



ISSUE 2 JAN 2021

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Issue 1 of The Glass Ceiling Magazine was published in September 2020, with topics ranging from body image, immigrant family dynamics and ethnicity, to comic strip style feminist art and a portrait to celebrate a local charity ambassador. It received over 1000 downloads - and we even went on BBC Spotlight! After months of working so hard we pulled it off! I had never felt so lucky to have collaborated and worked with such amazing creatives and friends. So obviously, we have now created Issue 2.

The theme for Issue 2 is Bodies. When looking for a theme for this issue, it was very apparent to me that central to the discussion was our bodies. Some articles explore how we use them, through finding our voices, picking up instruments, or rolling out yoga mats. Others discuss society's judgement of our beautifully diverse shapes, ethnicities and genders. The art and photography in this issue traverses the landscape of our bodies, and is so stunning in its depth and authenticity.

Our bodies can be defiant and rebellious. An integral part of how we perceive the world lies in the body that we live in. If you are disabled, the difficulties you face in a society that doesn't accommodate you is highlighted in your frame of reference. If you are Black, your experience of racism will play into your everyday choices. If you are fat, the way you perceive society is going to be different. What I'm saying is, that it is so fundamental to listen to a diversity of experience, And that comes from a diversity of voices, a diversity of bodies. So I am very excited to share with you this issue, that moves through many different frames of reference, in the hope that we can all take something new away.

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Disability and Sex: Outcasts or Objects?

Trigger warning: discussions of sex, pornography, and fetishes

All women face the minefield that is sex and sexual relationships. Even in this modern era, in a Western society such as the UK, sex, and all that it comes with, is a keystone feminist issue. But how can intersectionality impact women's experiences of sexualisation and sexual liberation? I would argue that disabled women face a plethora of challenges in this arena which non-disabled women may never encounter. Through my lived experiences as a physically disabled woman and through listening to the experiences of my community,

I would suggest that disabled women are locked into a lose-lose situation when it comes to sex.

Here's why.

Disabled women are often perceived by society as non-sexual beings. We're stereotyped as pure, innocent things that could never be interested in sex. This is not just intensely frustrating, it's actually harmful; as young women we may be excluded from sex education, as adults we're not offered contraceptives and we're not asked about the risk of pregnancy or STIs when seeking medical treatment, while LGBTQIA+ spaces are often inaccessible due to the assumption that a woman could not possibly be a member of both the disability and LGBTQIA+ communities simultaneously. In general, disabled women are left out of the conversation completely.

There seems to be a number of factors which compound together to create this desexualisation fallacy. Firstly, the impact of preconceived misconceptions. Non-disabled people will often look at me and assume that I cannot talk, or perhaps I have little cognitive function. These snap judgments, made out of ignorance, can also relate to sex; 'she couldn't do X, Y or Z' or 'she wouldn't understand consent' or 'it wouldn't be good for her health'. Secondly, disabled women face infantilisation around every corner. We are depicted in the media as childlike and cute. Disabled people who cannot advocate for themselves are sometimes 'kept' in a younger state by their parents or carers through childlike clothes, hairstyles, and hobbies. This infantilisation means many people see it as inappropriate to be sexually attracted to a disabled woman. Thirdly, the burden narrative which permeates society makes a relationship with a disabled person seem truly undesirable. Disabled people are seen as heavy burdens, and therefore any person who entered a relationship with a disabled person would be taking on responsibilities such as caring duties, and would be forced to make sacrifices leading to general dissatisfaction.

Films such as Me Before You (2016) and Inside I'm Dancing (2004) add to this painful narrative.

If a disabled woman somehow manages to escape the non-sexual label which society may force upon her, she is still not safe. I, and many other disabled women, find ourselves frequently hypersexualised. Handling inappropriate questions from the public is a thing which all disabled people have to do. For some baffling

reason non-disabled people feel they have a right to look into disabled people's personal and private lives. But for disabled women, the questions are often sexual; a classic being:

'Can you feel everything down there?'

These questions come from entitled strangers, and we are expected to answer nicely.

Any woman who has used online dating apps has likely experienced inappropriate messages from potential matches. However, when I use dating apps the messages focus on the fetishization of my disability. I have received opening messages about stroking my breathing tube and having sex on my wheelchair.

I find having one of my main identities fetishised and objectified to be a slimy feeling.

People who have a real fetish for disability are sometimes referred to as 'devotees'. These people may not be inherently harmful, and I would not want to kink-shame others, but individual devotees can often objectify and dehumanise disabled women, including myself, and I'd say that the general disability community remains apprehensive of accepting devotees. This fetishisation is mirrored in pornography; there are whole sections on porn websites devoted to disability porn with specialisations such as videos involving amputees or quadriplegics.

There is a fine line between finding an aspect of someone's physical appearance attractive,

and only being attracted to that one aspect and nothing else about them.

It's obvious that barriers to sex for disabled

women exist. These barriers might be physical or related to a disability, but they are more often societal barriers. Breaking down these barriers is the key to unlocking sexual freedom and liberation for disabled women; think sex toys made specifically for disabled people (such as the up and coming brand Handi). However, just like any other women, disabled women can be objectified and used as objects, thus hypersexualisation is not the goal here. Until we can get this balance right, and until disabled women can have the same sexual value and status as non-disabled women, there is still work for feminism to do.

