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BEYOND ACCESS:

EXPANDING THE DISCOURSE AROUND BARRIERS TO DEAF, DISABILITY & MAD ARTS

BY MICHELE DECOTTIGNIES
FOR PACIFIC OPERA VICTORIA



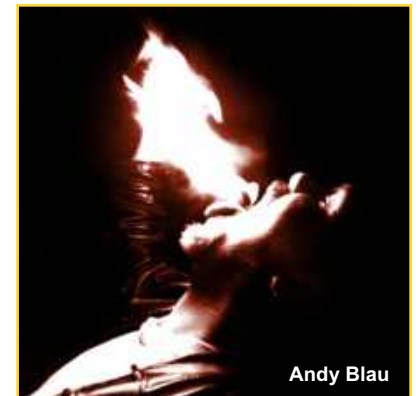
Syrus Marcus Ware



Alan Shain



Chandra Melting Tallow



Andy Blau



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PART 1: OVERVIEW

FOR THE KNOWLEDGE I'M SHARING

PRESENTATION CONTEXT

PART 1: ABOUT ME

HOW I SITUATE MYSELF IN SOCIAL/ RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

MY CULTURAL BACKGROUND

- Scottish colonial settlers & French imperialists

MY SOCIAL DIVERSITY

- aka Social Location (Identity + Capital)
- deaf, Disabled, Mad, aging, working class, under-educated, lesbian...

MY POLITICAL/ CIVIC ROLES

- Systems-change, via bottom-up organizing from the outside in...

MY PROFESSIONAL/ ARTS SECTOR ROLES:

- Presenter, producer, playwright, dramaturge, director, designer, technician...
- Advocacy, fund development, administration, governance, service...

PART 1: MY CAREER

PRODUCTION. EDUCATION. ADVOCACY.

POPULAR THEATRE: ARTISTIC OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL, in the arts

- 35 years in the industry: Most experienced disabled artist in the Western world
- 21 years as AD of Stage Left: Only one still running her own, indie company
- Leading contributor to Dis Arts: 10 Festivals; 150 productions; 35 commissions; 15 national gatherings; 2 networks; 1 NASO; 1,000s of artists supported...

POPULAR EDUCATION: SYSTEMIC EQUITY FOR ALL, through the arts

- Artist-Community Collaboration: Community Engagement
- Applied Theatre of the Oppressed: Systems Change
- Arts Equity: Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Exchange

DIVERSIFIED APPROACHES: CROSS-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY, via non-normativity

- Stage Left: Applied Arts, Presenting, Production, Training, Hosting, Commissions
- DDMAAC & CCEDA: Advocacy, Networking, Education, Research, Service & PD

PART 1: CREDITS

THIS LIVING DOCUMENT IS FROM MICHELE DECOTTIGNIES'S
35 YEARS OF EARNED (VS LEARNED) KNOWLEDGE.

WITH MY THANKS TO SEVERAL OF MY COLLEAGUES:

- Dr. Rachel da Silveira Gorman, Revolutionary Forms
- Alan Shain, Smashing Stereotypes Productions
- Dr. Linden (Lindsay) Crowshoe, Educating for Equity
- Ruth Ruth Stackhouse, Mad Pride/ Friendly Spike Theatre Band
- Meg Torwl, Integral Media
- Jenna Reid, Textiles Cooperative Studio
- Syrus Marcus Ware, Performance. Disability. Art.

PART 1: LANGUAGE

THE SHORTHAND I'M USING, AND WHY

EXCLUSIVE ABBREVIATIONS FOR AN INCLUSIVE DOMAIN:

- My use of *disability*, *dis* and/or *dis arts*, throughout this presentation, is intended as inclusive of all artists who live with any form of impairment – whether innate or acquired, temporary or permanent.
- I'm only using overly exclusive abbreviations for **ease of communication** and as needed **accommodation** for my learning disabilities.
- I apologize for **minimizing the unique affinities** that exist amongst the many **culturally-distinct communities** who contribute work to the dis arts domain.

PART 1: ABSTRACT

FROM ACCESS TO AUTONOMY: EXPANDING THE DISCOURSE

BROADENING THE SPECTRUM OF DIS ARTS INQUIRY

- Beyond single-issue models of diversity & representation (multiversal vs universal)
- Toward intercultural competencies and collective counter-culturalism

SITUATING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN A PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

- Arts sector discourse
- Artistic practice barriers

ADVANCING A MORE HOLISTIC DIS ARTS THESIS

- The Access part of this conversation is around human rights considerations.
- The Art part is about the aesthetic representation of unique cultural perspectives on the human condition (aka the lived experience of *disability oppression*)

PART 2: CORE CONCEPTS

FOR THE KNOWLEDGE I'M SHARING

DDMAAC'S

DIS ARTS FRAMINGS

2. CONCEPTS: AN ARTISTIC DOMAIN

SOME HOLISTIC FRAMINGS FOR DIS ARTS

THE DDMSTC ARTS DOMAIN

- DDMSTC Arts:
d/Deaf; Disabled/person with a disability; Sick/spoonie/survivor;
Trauma-impacted; Colonized....

