

# femLENS

INFO BROCHURE



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# ABOUT US

## **(OUR) VISION**

femLENS' vision is a world where empowered girls and women are creating and sharing their own stories about their lives.

## **(OUR) MISSION**

femLENS is a non-profit association that aims to empower women and their communities, to challenge stereotypes and discrimination in the media, through education, support, exhibitions and contacts with the media. femLENS empowers vulnerable women to document their lives through photography and to create positive change in their own communities.

femLENS' mission is to visually educate and make technologically aware the most vulnerable and resourceless women of our society through documentary photography made accessible by mobile phone cameras and cheaper point and shoot cameras.

## **CORE VALUES TO ACHIEVE femLENS' MISSION**

**EDUCATION:** Seek to expand educational opportunities for women.

**ENCOURAGE LIFE-LONG LEARNING:** Teaching a skill which can be applied in another area with further development encourages self-learning and life-long development.

**COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT:** Educate women who will contribute to the empowerment of their communities.

**INCLUSION/DIVERSITY:** Working with women from all backgrounds.

**TELL VISUAL STORIES:** Visual storytelling is a therapeutic form providing tools for self expression, healing and further interpersonal growth and development through self-reflection.

**DIVERSITY OF VISIONS:** Provide a multiplicity of visual voices in the media and arts.







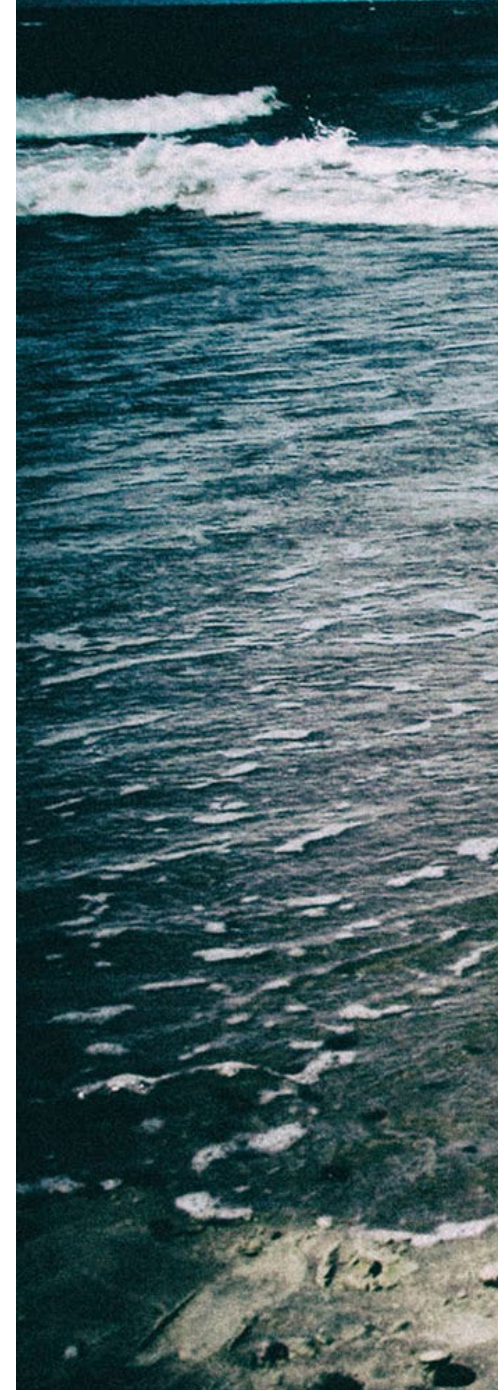




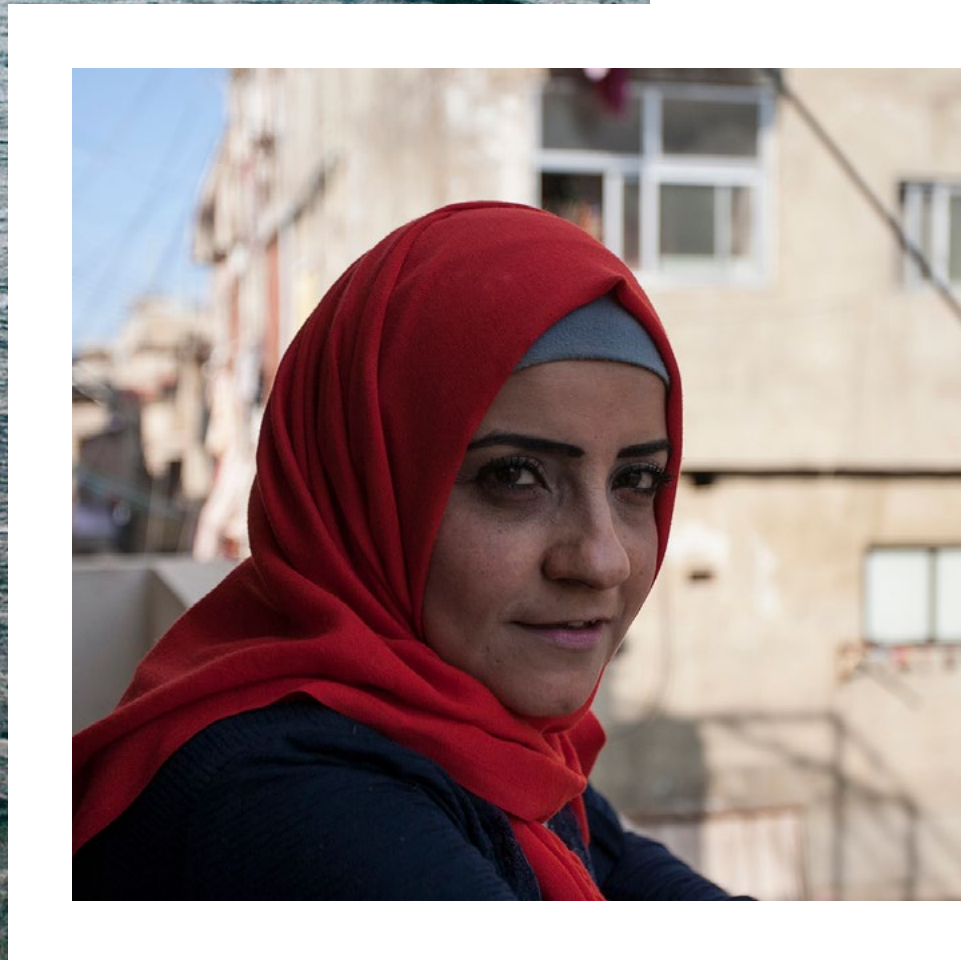


## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1. Be the leading photographic educational resource for women from communities with limited resources:**  
Practical and comprehensive photography workshops for beginners from different backgrounds.
- 2. Contribute to the global work that is already being done to include women into photography and for people to start telling their own stories:**  
Promote women's projects through publications and events.
- 3. Engage with traditional media to diversify the content providers:**  