@GinnyAnd T

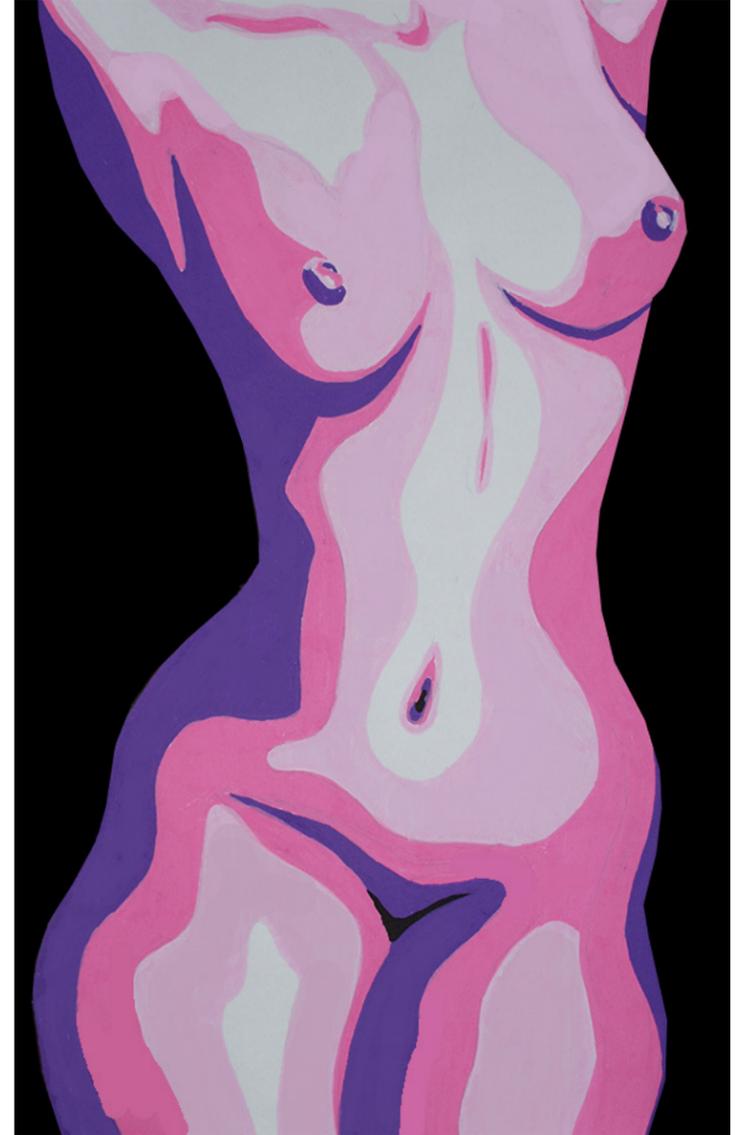
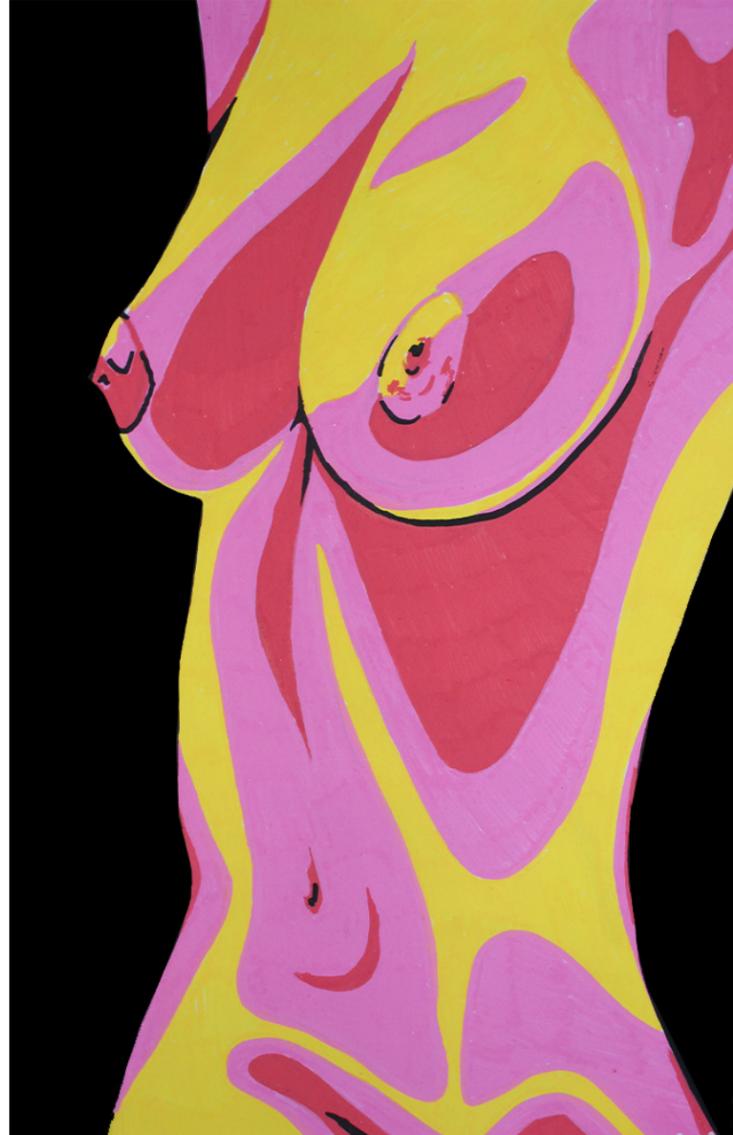
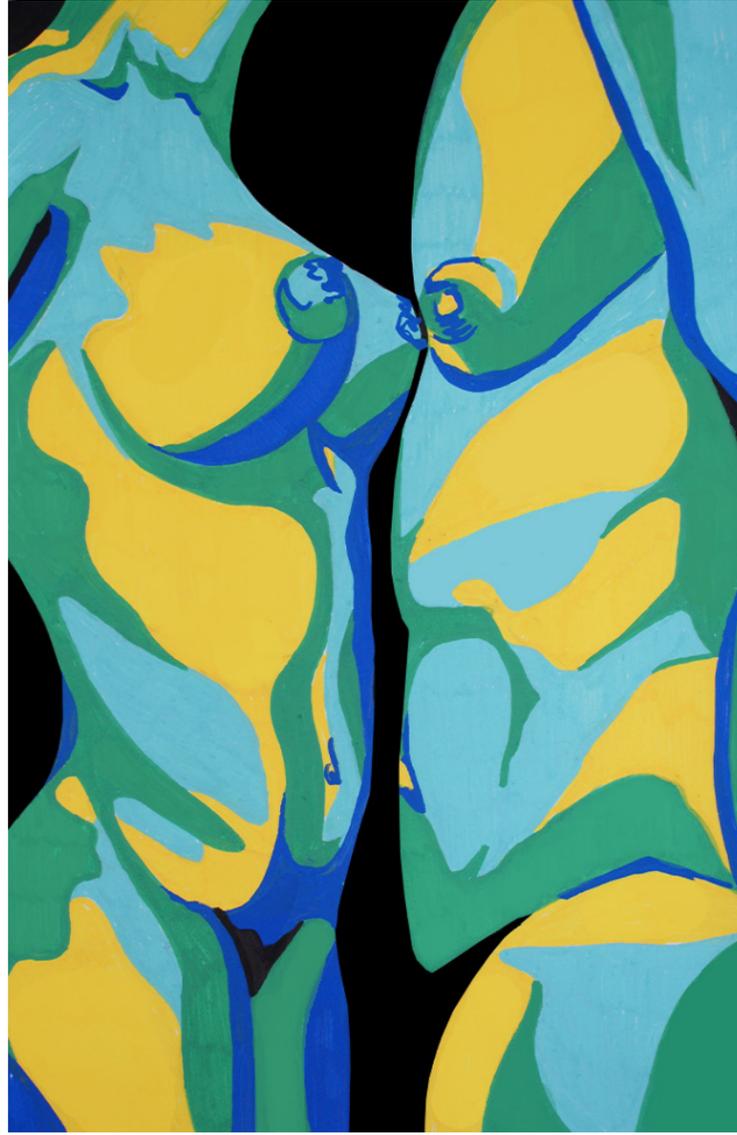
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***Ginny Butcher, writer
Emilia Pavely, illustrator***

Media Scrutiny



Mia Bryan

What does feminism sound like?

riot
grrrl

The tool that I've found most helpful in sculpting my understanding of the world is without a doubt, music.

This very tool has become the lens through which I see and absorb almost everything, particularly in relation to feminism.

Like others in this generation of Spotify addicts and compulsive vinyl collectors (ie. pretentious indie kids), I listen to music all the time. From Wake UP to nighttime, from FunkyTown to Bad Bitch Party, my playlists are endless. Ringing through my ears constantly like beautiful sirens, providing a guide for every mood, for every time of the day. Teaching me, waking me, enticing me.

The impact music has on me became particularly prominent when I began to delve into my journey as an unapologetically loud feminist (inspired by a combination of many episodes of 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer' and Florence Given's life changing book, 'Women Don't Owe You Pretty').* My close friend and bandmate Tess, who just so happens to be a badass guitarist and fellow music fanatic, recommended a documentary called 'The Punk Singer'. It's about Kathleen Hannah, the lead singer of 90s punk band, Bikini Kill, and subsequently a pioneer of the iconic Riot Grrrl movement. I hadn't listened to

Bikini Kill all that much beforehand, I just knew they were a cool feminist band. The impact this documentary had on me was immense. It changed the way I view the entire music industry and feminism; unpacking the overwhelmingly violent and masculine culture of mosh pits, consequently forcing women to be pushed to the fringes of gigs, the blatant sexualisation of female artists, the hyper masculinity and severe lack of female presence in the punk scene, and so much more.