THE ARTISTIC VISION

- The lived experience of... *overcoming disability oppression*
- *Art has to be measured in terms of what it values.... Stories about how dreadful it is to be disabled value being able-bodied, not being disabled. We don't see our disabilities as obstacles that we have to overcome in order to make our way in the non-disabled cultural world.*
(Allan Sutherland, stand-up comedian)

2. CONCEPTS: DIS ARTS DIVERSITY

CULTURAL COMPLEXITY

CULTURAL DIVERSITIES

- Fastest growing artistic population = “TABS” *(remove your glasses example)*
- Most diverse artistic domain

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTORS

- Academic Theorists: Dis Studies & Community Rehab scholars
- Disability Service Providers: Supports for independent living
- Guardians & Caregivers: Legal authorities
- Artistic Includers: Non-disabled facilitators of one-off projects
- Disabled Artists: Emerging but elevated artists with impairment(s)

- Established, career-track disabled artists: Who pioneered artistic practice
- DDMAAC’s constituents: FNMII2BTQAOC who experience disablement, yet remain excluded from the DDMSTC Arts domain

2. CONCEPTS: ACCREDITED IMPAIRMENT

EXCLUSIVE FRAMINGS OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

ACCREDITED IMPAIRMENT

- Impairment refers to any condition that impacts an individual's ability to function to their own potential; it's mostly associated with an *innate/ fix conditions*, like cerebral palsy or Downs syndrome, and is understood as a *tragic affliction*.
- Disability service providers must too often limit their (segregated) services to only those with accredited impairment (medically-sanctioned conditions).
- Except most forms of impairment are actually *acquired* – not from accidents, but from socially-imposed (in)human conditions that result in relentless exposure to *toxic stressors*.
- As a result of “accredit impairment”, the disability community has been exclusive of those diverse groups of people who are most vulnerable to the impacts of social inequality.

2. CONCEPTS: SOCIAL DISABLEMENT

INCLUSIVE CULTURAL AFFINITY

DISABILITY

- Disability refers to an individual's condition of being impaired.

DISABLED

- Disabled refers to an individual's condition of being impaired by an imposed social condition.

DISABLEMENT

- Disablement refers to a collective experience impairment that is socially-imposed, in ways that are unique to specific classes of people.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- Colonization of FNMI Peoples of Canada, and associated inherited traumas.

2. CONCEPTS: CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS ACROSS DISPARATE, DIVERSE CULTURES

INTERCULTURAL AFFINITY

- Interculturalism is a means of representing the whole of one's diversity
- Interculturalism promotes purposeful connection among disparate cultures
- It advances a *multiversality* of perspectives
- Thereby disrupting the presumed "universal" in the monocultural status quo

COUNTER-CULTURAL SOLIDARITY

- Counter-cultural solidarity cultivates non-normative aesthetic representations of how disablement uniquely impacts culturally-distinct groups of impaired people
- It enables purposeful cultural connections to framings of "disability"
- It provides more equitable access to the "disability community"/ dis arts domain
- It disrupts hegemony in the dis arts domain

PART 3: ACCESS

THE FULL SPECTRUM

ADVANCING AN EQUALITY OF ACCESS

3. ACCESS: THE FULL SPECTRUM

ACCESS FOR WHOM AND TO WHAT, EXACTLY?

THE FULL SPECTRUM OF "ACCESS"

- REPRESENTATION: Access to Cultural Inclusion
- ADAPTATION: Access to Artistic Excellence
- INTEGRATION: Access to Inclusive Design
- ACCOMMODATION: Access to Artistic Repurposing
- RACIAL INCLUSION: Access to InterCultural Affinity
- DISABILITY JUSTICE: Access to Counter-Cultural Non-Normativity

3. ACCESS: REPRESENTATION

ACCESS TO CULTURAL INCLUSION

REPRESENTATION DIVERSIFIES THE PUBLIC FACE BUT NOT THE CULTURAL NORM

- Representational models certainly elevate the few select diverse artists who can get included in the closed shop called “the arts sector”
- It provides meaningful access, but does not require the organizational culture nor artistic practice to be adapted nor altered in any way
- As it also does not require the individual artist to be a proponent of dis culture, it often separates included artists from their cultural affinity groups (aka peers)

DISABILITY REPRESENTATION EXPERTISE IN THE SECTOR

- **NeWorld Theatre:** The representation of (emerging) artists with Down’s syndrome
- **Imagining Possibilities:** The representation of (emerging) artists with cp
- **Deaf Spectrum:** The representation of (emerging) d/Deaf artists

3. ACCESS: ADAPTATION

ACCESS TO ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

ADAPTATION UPHOLDS THE STATUS QUO:

- Adaptation seeks to satisfy established/ entrenched artistic aspirations
- By matching “abnormal” bodies to normalized forms of art (as much as possible)
- Adaptation is the go-to tactic for the inclusion of disabled people/ artists
- It puts us in a position of having to measure up to normalized standards of “artistic excellence”, which most of us can’t actually satisfy (no matter how much we try)

ADAPTATION EXPERTISE IN THE SECTOR

- Frank Hull: Power Wheelchair Dancer/ Choreographer
- Propeller Dance: Mixed Ability Dance Training
- Cahoots Theatre: Deaf Artists & Theatres Toolkit

3. ACCESS: INTEGRATION

ACCESS TO INCLUSIVE DESIGN

INCLUSIVE DESIGN EMBEDS ACCOMMODATION IN THE ENVIRONMENT

- Inclusive Design refers to the design of social products and/or services that are accessible to, and usable by, as many people as reasonably possible – without the need for special adaptation or specialized design.
- Inclusive design emphasizes the ways that diversity informs the design of a shared environment; it seeks to cultivate conditions that include as many different people as possible.

INCLUSIVE DESIGN EXPERTISE IN THE SECTOR

- **Artists with a Masters in Inclusive Design:** Spirit Synott, JD Derbyshire (for art)
- **Relaxed Performance Training:** The British Council (for audience)
- **Good Host Program:** Inside Out Theatre (for audience)
- **Audio Description:** Vocal Eye

3. ACCESS: ACCOMMODATION

ACCESS TO ARTISTIC REPURPOSING

ACCOMMODATION IS A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ONE-PROCESS
OF MEETING INDIVIDUALS WHERE THEY ARE AT – NOT VICE-VERSA!

