

*Strength in ourselves, strength in our communities
Free classes for fitness, defense and self care*



POP GYM IS A NEW PROJECT, WORKING TOWARDS OPENING A PHYSICAL SPACE IN BROOKLYN THAT OFFERS FREE SELF-DEFENSE, FITNESS, AND SKILL SHARE CLASSES 7 DAYS A WEEK.

For any questions, comments, or inquiries for future workshops for you or your organization, email us at info@popgym.org

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POP GYM THE ZINE!

FEATURING STORIES/ART ABOUT:

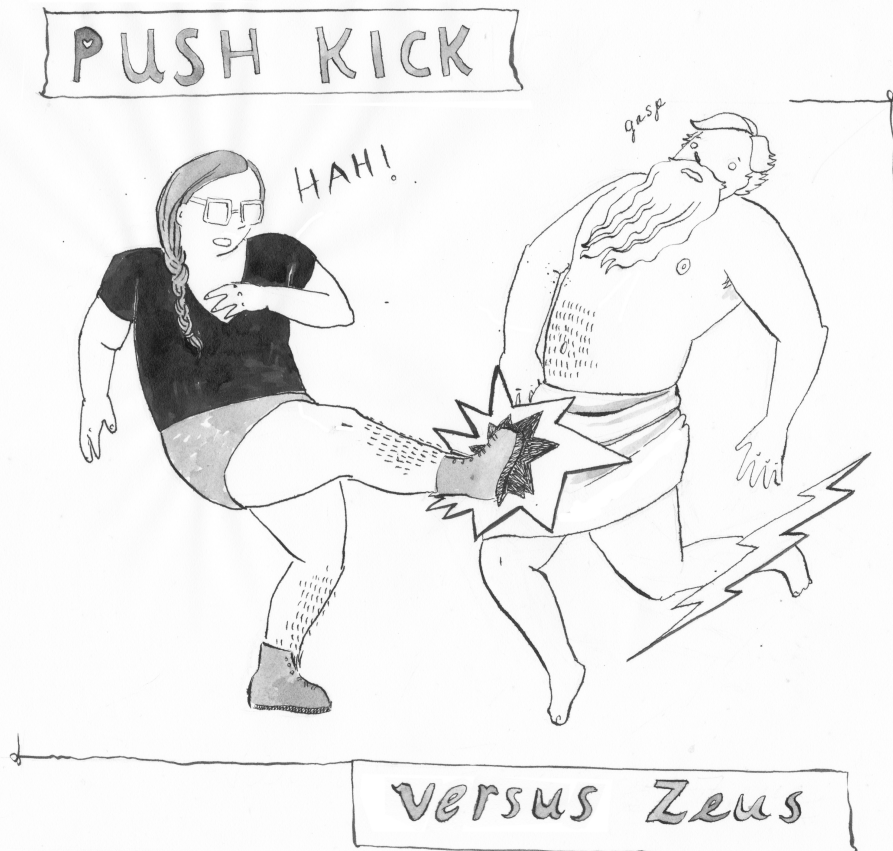


**SELF-DEFENSE
ACCESSIBILITY
BODY POSITIVITY
SAF(ER) SPACES
AND MORE!**



#1

About the Authors



Zeus by Jan

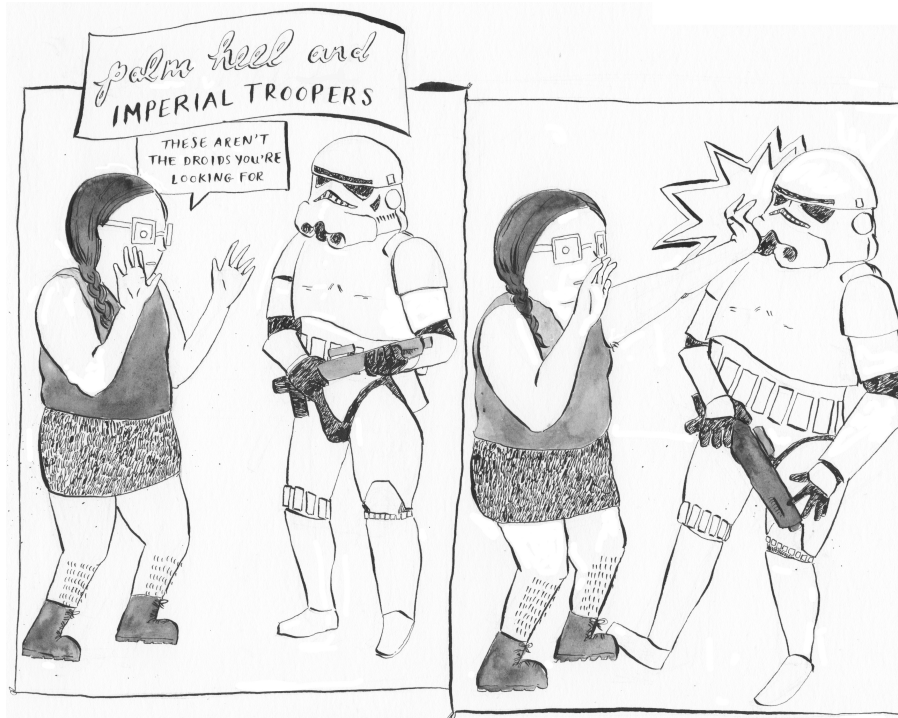
Kirsten is a queer, white, cis woman raised in Queens but living in Brooklyn (recognizing her complicit part in gentrification and carrying the toxic legacy of living on stolen land several times over.) She is trying to learn smarter ways to confront her family and finds hope and strength in liberation movements. She tags and transcribes for the New York Public Library's Trans Oral History Project and has been deeply moved and inspired by the stories of Miss Major, Izzy Mustafa and Dean Spade, to name a few.

Luu- Hello people and thanks for giving me the chance to participate in this initiative I'm going to tell you about myself: I'm someone that believes that self-defense is not only about defending our bodies is also a way to accept ourselves and pushing our boundaries. I have learned jiu jitsu, kickboxing, muay thai, krav maga and some boxing through several years , I'm always trying to learn better things to teach to my students.

Laurel is a martial artist and a self-defense instructor. She trains and teaches at Traditional Okinawan Karate in Brooklyn since 2006 and recently with Pop Gym as well. She'd love to hear from you - selfdefense.brooklyn@gmail.com

