

PRESENTED BY
CLAGS

SCREENING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Tara Mateik, Paisley Currah, Robert Chang, Sarah Chinn
Kim Christensen, Kate Huh, David Serlin, Santiago Solis

CO-SPONSORED BY

The Haworth Press, Women Make Movies, The Woodhull Freedom
Foundation, The Sexual Health Network (sexualhealth.com), The
Lesbian and Gay Law Association of Greater New York, and Video
Data Bank

ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies strives to make all our
events accessible. All events in the Graduate Center are wheelchair
accessible. ASL interpretation will be provided for the discussion
part of each evening's program. If you have other accessibility
needs, please contact the CLAGS office, with a relay operator if
necessary, at (212) 817-1955 or email us at clags@gc.cuny.edu

CLAGS INFORMATION

CLAGS is a university-based research center dedicated to the study of
historical, cultural, and political issues of vital concern to lesbian, gay,
bisexual, and transgender individuals and communities. By sponsoring free
public programs and conferences, offering fellowships to individual schol-
ars, and functioning as an indispensable conduit of information, CLAGS
serves as a national center for the promotion of scholarship that fosters
social change. CLAGS makes its home at the Graduate Center of the City
University of New York.

CLAGS's efforts to promote an academy where homophobia, sexism,
racism, ablism, and classism are studied and not enacted depend on the
generosity of our members. The basic membership rate of \$35 (\$10 for
students or individuals with limited income) includes advanced notification
of all public events and a subscription to our biannual newsletter. For infor-
mation about our programming, fellowships, colloquia and conferences,
or to learn more about becoming a member, please visit us on the Internet
at www.clags.org.

THE CENTER FOR LESBIAN AND GAY STUDIES FILM FESTIVAL

PICTURING QUEERNESS & DISABILITY

OCT. 7, 14, & 21

7 PM SCREENINGS, SEGAL THEATRE, GRADUATE CENTER,
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, 365 FIFTH AVENUE,
BTW. 34TH & 35TH ST. FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7

“Crip Shots”
John R. Killacky

“Beauteous: Stephanie”
Giovanna Chesler

“Double the Trouble, Twice the Fun”
Pratibha Parmar

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14

“One Night Sit”
C. Gonzalez, T. Hinojosa, & D. Naftal

“Entry” & “Voice/Over”
Shelley Barry

“Necessary Action”
John R. Killacky

“Sea in the Blood”
Richard Fung

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21

“Self Preservation: The Art of Riva Lehrer”
David Mitchell & Sharon Snyder

“goodnight, liberation”
Oriana Bolden

“Operation Invert”
Tara Mateik

“close yr hearing for the capshuns”
Stephanie Gray

Lehrer’s paintings are graceful, powerful, and moving representations of disability experiences and identities. The paintings, their subjects, and the film’s commentators challenge disability stereotypes on multiple levels. This work taps into and unleashes the non-sentimentalized and visionary love, joy, and community upon which the disability rights movement and other movements for liberation are founded.

Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell are the founders of Brace Yourselves Productions, a grass-roots digital video studio that has produced several award-winning documentary films. Together, they have also published several books and numerous essays in disability studies. Both teach courses in the history of disabled persons, the representation of disability in film and culture, and the history of eugenics, at the University of Illinois, Chicago.

This film demands that audiences intimately view the topics of health (or lack thereof), poverty’s affect on body and community, and the struggle to keep connected the personal to the political.

“i am an activist/organizer, dyke, filmmaker, survivor/warrior... at 8 i was diagnosed with a chronic illness, at 14 i started spending more time at non-profit organizations than at school, at 17 i co-founded a national network of youth organizers, and at 19 i was executive director of a young women’s organization.”

A comparison of the different regulations mediating botox-related plastic surgery and gender re-assignment “sex change.” Current institutional loopholes governing gender re-assignment surgery suggest a fresh resurgence of loony pathology and diagnosis.

The final evening of programming highlights resistance and activism. The evening's films could be considered as a tactical call to arms.

PANELISTS

- Oriana Bolden
- Stephanie Gray
- Tara Mateik
- David Mitchell
- Sharon Snyder

SELF PRESERVATION: THE ART OF RIVA LEHRER

David Mitchell & Sharon Snyder

GOODNIGHT, LIBERATION

Oriana Bolden

OPERATION INVERT

Tara Mateik

CLOSE YR HEARING FOR THE CAPSHUNS

Stephanie Gray

An experimental visual and sonic voyage through her tribulations with a muted world. She has a sensory-neural hearing loss, and was tired of sterile scientific and textual explanations of hearing loss.