However, the most influential aspect of this documentary for me, on a personal level, was the way it screamed

"START A GIRL BAND"

all over. It made me realise that the act of starting a band as a woman, welcoming free and total self-expression (without any previous guitar lessons I should add) is incredibly radical, and, if every woman did it, we'd change the world. So we took a dive into the deep end and did it. Tess and I, after leaving our previous band, created a new line-up along with our friend Ellen, who couldn't play the bass until a month ago, and called ourselves Liquorice. We've only been playing as a group for a very short while, but it's al-

ready pushing me as a feminist in ways I never expected and allowing me to grow in the most exciting and empowering environment.

Writing songs about feminism and womanhood has meant I've been able to discover some of the most interesting and creative parts of myself. It's made me become hyperaware of other female musicians, allowing me to connect with them on their experiences as well as the way they write and perform them.

The music industry is so overwhelmingly dominated by white men, so every band and musician putting a different face at the forefront makes a difference.

The reason girls aren't starting bands is because we don't see many female musicians in the current mainstream who aren't being hypersexualised. It was going to see Hinds live, reading about The Slits, watching that documentary about Bikini Kill, which made me realise that could be me. If they can do it, so can I.

Music is such an incredible platform and force for change.

If you've got something to say, play it. Why not?

Some amazing art can be created right now, from your very own bedroom. Don't keep it hidden away in a journal, share it. Shout it from the fucking rooftops. If people don't like it, at least they're listening.

Without music, I wouldn't be me. Without daily teachings from Lizzo, Joni Mitchell, Courtney Barnett, Noname, and so many others, I wouldn't know what it is to be woman.

I decided to make a playlist to celebrate those women. The ones who have taught me about love, growing up, friendships, and how to just be. The ones who made me want to make music like them. I did this by asking my followers on Instagram who their favourite female musicians were, and the responses were amazing. Have a listen to this playlist, The Soundtrack of Woman, let the music guide you and, who knows, maybe you'll write a song yourself.

Spotify: The Soundtrack of Woman

The Punk Singer - Kathleen Hannah (Youtube)
Reversal Of The Muse with Laura Marling- (Podcast)
Girl In A Band- by Kim Gordon, Sonic Youth (Book)

**In light of the recent news and debate around Given monetising The Slumflower's work, here is a link to The Slumflowers instagram - we highly recommend you dig into this story yourself. [Click here](#)*

Lori Beth Stott, writer

Giving Something Back

Three years after Fiona's breast cancer diagnosis she still wakes up at 3am thinking, 'Am I going to die?' Cancer has left permanent marks on her life. She can never wear underwired bras, eat dairy food nor red meat, feel confident in certain clothes again. Fiona felt unprepared for the psychological impact of a mastectomy, even though she had read and researched everything there was to know about it. Your breasts are part of you, your femininity and shape, and contribute to your confidence.

Fiona is a trustee for the Primrose Foundation - a breast cancer charity in Plymouth - which allows her 'to get the name out there and promote all the amazing work from having a mammogram, ultrasound, biopsy, talking through options, surgery, oncology to now being a no-evidence-of-disease patient.'

The charity gave her: 'lots of information, lots of kindness'. Diagnosis came as a massive shock. A mammogram detected Fiona's cancer even though she was symptom free.

'On diagnosis there was a specialist nurse. Later I met the specialist reconstruction nurse and specialist breast oncology nurse, all supported by the charity.'

She describes herself as being a bit 'blasé' about it and putting on a 'jolly hockey stick' face. However, it was much harder than she thought it would be.

The Primrose Foundation is with you every step of the way, even 10 years on from diagnosis. 'Just knowing there is something out there, knowing you can phone for advice, knowing that there are social activities you can get involved in' helps to make the clinical experience as pleasant as possible.



During her time as a trustee Fiona was part of a team of nine women, who had all had breast cancer, that organised two charity balls: dare to bare and dare to burlesque. Fiona was the compere in the second ball. They raised £23,000, as well as the 25th Anniversary ball postponed until next year. Her work has created a support group for women of all different ages.

'It allows me to give something back - having breast cancer was a complete shock, no lumps, bumps, or symptoms. The treatment I have had has been excellent'.

Her role is to support staff and patients and approve funding, for example a bursary awarded to the Plastics team for a training fellowship which will allow more women variety of choice with reconstruction.

'If one of the clinicians needs to attend a cutting edge course we can support them and the information is cascaded throughout the staff, helping to fund the best technology and training so that others who get this diagnosis get the best options available.' Reconstruction has been vital for Fiona's confidence. Eight weeks after skin sparing mastectomy and fourteen weeks after deep reconstruction Fiona was back to teaching - doing what she loves.

Fiona works full time at Stoke Damerel Community College as part of the Senior Leadership team: 'I love my job as I teach Geography 50% of the time in one of the most socially and economically deprived areas of Plymouth - 52% of our students are Pupil Premium. I thrive on it!' As well as teaching geography she also is part of the leadership team and looks after trainee and new teachers.

Tess Harland, artist and writer

Dear Male Lecturers - Get Over Yourselves. (We are not that interested in you!)

How our access to academic connections is blocked by male fear (presumption) of just being too damn attractive to female students.

The student-professor relationship is characterised by hypersexualisation. The idea of a female student "doing whatever it takes" to get good grades is deeply ingrained in popular culture and pornography. Wherever this plays out in reality, little blame is put on the professor's responsibility to reject advances, and while few men have lost their professional standing, the women involved have often struggled to reclaim their careers.

In light of the #MeToo movement, conversations about power hierarchies and accountability have led to universities implementing new measures to avoid scandals involving lecturers. Although student-teacher relationships still rarely result in concrete action against academics, lecturers now receive training and warnings about sexual misconduct. Especially in the social sciences, male lecturers will centre gendered issues in their courses and often pat themselves on the back for addressing the effects of power hierarchies academically.

In the personal realm, however, academics don't seem to practice what they preach. Instead of tackling the ways in which they perpetuate patriarchal ideals that result in the systematic exclusion of

women in academia, many seem to have come to the conclusion that sexism will be solved by avoiding contact with female students altogether.

Example:

When we approach you in the lecture/seminar room, we know what you are thinking: you suddenly are distressed, and we are the cause. You make us feel as if this contact is inappropriate. For us, it is about *discussion and curiosity*. While we never question our own or your intentions, your actions clearly state that your gatekeeping is reserved to us. Is it our bodies that make you uncomfortable? Is it young women, vulnerability or naiveté that is appealing to you? Is it being alone with a woman and a student that scares you? Is it because you think of her intentions or yours? We noticed that when our male friends contact you for help in a formal or informal setting (such as for drinks), you dudes could spend hours friendly chatting. **God help if this was an invitation made by one of us, a strange look would quickly put us back in "our place".**

The systematic exclusion that results from the lecturer's lack of contact with the female students and the minimal opportunities for the student to approach

male academic staff can lead to their academic disengagements and disinterest. Whilst the easy access available to the male counterpart creates and offers more opportunities: by networking with lecturers, and being able to access their knowledge and resources. **Women hardly get interpersonal access in informal spheres.** Higher Education, being the best environment for reproducing gender disparities, should not just academically debate these aspects of interactions, but it should be a space to dismantle and build new professional and interpersonal relationships. Women have the right to the same opportunities as their male counterparts. Therefore they should be integrated and seen as an essential part of the Higher Education space.

Student achievement should not depend on the gender of the lecturer nor the student! These dynamics not only shape the student experience but the systematic reproduction of university academics and position - which means that lecturers and

researchers will share their work | involving male students and those students will become researchers and lecturers. This then leaves little space for women researchers to gain high academic positions, reflecting a gender gap in confidence about academic achievements. How to stop this reproduction?