Salvador Oliva- Hola compas, mi nombre es Salvarod Olivia tengo 28 años y have 10 praticos y enseño mi visión de la defensa personal, pase por el Hapikdo, el JKD, Eskrima, MMA, Boxeo, BJJ, Lucha Olimpica, Muay Thai, Taekwondo, y más. Con el tiempo encontré mi camino y fui dándome cuenta que lo que más quería hacer era empoderar a los y las oprimidas/os, dándoles los recursos para defenderse y lograr caminar con alm, con atención, con recursos, he ahí la riqueza que puedo brindarles, he ahí mi tarea, mi carrera, mi sueño es poder viajar por el mundo ensendaño esto.

Untitled
by Kirsten



Imposters by Jan

"One of my biggest challenges is learning to trust myself. Raised as a woman but socialized in a volatile and loud family (but kind and loving, binaries are bullshit), I feel a lot of hesitation when I'm learning to defend myself. Often it's due to intense emotional concern and fear of hurting anyone as well as socialization to be kind, polite and apologetic, even when the situation may not warrant it.

Watching my mother and her sister beat this shit out of each other when I was younger (definitely without gendered politeness), or my aunt go to hit one of my uncle's, or my parents yelling in each other's faces or my brother throwing me against a brick wall (just one time) or as a teen when you didn't turn your back to no one without being ready (both the punches I gave and took); it took me so fucking long to turn off that impulse to get aggressive immediately. There are folks who come from way more physical violence, who can not so easily shift their own uses of it. There are likewise people who didn't grow up this way, who demonize folks who grew up speaking this language of interaction. I'm not trying to defend it, I realize it's toxic. But it's a language I often find my mind resorting to most immediately.

