

'One is not born, but rather becomes a woman'. When Simone de Beauvoir put pen to paper in 1949 and published *The Second Sex*, she had no intention of endorsing the women's movement. And yet these words placed her at the forefront of the newly defined feminist movement of the 1960s, making her a quintessential figure in the fight to liberate women from patriarchy.

Flash forward 60 years and the same message is reverberating throughout the streets of Paris thanks to *Cécile & Julie*, a new movement that seeks to bridge the gap between French and international understanding of feminism. The energetic duo wants to demystify the notion of feminism in French society through entertaining and interactive activities including an English-speaking tour of *La-Butte-aux-Cailles* in the 13th arrondissement, where feminist street art decorates each and every wall. "This is disguised activism" say Cécile Fara and Julie Marangé, two students at Science Po. "We want to become – in the long run – the biggest community of intersectional feminists in France."

The concept of intersectionality – coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 – is crucial to the survival of feminism, a movement that is too often associated to straight, white, and middle-class women. And yet, intersectional feminism is seldom talked about in France's academic and media sphere, even in a world-class university in politics and public affairs like Science Po. Just as Crenshaw was revolutionizing feminism studies by bringing in the concept of intersectionality in America, female students were still being sent home from school in Paris for wearing headscarves.

This gap between international and French understanding of feminism as a multi-layered concept is precisely what motivated these two young women to launch their start-up. With diverging views on *feminisms* and complementary personalities, Cécile and Julie are truly capable of practicing what they preach. They combine personal experiences, academic knowledge and contemporary street art to offer meticulous insight on the history of feminism, its role in French society as well as their individual interpretations of it.

The street art feminism tour is especially celebrated for bringing a new angle to the international conversation around feminism. It follows on the footsteps of the #metoo movement, which denounced the perpetual use of violence against women across the globe. "We still talk about it a lot" explains Julie, who was Chair of the Gender Equality Committee at the University of Bath last year: "The #metoo campaign served as a wake-up call for feminism in France". In late 2017 the hashtag *#balancetonporc* – the French equivalent of #MyHarveyWeinstein – saw thousands upon thousands of women testifying as victims of sexual assault, abuse and harassment on social media. These trending hashtags demonstrated that speaking up was better than doing nothing, "But better than nothing is not enough" says Julie.

As the wave of widespread denunciations begins to calm, the *Cécile & Julie* community is now placing intersectionality and the diversity of feminisms in the spotlight, in order to create a more inclusive gender equality movement in France. This is feminism at its finest.

