

from
"Constellations of Care"

ANARCHA- FEMINISM IN PRACTICE

edited by
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Milstein

“We are the squad you’ve been warned about. The cautionary tale for all who struggle for a better world and are actively organizing. To be feminist is to be vigilant about power hierarchies that we may be re-creating in our interpersonal relationships and within our own political analysis even—and so be able to reflect on our own shit and be intentional about destroying those hierarchical leanings within ourselves first. And feminist because for the last five-hundred-plus years on stolen land, we’ve been under patriarchy, particularly of the white, cis, hetero variety, and that shit gotta go. Anarchist cuz I will not obey. I refuse to willingly concede control of my life or body— not to the state, not to a “god,” not to a man. And anarchists cuz we get a lot more done by ourselves or with others who care beyond consumption and/or party lines.”

– Xela de la X

O.V.A.S. // CASACoatl (“Los Angeles”)

OUR AFFINITY IS OUR MANIFESTO

MEXICO CITY-BASED FEMINIST-ANARCHIST

AFFINITY GROUP IN CONVERSATION WITH AND TRANSLATED

BY SCOTT CAMPBELL

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Greetings, compas! Thanks for agreeing to talk with me. How would you like to introduce yourselves?

We should start by saying that we aren't a collective or formal group. We see ourselves more as a small group of women and nonconforming folks who are united by love, friendship, and the struggle for freedom, autonomy, mutual aid, and life against the dynamics of the current patriarchal state. We come from different anarchist positions and understand things differently in many cases, but we come together to do things jointly based on trust and the need to support our existence.

We live in different parts of Mexico City, where we carry out most of our struggles.

Or to put it more poetically, we are women of all the fires, born in lands full of misery. Our lives are written in the wind, and our struggles, loves, longings, and desires to change this reality live in the sea, in the waves that beat furiously on the rocks that contain them. Each one of us has her own history, forged with smiles and tears. Each one walks alone, yet we are strengthened by our paths that unite with the libertarian idea.

Our hair is interwoven, and we move forward together, trying to be a support, company, and embrace, despite everything, despite the uncertainty and this overwhelming moment, despite the repression.

Survivors of the terrible, only the wind will know the passion with which we once tried, at some moment, in some time, for humanity to be strengthened by the beauty of mutual cooperation and disobedience, without states, exchanges, competition, and capitalism.

Can you share with us how you came to your anarcha feminist notions, how you found one another, and how you decided form an affinity group?

Not all of us conceive of ourselves as anarcha-feminists. We're all anarchists, antiauthoritarians, and antipatriarchal, yet we've never arrived at having a joint identity. We came together based on the recognition that our own experiences have provided. We're a group that ranges from twenty to forty years old. As such, we don't all have the same paths, trajectories, or positions.

All of our stories are individual ones, and each one took its time. For some, what was important was the break with those men who we believed to be *compañeros*, but who betrayed, hurt, or snitched on us. With that we saw the crumbling of a discourse that was just that: a discourse and one that didn't delve deeply into how patriarchy runs through us. For others of us, the reality of being women and feminized bodies was always present: how we weren't listened to or were made invisible in political anarchist spaces; that only masculine voices were respected; and that even when we sustained various activities and a large part of the anarchist movement in the city, we continued to be relegated to the margins and unheard. So we assumed a position of defense and necessary confrontation within the movement, which was exhausting, but that helped us to be in this place today, together.

In a way, we lost our fear of separatism [femme-only spaces], although we never stopped seeing that there are men in this world we would have to interact with. We found one another in mixed, anarchist movement spaces through that recognition of oppressions intertwined with gender, class, schooling, age, and others. Sometimes this process of encounter was simultaneous to our male "*compateros* dropping like flies due to reports of sexual or physical aggression against other *compañeras*, which we could not deny or support. We were left in a space limited to mostly femme bodies where sisterhood and recognition occurred among peers and through our own experiences. We were left alone, or rather, we were defining our affinities with greater judgment how great! We recovered our affinity as feminized bodies within the anarchist struggle. We recognized ourselves as survivors.

From there, the confluence of our actions keeps us together. We fully trust each other regarding our position with respect to the state and the police, for example. We also know that each one of us walks the path of self-management, and not hand in hand with NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] or human rights groups. This has given us much of the confidence and trust that we have even though, we repeat, we don't all come from the same anarchist background. We are united in our belief that our unwavering principles are an essential part of our ethics.

What are your perspectives on the resurgent feminist movement in so-called

Mexico that began in 2018?

Although the “boom” in the feminist movement around the world became more visible in the media in 2018, with massive marches on March 8, strikes in universities in Chile, Mexico, Spain, France, Italy, the United States, and so on, we hold that previous struggles can’t be left out of this upsurge. Whether we like them or not, that includes approaches that we don’t adopt as seen, for example, in the proabortion discourses that push for legislative and constitutional changes. We believe that the struggle for the reappropriation of our bodies marks an indisputable precedent; in some countries, the voices of women and other bodies are beginning to be heard, and the struggle for the right to decide for ourselves is strengthening. And not just with respect to abortion but also with respect to individual decisions around sexual pleasure.

In the case of Mexico and specifically Mexico City, the struggle was obscured, as it was appropriated by the state and leftist government. The existence of a small oasis in this country that provides noncriminalized abortion and guarantees for gay persons loses force due to the state’s interference in women’s bodies. For us, it is not enough for the state to decriminalize abortion, we simply and plainly do not want it to be in charge of regulating our sexuality and controlling our bodies.

Yet it is true that in Mexico, we live in a very particular situation that makes this boom urgent and inevitable. We’re talking about the fact that in our territory, more than eleven women are killed every day. A boom that, we must also recognize, arrived late. What are we referring to? To the murders on the northern border; in Ciudad Juárez, where the neologism femicide was born during the 1990s. Why didn’t the feminist boom explode then? Why was the massive murder of working women on the border made invisible? Why were we not outraged by so many bodies found scattered around the desert?

It’s true that those were different times, and many of us were children or had not yet been born. Nevertheless, we believe that it goes beyond that; that it has to do with women whose deaths did not “deserve” to cause indignation because they were socially and morally devalued by the hegemonic discourse. They were morally unacceptable for going out late at night, for going out alone. They were invalidated under the construction of bodies that simply do not matter: poor, from the periphery, and workers. The state was lucky that there wasn’t enough social courage for the entire country to erupt at that point in the fight against death. Of course, at that time there were feminist collectives, academics, and some politicians who pointed out the need to look at this problem.

But we have to recognize that the state won that fight when, to this day, we’re

not even able to remember the names of some of these women, when we find it hard to say that we didn't see or know what to do and that the state imposed its version of history. Unfortunately, the so-called feminist boom can be read as an urgency to respond to the femicides of less stigmatized bodies too—university students, professionals, middle-class mothers, and so on—and it is equally regrettable that even in this situation, the same categories are still used to determine who gets named and who doesn't, such as the poor, whores, workers, and single mothers.

We like to think that the feminist boom is not 2018 and nothing more, that women and feminized bodies don't only appear when the media and government decide to "recognize us." We like to think that we can honor our ancestors by giving continuity to a struggle that we have joined, that we did not originate, and that doesn't answer to external agendas or media attention but rather to an inevitable necessity where we fight to stay alive and not forget any of our dead.

Street actions get a lot of attention, but beyond those, how have you all been involved in the broader feminist movement?

As we've mentioned, we're not a formal group, much less a homogeneous one, and therefore the ways in which we're involved in the feminist movement are equally diverse. Some of us accompany the anticarceral struggle, in which some compañeras have faced charges after participating in feminist actions or protests; others of us are involved in graphic design, which continues to be necessary to visualize the struggle in the streets and online; others are committed to physical self-defense; others of us contribute through print publishing; others are committed to radio work; yet others are involved in the self-management of mental and physical health; others have started and sustain spaces of resistance such as bookstores, libraries, and cooperatives; and others are involved in solidarity economies. In general, we're all in search of life and survival, which basically robs us of a lot of time and energy.

