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Editorial

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Colin Hambrook urges DAO readers to interact with Liz Crow's Bedding Out / 1 August 2013

In the run-up to taking *Bedding Out* to the Edinburgh Fringe from 9-10 August, Liz Crow has been busy taking the many thousands of messages in tweets made during the last performance in April at Salisbury Arts Centre and formatting the conversations as a downloadable resource divided into topics ranging from talking about labels and identity, the reality of our lives as disabled people, the welfare system, propaganda and campaigning. You can find these if you scroll down the [Bedding Out page on the Roaring Girl website](#) and find the link labelled Twitter Conversations.

Reading through the tweets you see peoples' identities emerge in a context of dealing with the contradictions that current welfare reform faces disabled people with. There is a strong sense of isolated people making connections and expressing outrage at having to deal with having been demonised more and more effectively over the past few years.



2 - @RGPLizCrow Daughter said "it's like the witch trials" Survive assessment and you don't need the support; die in the process and you did.

Atos test cartoon. © Crippen

So, for example @MYHeardRadio begins a conversation by saying “we’ve moved away from the fragile dignity afforded by the care/welfare system, towards justifying our existence?” “How has it happened” s/he asks “that in the UK folks think it’s actually OK for sick and disabled people to need to justify and ‘defend’ their needs?” @Kitschmonkey responds with a statement affirming a right to existence: “Identity becomes eroded through illness, and further by how we are viewed by public. I am not a victim. I am a whole person.” @RGPLizCrow follows the thread with a statement about the kinds of games disabled people get caught up in as a result of the pressure to present a contradictory sense of self. “I wear a public self that is energetic, dynamic and happening, I am also ill. I conceal it carefully,” she says. @tippyscarecrow adds to this by saying “It’s hard to get a balance: wear a mask and have a life, versus the knock-on effects of impairment. Many people only see me in my mask.”

The frustrations of bearing a fractured identity emerge through the conversations time and again. @IsabelleClement observes that “when the private becomes public it helps to illustrate the existential panic disabled people can end up feeling in the brave new world of Tory welfare reform.” #BeddingOut explores the knife edge disabled people are living on, having to deal with being tick-boxed as part of the process of justifying existence, setting out to be a platform to counter the lies and misinformation established in the press. According to a [TUC-commissioned poll published earlier this year](#) those who know least about benefits are the most hostile to claimants. @RGPLizCrow argues against the cynicism and despondency in the face of the immense power struggle that faces us: “If we say ‘nothing we say makes a difference’ we’ve lost the battle,” she says.

Whilst the press claim widespread benefit fraud [the Department for Work & Pensions \(DWP\) statistics](#) report fraud at 0.7% across all benefits, with DLA fraud at 0.5%. The battle is reflected in articles like that in the [Daily Mail](#) claiming 75% disabled people are ‘faking it’. At the same time according to a report from [the Institute for Fiscal Studies](#), published in November 2012, tax evasion is over £120bn. Government ministers are misrepresenting official statistics for political gain according to [the Guardian](#). We are fighting an ideological battle to counter spin on the costs of the benefits system.

Online statistical data from [the DWP](#) shows that the cost of benefits to the economy works out at a tiny percentage of GDP and less than ten percent of total taxes. Getting on for one-third of benefits goes in housing benefit, profiting landlords, raking it in as a result of the inflation of house prices by successive governments since the 1970s. DWP statistics show that still more of that money goes in subsidising employers who pay their staff less than a living wage.

A new ideology has emerged in the wake of the Paralympics as disabled people have gone from being marketed by the media as ‘superhuman’ to being labelled as ‘scroungers’ living the life of Riley on others’ hard-earned taxes. From remarks like those of @DACymru it seems that the Social Model of Disability has been appropriated and remodelled: “The Work Capability

the Social Model of Disability has been appropriated and remodelled. The Work Capability Assessment is a prime example of the Social Model being twisted and used against us.” Anti-charity rhetoric has been reinterpreted as meaning that disabled people don't need support to be able to get on with living with an impairment. Further to this @bluehook asks “...what happened to the equality impact assessment?” Government rhetoric emphasises the will to get disabled people into work at the same time as taking away the means of facilitating the possibility of being able to do so by cutting the Access to Work programme. Within a very short space of time the agenda for inclusion has been turned on its head.