Since college I've been trying to unlearn this language. Trying to control myself, calm myself, pace my decision making out more slowly. I'm not there yet but most people I know don't imagine I could ever be physically violent. The aggression still comes out in my words at times, I'm working on that. I do not want to perpetuate toxicity, I do not want to harm my loved ones.

So then what happens when I'm in a self-defense class and I have to punch a pad? I try to remember it's for practice but I'm almost always a step away from shutting down. There's so much guilt 5

if the other person thinks people might be watching) It presents you as being stronger, bigger, more confident and powerful; makes you seem like less of a victim

If it's a conversation you're looking for, shouting is probably not the best tool, but when your safety is in question, when it's not up for debate, it may be part of what helps you get out of the situation more safely. Here's one of my favorite self-defense stories:

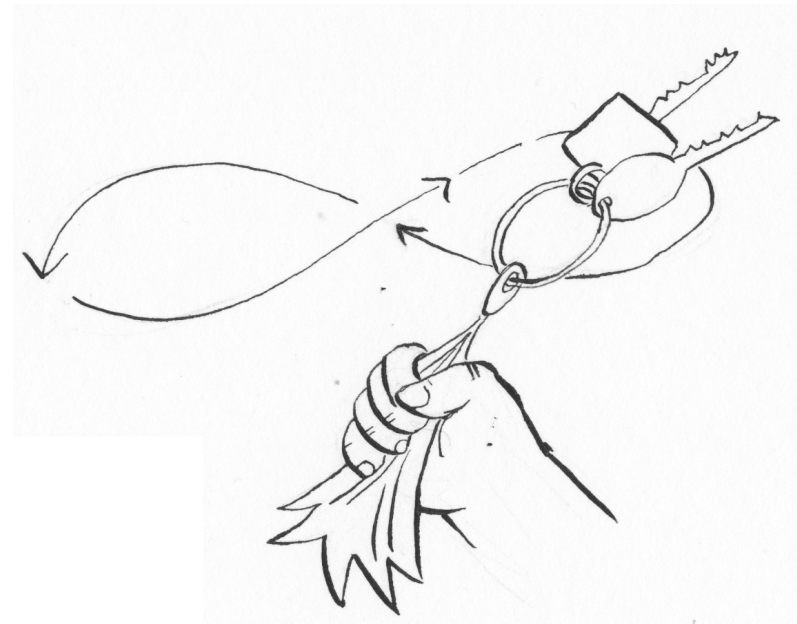
An old friend of mine was walking home from martial arts class one night, alone. When she turned the corner onto a dark, empty block, she realized there was a car following her. At first she denied it, telling herself she was being paranoid. But the car didn't pass her, it just crept about half a block behind her, varying with her speed. Finally she slowed her speed-walk to a stop and turned around. The car stopped, too. As the door opened and a leg stepped out, she shouted, loud enough to wake the neighbors, "IF YOU STEP ONE MORE FOOT OUT OF THA T CAR, I WILL FEED YOU YOUR BALLS!!" And the leg slowly stepped back into the car and they drove away.

