



FIX MY HEAD

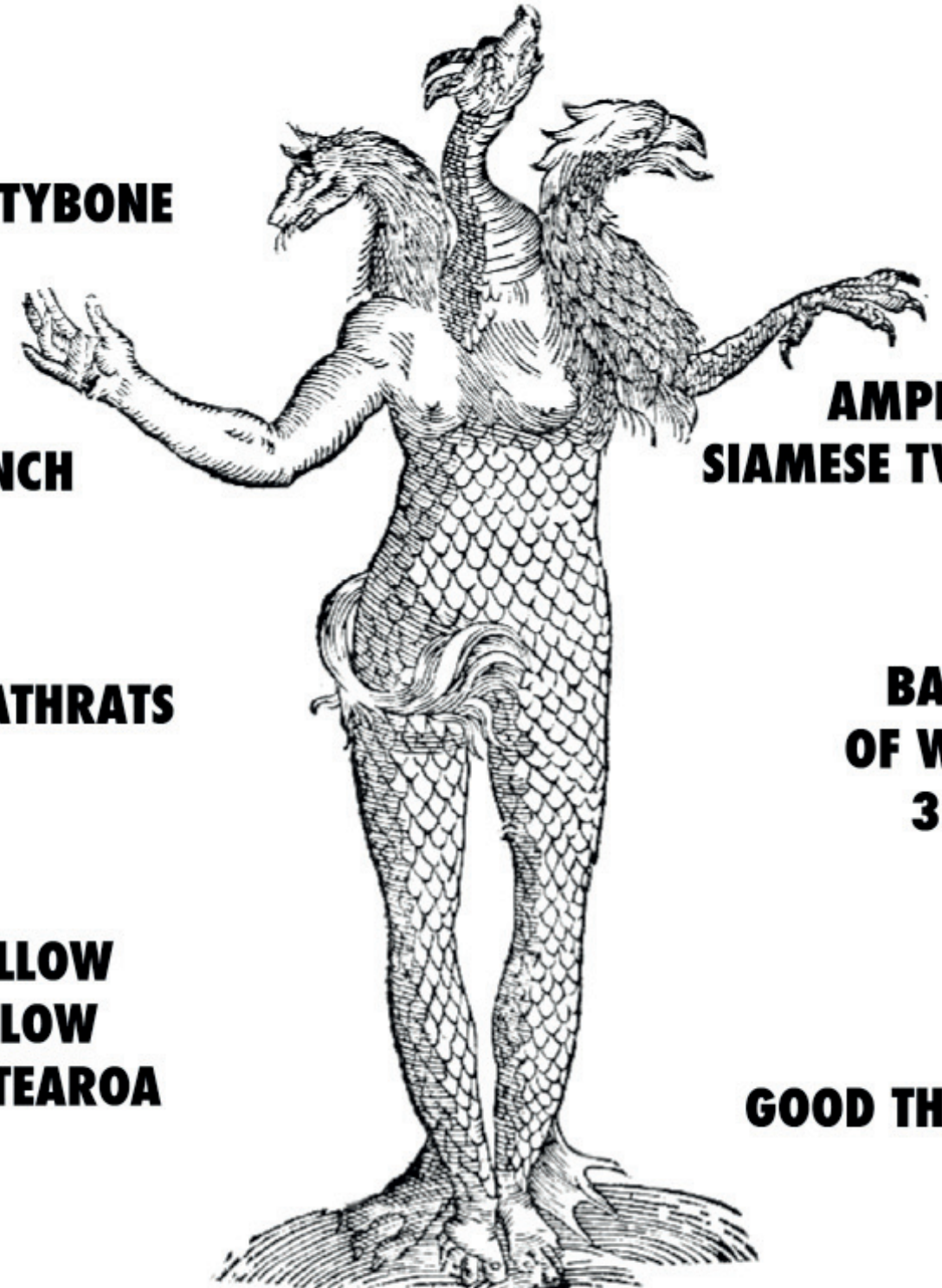
Issue Two

PETTYBONE

PUNCH

DEATHRATS

**MELLOW
YELLOW
AOTEAROA**



**AMPERE/
SIAMESE TWINS**

**BATTLE
OF WOLF
359/
LICH**

GOOD THROB

the LADY issue...

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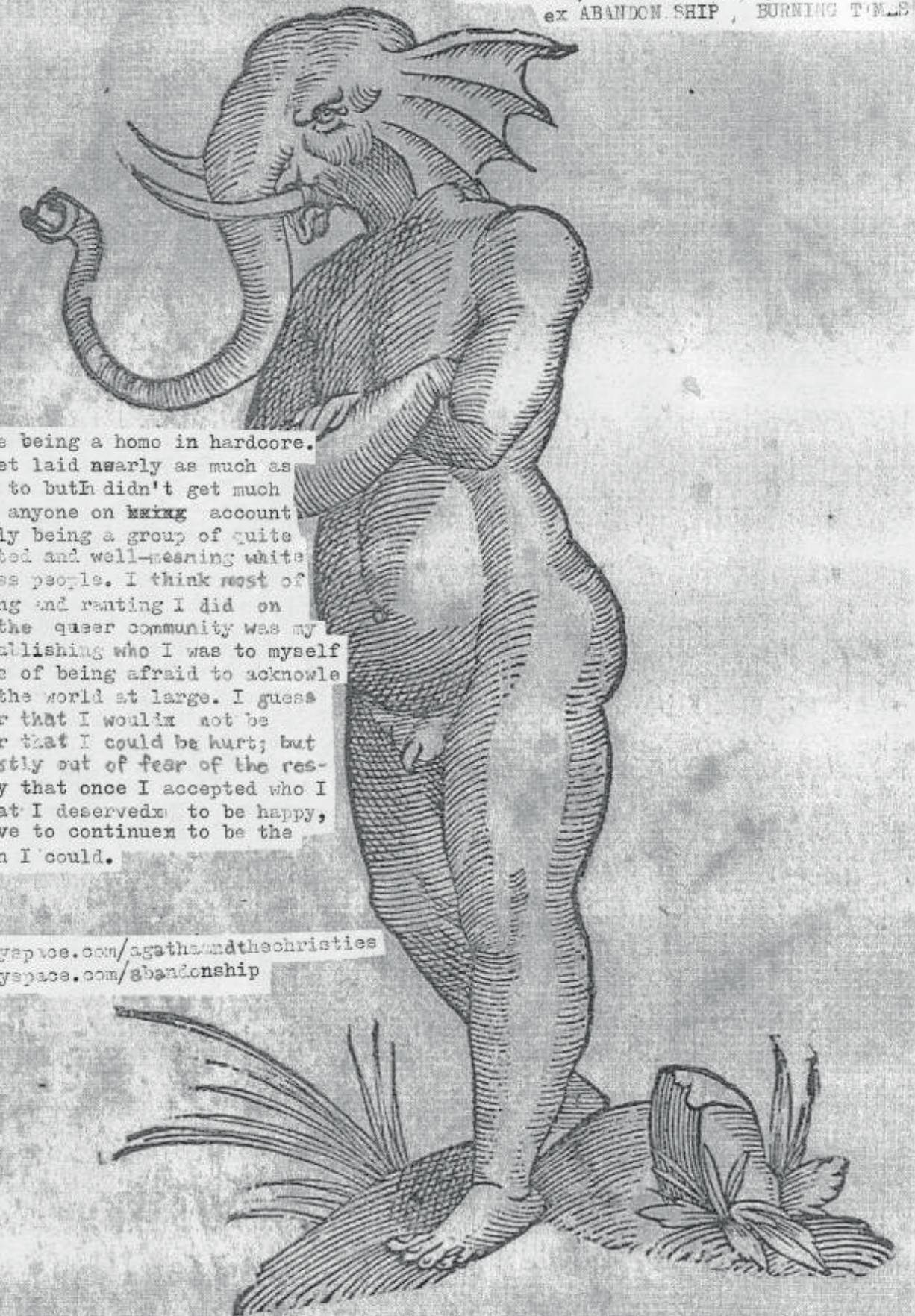
Andy from AGATHA AND THE CHRISTIES



Andi Devine from AGATHA AND THE CHRISTIES /
ROUGH SEX / CLIMAX CHANGE /
ex ABANDON SHIP, BURNING TOMBS

It was fine being a homo in hardcore. I didn't get laid nearly as much as I'd wanted to but I didn't get much hassle off anyone on ~~being~~ account of us mainly being a group of quite well-educated and well-meaning white middle-class people. I think most of the shouting and ranting I did on behalf of the queer community was my way of establishing who I was to myself after years of being afraid to acknowledge it to the world at large. I guess due to fear that I wouldn't be accepted or that I could be hurt; but I think mostly out of fear of the responsibility that once I accepted who I was and that I deserved to be happy, I would have to continue to be the best person I could.

myspace.com/agathandthechristies
myspace.com/abandonship



10) how do you live out accountability (and its contradictions) in your own life?

I'm not sure. I try to help friends and strangers who ask for help, so appear to need help but don't ask. I'm hyper aware of how I make others feel, to the point of annoying others, but in other ways I appear completely insensitive. I'm wracked with guilt every time I do things that scream of my privilege (dissent, veganism, advocating, using academic words or theories) and constantly apologise. I ask for consent on even the smallest things, like hugs, or if I can ask them about something personal. But sometimes I forget and people remind me that they don't want to be touched or talk about some things, which is good that they speak up. I try to speak up for people that I can see aren't equipped to speak for themselves, but often that makes me seem like a self-righteous self-appointed representative, which backfires often. I try not to upset or hurt others. I try to make people around me happy. I immediately apologise when I mess up, although sometimes that is really difficult, when the behaviour is deeply conditioned. I try to remind people around me that there are people in this world fighting for their lives, or their freedom to move, or for their families' survival. I try to call strangers and my friends out on their shit, because I would like to think that we are struggling for a common goal of social justice.

Intro. Vo

This issue was originally intended to feature voices from the wide array of queer, female and non-white people involved in hardcore. After over 6 months of emails, questions, pleading, etc, it became clear that there maybe weren't as many people as we had imagined involved in or playing in hardcore bands. Or, that they were not interested in being represented in a punk zine that possibly would be primarily aimed at straight middle class white dudes anyway. And why would they, after lifetimes of fighting for space in a man's man's man's world...? In the end, the most accessible group of people that wanted to be involved (and somewhat still felt enough hope to communicate with the general bro-core dude punk populace) were women who play in hardcore bands that some of us know and love. This issue is intended as a platform for sharing some of their experiences to people that may never think to ask about them in the first place.

On a personal note, my own experience of playing in hardcore bands for over ten years has been varied. Enough to make me cynical, for sure. And being a person of colour hasn't helped make me feel more positive, either. But I'm still here, for some reason, and we put this zine together, for the same reason. Because I still have faith that not everyone out there is a total chauvinist, or race-blind automaton; and maybe some people will take on board the things that these awesome women have to say. I'm stoked to be able to read what they have to say. I hope you're into it too :-)



my name's jamie, and i fuck up.

i think to be a good ally you have to acknowledge the points where you fuck up and and learn from them.

i'm aware that i'm privileged, and that simply being aware of it isn't enough. feeling bad about it doesn't help.

but i think being open about your fuck ups is important if you want to work things out, i mean work things out yourself, not just ask the nearest non white person to sort it for you.

i think a lot of people think about racism as a binary. either you're a nazi or you're not racist. obviously this is too black and white, you can be 'anti racist' and still make racist judgements, assumptions etc by accident, and being in denial of these because of a politic you've decided on, doesn't help.

i remember a few years ago i had a crush on a girl who worked in the same building as me, and i was too scared to talk to her, because of the crush. so in my head to justify my shyness, i made other excuses. She's Nigerian, she's probably christian, we won't have anything in common, so it would never go anywhere anyway. At the time i was aware that these were assumptions based on race that i shouldn't be making. but the thoughts still went through my head.

All the same can be said about sexism. I'm still trying to work out why i usually prefer female vocalists. In my head i feel like punk/hardcore is, or is meant to be the voice of the oppressed, or the voice of the pissed off and a lot of songs are written about oppression and the wrongs of society. So when i hear a band with a female vocalist, who's really good. i think they're better than male vocalists i consider really good. i think that they're better because they have more to be pissed off about and that anger shows in their vocals. that's my thought process. but is it just fetishisation?

keep questioning yourself.

To maintain confidentiality, I try to remain as general as possible, and share experiences that can be transferred to other situations, eg a member of a touring hardcore band takes advantage of his/her position of power and has non-consensual sex with another person. Unfortunately this is a common enough occurrence that it should be shared with other people in order to benefit them in future situations, and should be made public if it is in danger of happening again. It isn't necessary to state the origin or the genders or the details of the incident, and if it can be resolved privately, then that is ideal. But the importance of sharing some aspects far outweigh complete privacy.

Only in situations where the perpetrator refuses to participate in the resolution process, must people need to listen to the survivor alone. However, no one need be on trial, because there is no sentence/verdict involved, and this is purposely outside of a court of law. Therefore, the options of action should generally involve the survivor's self-care, and their perception of their own life/behaviour/mental process/situation. If they wish for an external punitive process that inevitably involves the unwilling perpetrator, then what usually happens, is that each member of the community (ie. the jury) will decide for themselves if they want to act on the punitive process or ignore it. No-one can force members of the community to act against their own opinion/judgement, the only hope is that their opinions and judgements are fair and without prejudice. It's tough one, but hopefully we can build groups of people that can view situations as objectively or fairly as possible, and are committed to social justice, rather than buy into patriarchal ideas of sexuality, morality and social standing.

Questions I have?

