

Participatory artistic research as nonbinary community building

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Cisnormativity renders nonbinary people invisible even to each other which makes community building challenging. I utilise practice-based research methods to address this invisibility. In my research project, 117 nonbinary participants created studio self-portrait photographs in collaboration with me, and each selected one portrait to be part of the photographic series entitled 'IN/VISIBILITY'. After the photo shoots, I interviewed forty participants about the meaning of the process and the selected portrait. The objective was to create a utopian space in the studio where nonbinary genders are recognised unconditionally and to produce portraits on the participants' terms. The interviews were a way of "listening to the images". The presentation provides an overview of the project, including the underlying utopian aspirations that inspire it. I suggest that, when employed mindfully, participatory research practice can be a valuable tool for nonbinary community building. It becomes a form of activism.