- Accommodation is not about whether people can walk or can't walk, but about *making space for how they prefer to move around*
- Example: Eyeglasses exercise...

ARTISTIC REPURPOSING:

ACCOMMODATION THAT ALTERS THE ART FORM INSTEAD OF THE ARTIST

- *All adaption allows for is inclusion, period. Repurposing requires the altering of something, so that it takes on an entirely new function. For many diverse artists, repurposing is not just an aesthetic preference but a necessary act of survival: By reshaping and reinventing art forms, we're redefining reality and representing a more complete picture of Canadian society. (syrus marcus ware)*

3. ACCESS: ACCOMMODATION

THE LEGAL DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

- Large-scale arts institution have civic responsibility to increase access to public venues, by cultivating a culture of Welcoming & Belonging
- That requires you to understand the cultural barriers that exist in dis arts, in addition to architectural (access) and social (attitudinal) barriers.

APPLICABLE LAWS & PROTOCOLS

- The Legal Duty to Accommodate is entrenched by municipal, provincial and federal human rights law/ regulations
- Also upheld by Grantors and sector-wide agreements, like Respectful Workplaces

DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE & INFORMED CONSENT RIDERS

- Forthcoming from DDMAAC, in consideration of associated liabilities

3. ACCESS: ACCOMMODATION

THE ACCOMMODATION OF IMPAIRMENT REQUIRES HIGHLY SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED! For example:

- What is dysarthria, and how does it impact directing disabled artists?
- How do you program a C-PAP Machine?
- How do you time lighting cues in ways that will not evoke seizures?

DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING = CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- Gain access to the most qualified & specialized expertise available to you
- Also as part of your outreach & engagement activity

DUE DILIGENCE! For example:

- Medical administration requires certification in the dis service sector
- My own "CP Awareness Guide" is 72 pages long!

3. ACCESS: RADICAL INCLUSION

ACCESS TO INTERCULTURAL AFFINITIES

DIS ARTS DATABASE EXERCISE

- Try to name as many disabled artists as you can think of (under pressure!)
- What are their social locations?

RADICAL INCLUSION

- Radical Inclusion is about the expanding the spectrum of diversity, and about the integration of collective cultural knowledges throughout the whole domain
- It's purpose is to *shift the discourse from the universal to the multiversal*

RESOURCES IN THE SECTOR

- DDMAAC: Barak ade Soleil, Jenna Reid
- PDA: Syrus Marcus Ware, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

3. ACCESS: DISABILITY JUSTICE

ACCESS TO COUNTER-CULTURAL NON-NORMATIVITY

DISABILITY JUSTICE: THE EQUALIZATION OF DIS ARTS

- *Disability Justice has the power to not only challenge our thinking about access, but to fundamentally change the way we understand organizing and how we fight for social change.* (Mia Mingus)
- Disability justice is concerned with cross-cultural and systemic equity, as well as individual empowerment/ agency.
- DDMAAC: The prioritization of Reconciliation, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, and Non-Normativity in all things “Deaf/ Disability/ Mad art” and in dis rights organizing/ advocacy.

NON-NORMATIVITY: THE FOUNDATION OF DIS ARTS PRODUCTION

- Non-normativity cultivates intercultural affinity and cross-cultural solidarities, and advance the aesthetic representations of how disablement uniquely impacts culturally-distinct populations of impaired peoples.

PART 4: CULTURAL BARRIERS

ACCESS FOR THE CULTURES IN DISABILITY ARTS

INDIVIDUAL VS COLLECTIVE MODELS OF ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION

4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

PROMOTING ACCESS: INCLUSIVE, INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATION



4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

PROMOTING ACCESS: INCLUSIVE, INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATION



project **EVERYBODY**
DIVERSITY | INCLUSION | ABILITY | COMMUNITY

a community collaboration led by
open door group
INSPIRATION AT WORK



**International
DisAbilityFilm
Culture & Art
Festival 2015**

Wednesday Sept. 16th 2015 2:00pm - 8:00pm (Films start at 6:00pm)
Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre
181 Roundhouse Mews (Corner of Davie and Pacific)

Free Admission | Venue is wheelchair accessible | ASL Interpreter will be available

open door group INSPIRATION AT WORK | **Vancity** | **pos Abilities** | **City of VANCOUVER**

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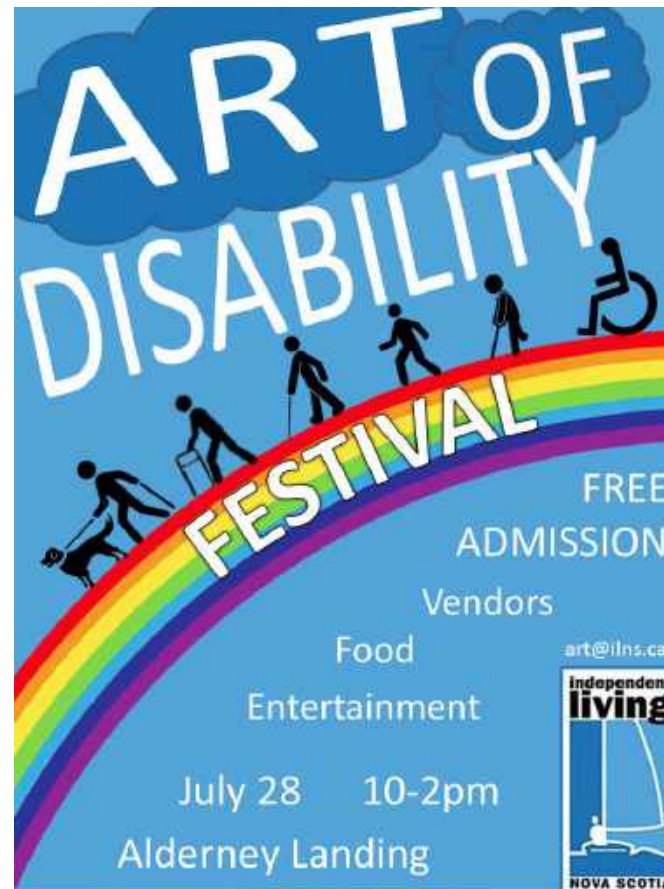
4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

