

Glossary for the exhibition

A Question of Closeness

A

Ableism

The term “Ableism” refers to discrimination based on physical abilities. It describes how people who are living with a disability are considered less ‘able’ and experience social and spatial exclusion and rejection as a result. People living with a disability are often reduced to this characteristic. This ignores the fact that disabilities are caused by barriers and lack of access. Strictly speaking, these people are hindered in their participation in society by their environment. It is an ableist society that elevates a ‘healthy’ body as the norm.

Ally / Allyship

“Ally” can refer to a person who is not part of a marginalised group themselves, but actively supports them. Allies use their position and privileges to advocate for equality for people who are discriminated against.

B

Binarity / Gender binary

“Binarity” or also “gender binary” stands for the two-gender system in which there are only cis men and cis women. A binary gender system assumes that all people must belong to one of these two categories. These two genders are mutually exclusive and at the same time they “complement” each other as “opposites”. These two supposedly stable genders are linked to gendered bodies, roles, characteristics and behaviours. Such a binary division inadequately captures the reality of gender diversity. Rather, gender is to be understood as a spectrum in which “being a man” and “being a woman” are merely two (end) points. There are also people who do not fit (exactly) into these stereotypes. This system completely hides the fact that there are intersex, non-binary and other people who do not fit into this system.

Body positivity / Body regime

Body positivity refers to a political movement from the 1960s Black community in the USA that fights for unconditional bodily self-determination. It criticises the permanent classification of bodies into “good” and “bad”. The movement’s demands go far beyond “a little more self-love”. It is about more justice and bodily self-determination for all. Body positivity addresses the manifold and often intertwined experiences of bodily discrimination, which are not limited to weight: it also concerns the stigmatisation of (dark) body hair, dimples or cellulite, exoticising representations of Black people and people of colour, heteronormative ideas of gender and body, or the unquestioned performance ideals that are oriented towards white, “healthy” bodies.

C

Care work

The activity of caring and looking after others is called care work. It is usually unpaid work. Care work is mostly done by women*. The different activities include housework, childcare, caring for people, within as well as outside the family.

In this context, the technical term “mental load” also appears. It describes the effort of having to think of everything. The heads of those who (have to) do this are literally (over)loaded. The self-evidence of “taking care” primarily affects women, often in heterosexual small families.

Cisgender and transgender

Cis comes from Latin, meaning “this side”. It is the opposite of trans, which literally means “beyond”. Cis and trans identity are not to be understood as two opposing categories. Rather, both characteristics run similar to a spectrum of colour in which every shade is possible. The terms “cis woman” or “cis man” have only become known through the current debate on gender diversity. Cis is considered the “norm” par excellence. Many cis people are surprised that there is a term for them at all. The counterpart to heteronormativity, that is the assumption and norm that all people are heterosexual, is cis normativity. Discrimination against people who are not cis is called cissexism.

Cruising

Cruising is the process of seeking and meeting a partner for anonymous sex in (semi-) public spheres. People meet in parks, at highway rest areas, on the beach, in the bushes, in public toilets and in the dark rooms of clubs. One aspect of cruising is “signals” that can be read by insiders. Another aspect is the places known as cruising areas. This practice is mainly associated with gay cis men. However, there was and is also cruising practised by lesbians* and queers. Lesbian women* and queers are not visible within cruising for structural reasons. There has been research on gay cruising since 1900, but almost nothing is known about lesbian cruising. There were also such efforts among women*, but lesbians* have always been “under cover”, so the places are of course seldom publicised and undocumented. Currently, there is a queer-feminist appropriation of cruising.

D

Dominant society

The “dominant society” defines the norm of a society, and marginalises and excludes certain people. The division between oppressed and oppressor runs along many lines of difference (woman/man, white/Black, German/non-German, poor/rich, etc). Structural discrimination is exerted on

minorities by the dominant society. Another term is “majority society”. This, however, implies a legitimisation of definitional power and representation, which must be viewed critically, through the assumption of being the (supposed) majority of a total population. Mechanisms of oppression remain unnoticed, and it remains unclear whether it really is the “majority”.

E

Empowerment

“Empowerment” describes the self-empowerment and self-enablement of structurally marginalised groups. Essential elements are to share experiences with each other, to strengthen each other, to form networks and to free themselves from external determinations. Accordingly, one goal of empowerment is to regain the power of the interpretation of oneself and to make one’s own narratives visible.

F

Feminist strike

A “feminist strike” means the organised suspension of the work of women* and queers. It is a form of demonstration used by feminist activists to strike against oppression and for the recognition and enforcement of rights. A feminist strike exposes the diverse working and exploitative conditions of women*. At the same time, it is not only directed at wage labour, but aims towards a fundamental change of social, patriarchal practices. The Feminist Fight Day takes place worldwide on 8th March.