Pocket Weapons

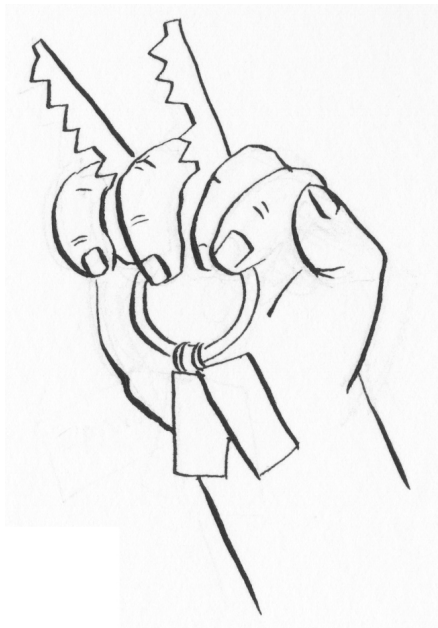
by Laurel

A lot of people like to carry things like pepper spray or a knife for self-defense. I say, the frequency with which you actually have to defend yourself is very small which means any tool that's purely for self-defense is likely not going to be at your fingertips when you need it. And when you need it, there's no time to dig it out of the bottom of your bag. You can use common things as self-defense weapons, stuff you may already have in your hand or random things you find laying around wherever you end up. **POCKET WEAPONS!** Here are some examples:

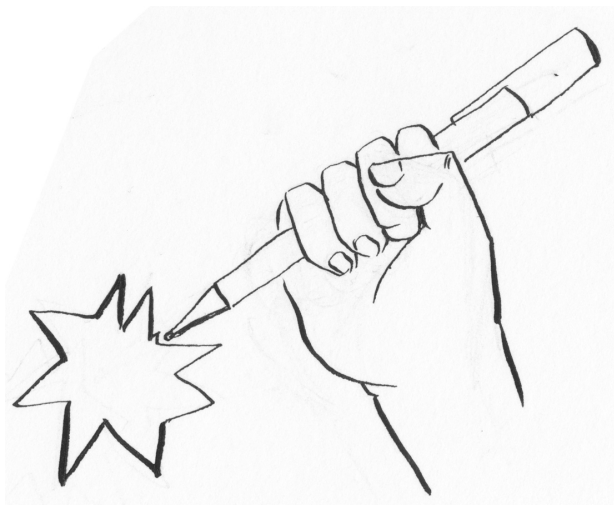
Big key chain (whip around in figure eights)



Small key ring (put between your fingers and swipe like a cat)



Pen (stabby stabby!)



Using Your Voice

by Laurel

What's your most powerful and far reaching self-defense weapon? Your brain. And what's number two? Your voice. Like most powerful weapons, there are a myriad ways to use your voice to help keep you safe.

Sometimes speaking calmly to someone who's angry can de-escalate.

You use your voice to offer consent, or to *not* offer consent.

Calling out behaviors can sometimes be enough to make someone stop doing the thing that's making you uncomfortable.

Shouting can also be a really useful way to use your voice in a scary situation. I know a lot of people, especially folks who have been socialized as women (taught to be quiet and meek), don't like shouting. I'm not saying you have to be a person who's loud and loses their cool, but it's worth knowing that you can pull a loud noise out of your mouth if you need to. I find riding bikes in the city to be a great way to practice - if I don't make a loud enough noise this instant to pierce the closed car window, they won't know I'm here and they just might kill me with their huge hunk of metal.

Shouting has many uses:

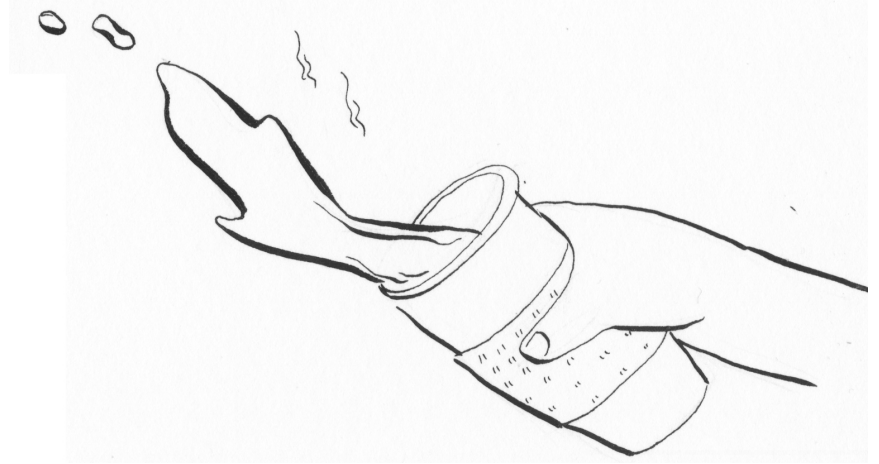
It helps you unfreeze

It forces you to breathe

It's startling and can create a moment to escape

It's intimidating and calls attention to the situation (even if no one comes to help, it could delay the situation from becoming violent)