Work with media institutions to promote the work of the students.
- 4. Encourage students to continue independent practice and share their knowledge and experience.**
- 5. Provide social media training and encourage further self-expression and engagement with the audience to inspire change**







# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**GENDER EQUALITY** - Promote participation of women in leadership in society, community, and specifically media and arts.

**DIVERSITY INCLUSION** - Provide access to education to women from communities with limited resources to diversify the media and arts.

**HUMAN RIGHTS** - The educational efforts aim to reach women in communities with limited resources to improve their access to education taking into account the significant social, cultural, economic and structural obstacles.





## **WHY CHOOSE femLENS COURSE CURRICULUM?**

femLENS' custom curriculum teaches both storytelling and technical photography skills in a way that impacts how women and girls view themselves and their role in their community. femLENS' course is unique because it not only includes a photography portion of the course, but it engages participants at a deeper level with a complementary storytelling course.

The curriculum promotes personal development in several ways. The storytelling, with help from clearly outlined activities, is designed to assess where each participant stands regarding our six objectives (as shared below). The course content is designed to measure the growth and personal development that happens in between a pre-course survey and post-course survey.

This helps measure the full circle impact of photography on these girls and women.

## **1. OUR CURRICULUM EMPOWERS SELF-LED DISCOVERY AND FREEDOM**

Our curriculum is designed to guide women and girls through a process of self-discovery and realisation of the important role and contribution they have in their surroundings.

This course combines methods of visual sociology, ethnography, and qualitative research, documentary photography and storytelling. These methodologies are designed as an innovative approach with which to provide our course participants with the space and tools to express and share their experiences in a safe and creative way.

