

The Feminist Resistance of Pirañas Crew

Photographic exposition by Lin Woldendorp, The Netherlands

Pirañas Crew is an interdisciplinary feminist all-women organization that, through street art, collective practices and critical pedagogies, enables the mobilization of free sexualities, the feminization of spaces and the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence against women, dissident/non-hegemonic sexualities and bodies.

Through street art, collective practices, and critical pedagogies, Pirañas Crew actively resists structural gender inequality and gender-based violence. They view murals as powerful vehicles for storytelling and advocacy. By using vinyl, spray paint, and collage the Pirañas express their social imaginaries and challenge existing cultural representations surrounding women. For them, street art is a gesture to disobey.

In 2023, Lin Woldendorp, a Dutch photographer traveled to Medellín to capture with a sensitive gaze the images of some of the Pirañas. She accompanied them in their intimate spaces, at work and in the streets, to portray their mobilizations, recognizing the courage of the members behind her camera. Furthermore, she accompanied Pirañas Crew during International Women's Day to portray the gathering, *la juntanza*, and the feminist resistance of the collective.

Lin Woldendorp (1994) is a photographer from Amsterdam, The Netherlands and her work has been published in Dutch newspapers such as Het Parool, zaterdagmagazine PS, de Volkskrant, Volkskrant Magazine and NRC. Lin experiments with color, playful shapes and uses both organic and straight lines in her work. Fascinated by people, she is always searching for their pureness. Her talent for capturing people as they are, is easily recognized in her portfolio of pop artists rocking the stage as well as people next door showing their vulnerability.

Lin Woldendorp
@linwoldendorp
www.linwoldendorp.com

Pirañas Crew
@piranascrew



Luisa Cárdenas Zapata, tag Antro (@antro.pofaga)

Luisa is one of the founders of Pirañas Crew. She grew up in the Doce de Octubre neighborhood in Medellín, where she witnessed the reality of structural violence and inequality. Therefore, as an art student, she sought creative ways to generate change and together with several young women from the neighborhood, resisted through different creative expressions. In 2017, the women created their first mural, which received much attention. Since then, Pirañas Crew decided to continue as a street art collective, with Luisa as creative director.



Juliana Ruiz, tag Rula (@rrrula_)

Juliana has been a member of Pirañas Crew since 2018. The collective's proposal resonated deeply with her, because of her desire to work and create with women while responding to injustices. "For me, it's important to speak out about injustice. During conflict, you feel frustrated, fear what is happening outside and you are paralyzed! You can't do anything about it. But with Pirañas we can do something, we can raise our voices against violence. With Pirañas we share the same ideas and we feel the urgency to do something and together we are stronger and we can do more. When we are together in the street and when we paint together, we are not afraid – and not only that, we feel happy and own the street.



This stencil 'Mis Hermanas Son Legiones,' translated 'My Sisters Are Legions,' was made during the march of International Women's Day on March 8, 2023.



Laura Osorio, tag Papprika (@papprik318)

Laura joined Pirañas Crew in 2016 because she was wanted to work with women to provoke change. "What motivates me is being together, creating and painting together with women, and from a secure place of mutual support improve the conditions for women in Medellín. Working with Pirañas means changing the realities of violence against women for future generations." Laura learned about feminism through her mother's form of caring, which later was fueled by her work with Pirañas Crew and enforced by the collaboration with other feminist initiatives.



'Si ves algo, haz algo,' meaning 'If you see something, do something.' This mural was made to represent the strength of collective action, the strength of 'El Cardumen,' or 'The school of fish,' which was also the name of the cultural and formative space of Pirañas Crew. El Cardumen has been a place of gathering, solidarity, creation and production to consolidate an interdisciplinary work group. Pirañas Crew believes that to promote change we must fight together, collectively sink our teeth into structural problems like a school of piranha fish.



This mural was created during the 2020 Feria de Flores in the city center of Medellín. This mural characterizes the blossoming of us as women and girls, sensitive to our environment, in a city that for many years has seen disparities in the quality of life of women and girls.



Mari Luz Gil, tag Asfalto (@asfaltomi)

Mari Luz joined Pirañas Crew after the social mobilizations during El Paro Nacional in 2021, because she believed that an egalitarian and just world is only possible through collaboration. Mari Luz grew up in Barrio París in Medellín, where she witnessed the consequences of the armed conflict. In artistic expressions she found an alternative to violence and developed herself as a critical visual performance artist. After El Paro, she felt the need to be part of a feminist group. "Getting together with women is important so that we can learn and reflect together. We need to learn what equality means for everyone, because we grew up in inequality. We need to understand and propagate a feminism where all genders are equal and have a place, where we are inclusive and not exclusive and where no violence is tolerated."



Lieke Prins, tag Risa (@liekeprins) on the left, Anyela Vanegas Arango, tag Ámbar (@anyela.vanegas) on the right.

This picture was taken during the demonstration on International Women's Day on March 8, 2023 and exhibits the unity between the Pirañas. Anyela joined the collective in 2018 because of her passion for street art, feminism, and activism. As a lawyer specialized in gender issues, she recognizes the daily realities of gender-based violence and structural inequality, that is why she feels that with Pirañas she can make a change and make a call to society about what happens to women in the territories. Lieke met Pirañas Crew in 2017 out of interest in her research project. "I was impressed by the artists' powerful socio-political message, which motivated me to get to know the women better. The Pirañas invited me to paint with them, after which I became a Piraña as well." Since then, Lieke has been painting with the Pirañas, while pursuing her PhD on gender relations in Medellín's street art culture.