PROMOTING ACCESS: INCLUSIVE, INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATION



4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

PROMOTING ACCESS: INCLUSIVE, INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATION



4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

PROMOTING ART: COLLECTIVE, COUNTER-CULTURAL AFFINITY



4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

PROMOTING ART: COLLECTIVE, COUNTER-CULTURAL AFFINITY



Janna Brown, Still Echoes Resound

Tangled Art + Disability presents:

STRANGE BEAUTY

April 9-25, 2015

401 Richmond Street West

4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

PROMOTING ART: COLLECTIVE, COUNTER-CULTURAL AFFINITY



THE OTHER FILM FESTIVAL

19TH - 23RD SEPTEMBER 2012

ARTS HOUSE NORTH MELBOURNE TOWN HALL

NEW CINEMA BY, WITH AND ABOUT PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

Test Size: A A A

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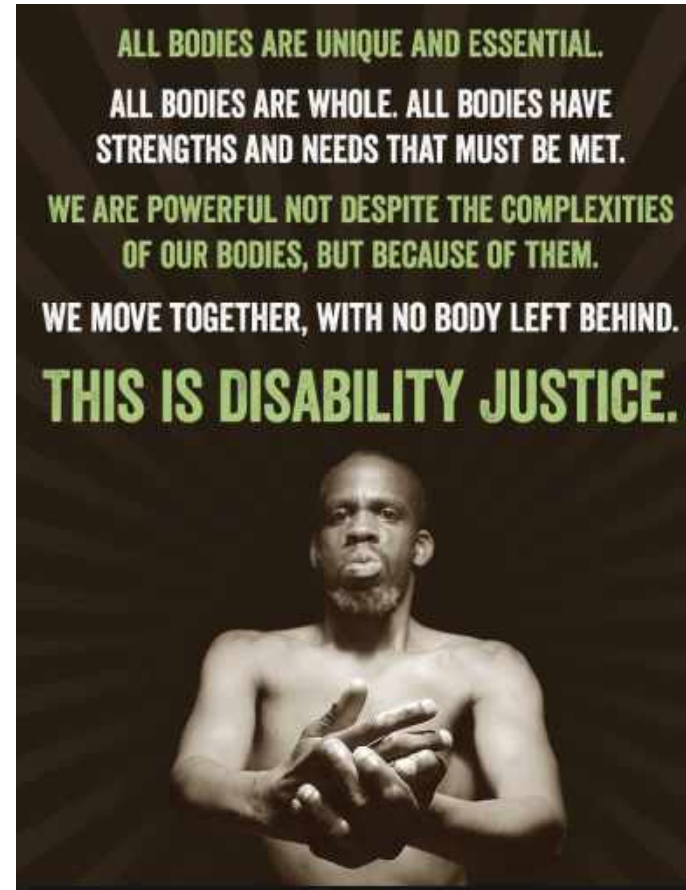
PAST FESTIVAL
[Visit the 2010 website to learn more about The Other Film Festival](#)

FULL 2012 FESTIVAL WEBSITE COMING SOON

 ARTS ACCESS VICTORIA

4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

PROMOTING ART: COLLECTIVE, COUNTER-CULTURAL AFFINITY



4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

NOTICE ANY DIFFERENCES?

PROMOTING ACCESS:

- Don't dis my ability
- Disability
- Art + Access
- Art for EveryBody

- Disabled artists are invisible/
not centered in promotion
- Disability is minimized

PROMOTING ART:

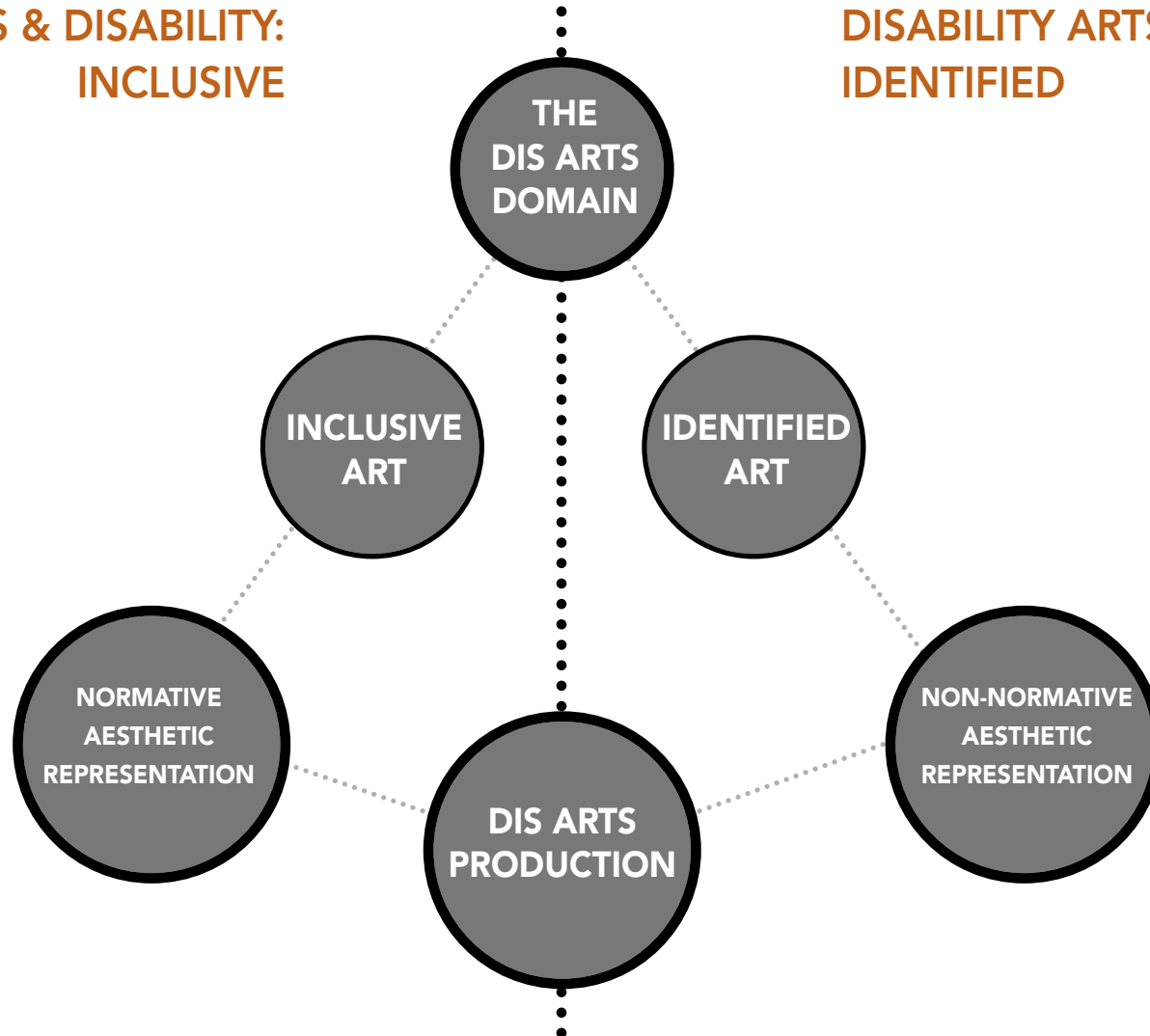
- Not just another freak show
- Strange Beauty
- What Are You Looking At?
- Bodies of Work

- Disabled artists are visible/
centered in promotion
- Disability is amplified

4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

THE ARTS & DISABILITY:
INCLUSIVE

DISABILITY ARTS:
IDENTIFIED



4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

INCLUSIVE VS IDENTIFIED DIS ARTS PRACTICE

THE ARTS & DISABILITY: Established forms of art

- Traditional forms of art that are practiced by artists with impairment(s)
- Most often through access to inclusion, via adaptation
- The artistic content, form and process has nothing to do with the vision of the global disability arts movement
- Artists who produce this type of work often say:
"I'm disabled but my art is not."

4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

INCLUSIVE VS IDENTIFIED DIS ARTS PRACTICE

DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE ART: Artist-Community Collaboration

- Pre-emerging & emerging disabled artists are given access to artistic participation
- Most often through inclusion, via adaptive approaches to accommodation
- “Integrated Art” in the Dis Arts domain = Inclusion into a mixed ability team, when the non-disabled have authority over representation
- Integrated Art in the Canadian arts ecology = Interdisciplinary Art; which is why DDMAAC frames this approach to artistic integration as “inclusive art”.

4. CULTURAL BARRIERS: THE AFFINITY GAP

INCLUSIVE VS IDENTIFIED DIS ARTS PRACTICE

DISABILITY-IDENTIFIED ART: Autonomous Production

- By artists with impairment(s) who have affinity with disability cultures, and practice in non-normative forms of aesthetic representation.

DISABILITY-IDENTIFIED ART PRIORITIZES:

- InterCultural Affirmation
- Counter-Cultural Non-Normative Aesthetic Representation
- Artistic & Aesthetic Repurposing

PART 5: ARTISTIC BARRIERS

ACCESS FOR DISABILITY ARTS

THE ERASED, EARNED EXPERTISE OF ESTABLISHED, DISABLED ARTISTS

5. ARTISTIC BARRIERS: ACCESS FOR DIS ART

GLOBAL DIS ARTS HISTORY: INVISIBLIZED CULTURAL AIMS

1. GAIN PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

- Gain professional recognition that disabled people are, in fact, capable cultural contributors, despite a social context which until now has relegated us to being the recipients of “art therapy” (aka art as improvement)

2. ESTABLISH A DOMAIN OF PEERS

- Produce exploratory presentations of disability art “in house”, within the affinities and accommodations available in the disability community; and

3. CULTIVATE COUNTER-CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

- Take our non-normative artistic practices, and multiversal perspectives on the human condition, out into the world
- i.e. Gain market access, on our own cultural terms

5. ARTISTIC BARRIERS: ACCESS FOR DIS ART

CANADA'S DIS ARTS HISTORY: INVISIBLIZED ARTISTIC ACCOMPLISHMENT

THE OLDEST DOMAIN IN THE WORLD

- 50 years of access to the arts, based on artistic merit
- 50 years of autonomous production
- 50 years of aesthetic innovation

THE LARGEST DOMAIN IN THE WORLD

- 50 companies
- 5,000 professional artists
- 50,000 includers!