Making our workshops participant-driven and giving the tools to express themselves helps to enhance participant empowerment and encourages creativity by providing the opportunity to introduce topics and ideas that are meaningful to participants.

We have adapted teaching photography skills and visual storytelling with photovoice

methodology for our workshop participants to document their own life using just mobile phone cameras or other easily available alternatives.

Participants will first learn about the history of documentary photography, how to use a mobile phone as a photographic equipment and a tool for self-expression. The course can be individually designed for women and girls, as well as educators working with youth or adults.

## **2. OUR CURRICULUM EMPOWERS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

This is crucial to show women and girls firsthand how they can be important contributors to their surroundings and that at the core of it all -- they matter. Through their perspectives and community contributions being uplifted onto a global platform, women and girls are showing themselves that today and always, they are the bigger picture.



### 3. OUR CURRICULUM EXPANDS CRITICAL OBSERVATION SKILLS AND TEACHES VISUAL LITERACY

Conventionally, knowledge is perceived as facts, information and skills that are acquired and comprehended through education. It is how we understand the world around us. But it is also widely presumed that to gain knowledge, one must be literate. When referring to literacy, reading and writing come to mind. And while these components remain at the core, we are seeing a shift towards other skills as we witness the evolution of the Digital Age.

Since the beginning of this period, literacy has expanded to include more visuals outside of text (e.g., photographs, videos and a combination of images and text) as the distribution of information is becoming increasingly image based. The importance of visual literacy is becoming more and more apparent, especially as more information platforms centre content around visuals.



Our workshops give women and girls the tools to read and understand images, challenge visual stereotypes about their communities and use the tools to tell their own stories.

Analysing work made by other photographers and discussing their own photos in a safe group setting will give them an idea about the visual world and their own place in it.

## OUR DIRECT RESULTS

Since 2015, femLENS has held 16 full workshops in 11 countries with more than 100 participants. We also held three online workshops. We have worked with single mothers in Ireland, women with physical disabilities in Poland, female refugees in Lebanon, women vulnerable to human trafficking in Ukraine, and many other diverse groups. During our online workshop we have worked with Palestinian women living in the West Bank and Israel, with women from Mexico, England and DRC, with Russian speakers, women working in the media in Cameroon, and many more.

This has allowed us to present new point of views into these communities. Through discussions with the participants we have gathered that participation in the workshops has given them a new kind of confidence in themselves and their abilities.





## STEREOTYPES CONFRONTED

femLENS has organised six exhibitions in Ireland, Poland, Germany and Estonia, which reached many people in the communities. The exhibition in Gdynia, Poland was hosted in the underground crossing next to a busy train station. The exhibition title was "Transcending Obstacles". The common view on disability was challenged by photographs taken by women with disabilities, sharing images of intimate moments from their daily lives.

In 2018 we launched the first worldwide women-only documentary photography magazine "We See". The first issue was released on International Women's Day (March 8, 2018). Page after page we featured the work of refugee women, women trying to understand local cultures and migration in Spain, as well as the realities of women living in rural Zhytomyr, Ukraine, an area highly vulnerable to human trafficking. Anyone who would like to know more about who a Muslim or refugee woman is should look at the work of Halima al-Haj and Faten Anbar.

## COMMUNITY REACH

Through exhibitions, online activities and We See magazine, femLENS has been able to reach a varied demographic. We have promoted femLENS

activities in Thomson Reuters offices in Gdynia, Poland, where our posts about femLENS on the internal social media platform have gathered more than 1567 views. The audience reached has been very diverse, from business analysts, engineers, to editorial staff, from across the world.

Our social media platforms have nearly 5000 followers combined. Our Facebook post about the launch of 'We See' magazine had more than 1300 views, while the second issue reached more than 3000 people. femLENS has also been featured in a number of articles, in as diverse places as Lebanon and the U.S., reaching additional audiences. The exhibition in Poland reached thousands of people as it was located in a busy spot for over a month. We have also redesigned femlens.com, through probono work by webgrow.ro, which now has more information about femLENS' work and displays more work by the photographers.

## WE SEE MAGAZINE

femLENS publishes a women-only documentary photography magazine entitled "We See." All featured work comes from participants in past femLENS' workshops. Wee See covers important topics and hopes to raise global awareness on social issues.