G

Gender pay gap

Women* and queer people earn significantly less than cis men for the same work and work experience. This wage gap is called the “gender pay gap”. The difference in earnings is explained by structural differences in employment: women* and queer people work more often in lower-paid jobs and sectors. Although their qualification level is often higher, they are less likely to be promoted and less likely to reach management positions. Another reason is reduced employment: many women* work part-time, often in order to be able to do unpaid care work (especially childcare and caring for relatives). As a result, the pensions of women* and queers are significantly lower, which is why women* and queers in particular are threatened by old-age poverty. The term “gender pension gap” is used to describe this.

Gender-sensitive language

When all genders are addressed in speaking and writing, it is called “gender-appropriate” or “gender-sensitive” language. This is a bit misleading, however, as gender-sensitive language, such as the exclusive use of the generic masculine in the German language, is also a form of gendering for language. Many words in the German language exist in a masculine and a feminine form. Often only the masculine form of a word is used. On the one hand, gender-sensitive language ensures more visibility for women* by explicitly naming them (and not just “thinking about them”). On the other hand, it aims to ensure the visibility of all genders. Gender signs such as the gender star (*) symbolise that trans, intersex and non-binary persons are included alongside cis women and cis men. In addition to the gap (_) and the gender star (*), the colon (:) is also used. The symbols are spoken as a small pause in speech. In addition, there is the alternative of using neutral words or avoiding gendered terms altogether.

Glossary

A glossary is an index of words. This glossary explains (technical) terms and words that are important for the exhibition. Some of the words are English terms and some are still new, as language is constantly changing. Since people visiting the exhibition may not (yet) be familiar with some terms within their everyday language usage, we describe some of these terms that we consider relevant to the exhibition here in this glossary.

H

Herstory

“Herstory” is a play on words with the term “history”. The first syllable “His” is replaced with “Her”. Herstory refers to history or historical narratives from a (queer) feminist perspective. It marks gaps in historiography, which is characterised by male-dominated documentation, and reworks omitted historical narratives. This history, rewritten from the women*’s perspective, highlights their experiences and work that have been excluded from the male-dominated documentation of our past.

Heteronormativity

Heteronormativity refers to the assumption that all people are heterosexual and that men desire women and women desire men. The term criticises the socially existing two-gender order and the power it exerts over other gender identities. Heterosexuality is privileged because it is an unquestioned, omnipresent norm that is cultivated. Very few people “come out” as heterosexual, for example, because this is the basic assumption. The model of heterosexual marriage and the image of the heterosexual small family are considered the timelessly valid “normal case” and thus the “ideal” of life arrangement.

I

Intersectionality

The term intersectionality describes that different social structures—for example gender, sexuality, origin, religion, social status—are interrelated. This also applies to forms of discrimination: the interconnections have to be considered and it makes a difference in the way e.g. racism is experienced if the person is also affected by sexism and/or homophobia and/or other forms of discrimination (see Multiple Discrimination).

L

LGBTBQIA+

LGBTBQIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bi+sexual, Queer, Intersex and Asexual.

The term tries to represent all identities in the queer spectrum. As this is not possible, there is a '+' at the end.

- Lesbians are often women* who desire women*.
- Gay people often refer to men* who desire men*.
- Trans people see cis- and transsexuality
- Bi+sexuality is an umbrella term for all sexual and romantic orientations that are directed towards more than one gender.
- Queer people do not want to fit into the cis-heteronormative system.
- Intersex people cannot be medically categorised as "male" or "female" on the basis of physical characteristics.
- Asexual people feel little or no sexual attraction to other people.

M

Mansplaining

"Mansplaining" is a play on the words "man" and "splaining" (colloquial for "explaining"). The term mansplaining describes the phenomenon of men, though unasked (often in a condescending, patronising and lecturing manner), explaining certain issues to FLINTA* persons, regardless of what their listeners (already) know about them. This is a devaluation and denial of female* expertise. Mansplaining highlights a power asymmetry in communication between men and women and queer persons.

Multiple discrimination

The term 'Multiple Discrimination' refers to discrimination based on attribution to more than one social group. Individuals may experience discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, as well as other factors such as class, origin, religion, disability, etc.

Thus, a Black lesbian woman* may experience discrimination based on racial ascription, on being a lesbian, and on being a lesbian as a Black woman*.

N

(Neo)Pronouns

Pronouns are words that can be used in a sentence instead of a person's name, for example "she" or "he". Since not all people can be addressed with these two personal pronouns, there are also neopronouns. "Neo" means "new". "Dey" and "xier" are examples of neopronouns in German-speaking countries. "They" is used as a neopronoun in English. Some non-binary people want their name to be used instead of a pronoun.

P

Patriarchy

The word is used to refer to the social order that is determined by and oriented towards men. It is a synonym for the male domination and oppression of women* and queers.

