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# Disability Arts Online

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## Editorial

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### Colin Hambrook gives an overview of Liz Crow's Bedding In Bedding Out. / 16 July 2013

Liz Crow's live durational performance 'Bedding In, Bedding Out' was initially a DAO commission which featured at SPILL Festival, held in Ipswich Art School Gallery in November 2012. preparing a revamp of the Bedding Out website in time for a fresh showing of the work at the [Pleasance Hunt and Darton Cafe in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival from 9-10 August](#).

In April 2013 Crow produced Bedding Out as a 48 hour durational performance for the 'People Like You' exhibition at

Salisbury Arts Centre. Having piloted the installation piece at SPILL, Crow had time to consider how to up the level of engagement created in response to the live art installation. Through a livestream the performance was watched in over 50 countries; had a continuous twitter feed comprising of thousands of messages, with extra twitter conversations laid on to cope with demand.

In a bold statement the artist placed herself in a large bed located on the altar stage of the converted church in front of a beautiful stained glass backdrop. Each day, members of the public were invited to Bedside Conversations, gathering round the bed or perching upon it to



Crippen Atos hammer cartoon

talk about the work and its politics. One of the purposes of the piece was for the artist to illustrate the contradictions of the private and public self of disabled people - having to put on their best 'performance' for employers and funders, whilst having to present themselves at their worst for benefits assessments. Crow said of the work: "This is not a work of tragedy, but of in/visibility and complication; a chance to perform my self without façade."

When you consider the media frenzy of newspaper reports and television documentaries since the recession, focussing on fraud and 'dependency culture', often presenting grossly inaccurate statistics or highlighting individual stories as representative of a 'bigger picture' then the need Bedding Out addresses for showing the complexities of the lives of disabled people becomes more pertinent.

In the conversations that arose through social media, compiled by Liz Crow (Roaring Girl Productions), Nick Dilworth (My Legal Forum) and Dawn Willis the anger, disenfranchisement and resolve of disabled people comes to the fore. Something extraordinary unfolds as facts about living on benefits and stories of disabled peoples' lives as they really are and what it is to be a benefit claimant, come into focus showing why it matters so much to speak out.

The edited tweets from the twitter conversations will soon be available as a resource. You can currently find the conversations that transpired from the last Bedding Out on [www.roaring-girl.com](http://www.roaring-girl.com)

What strikes me fundamentally from the material accrued by Liz Crow is how much of an attitude of total disregard for the lives of the poor by the wealthy and powerful, at its height during Victorian times, has resurfaced. How can a country that places itself above others as an example of a civilised society tolerate the authorities making demands that people prepare for work, whilst they are in the throes of dying. This has been the reality for at least 1,300 sick or disabled people, who have died (over what period) shortly after having their benefits stopped. What a terrible indictment of the cruelty of the administrative systems set up to assess work capability and what an ignominious disregard for human life.

Coming a year after the Paralympics, with all its hero, can-do rhetoric, we are seeing the full extent of how the sports agenda has been subverted and manipulated to demonise disabled people, who have been turned into a contemporary folk-devil as part of an ideological drive to divide and rule. The scrapping of the Independent Living Fund, due to close in 2015 is the next hangman's drop waiting to descend on disabled people...

**Keywords:** cuts to services, live art

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Government publishes PIP consultation document

[wearespartacus.org.uk/government-p](http://wearespartacus.org.uk/government-p)

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Tweet to @disabilityarts

18 February 2013

**The National Disability Arts Collection and Archive (NDACA)**



NDACA aims to preserve, digitise, and make public the significant works of art and items that have been important to the Disability Arts Movement.

The archive will help to capture an understanding of the historical influence of Disability Arts and the social struggles of the movement in changing attitudes towards disabled people.

[To find out about the project as it develops please 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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