

# Diversity Workshop – WAC 2019

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## ABSTRACT

Two Norwegian organizations working with equality and diversity in technology and the arts sector cooperate with this workshop on diversity. We will present our experiences and work as well as offer some tools to stimulate and achieve diversity in the workplace and in communities such as Web Audio. The workshop will thus have two modules; (1) one first module by The Art of Balance and (2) one second module by Girls Geek Dinner. The workshops will be held in English. Previous knowledge of diversity and other equality concepts will not be necessary.

## 1. WORKSHOP MODULES

### 1.1 The Art of Balance: Challenge the norms!

The Art of Balance (*Balansekunst*) is a Norwegian association of 80 organizations, companies, festivals and other arts and culture institutions that engage in promoting gender equality and diversity in the arts. In this part of the workshop, Victoria Øverby Steinland from Balansekunst will talk about how *norms* is a keyword to diversity work.

In order to create room for diversity, it is necessary to identify the barriers that may prevent some people from participating. One way to address this issue is by the means of *norm-critical perspectives*. With a norm critical approach, we bring attention to the norms that shape society and our ways of thinking.

In this workshop we will talk about how norms operate in society. We will touch on topics such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity and (dis)ability and investigate whether implicit norms hinder diversity in the field of arts and culture. If so, what do we do about it? The workshop will vary between presentation, exercises and discussion, with the aim of an interesting conversation.

The everyday norms such as ways of greeting or organizing a line at the grocery store are all fine and well, but what about society's norms relating to our identities? Norms determine what and who society deems normal, and consequently what and who is considered less normal, different or strange. Being labeled as different or 'not normal' is unfair in itself. Moreover, when being perceived as different, one is more vulnerable to discrimination. A norm-critical approach seeks to tackle issues of discrimination and exclusion, by identifying and challenging the underlying norms.

An important point is that no person is ordinary or different in its

own right. Rather, it is the norms in society that draw lines which exclude people. On the upside, norms are produced and negotiated by people in society, and thus, we can do something about them. The first step is to identify and talk about them.

Norm-critical perspectives, as a concept and an approach, originates from Sweden, drawing on influences from international feminist and queer studies and critical pedagogy [1][2][3].

### 1.2 Girls Geek Dinner Trondheim

The second part of the workshop will be conducted by Girls Geek Dinner (GGD) Trondheim. Girl Geek Dinners Trondheim is a place to meet for women who are interested in technology. We have had events on a broad field of different technologies hosted by very different companies and organizations. We started up in finance, energy, music, health, sports and construction to mention a few.

Girl Geek Dinners was started in 2005 by Sarah Lamb in London and now have chapters in almost 100 different places around the world. All our events are free and open for everyone.

Kari Dahn works as a user experience consultant in Bouvet and has been active in Girl Geek Dinners since the network started up in Trondheim. In March 2019 she suffered a heavy viral ear infection, that resulted in a mild/moderate permanent hearing loss, tinnitus, and a distorted pitch perception. Kari will share with us how getting such a sudden and complex hearing disability affected her; in daily communication, and in her interest in music. Her aim is to foster more understanding about how life with hearing impairments can be, and the need for universal design, both from a personal and professional perspective.

### 1.3 Speakers' bios

**Victoria Øverby Steinland** (The Art of Balance) is developing Balansekunst's project against sexual harassment within culture and the arts. She holds an MSc in sociology and has previously worked with projects on gender and sexual diversity, as well as teaching adolescents about sex, boundaries and consent.

**Kari Dahn** (Girl Geek Dinner Trondheim) works as a user experience consultant in Bouvet and has been active in Girl Geek Dinners since the network started up in Trondheim. Dahn holds a master's degree in Information design

### 1.4 Workshop organizers

**Miranda Moen:** Miranda Moen is educated in aesthetics (University of Bergen), arts management (OsloMet), and completed a master's degree in Equality and Diversity at NTNU June 2019. Affiliated with KOSO, the Art of Balance and AKKS.

**Andrea Hegdahl Tiltnes:** Andrea Hegdahl Tiltnes is educated journalist (Nord University) and worked as a news reporter for some years after finishing her studies. Since 2014 she has worked as Communications Advisor at NTNU.



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Web Audio Conference WAC-2019, December 4–6, 2019, Trondheim, Norway.

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## 2. REFERENCES

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- [2] Kumashiro, Kevin. 2002. *Troubling Education. "Queer" Activism and Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy*. Routledge.
- [3] The Living History Forum and RFSL Ungdom. 2009. *Break the norm! Methods for studying norms in general and the heteronorm in particular*