‘Counter-Plastics’ of Online Misogyny:

Art-based Reflections of Youth on Digital Society, Gender, and Vulnerability in Norway

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ABSTRACT

Based on creative ethnographic methods, this paper explores young people’s emotional archives as they navigate the complexities of digital society, gender and sexuality-based vulnerabilities in the context of “digital patriarchy”. It also discusses the potential of art-based methods, which we coin as stamping poetry, not only as an innovative tool for ethnographic research but also as a means of resilience and a pedagogical strategy. In other terms, how can a future-oriented, “response-able”, ethically and politically engaged methodological approach be mobilized among young people as a self-reflective experience, using objects, spaces, and symbols, to counter anti-democratic circulation paths? Drawing from creative art sessions with university students living in Norway – focusing on their work, presentations, messages, and plastic engagements – this paper aims to understand how youth navigate discussions on digital cultures, misogyny, and the “pros and cons” of new communication technologies. It illustrates how these discussions evoke a spectrum of emotional responses – such as fear, anger, hope, disgust, and empathy – while also showcasing creativity as a powerful medium for fostering critical voices and creating positive echo- and “optic chambers”. Ultimately, the study demonstrates how art-based methods such as stamping poetry can make affective, embodied, and symbolic registers of digital misogyny analyzable, offering both an innovative methodological contribution and new insights into how affective engagements generate resilience, resistance, and alternative digital futures.

KEY WORDS

STAMPING POETRY, ONLINE MISOGYNY, YOUTH, CREATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY, AFFECT THEORY, NORWAY

INTRODUCTION

How can we study digital cultures and society through art and creative thinking? To what extent can a 'plastic approach' — including collages, paintings, sculptures, and object arrangements — improve our understanding and articulation of social phenomena? More importantly, why and how can controversial, anxiety-creating social and political questions, as well as anti-democratic practices, such as gender-based violence, digital attacks, hate speech, wars, and genocide, be debated through visuality and conceptual frameworks? In what ways can this approach spread the idea of resilience and critical perspectives? To address these questions, this paper explores how art-based reflections by young people in Norway can utilize plastic creations as a tool for understanding and expressing their perspectives on online misogyny, gender-based vulnerability, and digital communication technologies. In doing so, we draw on *affect theory* to understand these reflections as embodied and *archives of emotions* that illuminate how misogyny is both experienced and resisted (Brennan, 2004; Ahmed, 2004; Cvetkovich, 2012).

According to Gergen and Gergen (2012), creative methods in social sciences use innovative approaches like visual arts, storytelling, photography, and poetry to expose authentic explanations of human experiences. More conventional methods, such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, or surveys, rely primarily on verbal or written communication. However, not all experiences or engagements with social realities can be fully transmitted by means of words alone (Mason and Davies, 2009). Creative methods help participants share emotions, memories, and experiences that may be hard to express with words (Pink, 2006). Artistic approaches open new dimensions of thought, allowing us to explore experiences that are difficult to express in words or text. Through creations and "happenings" (an event-like artwork where life and art merge, focusing on presence, interaction, and unpredictability) promoted to free association and randomness, participants can express a range of emotions and perspectives (Frankel et al., 2024). In ethnographic research, creative methods help build trust and encourage participation, promoting richer data collection and collective experience (Goopy and Kassan, 2019). As Leavy (2017) notes, these methods can hide the complexities of lived experiences and emotions, offering multiple entry points for the analysis.

Integrating art here enables both researchers and participants to process emotions and engage with the subject matter from multiple perspectives (Salinas, 2024). For instance, participants can delve deeper into the topic, prioritize ideas by organizing them according to their personal viewpoints, and consider the message(s) or emotion(s) they wish to convey. Additionally, they can reflect on how these selections can be expressed through materials, space, or unconventional tools – potentially introducing tension within the pre-established and habitual ways of the storytelling process. As a result, a distinct focus and a new way of thinking emerge at that moment, which can be didactic or more hermeneutic with the help of symbols and metaphors, motivating participants to explore the phenomenon through colors, forms, contrasts of light and dark, different materials (and their resistance), dimensions, and composition.

In this paper, we use creative methods to investigate how knowledge is produced and data is generated, highlighting the role of agency and social interaction in the creative process through a method we will introduce as *stamping poetry*. At its core, this method involves choosing and using an object that leaves an imprint on a surface, much like potato stamping in kindergarten, and then exploring both the symbolic meaning of the object in relation to the chosen topic and the interpretive universe generated by its traces. By adopting this approach, we repositioned ourselves as reflexive, participatory, and responsive researchers, fostering collaboration with participants and integrating multiple perspectives on the research topic (Kindon et al., 2007). Being responsive here to a general attitude that remains open, adaptive, and relational throughout the research process, attuning to participants, materials, and contexts; allowing

emergence and shift; ethically adjusting to unfolding conditions; and co-creating with multiple actors (human, material, affective) (Ringrose et al., 2020). We did this by providing participants with space for self-expression and choice, allowing them to actively shape the research process and articulate their experiences in ways that felt most meaningful to them. This approach not only facilitates deeper engagement but also emphasizes the importance of agency in co-constructing knowledge. At the same time, we remained committed to ensuring the safety of this space, upholding its ethical framework, and maintaining transparency. By presenting data through artistic forms and styles, we aimed to highlight the archive of meanings embedded in cultural and social practices, while also challenging conventional research methods and their limitations. Our approach resonates with recent work that combines feminist, arts-based, and reflexive methodologies to interrogate digital culture (Annabell and Rasmussen, 2024). Like their 'Spotify (Un)wrapped' workshops, our *stamping poetry* sessions position participants as co-analysts of their own mediated experiences, enabling critical reflection on how digital systems shape subjectivity. These experiences invite audiences to engage with alternative understandings of human experiences (Harasym et al., 2024), particularly through visual and kinesthetic research approaches that emphasize cultural practices and social interactions (Goopy and Kassan, 2019). In doing so, our goal was not only to examine the role of non-human and material forces in shaping human responses and the construction of agency but also to study how our participants articulated online misogyny and digital violence in their responsive cosmologies.