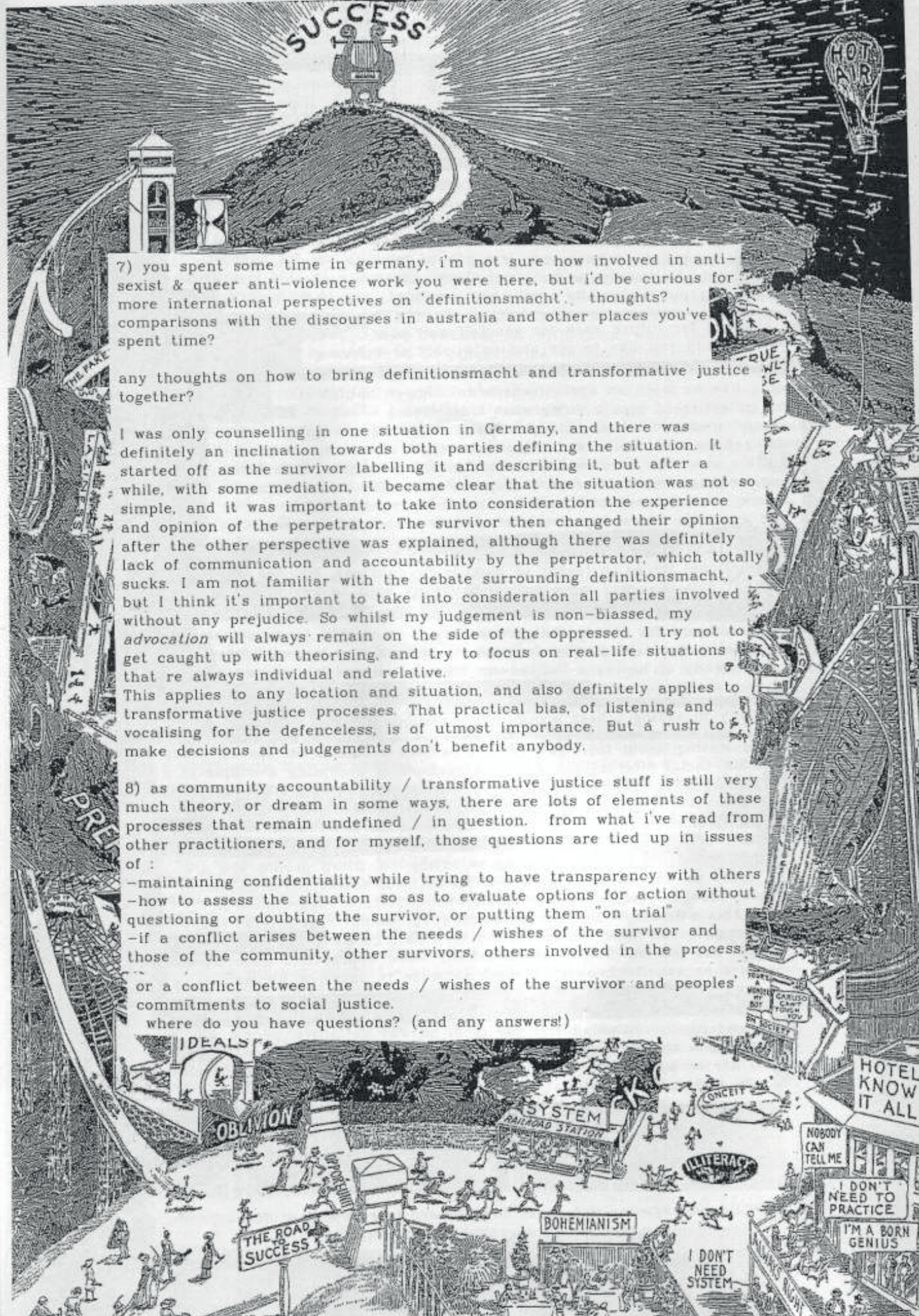
When will every single person drop their pride and ego for long enough to accept that they have an effect on others? And that sometimes it is a very very negative effect. I just hope somehow, one day, people learn a little bit more empathy, and drop their defensiveness, and that will make it easier for everyone to take responsibility for their actions! And then these processes won't be necessary anymore!

9) i've talked to a lot of people who feel that community accountability is a pipe dream because it requires a strong community and already understands itself as anti-sexist and anti-oppression, and they just don't see that around them. what do you think about this? do you see opportunities for accountability, even in the messy, problematic, and under-equipped communities around us?

I think, in places like Berlin, there is a lot of potential for community accountability to form, maybe if people overlook the pedantic, administrative details, and focus on the parties and emotions at stake. I felt, living there, that anti-sexism, decentralisation, and horizontal organising, were really strong themes entrenched in the society there. And if that can be transferred across to social and economic circumstances (eg. in conversation and friendships and community accountability), and not just professional ones (eg. females in bands or carpentry or metalwork and other trades), that would be a good start.

In other cities, and countries, it might be more difficult, if you look at how people were brought up (eg. Mexico, Vietnam, Japan, Italy, in patriarchal, authoritative, or Catholic socialisation), but those are just generalisations. Under a microscope, in every place, there are pockets of promise, where there are enough people striving for mutual-aid and social accountability, so I think it's possible, if people are more altruistic in

their behaviour and motives.



7) you spent some time in germany. i'm not sure how involved in anti-sexist & queer anti-violence work you were here, but i'd be curious for more international perspectives on 'definitionsmacht'. thoughts? comparisons with the discourses in australia and other places you've spent time?

any thoughts on how to bring definitionsmacht and transformative justice together?

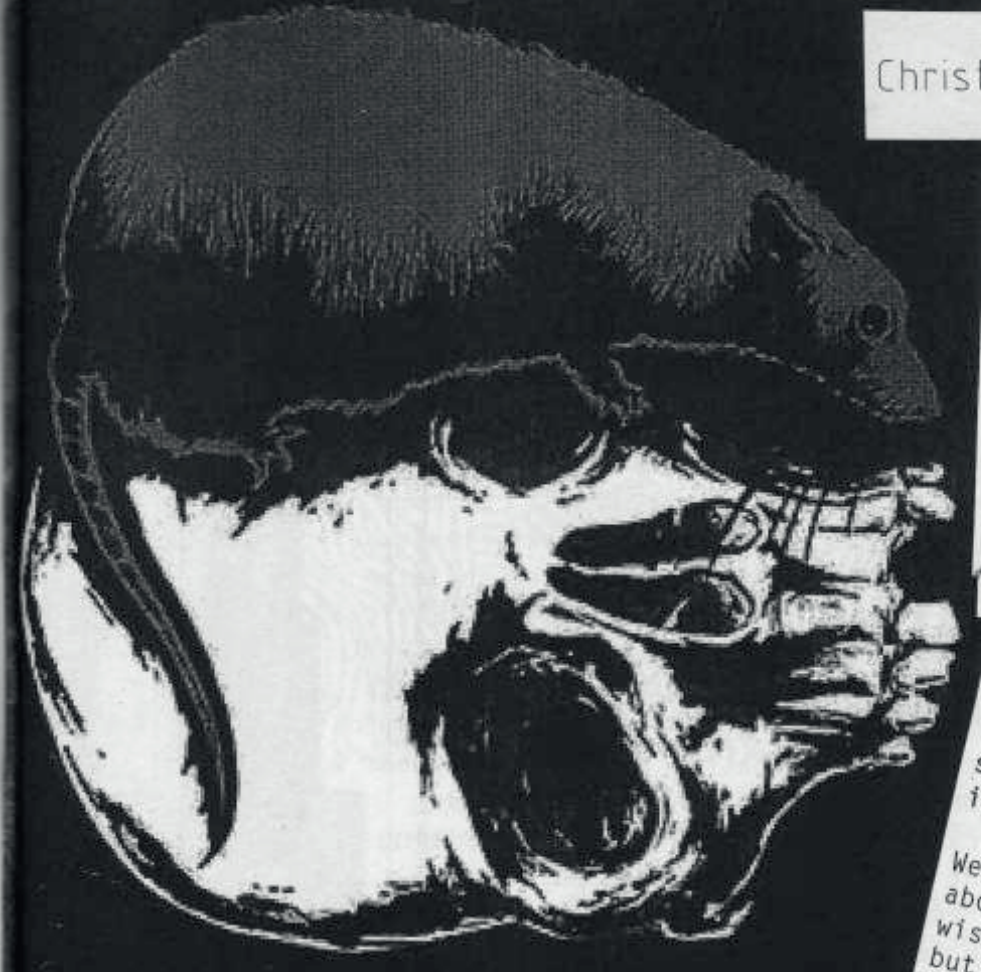
I was only counselling in one situation in Germany, and there was definitely an inclination towards both parties defining the situation. It started off as the survivor labelling it and describing it, but after a while, with some mediation, it became clear that the situation was not so simple, and it was important to take into consideration the experience and opinion of the perpetrator. The survivor then changed their opinion after the other perspective was explained, although there was definitely lack of communication and accountability by the perpetrator, which totally sucks. I am not familiar with the debate surrounding definitionsmacht, but I think it's important to take into consideration all parties involved without any prejudice. So whilst my judgement is non-biased, my *advocaton* will always remain on the side of the oppressed. I try not to get caught up with theorising, and try to focus on real-life situations that re always individual and relative. This applies to any location and situation, and also definitely applies to transformative justice processes. That practical bias, of listening and vocalising for the defenceless, is of utmost importance. But a rush to make decisions and judgements don't benefit anybody.

8) as community accountability / transformative justice stuff is still very much theory, or dream in some ways, there are lots of elements of these processes that remain undefined / in question. from what i've read from other practitioners, and for myself, those questions are tied up in issues of :

- maintaining confidentiality while trying to have transparency with others
- how to assess the situation so as to evaluate options for action without questioning or doubting the survivor, or putting them "on trial"
- if a conflict arises between the needs / wishes of the survivor and those of the community, other survivors, others involved in the process.

or a conflict between the needs / wishes of the survivor and peoples' commitments to social justice.
where do you have questions? (and any answers!)

Christine from DEATHRATS



Who, what and where is Deathrats?

Deathrats is Brian Lam, Brad Napier, Greg Mazur, and me. We all live in the Petworth neighborhood of northwest DC. Jen Hauser from Appleton, WI comes on tour as a second guitarist and road-dawg extraordinaire sometimes. We're just a punk band.

How do you feel about being in the band in general? How was it for you when it started, compared to how it feels now?

Well, in general, I feel good about being in Deathrats. I wish we were able to tour more, but I would leave DC all the time if I could. When we first started, I was way more nervous about playing in front of people and about making the lyrics I had written public. It's one thing when your words are inaudible because they're being screamed, and another thing when they're written out. It was really intimidating for me to put them on the internet especially. My parents just saw me when I first joined the mic and I feel way more confident about the things that I talk about when we're playing, as well as the lyrics that I've written, and I think that's just come from assessing my own articulateness, and from watching other bands just say? Did people understand me at all? Did I just make a total jerk outta myself?" I've become more self-aware of that kind of thing from assessing my own articulateness, and from watching other bands play. You kinda have to take you for the few words that you share for the most part. So if you're trying to get a point across, you have to just say what you mean and be done with it. That can be hard when you're terrified, but I think I lost some of that fear along the way. I'm happy with the lyrics on the new record, and I'm happy with the way things sound in general. I'm also happy that there are people who like us and who identify with things that I've said and how I've said them. It's surprising, but really awesome, too. I'm still pretty shy about these things sometimes.

IF I A T E

What are your lyrics about?

I try to write about a lot of stuff, but I always just end up writing about things that make me mad. I don't want to be an angry and nihilistic person, and I do think some of the songs deviate from that, but most of my lyrics are just pissed. And they *sound* pissed. I think that's okay though, what else am I supposed to sound like? I've written about street harassment, lady-solidarity in punk, my mom, anxiety, abuse, fucked up friendships. Things that I experience day-to-day as a woman, as a queer kid, as someone with social anxiety. It's funny to me when people like/hate us because we're a "political" band. There are plenty of classic punk and hardcore bands that write about presidents, wars, societies, and other "political" stuff, but they're not categorized that way. Once one starts talking about the personal it gets weird and scary and alienating to people though. I firmly believe that the personal is political, and that people gravitate towards what they can relate to. When you start writing lyrics that challenge dominant structures, you challenge people's experiences and perceptions, and they take it personally as well. I'm finding more difficult to relate to a lot of hardcore these days, because so much of it fails to strike a personal chord. I feel like shows and bands and lyrics get so boring when there's no meaning, and that the recycling of the same dominant group of people playing the same music leads to that kind of monotony. And when people do write personal/political lyrics, they sometimes deny those intentions so they don't get roped into the anti-"pc" backlash. But if punk isn't challenging than what's the fucking point, right? I'm tired of reading lyrics that don't make me feel anything, so I'm not going to write stuff like that. I'm just going to write what I understand. Ps, I wrote a song about that. It's on the new record.



5) especially for me, as someone with far more theory than praxis, i'd be interested to hear how your practicing of community accountability has affected how you feel about / see the theories?

I think the main thing is that trust is really important. If people don't trust me as a mediator, then it's not going to work, and it's better to find someone that they feel like they can relate to more. Me being of a certain race, class, gender, sexual preference (non-white, immigrant, working-class, female, mainly hetero), means that some people will relate to me more, and others not. And that is what decides if they want to talk to me or trust me. So in the past, people that have come to me either know me personally, or know me by a reference from someone they trust. I am finding that now that I am in a foreign country and city, where people don't know me; less people come to me for support - the trust and pre-knowledge just isn't there. Especially as this is a group of people that don't normally trust their personal lives to strangers.

6) what do you envision for future work for yourself and your communities? what would you like to see and be a part of creating?

Uhm, I would like to start an open, transparent though confidential, trustworthy collective of people doing what I am trying to do - counselling and mediation. I would hope that it encourages people to talk about their feelings and conflicts more, and practice self care, and care for others. This year I've lived in Berlin and London, and have seen some people completely ignore what I feel is very obvious - the suffering or need of others, or the needs of themselves. In these places and in America and Australia where I've also lived, I've witnessed many times over:

- avoidance of emotional issues in favour of humour or courtesy, because people feel like that shit is 'heavy' or personal, and they want to keep things light.

- complete disregard for others that are suffering or clearly need help or guidance, sometimes out of apathy, laziness, or resignation, or sometimes because the novelty of having a 'fucked-up friend' is more valuable or humorous than helping them.

- hesitation or difficulty in asking others about their emotions,

communicating about feelings and very evident problems, in spaces, group dynamics, social interactions, etc. One example is accepting a couple in a peer group, even though one is visibly abusive to the other, because it's too much trouble to say or do anything, and people don't want to cause conflict. This to a point of not even talking about it between other friends (!?)