Stephanie Gray is a NYC-based media artist. She was previously editor of the Squealer media arts journal published by Squeaky Wheel/Buffalo Media Resources, a non-profit media arts center. Relocating to NYC in 2004, she now works as Development Associate at the Creative Capital Foundation in NYC, a nonprofit organization that supports artists.

PICTURING QUEERNESS AND DISABILITY

Queer experimental and activist film and video was at its origins linked with the New Queer Cinema and AIDS activism.¹ Politicized works rebutted mainstream media's definition of AIDS and built community around a new HIV Positive identity. At the same historical moment, a new canon of experimental queer cinema emerged to re-examine histories and representations of homosexuals and, in the process, subverted genres previously considered mainstream.

The cultural production and media activism around queer disability issues showcased in *Picturing Queerness and Disability* furthers the critical trajectory of queer cinema and its formative relationship to AIDS politics and experience. Like early AIDS activism, this program aims to distance disease and illness as the distinguishing characteristics of queer identity, and to resituate disability as part of the political discourse from within our community. Echoing throughout this body of work is the desire to reconnect the discourse on illness and impairment to queer identity and, more generally, to sexuality. The individual pieces in *Picturing Queerness and Disability* collectively employ the strategies of critique, humor, and intervention to revise mainstream representations of disability—that of the disabled as medical specimen, as heroic “supercrip,”² or “useless eater.”³ This series calls for disability to be part of the L/G/B/T political vocabulary and focuses our attention to work at the intersections of queer studies and disability studies. These videos contain refreshing positive, multidimensional, and critical views on disability. Our hope is that this program will facilitate an open-ended robust exchange inspired by the transformative dialogues on screen.

OCTOBER 7TH: INTIMACY AND EXPOSURE

Pratibha Parmar's *Double Trouble, Twice the Fun* is a germinal project, one of the first video representations at the intersection of disability and queerness. Just as queers have historically been characterized solely by their sexuality, disabled people have been characterized by their presumed lack of sexuality. This video sets the mood for romance using softly erotic humor—“Your wheelchair or mine?” Parmar's repeated use of mirrors reflects the notion that people with disabilities live multi-dimensional lives. The second of the evening's screenings, *Beautiful: Stephanie*, calls attention to the practice of “normalization” through surgery. Exposed to the knife early on, Giovanna Chesler examines her relationships to beauty standards as she considers the childhood surgery that transformed her face. Disability becomes an infinitely malleable space, worked from the inside out by John Killacky in many of the vignettes in his video *Crip Shots*: Greg Wallock's eloquent re-telling of getting a boner during a checkup gives new meaning to exposure, yet through candid autobiographical disruption he creates his own triumph; Terry Galloway brings together taboo with dark humor and meditates on mortality in the provocative *Etiquette of Suicide*; and the rhythmic, acrobatic movements of the “crutchmaster,” Bill Shannon, challenge a state of crip frailty and propose a modern athleticism only feasible through a disabled body.

OCTOBER 14TH: NEGOTIATIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS

In the collective production, *One Night Sit*, Carmelo Gonzalez, Ted Hinojosa, and Diana Naftal imitate the camera work of popular dating shows, and through candid interviews, pose questions about dating in a gay male community that over-emphasizes physical beauty. In *Entry*, Shelley Barry's visual poetry pays mimetic homage to Frida Kahlo's paintings as she meditates on her own body paralyzed by taxi wars.⁴ And in her companion piece, *Voice/Over*, Barry combines erotic-sounding breathing with images of her scars ornamented with crowns. Bullet holes are the precursor for her disability, but they don't preclude, and are actually part of, her queer sexuality. John Killacky also ruminates on disability and sexuality in *Necessary Action*. Dreaming as an able-bodied man, Killacky comes to terms with his disability even during sleep, and reminds the able-bodied viewer that they are all just "temps," impermanently able bodied and susceptible to disability.⁵ In *Sea in the Blood*, Richard Fung's video on living close to illness—his sister, Nan, has Thalassemia and his boyfriend, Tim, is HIV positive.⁶ While their illnesses are blood relatives, his sister and lover never meet. The filmmaker lyrically mediates between two chronic illnesses, love, and loss, as he fuses home movie footage, travel documentation, and a journey that connects his sister and partner.

