

# how to change the world

STELLAR QUINES  
PROJECT



A ZINE OF YOUNG WOMENS'  
CREATIVE RESPONSES TO  
AN EVER CHANGING PLANET



# we would like to thank...

**STELLAR QUINES WORKED WITH A NUMBER OF ARTISTS TO CREATE THIS EXCITING ZINE, CELEBRATING YOUNG WOMENS' CREATIVITY, ACTIVISM AND INSIGHTS.**

Whilst COVID has further galvanised pre-existing inequalities in an already unequal world, the resilience and insightfulness of young women has continued to be a powerful source of inspiration. From tackling environmental issues to the highly politicised world of women's bodily rights, young women have continued to shine a light on issues when the world seemed so dark.

At Stellar Quines, we knew that many artists and creatives would be inspired by the power of these young women and that their experience and guidance could help create a call for positive change and action, when the world needs it the most.

With this in mind, we worked with five artists who provided creative prompts and insights for young women to respond to. Special thanks to Raisah Ahmed, Courtney Stoddart, Nelly Kelly, Eilidh Muldoon and Joana Avilorie for their hard work encouraging young women's creativity.

We would like to further thank the Lighthouse, Edinburgh's Radical Bookshop, for their support, as well as the William Syson Foundation, without who this zine would never have been made.

# blue lit screen



## Helen Loud

So I have to learn to stop.

The more I stare down a blue-lit screen, the less value everything seems to have.

The blank cold white of another online “obligation” does its bit chopping down the last few inches of focus that I had already used up the day before.

And still, continually, never-ending, unforgiving, there is more. Even if the world has been supposedly locked away (however temporary that may be) there has not been a second of rest since it began.

And as I sit still looking through a blue-lit screen as it explains to me the atrocities of the world, and how they were the atrocities of the past, and how they will be the atrocities of the future, well knowing the little difference I can make in a world with systems so simply complex they exist purely on the spite of the last ten generations as the world turns on its axis over and over

The little I can do only feels smaller when pit against the flood of global unrest that streams through every timeline.

So I have to learn to stop.

To take stock.

To understand that a little difference, a little care, is still a difference to someone, something, somewhere.

And so a little difference is enough even if it is only that I’m still able to look at the world through a blue-lit screen.

# allow me to pose you a question

Liv Thackray

What happens when we lose our empathy? In a world where we depend so heavily on technology for even the simplest of motions, it seems almost surreal that those around us have feelings as fragile as the technology on which we so helplessly rely. When the night rolls around and we finally silence our robotics of choice, we are left with a silence that leaves us staring into the abyss of our soul, the skeletons of emotion calling to us from bellow. A phone knows not the silence it has to endure between people; kindness is what guides us to our loved ones and makes the bleaker things in life bright. What do we have left when life is reduced solely to the technological shackles which control us?

It is a common misconception that showing empathy is a weakness, yet what we fail to realise as a society is that showing kindness is what makes us human and separates us from the screens that have dominated our lives. In this fast-paced world where selfishness is first nature, there arises the question of why kindness is needed; the answer presents itself in the simple fact that we are all going through the same trials of life, simply at different paces. Through our own hardships and grief, we are building an ability to empathise with both the horrors and wonders of the world that surround us. By indulging in the lies of the internet and hiding behind our own virtual charades, we are not only stunting our own emotional growth, but destroying the ability for future generations to learn how to make the journey of life more bearable. Are we truly so reliant on technology that we are willing to forfeit our place in a humane society?

The solution is clear. We, as a society, must allow for the inevitable advances that are moulding the world in which we live, while understanding that without kindness we are truly alone. The times we regret most in life will always be the situations where we failed to offer kindness, even when it seems like the most trivial issue at the time. This will only be achieved by educating people of all ages on the importance of kindness in daily life - as well as the urgency to distance ourselves from the screens that control us on both a physical and emotional level.

Through kindness we will find strength - through strength we will unite.