- people that have trouble refusing or saying no. Often people who are very active or helpful will agree to a lot of involvement/participation in different things, which results in their own anxiety or depression or stress. This extends to personal situations, eg. sexual encounters. They don't promote self care, which can be very destructive!

- people will flat out refuse accountability when approached about oppressive or abusive behaviour, when someone is upset or uncomfortable as a result.

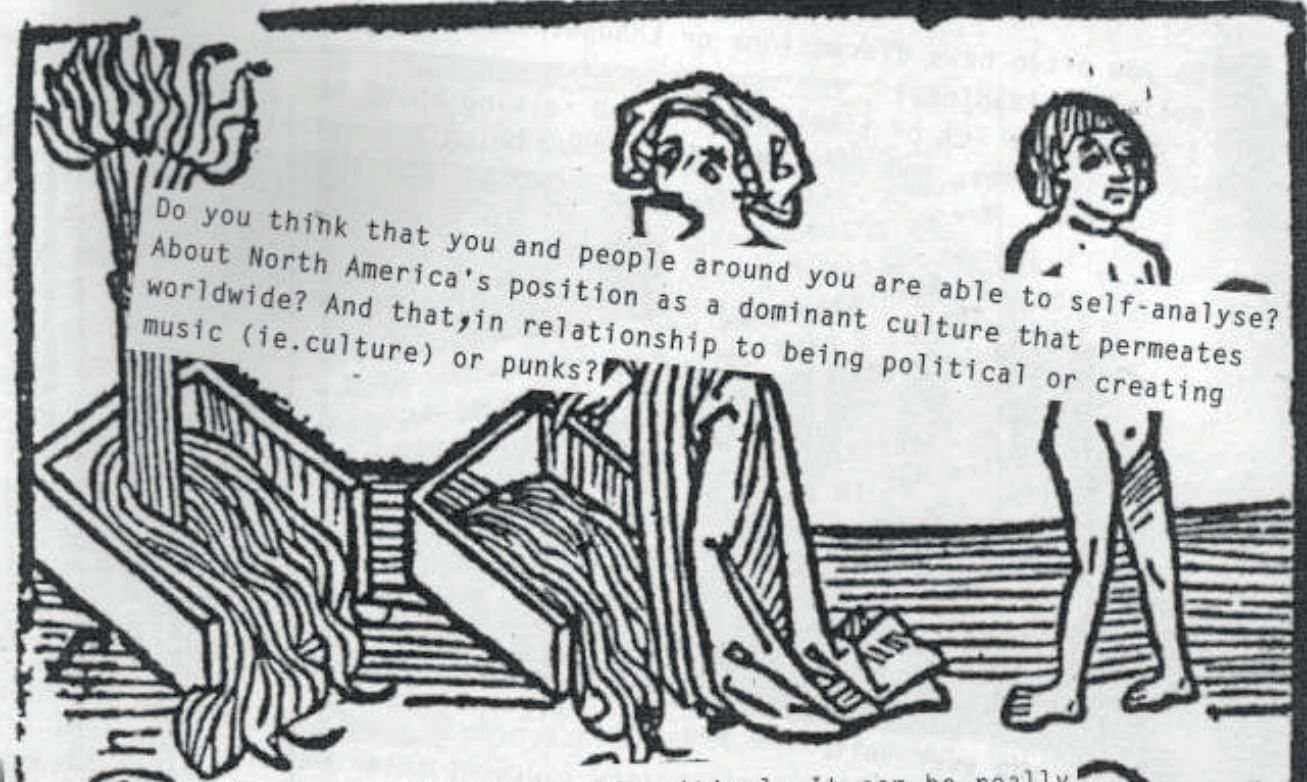
- and finally, although this list is in no way definitive, people who don't know how to ask for help. People that are in trouble or need support or an ear or a friend, feel guilty or shy or don't want to 'burden' someone with their problems.

It would be awesome if I could one day see less of this stuff happening, and people being more open, direct, and accountable.

4) in terms of comm accountability and transformative justice processes, you mentioned that you have a lot of experience with mediations and confrontations, and generally dealing with perpetrators of violence. can you share anything from those experiences that might be useful for others working on the same stuff? successes, failures?

As I said before, it's usually very difficult to communicate with someone that what they have done has upset someone else, especially if they associate themselves with feminism or fights against general, theorised oppression. What occurs very often is that people involved with a lot of activism find it very difficult to admit to their own destructive or insensitive (or violent or abusive) behaviour. So that is the initial challenge, and I am still trying to find a nice way to say "this person feels that you're a perpetrator". No matter how its communicated, there is usually a pretty aggressive reaction. So, with them, while this is happening, I try to explain it in other terms, in analogies that they can relate to. If I know something about their lives, I equate it to a situation where they may feel like a victim, like if they are riding a bike, and a car driver cuts them off. I know this sounds trivial and simplistic, but sometimes it has to be an external example that doesn't threaten people, which then you bring back to a real situation of violence, where the stakes are higher, and then people start to understand the feeling of having less power in a dynamic. Obviously perpetrators usually have more power, and they are unaware of it, or reluctant to admit it. So those are initial steps. Of course, people usually believe they are acting to the best of their knowledge and ability, and to explain to them that there was an oppressive or abusive result regardless of this, can be really difficult. Sometimes, people immediately recognise the situation and are really sorry, which cuts out that step. But next is figuring out what the survivor wants to happen, what the perpetrator would like to change or act on in light of the circumstances and every situation is different. A common resolution is that there is social separation of the two parties, where they arrange to not be at the same events at the same time. Or maybe the perpetrator will be excluded from activities for a period of time. Usually the community supports this by organising around that, (eg. if both are facilitating at a workshop event, etc), but sometimes it's a difficult matter of confidentiality, where a community may be needed to support the outcomes of a survivor's

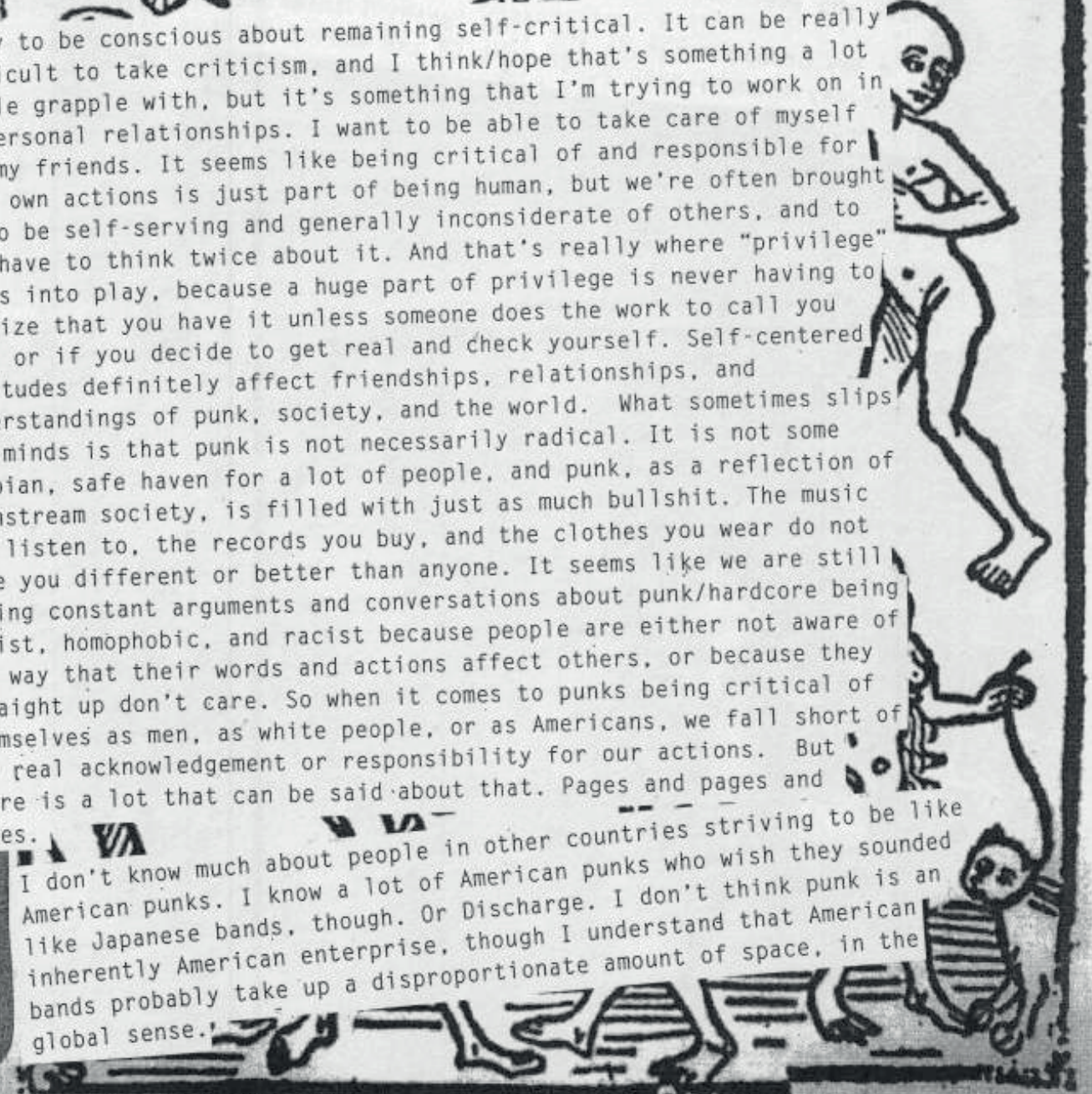
requests, but it is part of the request that people don't speak of the event, or of the specific details of the incident. Then, thirdly, there are the processes of realising those defined terms. As usual, things in practice don't pan out as well as they do in theory, and conflict usually arises out of that, especially when people are missing out on things, eg. events, that they resent missing out on, or resent sacrifices in general that they hadn't thought of in beginning the mediation process. So continual mediation is necessary to iron out those things. Some things don't get resolved, and some requests get ignored, so there are a lot of tense and angry emotions surrounding this process. Another issue is the reaction or behaviour of the community surrounding said people. Lots of people will have formed a judgement about a situation, and it is tiring and sometimes futile to remind people not to make decisions about circumstances that they aren't knowledgeable about! This results in character judgements, prejudices, gossip, all manner of puerile, high school behaviour, and is very disappointing. What is good remember that even in a violent incident, one of intended or accidental assault, there is always a set of conditions that determined that behaviour, whether we understand them or not. And working through these conditions is the only way to help avoid another similar occurrence. If there is patience and understanding, then people can really work through their shit if they want to.



Do you think that you and people around you are able to self-analyse? About North America's position as a dominant culture that permeates worldwide? And that, in relationship to being political or creating music (ie. culture) or punks?

I try to be conscious about remaining self-critical. It can be really difficult to take criticism, and I think/hope that's something a lot of people grapple with, but it's something that I'm trying to work on in my personal relationships. I want to be able to take care of myself and my friends. It seems like being critical of and responsible for your own actions is just part of being human, but we're often brought up to be self-serving and generally inconsiderate of others, and to not have to think twice about it. And that's really where "privilege" comes into play, because a huge part of privilege is never having to realize that you have it unless someone does the work to call you out, or if you decide to get real and check yourself. Self-centered attitudes definitely affect friendships, relationships, and understandings of punk, society, and the world. What sometimes slips our minds is that punk is not necessarily radical. It is not some utopian, safe haven for a lot of people, and punk, as a reflection of mainstream society, is filled with just as much bullshit. The music you listen to, the records you buy, and the clothes you wear do not make you different or better than anyone. It seems like we are still having constant arguments and conversations about punk/hardcore being sexist, homophobic, and racist because people are either not aware of the way that their words and actions affect others, or because they straight up don't care. So when it comes to punks being critical of themselves as men, as white people, or as Americans, we fall short of any real acknowledgement or responsibility for our actions. But there is a lot that can be said about that. Pages and pages and pages.

I don't know much about people in other countries striving to be like American punks. I know a lot of American punks who wish they sounded like Japanese bands, though. Or Discharge. I don't think punk is an inherently American enterprise, though I understand that American bands probably take up a disproportionate amount of space, in the global sense.



Spernitur a stultis, (LEO VIRIDIS) sed amator plus ad edna.

Do you often have discussions or thoughts about this? Do you have any political leanings?

I've spent a lot of time thinking and talking about how I feel about punk and punks, and more recently, about being a considerate person.

Not so much about American punks vs. other-country-punks. I don't know much about that. I have political leanings, though I'm reluctant to identify with any particular philosophy. If I had to choose, I'd say that I like the idea of anarchy, though I'm tired of meeting anarchists who do sexist and racist shit. I'm more interested in trying not to be a jerk, and avoiding people who are jerks. I feel like I'm speaking in riddles.



Was-sonax 2 portus. ignis. Cum Tempore latens

Have you ever felt like you don't fit in?
I'd say probably 95% of the time, yeah. I think most of people feel that way though, even squares. Like the end of Revenge of the Nerds. Or Angus.

Do you have any general criticisms of hardcore culture (jock or otherwise)?
Yes, I do.



3) what do you do to promote your own healing and self-care while doing this work? do you see this work as a part of your own liberation (and how)?

As I do this once a week, I make sure that the evening of that day is a time I spend in a non-demanding environment. I make sure I don't follow it up with another activity or interaction that is draining or emotionally demanding. I try to keep it low-key (like a movie at home, or a book in bed) or nurturing (like a good hearty meal, or a nice time with a loved one). Other than that I constantly am revising and self-analysing the way I interact, the words I use, the manner in which I communicate, and how it affects others. I write a lot, about my thoughts and feelings and challenges, and even fiction helps me see situations from afar, the forest for the trees. I also make music which is a satisfying way to get out of those heavily emotionally and psychologically engaging sessions.

My own liberation? I suppose the best way of learning about oneself is looking outward. Which is difficult to apply at times, because I'm quite

stubborn, but I'm doing it slowly, and can see common patterns or processes of behaviour in myself and the people around me. And when I see negative ones, I try to constructively avoid them by communicating to myself or others that that is what I would like, for those things to not happen again. Sorry if this is too vague or abstract. But what I'm talking about is passive aggressiveness, defensiveness, shame, blame, victimisation, accusing language, extreme language, black and white concepts, ultimatums, threats, avoidance, dismissiveness, unnecessary conflict, misdirected anger, lack of communication, self-righteousness, authoritarianism, patriarchy or sexism, feelings of powerlessness, lack of assertiveness, lack of accountability or responsibility, lack of recognition of privilege, and other feelings and behaviour that are conditioned in all of us, through television and movies, and the people around us when we were growing up. Like many, there was a lot of violence, aggression, and absence of communication in my family and it is difficult to wean these patterns out.