Building on recent feminist and arts-based methodological innovations (Annabell and Rasmussen, 2024), our *stamping poetry* workshops invited participants to act as co-analysts of their own mediated experiences, critically reflecting on how digital systems shape subjectivity in a collective *happening*. To interpret the insights generated through this creative process, we turned to affect theory, which foregrounds the embodied, emotional, and relational dynamics of social life (Ahmed, 2004; Berlant, 2011). Affect theory allows us to analyze not only what participants say or create but also how their engagements with online misogyny are charged with feelings of anger, fear, hope, and solidarity. By centering affect, we interpret participants' creative expressions as acts that simultaneously register harm and open possibilities for resilience and resistance. Although posthumanist and new materialist perspectives have illuminated the entanglements of human and non-human actors in digital culture (Gane, 2006), our analysis primarily draws on affect theory, which we find best suited to our data and research aims, particularly for framing *stamping poetry* as a novel and useful ethnographic tool. In doing so, this study contributes to feminist digital scholarship by showing how art-based methods can surface the affective registers of young people's encounters with online misogyny, thereby advancing the theme of *engendering the digital*. More specifically, we show how creative practices like *stamping poetry* invite participants to voice their vulnerabilities while also envisioning alternative digital futures in dialogue with objects and material cultures. Framed through this lens, affect and creativity intertwine to open critical ways of seeing and sensing digital culture, gender, and power.

METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

CREATIVE ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

As Coleman highlights (2017), creative work inspired by artistic approaches offers affective, embodied, and sensory dimensions of experience. These qualities are effective when engaging with concepts such as hope, uncertainty, anticipation, and "futurity", where emotional textures are intense and many aspects are intangible. Creative methods then help capture this complexity in ways that conventional research methods often smooth over or disregard (Pink et al., 2018; Hellstrand et al., 2024). They do this by enabling richer, multi-sensory, and multi-modal forms of analysis. As a result, for both the participants' and ethnographers' future possibilities can be felt, imagined, and materialized. These conditions draw attention to non-linear, "in-between," or present-oriented temporalities (Coleman, 2017). In this way, arts-based

inventive methods are not merely experimental; they expand what counts as data, particularly around the concept of agency and meaning-creation. They may also carry political and ethical resonance, making space for marginalized voices and perspectives and opening new ways of thinking about hope, possibility, and collective solutions to "urgent questions" (Andrä, 2022; Alacovska, 2019).

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Following this approach, our creative ethnographic workshop was conducted with twenty-three graduate university students in the social sciences study program, all of whom reside in Norway. The participants, primarily young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 (with a few exceptions over 30), had already been exposed to discussions on incel communities, manospheres, and gender-based violence literature, giving them a foundational understanding of these topics. The group maintained a balanced gender distribution between men and women; however, no participants identified outside of these categories. As this was a pilot study, we aimed for a socio-culturally and economically diverse group and therefore did not impose strict demographic limitations. The study received ethical approval from Sikt, the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (reference number 478612). All participant names have been anonymized using pseudonyms, but we showcase original artwork and titles with the participants' consent for dissemination purposes.

As part of our exploratory ethnographic research, our primary objective was to identify and analyze the key themes that emerged through this method and inquiry. Building on this foundation, our methodological approach is twofold. First, we examine the role of creative ethnographic methods as a means to engage young people in critical reflection on 'difficult' social themes and controversies (Giorgi et al., 2024), with a particular focus on online misogyny and digital violence. Second, we introduce and elaborate on the specific art-based method we designed for this study, which we term *stamping poetry*. By integrating these methodological approaches, we not only outline the rationale behind our data collection process but also demonstrate its significance within the broader field of critical visual ethnography. This creative method we adopted is inspired by visual and plastic arts (specialization of Ozan Félix Sousbois) and involves drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, photography, digital art, and object arrangements, to provide participants with an expressive and interactive space. Our goal was to support them to visually represent their lived or imagined experiences (Leavy, 2017) by offering an innovative way to explore and articulate complex emotions and ideas, whether uncertain, rigid, powerful, emphatic, or ambivalent (Thompson et al., 2011). At the same time, we sought to create an environment where participants could engage in these themes in a way that was both critical and enjoyable, allowing for reflection, experimentation, and creative agency in shaping their narratives.

STAMPING POETRY AS A TOOL AND METHOD

What we call *stamping poetry* is a technique and artistic style in which visual creation revolves around a central object (or multiple objects, e.g., a stone, a vegetable, a hat, fingers, feet, cables…), used as a "painting brush" to leave imprints on a chosen surface, this method is inspired by the artistic philosophy of *Nouveau Réalisme*, as exemplified by artists such as Arman, Yves Klein, and Daniel Spoerri. It draws on their approach to materiality and imprinting, transforming everyday objects into tools for creative expression (Adamson, 2001). To create their works, they employed various techniques such as assemblage, object accumulation, deconstruction and reconstruction of existing materials, and tearing. By recontextualizing these objects and their imprints, the artists infused them with new meaning and significance, fostering reflection on major social transformations and their impact on everyday life (Hamilton, 2006; Cabañas, 2013). In their philosophy, they were rejecting traditional artistic processes in favor of spontaneity, free associations, and action, in response to the changing nature of modern society.

Many artists of this era adopted stamping as a signature technique to explore themes of time, space, movement, national identity, and boundaries. In contrast to collage-based creative methods that construct meaning through the curated juxtaposition and layering of fragments, *stamping poetry* proceeds from the object's own material agency. This emphasis on imprint foregrounds immediacy, non-linearity, and the situated temporality of encounter: *stamping poetry* thus departs from collage's compositional logic, offering a method where testimony arises from material contact and trace, even if the work may transform itself into a collage at the end. Here, we hope the stamps and their repetition highlight the power or the banality of a symbol, depending on how they are used. This technique captures reality while engaging with everyday materials. Leaving an imprint on the surface also serves as a means of communication with the observer -using traces, spaces, and the passage of time to draw attention to transformation. Therefore, *stamping poetry* places the object at the center of creation, allowing it to serve as a 'storytelling device' for exploring social phenomena shaped by political and societal transformations.