1999: RYERSON DIS STUDIES

- *Disability arts marks the growing political power of disabled people who use it to counter cultural misrepresentation, establish disability as a valued human condition, and shift control to disabled people...*

5. ARTISTIC BARRIERS: ACCESS FOR DIS ART

CANADA'S DIS ARTS HISTORY:

1. RECOGNIZE THAT DISABLED ARTISTS ARE CAPABLE ARTISTS

1970 – 2000: INDEPENDENT DISABILITY ARTS PRODUCTION

- By professional disabled artists who established our careers in the professional arts sector, while achieving considerable artistic acclaim.

EXAMPLES OF EARLY ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTIONS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1974: David Freeman, CREEPS; Chalmers Award
- 1983: Persimmon Blackbridge, STILL SANE; VIVA Award
- 1997: Lyle Victor Albert, OBJECTS IN MIRROR; Sterling Award
- 1999: Michele Decottignies, MERCY KILLING OR MURDER; Columbine Award

5. ARTISTIC BARRIERS: ACCESS FOR DIS ART

CANADA'S DIS ARTS HISTORY: 2. PRODUCE REPRESENTATIONS IN-HOUSE

2000 – 2010: DIS ARTS PRESENTING

- Via a national circuit of dis arts festivals that established Canada's dis arts domain

DIS ARTS FESTIVALS

- 1999: Ryerson Dis Studies, ART WITH ATTITUDE
- 1999: Friendly Spike Theatre Band, MAD PRIDE**
- 2001: Society for Dis Arts & Culture, KICKSTART
- 2002: Stage Left, BALANCING ACTS**
- 2003: Workman Arts, MADNESS & THE ARTS WORLD FESTIVAL
- 2005: Abilities Arts Society, ABILITIES ART FESTIVAL

**** The only festivals produced by established, disabled artists.**

5. ARTISTIC BARRIERS: ACCESS FOR DIS ART

CANADA'S DIS ARTS HISTORY: 3. TAKE OUR MESSAGES OUT INTO THE WORLD

2010 – 2010: DIS ARTS POLICY & FUNDING

- That erased the foundational culture and purpose of all that came before
- Because established, practicing artists were excluded from public consultation

POLICY IMPACTS

- Disability Awareness displaced Disability Arts Equity
- Dependent Inclusion displaced Autonomous Production
- Capacity Development displaced Professional Development
- Emerging Artists displaced Established Artists
- The Learned Knowledge of academic theorists displaced
The Earned Knowledge of long-experienced disabled artists
- "Access" continues displaces Counter-Cultural, Non-Normative Representation

PART 6: SOCIAL BARRIERS

DOMINANT ATTITUDES TOWARD DISABILITY

DISABILITY BIAS IS EMBEDDED IN THE STATUS QUO

6. SOCIAL BARRIERS: DISABILITY BIAS

THE HISTORIC ROOTS OF ARTISTIC DISABLEMENT

GREEK AESTHETICS: THE DOMINANT CULTURE

- Western/ Eurocentric Norms: *IDEALIZED BODIES* ("beauty")
 - Standards of aesthetic appreciation we default to today (all of us!)

RESULTANT SOCIAL ATTITUDES & SOCIAL RESPONSE

- 800BC - 500BC
 - Abnormality is *Inhuman*
 - The response is *Death* or *Banishment*
- 500BC - 1400s
 - Abnormality is a *Wonder* or *Oddity*
 - The response is *Exotic Servitude* (Court Jesters, Victorian Freak Shows)

6. SOCIAL BARRIERS: DISABILITY BIAS

THE HISTORIC ROOTS OF ARTISTIC DISABLEMENT

- 1400s - 1800s
 - Abnormality is an *Burden On or Menace to Society*
 - The result is social *Stigmatization* (Handicaps, Asylums)
- 1800s - 1950s
 - Abnormality is an *Incapacity*
 - The result is *Segregated Training* (Institutions for the Mentally Defective)
- 1950s - now
 - Abnormality is an *Defectiveness*
 - The result is medical *Eugenics* (The Cure, Sterilization, Assisted Suicide)

6. SOCIAL BARRIERS: DISABILITY BIAS

CONTEMPORARY ATTITUDES TOWARD DISABILITY

VICTIMS

- We're treated as objects of tragic afflictions that burden us and society.
- This attitude turns us into objects of pity and paternalistic benevolence.

HEROES

- We are only treated as fully human when we strive to overcome our disabilities
- This attitude turns us into what we call Inspirational SuperCrips™!

VILLAINS:

- Throughout history impairment has been used to suggest evil or depravity.
- This attitude turns us into a class of violent people that rest of society needs to be protected from.

BIAS MAKES "DISABILITY" AN UNDESIRABLE ASPECT OF THE HUMAN CONDITION.

6. SOCIAL BARRIERS: DISABILITY BIAS

RESULTANT POP CULTURE AESTHETIC REPRESENTATIONS

THE ART OF OBJECTIFICATION

- As in the Victorian Freak Show era, "disability" is again being treated as an object of wonderment and fascination – along with pity, paternalism and benevolence.