# COURSE OVERVIEW

## DESCRIPTION

Founded in 2015, femLENS works as a capacity builder delivering workshops to teach women - especially women and girls from economically and culturally diverse backgrounds - documentary photography techniques to tell stories visually by using cameras and the easily available tools such as mobile phones and other cheaper alternatives.

**TIMING:** 4 class sessions of 4 hours each, 1 Exhibition (Optional)

**AGE LEVEL:** 12 - 70 year olds

**SUBJECTS:** Photography, storytelling, writing

**CLASS SIZE:** 10 - 15 students per class (recommended)



## OBJECTIVES

Through the course, students will:

### Community Integration

- Discuss other projects happening worldwide with other student photographers, and ultimately discuss the community impact that each photographer created and invite students to do the same.
- Recognise their individual responsibility for achieving the program's goals.
- Understand how their photography work will contribute to expressing their perspectives and telling the stories of their communities.

### Photography Skills

- Understand phone camera basics, including how to focus and change exposure.
- Cite examples of photography techniques and concepts during course activities.
- Articulate the feelings and thoughts elicited from photographic techniques used in various photos.
- Understand and demonstrate a mastery of photography tool-belt techniques including composition, exposure, night photography, portraiture and self-portraiture.
- Integrate concepts and techniques to create visually strong photographs with a personal voice.
- Critique professional, peer and personal photographs using photography concepts.
- Articulate a deeper understanding of how each photography technique contributes to their work.

### Writing Skills

- Employ effective techniques, relevant descriptive details and well-structured event sequences to develop a written narrative of real experiences or events.
- Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and

sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

- Write captions and accompanying texts to their stories.

### Personal Development

- Identify characteristics about themselves, their emotions, their goals.
- Explore their past, present, future, and how to express themselves consciously through both writing and photography.
- Thoughtfully communicate an integrated personal story through both writing and photography.

### Intercultural Development

- Examine the concept of worldwide community. Identify and describe characteristics of other cultures in a non-judgmental way.
- Express respect and positive regard for other individuals.
- Discuss their own cultural story and articulate it to others.

### Interpersonal Development

- Express themselves clearly during group discussion with a well-thought out response.
- Understand the concept of group assignments, requiring them to be responsible for their work as part of the whole.
- Show respect and empathy when critiquing others' work.
- Exhibit good listening skills and engage others in the group discussion.

## **COURSE OUTCOMES**

At the end of the course, students will have created a portfolio, consisting of homework photo assignments, a photo project and a written story.

Students will have received knowledge that empowers and launches a personal journey of communicating their unique point-of-views, ideas, emotions and the stories they want to tell through words and images.