Something that has become necessary to do together, though, has to do with the precarious conditions that most feminized bodies experience. In this regard, in 2020 [when the pandemic began], we saw how women were at greater risk due to the forced confinement because they were with their aggressors all the time. It was necessary to go out and call on women to fight for life and occupy the streets. We called for the creation of small markets, flea markets, and bazaars by and for women—there were also trans and queer friends—with the idea of surviving by exchanging the products we made and to spread awareness about our self-managed projects.

The organizing that has occurred since the pandemic has allowed for the

opening of furrows where we've seen self-management and rebellion flourish, and where we've brushed its fierce and faint breath with anarchy. That's how we found ourselves in the streets within a broader feminist movement. This is not easy because there are many positions and understandings within the movement that we don't necessarily coincide with, but we firmly believe that it is the differences that make us powerful.

We believe that maintaining a fierce and voracious critique against the state and capitalism permits us to not waste time betting on lost struggles for instance, for the approval of laws that guarantee us security that in the majority of cases, are applied against us or help to criminalize what is already criminalized: the poor and racialized. But we also see that especially in our context, in certain struggles, our critique isn't applicable for example, the struggles undertaken by the mothers of the disappeared or murdered. We don't see ourselves as having the ability or arrogance to tell them not to seek "justice" from within institutions or not to engage in dialogue with the representatives of power, because there are many cases where that is impossible to avoid. On the contrary, we see ourselves as deeply inspired by them, by their actions and paths. We believe that it is those collectives that nourish us and give us a lot of strength to continue.

How would you describe your own general orientation when taking action?

As we come from anarchism, and we have little by little been breaking with its classical vision of struggle, we understand that the struggle is found in all spaces, micro and macro. Therefore we don't see the need to wait for some moment to intervene in this or that; rather, we believe in the necessity of placing strain on the relations of domination among them gender and sex—in the spaces that we inhabit: families, collectives, compañerxs, and ourselves. But we can't do that if we don't struggle to make it clear that we exist, to make a space for ourselves among the already established structures of struggle, dissent, and society in general. That same space gives us the opportunity to make our positions clear, to go forward as we would like to live and according to our principles that is, outside the institutions, away from the state, through direct action, self-management, and autonomy.

Contrary to the fashion of "visibility," we position ourselves through obscure and opaque daily action. Our action is our own manifesto.

Speaking of taking action, what has your experience of participating in feminist actions felt like, and what has it made possible that previously might have seemed foreclosed to you?

A point of street action that seemed impossible was the acceptance of the

slogan “It was all of us” in a moment when the white feminist discourse seemed to prevail and the supposedly citizenly idea of the “good feminist” kept appearing, almost to the point of them becoming the “police” of the demonstrations, which they actually did with a citizen call to protect women police officers during the protests under the argument that they were also “sisters” and “women.”! Currently, this slogan has been taken up by more and more compañeras in the street, and that is motivating, but we’d still like to transcend the slogan, and see criminalization and political correctness be challenged. Even so, hearing in unison “It was all of us,” and taking on the rage of others as our own, brings the body joy and reaffirms our presence in the streets.

We were not enlightened by 2018, so to speak. Many of us had already traveled a long road in the anticapitalist and autonomous struggle. It was anarchy that gave us the possibility to position ourselves from a place of autonomy and have a deep critique of what it is to struggle against the prevailing system of domination. This path has given us immense possibilities, necessary stumbles, and inevitable ruptures. We have learned that from all of this, self-criticism, pressures, and openings emerge. One opening was perhaps feminism, which has swayed us with respect to many questions, leading us to explore micro- and infrapolitical spaces. We approach feminism to a greater or lesser extent and make critical distinctions because we’re not convinced that there is only one feminism, nor do we try to pursue it.

To place the body [in action] is, in this sense, to assume our struggle from within ourselves and toward the outside. To embody [feminist] struggle is to realize that part of it corresponds with us, such that we suffer and are not indifferent to it. The somatic experience of this is indistinct from all we’re doing. Sometimes we are literally a ticking time bomb, and sometimes we’re bodies that are vulnerable. Sometimes we are filled with collective strength, and other times we feel like weirdos and that we’re singled out to such a degree that we become tiny. Sometimes we laugh out loud, and at other times we simply weep in torrents.

What has it meant for you all to be an affinity group of feminist anarchists participating in the movement and being there for each other as opposed to going it alone?

We go alone and together. We believe in each other’s individuality and the power of being together. But we know that not all of us want or can take on the same things, or have the same abilities, to mention a few differences. Even so, knowing that we exist as a rare and amorphous entity has given us security in moving about our city. We know that if one of us falls into the clutches of the police, there will be many of us outside the police station or

prison entrance. We know that if one of us is sick, we'll have another one accompanying and caring for us. And we know that whatever idea we want to carry out, we can share it and find an echo among others.

In this way, we see that affinity cannot be measured entirely in political, strategic, and pragmatic terms but instead goes hand in hand with how it transcends and traverses love, friendship, and the struggle for survival. Are we in affinity? Yes, but we are also accomplices, sisters, friends, and compañeras. We don't just see ourselves as an affinity group or meet because of that. We do it because we care about each other's lives too, because we like to laugh together, eat together, cook together, and believe that this is how we'll be able to survive. This encourages us a lot.

This is a broad question, but how do you articulate your own feminist anarchism?

As we mentioned, we have different roots, and sexuality has not affected each of us in the same way and that means many things. The older members of our group grew up in a fairly heterosexual anarchist scene, and therefore nonconformity was more opaque or simply did not appear. Of course, we have precious beings who are openly gay, but we understand, as the anarchist scene here is heterosexual, that those bodies escape from those spaces and construct their own. We recognize that we came late to many criticisms in this sense, and little by little we have learned to come out of the closet ourselves or deconstruct our own sex-gender identity, although we don't see it as the core that defines us.

Indeed, we have a critique of identity. Sometimes it means taking on an essence in order to act from a certain positionality, but most of the time it blurs a series of differences that to us, seem necessary in order to walk together. Perhaps before indicating our sexual identity, we start from the point of being "dark-skinned" or Indigenous descendants an inevitable matter that situates us on the stage of antagonistic struggles and more so in an essentially racist country. We are also poor; we come from places and families that have always struggled for survival.

We've learned that we can't generalize, even though there are structures that affect all of us. And in that sense, we see ourselves as distant from some groups of trans and nonbinary people because we don't share conditions of class or race. As we have grown up marked by that racism, there are many nonconforming spaces where we don't feel comfortable, or where that feeling of being seen as strange or exotic accompanies us. Many queer and nonconforming spaces not all are part of the art world, and we experience them as white and hostile places. Likewise, some of these people take part in

the struggle from institutional, academic, or NGO spaces spaces denied to us and that we reject. Our reality sometimes doesn't allow us to understand their direction, and many times we feel we don't share the same concerns. Maybe it has to do with us still struggling in a broader sense by not abandoning the enormous desire to destroy the state and see capitalism fall. Sometimes, the nonconforming compas focus a lot on the construction of sex and gender and our positions begin to bore them. Ha ha.

We don't take identity as the starting point even though a few of us are nonconforming but rather the practice and ethics of our political actions, and anarchism on some occasions has given us the answer to feeling comfortable with our sexual and political differences. We think it would be much better if anarchism were nourished by questions of gender and sexuality, and displaced the machismo and heteronormativity that lives in its core, just as anarchism can bring important questions to the queer and nonbinary struggles. In our ideal dream, this mutual reciprocity goes hand in hand.

We also know that language is patriarchal, so we take on the responsibility of thinking of new ways of naming ourselves, and we are learning to do so.