THE ART OF BENEVOLENCE

- The disabled are included in the arts in order to help us get better
- The goal is to improve us (as humans and as artists)
- But we aren't broken and don't need fixing
- *(we need access to artistic and aesthetic accommodation)*

THE ART OF EXOTICIZATION

- The lived experience of disability is put on display and dissected in great detail, so non-disabled audiences can understand how we cope with it

6. SOCIAL BARRIERS: BENEVOLENT SUPPORT

THE HISTORY OF COMMUNITY INTEGRATION: DEPENDENCY DISPLACES AUTONOMY

MODELS OF DISABILITY SERVICE

- **Administrative:** Segregation by accredited impairment = affliction vs affinity
- **Medical:** The Cure = attain idealized human beauty/ be normal
- **Charitable:** "Poor, Pitiabile Half-Humans" = paternalization/ eternal innocence
- **Human Services:** Dependence = supports from those "more capable"/ normal

THE THEORY OF NORMALIZATION

- **ALL Disability Service Providers Guidance**, on a global scale

6. SOCIAL BARRIERS: AUTONOMOUS ABILITY

THE HISTORY OF DISABILITY RESISTANCE: LIBERATION DISPLACES DEPENDENCY

EXAMPLES OF *SELF* ORGANIZING: COLLECTIVE LIBERATION

- **1850s - 1950s: Political Resistance**
The De-Institutionalization Movement
- **1950s - 1970s: Cultural Resistance**
The Independent Living Movement
- **1970s - now: Social Resistance**
Social Model of Disability
- **1974s - now: Representational Resistance**
Canadian Dis Arts Movement

6. SOCIAL BARRIERS: DEPENDENT PRACTICE?

THE HISTORY OF ARTISTIC INTEGRATION: ACCESS DISPLACES AUTONOMY

APPROACHES TO ACCESS THAT ARE ELEVATED

- **Inclusive:** Pop Culture norms = disability is an individual condition to overcome
- **Identified:** Counter-Cultural norms = social disablement is a cultural imposition

APPROACHES TO ACCESS THAT ARE MARGINALIZED

- **Affirmational:** Impairment is a shared source of affinity and solidarity
- **Non-Normative:** Impairment is a property of aesthetic representation

PART 7: REPRESENTATIONAL BARRIERS

DISABILITY AESTHETICS

THE ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION OF INTERSECTING CULTURES, VIA NON-NORMATIVE AESTHETICS

7. REPRESENTATIONAL BARRIERS: DIS AESTHETICS

NON-NORMATIVE COUNTER-CULTURALISM: DISRUPTING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITY OPPRESSION

DISRUPTING AUDISM

- Deaf Culture is the set of social beliefs, behaviors, art, literary traditions, history, values, that are influenced by D/deafness – which uses visual/ signed languages as the primary means of communication.

DISRUPTING DISABLEMENT

- Disability culture inverts the socially-imposed shame of disability into collective pride, by promoting the belief that impairment is a desirable aspect of the human condition.

DISRUPTING SEGREGATED STIGMATIZATION

- Mad Pride affirms mad identities, develops and empowers mad communities, challenges discrimination, and empowers psychiatric survivors to remember and participate in their own social & cultural history.

7. REPRESENTATIONAL BARRIERS: DIS AESTHETICS

AESTHETIC REPRESENTATION

NORMALIZED AESTHETICS: pop-culture identified

- Disability is minimized
- Impairment is adapted to art form, in ways that satisfy aesthetic norms
- Aligned with pop-culture notions of disability as a limitation to overcome
- Curated as empowerment & improvement (therapy)

NON-NORMALIZED AESTHETICS: disability identified

- Disability is affirmed as diversity
- Art form is adapted to impairment, in ways that transgress aesthetic norms
- Aligned with Disability, Deaf and/or Mad culture(s) and disability justice
- Curated as aesthetic innovation

7. REPRESENTATIONAL BARRIERS: DIS AESTHETICS

AESTHETIC APPROACHES

NORMALIZED APPROACH TO AESTHETIC REPRESENTATION: pop-culture identified

- The aesthetics of absence = disability is invisibilized
- The aesthetics of eternal innocence = disability is diminished
- The aesthetics of awareness = disability medicalized
- The aesthetics of inclusion = disability is normalized

CURATED AS:

- Art Brut
- Kitsch
- Just as good as (the non-disabled)

7. REPRESENTATIONAL BARRIERS: DIS AESTHETICS

AESTHETIC APPROACHES

NON-NORMALIZED APPROACH TO AESTHETIC REPRESENTATION: dis identified

- The aesthetics of access = disability is accommodated
- The aesthetics of integration = disability is affirmed
- The aesthetics of impairment = disability is centered
- The aesthetics of disablement = disability is non-normalized

CURATED AS:

- Outsider Art
- DIY (Do It Yourself)
- Non-Normative Counter-Culturalism

7. REPRESENTATIONAL BARRIERS: DIS AESTHETICS

AUDIENCE RESPONSES

NORMALIZED AESTHETICS: Audience Responses:

- Inspiring, courageous, informative: I didn't know they could do that...
- Appreciation that the disabled artist actually made art (e.g. standing ovations because the actors learned their lines)
- Assessed by its public impact
- Valued for its inclusion of Othered artists

NON-NORMALIZED AESTHETICS: disability identified

- Disability is sexy! Wow! It took me where I wasn't expecting to go!
- Appreciation for that artwork and its aesthetic
- Curated by its artistic impact
- Valued for its aesthetic innovation

PART 8: PROFESSIONAL BARRIERS

BARRIERS TO COUNTER-CULTURAL NON-NORMATIVITY

ACCESS FOR PROFESSIONAL DIS-IDENTIFIED ARTISTS

8. PROFESSIONAL BARRIERS: THE GREAT DIVIDE

THE ROOTS OF AESTHETIC OPPRESSION

POP CULTURE AESTHETICS: INDIVIDUAL INTEGRATION

- Inverted Artistic Vision: FIT IN
 - Satisfy aesthetic expectations, via inclusion as personal empowerment
 - "Congratulations. You made it."
- Inverted Cultural Aim: MEASURE UP
 - Satisfy aesthetic aspirations, via adaptation as individual agency
 - "Congratulations. You did it."

