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# Disability Arts

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## Art, Austerity, Activism: Alice Holland's blog

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### Art, Austerity, Activism: Alice Holland's blog / 12 March 2015

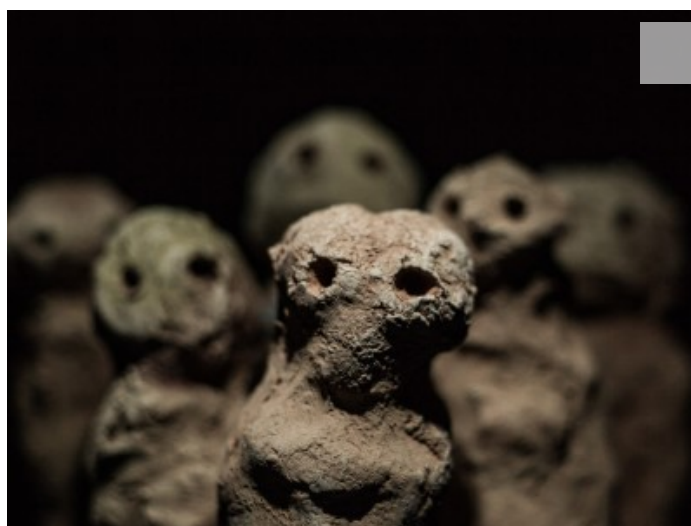
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In the week dominated by coverage of [Martin Sheen's speech](#) on the danger of middle-of-the-road politics whilst the NHS is eroded I found myself sporadically weeping into the pelt of a Golden Retriever called Archie and plotting to blow up Parliament. Welcome to arts administration.

In preparation for Liz Crow's new sculpture performance '[Figures](#)', I had the grisly-yet-illuminating task of copy-editing 650

stories of the human cost of austerity, each one to be represented by a clay figure made by Liz. At the office of [CoQuo](#), the digital agency supporting Figures, I plugged in, caffeinated, and nearly dislocated my jaw from the number of times it dropped in disbelief.

As a borderline anarchist, the depths to which the authorities will stoop to do over the public in the name of budget cuts didn't come as a total surprise to me, but my ignorance as to the situations of some people claiming Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence



Payments was a bit of a shock. I knew when starting this training that my limited experiences of personal disability were going to be challenged, something I am grateful for, but the total outrage I felt at reading the unfair ways in which claimants have been treated was a baptism of fire into disability politics that has brought me, still smoking, to total belief in the relevance of Liz's arts activism. People are dying waiting for their PIP re-assessments, families are being put under terrible pressure, and press propaganda is turning neighbours against each other.

The metaphorical clay from which we are all fashioned will, I hope, be transformed into literal protest in Liz's hands, and I will be there, along with CoQuo and Dao to support this performance as it happens. Archie, my respite hound friend, will unfortunately not be in attendance as he is enjoying a retirement most humans would be lucky to have.

Matthew Fessey of CoQuo made an interesting point about the power of digital media; in that whilst only a few hundred people were in attendance at Martin Sheen's speech his message has now been spread to millions thanks to a couple of smartphone cameras. Whatever our stories we must document them; the status quo cannot be trusted to record an accurate history.

Make art, share stories, shout loudly.

As I finish writing this post I have just received the great news that Trish and I have been accepted as Joint Fellows of the [CultureHive Digital Marketing Academy](#); we applied with the intention of upskilling ourselves in the promotion of disability arts projects to even wider audiences.

Watch this space artists, or better yet, fill it!

Please sign up to follow [@WeAreFigures](#) on Twitter, where the 650 stories will be shared.

Keywords: access to work,art and mental health,capitalism,disability activists,disability art,george osborne,liz crow,money,outdoor art,performing arts,political,politics,protest,recession,socially engaged art,symbolism,visual art,welfare reform

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- engage seek Generation ART,  
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- Shape Arts seeks candidates for  
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Futures’
- GDANCE is seeking a

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Lloyd Coleman: The  
Sound of Disability

Wendy Tongue

Crippen

Deborah Caulfield

Bonk's blog

Katherine Araniello

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Vince Laws

Survivors' Poetry

Oska Bright On The Road

Frank Bangay

Liz Porter: Learning to  
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18 February 2013

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Dao is a partner of the National Disability Arts Collection and Archive. To find out about this important

**Tweets**

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 **DisabilityArtsOnline** 20h  
@disabilityarts

Slippage: The Unstable Nature of Change, CASC Gallery, University of Chester till 27 March.  
[In.is/org.uk/2iK1A](http://In.is/org.uk/2iK1A)

 **DisabilityArtsOnline** 21h  
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Art, Austerity, Activism: Alice Holland's blog - disability arts online  
[In.is/org.uk/P9rwu](http://In.is/org.uk/P9rwu)

 **Hannah Morgan** 22h  
@HannahnagroM

Crippen picture always brightens a Friday afternoon  
Are you stuck in that wheelchair?!  
[In.is/org.uk/xVTek](http://In.is/org.uk/xVTek)  
HT @disabilityarts

Retweeted by DisabilityArtsOnline

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 **DisabilityArtsOnline** 22h  
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engage seek Generation ART, Evaluator: £10,000 fee April - October 2015 [In.is/org.uk/NgJai](http://In.is/org.uk/NgJai)

Tweet to @disabilityarts

project as it develops

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go to \[www.ndaca.org.uk\]\(http://www.ndaca.org.uk\)](#)

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## The Creative Case for Diversity

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The Creative Case is a re-imagining of the Arts Council's approach to diversity and equality, setting out how these areas can and should enrich the arts for artists, audiences and our wider society.

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Friendly URL: <http://www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk/art-austerity-activism>

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