We don't trust cis men. Our space does not seek to directly link with these compañeros. We don't reject mixed spaces of work or coexistence, but our primary affinity is with women and feminized bodies, as we mentioned earlier. The relationship in mixed groups has almost always felt to us like a utilitarian one stemming from supposed collective and political positions. We're not interested in feeling threatened by or vulnerable to patriarchal thoughts.

Since the break with cis men in our spaces, we have seen a conscious organizational advance from the perspective of anarcha-feminism. Our presence in the streets and taking on demands from an antipatriarchal perspective have been fundamental to seeing and being in solidarity with others in different latitudes. Understanding that women around so-called Latin America are being murdered as a result of being objectified as merchandise has given us the opportunity to create spaces for dialogue to understand our realities. The radicalization of demonstrations has called on us to denounce and act against disappearances, femicides, and antiabortion.

Our affinity is not only because we are women or nonconforming; it is because in our actions, we seek a radical rupture with traditional patriarchal impositions and we see with pleasure that this rage is spreading, beginning transcendent struggles. In some countries, this has been initiated by women, and has been able to stay active due to organizational persistence that emanates from our groups or individualities.

As for our aspirations, the least we try to do is walk toward life in a dignified way, and toward death in a meaningful way, even if it's for ourselves. The maximum: social revolution, the destruction of the capitalist-patriarchal system, the creation of other forms of living life, although we're not married to the idea that someday this will appear; rather, we're building it as much as we can in the here and now.

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As for our informal affinity group, we have no names that define us. Only the knowledge that nature is everything and humanity is destruction. To change that is our path.

Scott Campbell is a radical writer and translator residing in both what they call the United States and Mexico. His personal website is fallingintoincandescence.com. For a longer version of this interview, visit itsgoingdown.org/feminist-anarchist-affinity-group-interview.

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COMMUNITARIAN KITCHENS: STOKING THE FLAMES OF MEMORY AND REBELLION

VILMA ROCÍO ALMENDRA QUIGUANÁS,

TRANSLATED BY SCOTT CAMPBELL

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Our relationship with our territories is woven into the tulpas, the millennia-old fires of encounters, legacies, flavors, and knowledges. Memory is spun, and the fires of resistance and freedom are rekindled. Today, there are those who try to usurp this space of flames and affects, to glamorize it, and turn it into an image and propaganda so as to later steal it, empty it of meaning, and destroy it as a passing fad or merchandise.

The tulpa, though, this center of women in collectivity with the land and family, this heart of liberation and intimacy, this power to be ourselves without

being seen or judged so as to continue surviving, has no price and cannot fit into the market. This sketch recalls the tulpas, invokes them, and calls on us to care for ourselves by caring for them. It is the life around the fire that keeps us going.

When neighborhood women feel the same needs, when neighbors talk about their problems, or when neighbors come together and feel the same hunger, many times they self-organize around food, around the fire, around their challenges. This has happened historically, and it continues to happen to this day in large and small uprisings, mobilizations, and marches, where particularly women and all of those who labor daily to care for life work to provide food during social actions.

For example, during the 2021 national strike in what they call Colombia, when youths issued a call to rise up against the increased taxes and cuts to health care proposed by President Iván Duque Márquez's government, and then hundreds of thousands of people seeking social transformation joined the protests, the communitarian kitchens, sustained by fire, were an essential pillar, feeding the front lines of the uprising that exploded in the streets for more than sixty days [translator's note: The front lines, supported and nourished by the communitarian kitchens, were made up of women, men, and nonconforming folks who put themselves at the front of the marches, encampments, and other collective actions in order to safeguard the mobilizations and protect other people. Many of them were killed, disappeared, tortured, and/or jailed by the state]. It's not known how many communitarian kitchens were created. It's only known that whoever passed by donated what little they had in their home – rice, beans, lentils, salt, oil, potatoes, bananas, or whatever was within reach – and the various ingredients were then cooked into soups, stews, and broths in the giant communal pots that fed the mobilized masses in the cities. Groups of women and men collected the food, and then sorted and prepared it, keeping the communitarian kitchens in constant action. As people washed, peeled, chopped, seasoned, and mixed foodstuffs to create a delicious and steaming hot soup, they also shared words about the struggle in the streets, their needs, the media's lies, the repression, the resistance, and their dreams as well as life and death.

The communitarian kitchens were where youths came to enjoy a good meal and collectively fed themselves while fighting together for a common cause. In fact, some of the impoverished youths, strong on the front lines, said that during the strike, they were able to eat three times a day thanks to the communitarian kitchens. As well, families and collectives prepared food and drink in their homes, and then brought it directly to the barricades because they both wanted to take care of the mobilized youths and were indignant

that the so-called public forces had destroyed some of the communitarian kitchens, leaving them without food. In spite of this, the communitarian kitchens persisted in word and action during this lengthy mobilization. Hopefully they will continue to be maintained through the self-organization and solidarity of the peoples, countering any efforts to institutionalize them and make them dependent on the state.

THE FIRE THAT INHABITS ME

Since I was a girl, fire has been an everyday part of my life. Infinite memories of our daily relationship with fire now inhabit me. The tulpas always remind me of dreams, signs, stories, advice, plants, remedies, flavors, colors, smells, and sounds. I remember the tulpa in our house in the mountains of the Indigenous reservation of Jambaló, in the southwest of what they call Colombia; its three big rocks were on the ground, almost in the center of our kitchen, with pieces of burning wood atop the stones. Always nearby were the pots of food, medicinal waters, brewed coffee, and toasted coca that provided all the energy for the day's work.

I remember my maternal grandparents, with whom I had the privilege of spending my childhood. They were always close to the tulpa, asking us about our dreams; explaining the meaning of signs (bodily vibrations) to us so that we could recognize the messages of Mother Earth; showing us how to use plants to protect ourselves and care for the territory; and advising us, based on their joys and sorrows, on how to walk through life.

They taught us how to understand the fire's signals. When the sounds of the fire seemed smothered, for instance, as if

someone was blowing on the fire, or when the fire seemed to be dying, it was because a visitor would arrive soon. We were then supposed to take a little bit of wood and throw it into the fire, saying aloud, "May they not come empty-handed. May they bring something." Or when the fire sparked and emitted small, sharp explosions, it meant that an ill-tempered person was going to arrive. That is what I learned from my grandmother, and that is how I live today, here and now, with my family in the mountains I inhabit.

In 2013, when I was participating in the "Little School of Freedom according to the Zapatistas" and staying in the home of a family from the bases of support, the fire there began to spark. My compañera host listened to the memories of my grandmother while we did the domestic work necessary to then eat some delicious tortillas. I explained to my compañera that an ill-tempered person was probably about to arrive. A short time later, a woman came to the house. The surprised compañera told me, "Here comes my

comadre [friend], and yes, she is very harsh!!!”

Our relationship with fire is fundamental for familial intimacy and also territorial collectivity. The fires of familial intimacy are woven into territorial collectivity, not just due to the material support each family brings, but because of the spiritual energy that each family provides for the community. This fabric of fires has given birth to collective words and actions to defend life too, beyond the rural and urban— the locations that the state has assigned to us.

THE COMMUNITARIAN KITCHENS

Today I relive the memory of the communitarian kitchens that we helped to stoke in the mountains of Jambaló in 1986, when my mother became a teacher in the rural community of El Voladero. Festivals and school ceremonies were held that wove us toward a better education. I remember the comadres, midwives, and neighborhood women arriving with something from their garden and a knife in hand to cook. I remember the day laborers, musicians, and neighbors arriving with firewood, and in case more was needed, machetes in hand. We held a minga – ancestral collective work where everyone contributes – to enjoy life in community.

