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Reverberation!
A New Wave in Disability Art

Réverbération!
Une nouvelle vague dans l'art du handicap

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Abstract

Graduate student scholar/artists Sydney Erlikh, Maggie Bridger, and Sandie Yi reflect on their experiences of having attended *VIBE: Challenging Ableism and Audism Through the Arts*. The three were struck by the diversity and range of unique experiences reflected in the work of the presenting artists. Each author takes the lead on one of three themes they collectively identified: what constitutes disability art, how community shapes artistic and scholarly practice, and how boundaries of the field are evolving. The article explores the ways in which disabled artists are defining creative processes and aesthetic approaches outside of the mainstream art world and its ableist productivity demands. They also take note of how artists with non-apparent disabilities are actively moving the field in new directions. Finally, they examine the ethical dimensions of artistic "ownership" in the collaboration between artists with and without disabilities, particularly around those with intellectual disabilities and their allies. The authors ultimately offer a description of a new wave of disability art that is pushing the field to think through questions of process, collaboration, ethics, visibility, creative scholarship, and relationship to disability studies. This new work, they argue, is creating space for a more sustainable, community-based practice.

Résumé

Les artistes et étudiantes diplômées Sydney Erlikh, Maggie Bridger et Sandie Yi ont assisté à VIBE : *Défier le capacitisme et l'audisme à travers les arts* et réfléchissent à leurs expériences. Les trois ont été frappées par la diversité et l'éventail des expériences qui se reflétaient dans le travail des artistes présent·es. Chaque auteure mène l'un des trois thèmes qu'elles ont définis collectivement : qu'est-ce qui constitue l'art du handicap, comment la communauté façonne la pratique artistique et universitaire et comment les limites du domaine évoluent. L'article explore les façons dont les artistes handicapé·es définissent les processus de création et les approches esthétiques en dehors du monde de l'art traditionnel et ses exigences de productivité capacitistes. Elles prennent également note de la façon dont les artistes ayant un handicap non apparent contribuent activement à amener le champ dans de nouvelles directions. Enfin, elles examinent les dimensions éthiques de la « propriété » artistique dans la collaboration entre artistes handicapé·es et non handicapé·es, en particulier entre les personnes qui ont une déficience intellectuelle et leurs allié·es. Les auteurs offrent finalement une description d'une nouvelle vague d'art du handicap qui pousse le champ à réfléchir aux questions de processus, de collaboration, d'éthique, de visibilité, de savoir créatif et de relation avec les études sur le handicap. Ce nouveau travail, soutiennent-elles, crée un espace pour une pratique communautaire plus durable.

In reflecting on our time at *VIBE: Challenging Ableism and Audism Through the Arts*, we were excited by the new ground being covered in disability art at the symposium. Discussing the work, we asked questions around what disability art encompasses, how community connections actively shape artistic and scholarly practice in disability culture and how disabled artists and allies make artwork about disability and illness? Additionally, how do those same bodies experience artwork? We began to wonder not only how the lived experience of disability informs the artistic process, but what role the viewers' lived experiences play in their reading of art.

This paper is a collective effort of three scholar/artists to enact Alison Kafer's (2013) political/relational model of disability, which challenges medical and social understandings of disability articulated by early disability studies scholars to insist on a conceptualization of disability as political and constantly emerging in relationship to surroundings, environment, and other bodies. To this end, we first offer a very brief definition of disability art. While not meant to be exhaustive, we do believe this history provides essential context for our later theorization of a new wave of disability art. We then provide brief vignettes exploring how our bodies existed in relationship with each other, the various spaces of the symposium, and the artwork presented at VIBE. Here, we document the work of the symposium, but also the ways that we as artists might attend to our viewers' experience of disability art, as well as the unique ways that disabled and pained bodyminds with different access needs and backgrounds might perceive art and art spaces. Essential to our implementation of the political/relational model throughout these vignettes, as well as the following sections, is Kafer's situating of impairment as a site of analysis alongside disability. Moving from the vignettes, we explore the ways that the artists and scholars at VIBE challenged us to think of disability art in new ways. We each take on a theme that we identified from the symposium -- allyship, process, and lived experiences-- and expand on its implications for the larger field of disability art. Finally, we offer characteristics of the new wave of disability art we experienced at VIBE. We name this new wave as a genre (or movement) that represents the diverse range of disability experiences articulated by the political/relational model.