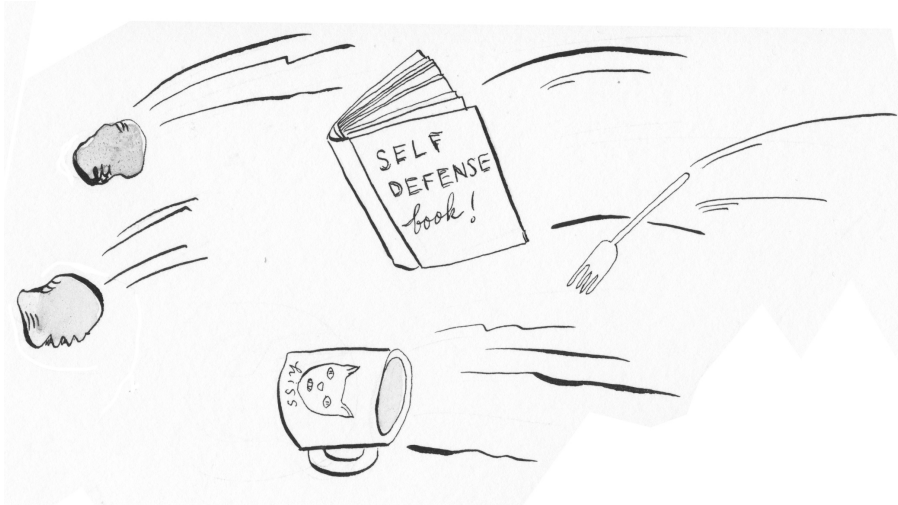
Hot beverage (throw contents in their face)



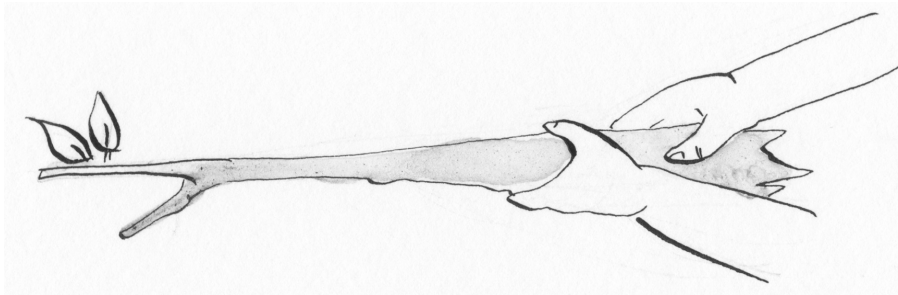
Hairspray + lighter = fire ball!



Rocks, dishes, books (throw them)



Sticks, backpacks, belts (swing them to strike and/or create and maintain distance)



I find a renewed sense of solidarity¹ with trans, gender nonconforming, and queer people who are on the frontlines of the fight to liberate gender.

Most of all, I am learning the meaning of community self-defense: what we do to protect each other against the State and against white supremacist, misogynist and homo and transphobic attacks. For example, I recently had the confidence to kick a known abuser out of an organizing space. I am learning what it means to be a Subject in the world, and to work with others to build a collective Subjectivity. I have come a long way, and I still have a long way to go, but I am super excited to embrace the girl who shoved grass in the face of some dude that fucked with her. I wonder what she will become, both inside and out, in another twenty years.

¹ Leslie Feinberg discusses cis and trans solidarity in “We Are All Works In Progress,” <https://anth1001.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/we-are-all-works-in-progress.pdf>