

## Critical Disability Studies

March 30, 2023

### ● Disability Culture

- Evolving question - no set definition
- Separate from deaf culture (centered around sign language, a more particular group of people, more uniform experience)
- Class ideas:
  - “A laboratory of disability culture”
  - The intimacy of being strapped into her chair (Alice Sheppard)
  - “I have fallen in love with dancing ...” Alice Sheppard
  - “A fine and twisted shape” Petra Kuppers
  - “I do not work from a deficit-based understanding of my body” Alice Sheppard
  - Not always for educational purposes (Alice Sheppard)
  - “Aesthetically noncompliant,” Access is art, pleasurable, fun (Alice Sheppard)
  - “I was not supposed to be a dancer” Alice Sheppard
  - “Dance is often more injurious than therapeutic.”
  - “It is sexy” Alice Sheppard
  - “The impossibly possible culture”
  - “More like a verb than a noun”
  - “We hang there together” - dance is not just aesthetic, it is sound, it is texture, kinetic light (Alice Sheppard)
  - “There is juice in disability culture work” Petra Kuppers
- Creative adaptation
- Experiences incorporate the entire sensory spectrum → Aesthetics
  - Multimodal
  - Multisensory
- A push against the dominant culture
  - A rebirth where mainstream culture accepts and considers the experience of disabled people
  - In order to do so, disabled bodies are used to “consciously create” disability culture
  - Inclusivity isn’t the end-all-be-all - we want to create something new

### ● Disability Aesthetics

- Define “aesthetics” - judgements about what is beautiful and visually appealing
  - The response we have to another body
  - Trained to find some things pleasing and some things not
  - A cultivated style

- How is disability aesthetic unique?
  - Fragmented/mosaic
  - Mutimodal/multisensory
    - Texture and sound
  - Personalized
  - Alice Sheppard using her crutches
  - So much of modern art stems from the disability aesthetic
  - Subversion of dominant culture
  - Incorporating access tools
  - Aesthetically pleasing (redefined)
  - Asymmetry
    - Traditional ideas of beauty are based in symmetry, while the disability aesthetic intentionally values asymmetry
  - Imperfection and human variation
  - The value of dissonance and consonance
  - Juicy
  - Playful, pleasurable
- Access as Creative
- New disability icon!
  - Features wheelchair users as more active
  - This icon doesn't make happy
    - Opinions on access are never universal or homogeneous
  - Small changes make a difference in mindset overtime
    - Visuals can change our perception
- Access should not be a checklist
  - Some boxes need to be checked, but it can't stop there
  - Inherently a creative process
  - Requires disability imagination
  - The ADA doesn't come close to covering all access needs (still an important place to start)
- Building access at Haverford
  - Ledges in the North Dorms
  - Extremely heavy doors
  - Not all push-to-open doors are functional