Generally speaking, my ultimate goal is to make people aware of how they behave, and how it affects other people. Mutual aid, active care, and co-operation. With no motive of gain or recognition, except to make other people feel better instead of worse.

Community Accountability for Sexual Violence Interview with
Vo, by Transformative Justice, EU.

1) how did you come to anti-violence work?

In a way it commonly starts, I think, a situation occurred between two friends of mine, and being someone who has experienced partner violence, stranger violence - both sexual and non-sexual - they came to me for support. I found that, as commonly happens, the survivor had trouble expressing and asserting their opinion/will/intention, and the perpetrator was quite vocal, defensive and aggressive. There had to be some common ground for mediation, but both were too emotionally invested to find it themselves, so they asked for mediation. I currently offer a mediation support service in a social centre in London, but I find that people would rather turn to friends that they can trust, rather than someone they have never met before! Which is totally understandable. Especially if they are specifically seeking support that is non-institutional or non-professional.

2) why have you stayed with it so long? what in the work continues to challenge / interest you? what do you get from it?

It's hard to explain, but basically, I find that there are always so many subjective truths and perspectives, and often people can't see from other points of view. I've always had an observer type of position, and believe to be fairly capable of achieving a more objective or neutral perspective, and usually am okay at communicating that to people. Of course there are always lots of hurdles, and no matter how you word or approach some things, some people will refuse to accept what is being expressed. It's really tough, and can be very frustrating. Also, my bias is usually with the oppressed or less vocal party, and that can really rub the more aggressive or defensive person up the wrong way. I always want to be the good guy, but often am intensely disliked because I am a messenger of sorts, telling people things what they don't want to hear about themselves. How their behaviour is not so great sometimes. So what do I get out of it? It's idealistic, but I try to defend people that find it hard to defend themselves. And I really really love that moment, the click, when both/all parties start to understand the other. When there is a concept or emotion that has been evading them, and blocking them from feeling empathy. And then after lots of hard work or talking, it suddenly becomes clear and they can see another person's perspective/experience. It's not something I do full time, just when the need arises, or else I would be pretty drained if I was doing this every day!

Do you have any thoughts about growing up or living in America?

I don't have particularly strong feelings on the subject, it just kind of happened, ya know? America is a jerk-ish country or whatever, but what country isn't, really? Historically, law-wise, etc. I wish that I had time and money to travel outside of the states, but it's pretty difficult to coordinate. I was in Canada for a day and a half in December, I've only been to border towns in Mexico, and I haven't been to Europe since I was 16. I guess I don't really have much perspective at this point.

What does the band have planned for the future?

We've got a few outings planned for this summer, but nothing too big. I'm pumped about doing a weekend tour with the Shirks, who are an amazing band from DC. We just put out a 7" on To Live a Lie Records, so I think we're just going to work on writing new stuff. Who knows what the future holds.

deathratsdo.blogspot.com

PYTHON

Bryony from GOOD THROB

So, what do you think of the whole gender thing in music anyway? Do you think it's a non-issue?

It's one of my main personal, academic and social interests, so definitely don't see it as a non-issue, as I think anyone (i.e. everyone) who is affected by the intersections of gender, power and privilege can or should see. Seeing stuff that's this fundamental as a 'non-issue' is totally the language of people who lucky enough not to be on the receiving end of a lot of the bullshit that comes with living in a male-supremacist world.

I feel pretty strongly about a lot of this stuff, having spent so long watching people who identify/associate/benefit from punk happily go on oppressing women-identified people just as they would do in the norm world, not checking their privilege or considering the world from other positions than the one they occupy, and it fucking stinks.



Can you think of some annoying or frustrating things that you encounter as a woman who plays punk/hardcore music? Or some general recurring themes in regards to male/any privilege?

The frustrating things are mostly the same as you might experience in the wider world, except the annoyance is heightened because, foolishly or otherwise, I still expect better from people within this community. If anything, the veneer of 'well of course no-one HERE is sexist' can lead to a lot of bullshit being perpetrated quietly, and going unchallenged. That said, at the same time, I understand my own privilege as a white, cisgender woman who passes as straight. I guess from my own experience, when I was in a band with three men, there was the CONSTANT questioning as to whether I am 'with the band' and disbelief when I said I was in it, to the point where in pro venues on the few times we played those sorts of places, I'd always be scrutinised by doormen, looked at funny when using drinks tickets, or treated like a general weird novelty. The issue with a lot of this stuff is once you start to notice it, and tune into it, it can come close to driving you completely insane, and when you're the only girl in the band, good intentions or otherwise, the dudes around you are not always gonna see what you see. That can carry through to some pretty extreme situations. I mean, I have had my breasts groped during a set, by a naked teenage boy who heckled how he wanted to 'lay me.' No-one said or did anything. I slapped the guy (who was fucked out of his mind, but the last time I checked that's not a legit excuse) and carried on singing, but it didn't mean I didn't feel fucking terrified and heavy hearted as we finished the set. Having the mic does not mean necessarily that you have power over a crowd, that they will listen to what you say or that anyone will support you. Experiences like that have made me reassess what role I want to play in terms of being happy to make enemies and be seen as a 'feminazi', if it means someone will think twice on the shit they pull. Rape jokes at the bar, casual appraisal of different female gig-goer's arses. It happens. In England, the lad/pub culture is ultimately pervasive, I mean, so many gigs happen in the back rooms of pubs, and in a punk context this means that, sure, anyone is welcome, as long as they don't challenge the status quo or, to use an Americanism, 'harsh the buzz', so everything is a joke, everything is permissible, nothing is to be dissected or looked at critically, and if you do dare to do that, then you're a humourless fun sponge who 'doesn't get it'. You can see why so few women speak up, let alone the men. There is a wealth of material available for right thinking dudes who want to be genuine allies to the women around them, and 99% of it can be found just by LISTENING to your female friends experiences and asking a couple questions. You will be mindblown at how much this means.



What do you say to people who talk about "female-fronted hardcore" as a genre, etc?

It's difficult. Obviously 'female-fronted hardcore' is not a genre, in that it can't really tell you anything about the sound of the music, but it's a tag that has probably made me take notice of a band I might otherwise have skipped over, by the very virtue of how rare it is to see or hear of women making music. I will go out of my way to support other women making punk and hardcore music in any capacity, because making the jump from spectator to producer was the biggest turning point for me, five years into being involved in punk, I sang in a band, and it was terrifying and cathartic and amazing all at once. Taking control of the means of production, as a wise person once said, is a key tactic at beating the bro-bores that still abound in even the most supposed politicised hardcore subsections. (I could name and shame the list of crust dweebs that have tried to make me



What do you think of the term "female fronted hardcore"?

I think it's a double edged sword. While on one hand it draws attention to the positive example that can be set for other girls to get more involved, but it also communicates that it's something novel. You'd never see 'male fronted hardcore' on a flier because that's the norm. I'd say I prefer to not have that term used although I get excited to see other bands with women and I also love talking with girls at our shows.

What's your all time top five records?

This question is hard so I'm gonna cheat a little- (albums that have influenced me/I would take to a desert island in no particular order)

- Hardcore- [unclear]
- Modern Life is War- My Love, My Way
- Comeback Kid- Turn It Around
- Gorilla Biscuits- Start Today
- Stay Gold- Pills and Advice
- Dystopia- The Aftermath

- Other-
- The Cure- Disintegration
- Pinback- Blue Screen Life
- My Bloody Valentine- Isn't Anything
- The Smiths- The Queen is Dead
- Van Morrison- Moondance
- plus every Sleater-Kinney album

What're you most excited about this year?

Meeting new people on tour, our new 7", and continuing my nursing education.



David La...
www.cahf-photography.com



ROMEN, ENNAEN
A. P. Abbe van S. George
A. de vande pout la gerve

Do you ever feel out of place in the very dude-heavy, youth crew/sxe circles?

The shows we tend to play I feel very comfortable at but it does happen occasionally that I feel a negative vibe about being a female at a hardcore show. At this point in my life I'm confident enough to not care.

How about violence and other macho behaviour at shows?

We recently played a fest in Seattle and during one of the other bands, I just thought to myself- we are on the same show as this? We fit under the same general genre as this? Maybe release some tension or aggression but it can be done in a positive, safe way. Seeing people leave a show hurt really bums me out, and I don't like that people react like it's some kind of accomplishment or trophy.

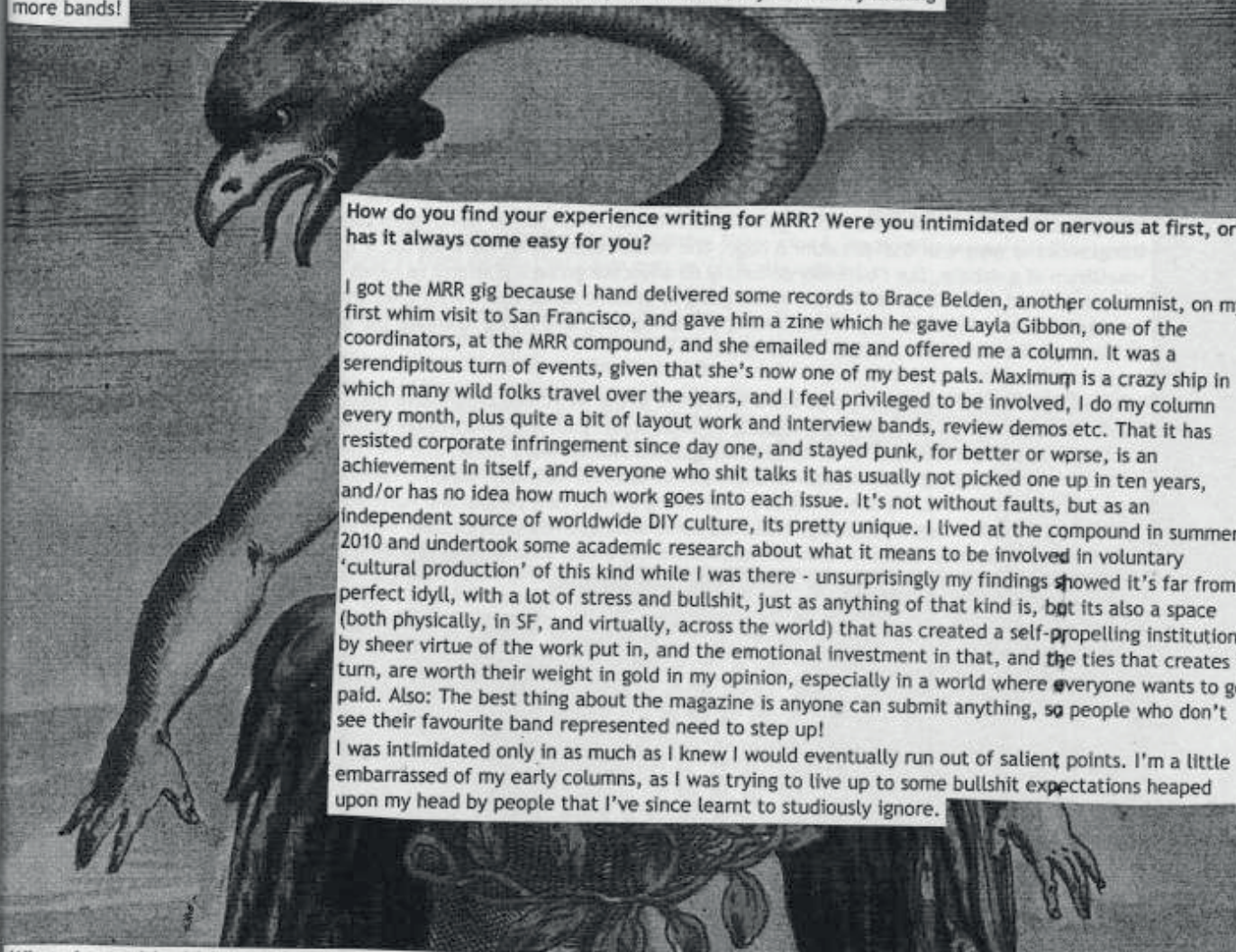
What's it like where you live? For music/cycling/everyday stuff?

I live in San Francisco which I love. As for music there's not enough all ages venues (other cities in the bay area are better like Oakland and Berkeley) and a friend just told me 'you can't be punk in San Francisco because it's so expensive'. Cycling is pretty easy, you can avoid hills but not always traffic congestion.

Do you have predetermined subject matter for lyrics or is it just whatever comes to you?

For the last few releases it's been whatever comes to me. When we first started out I had never sung for a band before and felt more self conscious about what I sang about. I feel like as I've relaxed and written from a more personal place people have connected with the lyrics more. It's a great outlet for me.

feel stupid, inferior and generally incompetent when I've been so audacious as to put on bands that are apparently their domain, but that would be pointless.) The trouble with being at the front, behind the mic, is that you don't escape the gaze, and you all too often still get written off, either with 'oh, well she's only singing' or 'ugh, sorry I just don't like female voices.' Basically, normalising the sight of a woman playing as well as singing is really important, and we can only do that by making more bands!



How do you find your experience writing for MRR? Were you intimidated or nervous at first, or has it always come easy for you?

I got the MRR gig because I hand delivered some records to Brace Belden, another columnist, on my first whim visit to San Francisco, and gave him a zine which he gave Layla Gibbon, one of the coordinators, at the MRR compound, and she emailed me and offered me a column. It was a serendipitous turn of events, given that she's now one of my best pals. Maximum is a crazy ship in which many wild folks travel over the years, and I feel privileged to be involved, I do my column every month, plus quite a bit of layout work and interview bands, review demos etc. That it has resisted corporate infringement since day one, and stayed punk, for better or worse, is an achievement in itself, and everyone who shit talks it has usually not picked one up in ten years, and/or has no idea how much work goes into each issue. It's not without faults, but as an independent source of worldwide DIY culture, its pretty unique. I lived at the compound in summer 2010 and undertook some academic research about what it means to be involved in voluntary 'cultural production' of this kind while I was there - unsurprisingly my findings showed it's far from a perfect idyll, with a lot of stress and bullshit, just as anything of that kind is, but its also a space (both physically, in SF, and virtually, across the world) that has created a self-propelling institution by sheer virtue of the work put in, and the emotional investment in that, and the ties that creates in turn, are worth their weight in gold in my opinion, especially in a world where everyone wants to get paid. Also: The best thing about the magazine is anyone can submit anything, so people who don't see their favourite band represented need to step up!