Here, we utilized this method to debate online misogyny and digital hate, topics that are often uncomfortable to discuss or engage with. This is done by focusing on the object as a carrier and "career" of (the) meaning; the method allows participants to externalize difficult experiences without the pressure of direct narration, which might be uncomfortable or retraumatizing for different reasons. The resulting imprints function as traces or "testimonies" that hold both immediacy and ambiguity, accommodating the fragmented and non-linear temporality of the difficult topic or lived experience. In this way, stamping poetry creates a safer, more open space, distributing agency between participant, researcher, and object. As a first step, over six weeks, we conceptually explored various topics related to the digital world and its controversies through individual and group discussions. These included themes such as incels, the manosphere, gender-based violence in digital platforms, online misogyny, and digital extremism. The second step involved deconstructing the didactic tone of knowledge transmission by encouraging participants to engage with these phenomena on a more personal and individual level. Here we asked them: *How do we define online hate, misogyny, or violence, and what role does digitalization play in promoting this? What are the potential dangers of this trend - are they simply the result of isolated individuals, or is there a broader societal impact at play? How can we critically analyze and understand the phenomena of inequalities, violence, online misogyny, incels, masculinism, anti-feminism, and digital hate in today's world?* Here, our goal was to promote critical thinking using visual elements. The final step, following the art production, was for them to write reflection texts based on their ethnographic notes, creation process, and personal motivations.

Our primary analysis in this paper involves a cross-examination of the visual categories alongside their textual information (or "reading tips" for their creation), as articulated by the participants themselves. Ultimately, we invited participants to select a specific object to serve as a "painting brush" – one that symbolically connects to digital society, its transformative potential, and the themes of online misogyny and incel communities from their perspective. We also encouraged them to take notes throughout each phase of their creation, much like in traditional ethnographic observation. These notes were not only to reflect on the theme, metaphors, and symbolism they develop, but also to document aspects of composition, including color choices, forms, the interplay of light and dark, and the use of space. However, we gave them complete freedom to move beyond stamping, encouraging the use of mixed media to enrich their visual language and storytelling. This exercise and its outcomes can be considered poetic in that they evoke emotional, symbolic, and conceptual intensity. By sparking the imagination, resonating on an affective level, and conveying meaning through symbols, the process encourages concentrated reflection and interpretation.

DATA ANALYSIS

To analyze participants' engagement with digital violence and misogyny, we conducted a thematic analysis of their written reflections, complemented by a visual analysis of their creative works. Our dataset consisted of twenty-three written reflections and accompanying photographs of participants' artworks. This dual approach enabled us to trace how meanings were expressed both textually and visually, and to capture the interplay between affect, symbolism, and creative practice.

The thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2012) six phases. The first phase began during data collection, as we developed preliminary insights from participants' narratives, artistic processes, and observational notes. Early codes emerged around themes such as *fear*, *anger*, *hope*, *having a voice*, and *resisting misogyny*. In the second and third phases, the transcribed reflections and visual artefacts were coded more systematically. We first applied semantic codes to capture explicit descriptions (e.g., *seeking support*, *digital solidarities*, *feeling monitored*). Then, moving to a more conceptual level, we reorganized initial codes according to their frequency, resonance, and conceptual significance. To structure this step, we distinguished between processes of *exposure and confrontation* and processes of *response and resilience*. The fourth and fifth phases involved reviewing, refining, and clustering codes into broader themes that integrated textual and visual layers of meaning. For example, codes such as *algorithmic bias*, *digital capitalism*, and *platform neglect* were consolidated under the theme *Structural Critics*. In contrast, codes such as personal testimonies of harm and embodied vulnerability informed the theme of *Lived Experience Responders*. Each theme was tested for internal coherence, conceptual distinctiveness, and relevance to our research questions. Finally, in the sixth phase, we knitted these themes into a narrative account that structured our findings. This process led to the development of five typologies of engagement, which will be explained in detail in the following section. To ensure reliability, both authors collaborated on the analytical framework before coding independently. After completing initial coding rounds, we compared results, discussed inconsistencies, and reached consensus through iterative refinement. NVivo software was used to manage and organize codes, while visual analysis was conducted manually through repeated rounds of interpretation. This collaborative approach strengthened the depth and trustworthiness of the analysis, ensuring that multiple perspectives informed the final themes.

FINDINGS: A TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ARTISTIC RESPONSES AND PROGRESSIVE INTERVENTIONS

The analysis of our participants' artistic and written reflections has revealed five distinct categories, each representing a different way of engaging with, resisting, or making sense of online hate cultures, gendered digital spaces, and the broader power dynamics embedded within technological infrastructures. Our categories capture different relationships and modes of engagement with the creative process, encompassing content, material use, techniques, and artistic choices, together forming a construction site. The findings are organized around the interaction between the literal space (*espace littéral*) – the actual, physical space occupied by the artwork, such as the canvas, paper, plywood, or any other surface on which techniques are applied, and the suggested space (*espace suggéré*) – the imagined or narrative space evoked by the work, where a storytelling begins through representation, symbolism, and the layering of ideas and concepts (Lumineau, nd). In our ethnographic research context, thinking in terms of *literal space* and *suggested space* enables us to categorize creative works not only by their material properties but also by the universe of meaning they open.