What is Disability Art?

Historically, artistic practices were used to represent disabled bodyminds mostly through the lens of the medical model. Medical photography documents disabled people's impairment for the advancement of medicine (Amirault, 1993). In contemporary times, disability is often represented through the non-disabled and therapeutic gaze in art, such as in the case of the Outsider art market and mentally ill patients' artwork in the field of clinical art therapy (Yi & Moon, 2020). Mass media often reinforces overcoming and inspirational narratives by framing disabled people's ability to create art "despite their disability." In the mainstream artworld, ableism exists in exhibition and presentation practices, where accessibility is often left as an afterthought.

The term disability art, meaning art made to reflect disability experiences and document/validate the existence of disabled people, emerged in the 1970s, in many ways to refute these methods of co-opting the disability experience. It mirrored the rise of disability rights activism in the U.S. and the international disabled people's movements. It has since been a lively part of disability culture (Sandahl, 2006; Sandahl, 2009). Disability studies scholar, Carol Gill (1995) described disability culture as the emotional unity for disabled people. In the early days of the disability rights movement, disabled activists showcased fellow disabled people's songs, poetry, or writing as they shared their own experiences with the inaccessibility of the environment. Disability culture cabarets were formed and paved ways for the development of disability art. Thus, disability art emerged as a tool to support disabled people's emotional survival amid institutional isolation and segregation. As a cultural minority, disability art can provide a space for the development of collective consciousness and the forming of shared language, behaviors, identity, care-relationships, art, life style and aesthetics (Barnes 2003; Cameron, n.d.; Peters 2006).

Currently, disability art cultivates knowledge and new vocabulary for framing and reframing the meanings of disability and provides a forum to discuss how disability has been represented in mainstream culture. This practice has often been called "disability aesthetics." In her "Intersectional Disability Arts Manifesto", disabled dance artist Alice Sheppard again articulates disability aesthetics as necessarily emerging from disability culture. For Sheppard, disability itself is "an aesthetic, a series of intersecting cultures, and a creative force." Disability aesthetics do not exist to explain impairment or disability oppression to a mainstream audience, but instead are made for and by disabled people. It is this process of developing, articulating and practicing disability aesthetics that we believe the new wave of disability art presented at VIBE reflects and builds upon.

Sandie

With the increased xenophobia and national security scrutiny in the United States, traveling across borders nowadays always makes me extra nervous when I am a foreign-status, disabled person of color. I dragged my suitcase directly from the airport to the VIBE opening night. My adrenaline kept me going despite my poor sense of direction. Feeling the weight of a backpack, a roll-on suitcase, and a cell phone in my two-finger hand on a cold night in a new city, created additional excitement, which I only recognized as anxiety much later. It was not until I saw Deaf people signing and disabled people mingling at VIBE, that I finally breathed with relief as if I finally made it home safe and sound. This sense of "home-coming" has often taken place during disability art and culture gatherings for me in the past fourteen years. Calling the disability art and culture community as my "home" is not a romanticizing gesture. I can often find people who share similar disability and/or illness experiences, who "get" me, under the roof of this "home," but it does not mean that I don't need to communicate my needs or advocate for other people's needs within the disability community.

At the VIBE opening night, I was concerned that flash photography may trigger seizures in some people. My urge to raise concerns about this access issue recalled the "trouble maker" label, which I had received numerous times for "asking for too much [accessibility]." As an organizer myself, I understand the labour and teamwork that it requires to host a symposium and that attendees' feedback is valuable for an organization's growth. But, when I wanted to make accessibility requests as an attendee, I still found myself battling with my own internalized ableism— *should I go and say something? Should I not?* Without knowing the make-up of the event organizers and their approaches to disability, I contemplated ways to voice my concerns without coming across as nitpicking. In the end, symposium staff was quite receptive to my request, and quickly eliminated the use of flash photography.