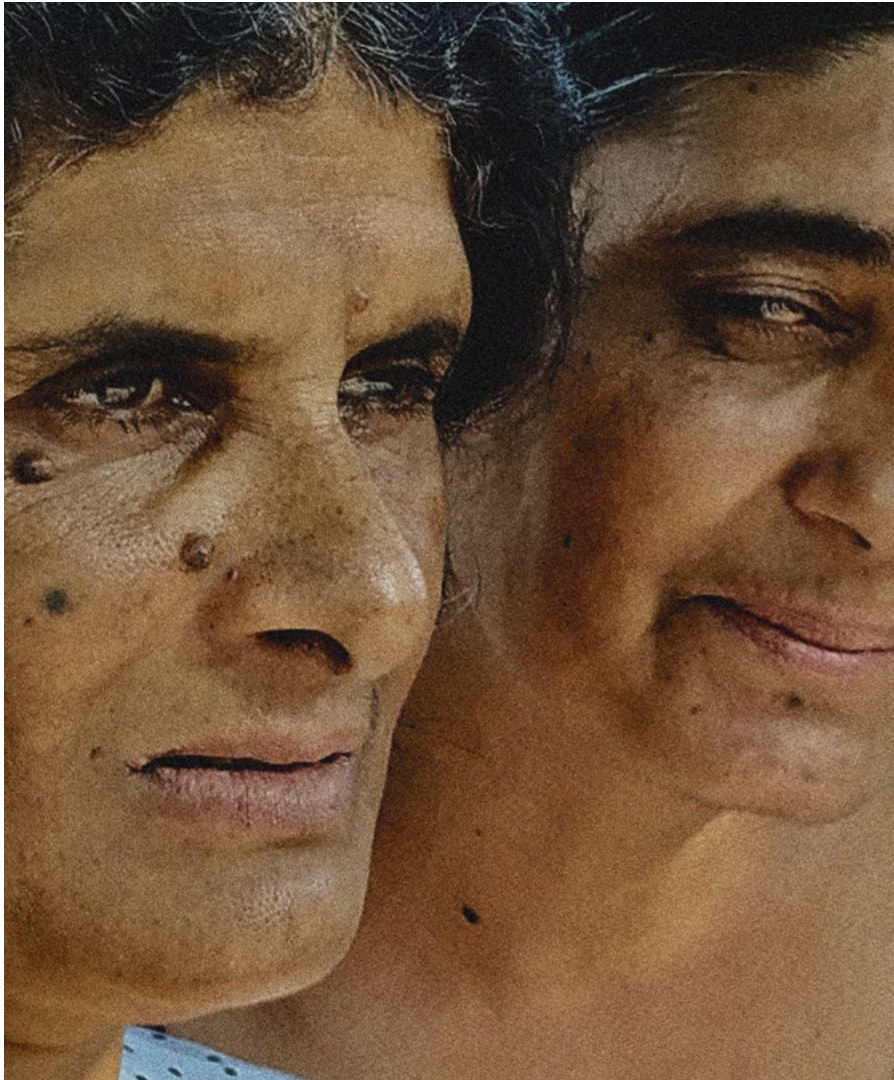
## **MATERIALS NEEDED**

### **General:**

- projector (this can be optional; slide-shows can be printed or shown on iPad screens);
- computer (to connect lesson materials to projector and for viewing students' photographs).

### **Materials needed for students in class:**

- curriculum worksheets (lesson plans, including the materials such as slide-shows, activity worksheets, etc.);
- notebooks, pens;
- name tags;
- student mobile phones/digital cameras.



## LESSON OUTLINE

Our course is designed to be taught through the overarching lens of how to share a narrative through photography while empowering students with the important reminder that their stories matter and their perspectives are unique and powerful.

Through our custom interactive lectures, camera and photo activities and group discussions, each class focuses on our three key benchmarks of composition, photography and storytelling to teach the following classes:



**1. Foundations of Photography:**

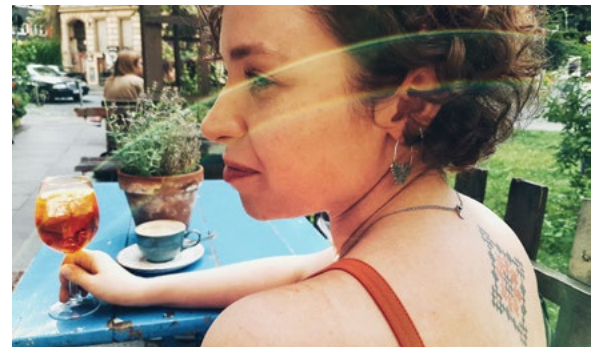
Students get to know the camera and each other. They learn how to write a narrative with images by learning the importance of composition in photography and storytelling and how to take great pictures through our custom camera tool-belt exercises.

**2. Creative Expression:**

Students learn how and why emotions are powerful when communicated through an image and how it is possible to invoke a feeling or response in the viewer. Students explore their own unique stories through activities and exercises that help them process their past, reflect on the present, and look to the future, encouraging them to embrace their storylines with wholeness and a passion for growth.

**3. Your Role in the World:**

Students learn portraiture as an art form to self-express and communicate an idea, story, emotion, perspective or self-view. Students also learn how to create central themes to tell big picture stories as their story relates to the world.





## CRITERIA FOR PARTNER ORGANISATION

Currently, we choose which organisations or groups of women we will run the workshops for, but if you think that your organisation or school would benefit from engaging the women and girls involved in your work in documentary photography, you can reach out to us to tailor a workshop.

NGOs and informal associations will benefit from training their participants to be able to record the work of the organisation, which could be used on websites, social media, annual reports.

Schools that want to encourage girls to choose more active and socially engaged careers may want to host a series of workshops on documentary photography for girls.

femLENS is specifically designed to work with NGO, community centres, women's centres or enrichment programs to equip students with the tools they need to tell their stories while also empowering them to create change in their communities.

