

Shape the camp - LGBTQI+

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Introduction: who organizes and why?

Presentation of Le Space

[Le Space](#) is a place that has existed for a few years in an organic and *bottom-up* way. The place has been taken over by people undergoing multiple and varied oppression to reflect together on strategies and ways to connect with other struggles elsewhere (especially at the global level). They try, through a physical place, to create an intersectional space but in an organic, non-academic way. They also disseminate the knowledge transmitted through these meetings. A recent study showed that Le Space was the only organic intersectional place in Brussels. Le Space organizes 3 or 4 events per week, focusing on artistic and cultural formats (concerts, exhibitions, discussion-debates).

Presentation of Climate Justice Camp

The event is co-organized by Climate Justice Camp, which is an open group that is organizing a camp from September 4 to 8. The principle of a climate justice camp is to bring people together around several themes and to organize discussions, workshops, training sessions... The idea is also to change the narrative of the climate struggle (& stop focusing on climate urgency) in order to better integrate the voices of those concerned in this fight.

Conduct of the discussion

Before starting, we remind everyone that the discussion must take place within a general framework of benevolence (ie. when I express myself - in my actions, in my gestures - I do so in a desire not to hurt

anyone). This is important because everyone is learning. It is also recalled that personal experiences are intimate: only a person who has experienced something can decide to share it in a large group. People who do not identify themselves as LGBTQI+ are invited to be in a listening and observing posture because only those concerned can provide insights on how to make the camp caring.

The discussion is structured around 3 questions:

1. My experience in environmental circles is... I don't go because...
2. What positions and what kind of narrative would we like to convey?
3. How to conceive the climate justice camp as a *safer* space for everyone?

My experience in environmental circles is... I don't go because....

Homogeneity and heteronormativity create a sense of otherness and invisibility

- Ecological activist circles are often very white, very masculine, very heteronormed: often, activists have no idea what is different from heterogeneous monogamous circles. The consequence is that some people try to adapt, by invisibilizing some parts of their identity (& their commitment to other struggles) that are fundamental to them.
- This homogeneity (or conformism) and heteronormativity of ecological struggle spaces create a feeling of otherness. While straight people do not deprive themselves of talking about their sexual orientation, some people concerned do not dare to do so. It is difficult to express one's queer side, whether in verbal or clothing terms. They generally feel freer outside militant circles.
- Sometimes, environmentalist circles are marked by an essentialist vision of "women" and "men", which does not make them want to participate.
- Ecological spaces are rarely intersectional, but this is a sine qua non condition for many people present, who need to see clearly that they are welcome, that they are part of a community.
- Moreover, civil disobedience actions are rarely used to highlight other struggles.

Lack of space for emotions, vulnerability, self-care

- During actions, vulnerability and sensitivity are not always taken into account, which is a barrier to participation: a priori, we are all strong, everyone should be able to face the police etc. The hardness of the actions can make them want to leave.
- In queer/trans spaces, we take more time to really listen to people. Perhaps it is related to the length of meetings, which are longer?
- There is often a moral injunction not to be tired in militant circles. How to take care of yourself? If you take care of yourself, it's easier to be empathetic. Vulnerability is often seen as an obstacle to the struggle, whereas it must be at the beginning of it. As a community (queer), self-care (and community care) is something that can be provided.
- There is a concern for intellectual dominance, which is evident in both the climate and the queer environment: some people do not dare to express themselves because they are not necessarily able to follow the discussions, which often use complicated terms, acronyms, etc...

What positions and narrative would we like to convey?

- The RPC trio (Racism, Patriarchy, Capitalism) must be central to the narrative.
- The climate narrative is too often in dialogue with the power in place (and not with this new society that we are trying to create upstream, from below); this strategy often starts from a privileged patriarchal position, in dialogue with the power.

- More needs to be said about how the people concerned are more impacted by climate change: if there is an extreme event, queer and trans people are more likely to experience homelessness; the idea is to develop a narrative that builds on personal, intimate experiences.
- Defend a real visibility, which is more thoughtful and inclusive.
- Climate change is about learning how to protect our lives. Every time we do *care* work, we are not wasting time but saving time.
- Give more credit to this idea: We are not defending nature, we are nature defending itself.
- The very idea of a climate emergency is sometimes incompatible with other emergencies. The danger is to reproduce a narrative that wants to change the world but that ultimately only reproduces certain oppressions
- Make more of a link with anti-speciesist struggles because the issues of veganism and anti-speciesism are very important.