These typologies then reflect not only diverse perspectives and emotional responses but also varying levels of critical engagement with the systemic, personal, and political dimensions of digital misogyny. The five categories that emerged from the analysis are: (1) *The structural critics*: Systemic and

institutional investigators, here the participants focus on macro-level critiques of digital misogyny, examining the role of algorithms, digital capitalism, and online platform structures in reinforcing hate; (2) *The lived experience responders:* Personal and emotional testimonies, here the focus is on personal narratives of victimization, survival, and emotional resilience, centering on the psychological and embodied consequences of online misogyny; (3) *The conceptual experimenters:* Symbolic Interpreters of Imageries, here our participants engage in experimental, metaphor-driven, and symbolically charged representations, utilizing fragmented imagery and dynamic color schemes to evoke complex interpretations of digital violence; (4) *The narrative builders:* Storytellers of digital resistance and victimization, here we observe construction of clear narrative arcs in their creative works, juxtaposing victimization with digital resistance to emphasize the personal and collective dimensions of online hate; (5) *The cyber-advancers*: Progress-oriented and solution-driven responders, here the focus is on participants who are explicitly activist in nature, using stamping poetry to advocate for awareness, justice, and platform accountability in the fight against online misogyny.

In this section, we show how each category sheds light on the ways digital spaces intersect with gendered violence. While some participants deeply examine the structural forces that sustain digital misogyny, others focus on lived experiences, personal traumas, and observations related to harm and survival, or create less didactical, representation-based expressions of online hate and its societal consequences. We will argue that the creative approaches observed in the stamping poetry exercise highlight different features of digital misogyny and illustrate how young people interpret and respond to online violence in ways shaped by their own experiences, positionalities, and conceptual orientations.

The table below provides an at-a-glance overview of the five typologies developed through our thematic analysis.

Typology	Key Focus	Illustrative Codes/Phrases
Structural Critics	Critiques of digital platforms, capitalism, and algorithmic bias	Algorithmic bias, platform neglect
Lived Experience Responders	Sharing embodied experiences of harm and vulnerability	Personal testimonies, re-victimization
Conceptual Experimenters	Testing new framings, categories, or imaginaries	New metaphors, speculative ideas
Narrative Builders	Crafting stories of resilience and justice	Digital solidarities, helping out others
Cyber-Advancers	Forward-looking, future-oriented engagements	Visioning alternative digital futures

1. THE STRUCTURAL CRITICS: SYSTEMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL INVESTIGATORS

The Structural Critics category encompasses participants whose stamped poems reflect a macro-level critique of digital misogyny, hate, and violence, situating these issues within broader institutional, technological, and politico-ideological structures. Rather than focusing on individual experiences of harm, these participants interrogate the systemic mechanisms that sustain and amplify online misogyny, including algorithmic bias, digital capitalism, surveillance infrastructures, and the manosphere's embeddedness in networked communication systems. Their work demonstrates an awareness of how digital platforms function as ideological spaces, shaping both the production and circulation of gendered violence. Through their choice of objects, colors, and compositional structures, these participants' emphasis is on how power operates invisibly within digital spaces, reinforcing gendered hierarchies, exclusionary knowledge economies, and the amplification of misogynistic discourses and normalization of online hate.

A defining feature of this category is the use of networked imagery, such as cords, digital traces, and cables as symbolic imprints, underscoring the entanglement of misogyny within technological infrastructures. Participants frequently employed USB memory pens, charging cords, and data storage devices as their stamping tools, illustrating how platform design and algorithmic curation sustain misogynistic narratives. These objects symbolize both connectivity and control, reinforcing the duality of digital spaces as sites of both participation and oppression. This layering effect mirrors the algorithmic feedback loops that amplify digital hate, where content is continuously resurfaced, recommended, and reinforced by platform design. Another participant utilized charging cords dipped in black ink, stamping them in overlapping patterns to mimic the interconnectedness of misogynistic communities online. This approach highlights how the manosphere operates as a networked ecosystem, where misogynistic subcultures like incels or Men's Rights Activism (MRA), cross-pollinate ideas and radicalize new members.

Participants in this category explicitly described their deliberate use of color palettes to evoke danger, control, and the opacity of digital power structures in their written reflections. The dominance of black and red in their work indicates the presence of algorithmic misogyny, the hidden control of digital capitalism, and the constant reproduction of gendered hierarchies through technology. Black often appeared as a background layer, representing the invisibility of platform governance, while red was used to highlight the consequences of unchecked misogyny, whether in the form of targeted harassment, radicalization, or gendered violence. For example, one participant incorporated red-inked overlays of fragmented text and stamps, visually signifying how power and exclusion function in online discourse:

I wanted to show the relationship between incels' comments and how the orientation of these dictates their interactions, so I concluded that I had to randomly stamp the whistle with it pointing at different angles in order for the `echoes´ to cross over in different ways and provide a snapshot of how the comments cross paths and how different incels hear and react to them. I drew curved lines in red to represent an undertone of anger". [Lara, the work 'A whistle', Image 1]

Lara's quote illustrates how incel discourse spreads and influences interactions within online subcultures and beyond. She visually represents how angry comments "echo" and intersect, showing how different incels hear and react to them. The use of curved red lines, words, and stamps symbolizes an underlying anger and exclusion mechanisms, emphasizing the emotional intensity of these exchanges.

A recurring theme among participants in this category is the critique of digital capitalism and its role in amplifying misogynistic content. By employing layered digital imprints and text overlays, these participants emphasized how social media platforms function as economic systems that prioritize

engagement, regardless of the harm inflicted. One participant, for instance, used gaming-related imagery to critique male-dominated digital spaces, highlighting how platform design and online discourse foster exclusionary communities (See: Image 2). Through the use of gaming card stamps missing their hearts, this participant told a story about how digital subcultures create environments where women are viewed as outsiders or trophies, rather than equal participants. The critique extended beyond individual experiences, focusing instead on how gaming culture and digital design reinforce patterns of exclusion and gendered hostility. These works resonate with what Ahmed (2004) calls "affective economies", where anger and hostility circulate across digital infrastructures, sticking to certain bodies and communities in ways that both intensify exclusion and reproduce gendered hierarchies.