**Partner organisations are accepted through an application process and will be approved based on the following criteria:**

1. Demonstrates strong community commitment ties through programs and services.
2. Must be willing and able to establish and maintain a long-standing partnership with femLENS.
3. Shows substantial need that the femLENS mission can positively impact students through creative expression and/or funds raised.
4. Must demonstrate accountability with funds and impact, including outcome and measurements.
5. Shows enthusiasm and desire to work alongside femLENS to help make the workshop a special and celebrated experience for the students.
6. Has a lead representative to be liaison between partner organization and femLENS.
7. Commits to engage with femLENS staff to provide progress reports on course updates, impact data, images and stories to help amplify students' voices and perspectives via website and social channels
9. Must work with women/girls in the community.

Those women should:

- Be central to the partner organisation's mission.
- Benefit from the femLENS workshop and the partner organisations' programs.
- Be available to participate consistently in a four class course.

**Plan the logistics**

- Finalising dates and course schedule.
- Ensuring you have adequate space for the course.
- Managing on-the-ground logistics such as lodging and transportation.
- Ensuring partner understands the nature of project, details of project execution, and post-project expectations.
- If working with children: ensuring student waivers are signed by a parent or guardian or partner organisation. Commit to have student releases signed to give femLENS the permission to use, display and sell images. femLENS will provide this legal template.
- Familiarising yourself with femLENS curriculum.
- Acquiring any supplies may be needed for the project. Staff will help provide checklist.
- Commit to have an agreement signed

between femLENS and the partner organisation stating that funds will be sent through a transfer in one sum. femLENS will provide this legal template.

NOTE: Staff should be notified of all changes in plans. Staff is available to provide additional support for planning at any time.

**Hold an exhibition event**

You have the unique opportunity to highlight the project and the stories of students and partner communities. This event could also help raise money for the partner organisation in your own community.

Big or small, the type of fundraiser is up to you – could be benefit concerts, traditional gallery shows or any kind of exhibition. Our team at femLENS is here to help you come up with ideas to have a successful fundraising event.

**Get the word out**

Ultimately, the reach of your project is limitless when in your hands. femLENS commits to share information about your project on our channels and to always, of course, be looking for opportunities to help share the story.





# COST

**Based on over five years of experience, the cost for a 4x4 (4 hours x 4 meetings) workshop series and an exhibition event is 2350 EURO and includes the following:**

- Four classroom workshops designed to meet educational programming standards (in-person or digital).
- All supporting materials such as slideshows, student worksheets and certificates (digital).
- Classroom assessment tools to track the growth of each student and project's impact (digital).
- Curriculum tutorials and Q&A with femLENS.
- Field support before, during and after the project for staff and workshop participants.
- Management of the online project webpage at

femlens.com and photo gallery.

- Guidance on organising a photo exhibition.

**Not included:**

- Mobile phone cameras or point-and-shoot cameras.
- Student notebooks and pens.
- Printing costs for worksheets, exhibition materials.
- Location with necessary equipment.
- Travel expenses (if necessary).

Thank you for your interest. We hope you consider applying to help empower girls and women to share their stories! To apply, please visit [www.femlens.com/contact](http://www.femlens.com/contact)



### **Example of 5 day workshop program:**

\* Day 1: Introductions. History of documentary photography x 2 hours. Photography techniques and using a mobile phone as a camera x 2 hours.

\* Day 2: Photography techniques and using a mobile phone as a camera x 2 hours. Photo practice x 2 hours.

\* Day 3: Introduction to visual storytelling - story development, planning, finding subjects, working with a story planner. Community and identity discussion and discussing final project ideas x 4 hours. One week independent practice - working on final project ideas (collective or individual) in the local area (if story ideas are defined in advance fem-LENS can help arrange access).

\* Day 4: Photo analysis, understanding and confronting stereotypes. Selecting photographs for a story, editing (editing apps and programs), sequencing. Writing a supporting text and captions x 4 hours. Independent practice as necessary to complete.

\* Day 5: Exhibition planning.



femLENS MTÜ

Registration number: 80429622

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[facebook.com/femlens](https://facebook.com/femlens)

[instagram.com/femlens](https://instagram.com/femlens)