

Call for Papers: Special Issue of the *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*

Invitation to Dance: Performing Disability Politics through the Dancing Body

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The global phenomenon of disability/integrated dance – an art form in which dancers with and without disabilities dance in collaboration and as individual, creative practitioners – provides case studies to the questions raised at the outset, bringing forward the role of the body in cultural and societal representations of disability. More broadly, disability dance offers insights into the ways choreographers, directors, and practitioners employ the moving body, the built environment, and mobility apparatuses to expand the politics of participation and the appearance of disabled bodies in public spaces. Georgina Kleege (*Sight Unseen*, 1999) draws on her own experience studying with Martha Graham to explain that, because of the strong emphasis on verbal communication in dance pedagogy, her vision impairment “was not the hindrance one might assume” (p. 112). This example illustrates, with particular clarity, how disability dance resists straightforward distinctions between the biological and the social dimensions of corporeal difference, while foregrounding the aesthetic possibilities that follow from enlarging the scope of ordinary notions of athleticism, expressivity, creativity, and skill.

Joining a long philosophical conceptualization of the moving body as a creative medium through which modern political subjectivities are constructed and regulated, this special issue of *JLCDS* on dance, disability, and performance begins a conversation at once familiar and strange. Disability Culture embraces the politicized moves of “disability performance art” and disability studies’ calls for a return to a phenomenology of disabled people. Somewhere near, dance studies attend to the political role of the kinesthetic realm, analyzing, for example, the choreography of protests and the political role of dance within bitterly contested domains. The performance of disability politics through the dancing body offers an opportunity not only *to re-embody the political* by focusing on the kinesthetic, moving body, but also *to politicize movement* through the prism of disability studies, staging disability and bodily difference as central analytical tools.

For this special issue, we invite interdisciplinary analyses of the question of how and if the sensory dancing body mediates and affects the artistic and everyday politics of disability and bodily diversity. We wish to bring together the experiences of people with and without disabilities from a variety of countries through a wide range of disciplines and analytical approaches, including anthropological, sociological, historical, performative, autoethnographic, and practice-based research perspectives, paying attention to “alternative corporealities” on stage, in the studio, the home, the archives, and in myriad public, private, and mediated spaces. We invite you to explore how, if, and why movement can be conceptualized as a political act that can invent a new aesthetics of representation, with dance making corporeal difference tangible in singular ways.

We invite papers encompassing the work of established scholars, early and mid-career researchers, independent scholars, artists, and creators, to offer a multifaceted discussion of dancing subjects and their ways of negotiating disability as difference in contexts such as education, the Covid-19 pandemic, visual impairment, Deafblindness, neurodivergence, physical disability, Madness, intellectual and developmental disability (IDD). Through this expansive approach, we call for critical attunements that deepen our individual and collective understanding of what human movement has meant in the past, and what it could mean in the future.

Possible questions may include those listed below, as well as closely related topics, and areas of exploration:

- How has Covid-19 transformed the ways bodies move in and out of time, and through real and virtual space?
- What strategies do dancers and choreographers use in (re)claiming the disabled body?
- How might dancing encounters and choreographed collaborations between disabled and non-disabled people challenge individual and collective beliefs about their own and others' bodies, identities, and embodied practices?
- How are bodily differences represented, negotiated, and experienced through artistic expression?
- What are the possibilities and limits of negotiating diversity and aspiring for socio-political change when these goals are intertwined with infinite ways of being?
- How might we reimagine the political importance of the corporeal, intersubjective knowledge created at the junction of the political, corporeal, and aesthetic?

Please send abstracts to shonisch@mail.ubc.ca and gili.hammer@mail.huji.ac.il, by **June 1, 2022**. Abstracts should be no more than 500 words. Authors whose abstracts are selected for the co-edited special issue will be notified by **August 15, 2022**. Full drafts of articles based on selected abstracts will be due by **January 15, 2023**.