Sadly very little can be done institutionally to ensure equal treatment on an interpersonal level. But that should not stop us from making the disparities very visible. When a lecturer unfairly excludes you from a discussion, do point out that he would not be doing so if you were a man. If you overhear your peers talking about grabbing a drink with a professor, ask to join and investigate why you weren't invited in the first place. Women have to remind themselves that higher education is a space that belongs to them. **We are not paying lower tuition fees, so we deserve equal treatment, even if it means some academics will have to feel uncomfortable.**



Get some Yin inspiration with a different type of yoga

I've never really been a fan of the whole Yoga thing. I thought it was too quiet an exercise to calm my busy mind. I thought I needed a robust, tough activity; an activity that made me feel that I had achieved, that I had really worked out and exerted myself to the max.

Because apparently in my mind, exhaustion equals success.

Also, if I'm really honest I just didn't want to be one of those people who said they do Yoga. It has become the fashionable pursuit squeezed in between your matcha latte (nope I didn't spell mocha wrong!) and the Steiner school run. I was basically having an internal rebellion against this seemingly elitist, pointless activity, and more than happy staying away.

But because I suffer from stress-induced back problems, probably from getting rageful at the lycra-wearing, matcha-obsessed, walking perfections (did I say it was an internal rebellion?) I was recommended to go to a Yin Yoga class.



I did not have many positive thoughts about this. I was told that we would be holding poses for a few minutes at a time – I'm sorry, what? – and my trepidation increased when I read that Yin Yoga is a much slower pace of Yoga than the types most of us have heard of (interestingly these are called Yang Yogas). In Yin Yoga, poses (Asanas) are held for on average 2-5 minutes and it works on the deep connective tissues like the ligaments, bones and joints, helping to stretch and lengthen them and increasing flexibility. Now this may sound good for my back issues but for a mind that is in constant need of distraction, I think not.

I am not going to pretend it was easy. Holding poses for such a length of time is uncomfortable – partly because we just never stretch out areas of our body like this – and partly because when staying still in one position, thoughts and worries suddenly start to bombard your mind like a Catherine wheel on steroids.

However, despite all of this, I strangely enjoyed being told to be still and to not have to do anything other than focus on holding these poses and my breathing. It was refreshingly grounding and simple.

After my first class, a pleasant sense of

peace and calm enveloped me – such as I hadn't felt in a long time, and I slept like a baby that night.

Not only does Yin Yoga work directly on your body, it also helps activate the parasympathetic nervous system which induces calm and helps to lessen anxiety. Other benefits of Yin include better sleep, increased circulation, and reductions in stress levels.

Yin Yoga is based on the principles of traditional Chinese medicine which believe that we have vital energy (Qi) running through our bodies and in practicing Yin it can help us to alleviate any blockages of Qi that may be causing imbalance, manifesting in pain and stress. Yin Yoga's whole ethos seems to be one of taking time, of being mindful and compassionate and treating the mind and body as one, something that tends not to exist in Western style treatment approaches.

I have slowly come to learn from my weekly class that it is good for me not to distract sometimes, not to have to push myself so hard, and I found that there is actually a kind of resilient strength in a gentler type of activity.

Yin Yoga has become an essential tool in my self-care routine. I have come to rely on it. It allows me to relax, be

mindful and it benefits both my mind and body. It gives me the time to just be, without any distraction (and let's face it we never get this in a modern world that largely operates because of distraction) A Yin Yoga session feels like you are metaphorically wrapping a blanket around your soul and who doesn't want that!



I think particularly as women, it is important to carve out some time for ourselves and to find a space away from our other daily tasks and responsibilities. Yin yoga allows us to rediscover our identity, and for me this is a key part of what it means to be a feminist – to find out who you are and what makes you happy.

Do not get me wrong. I have not transformed into a Yin Yogi. I still spend way too much time scrolling mindlessly through social media and I've had to actually give up pretending I like herbal teas. But for just for an hour, once a week during my Yin class, I feel like I've got the space to work on achieving inner calm and peace – and that has to be progress, right?!

Emilia Pavely, illustrator Amelie Baker, writer

Board Meeting.

by Indira Falle

I watch from the corner biting my lip, as Alan

laughs at a joke about snowflakes then the size of his
secretary's tits

The table sits twelve of them, reminiscing about the good
old times, the days before

everyone gave a shit about "jokes", "harassment",
"crimes"

I march over to the stacked chairs by the door. Angry and
aggressive and

not very lady-like at all
they think

I pull down a chair. Then another. Then another, and then
twelve chairs

are unstacked on the floor

Weirdly, they're not talking anymore.

They watch, mouths open, cud on display as empty chair after
empty chair is

thrust angrily and aggressively next to theirs.

Excuse me please, I'm speaking. It's your worst nightmare:

Look there's space at the table for double the chairs.



“If you don’t come with me and suck my dick, I’ll fucking destroy your career. I’ll destroy you!”

Denmark in Denial - The second #MeToo movement in Denmark

The Danish television presenter, Sofie Linde, stands up proudly as host in the annual Comedy Galla sharing her outrageous experience of sexism in the media industry. Linde opens the debate of sexism once again, which started in 2017, but never came far among the Danish citizens.

We are privileged, we have it better than most other places. But we are in denial. When I talk to people outside of Denmark, they have a clear idea of what Denmark stands for. So what does Denmark stand for? It's egalitarian, there is a strong sense of community, all in all, it is supposedly the happiest place on earth. But why? As a Dane, I struggle with the assumption that Denmark is great and we shouldn't complain. Who are we to say when we are allowed to complain or not, and if everything is so great, then why can't we talk about it? Despite today's plentiful opportunities, there remains an unwritten rule to stay subtle. And this subtle behaviour reinforces the notion of a peaceful and egalitarian country to the outside world.

The image of the 'perfect' Denmark, I would argue, has been created and reinforced by the media for decades. We depend on the media to give us a full picture, but where are the critical news that Denmark has a burka ban and has people spitting on migrants? Instead, I hear again and again from non-Danish people that I come from a country that has the rights and freedom other countries are fighting for. So where is the issue of sexism in all of this? One of the most recent anti-sexism movements is the #MeToo in 2017. It was a digital social movement that reached global news. This movement was big, but Denmark was nowhere to be found in this debate, until now.

The first wave of #MeToo came to Denmark in 2017 and the few actresses who shared their stories were treated as the exception rather than part of a larger cultural issue. In other words, it was not with a huge impact or social costs compared to other countries. Nevertheless, this year there is a second wave of anti-sexism movement taking place in Denmark and it is disrupting political parties and companies, provoking loud reactions and suddenly the polite and quiet Danes are showing their true colours. To discuss sexism in Denmark creates the dilemma of whether we are privileged and should be thankful for our culture and rights, or if we are in denial that our country has flaws. But even now as I see the action happening I cannot help but wonder why once again it is the celebrities who are in focus, when in fact this issue is recognizable to everyone from your local barista to business women. All experiences count, big and small. I have gathered some stories of the everyday women of Denmark, and their perspectives on sexism.

Amalie Enghave

Studying Sociology in Aalborg, Denmark

Age: 23

“At the interview I agreed upon a salary with my boss and he chose to hire me. When I got the contract, the salary was down by 250£. I [...] spoke to my boss’ boss, he then said ‘You are fairly young and don’t have experience so you cannot get the full salary... You will get the salary with time’. He was older than me and was quite intimidating.”

“I accepted it and when I started doing very well at the job, I asked my colleague what he made, and he told me that he got a higher salary. I confronted my boss ... he was scolding me and telling me that I could not speak about my salary.”

“Three months later I got the agreed salary. When I got the raise, he told me I was lucky (was it not earned?! I told my family and the response was ‘Oh are you sure you didn’t misunderstand or misinterpret something?’.”

How do you feel about sexism in Denmark, overall?