We all took collective action to build a decent school, better education, happy childhood, and organized community. From that space, we dreamed and created daily life around the fire. At that time, almost everyone had a tulpa in their home. The school meetings were places to not only to talk about the progress and setbacks of the students but above all address the problems of the community and look for collective solutions. Not everything was rosy, but keeping the fire burning during the various collective actions ensured that community organization was maintained at the time.

The communitarian kitchens, better known as fogones in our territories, have always accompanied the communal work carried out through the mingas. They have been present in the barter exchanges and assemblies, nourished the traditional festivals, and never been absent from the mobilizations and collective actions that we have carried out for the past fifty-three years organized by the Cauca Indigenous Regional Council in the Mother of the Forests (Kauka, in the Namtrick language of my Misak people). [The council was created in 1971 to fight for the unity, land culture, and autonomy of the peoples in the mountains of the Cauca.]

Our fogones have been fed by the determination and solidarities in the mountains, reciprocity between us and the land, and need to achieve a common objective among pueblos originarios [first or original peoples]: to

recover the land. Toward this objective, my grandfather told me that they used to have big parties to gather resources, but that the police almost always arrived to tear down the communitarian kitchens and dump out the pots of chicha, a fermented maize drink, in order to hinder collective action.

Knocking down the communitarian kitchens has practically become the law. The state and police have done it everywhere so as to destabilize our organizing. Even so, the communitarian kitchens have been the heart of our territorial struggles, and with greater need in the cities now, they have become a refuge that mitigates the hunger caused by the extractivism and dispossession that commodifies the land and life itself.

In the cities, there are beautiful experiences too. There are those who have resisted the systemic crises that fall on their shoulders, thanks to the collectivity found around the fire, and have managed to feed themselves despite the impoverishment they have been subjected to in urban spaces. The coming together of those who are displaced and impoverished in the cities has allowed people to not only fight for food through the communitarian kitchens but also feed the rebellions for a dignified life.

FIRE FEEDS THE BODY AND SPIRIT

In the uprisings, strikes, revolts, marches, encampments, popular assemblies, blockades, land recuperations, communal congresses, appropriation of factories, roadblocks, and popular tribunals, and on pickets and barricades, fire has always been present.

Fire helps us to endure low temperatures and cook food so as to resist, among many other things. Communitarian kitchens and fire are a necessary couple. They have been present and vital in feeding the dignified rebellions that denounce and question the state, transnationals, and all the other powers that have always oppressed us. For the most part, the communitarian kitchens have been the fruit of self-organization, self-management, and self-care, far beyond the promises and lies of the state.

For a long time, in ruralized and urbanized territories, communitarian kitchens have sustained struggles against hunger, for land and water, as a life practice and central axis for collective nourishment. Without going too far back, it is enough to recall some exemplary moments in various latitudes that have stoked the fires of struggle.

There is the Housewives Committee of the Twentieth-Century Mine founded in the 1960s by the wives of tin miners at the Siglo XX Mine in Potosi in what they call Bolivia. These women organized against the repression and

imprisonment of their husbands, who had marched for the payment of wages. They demanded the miners' freedom, food supplies, and payment for work. Among them, Domitila Barrios de Chungara distinguished herself as one of the most courageous.

Then too, there is the Villa Fil Salvador Self-Managed Urban Community, which arose in 1973 from the efforts of impoverished families in Lima in what they call Peru, where women organized themselves to guarantee food. In this context, María Elena Moyano, one of the great examples of this self-managed community, founded the Micaela Bastidas Mothers' Club, concerned with women's issues, education, and family health.

Also, in Veracruz in the place they call Mexico, there is the inspiration of Leonila Vásquez, who in 1994, moved by the Central American migrants passing through on the "Bestia" (train of death) to reach their "American dream," decided to share what little she had for her family and deliver it via "launches," throwing bags of food onto the train for the migrants. Today there are more women, known as the Protectors, who continue Leonila's legacy and now have more support to carry out this humanitarian work.

And there is the piqueteros (picketers) movement, born at the end of the 1990s in Buenos Aires in the place they call Argentina. "Pickets" (roadblocks and blockades) were erected in various parts of the city in rejection of the precariousness of work and resultant hunger caused by rampant neoliberalism. In 2001, the pickets grew stronger, along with the bravery and dignity of the women— visible because they were not only a fundamental part of the communal feeding but in all areas of care during the pickets as well.

This is just a sample of an endless number of illustrations. Yet without a doubt, the eighty bonfires of Cherán in the Purépecha Plateau of what they call Mexico are our reference point. Day and night for more than six months in 2011, the people of Cherán resisted, ignited by women setting bonfires, which in turn became the spark for the K'eri communal self-governance there that today inspires and infects the world. [For the story of these bonfires and the communal self-governance structures that arose from them, see Scott Campbell, "The Bonfires of Autonomy in Cherán," in *Deciding for Ourselves: The Promise of Direct Democracy*]

During the pandemic, hunger, discontent, and indignation were what compelled people to organize. People clearly saw the need to collectively feed themselves in order to resist economic subjugation, urgency to rise up together in the face of policies and reforms that continue to impoverish them, and necessity to decide how to sustain the various uprisings and safeguard life. Moreover, against the backdrop of rising fascism, social abandonment,



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International Women's Day on March 8 (8M) has become sacred for those of us still riding the wave of this ongoing feminist uprising. Although we mobilize all year round, 8M is when we can celebrate the size and strength of our movement, and flood the streets with our liberated bodies. Together, we can wear as much or as little as we want; we can paint our politics on our skin or embroider our slogans into our costumes. On 8M, you can hear our voices, but our bodies talk too. This watercolor captures a fragment of the spirit that animates us: a smiling young feminist balances on a fence while proudly displaying her hand-stitched violet-colored skirt, which reads, "Abort the patriarchy!"

My work, like my politics, is intensely personal, as my paintings are often intimate

portraits of my friends and compañeras in the context of our feminist activism. Yet my work also features slogans, symbols, and performances that reference both local campaigns and global struggles against all forms of domination. This dichotomy speaks directly to my anarchist-feminist ethic since my art is an exploration of the interplay between the politics of everyday life and our collective ambitions for a utopian future.



"Autonomia, autonomy, our bodies will always belong to us," repeated as a chant in my mind while I created this image. With *Roe v. Wade*'s overturn and the attacks on gender-affirming care, the capacity and right to decide for oneself becomes disputed, preventing us from moving freely and reaching the horizons we dream of. In this harsh landscape, uplifting self-determination is an everyday task.

I hold tight to the love in the collective efforts to care for one another, to show up and share the bounties of our gardens. I look back into herbalism and ancestry practices as our paths toward healing. In this print, I dream of and portray an endless cascade of possibilities and autonomy for us all.

Andrea Narno, a Mexican queer printmaker living in New Orleans, Louisiana, believes in art as a tool for transformation during these uncertain times. Their work centers around the symbolism of plants to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas as well as examine topics like migration, absence, and grief. Andrea is a member of Justseeds'

Artist Cooperative. Alongside artist V Adams, they run *Birds of Paradise Press*, a project exploring distance, longing, and the connections we have to place through our relationships with plants. You can find them on Instagram @graficanarno.



I grew up watching Japanese anime. The first one I ever saw was Candy Candy, a normatively romantic, soap opera-style cartoon where patriarchal values, gender roles, and white beauty standards were everywhere. I always loved the drawings, but I could never get through an entire episode because of such messages. Through my own art, now as an adult, I've been able to reconnect with the type of cartoon I would've loved to watch as a kid, but I've subverted the character Candy, a blond girl, into a badass brown anarcha-feminist with rainbow hair.

During my artistic journey, I've found a lot of satisfaction in switching the gender roles that

the media typically imposes on us. I even created a genre for this, which I call Subversive Pop. As some of my pieces proclaim, "We deserve a world that does not hurt," and that includes not only destroying patriarchy and protecting trans, queer, and femme folks, not only raising our black flags and fists against their violence, laws, and stereotypes, but also proudly and playfully showing that our feminism is anarchist or it isn't feminist at all.