Asking for help from others has always been challenging when I am around people who appear as non-disabled. It took me a number of years to realize that I am not alone in this experience, and asking for access needs is a way to practice care. "Home coming" to the disability art and culture community—crip family— always needs communication and at times, negotiation, for the artists, organizers and attendees to address their access needs. “Home coming” requires us take on the role of “feminist killjoy” (Ahmed, 2017)—someone who speaks up with uncomfortable situations in the patriarchal culture—to hold each other accountable. My attendance at VIBE propelled me to pose the following questions: how do we sustain our process as artists, activists, and scholars when Madness, Deaf, disability, and illness are subjects that are close to home to each of us? How do we create spaces when there are competing access needs when one person’s access needs pose to be inaccessible for another person? How do we killjoy and provide support— both on accessibility and artistically— for and with our peers in the larger international disability art and culture movement? What sustains our work together?

Sydney

I am the “wiggler” when seated, constantly repositioning myself. Leaning forward and back, crossing and uncrossing my legs, rolling my shoulders and neck. Stillness is rarely a part of my movement vocabulary. I wonder if this is a learned physical vocabulary from years of dance practice or if I danced because it was a place to move. I dreaded the prospect of sitting for hours in a conference room. I become cold, stiff, and distinctly aware of my aches and pains. Initially, it will be my hip then my neck and shoulders. Every time I adjust myself I kick seats or my neighbors. As the day wears on, sitting in a chair becomes difficult so I move to the floor. Being in a disability community allows for accessibility to move without the admonishment of appropriate physicality within professional spaces. At the VIBE symposium, when I moved to the floor, not only did my colleagues join me in solidarity but other members of the community also chose to join me in choosing alternative seating. The conference staff immediately provided cushions. Their actions simply accepted the different access needs of the conference attendees.

As an injured dancer, my colleagues acknowledged my access needs and supported me without question. Creating an environment of care means modeling and backing each individual's access needs while being open to possible conflicts. As an academic, I wonder what meaningful knowledge can emerge from allies acknowledging their own accessibility needs? How are they supported in return by the disabled community? This is what I felt at VIBE. During the multi-day conference, I observed people’s accommodation needs being recognized while being open to the importance of shifting preconceived notions of how these can change day to day. How then can allies continue to use collaboration through disability art to spread accessible care? What ways does this support the disability community, culture, and art makers? What are the best processes to use when making disability art that push the field while creating sustainable community practices that allow others to experience the richness of care in disability culture?

Maggie

As I walked into the Vibrations Exhibition at 4th Space, I became aware of my body in a way that I love and dread in disability spaces. That is, I am always aware of my body, but the awareness shifts in spaces built by and for disabled folks. Typically, my focus is split between the internal and the external. I ask constant questions of my body as I move through life to adjust for pain and fatigue. How is my stomach? Particularly tight today, I should avoid anything that might intensify that into actual pain. I regularly bend and extend fingers, toes and ankles to check on joint stiffness and inflammation. I live my life split between caring for my body and performing the external tasks required of it, but I never go too far inside if I can help it. While in the general public, my internal attention extends only far enough to maintain productivity. To fully focus on the internal, to actually understand my body fully in every moment, would take my full attention in a world not built for bodies to know and care for themselves.

At VIBE, in a space designed for me and my people, though, my attention simultaneously expands and goes deeper inside. I suddenly had time and space to tend more fully to my body, but also feel that sense of care extended outside of myself. These feelings are further complicated by the fact that my impairment is not always legible on my body, even in disability spaces. I know that this was a space built with disabled folks in mind, but I also know that I do not always read as part of “my people,” so I take my time. I felt the space I took up and sensed the bodies, art, and furniture around me. I moved softly, trying not to take up more space than my fat, disabled body needed in this new space. I looked for a spot off to the side where I could survey the room and get a sense of the art and humans that had briefly taken over. I scooched past other bodies, smiling and waving as I went. I looked at a few pieces slowly, always with my attention split between my own body, the bodies around me, and the work.