“From the outside looking in, there is definitely equality. But there are ways around it ... and it is not very nice to talk about.” They say: “oh you are so privileged you cannot complain”.

“We are privileged ... but [sexism] is still there in the culture and no bureaucratic system can get rid of that.”

Lea Larsen

Studying Humanities in Copenhagen, Denmark

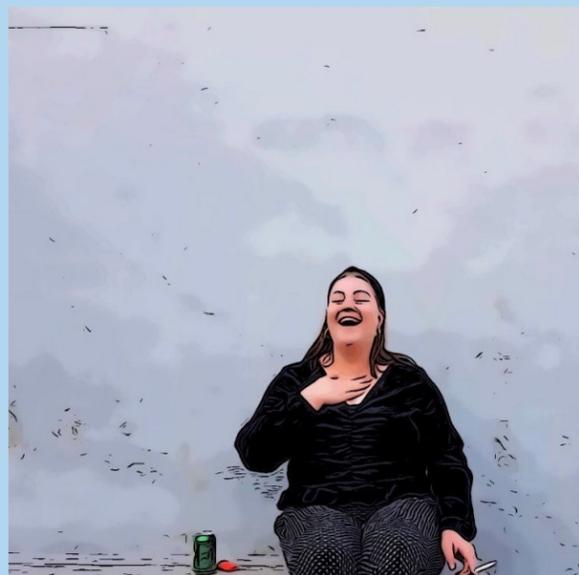
Age: 27

“I worked part-time at a supermarket [...] where [...] one of my bosses [...] would like to demonstrate his power. He was between 40 and 50 years old. He would grab my ass when he walked around the corner and especially when I was leaning forward to the lower shelves. He would also ‘compliment’ our clothes, our uniform, in a very sexist way.”

“When I tried to talk to the girls, they all said ‘well you can’t do anything about it, it’s our boss and that is just the way he is, so just deal with it’. “

“The less we talked about it, the better. I felt helpless.”





I talked to my family about this last week (for the first time). I started reflecting about why I didn't talk to them about it. And that is the golden question!"

How do you feel about sexism in Denmark, overall?

"There is a lot of focus in Denmark about the film industry and other big industries. I want to tell my story because sexism is also at your local supermarket, it is EVERYWHERE. It is part of the culture; it is very old fashioned. The men have the power and the women, well – very old fashioned."

Signe Højrup

Studying Literature in Odense, Denmark

Age: 24

"We were preparing for the prom (in high school) and [...] we were learning how to dance Lancier and you had to dance with a partner. I was dancing with my friend, we were two girls. You had to dance in pairs and in a square with four pairs. Our gym teacher came and said we could not be in the square because we were two girls. We were then placed in a broken square with not enough people to practice. I asked him why? 'Well you are two girls; you are ruining the square'. It made me so furious, it was ridiculous!"

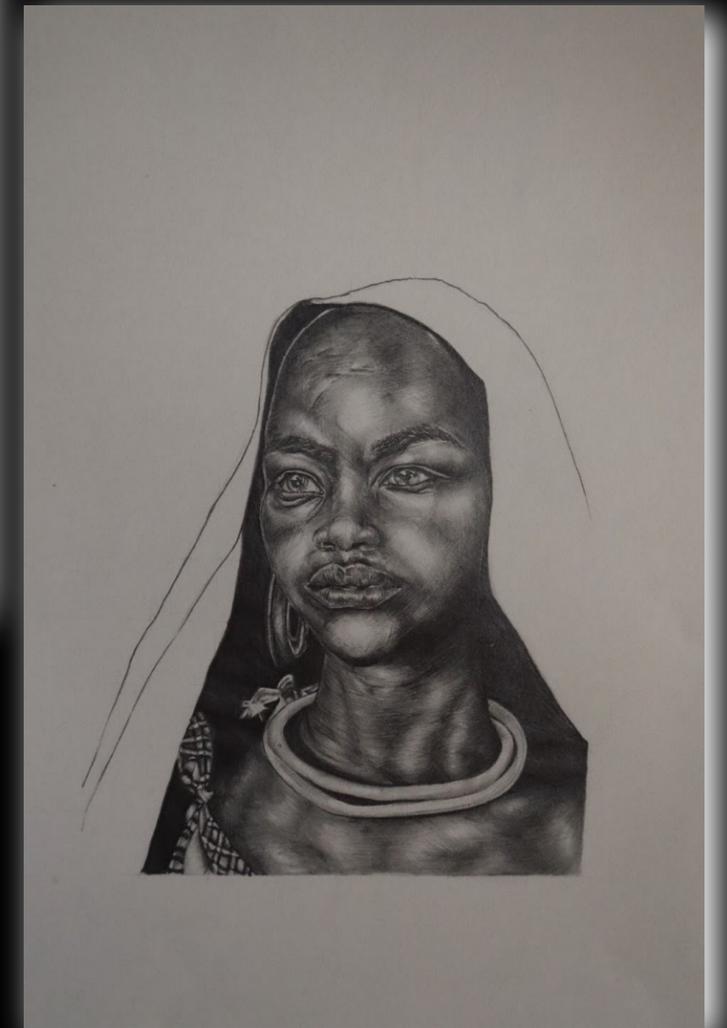
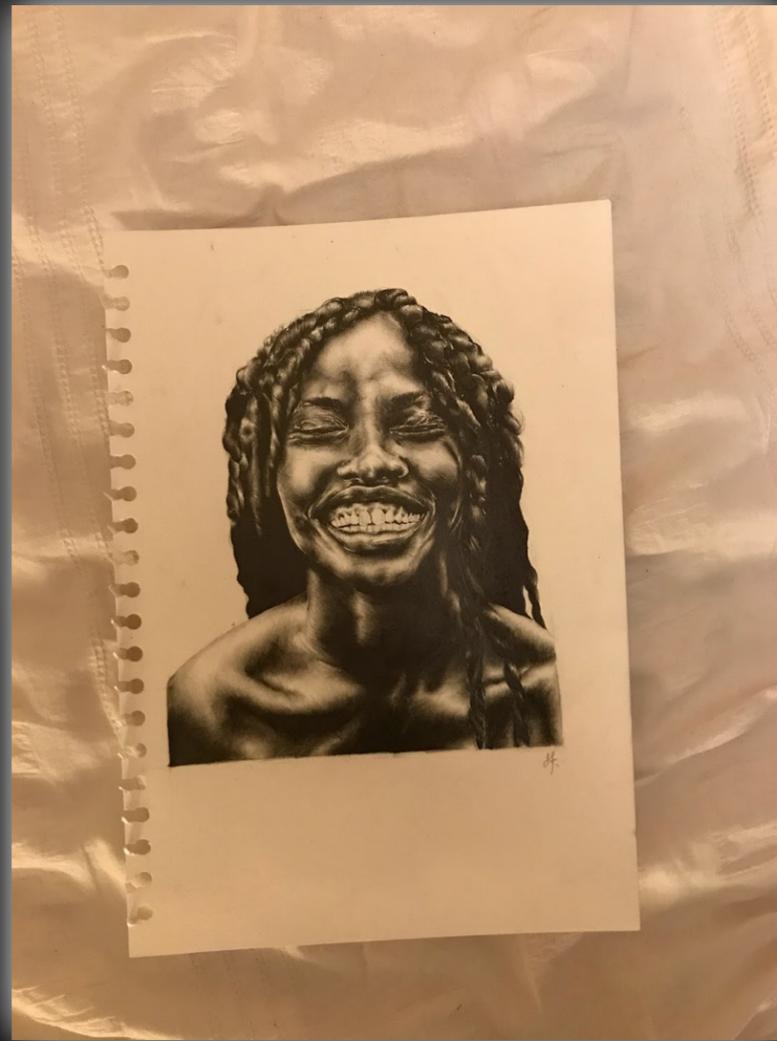
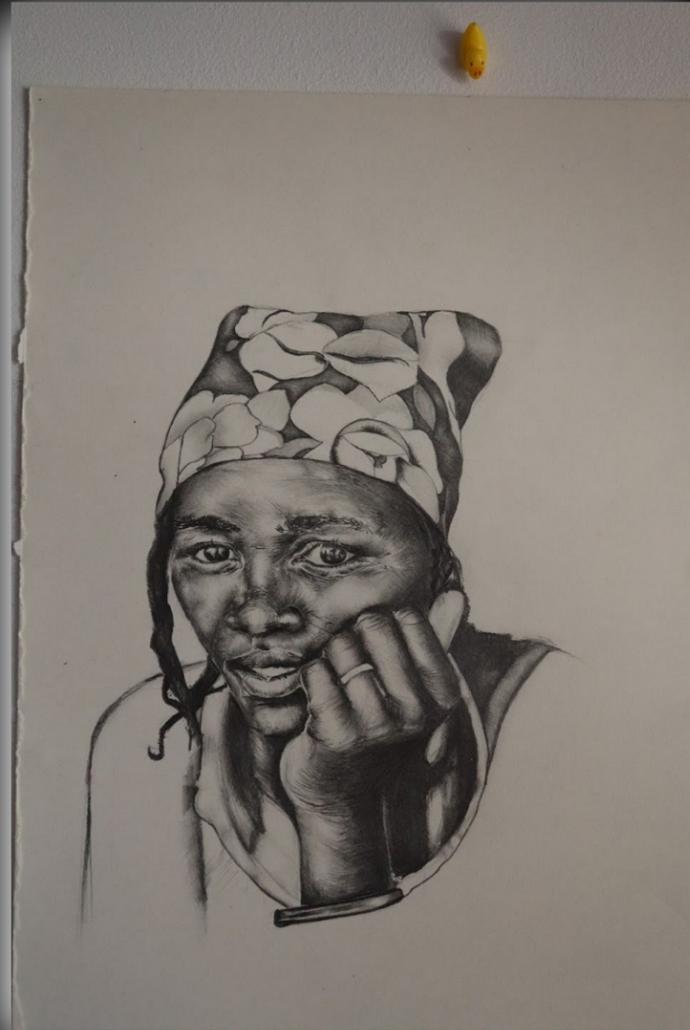