I was intimidated only in as much as I knew I would eventually run out of salient points. I'm a little embarrassed of my early columns, as I was trying to live up to some bullshit expectations heaped upon my head by people that I've since learnt to studiously ignore.

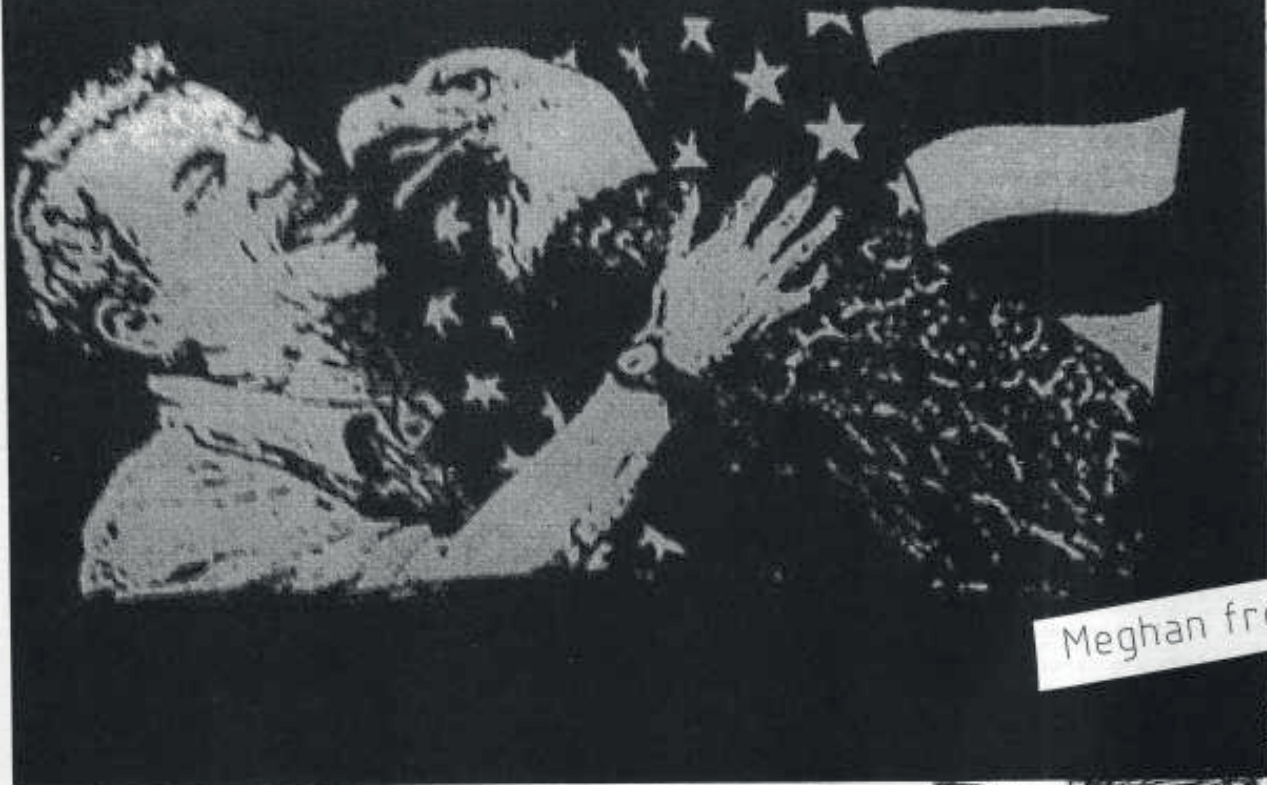
What about with playing music? What are your past bands, current bands, and future bands? What were your thoughts at the beginning, when you started playing music, and nowadays?

I love playing music. Watching a song take shape is literally magic. We have a garage-cum-studio-cum-practice space here and I am in there most days. I started off in Back Sabbath, an all-girl hardcore band that I did in Brighton in 2007. We were a band with two basses, no guitar, for three weeks (intentionally, before the guitarist went back to Australia) and played four shows, covering the full weird gamut, we played with 108, Wolf eyes and Whitehouse (not all at the same show.) It blew my mind that I'd somehow been fooled for all these years that it was something that required all these skills, all this terminology, the language of guitar shops and practice studio dicks. Breaking that down for the bullshit it was was the biggest turning point. My first proper band was The Sceptres which I sang in for four years with some of my best friends, which was always the difficulty when you have strong personalities, and I sometimes think back and think maybe we were trying to combine too many ideas, but the experiments resulting from that, fourteen songs or over four years, well, I am still proud of them and probably always will be. Writing and being able to release music that you've written that is always going to contain tiny pieces of your own life, opinions and experiences, I think we fundamentally all do it as a way of cheating death, and the sniff of that, even if you never release the song, even if it never leaves the garage, is why it feels like magic, and its what becomes addictive, and I feel privileged to be able to be surrounded by that feeling so often in day to day life.

These days, I play guitar in Good Throb with Ashleigh and Ellie, and Louis who played bass in the Sceptres and sang in Shitty Limits. Louis has been a huge influence on me, even though he was taught music from a classical perspective, he also forced me to confront my fear of 'being shit' that had led me to buy a guitar and never really play it. Being in a band with two women who's views on the dudebro shitsystem mirror mine, and being able to support and propel each other, is like the magic I mention above, but squared.

I play guitar a newer raw punk hardcore band with Ashleigh, Raquel and Michelle that that hasn't played any gigs yet, called Tortura. I also play bass in a noisy project with my boyfriend Ben.

PUNCH



Meghan from PUNCH

Can you talk a little about how the band started and how/why/when y'all got together?

In mid 2006, Keith started writing songs with his friends from the bay area band Rosenbombs which had just broken up. His other bands Doppelganger and BeforeAfter were also done so Punch came out of the end of those three bands. I first came to practice in September of that year to "tryout", and we recorded our demo that December in Jeff's parent's garage and played our first show April 2007.

You've toured quite extensively, Europe, States, Australia and Japan. What differences did you notice playing shows in all these places?

I love touring and feel so lucky to have been to all of these places. I appreciate how well Europe takes care of touring bands. I appreciate how nice Japan is. I appreciate how many women are in bands in Australia and that tour is like a vacation there. I love touring the US because I appreciate seeing outside of the bubble that is San Francisco.

And how that feels/seems different from the culture in the States?

There are loads of reasons why things are different here: the main thing is that it's a small island! The network is stretched out and generally smaller. Then of course property law and the ability to rent industrial space for shows for cheap, the fact that people don't drive so much/ have cars to get to gigs here, the fact that a lot of people would not attend a 'dry' show, and that venues are in cahoots with breweries, etc etc, the list goes on. However, we do, just about, still have squats here, which is always my favourite/ I feel 'purest' live setting representation for DIY hardcore/punk etc, so we win on that front.

Have you seen anything really inspiring or frustrating recently?

Inspiring: The three sets (Kingston, London at Big Takeover 17, Bradford at Means to an End) of the band Inservibles from Mexico that came over recently. Incredible!

Frustrating: Seeing some absolute moron from a band called 'Cease to Exist' throw a microphone stand into the faces of three women standing at the front of a gig and when called on it respond with 'What's the problem, it's art!'. Making anyone feel unsafe in that setting is totally unacceptable in my opinion, as is being in that shitty a band and calling it art, ha.

Have you seen any constructive discussion about gender and hardcore/punk occur in forums, etc?

The internet can be really good (see livesweat.tumblr.com) for dialogue, but often you can see messageboards attempting to create a consensus reality of perceived accepted roles in hardcore. This includes the pretty flawed idea of this dialectic between 'cool girls' and 'slutty girls', which firstly delightfully erases the experiences of LGBTQ hardcore kids, but also means, in practice, for straight and cisgender women, they have two choices: deny your sexuality to the degree that you perform as 'male' as you can, with the reduced participation that obviously goes along with the fact that you're still female, or just shed expectations of meaningful engagement with other people who share your interests and play up to this idea that being interested in dudes means you are promiscuous. It is pretty insane how quickly having fucked more than one dude who likes the same kind of music makes you some kind of hardcore Mary Magdalene, which again relates to the quiet conservatism/sex-fear of a male dominated culture, as in, the latent idea underneath a lot of the internet debating that goes on about acceptable ways to be a girl into hardcore is one of fear that women = sex = competition = conflict = corruption of the eternal dudebro brotherhood.

Some real stone age shit there. This obviously depends hugely on the kinds of gigs one is attending, and doesn't always work in practice, thank heavens, because in reality the vast amount of people at any given gig usually aren't concerned with debating some fictitious ground rules on the internet. Another important thing is that sometimes, some of the people doing this are older participants in possession of the 'cultural capital' that their word pretty much goes, which is dangerous... i'm thinking shit like Nate Bean formerly of that band Rot in Hell blogging about how a show was ruined for him by some girls moshing, because 'that shit just looks awful.' Yeah dude, because women are just guests in your culture, so if their participation critical fit the ridiculous never-was mythos you've built in your head, go right ahead and shut 'em down. You get this kind of attitude from apparently untouchably high-status boring old men the hardcore world over. Regardless, people need to accept that their words are going to get parroted, and that not everyone was around in the 90s when a foundation of not being an exclusionary prick was laid, presumably twenty years later still giving the freedom for that kind of loose talk that speaks only to one person's experience. We sadly participate in a culture that some branches of still think 'faggot' is an acceptable putdown, so there's a long way to go.

Any more thoughts you would like to share?

Be good. Be good to the people around you, punk to me is about the total denial of shame and challenging all forms of oppression through that everyday goodness. Oh, and I run a record label from our living room, I just put out three records and people should totally buy them:

www.direrecords.com

www.modernhatevibe.com / goodthrob.tumblr.com

[Handwritten notes in the right margin:]
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not so easy to define, and I am sure my 'feminism' is different to others. Playing shows on big stages is not an issue for us at all. We will play anywhere and with pretty much anyone. We see the stage as an opportunity to kick ass regardless of what or where that stage is and for which audience. This is why we have played small squat shows as well as big stages as we wish to break through perceived barriers and if we can bring people into the squat scene who may never have thought about a more alternative culture before then that's great.

Do you self-analyse or discuss much about privilege, and living in a major colonial centre? Maybe about the (jock) behaviour of doods who play music locally, etc?

On a personal level yes, it's very important to always be aware of what is happening within the community. Gentrification for example is a huge issue here in Hackney. I have lived in Hackney and East London for many years now, during this time I have seen communities destroyed and people displaced. I am aware that my living in this area is also contributing to this, so I think it is important to be aware and try to limit your impact and help the local community resist. So far we have been lucky, all bands we have played with have been really cool, people sometimes are a bit unsure of how to take us but we have not really had any issues with other bands just because we are girls.

What does the band have planned for the future?

We have just released our album "From desperate times comes radical minds" which is coming out on Damage Done Records (Czech) and Emancypunx records (Germany) and are hoping to be playing many more gigs in the future within the UK and to do a European tour in September.

Anything else to add?

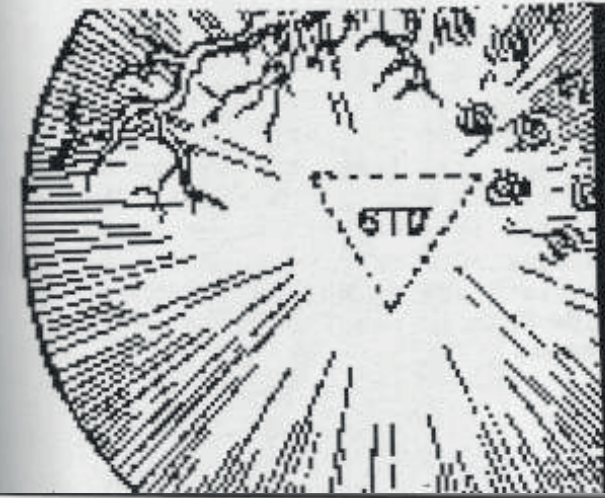
Thanks so much for the interview and for giving us the opportunity to say some things. Good luck with the zine. If anyone is interested you can keep up to date with what we are doing here: www.pettybone.blogspot.com, thanks.

Do you have any general criticisms of music/punk culture? Identified hypocrisies?

Sometimes it is frustrating that the punk scene, supposedly open to all is just as closed as any other scene. At times there are feelings of cliqueness, which can make it feel uncomfortable to someone who may be attending a squat gig for the first time.

What are your thoughts on gender, and playing music, and playing shows on big stages, etc?

Gender is such a complex issue and is not something which the band has a definite view about, we do not have any songs on identity politics for example, and this is by choice. I have interested in gender theory for some time now and it is something which is still confusing to me. Identity politics such as that discussed by Butler has had a great influence on me, at the same time, I am still finding my place within identity politics discourse. Additionally, I feel that any discussions on gender, removed from a critique of capitalism falls short as I do not believe that identity politics are to be looked at separately from a wider discussion on capitalism. Our songs, the ones which do touch on "feminist" issues are more generic. In fact, the whole issue of feminism is something which we can have a discussion about as feminism is





Tell us about the context of how Pettybone started and what it means now for everyone.

Pettybone started at around the end of 2009, when Ivona had the idea of doing an all girl punk/hc band. As the UK Punk/HC scene has not got that many females who were making that sort of music, it was not that difficult to put the band together. Pettybone means a lot to us, it gives us the opportunity to express ourselves in a way that we didn't have before. We all played in previous bands with guys and none of us knew what to expect when starting Pettybone or even if something like this would work. However, we all feel that this is the best thing we could have done, we make music for ourselves and being able to talk and discuss issues which directly affect us as women is really great.

How does everyone feel about the band compared to how it was when it began?