Dear students,  
Hello lovely friends,  
I hope this message finds you  
safe and well. I hope you all  
eat lots of fruit in this disturbing  
time I hope you  
enjoy this lovely month I hope you all are grand.  
I miss you. Take care we are aware  
of great uncertainty, we are

wishing you the very best  
of health. Are you thinking  
about your next steps? Due to  
the impact of the Coronavirus,  
if you have any problems it may  
take slightly longer than usual  
to respond. I hope this helps.  
What comes next? I hope  
that you are safe and well.

Take care thank you  
for your patience sorry  
this is 'late' I hope  
next week I'll have my life  
together. Here is my offering:  
it needs.

My main concern aside from  
pulling in different

directions - I forgot  
we are writing death  
as live as possible.

Thank you always I have  
a deep gratitude I hope  
things are good in all  
your corners of the world I hope

you're keeping  
safe and well and have  
a thriving Thursday night.  
Stay safe stay sane  
stay stellar, even though  
we can't go far journey well,  
rage on stay safe and strong  
you are valued.

Yours with tender heart,

**please  
scream  
inside  
your heart**



**Skye Wilson**

# taking up space



## Rowan Miller

We worry our voices are too loud  
Don't want to come across too proud.  
Keep ideas concealed  
In meetings our lips are sealed.  
Maybe they'll laugh?  
Or dismiss what we say.  
After all, we only get half  
His monthly cheque on pay day.  
Where has the guilt come from?  
The need to stay quiet.  
From now on lets speak our ideas  
With the force of a riot  
Be bold, brave, pick up the pace  
And never apologise  
For taking up space

# seat at the table



## Florence McCrae

There's something ironic about working from home, ironing board perched on my knees for want of a table. The year is 2020, and we thought this would go on for two weeks at most. We're entering our first month of lockdown, and with no end in sight, C and I are negotiating whether a table is a viable investment. My job hangs in the balance, and though hers is secure, she is confident that the return to the office is a matter of weeks away. We are both wrong.

The importance of a seat at the table has taken on a new meaning of late. Not only symbolic, my current set up is a chiropractor's nightmare - stool too short, or woman too tall, I am tucked up like a deckchair in our two room flat. We are most certainly not living the dream.

It has become harder to work from home recently. I don't exactly miss the commute per se, but there was something comforting about the regularity of turning up late to the office everyday to put on a pot of coffee that was subsequently consumed by my colleagues without so much of a word of thanks. I was equal parts Mrs Overall and Shazza of Bridget Jones acclaim, easier to fit into a box upon first encounter than to probe deeper.

# seat at the table



I was ill suited to my employ. Interviewed in a state of post-degree desperation, I had managed to all but blag my way in. I was the first woman to be employed as a writer in the company's history. Of our workforce, the other women were relegated to the back room, and used, as I was, as facilitators to the egos of men. This took as much energy as my actual job, and was by no means as satisfying. Churning out one hundred words a minute, quantity far exceeding quality, I was regularly confused for a secretary. My boss attempted to console me - some men just don't like women he said before heading out for a cigarette. I was groped at an event, and told that the next time this happened, I was to turn around and ask for his name.

There was no particular moment when I decided to depart from this role. No straw that broke the camel's back. Just a sense that moving on was overdue, and so, exactly a year after I commenced by role, I left it, moving on to another.

In the end, C and I caved, investing in a non-descript table from IKEA, put together lovingly by our own hands, screw by screw, leg by leg.

I don't need a seat at that table anymore. I'm making my own.

# the unfurl

## Rowan Strachan

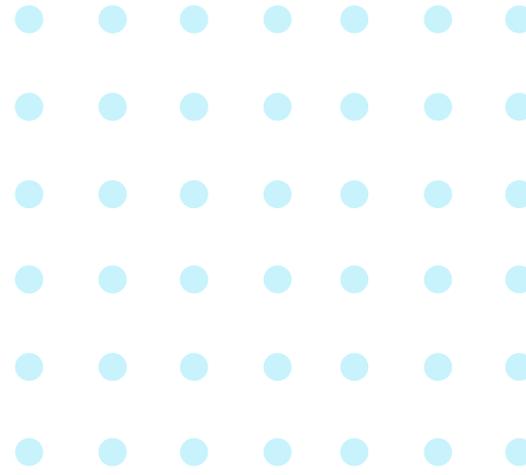
I don't think you understand,  
understand power still unfolding,  
unclenching, still rising  
in me.