How do you feel about sexism in Denmark, overall?

"I think it would be ignorant to say sexism is not in Denmark. I think we are good at ignoring that there is sexism in Denmark. It is so normalised. People are good at ignoring and accepting it in Denmark."

Women experience sexism in direct and indirect forms. Denmark is no exception. Whether we Danes are too privileged to talk about it, or if the problem is that the topic is too awkward to discuss, it seems clear to me that Denmark, as any other country, has flaws. Calling myself a feminist means that I believe we should talk about it and improve all types of inequality worldwide, regardless of image.

Sketches



Ditching Toxic Diet Culture

Around a year ago, I went to the GP with a concern about my wrist. She told me it would probably ease with painkillers and a cold compress to reduce the swelling and I thought we were done. As I went to pick up my bag, a leaflet was put in front of me accompanied by the words,

“Have you ever thought about losing weight?”

Later diagnosed with tendonitis from an untreated strain injury, my health concern, and reason for visiting, was notably nothing to do with my weight.

Existing in body positive spaces on the internet, I had heard shocking stories about people who had been refused treatment or experienced discrimination in the health care system. Until this moment, it had never happened to me. My experience was incredibly tame compared to the stories I had read, but it still left me feeling angry.

Fortunately, having been in the body positivity community on various social media platforms, I knew how to respond.

I told her that if I had wanted help, I would have asked her for it and I left to buy some ibuprofen for my wrist. I was in a headspace in which I could ignore the GP’s comments and go on with my day, but the anger remained.

Growing up in a society where beauty standards are unrealistic, naturally I thought my value was wrapped up in my weight and the space my body takes up. I have dipped my toes into diet

culture plenty of times and experienced the same outcome.

Weight may have been lost and I may have appeared to be getting healthier, but my mental health suffered.

Being immersed in a culture where supposedly bad foods were called ‘syns’ left me feeling guilty for even so much as thinking about a jaffa cake. The first week I gained a couple of pounds, I left in tears. The group after weigh in was less than supportive and if anyone mentioned they had treated themselves that week, it was as if they had committed the worst crime possible. You went for a birthday meal? Why did you even bother showing up this week?

One of the problems with fatphobia in our society is that it is so deeply ingrained. We all have fatphobic bias within us.

We have been conditioned to think that fat bodies are inherently bad and certain foods should be avoided. Weight loss products and diet culture are constantly thrown at us and we have almost no choice but to think about our bodies and the space we take up.

Since being in body positive spaces, I have learnt that my body is not inherently bad. I have been reminded of my worth and the value I bring to my loved ones and communities as a plus size person. No food is inherently bad. You do not deserve to feel guilty for listening to your body and eating when you are hungry.



Bethany Collins, writer

Mia Bryan and Josie Francis, illustrators

An Interview with Frances Scott, founder and director of the 50:50 parliament campaign

H: Harriet Gill

F: Frances Scott

H: Hi Frances! How have you been?

F: 50:50's been going from strength to strength. Record numbers of women are signing up and we're going beyond the 'Westminster Bubble'. Maybe people will begin to acknowledge that women should have equal seats and equal say, and women will be able to come forward and we can support them.

H: That's amazing! I wanted to start by asking about the beginning of the 50:50 campaign: What motivated you to start the petition?

F: It started 12 years ago, my daughter came out of school and said 'Mum, I'm so excited, I've been elected to school council!' I said, 'Oh exciting, you're representing the whole class!'. She said 'No, of course not, there's always one boy, and one girl because our experiences are different. I thought: Why can't parliament be like that? It occurred to me that 'Power' just does not understand women's lives, because most people in power, are men! The problem is that democracy was designed 2000 years ago. We're living with an archaic system, a historic problem, the fight for political equality is still on. I had all sorts of ideas about how I would change democracy, but I didn't have time! I had four children, a house to organise, I was an antenatal teacher, I was a busy person. But my eldest daughter said 'Mum, stop talking about it, do something!'. I thought, here are so many young women, saying what they think, I'm going to say what I think! And I think we should have equal power! That's when I put up the petition. The thing I find incredible is that we have to persuade people.



H: I think it's because the system relies on inequality. Is it due to lack of education focused on women's rights and intersectionality?

F: There's a lack of education to both girls and boys about the possibility to participate in democracy. It's clear that there are particular 'schools' (laughs) that prepare boys for political life, but it's not called the 'House of 'those schools'' it's called the 'House of Commons' and we're all commoners so we should all be free to occupy a seat. **In the years since women won the right to vote there have been over 5000 MPs elected, but only around 550 women.** The statistics reveal the sexism, and it is absolutely a systemic problem. There needs to be a wider understanding about how to participate in politics.

H: Yes! I noticed on your website the term 'New Girls' Network', is that a deliberate play off the term 'Old Boys Club'?

F: Yes, definitely. A young lady called Charlie Brades-Price said 'we're creating the New Girls Network', a definite antidote to the Old Boys Club. I was talking to a friend whose husband is a Judge, what annoyed him during lockdown was that his clubs closed.

These clubs do not welcome women, it's where influential men meet, god knows what they do there, maybe they play snooker, but they say 'Will you take my lad for an internship?' It's tough to counteract that level of informal influence.



H: Can you tell me more about this network of women standing for election, how does the system work?

