

INTERVIEW WITH CLITROCKET

please, introduce yourself...

hi, i am pauline from the band rhythm king and her friends

where are you from?

we all live in berlin. i lived before in the french speaking part of switzerland, linda was born in west germany and sara in east germany.

how you met each others and decided to play into a band?

we met in berlin. when i arrived there i had an idea to start a band and i was looking for some girls who would play with me. i bought a tape of a german band that i had never heard of: it was called miyax, they were from bremen – i didn't know at all at the time where bremen could be... i was riding a lot my bicycle, discovering the city and i very often listenend to that tape which really caught my attention. it was punk rock but very funky and with unusual melodies and voice. at some point i had to write to them, which i usually never do – and some time later i went to a concert of them in berlin with sara, that i already knew and was starting to play music with, and that's were we met linda for the first time who was in the band. we flirted... then became friends and one year later after miyax had broken up we started together, linda sara and i, rhythm king and her friends, it was 2000. what was very new to us 3 is that, as we all are queer, we really wanted our project to reflect our lives and politics, we were also tired of the whole punk rock grl style, i mean not that it hadn't been important to us, on the contrary, but i think at the end of the 90ies nothing very exiting was happening any more. we wanted to carry on some kind of spirit of it, for example playing explicitly for a feminine or queer audience, strengthen feminist networks, make visible our inspiration in feminist thinking and art etc, but we also wanted to make music that was electronic. somehow we were tired of going to dance to queer clubs that were playing only straight music, and of some stereotypes like lesbian music needs only guitars and club music is made by straight guys or maybe by gays. so we wanted to take back the dancefloor and make music for the queer ladies & gentlemen.

what are your influences?

as i said, i think we all listened in the 90ies to a lot of girlbands coming from the so-called riot-girl spheres but we all listen to a lot of different things from the b-52s to girls-bands like kleenex, au pairs, bush tetras or luscious jackson, god is my co-pilot. i must say that for rhythm king and her friends we haven't had a direct influence. we never said we would like to do a music like this band or that band, maybe because at that time there weren't many women doing electronic stuff so we just invented our own style.

*i like that you sing in different languages;
it's started by a necessity or just for fun?*

well we thought about it a lot when we started writing texts. we wanted to sing mostly in english, because it is the language that people internationally best understand – but as it isn't our mothertongue, we sing in a kind of „international english“ it means that we have accents and also that our accents can change the meaning of the words sometimes or add meaning. we sing in french too but i am not the only one who is going to sing in french because i know that language best, linda also sings in french for example. there is also one song that is french and bulgarian because it fits very well to the content of the song. basically we use languages as instruments, -you can take one, then take another one -. we use many different music instruments, some of them we haven't really learned before, and we play these instruments with accents too.

do you consider a queer feminist political band?

ÿ yeah. but this is one aspect of our band. i think it is important for us that people have different kind of accesses to what we do. sometimes we play in an electronic club and i think some people mostly like us because of the music, which is fine, and sometimes people like us because it is very important for them to see queer women on stage, sometimes people like us because they like our texts, or because we play in radical left scenes etc. i think it is important for us not to be categorised in only one way because i think we are trying to do something that you can perceive from various perspectives and we don't have only one agenda.

usually in what kind of venue do you prefer to play and what kind of crowd attend your shows?

this question is a little bit answered in the previous answer. i think we like to be surprised by the crowds.

how do you compose your music and write lyrics?

we don't have a method, it is always different how a song is made, usually one of us comes up with a text, melody or a rhythm and we try things together. sometimes we have a text idea and we try to use sounds or melodies that are going to carry the same contents – like for the song „copy-moi je veux voyager“ where we use a very obvious 80ies sound with the synthetizers and melodies: we were reflecting on this return of the 80ies hype, and remembering how the aesthetics of that time were so much marked by the cold war, and how much our own lifes had to do with that story. in this song we try to relate sound and text in a way that both carry the meaning.

i saw you play live for the first time, last sept 16th at the homocrime night and i was amazed! did you liked that show in london and how went this just passed uk tour?

oh yes we loved that show. i think this is exactly the kind of venue where we a lot of things happen for us. sometimes you really get such a nice feedback because it means something to other people and this gives meaning to what you do.

can you tell us about berlin queer community?

oh its difficult, i wouldn't like to generalize. i think there are many queer communities here which is good because it means you feel quite free to chose the people you want to hang out with.

in what way are you involved in the queer & feminist community of you aerea?

i don't like to make separations, like here are the politics and here is art or music. so i would say that the band is a way of being involved in the queer & and feminist community of our area.

are you involved in other projects beside your band?

all of us are doing other things that also have an influence in the work of the band, for example linda works as a graphic designer and does a lot of graphics for the band, i work with video and i do the visuals for our performances.

how much it is important for you to produce and distribute your own music in independent circuit?

well it is very important for us to be able to produce our music the way we want it. when we started to work with kitty-yo they told us that they think we know exactly how we want our sound, and that we don't need any producer to work with us. this was important for us, to be supported in the exact thing we want to develop. it is also important to know that if we don't want to work with particular journalists or press, nobody is going to put pressure on us. our label and our booking agency know our politics and it very important that we can talk together about where we want to play and how we want to work.

some suggestions to women who want to start to play electronic music?

i think at the beginning some thing that can be difficult is to learn how to play with new electronic equipment. you go to music shops, and every thing seems very complicated and expensive, and the guys with no hair and glasses in the shops usually will explain the things as complicated as they can, so you get out of the shop with no idea what to do... we bought at first very cheap and basic equipment, we found some old synthetizers in the flea market for some euros, and i think it can be a good feeling for women who want to start if they know they can do a lot of great things with very simple instruments, just buying the cheap samplers that are very easy and direct to use. don't take anything that you need a lot of time to understand how it works!

future projects?

we are going to release a new remix record of the song i am disco, for which we are asking some amazing female djs in germany. this will be the number 2 of our remix series „she considers capitalism not to be eternal“. we will be touring next spring, and we want to find time to work on lovely new songs.