

Feminist art action in Toilets

by [Malin Björk](#), [Scum Grrrls](#)

Sara S'Jegers took on toilets in one of her projects – working with and transforming the classic toilet signalisation - placing feminist subversive stickers of words-images in public toilets. The project, called 'Gender fact files f/m – m/f', has also had a life outside the toilet settings, being exhibited in several locations in Belgium. Through word-images the project expresses different feminist ideas and possibilities about gender and language. The Scum Grrrls Toilet team (ScumTt) met up with her for a chat...

Scum Tt : *Why did you find it important to break the female/male divide ?*

Sara : Are there really only two genders ? I consider that there is a lot in between. And at this time I was reading quite a lot and started to think more and more about these issues. If I would develop the project today, I would insert more elements of multiculturalism though. In the f/m project gender is the most important thing, but for some people race comes first. So I have started to think about links, and how it is all connected, and I would like to introduce ethnicity in the project.



I have also read about people that analysed what was written in toilets – dialogues on the walls, and the differences between male and female toilets. This was not part of the f/m project though.

ScumTt : *Why (in) toilets ?*

Sara : The toilet signs are not giving any leeway for gender – there are only two – either a man or a woman. So it is very defined masculine or feminine, which is not really corresponding to reality. And I put the stickers in toilets because you actually have to sit there and look at it. It is also easy to put stickers in toilets because no one sees you when you put them. I did place them outside toilets also, but less. In all, not everyone understood the project, but the stickers at least made them think about it...

ScumTt : *What reactions did you get ?*

Sara : Ah, it varies, sometimes people had tried to scratch the stickers off, maybe because they found it offensive ? But many people liked it and got in touch with the project. But I was of course never there in the toilet with them to see the reactions...

ScumTt : *Do you have an ideal toilet ?*



Sara : No...I don't think so. Well, toilets are often dirty and smelly – so if a toilet is clean, it is extra nice to be there. But another question that I have been thinking about is why men have to stand up when they go to pee ? And often next to each other – it seems like a social thing. In ancient times people sat next to each other – and there must have been a lot of contact in going to the toilet, which is interesting. But that is not my vision. I actually do like the fact that toilets are separated, in the sense that there are no men there. It can be very peaceful, also when you don't feel so well...

To conclude, one must say that Sara has many projects around her – with not much to do with toilets, but a lot with feminism. On the website of Sara S'Jegers you will not only find the Gender fact files f/m – m/f' project, but also some of her other projects such as "women's tongues", "men in skirts", and "Errata" (where she worked with text and put notes into books in public libraries). Lately a lot of her time is taken up by FC Poppesnor, the fabulous feminist café in Antwerp, where she together with a number of women have produced a short film called 'Feminisme voor Dummies'

Web site : <http://www.wo-man.be>