F: It's early days, but success in politics depends upon peer support and alliances. At the last election, 50 of the women were part of our #SignUpToStand campaign and 9 won seats. They were all prepared to say they believed in a 50:50 parliament. That is powerful. The repost you get is 'I want the best'. I find that an insult. Of course I want the best! The best person to represent me is a woman who has similar experiences. We want the best possible parliament. **Diversity leads to better decision making.**

H: I absolutely agree.

F: We should be building diversity into democracy. We are campaigning for all women, and some of those women face multiple forms of discrimination! We're creating a network of buddies drawn from those intersections who can speak directly to those underrepresented. **REPRESENTATION** shapes policy. **RESOURCES** should pull upon the widest pool of talent. It's about **RESPONSIBILITY**, it's a woman's world too and we should be equally involved. Parliament should show **RESPECT** for women and their experiences. On the 21st of November 2018, 100 years after The Qualification of Women's Act we organised an [#AskHerToStand](#) event in London, 200 MPs invited over 300 women to Westminster, we ran workshops in Westminster Hall. It was a significant moment – and some of those women at that event are now standing as MPs.

H: Was that a turning point in the campaign, or was there another moment you can pinpoint?

Message the Glass Ceiling if you would like to read the full transcript!

Ask Her to Stand: What's stopping women becoming MPs?

#askhertostand on instagram

F: There have been so many! The other was when I spoke at Canterbury University in 2015. The students had difficulty with what I was proposing, but one of the women asked to meet after, Rosie Duffield. We met and I said Rosie you should stand! She said, 'No, this is a Conservative constituency, there's no point' I said 'I'm asking you to stand.' In 2017 she was elected, she overturned a Tory constituency held for decades, she was our first #AskHerToStand candidate. Then 2017 was crazy – Women's March London, Trump had been elected, the world was falling apart, and then my husband died, I met with the team and said I can't go on. I was on the point of packing up 50:50, but they wanted to run the #AskHerToStand campaign – and they did! Then 2018 with the event in Westminster, Brexit had happened, nobody was talking about equality of representation! **I was angry, because who was making the most important decisions? 32% of MPs were women but they only got 16% of the press coverage surrounding Brexit.** In 2019 I went onto Women's Hour with a wonderful young woman called Lucrece and we get record numbers of women signing up. When I first started this, I was just a ranty woman, saying 'WHY can't it be like this, it MUST be like this!' But now we're the ones going about trying to solve the problem.

H: Because The Glass Ceiling is a predominantly Youth led magazine, what advice can you give to young feminists who want to get involved in activism?

F: **All it takes is a kitchen table and a laptop.** We live in an exciting age – with technology, change can happen, and it can happen quickly. Twitter has transformed this campaign, I was able to access people and MPs in a way that wasn't possible years ago. I'm sure that your young people will be able to embrace that readily.

H: Just to finish off, is there anything you want me to include in the article, links to petitions etc.

F: **1.** join the campaign. We are launching something called friends of 5050 parliament if you feel like you would like to donate. All our services are free, and we want to keep them accessible.

2. We're relaunching the ambassador program – sign up on the 'Get Involved' page on the website.

3. Also it's never too early to sign up to stand!

H: Thank you so much for your time Frances, this has been amazing!

F: Thanks a lot, it's a pleasure Harriet, good meeting you!

1. Allen, Grahame. *General Election 2019: How many women were elected?* commonslibrary.parliament.uk. 15th January 2020

2. *Published in 1918. Allowed women to become MPs*

3. *Loughborough University, Centre for Research in Communication and Culture. Media Coverage of the EU Referendum. 27th June 2016.*

4. *Radio 4 Women's Hour. Video on 5050 Parliament's Facebook page. 2019*



Louise Francis, illustrator

YOU CALL YOURSELF A FEMINIST?

“I’m a feminist, but...”

I’ve never really got into podcasts, but I love these introductions on the Guilty Feminist podcast that have become iconic in the last couple of years. A personal favourite was “I’m a feminist, but one time I went on a women’s rights march, and popped into a department store to use the loo, got distracted trying out face creams and when I came out, the march was gone.”

While making me snort as I breathe a sigh of relief that I’m not the only “bad” feminist, these tropes raise an important question: how have we feminists managed to get ourselves a stereotype, when feminism is actually all about breaking stereotypes? Why can you only really count as a feminist if you go on the women’s rights march rather than buying some new face cream?

Ironically, being a “good” feminist has come to mean shedding yourself of anything that might be perceived as feminine.

You can’t enjoy *Grease* (in which main character Sandy moulds herself into one of the sexy, leather-clad, cigarette-smoking girls in order to make Danny love her) while calling yourself a feminist. You can’t shave your legs and call yourself a feminist. You can’t be a housewife and call yourself a feminist.

Just as with countless other expectations of the modern-day woman, being a feminist can have seriously high (and often, double) standards. As Deborah

Frances-White, the brilliant host of the Guilty Feminist podcast, argues, “for some women, feminism has become another thing to feel inadequate about”. But why is that?

Feminism is a movement fraught with internal prejudices and judgement.

For me, more recently I have been struck by my own prejudice towards women that seem to actively participate in patriarchal cultures. Although I grew up in London, my parents are from India and we often visit our family there. To me, this always emphasised the difference between me (who grew up in London) and my female cousin (who grew up in New Delhi). She always wore skirts past her knee while I wanted to roll mine up; she didn’t text guys she wasn’t dating while I made a big show of having male friends. Her attitude to being a modern-day woman seemed outdated and restrained; being around her made me brash in a determined effort to demonstrate our differences and display how much greater my female emancipation and my brand of feminism was.

However, talking with her one day, I realised with a start that she had something I didn’t: self-assured confidence in who she was and what she wanted in life. All of a sudden, the length of our skirts paled into insignificance. I finally understood that participating in more conservative cultures does not necessarily mean being less of a feminist – and my refusal to shave my legs certainly didn’t make me more of one.



We need to understand that what we perceive to be surface-level indicators of feminism often barely go deeper than that.

Cultural differences may translate into differences in what feminists look like and care about across the world – but that has no bearing on how “feminist” they are.

And no woman has a place to judge another on how feminist she is: our bodies, thoughts, actions and selves are owned by us, *not by other women.*

For me, feminism has come to mean wholeheartedly respecting the choices of other women in their contexts and supporting those choices. All too often, the undercurrent of competition between feminists to

out-feminist each other obscure the things that are important to the movement. In a world where there is a tangible confidence gap between men and women that translates into socioeconomic impacts, further diminishing confidence of other women through judgement and prejudice has no place.

As a movement, feminism will fast become irrelevant if the participants cannot accept each other as equals and to rid ourselves of surface-level stereotypes of what being “feminist” is.

Before we challenge the rest of the world to come with us, we have to accept those who already are – face-cream-buying or not.

Shammah Banerjee, writer



'To capture beauty' Daniel Geezharts

Mela La Muse

Mela thou beest my muse and my maker
Of happiest melodies and coined coincidences.

Mere mortal as I could not have connived to plot such a curve nor fleshy axis
on your graph of nature.