2. THE LIVED EXPERIENCE RESPONDERS: PERSONAL AND EMOTIONAL TESTIMONIES

The Lived Experience Responders category includes participants whose stamped poems reflect deeply personal, embodied encounters with misogyny, harassment, and digital violence. Unlike the structural critics, who focus on systemic and institutional mechanisms of online hate, this group of participants highlights their own or others lived experiences, emphasizing the emotional, psychological, and physical toll of online misogyny. Their work is characterized by intimate, first-person storytelling through visual and symbolic means, using physical imprints, fragmented imagery, and contrasting symbols to express the profound personal impact of digital hate.

Moreover, this category stands out for its affective engagement with digital forms of misogyny, drawing attention to how gendered violence manifests in everyday life, both online and offline. Participants in this group then do not engage with digital misogyny at the macro-structural level; rather, they illustrate how misogyny is felt – how it is internalized, embodied, and negotiated in personal experiences. Many of their pieces explore the intersection of vulnerability and resilience, showing how pain, fear, and anxiety coexist with resistance, love, and hope (See: Image 3, 4).

One of the defining features of this category is the use of bodily imprints, fingerprints, footprints, and personal objects as stamping tools, visually carrying the embodied impact of online hate. This technique highlights how digital misogyny is not abstract or impersonal, but something that is deeply felt and lived in the bodies and minds of those affected. For instance, one participant used their children's fingerprints and footprints in green and beige, symbolizing the early formation of identity in digital spaces, and expressed their fears associated with exposure to hate from a young age. In their reflection notes, they emphasized that their use of faint and scattered prints (in contrast with darker, more pronounced imprints) reflects how innocence is gradually overshadowed by online harassment and misogyny. Another participant incorporated a heart made of beads stamped in green, signifying love, safety, and the struggle to maintain emotional well-being in digital spaces. The delicate and fragile nature of the beaded heart contrasts with the harshness of digital violence, reinforcing the theme of emotional vulnerability.

A powerful example of symbolic juxtaposition in this category is the use of red-stamped smartphone and locker imagery to depict 'revenge porn' as a deeply personal violation. The smartphone stamp represents the digital platform where private moments are captured, stored, and later weaponized, while the locker serves as a metaphor for the supposed security of intimate relationships that are ultimately broken. The use of red in this piece not only signals violence and betrayal but also represents the irreversible emotional scars left by digital exploitation. This piece speaks to the broader issue of digital coercion and non-consensual intimate content, reflecting how victims of revenge porn experience extreme emotional and psychological distress as their most private moments are turned into a public spectacle.

Another particularly striking example in this category is the image of a bird wrapped in cords, symbolizing isolation, anxiety, and emotional suffocation due to digital hate. The participant used soft, muted colors for the bird itself, but contrasted it with dark, thickly stamped cords that coil around it, visually representing entrapment. The use of overlapping textures and smudged ink further reinforces the theme of oppression, showing how digital harassment creates an all-encompassing psychological burden that restricts one's freedom and sense of self.

However, despite the expression of trauma, violation, and oppression, many of the pieces in this category also include symbols of resilience and resistance. A green heart made of beads, for instance, suggests that even in the face of digital misogyny, love and connection endure. Similarly, some participants used layering techniques to visually "rebuild" fragmented elements, symbolizing the process of healing and reclaiming agency in digital spaces. Their work serves as a powerful reminder that behind every statistic on online harassment, there are real people, real emotions, and real consequences. At the same time, many of these accounts reflect what Berlant (2011) terms "cruel optimism": participants remain attached to digital spaces for recognition, connection, and community, even as those very spaces expose them to harm and exploitation.

3. THE CONCEPTUAL EXPERIMENTERS: SYMBOLIC INTERPRETERS OF IMAGERIES

This category includes participants whose stamped poems embrace abstraction, ambiguity, and open-ended interpretation to explore online misogyny, digital violence, and gendered oppression. Unlike the *structural critics*, who focus on institutional mechanisms of online hate, or the *lived experience responders*, who foreground personal testimonies of digital harm, the *conceptual experimenters* engage in symbolic, experimental, and abstract visual representations. Their work resists straightforward narrative structures, instead using fluid compositions, non-literal imagery, and unconventional stamping techniques to create evocative yet open-ended explorations of digital misogyny. In doing so, they challenge fixed meanings, opting for non-linear, deconstructed, or fragmented visuals that emphasize the instability of digital identities, the fluidity of online violence, and the ambiguous nature of digital interactions. They often use layered textures, color blending, and mixed media elements to evoke a sense of movement and transformation, reinforcing how misogyny in digital spaces is not static but constantly evolving through networks, platforms, and ideological shifts.

To take one case, a defining feature of this category is the use of blurred, overlapping, or fragmented imagery to signify the hidden and intangible spread of misogyny in digital spaces. Several participants used USB and charging cord stamps, but rather than employing them as direct symbols of technology, they were layered in translucent ink, partially erased, or overlaid with abstract textures to suggest the diffuse, elusive nature of digital violence. This was evident, for instance, in the use of overlapping USB imprints in a faded blue-grey palette, visually representing how misogynistic discourses are embedded in digital infrastructures yet remain largely invisible. The use of blurred edges and mixed ink patterns further reinforced the idea that misogyny in digital spaces is not always explicit or overt but often operates subtly, beneath the surface, shaping discourse in ways that are difficult to pinpoint.

Another prominent theme among conceptual experimenters is the use of fractured, fragmented imagery to explore self-perception, agency, and identity in online environments. One participant used a broken phone screen as a stamp, repeatedly pressing it onto the surface with varying levels of pressure, creating an effect of shattered, uneven textures (See: Image 5). The resulting piece visually represents how digital interactions – particularly misogynistic harassment – fracture one's sense of self. A central feature of this approach is its use of ambiguity and visual paradoxes to challenge stable interpretations. In line with

Cvetkovich's (2012) insistence that trauma and difficult emotions often exceed verbal articulation, these abstract and fragmented works function as affective archives that register pain, instability, and the unspoken dimensions of digital misogyny. And in this case, many of their pieces rely on juxtaposition, layering, and non-linear composition to emphasize how digital misogyny, identity formation, and online interactions exist in states of flux.