I'm cooking, maturing all things  
needed to be said.  
All things uncomfortable, swirling, gut twisting  
silence bearing.

And one day, one day when  
pots bubble over, spring arrives  
and our world pushes back towards the sun  
I will spill over with hot words  
in cacophony, in symphony.

I'll grow, not like flower  
but like flame toward the stars,  
reaching up,  
hair streaming sparks  
bathing in light, Scattering clouds.

I will pluck you a great,  
glowing orange from midnight velvet  
and gently, oh so gently  
raise it to your parted lips  
planting a seed, sprouting in your chest.



# women in (pressed) powder



**Abbie McLaren**

Sometimes being a woman feels like you're standing in front of two burning houses.

In one house is your intelligence, your drive to succeed, your respectability and your power. In the other is your favourite lipstick and your sexiest pair of heels. And there you stand - with one hose. Time's running out, you have work in half an hour. Pick a fire to diffuse and get on with it. Which one do you save? Which part of your womanhood do you keep, and which do you watch burn?

I'm not sure who decided that in order to be taken seriously, women have to give up any feminine attributes. Did someone (probably a man, no offence) just wake up and say, "today I will only listen to my female co-worker if she hasn't curled her hair" or "if my female co-worker is wearing a cut-crease and some contour, I will throw files in her face and call her a slag"?

A study conducted by the University of Abertay in 2018 had participants look at 16 sets of photos. In one photo, a woman was seen with no make up on, and in the other photo, the same woman had the adequate amount of make-up on for a "social night out". The studies showed that participants of any gender or sexuality were less likely to perceive a dolled-up face as that of a leader.

However...it appears that a bare face isn't always the way to go either.

In another similar study conducted in Boston, participants were faced with a photo of a bare-faced woman, and then three pictures of the same woman wearing three different makeup looks, categorized by different levels; "natural", "professional" and "glamorous". The "professional" faces were deemed "capable, reliable and amiable". It was clear in the results that these particular participants favoured at least some make-up on a professional woman, rather than none at all, as the "glamorous" face was even said to be "untrustworthy".

# women in (pressed) powder



So basically...your own face isn't good enough, so you need to wear at least a bit of slap, but if you're even slightly too heavy-handed with the Glow Kit you are absolutely the office harlot and definitely sleep with the boss in the stationary cupboard during lunch. Got it.

Let's go back to the houses for a second. What if I don't want to sacrifice one of them? And who's lit these fires anyway, who says I absolutely have to choose (rhetorical question, the answer is a man in a suit somewhere, years before I was even born. Once again, no offence)? The line between socially acceptable makeup and makeup that doubles as a one-way ticket to Bimboville is so thin, I barely notice myself crossing it. If I don't notice, then is my super-duper important, crazy-busy boss going to? Probably not. And if he does notice, and makes a gross comment, do I really want to work for him? Absolutely not. The world is full of injustices, and the amount of make-up I do or do not wear should really be at the bottom of everyone's lists of things to be pissed-off about.

What part of the world do I want to save? My £40, full-coverage, pore-blurring foundation, thank you very much.

# this is for you



## Abbie McLaren

You wouldn't tell the sun not to rise so high, or the birds not to sing, or the sea to stop being so deep and full of mystery because all you see is murky water. When sunflowers bloom above your head looking like friendly faces - like mothers, aunties, friends - you do not cut them down and try and trample them into the ground, purely because their stature makes you feel small enough to silence them.

You do not sneer at stars and how decadent they appear, like jewels or little sparks of magic. Despite the incomprehensible nothingness they find themselves in, they make themselves seen. You don't roll your eyes or scowl at them for that, do you?