You can find more of **Sugarbombing World's** DIY art projects and no-border, fuck-the-police politics at <https://sugarbombing-store.myshopify.com/oron>
Instagram @sugarbombingworld



I felt inspired to draw this because I wanted to express that we're out here, In my experience, it can feel lonely trying to find other people. Yet I have found and we will find people who understand how deeply we need each other, who want to grow together, to acknowledge that we're going to make mistakes and are capable of harming others, but will support each other with love, care, accountability, and tenderness to unlearn ways of thinking that are hurting us, and create safe, loving, anarchistic relationships and joyful realities. I created this illustration to print as a sticker and paste around my city, although I'm still looking for a printer that uses vegan materials, is worker owned, and has as little ecological footprint as possible.

My drawings are representations of my dreams of building another world as well as protesting against hierarchy (patriarchy included), speciesism, adult supremacy (that's why most of my characters look young), binaries, and the academy.

They are about tenderness and vulnerability, about allowing us to feel rage and sadness, let our emotions bring us closer, and take care of and defend each other.

Addy (she/her) loves drawing, taking naps, eating plants, looking at the world, making mistakes, and learning to live in community. You can find more of her drawings on Instagram @ [addy_rivera](#).

and the current wars and others in the making, it is not enough to name the self-proclaimed Front Line Mothers of the communitarian kitchens in what they call Chile or Ecuador, Colombia or Peru-the women who are fundamental to self-managing everything in daily life, and more so when they come together and manage to feed revolutions. We must also mention the mothers, women, children, and youths who day by day are being bombed, displaced, and disappeared, and impeded from having their own communitarian kitchens.

TO INHABIT OBSCURITY AND CARE FOR THE TULPAS

There are many other communitarian kitchens that don't declare themselves as such. They, made up mostly of women, simply provide dignified food for the resistances and feeling-thinking that walk side by side during concrete actions. That is, from what we've witnessed recently in the resistances in Abya Yala [the Americas], it is not enough to list the self-managed spaces, write down the names of communitarian kitchens, and quote the words of the women cooking to enumerate the fullness of collective actions.

We must go beyond the spotlight. We must gather ourselves in the shadows to ensure that communitarian kitchens come together through self-organization, self-care, and self-management, and don't get lost in welfare politics that try to bureaucratize even food. May they not get lost in the institutionalization that political parties seek. May they not turn into banners for the compañera or compañero from the struggle who transforms themselves into a candidate in order to take power from above. May they continue to germinate as seeds that bloom in soil fertilized by dignified rebellion and the urgency of autonomy.

In a context where the powers from above have shown us that no matter how libertarian they may be, they must always comply with the regime of sacrificing the people (it's enough to look into the mirror at Venezuela, Nicaragua, Chile, and Bolivia), our fires are crucial. In a context where other pandemics such as hunger are looming, wars continue to be the biggest business, extractivism continues to triumph, patriarchy continues to turn the land into merchandise, the communitarian kitchens are an emergent necessity to sustain life and collective relations among peoples. This continues to be demonstrated here and now by the Network of Community Kitchens in Popayán. I invite us to immerse ourselves in the obscurity that inhabits the ollas comunitarias when the lights of the spectacle cease to shine on the sweaty faces and calloused hands behind the steaming pots.

* * *

Vilma Rocio Almendra Quiguanás, daughter of the Nasa and Misak peoples,

is a member of Pueblos en Camino (pueblosencamino.org), a self-managed initiative that seeks to weave resistance and autonomy among peoples and processes in Abya Yala. She can be contacted at <https://facebook.com/almendrakiwenasa> or vilmaalmendra@yahoo.es. Vilma resides in Vereda Quitapereza, Santander de Quilichao, Mother of the Forests, in what they call Colombia.

Scott Campbell is a radical writer and translator residing in both what they call the United States and Mexico. His personal website is fallingintoincandescence.com. He'd like to thank Anthony Dest and Valeria Peña for their assistance on this project.

COLECTIVA MUJERES SUBVERSIVAS: IN SOLIDARITY AND FRIENDSHIP

LORA GALORA

This story is like a bindweed, weaving together chronicles of urban oppression with legends of freedom, myths of music, and anecdotes of direct action. We revel in revolt, with love, reclaiming the wild garden within us all. We are Colectiva Mujeres Subversivas / Subversive Women's Collective. And you are too.

There we were, in a squatted abandoned lot at a feral punk show in Querétaro City, deep in Carrillo, a neighborhood that was once full of flower farms, but has sadly been invaded by concrete factories. A place where the false flag of progress took precedence over the human lives that reside there. Yet humans are resilient. It's no surprise that this trampled community was the bastion of a thriving scene, back when punk was illegal. Back when distortion and dissonance were outlawed. The prohibition of wild music couldn't and wouldn't stick. No matter how many times you dig up dandelions, they always grow back. The community organized and it keeps organizing. Freedom is a

fight that never ends. Today those small deserted lots, full of broken bottles and broken promises, disguise fertile land ripe with the flowering seeds of friendship and rebellion that continue to swirl on the wind, carrying their dreams wherever they go.

"Mujeres Subversivas are born from one moment to the next in any space-time." We give birth to each other, sprouting up from urban decay, from the rot of capitalistic malevolence, from the violence of toxic masculinity. We are the wild planes that grow up through the cracks of concrete, and one by one we guide each other back to the fertile lands of grassroots autonomy, mutual aid, horizontalism, and companionship. But even in the so-called anarchistic punk scene, our flowers get trampled in the form of microaggressions and petty competition. We find ourselves walking on eggshells around fragile egos. Our songs get talked over, our voices muted, until we have to scream just to be heard. Where the fuck is the solidarity?

That's how Mujeres Subversivas came into being, back in 2019. The first call, one of many, was initiated by Mara and Anita. Working with a cogendered collective, they organized a two-day event called Mujeres Subversivas: Anarcho-Feminist Action and Self-Defense. There was a DIY market, discussion about the zine "Accion y Autodefensa Anarcofeminista" (Anarcho-Feminist Action and Self-Defense), self-defense class, documentaries, and workshops on interpersonal violence and teaching new forms of masculinity, screen printing, papermaking, and stencils, not to mention performances by lots of bands and a radical feminist theater troupe called Ollin Compani. Many people in attendance, though, got upset that the thespians took to the stage between bands and started disrespecting the powerful art being performed before them. The artists and actors were baring their souls and getting heckled for it. The rage in that moment sparked the fire for the femme-based collective Mujeres Subversivas. That same rage could still be felt under the rubble of the old flower fields.

Soy mujer y quiero ser poeta.

Quiero nombrar la violencia con flores en la boca.

Quiero ser de las que hacen que el mundo se acomode.

Quiero crear palabras que corten de tajo el otoño y de paso, la cabeza de algunos violadores.

Quiero decirles a mi madre, a mis amigas y a todas ellas,

que estamos haciendo historia y es poesía porque son ellas, Quiero ver que

el fuego se propague por las fiscalías y no por las fábricas con ellas

Quiero que las balas apunten a Dios y no hacia ellas, Quiero que reciten su llanto hasta que se haga lluvia, quiero navegar junto a ellas,

quiero que el viento sople a favor de ellas, quiero que los huracanes sean ellas, quiero que la esperanza sea en ellas,

¡quiero que el mundo sea con ellas!

Y quiero, que nuestros corazones se agiten de Amor, de Rabia,

pero nunca de miedo ...

Quiero que al menos estas palabras atraviesen el planeta y crezcan fores con espinas que muestren la fuerza de ser mujer, de ser poeta y de ser con ellas.

I am a woman and want to be a poet.

I want to name violence with flowers in my mouth.