4. THE NARRATIVE BUILDERS: STORYTELLERS OF DIGITAL RESISTANCE AND VICTIMIZATION

The Narrative Builders category consists of participants who use storytelling as their primary method of engaging with digital misogyny, online hate, and gendered violence. Unlike the *conceptual experimenters*, who rely on representations and open-ended symbolism, the Narrative Builders construct clear, linear, or sequential narratives, guiding viewers through experiences of victimization, digital harassment, activism, and survival in a more didactic tone. Their 'stamped poems' strongly emphasize narrative structure, using collage techniques, text overlays, and layered materials to visually unfold stories of oppression and resistance in digital spaces.

The participants in this category create works that feel personal yet collective, offering visual testimonies of online violence while also connecting them to broader social struggles. Many uses found objects, cut-out text, and mixed-media materials to reinforce their storytelling, often juxtaposing symbols of control (locks, chains, broken screens) with symbols of empowerment (solidarity gestures, fragmented but reconstructed images, and feminist slogans). Their works do not merely illustrate misogyny as an abstract or invisible force but instead depict how it is lived, fought against, and sometimes overcome, turning individual stories into larger social critiques. For instance, the work below, titled '*Youth in Motion*', explores the concept of youth-led digital activism through a mixed-media painting. Hashtags inspire the participant as a symbol of online movements, seeking to visually represent how social media empowers young activists to mobilize and influence social conversations. The choice of headsets as a stamp contrasts digital tools' role in consuming and producing activist content, bridging the gap between online discourse and real-world protests. Through selected magazine snippets, stamps, and other visual elements, the work highlights the ways young people connect, discuss, and organize through social media. The work predominantly emphasizes the empowering nature of digital activism, showing how it enables young voices to be heard and fosters a sense of community. However, the artist acknowledges a lack of emphasis on its challenges, such as commercialization and surveillance (See: Image 6).

Another powerful example of narrative-driven stamping poetry in this category is the use of cut-out newspaper headlines and fragmented revenge porn imagery, arranged sequentially to tell a story of exposure, violation, and social punishment. One participant's piece, for example, included a stamped smartphone screen layered with torn newspaper clippings, featuring phrases like "LEAKED PHOTOS", "VICTIM OR VILLAIN?", and "EXPOSED ONLINE". The artist deliberately placed these fragments over an abstract silhouette, suggesting the dehumanization of individuals caught in digital scandals. The gradual breakdown of the silhouette into smaller and smaller pieces illustrates how online harassment erodes one's sense of self and control. By arranging these elements in a step-by-step sequence, the participant visually narrates how digital violence unfolds over time, from private moments of trust to public moments of humiliation and social alienation

One of the most recurring motifs in the Narrative Builders' works is the symbolism of digital chains, representing how online misogyny functions as a restrictive force, imprisoning victims in cycles of fear, harassment, and surveillance. For example, one participant used stamp imprints of chains wrapped around a central figure, visually illustrating how social media, search histories, and digital footprints become mechanisms of both surveillance

and self-censorship. These narrative strategies echo Ahmed's (2010) reflections on how happiness and survival stories orient subjects toward particular futures, offering not only testimony to harm but also affective maps of resilience, solidarity, and endurance. This was evident in the use of chains that were applied using varying shades of grey, black, and deep red, emphasizing how digital misogyny operates at different intensities – from subtle, everyday microaggressions to full-scale doxing and targeted harassment.

5.THE CYBER-ADVANCERS: PROGRESS-ORIENTED AND SOLUTION-DRIVEN RESPONDERS

The Cyber-Advancers category consists of participants who approach stamping poetry as a deliberate tool for activism, awareness, and advocacy. Via their 'stamped poems', they focus on possible solutions, interventions, and systemic accountability. Their work is not only descriptive but also prescriptive, where they aim to challenge digital misogyny while proposing pathways for social progress. These participants view digital spaces as battlegrounds for feminist activism, using symbolic elements, direct messaging, and critical engagement with technology to emphasize platform responsibility, digital justice, and the power of online resistance movements. They often blend visual protest with explicit calls to action and political messages, embedding legal and social demands within their 'stamped poems'. By highlighting hashtags, surveillance imagery, and feminist digital spaces, their work aligns with contemporary feminist activism in the digital age, drawing from movements such as #MeToo, digital rights campaigns, and platform accountability initiatives. For instance, they use #MeToo hashtags over black-inked online hate messages, creating a visual confrontation between digital misogyny and feminist resistance.

Another common theme among Cyber-Advancers is the critique of digital platforms, surveillance capitalism, and corporate complicity in online gender-based violence. Many participants used smartphone and surveillance camera stamps to represent the role of technology companies in facilitating or failing to prevent digital abuse. For example, one participant stamped multiple smartphone screens with watchful eye motifs, symbolizing the omnipresent but selective gaze of digital platforms, monitoring users for data extraction while failing to protect them from online abuse (See: Image 7). Some of the eyes were blurred or incomplete, visually suggesting platform inaction, negligence, and the failure to address misogynistic content at scale.

While many Cyber-Advancers focus on critiquing misogyny and advocating for change by establishing hope, some also explore feminist digital utopic spaces where justice, equity, and inclusion are embedded in the architecture of online interactions. One participant used green-highlighted stamps to create interconnected nodes, visually representing a digital ecosystem where feminist thought and activism thrive. The artwork featured fluid, branching structures in green and gold, evoking the potential for digital spaces to be sites of empowerment rather than harm. This piece moves beyond mere resistance to online misogyny, instead advocating for proactive strategies to reclaim and reshape digital spaces. For us, in these pieces, hope emerges as an affective force in Ahmed's (2014) sense, mobilizing participants toward transformation and action, while also resonating with Sedgwick's (2003) idea of reparative practice – reading against despair to imagine alternative digital futures. Moreover, their reflection report highlighted that the choice of green as a dominant color signifies growth, renewal, and the possibility of transformation, suggesting that digital activism is not just about dismantling oppressive structures but also about building alternative spaces for feminist discourse and solidarity.

