

Praktiken widerspenstiger
Lernräume

*Teaching to
Transgress*
Research Group*

2

Conversation with
Camille Circlude

The publication project *Praktiken widerspenstiger Lernräume* (english: Practices of Unruly Learning Spaces) is dedicated to experimental learning formats that position themselves unruly with their content, composition, organisational forms and*or approaches and test their critical visions in practice. In conversations with the organisers of these learning spaces, experiences, difficulties and insights are to be documented and collective practical knowledge made accessible.

*Teaching to Transgress**
Research Group

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The zine series *Praktiken widerspenstiger Lernräume* (english: Practices of Unruly Learning Spaces) was created as part of Katharina Brenner's final thesis in the Visual Communication programme at the *Kunsthochschule Kassel*. The project was supervised by Johanna Schaffer and Johanna Schäfer.

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Katharina Brenner: The *Teaching to Transgress** *Research Group* was founded in 2017 at *école de recherche graphique (ERG)* in Brussels. How was the group founded? What was the motivation?

Camille Circlude: When Laurence Rassel, a well-known cyber-feminist, became the director of *ERG* in 2016, some teachers realised that there would be new opportunities to work on certain topics within the institution and that she will be very open to projects and point of views that disrupt the heteronormative male perspective. I then wrote her an email, explaining to her that I wanted to do something about, what I call the *Gender Gap* at *ERG*. By *Gender Gap*, I meant that the topic gender was practically non-existent in the institution at that time. Coincidentally, Loraine Furter, who was also a teacher at *ERG*, wrote a very similar email to Laurence Rassel, who then said to us: "Why don't you work together?". So that was really the beginning of our collaboration. We then invited the former student X. Gorgol to join the research group because I witnessed a situation where a jury made fun of X.'s work during a presentation because of X.'s appearance in high heels.

One of our first projects we made together

was the collective rewriting of the study regulations of *ERG* during the symposium *No Commons without Commoning*. During this symposium, we provided an open table where students and lecturers could exchange. We were a group of around ten participants and came up with the idea of rewriting the study regulations with a lot of irony and humour. We tried to push it to the maximum and to imagine things we would like to live at school. We proposed for example mandatory inclusive writing, a ban of all books written by men in the library, tuition fees that depend on your privileges, a cuddle room and the rejection of the compulsory medical examination. We also changed the name of the study regulations from *le règlement d'ordre intérieur, R.O.I.*, which means king in French to *R.E.I.N.E.*, which means queen. (laughs) We continued working on the document after the symposium and asked Laurence Rassel if she could send it to all the institutional members pretending that it's the new regulations. We also attached an invitation to an assembly to discuss our proposal. We were super happy that she played the game with us and published it. So when the teachers and students got the mail, some really believed that it was true. About 30 people came to the assembly, with

whom we then discussed how we could realise the ideas of our fabulation. I remember that we talked about organising a workshop about type design and gender, for example. Six months after the assembly we then really organised the Workshop *Bye Bye Binary*, which is still an active platform and community dealing with inclusive typography.¹ So all the research I'm doing now about post-binary typography and a lot of my design practice started with that little paragraph of our fabulation. It shows that sometimes just one sentence or one idea can be the beginning of something bigger.

Katharina Brenner: How do you look back on this protest action six years later? How did it shape the institution?

Camille Circlode: When we wrote the text in 2017, it seemed super radical to us. And now when I'm reading it again, I feel like it's not so radical at all and that all the things we proposed could really happen or are already implemented in the institution. For example, inclusive writing is now implemented in all communications from

¹ More information: <https://typotheque.genderfluid.space/>

the school (but not yet in all teachers' courses!). Also a lot of teachers and students have now read the book *Non, le masculin ne l'emporte pas sur le féminin* by Eliane Viennot as we proposed it in our fabulation. We also have lectures about porn, a jury with equal gender representation, more diversity in the library, ungendered toilets and a specific welcome for trans persons. So some points from our fabulation or at least aspects of it really ended up becoming reality. So our protest action had quite some impact.

Katharina Brenner: How was the Research Group organised? What was your working practice like?

Camille Circlode: Our practice consisted very much of asking the students and teachers questions and discussing them with them. For example, we organised a second large assembly to discuss student evaluation.

Documentation also played an important role in our practice. We tried to record as many meetings and discussions as possible. We really have a lot of material now!

Katharina Brenner: Between 2019 – 2022, your research has taken the form of an *Erasmus+* project called *Teaching To Transgress Toolbox*. What was the idea behind the program?