I want to be among those who bend the world to us.

I want to create words that cut off autumn, and along the way, the heads of some rapists.

I want to tell my mother, My friends, and all of them,

That we are making history and because of them it is poetry.

I want to see fire spread through the prosecutors' offices and not the factories where they [our mothers] work, I want the bullets aimed at God and not at them, I want them our grandmothers) to utter their laments until they become rain,

I want to sail with them,

I want the wind to blow in their favor, I want them to be hurricanes, I want them to be hope, I want this world to be theirs!

And I want our hearts To tremble with love, With rage,

But never with fear ...

At the least, I want these words to cross the planet and grow thorned flowers that show the strength of being a woman, of being a poet, of being them.

– *Reexistir (Reexist)* by Gabriela Navajas Rojas, a poem used in a song by the band Filoso

* * *

Gaby threw her words off the stage and into the hearts of the crowd at this punk show, kindling their inner fires. The potent rhythm of a drumbeat felt like the countdown to a blastoff. It was followed by a screaming guitar riff and bass line that resounded throughout the space. The music was throbbing, sharp, raw, and direct. An all-femme mosh pit broke out, our bodies flying around in a blur of fishnets, patches, studs, glitter, chains, boots, eyeliner, and raised fists full of rings. Hugging each other passionately, we spun around to keep the chaotic energy moving. "Sharpen your knives! Sharpen your minds!" Gaby screamed into the mic, the voice of our fury, the voice of our solidarity. She ended with a body-shaking shriek. When the music ended and the musicians conferred about the next song, chatter bubbled up among us.

"Chingón [fucking awesome]!!!"

"Amigaaaa! What an epic day! First the Autonomy for Kids workshop and now this! Increíble!" Fist bump.

* * *

Anita clapped her hands together. The game was starting in today's kids workshop. We lined the children up in a row, making the younger, rambunctious, and distracted Erizo the leader. He called the shots, directing the other kids to pass small foam mats foamies, as we called them along a path to get to the other side. No one else was allowed to speak. It took some coaxing on our behalf, reminding him now and again of the goal, and asking him what he should do next, but eventually he got all the other kids across.

We played again, but this time we changed the rules.

Now everyone could share their ideas and work together collectively without a leader. Needless to say, the kids made it across much faster on the second pass. Then we all sat in a circle talking about the experience. How did it feel to have to listen to one single person in charge and not be able to voice your thoughts? What changed when no one was the leader and everyone could work together? Which version worked better? Gaby spoke about the

difference between vertical and horizontal hierarchy How working together collectic opened the space for new ideas and faster outcomes, not to mention that having your voice heard is important to everyone. Anita emphasized the importance of listening to others, and having the courage to speak up for yourself and those you care about, or those who aren't always able to speak up for themselves.

* * *

We wrapped up the workshop and led the kids through the patio, past the parents sitting in the front room and into the kitchen of *Casa de Vinculación Social* (Social Connection House) to wash their hands. Casa de Vinculación is a social center in the heart of Carrillo. It's a large two-story house with ample front and back patios as well as a large garden.

Many collectives flow in and out of the space. Over time, a musical collective has taught guitar classes for kids, various exercise classes have been held, a psychologist offers cart, and people built a sweat lodge out back. An environmental collective maintains the gardens. Several years ago, Casa de Vinculación organized and planted a community garden in an abandoned lot around the corner too. Recently, a couple of the colectives got together to form *Micelio* (Mycelium), which organizes around the issue of Querétaro's water, an especially poignant topic since 2022, when the state moved to officially privatize water rights. The state's plan has sparked many calls to action and a larger conversation about the future of water in Mexico.

The ship that is Casa de Vinculación is under the guidance of the formidable Mari Carmen, who provides a special space in a neighborhood that is frequently overlooked and overpowered by the industries that built over its flower fields and mesquite trees. *Mujeres Subversivas* started working with Casa de Vinculación in 2020. And now that the kids workshop had wrapped up, it was time to put everything away. But first snacks.

* * *

The parents had prepared sliced fruit and tostadas with vegan toppings and salsas, and made sure that coffee and lemon verbena tea stayed hot on the stove. They sat in the next room around a big table chatting and opened up space for several of us to sit, while others began bringing the foamies back upstairs and putting away the art supplies. Mona, Ramona's mother, thanked us.

"This is such great work you all do. How did you get started?"

We looked around at each other.

"Well..." Mara started.

"Mara!" blurted out Fatx. "You're the connection for all of us."

Mara shrugged with a smile. "Well what can I say? I just wanted to be organizing with powerful feminists. And it all just came together."

Then Anita spoke up. "I remember the temazcal sweat lodge with Gaby and Pau that Yun organized with her collective, Casa Tonatzin Talli Temazcal." Yun gave her a wink, "Oh thank you, amiga, that felt like a metaphor for the birth of our collective. And then we all just came together from different parts of the city, from different backgrounds, different ages. Like the invitation was sent out, and everybody came running." Anita giggled with an excited hand gesture and elvish grin.

"And at just the right moment!" Leo jumped in, pointing at her. "One by one we gathered together, looked around, and realized we'd found something really special. Then later we found this space to work out of, Casa Vinculación, and everything just came together."

* * *

Victoria, Erizo's mother, nodded with understanding. Lora came down from putting the foamies and art supplies away, finding the last empty seat at the table. There was curiosity in the eyes of Yun, whose boys Mateo and Geronimo were playing with the other kids out back. "OK, so explain to me more about your collective," Yun said with her warm smile.

"Like what is it?"

The intention of Mujeres Subversivas, from the start, has been to create a network of women and femmes connected by common ideals, organized horizontally and in solidarity, to share feelings, thoughts, and the fire that rages within us all. To weave the world with our words, growing together up out of the concrete, sharing hardships and cultivating our wild ways within the world.

Faux eagerly asserted, "I see our collective as a platform to Know ourselves through each other. We come from all over the city as artists, teachers, painters, dancers, and poets, and together our actions create space to live out our ideals, dreams, rebellions, and passions. We all came to Mujeres Subversivas looking for change in ourselves, in our community. We believe in

building a better system, and we're doing the work to make it happen."

"One rebellious mural at a time!" blurted out Leo, laughing. "Mujeres Subversivas is based on friendship. We're about freedom and horizontal organizing. We're about solidarity and mutual aid. We teach each other lessons, from the kids to the adults and everyone in between. We're diverse and cross-generational. We even have a member from the other side of the border," Leo said, looking at Lora, who smiled, shrugged, and then gave her own answer in an accented Spanish.

"I see us as revolutionaries. We have strong personalities, we have conflicts, but at the end of the day, we all have the same goals. Freedom. Make the world a better place. And we each bring different ideas about how to accomplish those dreams. When we mix all of our ideas together, I like to think that we're able to bring something really special into the world."

* * *

"Definitely," said Majo, the mother of José Carlos. "What other activities have you all put together?"

"The first event we put together as Mujeres Subverina was with Polila, who came up from Puela to organize a big three-day event over the course of two weekends. The idea was a direct action on the street to create a feminist mural using stencils," Mara replied. "On the first day, we had a discussion about anarcho-feminist education. We shared ideas about strategies and working collectively. We spoke about bringing art and direct action into the public space.

"The next day, Polilla taught us how to use stencils. It was also a massive brainstorming day. We threw all of our ideas together. To start, we wanted to demonstrate freedom and autonomy, so we used a drawing of a bicycle to represent that. We wanted to be inclusive for all kinds of women, so we made the bike long with multiple seats to include a woman with a prosthetic leg. There was one person in high heels and another in boots to portray the spectrum of femininity. We also added a child to represent motherhood. The bicycle was shooting flames to represent the internal fire we all carry, and in the flames we'd written 'Existe Resiste' (Exist! Resist!).