The findings from this study then illustrate the diverse ways in which participants engage with and respond to digital misogyny, online hate, and gendered violence through their artistic expressions. The five categories that emerged from our analyses reveal

a wide range of emotional, intellectual, and advanced responses to the complexities of online gendered violence. Taken together, these categories can be understood as affective orientations – anger, fear, ambivalence, resilience, and hope – that shape how young people negotiate misogyny in digital environments (Ahmed, 2004; Berlant, 2011; Cvetkovich, 2012). Each one of them offers unique insights into the relationship between digital spaces and misogyny, demonstrating how individuals perceive and address the societal, technological, and personal dimensions of this pervasive issue. From systemic critiques of platform design and algorithmic bias to personal testimonies of victimization and resilience, from metaphoric interpretations of digital violence to concrete calls for digital justice and social progress, these findings highlight the depth of engagement with online hate cultures across different positionalities. The creative approaches observed through stamping *poetry* exercise stress not only the emotional toll of digital misogyny but also the possibilities for resistance, transformation, and the construction of alternative digital futures.

Collectively, these typologies serve as a powerful testament to the complexity of online misogyny and the range of responses it elicits from those who encounter and seek to challenge it. Seen through the lens of affect theory, the participants' artworks become more than representation: they are affective acts that register harm, circulate emotions, and generate new attachments to justice and solidarity. For us, as researchers working on difficult and often distressing topics such as online violence and misogyny, these findings offer a sense of hope and agency. The young participants in this study actively engage with and creatively resist digital hate through their artistic expressions, demonstrating that awareness, critical engagement, and activism are evolving in new and innovative ways. For us, their work demonstrates the potential for alternative digital futures shaped by justice, inclusivity, and collective resistance, reminding us that even in hostile online environments, acts of defiance, solidarity, and transformation continue to emerge.

DISCUSSION

This research highlights the diverse ways young people in Norway engage with and respond to online misogyny through creative ethnographic methods, revealing how affective experiences such as fear, anger, resilience, and hope weave digital interactions. The *stamping poetry* technique allowed participants to articulate not only critical reflections on gendered digital violence but also deeply embodied emotions and symbolic expressions of distress, agency, and resistance. Affect theory helps frame these findings within a broader understanding of how digital misogyny operates not just as a structural phenomenon but as an affective force that circulates through online and offline spaces, shaping subjectivities and social relations. We identified five typologies emerging from the participants' visual and textual reflections: *Structural Critics*, *Lived Experience Responders*, *Conceptual Experimenters*, *Narrative Builders*, and *Cyber-Advancers*. Each of these categories espoused affective intensities and relational dimensions of online misogyny – from structural critiques of algorithmic bias to deeply personal testimonies of psychological impact and (pro-) feminist and pro-gender-equality resilience.

Our findings highlighted that digital violence is not only ideological but also affect-based, shaping how individuals feel, process, and respond to online gendered hate, disgust, and anger. Sara Ahmed's (2004) concept of "affective economies" is particularly relevant here: emotions do not simply reside in individuals but circulate between bodies, texts, visuals, and digital infrastructures, accumulating affective intensities that sustain power relations. Online misogyny, as participants in the *Structural Critics* noted, is embedded in the affective economies of platform capitalism, where anger, outrage, and hate are not incidental but economically incentivized and algorithmically amplified (Ahmed, 2017; Massumi, 2015). The repetition of misogynistic discourse through digital infrastructures – whether through manospheric networks, viral misogynistic memes, or the comment sections of social media –creates a feedback loop of

affective reinforcement, where online hate becomes self-sustaining and justified.

Conversely, the *Lived Experience Responders* highlight how misogyny is not just abstract but felt and testified with profound emotional and psychological consequences for those targeted. Lauren Berlant's (2011) notion of "cruel optimism" helps explain why some participants described feeling trapped within digital spaces despite their harmful features. Many reported an ambivalent relationship with digital platforms, at once sites of community and exposure, empowerment, and harm. Affect, in this case, mediates online agency, as young people grapple with the paradox of needing to be online, since it creates social visibility and recognition, while also fearing its risks (Paasonen, 2018). This ambivalence was particularly noted in the artwork of our participants who used smudged, fragmented, or ghost-like visual imprints to represent the cutting out of the agency and the psychic toll of online violence. For the *Conceptual Experimenters*, affect was expressed through non-linear, metaphor-driven artistic choices and styles, resisting the fixity of misogynistic discourse by adopting abstraction, ambiguity, and chaotic styles. Their works align with Ann Cvetkovich's (2012) argument that trauma and political emotions require creative forms of expression beyond mere verbal articulation.

The *stamping poetry* method, with its reliance on material traces, fragmented compositions, and multisensory engagement, acts as a conduit for affective processing, allowing participants to externalize their experiences of misogyny in ways that are non-discursive yet profoundly charged with meaning. Similarly, the *Narrative Builders* structured their responses in ways that foreground storytelling as an emotional practice. Ahmed (2010) emphasizes the power of storytelling in shaping affective orientations, which are the ways people come to feel, identify, and understand themselves in relation to power structures. The juxtaposition of victimization and resistance in their artistic responses suggests that digital misogyny is not merely endured but continuously negotiated through narratives of survival and solidarity of the manosphere. The layering of textual fragments, collaged images, and visual symbols in their work mirrors the affective labor required to reclaim agency in a digital environment structured to silence and discipline dissent (Hemmings 2005). The *Cyber-Advancers*, in contrast, embodied an affective politics of hope, digital justice, and (pro-)feminist future. Hope, as Ahmed (2014) argues, is not a passive emotion but an affective force that mobilizes action and transformation.