Fears arise through the conversations: @lisapeacefrench states “What frightens me is that welfare reforms are CAUSING discrimination and stigma.” With the proposed disbandment of the Independent Living Fund in 2015 there is a question about the reintroduction of institutions. @DebzCaulfield states “#BeddingOut highlights the agenda for austerity cuts, ie putting disabled people back into institutions.” “This must not happen,” she asserts.

What comes across through the messages is the need to share experience and to find solutions and ways of making our voices heard. @Onlyfluffyone applauds the use of social media: “From my bed I have witnessed a small revolution begin.. @RGPLizCrow has started it.. We need to carry it on.. Time for more #beddingout.” @DADAAorgau describes #BeddingOut “as a quiet act with a loud social impact” affirming that “quiet acts can have loud consequences.”

I'd urge you to have a look at the site and take part as Liz Crow prepares for Bedding Out in Edinburgh

Friday 9th August 10.00am – Saturday 10th 4.00pm

Hunt & Darton Cafe, 17-21 St Mary's Street, EH1 1SU

Conversations around the bed Fri 1pm, 5pm, Saturday 10am, 2pm, with BSL interpreter and notetaker

Conversation on Twitter Fri 9pm, Sat noon

@RGPLizCrow #beddingout

Please leave your comments. They will display when submitted. DAO encourages critical feedback, but please be considerate. DAO reserves the right to edit or remove comments that don't comply with our editorial policy, which you can find on DAOs 'About' pages.

Your name

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Your e-mail address will not be revealed to the public.

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HTML is forbidden, but line-breaks will be retained.

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This can be a URL of an image or a YouTube, MySpaceTV or a Flickr page (we'll handle the media embedding from there!)

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In this section:

Editorial

Liz Crow

Tim Jeeves: How to Fall in Love

Crippen

Gini: 'Creatives in Con.Text'

Deborah Caulfield

Joanne Cox

From the listings**Jobs | Events | Opportunities**

Candoco Dance Company are looking for a General Manager (maternity cover)

Mercury Theatre seek Chair of the Board & Board Members

Marketing and Fundraising posts at Pavilion Dance South West

The Art House seek expressions of interest for a 12 month artist in residence project.

Sarah Hirst

Nina Muehlemann

Bonk's blog

Katherine Araniello

Joe McConnell

Sophie Partridge

Trish Wheatley

Richard Downes

Gini

Penny Pepper

Gary Thomas

Dolly Sen

Vince Laws

Joe Kelly

Survivors Poetry

The Art House

Oska Bright On The Road

Archive blogs

Be a DAO blogger

Frank Bangay

Shape Arts seek Volunteer
Access Driver

Share this page:

Tweet 0

Like 2

Like and follow our page:

Like 29

Follow @disabilityarts

DAO stream:

Art forms:

Visual Arts

Performing Arts

Literature

Film and Television

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](http://www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk/?location_id=176&item=1879)

Tweets**Follow****DisabilityArtsOnline**

2 Aug

@disabilityarts

Robert Softley is performing 'If these Spasms Could Speak' at the Edinburgh Fringe. He talks to Kaite O'Reilly on DAO

disabilityartsonline.org.uk/robert-softl

Expand

**Liz Crow**

1 Aug

@RGPLizCrow

'Disabled people feel paraded and degraded during the benefits claims process.' It is time to make a stand together join [#beddingout](#)

Retweeted by DisabilityArtsOnline

Expand

**Liz Crow**

29 Jul

@RGPLizCrow

[#beddingout](#) "This is not a work of tragedy, but of in/visibility and complication" in disability and welfare reform. [#EdFringe](#) 9-10 Aug

Retweeted by DisabilityArtsOnline

Expand

**DisabilityArtsOnline**

30 Jul

@disabilityarts

Video diary of development of How to Fall in Love - promenade

Tweet to @disabilityarts

[as it develops please go to](#)

www.ndaca.org.uk

The Creative Case for Diversity



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/colins_blog

Site by [Surface Impression](#)