Camille Circlode: In 2019, we had the opportunity to apply for an *Erasmus+* project. Writing the funding application for this project was a huge challenge, as we had no experience with such processes. The topic of the project was critical pedagogy in the arts and the aim was to connect three different art schools from three different countries. We teamed up with the *Institut Supérieur des Beaux Arts de Besançon* in France and the *HDK-Valand* in Gothenburg, where Eva Weinmayr was teaching and leading a PhD. The first year of the project was about getting to know each other and each other's practices. We were quite a big group of 40 people. In the second year we split into groups and worked on specific topics like *Questioning the notion of Neutrality*, *Emotions in the Classroom* and *Rethink Admission*, which was much nicer. I myself went back to my subject about inclusive writing and designed the "I Don't Like Inclusive Writing" *Binggggo* with a small group.

Katharina Brenner: How did the project go and what did you learn from it?

Camille Circlde: For me, the project was quite challenging. We had planned to meet in person and then in 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic interfered, so we mainly met in online meetings. In addition, the contexts and situations of the respective universities were very different. At *Besançon* they were struggling with difficulties with the director of the school, who was accused of abuse. Understandably, they were so preoccupied with this incident that it was difficult for them to be involved in other things at that time. We as *Teaching to Transgress* Research Group* tried to support them in their situation with an open letter. After all, the project was there to be allies and to stand up for each other in difficult situations. On top of that, the teacher coordinating the project at *Besançon* was on the verge of a burnout and ended up leaving the project. And in the school in Gothenburg, there were some issues with money management. And so we ended up finishing the project alone at *ERG* and were trying to complete the final report. It was really intense, but we published a lot of our process on our website: ttttoolbox.net.

One aspect that I am also very dissatisfied with is that many of the teachers involved were *white* and there was a lack of diversity. We at *ERG* were aware that if we wanted to do an intersectional feminist project, it was essential that non-*white* people and BIPOC were also involved in the structure itself. So for example, on the *ERG*'s side, we've made room for more diversity in the team. Loraine Furter really addressed this issue several times and ended up leaving her position and her teaching hours to Stéphanie Vilayphiou and Sarah Magnan. We asked our partner institutions to do the same, but in the end they didn't. We had a lot of BIPOC participating in the program but still not enough guest speakers and people in the organisational team. It was a real problem. So, I definitely learned a lot about what I would do differently as a *white* person! I shouldn't have had to learn all this on the spot at the expense of BIPOC people involved and should have been prepared for it in advance. Now I am aware that I have to educate other *white* people. I wish someone had done that for me before I naively embarked on this project.

Katharina Brenner: So what are you currently up to?

Camille Circlude: The project ended in 2022, so it was running for almost 5 years. Now everyone is involved in other projects, collective practices and research. I just published a book called *La Typographie Post-Binaire*², for example. And I'm currently in another research group called *TYPO-POST* with some members of the *Bye Bye Binary* group, including Enz@ Le Garrec, my partner in crime. We are mainly type designers, but also performers, researchers and writers. On the websites typo-inclusive.net and genderfluid.space, we collect our findings, publish articles, font design, and also a repository of our fonts in use in different kinds of contexts.

Teaching to Transgress* Research Group

From 2017–2022, Loraine Furter, X. Gorgol and Camille Circlude been part of the research group *Teaching To Transgress** which is an experiment on gender and queer issues, postcolonialism and intersectional feminism, within the context of the pedagogy and practice of the arts. In 2019–2022, this project has taken the form of a European Erasmus Plus programme *Teaching To Transgress Toolbox*.

Camille Circlude, author of *La typographie post-binaire*, is a typo-graphic designer, researcher and artist. They holds a Master's degree in Gender Studies, is an active member of the *Bye Bye Binary* collective and works as a graphic designer based in Brussels. They also teaches at the *ERG* (*École de recherche graphique*, Brussels). Camille Circlude is currently working on a research project entitled *Typographie post-binaire: recherche sur les usages, les appropriations et la pollinisation des fontes*, funded by the *Fonds de la Recherche en Art* (FRArt/F.R.S.-FNRS).

2 Circlude, Camille: *La typographie post-binaire - La typographie. Au-delà de l'écriture inclusive*, Paris, éditions B42, collection „Façons“, 2023.

Praktiken widerspenstiger Lernräume

- # 1 *ANTIRA-Projektseminar + Alerta kbh!*
Projektseminar zu Antidiskriminierung,
Gespräch mit **Yewon Seo** und **Anna Wolf**
- # 2 *Teaching to Transgress* Research Group,*
Conversation with **Camille Circlde**
- # 3 *Access Rider Tutorial,* Conversation with
Ren Loren Britton
- # 4 *Feministische Gesundheitsrecherchegruppe,*
Gespräch mit **Julia Bonn**
- # 5 *Netzwerk Diskriminierungskritik,* Gespräch
mit **Francesca Romana Audretsch,**
Sevda Güler und **Hagen Verleger**
- # 6 *Climate Supporters' Support Group,*
Conversation with **Sophia New,**
Daniel Belasco Rogers and **Ju Rosenstock**
- # 7 *Stadium Planetare,* Gespräch mit
Antonia Grohmann und **Lena Schubert**

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