We all have got to know each other better and learnt how everyone in the band works and show more patience and understanding towards each other. We are far more comfortable with each other now and to start with we were not sure whether an all girl band would seem to some people as some sort of gimmick, however, we have really grown together, our music is more mature and collaborative now and we are proud of what we have achieved so far.

What are the songs about?

I guess one of the main themes for the songs are about our relationships towards society and how society can make us feel so alienated from it. We see consumerist culture and capitalism as possible reasons for this alienation, in that this hyper consumerist culture is drilled into us on a daily basis through magazines, advertisements, and other mechanisms - how we should look, how we should feel, what products to buy and whatnot. So in a sense, our music conveys the helplessness of this but on some level also provides us with a sense of hope.

Any major musical influences? How do you feel about Born Against? Hehe.

We are all into different types of music, right through from classical to punk, but we do share similar musical influences though and Born Against are one of them, we even cover a Born Against song which is fun to play live.

Do you all have identified political positions? How do they fit into a London/UK/ Germany/Europe context, eg. breeding grounds for projects/reactions to immediate [capitalist] environments, etc?

No, not really. We decided at the beginning of the band that we would not stand in any one political camp. Our views within the band are far too varied to have set positions on things and it would be unfair therefore to say we are this or that. Essentially however, through the type of music which we play and the fact that we are all women goes some way to push certain notions about the band, but basically, we talk about what we see and what we feel regardless of which political stance this comes from.

Any comments about squat culture or animal liberation in the UK for our international readers?

We believe that squat culture is very important in creating alternative spaces and is an important tactic in the fight against gentrification and the breaking up of communities. Social Centres and squats are necessary to help organise resistance and to create a culture of autonomy, free from the interference of government. In a sense, this culture is like the heartbeat of radical movements, which is why it is very important to fight for every space we can. In terms of animal liberation, we are not a vegan band unfortunately. My own political outlook whether it be feminism / anti-capitalism all tie in to my views on animal liberation, I find it hard to have one without the other. Animal liberation has been part of my life for many years and is still very important to me.

Have you ever felt like you don't belong?

This is something which I guess everyone feels at some time in their life. As discussed earlier, many of our songs focus on this issue and this issue is something which everyone in the band can identify with.

So, do you give much thought to the whole gender thing in music? Do you think it's a non-issue?

It would be great if it were a non-issue but obviously this isn't the case. We live in a (white) male dominated society and it's inevitable that this will be reflected in the hardcore scene which is still a microcosm of society as a whole. I do vocals in a few fairly brutal bands and I don't know if there has been a show that I've played where someone hasn't come over and told me that either 'I am good, for a girl' or that they are surprised a woman is capable of doing it. These comments are normally meant as a compliment but really grate on me as of course there is no reason that a woman should not be able to scream/shout/sing in a band any more than a male.

To use the DIY scene as any kind of tool for real social progress it needs the involvement of people of all races, classes and genders. For how much gender politics are a prioritised topic in the scene there is still so much to be done to eradicate the common place sexism, misogynies and preconceptions of why women are/should be involved with hardcore. I find so much to be constructive inspiration from other women and men in the scene but there is still so much to be done to make everyone feel accepted and welcome. On a positive, year on year, there does seem to be more and more women becoming involved with the hardcore scene.

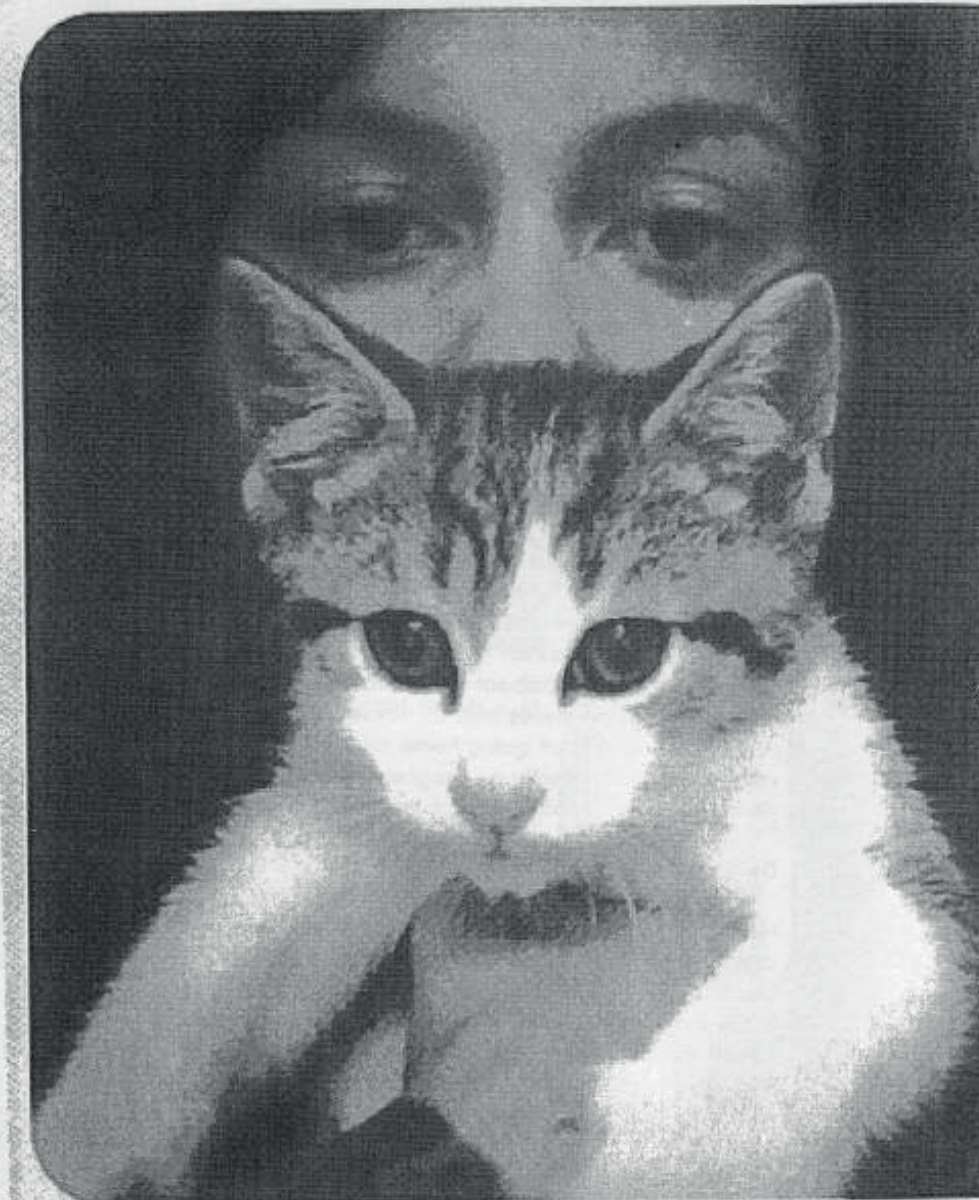
What are your past bands, current bands, and future bands?

Battle of Wolf 359 was the first band that I was ever in and we are still together five years later, albeit that we don't practice or play shows more than a couple of times a year at the moment. As the other dudes in BOW got busier and moved away Derek and I started LICH with a few friends of ours and we are fairly active with writing, recording and playing shows as much as possible. Recently Oli from Lich and I have started practicing a black metal band with a couple of friends of ours and we should have a demo out in November and will play our first shows then. I'm pretty interested to see how it will work out playing shows outside of my comfort zone with different expectations of performance and also a whole new level of intolerances and chauvinisms.

What were your thoughts at the beginning, when you started playing music, and nowadays? Nervous vs virtuoso?

Well I was definitely very nervous at the beginning, I don't know if I played a show in the first couple of years without having a drink first and alcohol definitely became somewhat of a crutch. I love being a vocalist but as I often feel pretty awkward around lots of people I don't particularly revel in 'fronting' a band and view it more as a means to an end. That said I have found so much confidence in

Sam from LICH and BATTLE OF WOLF 359



myself and my abilities over the past five years that I no longer get nervous and certainly don't ever feel the need to drink to take the edge off. Playing a really big show for the first time this summer at Fluff Fest in front of thousands of people was a really empowering experience- being on stage and doing something I never thought I could do.

How did it differ being one of two vocalists, to now being the sole vocalist/lyric-writer?
Sharing writing duties with Andy in BOW was always a really interesting and provocative process as it's great to have someone to collaborate and share your thoughts with and have someone challenge your opinions. I think it makes for quite an interesting narrative- seeing two people with different opinions and experiences approach the same subject matter. When I came to write for Lich it felt quite odd- mostly having to think about writing parts for 100% of the music but also not having someone to go through the writing process with. Whilst it sometimes feels lonely on stage, to be completely honest I think I do prefer writing by myself as I can deal with whatever issues I want to deal with and explore ideas by myself. The only constraint I ever felt with BOW was that I didn't always feel the need for a male voice on certain issues.

What do you like to write/talk about?

The majority of my lyrics are based around socio-political issues. In BOW we have quite a few songs about work unions and also the positive/negatives of scientific advancement as both are topics that Andy and I spent a lot of time discussing. In Lich I guess it's inevitable that I deal with more feminist issues- like a lot of women I know I've had first-hand experience of by rape, domestic abuse, gender discrimination and sexual harassment and the songs feel more cathartic because of this. One of the songs on our demo is about the need to build a platform within our scene where it is acceptable to be able to talk about issues such as abuse- it almost seems that if someone comes to shows then they cannot be capable of going home and hitting their girlfriend and of course this is not the case. If in a scene that is supposedly as progressive as the DIY hardcore scene it is a worrying thought that people do not feel comfortable enough to discuss their experiences without meeting scorn or disbelief.

Do you write much music too?

No, I can't play any instruments to any level worth noting. I have constant vague aims to learn to play drums and guitar but have made little progress with this despite being surrounded by brilliant musicians! I would love to play the drums (although I'm worried about my lack of natural rhythm getting in the way of this) and am really keen to play in a band with women so I am going to try pushing myself more with this. However, I feel very comfortable in all three of the bands I'm in and practices and always really positive experiences with everyone offering input to the song writing process so I feel like I make as valid contributions as I can.

How do you identify yourself politically or socially?

I am proud to call myself a feminist and I suppose politically I consider myself to be a social anarchist, although I would stop short of dogmatically identifying myself with any one school of thought in that respect. Since moving out of London I have had little involvement with any direct action groups although I am involved with some vegan organisations down here in Kent.

What do you think about bands, forming bands, and playing shows in Kent or the UK in general?

I think that both the UK and the Kent scenes are really thriving. So many of my favourite bands have been from the UK and I have been to literally hundreds of awesome shows here. The pros and cons of the way that the UK scene works is a huge conversation to start here but for the most part the DIY scene is awesome and runs the right way. The one big downer is probably the distinct lack of women in bands or even at shows. I was blown away on our first couple of Euro tours how many more girls you see coming to/getting involved with shows compared to here in the UK. Further than that in the US there seems to be more women actually playing in bands- on our US tour last summer I feel like we played with a band with girls in it almost every night unlike here, even in a cities as huge as London with so many rad girls, it is a lot rarer to be on a bill with even one other woman involved.

Do you have any cool stories to tell that may have happened to you recently?

I've been going to our local transfer station out here almost every weekend and I have really been discovering what a goldmine it actually is! They have sheds full of shoes, clothing, books, and assorted junk that is all free and it is pretty much set up like a free cycle where you can drop off stuff you don't want and take as much as you like. Recently I've been finding a ton of great shoes, lots of art books and books for collages. I got a huge box full of old national geographic magazines and other assorted items. This has also somehow also renewed my interest in going to the library more often and taking more advantage of all the great free resources that are in this area.



Any crappy ones?

I remember after I played a set with relics a few years back a guy who was at the show came up to me after we played and said "You scream pretty good for a girl". I really didn't know how to react. What was the response he expected to get from that statement? Me saying "oh yeah, cool.... yeah I guess I do he heh heh uh....". Was he intending it to sound flattering? Why couldn't he have just said "Your vocals are killer!"? It is still startling to me that here we are in 2011 (and this was said to me in 2006) and there are men who are still surprised when they see women in aggressive punk and hardcore bands. These women are being judged so much because of their gender and how they measure up to men, or the standards that men have about musicians in hardcore and punk bands. As a result this leads to a lot of women constantly apologising that they "messed up" or "aren't good enough". This kind of dialogue can kill any sort of confidence that a woman may have about being a musician, and this type of dialogue is what I hear most often at shows, and is some of the most frustrating to hear.

Any more thoughts you would like to share?

Move to Western Massachusetts. It is a really great place.

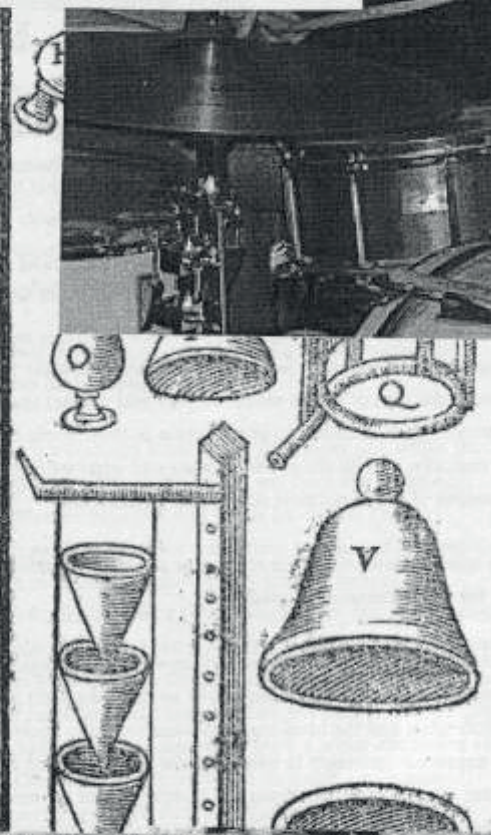
Websites, blogs, bandcamps?