"The next weekend, we got together for the third and final day to paint. We worked in groups to make the mural because the stencils were so large. That was in December 2020. Then in February, we got together and created another three murals."

"The murals were amazing," said Leo. "My grandparents even showed up! I was kinda scared about that at first, but it turned out great."

Gaby came in from washing the dishes. She wiped her hands on a tablecloth. "I really loved those events! It was a perfect balance of being organized yet spontaneous."

"Oh my goddess, yes," said Pau.

"Has anyone swept yet?" asked Fatx.

"Not yet," answered Gaby.

Leo got up and headed to the broom closet, leaving a space for Gaby to sit down.

One component of working with Casa de Vinculación was that we were responsible for cleaning the space after using it. There was no overt delegation of tasks for this. Instead, it always flowed organically. Putting away supplies, sweeping, mopping, dishes, and tidying. Usually another round of dishes. Making sure there was toilet paper in the bathroom, and finally, locking up afterward. This was part of working in collaboration with other collectives, forming a larger community of dreamers, organizers, artists, and healers.

"Yeah that event did have good flow," said Mara. "Then there was the lecture series we did on anarcho-feminism with writings from Peggy Kornegger ["Anarchism: The Feminist Connection," 1975]. We did one every month for four months. We got together and collaboratively created the flyer collages for each one."

"That was fun," said Lora. "It was hard too, because we all have such strong opinions, but I think we learned a lot about working together in those sessions."

"Then we stepped up our game with the Autonomia Para Niñxs [Autonomy for Kids] workshop," said Anita, "and twice a week!"

"Thank you again," said Mona. "It's been great for the kids to reconnect after all the craziness in the world."

We all kind of sighed and took sips from our coffee, or grabbed another piece of fruit. The pandemic had been a bookmark in time for so many things, the collective included. During the quarantine, we organized an online self-

defense class. Once we could meet up in person again, we started working with Casa de Vinculación. That was a whole new phase. We all had extra time, so we were meeting up almost every week, and sometimes more, to plan for the lecture series and organize for the M8 Women's March, which happens once a year in every major city across Mexico on March 8. We were part of a class on libertarian education and were dreaming up a workshop for children.

* * *

"So what have you folks learned from all of your organizing?" Sebastian inquired

We grew pensive.

"Take notes!" said Gaby, which got a round of laughs and lightened the mood.

Then Lora spoke up. "I think we probably overorganized the lecture series. Turns out you can overdo it on the organizing end. We were meeting all the time, but we would get off topic and didn't get a lot done. Not always; sometimes our meetings were really productive, but at other times it was like four hours would just disappear without anything concrete happening."

"Yeah, there was a lot of self-induced stress," Fatx observed. "I think we've learned the importance of delegation and trust-to trust ourselves, trust each other: We don't all have to be there for a flyer collage, for instance."

Gaby built on that, saying that it was "finding a balance of organization and spontaneity. Honestly, I think a fast-approaching deadline can help everything come together. Everyone finds what needs to happen and gets it done."

"It's balance, like you said. You don't want an event so unorganized that no one knows what's happening and it's all chaotic," added Mara.

Leo put the broom away and popped back into the conversation. "I've learned that I wasn't the only one who wanted to do this. There are a lot of people who want to change things, who know there are better ways. We keep the faith and find what actions to take. And by doing that we connect with others who share that same internal desire to live better. I feel grateful that everything came together for all of us. That doesn't always happen for people who want it to."

"But that's what DIY is all about, right?" said Mara. "Do it yourself, start with

a friend, find another, then another, and it all snowballs into the beautiful dream you have. And by organizing these small events, you never know who might come into the fold or who you're opening the door for."

"That's so true. I think we are making an impact, but we might not even see it. We might be blazing a path for someone for things they didn't even realize were possible. And we'll never know," Lora reflected. "Just like those who came before us will never know how important that first punk show was, or that first protest or first radical feminist theater performance. And it's never just one person. It's collective, it's community, it's the scene, it's everything. But regardless there's something inside of us that makes us do it."

Leo exclaimed, "Yes, that community weaving, where we effect this small piece of the world, but it ripples out! From the individual to everyone's beautiful kids and the people who come to our events. We even make an impact on our friends and families with the actions we take."

"And it has an impact on ourselves as well," noted Pau. "Sharing, organizing together, it brings us out of ourselves and places us into the world. Like when you climb a mountain and you get a larger perspective of everything. We can start to see what we're doing. I think the closing party we threw for the anarcho-feminist lecture series brought that all together for me."

* * *

That afternoon of the lecture series felt like a psychic hug from the collective. We were equals, smiling and happy. And we were fierce! We channeled our rage into stories sung as poems hurled into each other's hearts. We were vulnerable, opening up about our battles and crying over our wounds of war. We were furious, but we weren't alone. That made all the difference, and together we danced joy back into each other's lives, creating and sharing our art.

Mujeres Subversivas has been our call to action, solidified with the help of everyone there. Together we forge this liminal space, with open dialogue and an egalitarian spirit, carrying the torch for those who couldn't make it and those who first lit it to create a magical space where we feel protected, safe, and accompanied. Our work in collective has always been accomplished through horizontal organization and autogestion, which is a word that doesn't translate well. DIY comes close. Self-management is what the dictionary says. Autogestión is a way to generate opportunity for yourself without a boss.

To open the party that marked the close of the lecture series we held a

DIY market, where our friends bartered and sold their art inspiring us with their energy and their fire. Once the space had filled with laughter, we gathered everyone together for the last lecture in our series, which included a slideshow, arts and crafts, and deep questions. We've always strived to bring a balance of tactical experience and theory to our events, and this one was no different.

We concluded with the open mic, which without over-organizing, was spontaneous and organic. At first, we were anxious there wouldn't be enough time or that nobody would want to perform (despite the fact that the open mic was listed on our flyer). As it turned out, between ourselves and those who had participated in the lecture series there was no shortage of performances: poems and theoretical musings were read out of scribbled handmade notebooks, instruments were played, and voices offered the songs they'd been waiting to share, some melodic and some dissonant.

The first act to light up the mic was Power Animala, an all-femme rap group that inspired our bodies into motion with dynamic beats. Powerful verses made our hearts run wild. Then Fer shared a poem addressed to the trash human who'd wasted her time while she'd let her own talents languish. Josi filled the microphone with a poignant story about a person who tried to cut off their colorful wings and wanted to control their magical dreams. Roux gave a solo rap performance about the time she was metaphorically drowned by a relationship that kept her glow from lighting up the sky. Leo took our breath away with her exposed, passionate body. As she danced and twerked, we saw parts of ourselves that we've denied, and the desire to rebel. Musa bewitched us with her lyrics full of rage love, and rebellion on ukulele rhythms that transported us to mysterious dimensions. Fatx closed by creating the space for us to pause and reflect, to search for ways to process emotions, with an interactive zine full of love.

"That open mic was like looking into an open heart. It felt like standing before the mirror of all my sisters as we rewrite our history as womyn," Pau asserted.

The beauty of her words stunned us into silence. We looked into our empty drinks. Then Anita slapped her hands on the table, "Well, I'm going to go mop!"

And we all laughed.

"Does anyone still have unwashed dishes? I'll do round two."

"Thank yous" were handed out along with the dirty cups and small plates. Yun looked around the table at us and then asked, "So what comes next for

all of you?"

"We're a work in progress, a movement, constructing reality through the people we meet. We are a circle of trust. We want to change, to try new things. We learned from the lecture series that too much organizing can get in the way," Leo answered. "But we're still here. We still want to put events together; we just want them to flow more organically."

Gaby explained that "the difficulties and dramas that we faced in the past were part of the process, and they've made all of our friendships so much stronger: I've seen us change both individually and as a group."

"Truly. With each cycle we go through, we get deeper, find more space," affirmed Fatx. "Now what's next? Where do we go from here?"