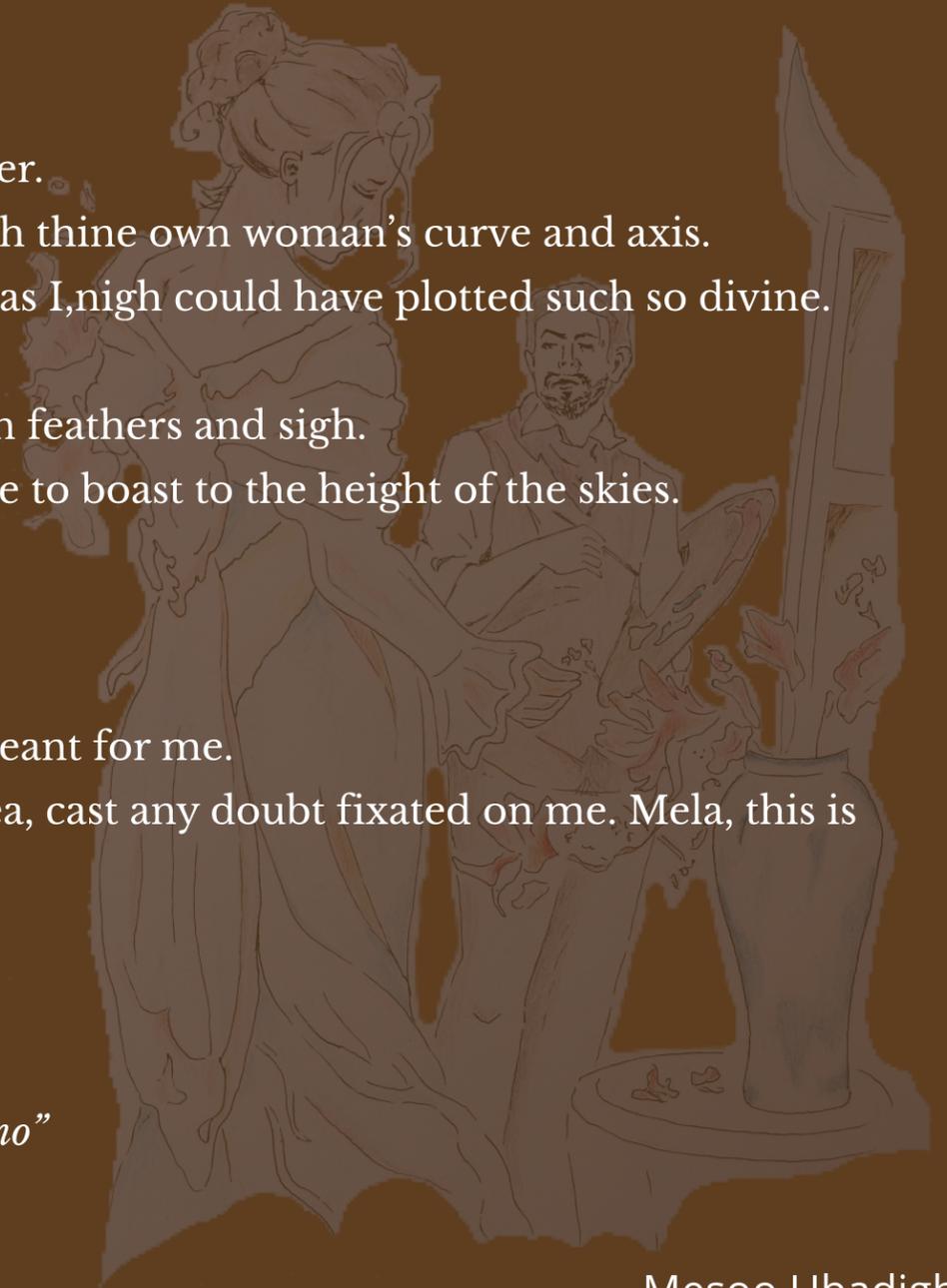
Nay,

Mela be my muse and my maker.
Mela fulfil all mine longing with thine own woman's curve and axis.
My Mela, no man born mortal as I, nigh could have plotted such so divine.

Mela lie. Lie here on my Icarian feathers and sigh.
Give me many a reason and tale to boast to the height of the skies.
You might never fly,
But oh Mela! Might I lie?

Might I dote on revels never meant for me.
Mela cast all brambles out to sea, cast any doubt fixated on me. Mela, this is
love
Can't thee see?

Mela frowned and lay with he:
"Nay." She spoke. "And err dell'uomo"



No Limits. No Labels. Just Your Voice.

When I was in my teens, I wasn't quiet-but I wasn't loud enough. It wasn't that I was shy (far from that) or that I had nothing to say, but that I couldn't quite find a way of saying it in public that sounded just right. People who haven't known me since my teens are often amazed when I mention this-as audience engagement for me these days is not a problem, and that is putting it mildly!

When I first started my career, I vividly remember the frustration of not being able to find a way of getting into what was normally a very male discussion. You see, I was often surrounded by gentlemen in my earlier roles (and still actually). I strongly recall the embarrassment at what tended to happen if I did get my contribution in: a few awkward moments

of silence after I had finished my bit, the man who had been speaking before would take over again with, "As I was saying..." It felt a put-down, and was probably worse than not being able to speak at all. I remember one time, asking a male friend after a meeting if he had actually noticed that it was only the men who spoke. Of course, he hadn't; it just seemed normal. Roll the dice to 2021, periodically this would still happen, but of course, my reaction now is rather shrewd.

I cannot imagine that there are many women on the planet who have not had similar experiences of not being able to find a voice in public, or (to put it more accurately, perhaps) of not being listened to or taken seriously.

I am often asked how I broke through this

particular glass ceiling at keynote speeches. The precise answer is that I do not really know and I cannot reconstruct in any detail what changed. I suppose getting older helps, thickening of the skin and adding a bit of boldness. One thing is clear, some female solidarity certainly did help. Nowadays, I make it my problem to reciprocate. It is important to me that I never allow awkward silences from other women around me. It is important to me that at seminars, speeches and meetings, I look out for the few women in the room, and leap in and say, and run with it for a bit, to allow their point to gain momentum. It is, for me, about **I. We. Us** and **The World**. When I 'see' all the women in the room, **we** consider all ideas, especially ones that differ from the mens'.

Through our views and deliberations, combined with **our** purpose, we ensure that every woman in **The World** is seen, heard and represented.

The big change for me is something quite different. When I hear myself speak today, I really do hear myself. Sometimes I'm being smart, sometimes I am being astute, sometimes I wish I hadn't said it, sometimes I think I could have chosen my words better-but, whatever, it is me that I'm hearing. I speak now-in my own way. How that change came about, I don't know. My insight to my younger self:

Own you voice and speak loud, with no limits, no labels, just your voice. If power and authority are still seen and heard as male, we should be working to ensure that is no longer so.



Makeup His Way



boys don't cry



game over



loves me, loves me not



it goes like this



be on my team



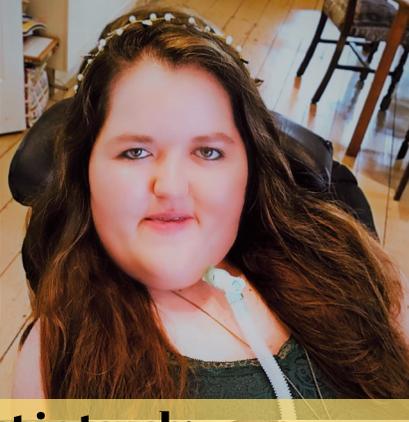
it's fine but it's not fair



the boys, my way

In this series both model and audience experience a glimpse into the visual possibilities of the lifestyle young men could live if they were not shunned out of wearing makeup. Each model was personally consulted and asked, 'what would you do if boys were allowed to wear makeup?' Their individually crafted looks showcase their favourite colours, textures and styles. Playing guitar and basketball are activities the boys do when they're together, and their makeup is an added layer of possibility if femininity was embraced.

Thank you to Mia Bryan for her makeup artistry. Mia Steele, thank you for accommodating with your photography. To all the boys – Ben Suckling, Harry Smithson, Josh Dibb, Preet Pradeep, Samir Siddiqui, John Scarfe – thank you for being brave, bold and brilliant models.



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