Moving further into the space, I spotted a small cove toward the back, glowing red between the white, scaffold-like shelving that demarcated the different areas of the gallery. This corner felt less crowded, and I was interested by the soft glow. I made my way back there and found a small, glossy, fabric house. The red glow came from a black box sitting at the back of the floor inside the house whose broken glass face reads "MRI IN USE" in red letters. The box sat on a metallic silver floor, intensifying the red glow and reflecting it up into the ceiling of the fabric house. Something in me recognized the pattern on the fabric before I fully registered it as the tiny florets usually found on hospital gowns. A white, bumpy, wrinkly orb hung from the opening of the fabric house and as I got closer I felt a humming that sounded mechanical, but also vaguely human, coming from the orb. I reached out to touch the orb, but stopped myself, glancing up to the work's label for permission to touch. Seeing that the artist, Darian Goldin Stahl, encouraged viewers to interact gently, I cupped my hand around the orb and was alarmed and delighted to feel it buzzing in my palm. I indulged in a moment of being fully in my body, with all of the pain and joy that entails, as I recognized the work as simultaneously aware of its internality and externality in much the same way that I am as I stood there in front of *The Healing House,* lightly holding the orb (2019).

Embodied Cross-Viewing: Maggie

In my artistic work, I am interested in how one might represent, or make legible, non-apparent disability through dance. Following disability studies scholar and rhetorician Margaret Price (2011, 2015), I use the term "non-apparent disability" to flag the ways in which disability that might not leave any visible traces on the body is often still legible, if the person looking, hearing, or feeling knows how to read it. Standing in front of Goldin Stahl's work, I thought of the ways that it makes apparent the constant practice of internal awareness and care demanded of disabled and sick bodyminds. It exposes these practices and invites the viewer to become a part of the practice, or even to reflect on the ways that they may be "invisibly" caring for their own body as they experience the work.

In her examination of racialized, segregated dance spectatorship in mid-twentieth century United States, dance historian, Susan Manning (2004) proposes the concept of "cross-viewing," saying that an audience member's reading of a piece is shaped not only by their own social and political position, but by their co-spectators', as well. Only as theaters were desegregated, Manning says, did white viewers begin to see dance within the context of race. Whereas, black viewers, previously relegated to the balconies (if allowed in the theater at all), always saw the role race played in dance.

While Manning proposes this concept in relation to race, I propose that something similar happens when disabled bodies enter dance and art spaces. I propose this not to analogize race and disability, but instead to begin thinking through the ways that both race and disability might help us to understand the experience of spectatorship as always political and relational. The "apparently" disabled body often takes up more space and is typically relegated to a highly visible, designated accessible area. When this person enters the theater, the presumptively non-disabled majority notices. They feel the difference of the bodies among them, and only at this point might they understand themselves as non-disabled and, by extension, perceive the bodies onstage through the lens of normalcy. Whereas disabled people live their lives constantly aware of bodily difference, the non-disabled art viewing masses only become aware of this difference when they see it embodied.

Where, then, do people with non-apparent disabilities fit in this viewing relationship? I propose that we embody both sides of this cross-viewing relationship. Although our bodies allow us to move around the theater or gallery in some approximation of how a non-disabled body might, we also carry the awareness that our bodies potentially differ from the bodies surrounding us. This calls up the concept of passing, wherein a member of a marginalized group might pass for "normal." Although non-apparently disabled people remain aware of their difference from their non-disabled peers and may relate more to the experiences of individuals within the disability community, they often benefit socially and economically from their ability to assimilate (Samuels 2003). I posit that because we exist socially in a space between disability and normalcy, we live as an embodiment of cross-viewing wherein we understand artwork through the lens of disability but hold no outward signifiers to inspire cross-viewing within our non-disabled co-spectators. We move through the world internally aware of bodily differences that we experience daily, but our bodyminds possess no external signs to signal that difference (and therefore prompt cross-viewing) for our non-disabled peers, at least those that lack the experience to know how difference appears on and through our bodies and minds.

