



# In Her Shoes

## Empowerment Workshop

### **Workshop Preparation for Facilitators and Organisations**

#### **Create supportive environments for women with protected characteristics to speak about prejudice**

*Don't replicate oppressive or discriminating structures that exacerbate prejudice*

- Learn about systems of oppression and how they silence people with protected characteristics
- Find out about the action people with protected characteristics and communities of identity have historically taken and methods they use to challenge and change those systems (Disability Movement, LGBT Communities, Feminism and Women's Rights, Black Civil Rights)
- Be open to learning about experiences outside of your own

### **Workshop Aim**

The aim of this workshop is to support women to build the self-esteem to challenge the prejudice they experience. We do this by exploring historical and contemporary creative responses to racist, disablist and homophobic discrimination and prejudice using posters, zines and artworks from Glasgow Women's Library collections. This method is directly informed by feminist, lesbian and black art activism, which invites the viewer to question inequality and incite social change.

By engaging with activist art participants explore the action and challenge of other women and artists who share their experiences and protected characteristics. In turn they are inspired to produce their own creative resources for challenging prejudice and demanding social change.

### Workshop Introduction & Ground-rules

- Welcome women and introduce self and volunteer
- Explain project background and why we are inviting women to join us to talk about this issue
- Explain that some people may wish to share sensitive and upsetting personal experiences during this session, that this may be the first time people have spoken about incidents that are difficult and emotional. Ask that we all agree to listen to each other with respect and patience.
- If any one becomes upset they are welcome to leave the room and return when they are ready. If they would like to speak with a worker privately at any time they can request this.
- Explain that GWL is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Reporting Centre for hate crime, there is no expectation or pressure on anyone to report but we are able to support people to do this.

### Activity 1: Activist Art - Adrian Piper



#### **Catalysis III, 1970, Adrian Piper**

Piper blurred the lines between art, performance and social commentary, making a lot of people question whether or not she was creating art in the first place.

She focused a lot on the interaction between viewer and artist, being careful to not let anyone know when she was doing a performance. She knew that if people were aware she was doing a piece, they would respond differently than they would if they had no clue what she was doing.

Piper's *Catalysis* was a series of conceptual performances in Manhattan that violated social norms of public behaviour. The resulting photographs document the artist bearing a WET PAINT sign in a crowded street.

**Find out more:**

<http://www.womanshourband.co.uk/media/reading/An%20Interview%20with%20Adrian%20Piper.pdf>

### Activity 1: Activist Art - Suzanne Lacy in collaboration with Leslie Labowitz



***Three Weeks in May: Speaking Out On Rape, A Political Art Piece*** was an extended work of performance art and activism by Suzanne Lacy in collaboration with Leslie Labowitz, Jill Soderholm, Melissa Hoffman and Barbara Cohen

The piece took place in Los Angeles, California from May 8 to May 24, 1977. The artists employed a mass media performance as a means to make social change through art.

**Legacy:** *Three Weeks in May* prompted the police and the city government to address violence against women openly and to publicize rape hotlines

**Find out more:** <http://www.suzannelacy.com/early-works/#/three-weeks-in-may/>

### Activity 1: Activist Art - Elana Mann and Audrey Chan



**Myths of Rape** by artists Elana Mann and Audrey Chan, working with Leslie Labowitz-Starus and Suzanne Lacy, recreates a 1977 performance by Labowitz-Starus, originally performed as part of Three Weeks in May. The 2012 re-invention of *Myths of Rape* transforms the original piece to raise contemporary concerns around rape, sexual assault, and activism. Thirty diverse performers, including women and men, enacted compelling interventions, wearing presentation boards featuring current myths and facts about rape. The performers enacted a series of movements (created in collaboration with choreographer Mecca Vazie Andrews) that created both intimate moments and bold statements at the LA Convention Center. Drawing inspiration from traditions of feminist agit-prop, the Occupy Wall Street movement, and the Arab Spring, this performance reinforced how activism and performance art are as relevant today as in the past.

**Find out more:** <http://www.elanamann.com/news/myths-rape-19772012>



### Activity 1: Activist Art - Zoe Leonard



*I want a president, (1992) Highline NYC, 2016,*

*“I want a president was written in 1992, in the midst of a presidential election and the early years of the AIDS crisis. Zoe Leonard’s work is a personal lament, a ferocious accounting, and a call to action. It is a call to a public that wants more from politicians and from political narratives; it is a call to a public that is enraged and fed up. It is a call to a public that needs the complexity of desire insisted on in the work. And it is a call to a public that is ready to mobilize their political desire and ready to make political demands.” Sharon Hayes, Artist/Activist*

**Find out more:** <http://topsidepress.tumblr.com/post/131292814714/i-want-a-dyke-for-president-1992-by-zoe-leonard>



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### Activity 1: Activist Art – Discussion

- Discuss who produced the work.
- What brought the need to make it?
- What is it in response to?
- How it was made?
- How it was used and shared?
- What was it about?
- Do any personal stories come through for you?
- What themes did it explore?
- What do you think of the title? What does it mean to you?
- What message does this artwork convey to you?
- What atmosphere was created?
- Did it affect your mood? How? Why?
- Did it inspire you?
- Does it change the way you think about women? Prejudice? Hate crime?

### Activity 2: Creative Response to Materials

#### Activist Art Collage Making

Facilitate women designing their own response to the activist materials they have looked at. Themes could include:

- Their reaction to the abuse they have experienced – might include the consequences or impact of the abuse on them.
- Fighting back – messages of resisting prejudice or a call to action against it.

### Activity 3: Evaluation Form