<http://ampere-punx.blogspot.com>

<http://siamesetwinsma.tumblr.com/>

www.flywheelarts.org

<http://veganslop.blogspot.com>



There are even some bands who do not even make records or tapes or CD's. Their music is only available in a digital format. I think part of what made me so excited about punk when I was first getting into it is that it was a really personal connection. I would hear about shows only through word of mouth and hand made flyers. I would get excited about finding out any information that I could about new bands and really get excited about handmade 7" covers and so on. There are still many bands who do this, but I really feel like keeping tangible things alive in DIY is really important whether it be a zine, book, a record or a handmade flyer.

How much does gender play into how you form bands, or start projects, or write lyrics or songs?

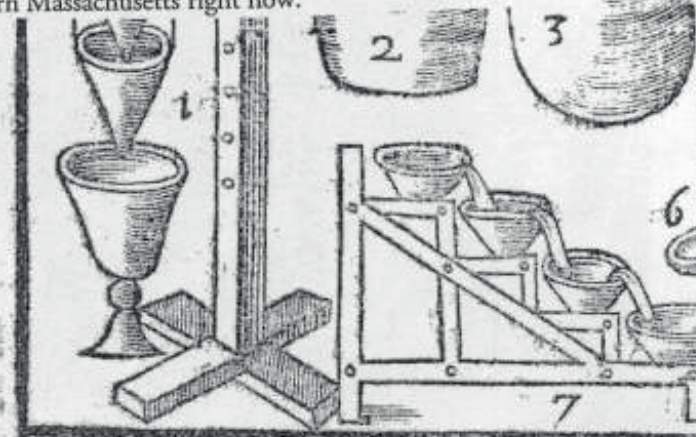
I feel like it is really important to both encourage and support women musicians/artists in your area. When my friends and I brainstormed the idea to do a ladyfest we really wanted to both celebrate and support the increase of the involvement of women in music and the arts that we had been seeing grow in our area over the last couple of years.

How much consideration do you give it when you are putting on shows in Western Mass?

Since I started booking shows I have always tried really hard to put as many women on the bill as possible. I feel like it is really important. I have noticed that in the past few years I have been putting even more women on shows, and some shows are even totally dominated by women. But I think part of this is also because there are a lot more women in bands right now, and not only am I seeking them out to play the shows, but I am also getting a lot more women writing me who need shows in this area.

Are there loads of bands you are excited about at the moment? Tell us about them :-)

I have been pretty excited about the new bands have been playing recently in this area, Honeysuck, Hoax, Pottymouth, Skvlt, Horsebladder, Outdates, Limbs Bin, and many other bands and Projects. It is a really exciting time in Western Massachusetts right now.



Any thoughts on alienation, feeling different or left out, growing up, or even now?

Growing up I was always moving a lot. I would never spend more than a few years in one area. I was always the new kid at school which would often leave me feeling pretty alienated. In some ways I feel like these experiences were really positive because I was constantly being removed from what felt comfortable and safe and I would have to learn how to readjust in each new place which I think made me a pretty strong and open minded person. But this also would leave me with a feeling of instability and I would learn later in life that if I wasn't moving all the time something just wouldn't feel right. I have lived in Western Massachusetts for over ten years now, but I think once I started playing in Bands and began to tour, that started to satisfy my need to move all the time.

What comes to mind when you think about "North American straight edge hardcore" culture?

Youth of Today. Minor Threat. I am straight edge, but identifying as a female, eg. I've always found it hard to completely identify with Straight Edge as a whole. I just feel like I really can't relate to the militant straight edge mentality. It has always been a personal choice for me, Drinking and drugs are things that I just really have no interest in doing, but I am also not out to "kill my local drug dealer". I really dislike bar and party culture. I feel those things are a complete waste of time. I also really do not like age restricted shows, and I feel strongly about supporting spaces that do all ages shows.

Do you ever feel any contradictions or conflicts, due to your lifestyle, vs expectations others may have of you, eg. your family?

Like many people, when I made the decision to go vegan I think my family had a bit of a hard time adjusting to it, but mostly because I wasn't eating meat anymore. I was born with a allergy to all dairy products, so I haven't been eating any dairy my whole life. So my family was already used to me always eating different meals from everyone else. My family was always a "meat and potatoes" kind of family, so think when I stopped eating meat and went vegan they had a hard time thinking of what my meat substitutes could be. This was also before there were as many options as there are now. So a lot of times I would get a can of soup or some pasta where the meat wasn't actually being replaced. They would just make things that they normally wouldn't put meat in anyways. Actual family gatherings were always much harder, but I guess in some ways they always have been because of my allergy. I've always had a really hard time eating at other people's houses and eating out.

The Kent scene has always been an odd paradox that feels unique to Kent but probably is much the same everywhere. It's almost as if there are two separate hardcore scenes that run alongside each other. The scene that Lich was born out of which feels very positive, friendly and outreaching and then the more 'bro hardcore' scene that the county is known for- which seems to revel in its insularism, misogyny and rejection of PCness. There is little crossover between the two scenes though and it feels pretty sweet when my/my friends' bands get recognition and success and put Kent on the map in a more progressive way. At the moment Lich is working on a trilogy of splits between ourselves, Human Junk and Man Hands which honour our roots and I'm excited to play some shows in Europe with those dudes next February to celebrate this.



Any thoughts on alienation, feeling different or left out?

Sometimes at shows I'll watch dudes throwing down, getting aggro, disrespecting people, using inappropriate language etc. and I wonder why I am there and what this scene has to do with me. It begins to feel even more compounded when people react like this to my band or something that I am actively involved with but end up but end up feeling excluded by. But this just makes it even more vital for women to keep their presence and take on proactive roles within their scenes.

There have been so many times playing shows where I have been made to feel different because of my gender. It always hits like a slap in the face as it normally happens on tours where I am feel untouchably positive about DIY (and probably just life in general) and we'll arrive at the venue and the promoter/sound guy/dude on the door of the club/barman etc. will talk through me to my male bandmates as if I'm not there. If I can even get the guy to acknowledge that I am in the band it will not be me that they come to to ask questions or give information to unless it's in regards to where to put the merch. It feels particularly silly as quite often out of all the dudes I'm travelling with I'll be the one who has booked the tour and spoken to the promoter/venue already. I've even made a concerted effort to start signing off emails with Samantha rather than Sam as that's caused a lot of confusion when people think that they've been dealing with a male the whole time, but it just seems fucking absurd that I should have to get people used to the idea that I am female. It's something that normally gets noticed by my tourmates pretty early on and as much as they empathise and have my back the isolated feeling is pretty hard to shake.

Do you feel any social pressures regarding being a "punk" vs a career-driven grown up lady person?

I feel plenty of pressure from society about being allowed to be a woman without meeting some traditional convention of femininity. These inexorable ideas of how I should look, dress, behave, achieve are projected on me by the media, my family, colleagues etc. I sometimes feel extra scrutiny from my family and some peers for rejecting conventional goals and successes in favour of being a punk (playing in touring bands, releasing records with all spare money etc.). As I get older and more self-assured I think maybe people are more accepting of (or maybe just resigned to) me leading an



Meghan from AMPERE and SIAMESE TWINS

What are your past bands, current bands, and future bands/records/publications?

I am currently playing in Ampere, Siamese Twins and two new bands that do not have names yet. In one of the new bands I am playing drums, and in the other one I am doing vocals again which I am really excited about. I also played bass for a few years in Foreign Objects, did vocals in Relics as well as other project bands over the years. Most recently I did vocals for a project band called Death Evocation with some friends from Boston.

Ampere is writing new material for a new record that will be a split release with our friends Raein. Siamese Twins recorded a demo at my house a few months back and we are making tapes of that material really soon. Foreign Objects has a LP out now as well as a new three way split LP with daylight robbery and defect defect.

Do you have any interesting projects going on?

This past April I helped organise Ladyfest Easthampton, a three day fest with music, workshops and panel discussions featuring a lot of great musicians and artists from New England and beyond. It was a lot of fun, and we are planning on doing this fest again in 2012 and I have started meeting with the other organisers to start the planning for it. I am also working on starting up a blog that will have artwork, writing, and listings of shows that I book in the area as well as interviews. I am going to try and also make a zine with these interviews as well, so that there is a digital representation as well as a printed document. One of these days, a zine that I have been trying to put together forever called Departure, will also be finished. It is based on my experiences and observations traveling and touring around the world.

Tell us about the panel you were recently in, and the article that featured you also...

As part of Ladyfest Easthampton, a panel discussion about women in hardcore was organised. I was one of four women interviewed on the panel and it was a really great discussion about topics in hardcore and punk that I think are not addressed very often. Each panelist was able to go into depth about their experiences, and it was really refreshing to hear this kind of discussion happening. There was also a recent article in the Boston Phoenix called "Pushing Back" that was all about women in punk and Hardcore bands in Massachusetts. It was really exciting to see this article because it made you realise just how many women are actively in bands right now in this area.

What were your observations at the beginning, when you started playing music, compared to nowadays?

Ampere started playing in 2002, and one of the things that I have noticed the most since starting to play in that band is how it seems like now, more than ever, there are more and more women getting involved, starting bands and booking shows. When Ampere first started touring, I felt like I would play with maybe three or four women at most on the entire tour. Now I am noticing not only just with touring but also with setting up shows in my area that there are other women playing most of the shows. Women have always been a part of DIY hardcore and punk, but I am seeing that number increase over the years and it is really exciting. Another observation that I have been thinking about a lot lately is just how many DIY bands there are these days. It seems like everyone is starting a band, putting the songs online for free somewhere and touring. I think that there are both negative and positive things about this. The internet has made it so that every band is able to make connections to tour and to make their music accessible online to anyone who wants to hear it. But as much as this could be seen as a positive thing I think it really takes away from what made punk and hardcore exciting in the first place. The element of surprise has started to really shrink. There was a time where you could go into a record store, and you would not be able to hear what a band sounded like unless the record store had a record player and you could check it out there. Now you can hear most bands online first, make a list and then go record shopping. I am not so sure a lot of people buy records anymore because they "look interesting" or they are on a label that they already like, etc.

"alternative lifestyle" rather than getting a career, buying a house, having a family etc. however I know my family at least are bitterly disappointed about what might have been. Little do they know that, despite having a job that I don't mind so much at the moment, I'm acutely aware that I am just waiting for the first opportunity to quit it to go off on tour!

Have you seen anything really awesome and/or shitty lately?

Well, the most recent band I saw play was PLF from the US. They came across as really nice dudes and their set blew me away but my whole experience at the show, as it often is, was dampened slightly by the fact that whilst I started off watching the band from the front by the third song in I was craning my neck to watching from the side of the room as things kicked off in the pit as several dudes got shirtless and were throwing fists/elbows/each other around regardless of who got hit. I am all for crowd participation and know first-hand from playing shows that people getting in to the set can really make a show awesome but there is definitely a point where it crosses the line into exclusionary violence. I had a discussion with a male friend recently who said that violence at shows has historically been a way for guys to blow off steam and react violently against the world but it seems without awareness of the other people that are there alongside you it's just a mirror of society's approval of men being allowed to act how they like 'because men are men'. Punch's recent UK tour proved to be a great contrasting example of crowd involvement in a really positive way with lots of women upfront rocking out with the dudes without people getting hurt.

Websites, blogs, bandcamps?

I very lazily oversee the following sites:

Distro, Label and tour booking: paradeofspectres.blogspot.com

My new tape label project: zoskiakultus.wordpress.com

Lich bandcamp: lich.bandcamp.com

Photoblog: swizevonludwig.blogspot.com





while wearing a hijab. Those are just the comments you get from strangers, on the streets, then there's the subtle structural racism of the way activist communities function and organise, and the cultural dominance of Pakeha culture in general, or the racism that operates in the workplace, especially in low waged jobs where employers can exploit someone's immigration status or their lack of English to keep migrant workers in the worst working conditions. So many international students from Asia struggle to even be paid the minimum wage!

Recently I went to one a conference organised by the ethnic affairs department and there was a speaker from an NGO in Australia focused on multiculturalism in the anti-racist sense and everytime the comparison between the treatment of indigenous people in Australia and New Zealand came up, the reaction was like 'haha at least we're not as bad as Australia'. Firstly, laughter is completely inappropriate, oppression just isn't funny, and secondly it is irrelevant - injustice is injustice, violence is violence, stolen land is stolen land, no matter how many people it affects or how brutal the oppression is. You can't compare it.

THINGS I LOVE TO HATE TO HEAR

"I don't see race, all people are equal in my eyes"

GOOD FOR YOU, BUT IT EXISTS FOR THOSE THAT LIVE IT OUT, DAY TO FUCKING DAY. THIS IS COLOURBLINDEDNESS.

"Reading/thinking about race makes me feel so bad"

WHITE GUILT DOESN'T GIVE YOU AN EASY WAY OUT OF BEING AN ALLY.

"It's not my fault this happened, it was my ancestors"

WHITE PRIVILEGE MEANS 'FESSING UP TO THE PERKS YOU GET AS A RESULT OF HISTORY.

"Please tell me exactly what I should say and how to act in this situation, with other people"

LOOK IT UP, EDUCATE YOURSELF, IT'S NOT UP TO ME TO REPRESENT EVERY NON-WHITE PERSON IN YOUR LIFE

"It's not racist, it's well-intentioned/politically correct/backed by institutions"

IT WAS RACIST IF I FOUND IT RACIST. IT WAS RACIST IF I'M OFFENDED BY IT.

Race is an issue of identity politics, separate to [current popular] universal economic theory [eg. class war]."

RACISM/GENTRIFICATION/CLASSISM HAS IDENTIFIED LINKS

"Racism is an interpersonal thing."

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM COMES FROM 'PERSONAL' RACISM

"That's so great that so many people of colour could come today"

YEAH WE CRAWLED OUT OF OUR CAVES TO MAKE YOUR EVENT MORE EXCITING

"I'll care about them when they learn our language and our culture"

SPEND THREE DAYS IN RURAL PAKISTAN, THEN LET ME KNOW HOW YOU GO

"I love anime/sushi/geishas/tribal piercings/dreads/mohawks/reggae/dance hall/breakdancing/sacred geometry"

<https://debunkingwhite.livejournal.com>

<https://www.peopleofcolororganize.com>

FUCK YOU AND THE FASHION THAT YOU STOLE FROM SOME PAGES THAT WERE MADE BY PEOPLE THAT STOLE FROM OTHER PEOPLE

Daily effects of white privilege (edited) from White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack by Peggy McIntosh

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
7. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.
11. I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another person's voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.
12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
13. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
16. I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.
17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
18. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race.
19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
22. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.