8. PROFESSIONAL BARRIERS: THE GREAT DIVIDE

THE ROOTS OF AESTHETIC AUTONOMY

DISABILITY AESTHETICS: COLLECTIVE COUNTER-CULTURALISM

- **Liberatory Artistic Vision**
 - *Reimagine artistic excellence, via **ARTISTIC REPURPOSING***
 - *While evolutionists may argue that the ability to adapt is central to the survival of a species, repurposing creates space to redefine reality. (ware)*
- **Liberatory Artistic Purpose**
 - *Reassert counter-cultural norms, via **AESTHETIC REPRESENTATION***
 - *Disability art is the representation of shared cultural meanings and the collective expression of the experience of disability and struggle. It exposes prejudice disabled people face, and generates group consciousness and solidarity. (barnes)*

8. PROFESSIONAL BARRIERS: ACCESS FOR CULTURE

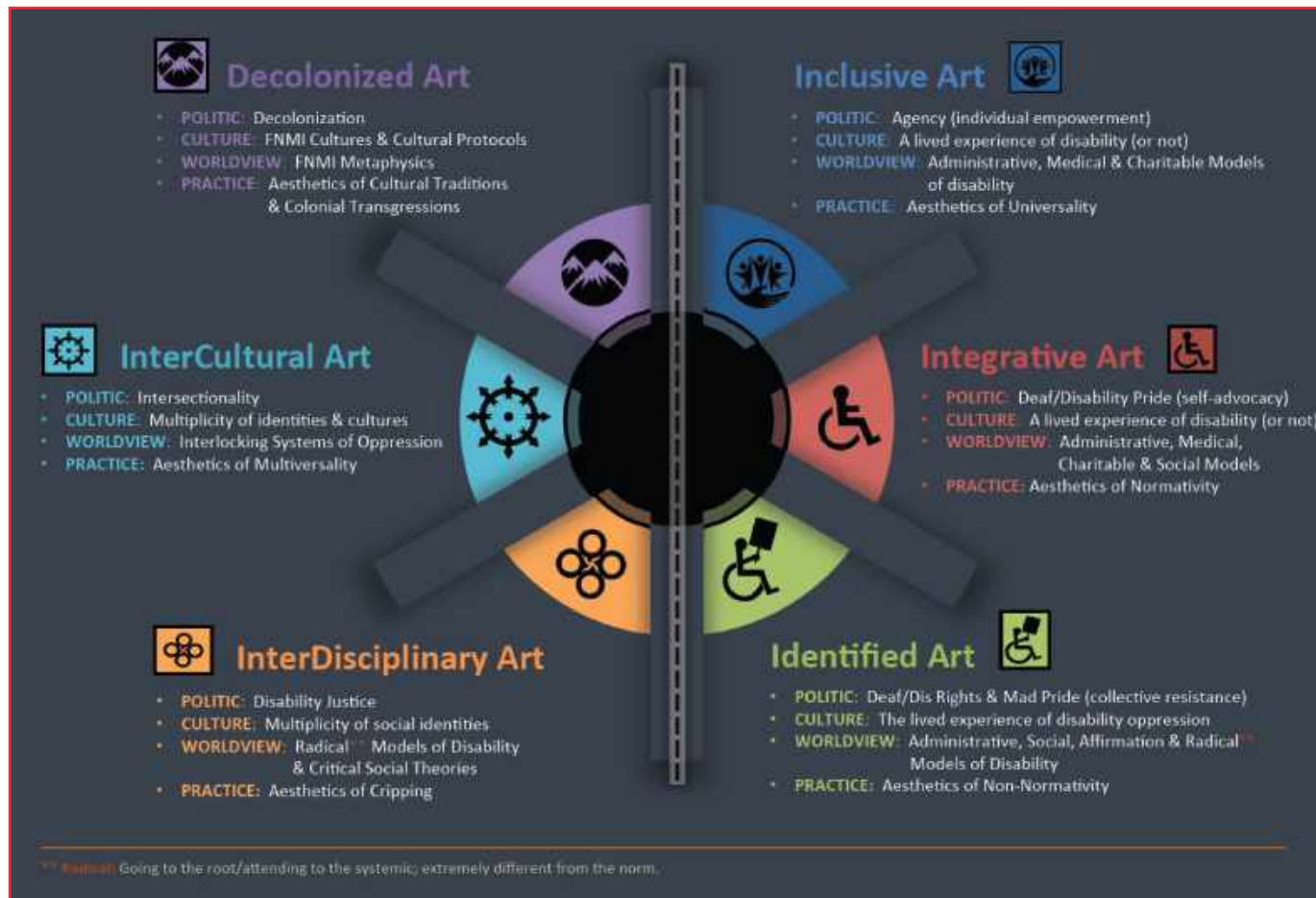
IMPAIRMENT: THE ROOT OF COUNTER-CULTURALISM IN DIS ARTS

MICHELE DECOTTIGNIES

- *Disability Art inverts impairment into a source of aesthetic appreciation by affirming disability cultures:*
- *Impairment specific words, gestures, symbols, meanings, history, and collective responses to disablement that cannot be authentically represented by the non-disabled....*
- *... nor by those with impairments who lack a lived experience of disability oppression to overcome.*

8. PROFESSIONAL BARRIERS: ACCESS FOR ART

ARTISTIC PRACTICES IN CANADA'S DIS ARTS DOMAIN



CONCLUSION: DISCUSSION

EXPANDING THE DIS ARTS INQUIRY: FROM ACCESS TO PRACTICE

SUMMARIZING KNOWLEDGE

- Points of clarification?
- Points of disruption?

GENERATIVE KNOWLEDGE

- Forward pathways
- Where can we all *advance the equality of access?*