

Positionpaper Frauenraum (If there is any mistake in the translation, please contact us!)

Politics and networking

The Frauenraum was founded on May 17, 1992 during a period marked by intense violence against women within the Reitschule and out of the need for a shelter and the bundling of feminist struggles. The Frauenraum is part of the Reitschule Bern and sees itself today as a queer_feminist space for activism, discourse, culture and networking. Since the founding, our activism has constantly changed, developed and we understand our social and political work as a never-ending process.

The Frauenraum contributes to the discourse within the Reitschule, is a political place for debate and awareness raising, a social and cultural meeting place and takes a stance in public. Our focus lies in particular on women, lesbians, inter, non-binary and trans people (FLINT+) as well as other queer people who are oppressed on the basis of their desire and/or gender identity. The expression FLINT+ is not complete in our understanding and stands in other words for all people which are not cis male. We are aware that all categorization is already part of the oppression, because it grants or denies privileges.

We embrace different kinds of feminism and connect with other queer_feminist spaces and organisations to fight together for the issues that we see as important. We embrace queer_feminism in particular as a vehement critique of patriarchy, heteronormativity and cisnormativity. We live a queer_feminism that thinks along with and is in opposition to mechanisms of oppression. We are, think, act or learn as intersectional, inclusive, anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian, solidary and self-determined as possible.

Room policy

The Frauenraum sees itself as a shelter and practices zero tolerance towards harassment and discriminatory behavior. What is counted as harassment is always defined by the person affected. We place special emphasis on respect towards diverse realities and lifestyles. In support of this, we try to create an environment in which everyone can feel comfortable (for example through a lighting concept or awareness structures). We demand responsibility and attentiveness from all people present, so that the room is supported by everyone. Visitors are sensitized interactively and made aware of the contents and values of the Frauenraum (for example through flyers, conversations or posters).

Access, Diversity and Barriers

People affected by any form of oppression in their lifestyles and life realities (for example race, ethnic background, physicality, age, family situations or financial possibilities) have their place in the Frauenraum and should be able to feel comfortable, whether as organizers, helpers or visitors. That is why we work - if necessary, with external support - to become aware of barriers, to break them down as far as possible and thus create better access to the Frauenraum. This includes physical barriers as well as structural barriers that make it difficult for people to participate in events or to practice active participation in the Frauenraum.

Empowerment through quotas and content

Due to the political situation, the Frauenraum is in FLINT+ hands and promotes FLINT+ and other queer persons who are oppressed because of their desires, gender identity or in their self-determined being, acting and learning. To ensure this, we consciously work with quotas. The core collective consists exclusively of FLINT+. The event groups consist of at least 50% FLINT+. The same

50% FLINT* quota applies to the presence on stage. In addition, events are held which are open exclusively to FLINT+. All events in their different formats and contents correspond to the political attitude of the Frauenraum.

Wellbeing

The Frauenraum is based on mutual support, assistance, trust, appreciation and attentiveness. In order to encourage this, we act proactively and self-critically according to these values and work with suitable methods, such as regular, uncommented check-in rounds at meetings.

The Frauenraum documents, archives and writes history. In order to enable everyone to participate with as little obstacles as possible, we share and exchange knowledge in a self-responsible and proactive manner. We do this for example, through suitable channels such as internal training events, a document collection available to all, or by recording the results of discussions on the website.

The Frauenraum is organized in a grassroots democratic manner and is led by a core collective and several event groups, which together form the overall collective. They are supported by helpers. The Frauenraum places great importance to low-hierarchical and solution-oriented discussions. In discussions and conflicts, the people involved are attentive. We do this for example by paying particular attention to the space we occupy, treating statements with respect, using language that is as inclusive and non-discriminatory as possible, living error-friendliness and commenting on possible vetoes. In order to ensure and promote this, all are self-critically guided by these principles and use appropriate methods. For example, by keeping a list of speakers. If no solutions can be found, in urgent emergency situations the core collective makes the decision or determines the further procedure. The Frauenraum works to create structures that can be used to solve such emergency situations in a different way.