These participants disrupted the pessimistic affective economies of online misogyny by *dreaming* about alternative digital futures, where platform accountability, (pro-)feminist advocacy, and technological progress reshape online spaces into sites of empowerment rather than violence. We observe that their work aligns with the concept of reparative reading, which suggests that critical engagement with oppressive structures can also involve acts of reimagination and repair. The participants' use of bright, fluid, interconnected visuals, alongside slogans and symbols of resilience, signifies a departure from resignation toward an active reclaiming of digital space. This echoes Annabell and Rasmussen's (2024) call to transform creative workshops into spaces where participants interrogate datafication and identity. Our study extends this line of inquiry by applying a similar feminist, arts-based ethos to the context of online misogyny and digital violence. Stamping *poetry* enabled participants to creatively re-narrate their encounters with misogyny, vulnerability, and solidarity in digital spaces. In doing so, the method not only generated analytical insights but also fostered reflexive and affective engagement, positioning participants as co-analysts of their own experiences. We suggest that this combination of thematic analysis with creative, embodied practice broadens the possibilities of self-ethnography or "self-archaeology", making visible layers of meaning that remain obscured in more conventional methodological frameworks. By centering affect as both a methodological and analytical lens, our study demonstrates how creative practices can make visible the emotional textures of misogyny that might otherwise remain obscured.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE AFFECTIVE DIMENSIONS OF ONLINE MISOGYNY AND CREATIVE RESILIENCE

By integrating affect theory with creative ethnographic methods, this research was an attempt to extend digital studies and demonstrate that online misogyny is not just a matter of discourse or policy but a deeply embodied, emotional, and relational phenomenon. The findings illustrate how affect circulates through digital infrastructures, (re-)shaping subjectivities, social hierarchies, and possibilities for resilience. As our typologies show, participants engaged with misogyny through distinct affective orientations – anger, fear, ambivalence, resilience, and hope – that both constrained and enabled their digital practices. The *stamping poetry* method provided a vital space for participants to process, externalize, and contest the affective dimensions of digital misogyny – whether through critique, storytelling, abstraction, or hopeful interventions. The typologies that emerged from this study not only reveal how young people experience and interpret misogyny online but also how they navigate online spaces through affective engagements that overlap critique, resilience, and empathy for victims with open questions about the future. Rather than treating the artworks as static representations, we presented them as nodes in affective circulation, where emotions of anger, fear, and hope are redistributed and reattached to collective imaginaries of justice. In doing so, we showed how they highlight the urgent need for creative, affect-sensitive methodologies in the study of digital and gender-based violence, particularly as online misogyny continues to evolve through male networked infrastructures of hate, visibility, and emotional manipulation.

Ultimately, this study suggests that affective engagements with online misogyny are not only reactive but also productive – opening possibilities for new ways of understanding, sensing, and intervening in digital cultures. Methodologically, *stamping poetry* expands the repertoire of creative ethnography by making affective, embodied, and symbolic registers of digital violence analyzable. In doing so, it demonstrates the value of art-based methods not only for generating rich empirical material but also for advancing feminist and creative approaches to knowledge production. This fact positions *stamping poetry* as both an innovative tool for studying online misogyny and a meaningful contribution to wider methodological debates in feminist digital scholarship. The hope, defiance, and solidarity expressed, for instance, in the Cyber-Advancers' works remind us that affect is not solely a vehicle of oppression but also a force for radical possibility. As scholars continue to explore digital cultures, recognizing the role of affect in shaping political agency and technological futures remains essential.

LIMITATIONS?

Although *stamping poetry* provides distinctive ways of engaging affective, sensory, and temporal dimensions of experience, it also brings its particular challenges and constraints. Its inherently interpretive and subjective nature can introduce ambiguity, which may challenge analysis and make outcomes less easily reproducible than with conventional methods. In addition, not all participants may feel equally comfortable engaging in artistic practices. There is also a risk of aestheticizing or abstracting sensitive issues in ways that dilute their urgency. To address these concerns, we approached *stamping poetry* as a co-productive process, encouraging multiple modes of participation where they shared their reflexive notes with us. We view the openness and multiplicity of meaning that emerge from this method not as a limitation but as a productive feature of *stamping poetry*, allowing for nuanced and situated understandings that might otherwise remain inaccessible.

On the conceptual level, the incorporation of such methods has been the subject of significant philosophical and methodological debate. Questions have been raised about what constitutes valid "data",

how such material can be interpreted without over-determining meaning, and how to ensure rigorous data when outcomes are seen as subjective and irreproducible. These debates also engage with deeper epistemological issues, such as whether creative practices generate knowledge or merely illustrate it, and the extent to which the researcher's or participant's own aesthetic choices shape the resulting insights. We position *stamping poetry* within this ongoing conversation, understanding it as an inventive method that does not aim to provide definitive answers but to open multiple, situated knowledge. In this way, the method aligns with arts-based and feminist research traditions that value partiality, embodiment, and affect as integral to knowledge production. Moreover, a further limitation is that affective interpretations are always partial and situated, as emotions circulate differently across participants and contexts (Ahmed, 2004). We addressed this by foregrounding participants' own reflections alongside our analysis.



Image 1

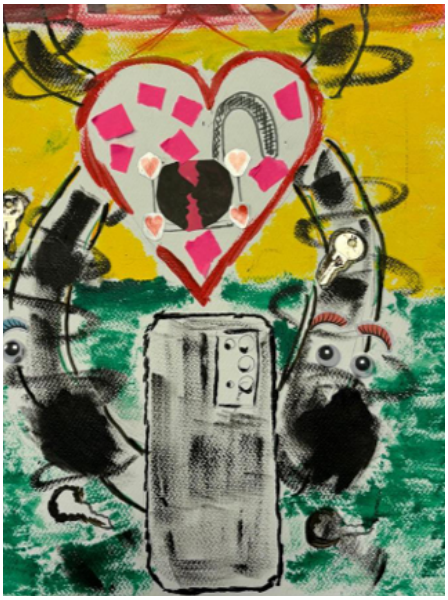


Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



Image 6



Image 7

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