Goldin Stahl's work and the work of other artists at VIBE dealing with non-apparent disability, then, hold the potential to make legible the embodied cross-viewing of non-apparently disabled people. *The Healing House* makes apparent the process by which people with non-apparent disabilities constantly tend to their bodies, while challenging the viewer's assumptions about the "invisibility" of this process. The house and the orb only somewhat effectively hide the internal light, sound and movement of the work. This, I argue, mimics the way that my own disability and practices of care for my body, seemingly entirely internal practices, actually become apparent if the perceiver knows how to read it.

Adding another layer to this complex relationship between audience and art is the fact that Goldin Stahl's work is based on the experiences of her sister, Devan Stahl, who lives with Multiple Sclerosis (Goldin Stahl, 2018). Understood through the political/relational model, this collaboration between Goldin Stahl and her sister further challenges notions of impairment as an unknowable, individual experience. By making art out of an experience thought only to be available to some, Stahl and Goldin Stahl bring the embodied cross-viewing of non-apparently disabled people outside of the body, providing the viewer new frameworks for understanding disability as a complex, relational, and varied phenomenon.

Collaboration and Community: Sydney

A question that I pondered prior to attending VIBE is how can disability art include the voices of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, especially when the current arts and education and training system excludes them? Writing about disability art and culture, Petra Kuppers and Melanie Wakefield (2009) claim that "sitting together in a common room, disabled people find language and behavior for themselves, often language different from the overtly medicalized labels used by medical staff and wardens" (269). Their description highlights the possibilities demonstrated and discussed at VIBE. The idea of finding a common language within the disability community and away from the medicalized understanding of disability is essential to creating an inclusive environment. Acknowledging this makes people with diverse forms of communication essential to developing disability culture and the art making process. Disability art then needs to adopt multimodal communication which I define as art that is composed of and uses forms of language all artists are able to understand.

Multimodal communication means that the artists come to an understanding and seek clarification in the community which allows for the clear, unmediated communication of their artistic intent. Through multimodal communication, the curator/choreographer uses whatever tools available to create meaning, including making a common movement language or using picture symbols. This could be categorized as augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Alyssa Zisk, an autistic neuroscience scholar, and Elizabeth Dalton, an education scholar (2019), describe AAC as “the ways people communicate without, or in addition to speech” (1). This is used generally by those with developmental disabilities who do not communicate verbally. AAC is often taught initially as picture symbols in direct relation to objects. Through the learning process, the picture symbols come to represent abstract concepts. People with disabilities and their allies can use picture symbols to communicate their thoughts and opinions, make choices, understand texts, write, develop community, and create art.

AAC might be used, then, to open up the disability community and art-making to the full range and diversity of impairments, offering an opportunity to build a new wave of disability art that understands that access tools typically relegated only to educational environments for people with intellectual disabilities are cultural products rich with artistic value and possibility. At VIBE, the organization Aiding Dramatic Change in Development (ADCID) presented their work with individuals with “complex disabilities" through a project called *Imagining Possibilities* (2011-2019). In the presentation by Jennifer Jimenez and Stephen Sillett, the co-directors of ADCID, they offered an explanation of how the inclusion of AAC might work in practice in disability arts. For the past seven years, ADCID has been using AAC to devise improvisational performance pieces with adults who have cerebral palsy. During the presentation, Jimenez stated that they have been working together to find ways to “improvise, create stories, and work together”. They originally began their work in Toronto but Jimienz says the original artists now serve as the leadership team traveling to other cities to work with new artist groups. Kuppers and Wakefield argue that “in works by disabled artists, disability emerges as a cultural experience, a nexus of bodies, histories, personal stories, and cultural narratives” (272, 2009). But what about work that is created by disabled artists in collaboration with their allies as the ADCID’s projects does?

In their presentation, ADCID highlighted the role of the interpreter in understanding what the artists with a disability are expressing through AAC. An interpreter is generally an individual who has built a report with the person using AAC and understands the communicator’s expressions and therefore can support their artistic language choices. One of the goals ADCID presented is to “inspire new modes of expression.” The relationship between the interpreter and a person with a disability is a unique component of the *Imagining Possibilities*

(2011-2019) project. Using AAC to develop a story is the specific process that creates their community performances. As a group, they collaboratively use AAC to develop a story and build a world using props. Since communication is inherently relational, AAC then becomes the artistic tool that develops the show. What, then, are the ethical dilemmas that arise when working with this marginalized community? How can allies and personal assistants ensure that disability culture is being promoted, as well as the agency of people with disabilities? Anna Hickey-Moody (2009) asserts that "methods of practice employed to construct performance texts can be quite specific to the bodies in question" (45). Applying Hickey-Moody's concept to ADCID's work highlights how their performance text is specific not only to the bodies using AAC but the allies and interpreters listening and assisting in the collaborative creative process.