5. I had a notoriously difficult time relating Berlin locals to experiences of people from other contexts and cultures, eg. growing up Asian, or Middle-Eastern, or being an immigrant to a new country. Did you have any experiences like that?

If by Berlin locals you mean white Germans who've never left Europe then I've definitely experienced that. I knew people who had lived in other countries on student or visitor visas as an overseas experience. And a (white) German friend of mine who lives in Berlin but had studied in

Aotearoa for 9 months could relate to some extent, the feelings of isolation and homesickness, but I think knowing you will only stay at a place temporarily is very different to actually immigrating to a new country to settle. But yeah it was definitely hard for white Germans and other Europeans to understand what it's like to grow up as an ethnic minority in a western-dominated setting. Most of them totally take it for granted, and might relate having piercings or dreads and the looks or prejudice you get on the street to racial prejudices but they are totally different things and you can't really compare it. One is a chosen form of expression and the other is based on something you didn't choose and can't change.

6. And finally, how do you find New Zealand? I practically feel like it's utopia compared to the climate of race relations and xenophobia in Australia. But of course, living there, you have a totally different opinion, right?

Yeah fuck yeah, it's definitely no utopia. If it feels that way compared to Australia then I can't imagine how horribly intense race politics and xenophobia is in Australia. There is still so much racism here. Just the other day I was in the car listening to National Radio, and normally I never listen to the radio cos it just makes me angry. But this radio host was discussing a crime case of a 'young Maori male' and he emphasised that all parts of that identity was important, basically insinuating all young Maori men were violent and dangerous. Then there's the October 15th 'Anti-Terror' raids where 18 defendants, mostly Maori, are facing arms charges after the terrorism charges got dropped. It has been over 3 years since the raids which in itself was emotionally traumatising for a lot of the defendants not to mention the imprisonment and ongoing court procedures.

Okay, so maybe anti-Asian racism at least in Auckland is not as bad as it was in the 90s to early 2000s when all this talk about the 'Asian invasion' was happening. I haven't had anyone yell at me to go back to China in a while. But it can depend on what area you're in and how acculturated you are, whether you speak English with an accent or not, and recently it's coming back with National Front flyers being distributed in Auckland. At my work, which is domestic violence intervention, the interpersonal racism that happens to Asian womyn is just disgusting, with pakeha partners/husbands telling them to go back to their country and if they're not a Permanent Resident, immigration is used as a tool of power and control. Plus I think there's growing Islamophobia, someone told me she got called a 'terrorist' in the supermarket

like I could relate way more to you and your experiences the more we got talking cos you also spent part of your life in Aotearoa.

4. You ran a workshop titled "Decolonising Queer Feminism" at Ladyfest in Berlin. How did it go, what reactions did you have, and did you have any problems getting points across?

I was asked to do a workshop that was similar to the one me and "Dumpling" did at the Aotearoa Anarcha-feminist Hui earlier in the year on anti-racism 101/intersectionality stuff by a British queer activist who is living in Berlin. He had been travelling and attended the hui in Aotearoa and said that discussions around addressing white privilege is still quite new to the radical queer scene in Berlin. I initially felt weird about just importing the same workshop cos some things were Aotearoa-specific and Germany is obviously a different context with different kinds of issues. Apparently people don't really talk about colonisation or post-colonialism, despite the history of German colonialism which reached the Pacific and parts of Africa. And apparently people don't call themselves anarcha-feminists, queer-feminist is a more commonly used term - so I had to tweak the original workshop quite a bit and had to think about translation.

The workshop itself went okay but way overtime, mostly because it took twice as long due to the back and forth translations in German and English during discussions. It was hard for some people to get their heads around cultural appropriation, and there were discussions about addressing white privilege where the response was just, "we don't know what to do about it." My highlight was the POC caucus (there were 5 of us!) and it was both validating and disappointing that it's pretty much the same shit everywhere when it's a western-dominated context. But specifically in Germany, there's some serious problems with the Antideutsch movement, who are anti-German and pro-Israel, considered part of the Left - with very Islamophobic tendencies. There's ("radical") queer bars and cafes in Berlin where there's a policy against anti-Zionism, not anti-Semitism, but anti-Zionism! Their analysis of the situation in Palestine/Israel is very German-centric, despite claiming to be anti-German. Some Antideutsch activists go as far to attack Jewish Israeli anti-occupation activists and accuse them of being anti-Semitic!

There might've been about 40-50 people that attended in the beginning, but about 15 that stayed for the closing round at the end and the feedback was generally positive. Afterwards, I was told that there had been a performance by a white American artist who wore a native American headdress, right after we talked about cultural appropriation! The organisers were approached about it but didn't end up doing anything and denied responsibility for allowing it to happen. So in the end, I wonder if they wanted the workshop to tick the box on anti-racism/white privilege stuff, and seemed rather tokenistic. I don't know how much of the discussions had seeped through in terms of the actual organisation of Ladyfest as being done through a white queer feminist lense and whether it would have any effects on the way it would be organised next time.

23. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
24. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge", I will be facing a person of my race.
25. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
26. I can easily buy posters, post-cards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
27. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance or feared.
28. I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her/his chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.
29. I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost me heavily within my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.
30. If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have.
31. I can choose to ignore developments in minority writing and minority activist programs, or disparage them, or learn from them, but in any case, I can find ways to be more or less protected from negative consequences of any of these choices.
32. My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.
33. I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.
34. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.
35. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.
36. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it had racial overtones.
38. I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.
39. I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.
43. If I have low credibility as a leader I can be sure that my race is not the problem.
44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.
46. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.
47. I can travel alone or with my spouse without expecting embarrassment or hostility in those who deal with us.
48. I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household.
50. I will feel welcomed and "normal" in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social.

MZ from MELLOW YELLOW AOTEAROA

Intro by MZ:

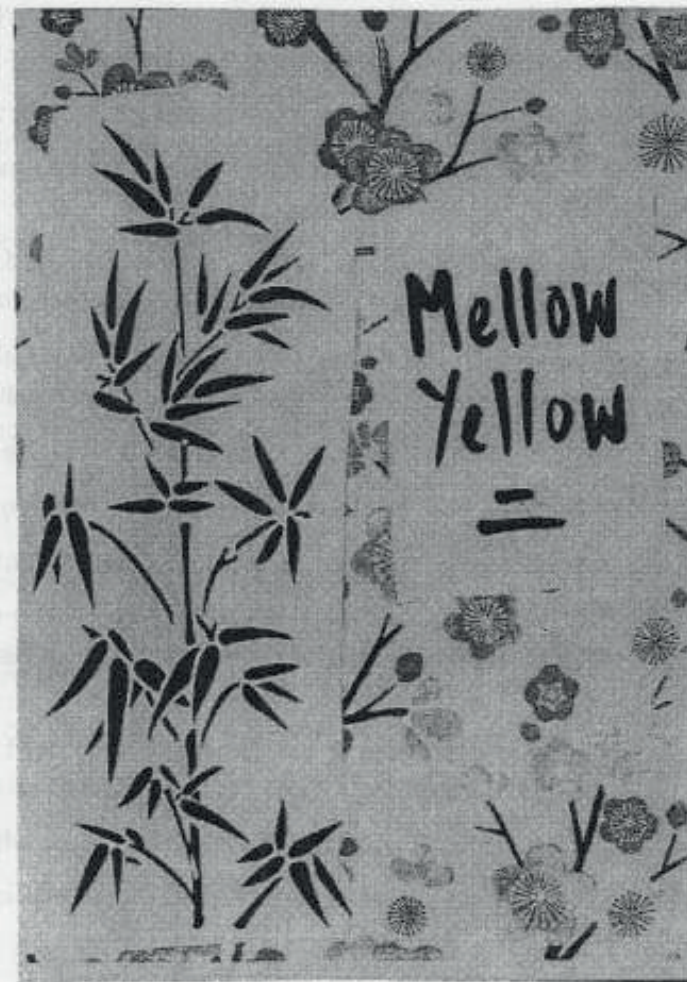
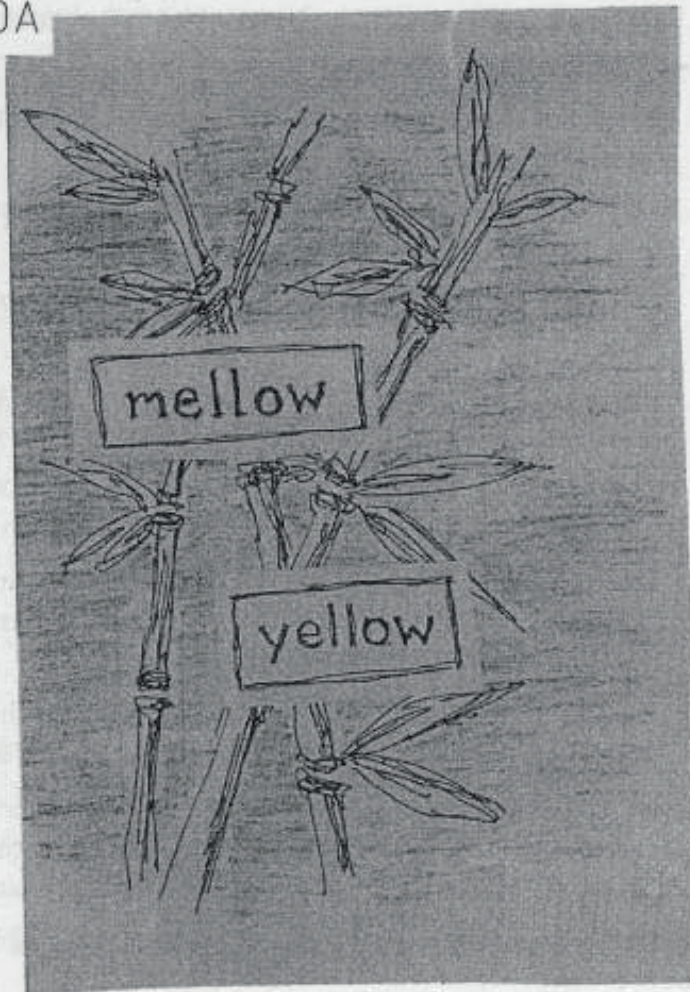
I met Anna at a workshop on "Community Accountability for Sexual Violence" and "Transformative Justice" in Berlin, it was part of the Anti-Sexist Practices IV conference in September 2010. It was quite apparent that we were the only two (visibly) Asian people in the room and Anna came up to me afterwards and asked if I was from New Zealand. As we got talking, we figured that we know people in common and that she had heard about me and I had also heard about her because her partner was the guy we couchsurfed with in London! And I remember overhearing him talk about her while cooking for Food Not Bombs. Such a small world! We pretty much just clicked straight away having quite a few things in common - being vegan, straight edge, anarchist, feminist, away from family and living in Berlin. We had a lot of conversations I missed having with my friends back in Aotearoa and I introduced her to Mellow Yellow, which she was super keen to come on board on, so these interviews are the result of our interactions.

1. What do you do musically? Is there a theme or concept to the band? And what are the lyrics about?

I was a guitarist in a band called Hysterror then the name changed with a new drummer to Mad Bitcher. We were a mostly vegan anarcho-feminist riot grrrl band with folk punky and crust influences sometimes. Basically, we got sick of only seeing boys only bands play in the punk scene in Auckland, who were also mostly apolitical, so we wanted to bring radical politics back into it and challenge the normative gender roles of girls just being the photographers or girlfriends of the band members. Lyrics are about anarchy, ending gender violence, veganism, anti-police state and fighting like a grrrl. We broke up cos our drummer got too busy with school and it's pretty difficult to find grrrl drummers with similar politics, so we made like the community party and split. But now me and some other Asian feminists just started another band, with screamo, punk and electro influences. We barely have a couple of songs, and we're still working on a name! We've only had two proper practices.

2. What is Mellow Yellow?

Mellow Yellow the zine is made in Aotearoa by



Asian activists/feminists with personal stories mixed with politics and musings on racism, colonisation, gender, class and radical politics in general. There are currently 3 issues and the 4th is in the making!

Mellow Yellow the blog is dedicated to radical social change from a section of the "Asian" tau iwi population in Aotearoa. We wish to create more dialogue and space to talk about issues that are specific to our experience. It's about opening up a space in which Asian womyn in Aotearoa can speak and communicate our specific and diverse experiences, to counter the dominant white feminisms and left-wing politics, to challenge racism and sexism and all forms of social hierarchy, to create understanding between all oppressed people, to support each other, to inspire solidarity and organize collectively for a better world.

<http://mellowyellow-aotearoa.blogspot.com/>

3. I met you in Berlin this year, and you expressed to me a kind of relief at meeting another "outsider" finally. Why was that? What experiences did you have that made you feel this way?

Yeah, omg I was so excited to have met you. It's funny cos when I heard you speak and hearing the Australian accent, there was this relieving sense of familiarity that was really missing. Seeing another Asian face in an activist setting in Berlin was pretty special. I had been feeling quite isolated and alienated, partly because of the language barrier and partly because of the cultural differences. I guess I had certain expectations of people with similar politics as me, like basic stuff of making people feel welcome in a space they are new to. Or in a social situation, I would've been introduced to some people and in a group where everyone is German except me, everyone would talk to each other in German and I wouldn't be able to understand much. Nobody would bother to translate or talk to me in a language I understand, it would just make me feel really isolated, excluded and homesick. And I wouldn't feel comfortable asking for translation cos it just felt like it would be a burden. Sometimes I would get stuff translated, but when it's a group conversation, it's hard to participate, all you can do is listen. That's the main thing that made me feel like I didn't belong there, and feeling like nobody really gets anti-racist politics beyond anti-fascism.

Also Berlin, despite being thought of as an 'international' city and having a large Turkish population, the radical left scene in my experience was like 99.9% white Germans or other Europeans. For most of my life I've been really used to being around people from various ethnicities, even in Pakeha-dominated environments and spaces, there'd always been some other Asians, or non-Pakeha people around. In the end, I did meet some awesome queer POCs and you which made me feel better about being in Berlin, but I feel

