and then share in a chat room the visions, imaginings, and words they felt most clearly on their journey.

Duration: 20 minutes

We would like to invite you to work briefly and individually with our imaginations,

We are committed to feeling with each other despite physical distances.

You can turn off the camera if you want.

Sit down comfortably.

If it's comfortable for you, close your eyes.

You can also lower your gaze.

You can focus it on something that feels good to you. On something that you associate with safety.

Relax..., take a moment to observe your breathing.

Take a deep breath in through your nose and very slowly let it out through your mouth.

Do it a few more times.

Make sure your exhale is much longer than your inhale.

Gently move different parts of your body. Relax them.

If you feel pain or discomfort in any part of your body, try to let the air into that part of your body.

Imagine your life and our world in 5 years:

What would you like it to look like?

Don't wonder if it's realistic or unrealistic.

Just create your own vision of what „the world will look like in 5 years“.

A world in which you would like to live, create, work or not work.

A world where you could be part of a community.

A world where you would like to pursue personal and shared goals, passions.

A world where you could care for the human and non-human people important to you.

What does your workplace look like?

What does your home or other place that feels safe for you look like?

What is the community that surrounds you?

What human and nonhuman people are part of it?

SHORT PAUSE

How are your relationships with people in your community, family, work, collective?

SHORT PAUSE

What are your daily rituals?

What do you do for a living?

How do you fulfil yourself?

SHORT PAUSE

What do activists do?

What do politicians do?

What are the most important topics in the media?

What tv series are made, who appears in them?

SHORT PAUSE

How is education organised?

Who teaches in schools, kindergartens?

Are there such places in your world? If so, in what setting?

SHORT PAUSE

Who do you meet on the street, on the bus?

What kind of people surround you? What non-human beings?

SHORT PAUSE

What isn't there in this world?

And what is more than a lot?

Now open your eyes, look around the space.

If you can and want to, stand up.

Stand comfortably, move your head gently left to right, in a circle.

Look up, look down, move your shoulders, wiggle your feet, sway your hips.

SHORT PAUSE

Now if you want to and you can, embrace yourself as if you were hugging yourself.

Stay in that hug.

Make your body sway gently.

Think about how your relationship with your body will look like in 5 years?

What will your health be like?

What kind of connection do you have with your belly? Your lungs, your jaw?

What emotions accompany you often and what emotions visit you for a while?

Slowly come back to the here and now.

See how your body feels today. What is its temperature?

The texture, is it light or heavy? What does it need?

When you are ready come back in front of the screen, turn on the camera if you've had it turned off....

PAUSE

Welcome back.

Just a reminder that it's Sunday, 24 of October 2021, and we're at the "Feminist Practices of the Future" meeting.

And now we invite you to write down in the chat 3 visions, images, words that you saw most clearly in your journey.

At the end: The person leading the visualisation reads what appeared in time.

What does the feminist of the future do?

We began the next part of the workshop by posing the question: „what does the feminist of the future do“? Each participant answered it individually by typing single words or phrases into the menti (see [Online Tools](#)). These were usually verbs, e.g., rests, makes a revolution, walks. We had five minutes to complete this exercise. Each person could write as many words as they wanted and had time for. This created a map of „future actions“ related to feminist practice.

Feminist practices of the future

Next, we asked each participant in the workshop to describe one activity she/he/they knows from her/his/theirs experience or observation that she/he/they thinks could become a feminist practice of the future. While doing the exercise, one could be inspired by the slogans collected on the map in the menti. After describing one action, each person passed the floor to the next. The aim of the exercise was to see the political potential in even the smallest initiatives and practices surrounding us and to share our knowledge about them.

Supporting questions can be used during the conversation:

What actions/practices that you know of or are implementing have potential but need support to germinate in the future?

What activities/practices that you know of or are doing can help us build a feminist future?

ON FEMINIST WORK

This workshop was prepared by the Polish team of the feminist project KASSIA and was devoted to the topic of feminist work. During the meeting we discussed together how work is conditioned by time and place, but also feminist work methods and strategies as well as how in this context we could define rest and resting.

I. Answering a Question With a Question

1. Choose one calling question (e.g., When is work?). The exercise is to answer the question with a question and create a list of questions as long as possible.
2. The next stage of the work is to look for answers to the questions that have just been created.
3. The next stage can be done in time-limited rounds (e.g., 5 minutes each).
3 rounds = 3 answer groups.

II. Exercise of Ideas (e.g. for rest) / performative exercise

1. Each person is asked to choose an object nearby that can be associated with the chosen activity/state (e.g. rest).
2. We show the object and describe why it serves the activity/state indicated in the exercise (e.g. rest).

Look around the room, the apartment, give yourself a moment to search for objects that you associate with rest. You can also use a metaphor, colour, or draw something. Take the object and show it to the other participants. What kind of rest does it give you? What kind of pleasure is it associated with? When will you use it? Can you do it now?

ONLINE TOOLS

We've worked remotely almost all the time. We've set the dates of the meetings thanks to Doodle (it wasn't easy; almost always one of us was missing), we communicated via emails, sometimes messenger, we met on Zoom, we brainstormed in shared text documents (that's how the first version of this archive was created), on Miro, on Jamboard, on Easyretro, on Zooma chat... We often talked about what tools we like and don't like. We did not always agree on these assessments, because we have different habits, working styles, ways of organising thoughts and notes, different bodies, different senses... Together we've discovered both the many advantages and limitations of the tools we use. Some barriers we managed to work through, others we did not. During the brainstorming session at the Jamboard, we created characteristics of these tools divided into categories: when to use - what are the barriers - how to use. We put them in order on Miro. We present this material to you because we believe that reflection on the tools is as important as reflection on working methods and what kind of relationships we build within them.

<https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVONEXTXs=/>

EVALUATION

After the conference, we made an evaluation of the entire work process, talking separately about each of its three areas:

Communication inside our team

Relations with people we've worked with who were not part of the team (conference recipients, foreign partners, media, etc.)

Work organisation (budget, task distribution, coordination, etc.)

We began the conversation about each of these areas by giving brief and anonymous answers to three questions posed in the menti (see Online Tools). Time to answer: 10 min. This exercise was the starting point for a joint evaluation discussion, during which some people revealed themselves as the authors of individual answers in order to elaborate on them (but this was not obligatory).

Questions:

What did I find difficult/what did I miss?

What good do I take with me?

What tools/working methods have stayed with me?