

Resistance: The Art of Change

By Liz Crow

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Around 15 years ago, I read *By Trust Betrayed*, a book by Hugh Gallagher that told of the events of *Aktion T4*, the Nazi programme of mass murder that targeted disabled people. The first thing to strike me was, in all my years' involvement in the disabled people's movement, how could it be that I had never come across this history before? Apart from the obvious horror of what I was reading, two things especially stayed with me from reading that book. The first was that the values that permitted *Aktion T4* to happen felt eerily familiar, alarmingly contemporary. From one of the darkest episodes of history, these values still echo through disabled people's lives today.

The second was a brief, yet very powerful, section of the book that spoke of people, including disabled people, who resisted. Imagine being in an institution and made dependent on the staff for your every need, those very same people who were pivotal in your survival or demise. To resist in those conditions inspires awe.

I knew I needed to do something with what I had read and, though it took time for me to find its form, over several years the *Resistance* project emerged. It comprises a film based installation that has now toured to ten galleries in the UK and internationally, and a high-profile performance piece that challenges historical values and their echoes. In this paper, I trace the history of the disabled holocaust, from its broader social and political beginnings to its aftermath, and I explore its contemporary impact. Describing the development of the *Resistance* project, I examine the lessons it holds for the future of a more inclusive holocaust education and of our capacity to act for social justice. Finally, I ask what we might learn from past and present in order to shape a future that can delight in diversity...

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