ADCID uses AAC to support artists with disabilities to create an immersive world for all those involved in the *Imagining Possibilities* community performances. ADCID's performances promote self-advocacy for people with disabilities by providing the tools for the artists to self-direct the outcome of each show and their artistic process of working through an interpreter recognizes the importance of interdependence in the lives of people with disabilities. This multi-modal collaboration is unique to disability art as the disabled artist actively directs allies in the artmaking process. This necessitates both artists and allies to be versed in disability culture. ADCID's performance pieces engage the audience in the disability community by inviting them to see how a story can unfold through a collaborative creative process, enacting Kuppers' and Wakefield's claim that "Disability culture is always emerging, never quite yet there, for certainly hierarchies and normative ways-of-being characterize many congregations of disabled people" (270-271, 2009). This project shows that disability culture can create new and interesting work by considering a new way of being in performing arts spaces. The group improvises to create a space that slows down time and reimagines the possibilities of collaborative performance between artists, their caregivers, and the audience. This work then has impacts beyond the theater by demonstrating to caregivers the importance of disability culture in people with disabilities' lives.

The concepts presented and proposed at VIBE were used to devise my year-long disability arts community project where accessibility is reimagined through AAC. The project thought about how communication is inherently relational and central to the creative process. I continue to think about working in disability arts as an ally. Is it ethical to pursue work in this field? How can I use my background to expand disability arts and encourage broader collaboration within the disability community? Perhaps the answer lies within the model of using AAC and the involvement of interpreters presented by ADCID's projects. Their work creates a disability community for itself and has the added benefit of increasing disability cultural competence for allies. The use of multimodal communication in a new wave of disability art holds the possibility of creating more inclusive artistic practices. As an artist, I see that we can take tangible steps to make the disability art world more accessible to people with intellectual disabilities using the tools that they are already using to communicate. These are not just educational in nature, they are cultural products that have the capacity to reshape notions of disability, relationality, and disability aesthetics.

Be a killjoy and Invest in the Processes: Sandie

In Sara Ahmed's book, *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), Ahmed used "feminist killjoy" as a strategy to combat against sexism and racism. Feminist killjoy is a refusal to define women's values based on their ability to bring happiness to others. Ahmed stated, "Becoming a feminist involves coming up against the world" (19) which requires a will to stay unsatisfied (unhappy) about injustice. Using killjoy in the context of disability means to unveil the ugly truth that disabled people's worth is defined by how much they can minimize the discomfort that non-disabled people might experience around them. As a killjoy in the disability art movement, I often wear multiple hats when attending disability art events, such as VIBE. Being a transnational disabled woman artist and arts administrator, who has been one of the core organizers of Bodies of Work: Network of Disability Art and Culture (BOW) in Chicago, I have had the opportunities to attend several international disability art festivals and symposia, and have met many fellow artists with disabilities who are hesitant to affiliate themselves with disability art. A few of them have named me as a "jealous killjoy" when I called out their exclusion of disabled people by exhibiting or performing their work in prominent but extremely inaccessible spaces. Such as when a motorized wheelchair user exhibits her paintings in a basement level gallery, which is only accessible by a flight of stairs.

In the mainstream art world, audiences observe and interpret artwork about disability often based on the stereotypical representations of disability that have existed in the non-disabled-centered cultural beliefs. Images of the overcoming super crips (Clare, 1999) —

disabled people who are able to demonstrate their sheer will and strength to prevail in life challenges in "despite of" their disability—have become the societal expectation of what disability "should" look like. Disability representations are polarized. The mundane physical, emotional, or mental ups and downs, and the systematic barriers that everyday disabled people experience remain unseen or intentionally sealed off. On the other hand, impairments can be overemphasized to the point where they are seen as the only things in a disabled person's life.