You, my darling, are a force of nature. You have as much of a right to be here as any ray of sun, or wave in the ocean, or petal on a flower.

Next time you find yourself in your own personal sunrise, achieving your goals and climbing to where you deserve to be, don't lower yourself down for in fear of intimidating someone else.

The next time you speak, and your words have the musical quality of a morning songbird, and your voice is both sweet and forceful, gentle and important - do not let anyone silence you. Make them hear and taste and feel every word you say until they have no choice but to give you the unadulterated respect you deserve.

We must also look out for other wonders.

# this is for you



The beauty of being a human is that you are your own solar system, your own collection of stardust and miracles – but you have your own place within this whole life force of other beings. Tune in to how the world is treating your fellow beings and educate yourself on the issues that face them. These sunflowers are being punished for being in love.

This star is still going unrecognised and disrespected after years of racial oppression. This moon does what she can to pay the bills despite cutting words of judgement.

This songbird is being harassed online because of her size, this ocean's brain is differently wired to yours so her opportunities are cut short – the list of prejudice and marginalisation is endless, and we must fight for their rights, support their work and give them what we can. It is up to us to stand up when we can and shut up when we should. We must listen when they speak and elevate their voices, rather than talking over them. A sunflower cannot understand the experience of a star. The ocean does not live the same life as a songbird.

Be a force of nature in your own world – and be a force for good in the worlds of others.

Because I know its on the way to moving,  
Coming in, rising higher and  
It moves and I wish it wouldn't and I  
Know it changes, has changed, will change and  
so what I wonder is can I visit it - will I be able to see the  
sea again, later or  
Will it still be a coast? Will it still be a beach? Will it be a  
sheer drop or a steady incline  
Will the low tide reveal old lives, a small town and a  
police station full of seaweed and criminal fish  
Will we lock ourselves up in dykes and multistory carparks  
and hospitals and new hotels away from the sea,  
fortified or  
Can I still dip my toes, crunch on stones, walk the pier -  
not a pier now, can I walk the parameters of some  
modern castle, walk into the sea on someone's garden  
wall, ride my bike through an underwater estate, swim  
between the betting shop and the Chinese takeaway,  
Do the hills become the steady decline  
The town the underwater  
Does sand fill in the potholes  
Do drains still work the same way  
And traffic lights! Blurry through the water. How do they  
work?  
And how long does a beach take to grow? Dunes take  
Forever, I know that and  
How long does it take to make sand  
How long does it take  
To save the coast  
Whatever form she takes  
Whatever train line she crosses  
How long does the coast stay the coast  
How slowly does she creep up  
How can I save her as she is now

what  
I  
want  
to  
save



**Róisín**  
**Sheridan-Bryson**

# Save the breath before the close, action's prelude.

**Julia Hegele**

Save the mountain of expectation that meets you with the stairs, worlds stretching to either side of you, your horizon three levels up.

The carelessness of ascending flight after flight, as reckless and ordinary as a bird dropping from a high rise.

The grudge of height, the ache in your thighs the prickle in your toes and voices keening about heading home and changing for the weather.

Rain lashing outside your window as you toss on this or that, one eye lined then two, the sensation of preparation, of creation.

Save the connection to the Elysium with the first sip, lukewarm and perched on your counter like ambrosia.

Save the magic, the evocation, the spellbinding we take for granted when we imbibe in such powers, the passing of a paper, the flick of a lighter, the laughter of your lover in the next room over. The fall into an evening without panic, without fear of fellow man.

Save the biome we leech out of our pores the next day, the world in a glance across a crowded room, the ecosystem of three bodies smashed into the backseat of a Peugeot whirling through gold-tinged portals, pitch black roads.