Matriarchy represents another social order. This is a system in which women (or mothers) hold social and political power. Within a patriarchy, there is gender hierarchisation and subordination through discrimination, exploitation and violence. Queer feminist movements bring forth approaches to address this inequality and oppression of women*, queers and marginalised groups.

Positive self-designation / appropriation

A queer feminist practice is the appropriation of name-calling. Terms such as "dyke", "faggot" and "queer" experience a positive re-purposing and political use by those who experienced those terms as insults. Formerly degrading terms serve as appropriated self-designations and create an empowering and identifying moment. However, not all people have been able to reclaim these terms for themselves. Therefore, it is not permissible in principle to use these terms for everyone, but only when explicitly requested by people.

Terms that can be used in part as a positive self-designation are:

- The term "dyke" was and is a swear word for lesbian women.
- "Faggot" was and is a swear word for gay men.
- "Queer" was used as "weird, crazy, inappropriate", was and is a swear word, especially towards gay men.

Powersharing

"Powersharing" demands structurally privileged people to use their power to promote the possession of advantages for marginalised people. This helps make hitherto invisible positions visible and thus ultimately work to dismantle their own privileges. The aim is to abolish discriminatory structures and achieve a more equitable distribution of power and access.

Privileges

"Privileges" are advantages that a person possesses within discriminatory structures. These include positions such as white, male, cisgender, heterosexual, wealthy or able-bodied. Privileges often facilitate access to resources, such as education, employment, and health systems. They go hand in hand with agency and (interpretive) power. Reflection on one's own privileges precedes their dismantling and thus also the fight against discriminatory structures.

S

Safer space

A safer space is a room, space or place of retreat for people experiencing marginalisation, discrimination or other forms of social exclusion, social inequality and/or rejection. Within a protected space based on the collective understanding of the group, it is possible for people with experiences of exclusion to retreat, recover and exchange. Safer space here defines a place where people can be sure to meet like-minded others and be protected from different forms of violence and discrimination, in contrast to life in public spaces. However, there cannot be a 100% safe space, only a safer one: even in a Safer Space there can be stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination and violence. A safe space tries to be at least safer than the everyday world. For example, racism, ableism, classism, etc. can still be reproduced in a queer safe space. Therefore, thinking about intersectionality / the complexity of identities is especially important.

T

Toxic Masculinity

"Toxic Masculinity" means harmful masculinity. The term describes a predominant idea of masculinity and includes men's behaviour, self-image and relationship concepts as well as collective masculine structures. Feelings of weakness are suppressed. Instead, men are supposed to be "tough" and "strong". Aggressive, invasive, dominant and violent behaviour is thus tolerated, and sometimes even encouraged. Tender, loving behaviour, on the other hand, is repressed, especially amongst each other. One's own superiority is demonstrated through misogyny and queer hostility, even to the point of propagating a "right" to sexual aggression. Patriarchal societies build on these dominant images of masculinity and their powerful enforcement. For men, there is often an underlying fear of losing privileges or of not being a "real" man.

Transvestite / Drag queens / Drag kings

The term "transvestite" refers to people who dress differently from what is considered the norm for their gender for a variety of reasons (e.g. cis men wearing a dress, make-up and high heels). It can be a fetish or kink, or a costume. The English term "drag king" refers to performing (exaggerated) masculinity at a show or performance. Often, but not always, drag kings are cis women. Drag queens are often, but not always, cis men – performing (exaggerated) femininity in the context of a show. Transvestite people and drag queens/kings should not generally be confused with trans people. Drag is a performance that is independent of the gender of the person. Of course, there are also drag performers who are trans.

§

§ 218

In Germany, abortion is basically illegal according to § 218 of the Criminal Code (StGB). Abortion is illegal up to and including the 12th week after conception, but is nevertheless exempt from criminal prosecution provided that pregnancy conflict counselling has taken place. Furthermore, an abortion is exempt from punishment if the pregnant person experiences physical impairments as a result of the pregnancy, in extreme cases for example when life is in danger due to medical complications. Abortion is also exempt from punishment after rape. The right to abortion and to self-determination over one's own body is a feminist demand. Besides the legislative level, conservative and religious opinions combine with a patriarchal position in the rejection of self-determination. In many countries around the world, such as Poland recently again, people who can become pregnant are partially or completely denied the right to abortion.

The glossary for the exhibition *Eine Frage der Nähe / A Question of Closeness* at Kunsthau Dresden was created in cooperation with Ariane Graf and the Gerede e.V..

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Gerede e.V. – Association for Sexual and Gender Diversity has been offering free, professional and anonymous counselling in Dresden and East Saxony for over 20 years. There are regular, free group offers on different topics of sexual diversity, which offer a protected space to meet like-minded people, to exchange ideas and to experience support. In addition, there are many educational offers for schools, youth groups, multipliers and practitioners in Dresden and East Saxony. For more information: www.gerede-dresden.de



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