Just then Pau entered the room with the mop. "Amigas! I think where we go from here is to the show!" She turned to the parents in the room. "Are y'all coming too? It's at the city museum downtown. It's a great venue to bring the kids to."

"Yeah, we're definitely coming," said Yun.

"Us too!" chimed in Victoria and Sebastian at once.

"Great, let's go!"

* * *

We finished up the last of the chores, gathered up the children, and piled into various vehicles to caravan together downtown. The city museum was a collision of the past and present. Its stone Spanish architecture of the colonized past met with modern mood lighting of the present while powerful artwork hung in stark contrast on white plaster walls. It was an unlikely venue, usually reserved for fine art exhibitions and gatherings of Querétaro's well-to-do. The building had an outdoor patio built into the interior, and that's where the show was taking place. So while the Spaniards had forced their culture onto the diverse Indigenous peoples of what is now Mexico, we were spreading our own culture in this place that now belonged to the upper class, the oppressor class. It was a strange dichotomy indeed, but we were here to break. the space and claim it as our own at least for a night anyway.

Gaby took to the stage, grabbing the mic and channeling our fury and rage, our solidarity and friendship.

* * *

Las mujeres subversivas nacemos de un momento a otro y en cualquier espacio-tiempo.

Emergemos en el instante que nos re/conocemos

niñas

madres

abuelas

hermanas

tías

amigas

educadoras

humanas

En ese momento,

en el que nos asumimos mujeres aún sabiendo

que estamos ante un sistema que nos dice

las otras, las olvidadas, las anuladas.

Es ese momento,

en el cual nos cuestionamos acerca de todo aquello que no nos permite ser

y que ahora sabemos,

lograremos arrancarlo de nosotras de la misma manera que

podemos

y deseamos hacerlo de este mundo.

Es ese momento,

en el que descubrimos nuestra capacidad

de acción, de transformación y de Resistencia,

Es ese momento,

en el que se nace mujer subversiva.

Nosotras, las Mujeres Subversivas, somos aquellas que pueden mirarse a sí mismas desde las demás personas,

aquellas que nos hemos organizado y autoeducado en colectivo, desde

una educación que nos libera y nos permite ir construyendo nuevas rutas encaminadas a nuevos destinos;

a nuevas realidades,

a nuevos vínculos,

a nuevas sociedades,

sin Dios,

sin jerarquías,

sin patrones,

sin competencia,

sin división.

Con (A)mor y Rebeldía

¡Qué vivan las mujeres subversivas!

Mujeres Subversivas are born from one moment to the next in any space-time.
We emerge the instant we recognize ourselves.

girls
mothers
grandmothers
sisters
aunts
friends
educators
humans

In that moment,
when we embrace ourselves as women despite knowing that we
face a system that calls us the other,
the forgotten,
the voided.

It is that moment,
in which we question ourselves about all that does not allow
us to be
and that we now know,
we will be able to uproot from ourselves the same way we will and want to
uproot it from this world.

It is that moment,
in which we discover our capacity
for action, transformation, and resistance.

It is that moment,
in which the subversive woman is born.

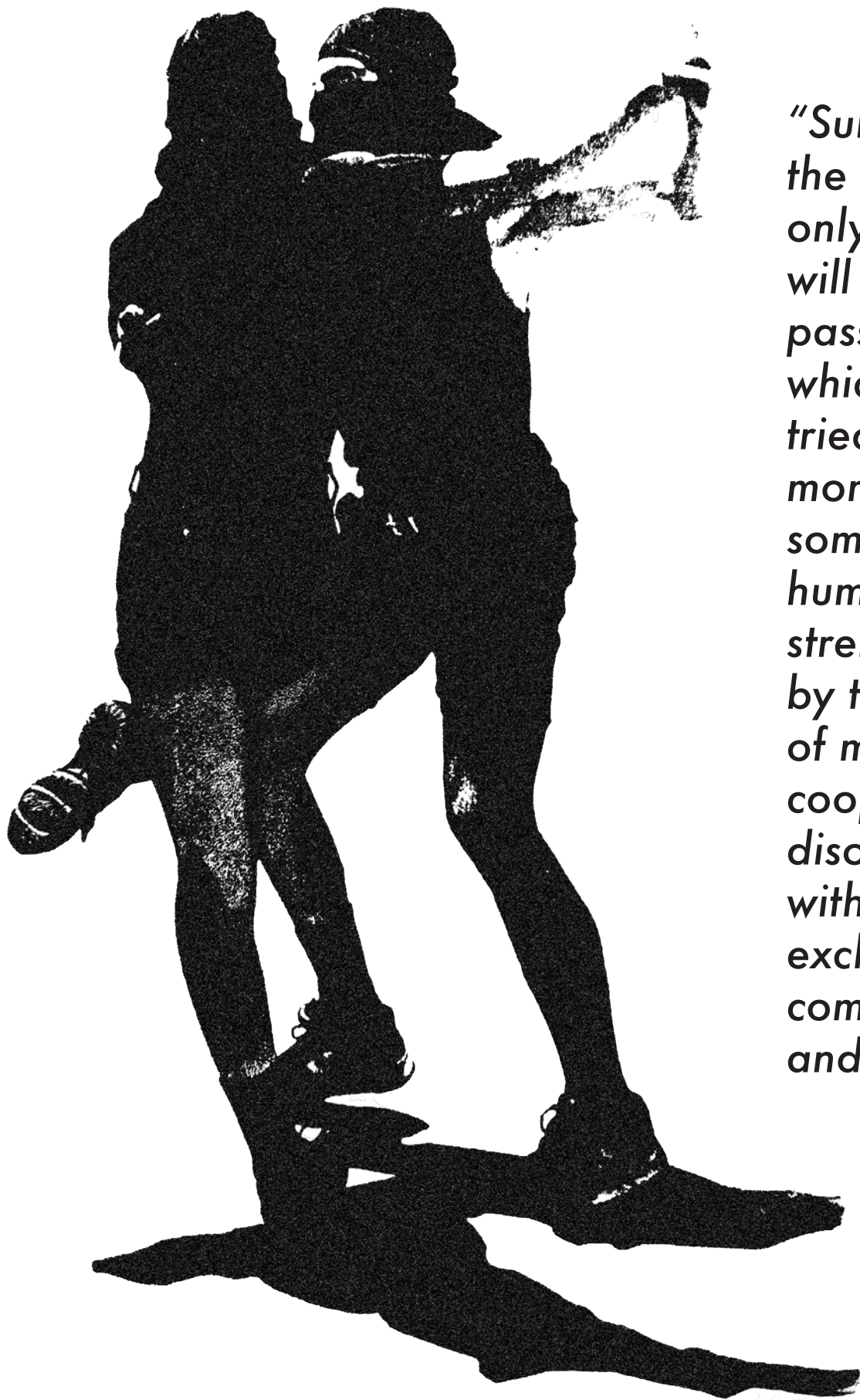
Mujeres Subversivas are those who can see ourselves as others do, Those
who have collectively organized and self-educated ourselves, with an
education that liberates and allows us to build new paths

to new destinations,
to new realities,
to new connections,
to new societies,
without God,
without hierarchies,
without bosses,
without competition,
without division.

With love and rebellion
¡Long live Mujeres Subversivas!

* * *

*Mujeres Subversivas was
founded in 2019 and is based
in Querétaro, Mexico. There
are currently seven members,
though they are looking
forward to expanding. They
can be reached on Facebook at
Mujeres Subversivas Acción y
Autodefensa Anarcofeminista.
Amor y rabia hermanxs!*



"Survivors of the terrible, only the wind will know the passion with which we once tried, at some moment, in some time, for humanity to be strengthened by the beauty of mutual cooperation and disobedience, without states, exchanges, competition, and capitalism."

LOVE
+
DISORDER
PROJECT

@love_and_disorder_