The people active in the Frauenraum contribute according to their individual possibilities. We attach great importance to a low-threshold access to the core collective. By making the workload a fixed item on the agenda of the event group meeting and by using this as a vessel for seeking and offering support, we also counteract the danger of overloading.

Self-Critique

The Frauenraum is self-critical in its queer_feminist being, acting and learning. In the discussions, which are characterized by openness and error-friendliness, criticism of oneself as well as others may be practiced, which is seen as an opportunity. This is ensured by the Frauenraum by making self-critique a fixed agenda item at each debriefing, the winter retreat of the core collective and the overall retreat, and by orienting itself on the contents of the position paper.

Bern, 6/26/2019

Glossary

In this glossary we show our current understanding of the following terms used in the position paper. We are aware that those meanings are subject to constant change and can be understood differently depending on the context.

- **Attentiveness:** Attentiveness means to be alert, vigilant, careful and cautious towards the environment and people and to behave accordingly.
- **Anti-authoritarian:** Attitudes / strategies that oppose systems based on dictatorial / absolute power relations
- **Anti-capitalist:** Attitudes / strategies that oppose capitalist / exploitative systems. Capitalism is an economic form characterized by private ownership of the means of production and control of economic activity through markets.
- **Awareness structure:** Awareness describes the consciousness, the attention towards other people / the environment. Awareness describes a concept that deals with problems related to disregard of physical, psychological and personal boundaries and violence in public spaces. Thereby discriminating and harassing behavior is countered. Awareness structures are used to find a way to name discrimination and harassing behavior and to actively counteract it. Persons who feel affected by this are supported and accompanied. (Source: awarenetz.ch)
- **Grassroot democracy:** Democracy is the principle of free and equal decision-making and participation in social groups. Grassroots democracy is a form of direct democracy in which all relevant decisions are made by the members themselves through direct participation by consensus (agreement of opinions).
- **Well-being round:** A method in which each person in a group expresses its current state of wellbeing without comment. This is done in order to create a common mindfulness for each other.
- **Desire:** Desire encompasses the manner of a person's emotional connection, love and sexuality. Homosexuality, bisexuality, pansexuality, asexuality or heterosexuality as examples are forms of desire.
- **Cis person, cisnormativity:** People who identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. Cisnormativity describes a world view in which being cis is considered normal.
- **Power of definition:** This concept implies that the person affected is the only person who can define when harassment occurs. Situations are perceived differently from person to person, so there can be no universal definition of harassment.
- **Empowerment:** Empowerment means enabling and transfer of responsibility. Empowerment is a concept that involves people making each other aware of their strengths. Also working together to develop strategies for living their lives in a self-determined manner and standing up for themselves.
- **Gender identity:** A person's gender identity describes the gender or genders with which a person self-identifies. It is also possible that a person identifies with no gender at all.
- **Heteronormativity:** View in which heterosexuality is regarded as a social norm.
- **Low-hierarchy:** Attitude/strategies that oppose hierarchical systems/rankings.
- **Intersex person:** Intersex is an umbrella term. Intersex individuals are born with sex characteristics that are either female and male at the same time or not quite female or male or neither female nor male.

- Intersectionality: With intersectionality the intersection or crossing point of multiple discriminations is meant and how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create unique modes of discrimination and privilege.
- Non-binary people: People who do not see themselves represented in the category of female / male. For example, a non-binary person can identify between and/or outside the binary genders.
- Zero tolerance: Attitude in which nothing / no deviation from something is tolerated.
- Patriarchy: A social system in which the construct of men holds primary power.
- Privileges: Privileges are undeserved advantages that a person enjoys.
- Transgender people: People who identify with a different gender than the one assigned to them at birth.
- Queer: We understand queer as a positive self-identification by people who see their desire, their gender role / social gender as well as their gender identity as outside the social norm. Queer can also refer to things or actions.
- Queer Feminism: Queer_Feminism is, among other things, a political attitude that points out the connections between desire, gender role/social gender, and gender identity and critically questions them. The basic concerns are self-determination, freedom and equality for all people, which is to be realized in public as well as in personal life.