The damaging mantra of "I don't see color" suggests one's deliberate choice for not seeing racism as a problem. Similarly, when the idea of "let the art speak for itself" applies to viewing artwork that references disability experiences, it often leads the audience into thinking, *"I should only focus on the art itself, I don't see disability*" out of so-called respect. But the use of euphemism does not help to address the core issues of ableism that disabled people experience in the society (Linton, 1999). Unfortunately, very few art critics and theorists have the finesse and literacy to articulate disability beyond the medical model or the overcoming narratives. Most artists with disabilities have experienced media or critics describing their art solely based on their disability, and how they have conquered life challenges. Artists with disabilities then fear that their work would be considered only as products of therapy, human interest stories, or of a lesser quality of art. Artists with disabilities who want to be accepted by the mainstream art world may end up rejecting their own disability and assume "disability art" as a negative label from which to stay away.

Before I met politicized disabled artists and scholars, I too shared the same hesitation to connect myself to the disability art and culture community. I only began embracing disability culture after meeting fellow artists and scholars, who addressed disability in both aesthetic and cultural terms in their work and talks. It was refreshing that I did not have to explain my medical history, nor demonstrate my abilities to prove my worth. Such invigorating feelings of "home coming" enriched the way I think about disability, and its complexity. At the same time, I experienced a first-time, deep rage about my own internalized ableism because I had been taught to only see disability from the lens of the medical and rehabilitation model. The feeling of "home coming" resurfaced at VIBE for me. I reflected on how internalized ableism requires time to unpack and how internalized ableism can be a survival strategy when one is isolated from the disability culture community.

How do we not only survive, but also thrive as artists and scholars, who produce art about disability through a political and relational lens? For artists, making changes begins by reflecting on our own experiences in relation to disability through the creative process. I argue that such processes must be cultivated amongst fellow disability art artists and scholars, because community is what makes homecoming sustainable in any disability movement. I have identified the following themes for creating and sustaining a new wave of disability art movement after attending VIBE.

Recognizing the Unseen Labour:

In artists' studios, artists use art making processes to create meanings of their lived experiences of disability. This physical and emotional investment echoes the often unseen labours in the care relationships within the disability community. Such as the emotional labour when non-disabled people demand to know *"what's wrong with you?"* And a large percentage of caregivers are underpaid women and especially women of color. By recognizing these unseen labours in artists' work about disability, we also call our attention to how they utilize these experiences to generate artistic vocabulary.

In Darien Goldin Stahl's slide presentation, Stahl modeled ways to facilitate conversations about care relationships through exposing the labour involved in creating *Healing House*. Stahl showed images of the construction process in her studio that captured her physical, emotional, and mental engagement of care. The time-consuming nature of wax prints required Stahl's patience and attention to details— the waiting time between applying the next layer of wax. Stahl's choice of materials: the natural smell of beeswax on the fabric, the warmth of the scent countering the coldness that one may experience when going through medical procedures. It makes the viewers wonder if this process also speaks to how time is experienced by disabled people and their companions, who go through the waiting times during hospital visits. *Healing House* invites the audience to visit a confined installation space where a disabled or pained body might occupy. But *Healing House* is not a teaching moment for the audience to simulate disability experiences. Rather, *Healing House* provides an interactive and meditative space to reflect the intimacy that disabled people often share with their companions and/or caregivers.

Be a Killjoy With Multiple Hats

Creating access for, with, and by disabled people is a process, and it requires efforts to create progress. Creating access does not stop after accessibility services, such as language interpretation, captioning or audio descriptions, are provided at events. We need to be killjoys and ask for more. I argue that the integration of accessibility as an intentional aesthetic choice is one of the next steps in the new wave of disability art.