How to conceive the climate justice camp as a *safer* space for everyone?

Before the camp

- Have a very clear communication before the camp on accessibility. Will the showers be inclusive or binary? On food: will it be vegan and accessible to people with allergies?
- Be careful about communication beforehand, so that queer people want to come. How can we make them want to come? Through programming, culture, celebrations and shows (artists).
- Prepare a "charter"/code of conduct (see below) and communicate it before the camp.

During the camp

Program

- In terms of program, the first part of the camp could be on everything that is deconstruction of privileges to put a deconstructed atmosphere in the camp (check of privileges = entry passport); go first through the human side to establish an intersectional camp and develop a common base; once that is established, we move on to the more climate-related issues.
- Concerning the deconstruction aspect, we should make sure that we have a whole team, so that if a person does not want to do education at a given time, they can refer to another person. We should also think about paying them or offering them something. It must be a good line in the budget. To think of the privilege of volunteering... not everyone can afford to volunteer...
- Have workshops between queer people so that they can identify themselves.
- Pay attention to the people in the panels and the choice of artists.
- For the speakers, make sure that they are well aware of the issues at stake in the camp and that there is an opportunity to take them back if they say something oppressive.
- Create educational spaces in the form of outreach workshops for people who want to learn about these themes: not only to know the history of LGBTQI+ struggles but also to have space for more philosophical discussions.
- Make visible and highlight marginalized people, through performances or other means (see for example pink-blocks that go into the climate markets well made up.es & dressed) or through green make-up workshops with biodegradable glitter.
- Someone makes the proposal to put on a queer show 😊

Having a sanctuary

- To have a "sanctuary" (by its name, we know that it is a place to rest), which is nicely decorated and is a safe place.

- This sanctuary can take the form of a non-mixed space to rest, to put energy back into its batteries, a place to rest if the day does not go well.
- It is a space for care and non-violent communication.

Take care of one another's needs: language, charter, safe & recovery team, photos

- Use inclusive language (including in the "labelling" of toilets, for example)
- For translation, do not hesitate to contact the translation team. Ensure that there are enough languages covered (not just French, English, Dutch but also Arabic for refugees). If it is not possible to arrange translation into other languages, make sure that there is material available so that it is possible to arrange translations spontaneously.
- Charter (prepared in advance) where we say that we do not agree with racism, homophobia, transphobia... that there are clear and announced mechanisms in place to deal with this, that there are collective practices ready for use. Make it clear that we are trying to create the world of tomorrow, which does not tolerate these forms of aggression.
- Make a "safe & recovery team" (composed of concerned and very diversified people) with blue t-shirts (example of Code Rood) and give them a space. The idea is to have a safe space if you have been a victim of something to be able to take care of yourself.
- Taking pictures: ask permission when one or more people are in the frame.

Question the presence of alcohol and drugs

- The presence of alcohol can increase the number of assaults and can also be experienced badly by people who have stopped drinking. Many marginalized people have had to deal with addictions or other problems, so it is not cool to present them with alcohol every two to three hours.
- Should there be alcohol sales on the camp? if not banning alcohol, another option is just not selling it.
- You should not offer alcohol, cigarettes, joints to a person whose story you do not know.
- If some people wish to take drugs or alcohol, they should do so in a responsible and invisible way (in a private way, for example by using non-transparent cups) to respect the place of others in these spaces;
- Make sure several people can take care of people who have difficulties with drug abuse, who have traumas.
- Do not demonize people who take substances either, also have a space in case they need help.

Sanction oppressive behaviour on the camp

- Sanctions procedure for oppressive behaviour, which can go as far as exclusion or even denunciation to the authorities.
- If the police come to the camp, how do you manage it without waking some people up?
- Also find a way to receive the feelings of the person who experienced the oppressive behaviours.

After the camp

- Do aftercare in case people need to talk about things they experienced after camp. Set up an email address for example!