

Not just the sound of music!

Vienna's Ladyfests, so far

by Iris Hajicsek

Hey - ever been to a Ladyfest? No? Then you don't know Ladyfest yet!

Hey - ever been to a Ladyfest? Yes? Then you don't know Ladyfest yet!

There is a lot of movement within Ladyfest communities: festivals change from location to location and from year to year. Each festival worldwide means new venues, new focuses, and new styles of doing things; new contents, new discussions, and new struggles; new problems, and, of course, new differences. This is also true for Vienna's Ladyfest. The three festivals of 2004, 2005 and 2007 varied greatly from each other; a group of different people working on each festival ensures change.

This is a history. The first Ladyfest in Vienna happened in mostly autonomous venues. It focused on four days of female self-empowerment, with comics, guitar music and exhibitions. One of the hot topics of the next Ladyfest in 2005 was queerness ("fuck your gender!"). Over three days and additional venues, the focus was performance art (including drag performances) and queer movies. In 2007, we dared to step into an alternative, commercial venue, and extended Ladyfest with an open stage and electronic music. This festival lasted five days. We hosted a public feminist Ladyride on bicycles through Vienna; took the literature performances to the big stage; and incited broad debates about sexuality following the widely discussed Ladyfest Sexp@rty.

From plenum-based processes to thematic working groups, the organising structure also changed with each year. In 2004, we discussed whether the group was open to transgender people (the decision was to be trans-inclusive). The following year's organisers considered whether to accept males as supporters (the decision was that it would not - accepting people just as supporters and nothing else leads to hierarchical structures). Last year, we discussed whether males could be actively involved in the organising collective ("Why not, if someone is interested?").

Hey - ever been to a Ladyfest? No? Then you don't know Ladyfest yet!

Hey - ever been to a Ladyfest? Yes? Then you don't know Ladyfest yet!

Every Ladyfest is different! We invite you to check out Ladyfest Vienna for yourself.

www.ladyfestwien.org