



KIPSELI, A NEIGHBORHOOD FULL OF GENTRIFICATION, SEXISM & SPECIESISM

The following text was written because we were informed by a passerby about the verbal, physical assault and videotaping of a queer femininity and her non-human companion in Kipseli by a boss- shop owner, for leaving the dog tied up for two minutes in the flower bed next to his shop.

So, welcome to Kypseli! To one of the main spikes of urban gentrification, in recent years, in the center of Athens that has made us experience our presence in the public space more and more enclosing. Speaking from the position of people living on minimum wage or are unemployed, we see increases in rents, while Greek bosses and their shops are expanding. Observing the simultaneous and increasingly frequent displacement of migrants living and working in the area, their impoverishment and the grabbing of an ever larger piece of our living space, makes us furious. Against the backdrop of the metro works and the imminent further increase in rents, bosses and posh artists rub their hands together and believe that all public space belongs to them. Whether that means they don't want to see non-human animals in the flowerbeds, or that they want to take the public benches and turn them into tables, or setting up their hipster alternative shops on streets, (like Agia Zoni- that until recently were mainly inhabited by immigrants). Also, exhibitions, like the one that the Onassis Foundation has set up in Pedio tou Areos (plasmata), try to integrate our fights in every way possible. In other words, these cultural institutions want to pink-wash our demand for visibility of the non-heteronormative presence and the "different". A classic example is of course the existence of the Municipal Market (that was formerly occupied) that sells crumbs of multiculturalism. Obviously, not missing from all this effort is the presence of the municipality, which is trying to "beautify" the area. An effort that aims to erase what it considers

monotonous and what it finds disturbing. They are erasing slogans from the walls, tearing down posters, planting beautiful flowers and lawns, so that we have nowhere to stand and nowhere to exist.

The heteronormative gaze that categorizes, judges and harasses us is a form of violence that we all pretty much experience in the public sphere. Sometimes, when we have the mental courage to respond to the challenges, admonitions or insults of the cis straight men- who flood the public space- and defend ourselves, this violence is elevated. Violence against femininities, non-heteronormative and queer people is a constant process of imposition and discipline that, especially when it happens in public, shows how intentional and normalized it is. At the same time, with the new visibility that the issue of femicide has received and with the legitimacy of the term at stake, there is a supposedly ostensible awareness of gender issues in greek society. Of course, there is not the same abundance of discourse and the same zeal in defending and/or supporting survivors of violence when they report what has happened to them, let alone when the survivors cannot do so because they are not legally constituted citizens. We can no longer stand for gender-based violence to gain visibility in the public sphere only when it is too late for some of us, a visibility that perpetuates the notion that our bodies are expendable and does not empower us in the now. We consider it very important that such incidents do not go unanswered and that gender violence in the public sphere is not naturalized in the eyes of the passing citizens who remain apathetic even in the face of a person's near lynching, because we do not want to get used to violence. We refuse to be obliterated, we put our bodies forward and in the public space challenging the certainty that they rightfully belong to the shopkeepers, violent men.

On the other hand, our rage is not limited to heteropatriarchal violence because that would alleviate the violence against our non-human companions as the anthropocentric speciesist logic places them as inferior and unimportant. On the streets, even those non-human animals that are worthy of respect in Western culture (dog, cat) are treated as monsters that pollute cities with their presence even if they coexist with humans. It is no coincidence that during the spring when people sit outside on the tables of the coffee-shops or bars, the existence of non-human animals spoils the “aesthetics” of the shops and their customers and it is the period

when the intense fights against people walking with non-human animals start, while at the same time the frequent placement of poisoned bait is observed. We, in no way, want to get used to these practices and be afraid to walk around with our non-human companions. It is not enough that we have forced them to live in cities, that they are subjected to daily speciesistic violence and lynchings, it is not enough that as a human species we destroy and wipe out everything natural, we even forbid their access to artificial flower beds. It is time to promote coexistence with them and to respond to all the violence they receive.

We are here, we are many and we will react in whatever means and ways each of us can, defending our non-human friends, our comrades, our bodies and our presence in the public space. We want to ensure that public spaces are not safe spaces for bosses, sexists and racists and we call out that:

IN THE STREETS WE WILL BE TOGETHER
UNTIL EVERY OPPRESSION IS VISIBLE.

KEEP WELL IN MIND, THE PUBLIC SPHERE DOES NOT BELONG
TO SHOPKEEPERS AND BOSSES.

DOGS WILL RUN LOOSE IN YOUR FLOWERBEDS AND ‘LITTER’
EVERY ELEMENT OF YOUR CULTURE.

THE PUBLIC SPACE DOES
NOT BELONG TO THE
BOSSES,
LET’S CUT OUT THE
NERVE OF CIS STRAIGHT
SEXISTS.



*This brochure was distributed during a protest against gentrification, sexism and speciesism in Agias Zonis in July 2022