Social artist and storyteller, Salima Punjani expands the use of biodata beyond its original purpose: identifying symptoms. Each of the three wooden boxes have one MRI scan on transparency film on one side, and the same image was laser-engraved on the other. Punjani's multi-sensory installation, *Progression*, features narratives of participants living with multiple sclerosis. Audiences are invited to listen to the voice recordings of the interviews through headphones. Audiences can choose to engage with this art through touching the laser engraving, or listening to the sounds of brainwave data collected during the telling of their stories. In addition, Punjani offered guides to engage with one's audience's own sensations and responses when viewing the work, such as ways to rest their body, ways to engage with the pillow and headphones. Punjani's use of technology and biodata challenges us to engage with illness and health issues beyond seeking resolution or cure. The multi-sensory installation design not only maximizes exhibition accessibility, but also points to the multiple dimensions of disability experiences. Here, Punjani illustrates the aesthetic and symbolic values of including accessibility in art.

Artists need role models to see accessibility is more than a service provided by arts administrators. Curators, arts administrators, and event organizers also need to recognize accessibility services have the potential to be artistic expressions. Accessibility should not be an afterthought. An example can be found in Cheryl Green's presentation on the Research Creation and Ethnography Part I panel discussion. As a video artist and an audio describer, Green's work demonstrated how audio description is not just filling the gap or reporting the visual images for blind audiences. The language and choice of words of the audio descriptions are integral to the overall artistic expression in video arts. These visions of disability art can lead artists to innovate multiple ways to embody the lived experiences of disability in the art making process and the final artwork. To create a sustainable disability art and culture movement, we need to create a space for process-oriented, backstage, internal, and intrapersonal conversations that we facilitate as a creative community. We especially need to do so for the sake of being seen by our own people in the disability culture, and by people who are still in search of their affiliations to the disability community.

Disability Art Is Getting More Complicated. And That is Good.

In our reflections, we found that our collective experience of sharing space with one another and other disabled artists and disability studies scholars shaped our experience of the symposium as much as viewing and hearing about the work being done in the field. In our reflections and theorizations, we identified a few themes we see emerging as essential to this new wave of disability art. Disabled artists challenge one another and our audiences to question assumptions around what disability feels and appears like, as well as opening up the potential scope of impairment types considered under the category of “artist” or “maker.” The work presented by artists and scholars at VIBE leverages the relationality of disability to open up our understanding of who constitutes a disability artists to include allies and those communities historically underrepresented by disability art, not all of whom were able to be covered in the space of this article. This work addresses the core of disability politics and experiences through disability aesthetics. It also challenges ableist assumptions about what an artistic practice is or might be by taking into account the needs of the bodies making and perceiving the work. It holds the potential to address a wider range of disability experiences than seen in previous waves of disability art and simultaneously encourages its audience to think in more complex ways about the line between disability and normalcy.

New wave disability art takes place not only in the actual artistic products, but also where access constitutes not one set goal, but an ongoing process of discovery, discussion, and adjustment. This constant flex is an essential part of creating work from a place where all participating bodies feel free to address their physical, communicational, psychological, sensorial, and emotional needs. As artist scholars, we experienced the ongoing changes of accessibility at VIBE. Not only in the ways the symposium’s structure changed to meet the access needs of attendees, but also as we began to understand each others’ needs. The space became more accessible as we learned to make adjustments for one another before they were asked for. Being in the space together not only allowed artists and scholars to promote and learn about one another's work, but to better understand the needs of each other's bodyminds and the ways in which those needs influenced their artistic process and product.

Pointing out that disabled bodies carry the capacity to attend to each other's access needs is important to acknowledge in our new wave of disability art. We envision a disability art future that highlights access as an embodied experience that benefits the disability art making process. New disability art is a canvas for disabled people not only to look at themselves from a creative and cultural lens, but is also a living stage to examine the dynamics, differences, and the interconnectedness shared within this chosen crip family. This family acknowledges that disability is an ever changing identity that might not be apparent, and acknowledges the importance of caregivers and allies becoming proficient in disability culture. As we create and embody this new wave, we have the opportunity to imagine artistic practices that meet the unique needs of the broad spectrum of people with disabilities. These artists and audiences push the field to think through questions of process, collaboration, ethics, visibility, and artistic-scholarship in disability studies and, in doing so, create a more sustainable, community-based practice for members of the disability community and their allies.

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