# Save the breath before the close, action's prelude.

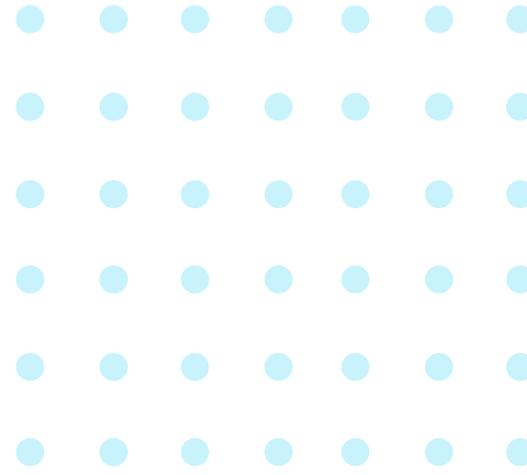
Protect with laws and petitions the ability to be ambivalent towards sensation of humans, no cringing, no holding your breath, passing passively like boats in a misty firth.

Preserve ducking in a corner behind a chippy, rain smarting salt and vinegar and mascara, painting pictures on cheeks with grease and acid, erosion unparalleled on the planet, rendering the most beautiful scars.

No canyon can compare with the ribbons of black and pink smeared across a beloved's face, no forest tempts hands to hold or sighs and heads against shoulders. No wonder on earth inspires that heavy, good, brown bread of a feeling, keeling over into pre-made beds.

The world burns the oceans boil the body grows  
gaunt with want and aches for the mindlessness of the Centre at night.

J,



## Florence McCrae

I am writing you a letter, which is quite frankly ridiculous, given the fact I'm fairly sure you're sitting downstairs eating the liquorice I bought today for us to have later. Some things never change.

I've been asked to save the world, you see, and I thought you'd laugh if I told you in person. Who on earth would think me the one to meet such a demand? I'd have expected there to be at least some more viable candidates for the post.

I know the world needs saving. I'm no fool. I watch enough David Attenborough to have at least some understanding of the problem. The thing is, I'm not sure I'm really the right person to do it. I have a couple of Highers under my belt, but they're in Latin and English, not really world saving kind of material. And then there's the shopping and the smoking. But they're by the by.

And there's so much of the world that needs saving. There's Hepworth's garden in Cornwall, and that bit of London that only we know about. There's the place we first met, and the place we met last. There's the pubs we won't go again, and the bars we might. There's the museums we got lost in and the strange tea shops we found. There's the big bits and the small bits, and all the inbetweeny bits. In truth, I love all of it. Always was a romantic, you say.

Here's the truth J, in all of the world, the bits I've been and the bits I'm yet to go. The place I want to save most of all is you.

Always,  
F

Honesty  
The Best Policy?  
Breast poverty-  
Heart can't beat enough  
to keep up  
with anxiety  
when I tell you straight  
to your face  
what's been bothering us all.  
Wrinkled frowns  
Trowl Over Your Brow  
Making space for new seeds of hate  
because my kindness wasn't  
received  
as silence  
you heard a scream  
of defiance  
gently placed on your screen  
and the words are like:  
**THIS IS HOW I SEE YOU**  
**THIS IS HOW YOU HURT ME**  
**THIS IS WHY I CAN'T TRUST YOU.... but I**  
want to  
All you see are the capitals  
Rising  
Fighting  
Uniting  
Against you  
No  
For you

Look further

Complicated Confiscated Coherence

Look

Detrimental Defence

Look

honesty,  
the  
best  
policy?

**Rosie Hart**

truth  
Kind connectivity  
Me wanting you to  
be better  
for both of us  
Bargaining  
kindness and honesty  
In one (the other) find

# you said it

## Aafiya Amir

You said it so loud, because you wanted me to hear you.

That my skin was dirt, that I was dirty. That my scarf hides greasy tendrils and not hair at all. You see me as dirt. You speak of me, not to me, like dirt. To you I am dirty, and so I feel dirty too.

I don't speak my truth. That you make me feel like dirt.

But here's another truth. I am dirt. From dirt grows flowers and plants, the food we eat, the air we breathe born from dirt. I am dirt. I am power. I am the earth that brings to life every thing and every one you have ever known and loved. I am dirt. I am the ground you walk on and the earth that shapes the sands. Without me, you'd starve.

I am dirt.

And I love it.



# how to change the world

ILLUSTRATION BY  
RUYING YANG