OCTOBER 21ST: RESISTANCE AND ACTIVISM

The final night of works is a call to arms. Implementing revisionist strategies and outlaw tactics, these artists incorporate and evolve disability and queer theory through action. Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell's *Self Preservation: The Art of Riva Lehrer* documents both artist Riva Lehrer's portfolio and the process of making it. Refurbishing old techniques such as surrealist painting, Lehrer collaborates with her muses—other people with disabilities—to construct surroundings in which they'll be portrayed in her Magic Realist paintings. The paintings come to life as the subjects talk about their experience and challenge stereotypes about disability. As a tribute and a response to Langston Hughes's *Good Morning, Revolution: Uncollected Writings of Social Protest*, in *Good Night, Liberation* Oriana Bolden sees no liberation in sight with regard to health care and poverty. She takes things into her own hands, literally, and shoplifts items at a local pharmacy. Programmer Tara Mateik's contribution, *Operation Invert*, analyzes the historical medical assessments of the invert (homosexual and transsexual) "condition" to reveal seemingly outdated absurdities about outsider deviance. Nonetheless, current institutional loopholes governing gender re-assignment surgery suggest a fresh resurgence of loony pathology and diagnosis. Are gender outlaws the new biological terrorists seeking weapons of mass bodily destruction? Finally, when Stephanie Grey was tired of sterile, scientific, and textual explanations of hearing loss, she composed a visual and sonic voyage that mimics the experience of someone with sensory neural hearing loss. *Gray's close yr hearing for the capshuns*, catalyzes a visceral response in her audience, exploring how "context is created and handed down linguistically and literally by communicators."

One Night Sit explores the difficulties four disabled gay men face in finding partners in New York City. The men in the film encounter prejudice and rejection in a culture where body image and looks count for more than companionship and tolerance. The video reveals that emotional and social barriers are as hard to surmount as physical barriers when you're gay and disabled. Produced through ConnectTV, the only broadcast TV production program for people with disabilities in the United States

Carmelo Gonzalez developed Cerebral Palsy as a result of an early childhood illness. He studied at the National Theater Workshop of the Handicapped for seven years. Leaving the world of acting - when his speech impediment made it increasingly clear that it would be impossible to get significant and consistent roles - he became a writer instead, and published *Rolling On*, the story of a disabled man's struggle for acceptance, self-respect and love. *Ted Hinojosa*, born in Jackson Heights, Queens, has been drawing since he was eight and making his own comics since the tenth grade. In 1992, he was diagnosed with GAD and agoraphobia. He became involved with the ConnectTV program and hopes to make his own film. *Diana Naftal* co-developed and co-produced *One Night Sit* with fellow ConnectTV students. Diana is currently in post-production for "Disarmed and Dangerous" ; a film exploring the similarities and differences between two women who share a similar disability. In addition to her involvement with ConnectTV, Diana is a practicing social worker. She received her Masters in Social Work from NYU in 2000.

ENTRY explores the re-insertion of images into a media that does not reflect people with disabilities as passionate and sexual beings. *VOICE/OVER* is a short experimental video focusing on notions of voice, language and disability.

Hailing from the Eastern Cape, South Africa, *Shelley Barry* is currently based at Temple University in Philadelphia, where she completed six short films. Following a shooting in the Cape taxi wars of 1996 that resulted in her being a wheelchair user, she has worked extensively as a disability rights activist.

Necessary Action presents one man's ruminations on disability and sexuality. See page 7 for *John R. Killacky's* bio.

Sea in the Blood is a documentary about living with illness, it traces the relationship of the filmmaker to thalassemia in his sister Nan, and AIDS in his partner Tim. The narrative of love and loss is set against a background of colonialism in the Caribbean and the reverberations of migration and political change.

Richard Fung is a Toronto based videographer/filmmaker and activist from Trinidad. His many works have engaged with questions of sexism and racism.

The selections for tonight's program focus on the negotiations of relationships -- romantic, familial -- and of landscapes.

PANELISTS

Simi Linton
President, Disability/Arts
Co-Director of Columbia University's
Seminar in Disability Studies

Shelley Barry
Filmmaker and Activist

Irene Sosa
Brooklyn College

ONE NIGHT SIT
Carmelo Gonzalez
Ted Hinojosa
Diana Naftal

ENTRY

VOICE/OVER

PINPRICKS

Shelley Barry

NECESSARY ACTION

John R. Killacky

SEA IN THE BLOOD

Richard Fung



Programming Picturing Queerness and Disability involved the mobilization of many resources. We took the community media tactics and the ethics of the disability community as our guide. Our programming committee of artists, academics, and activists—intellectually and personally committed to the issues on disability rights and disability studies—collectively selected the works. This is our contribution to the disability rights movement, and to interrogations at the intersections of disability studies and queer studies. We hope it incites further dialogue and debate.

TARA MATEIK
Curator

Tara Mateik is an Artist, curator, and activist living in New York City. Entering both political and biological cells as an ersatz scientist, his work critically explores the gendered signifiers and codes of these fantastic mythologies through performance, video, and intervention. As the founder of the Society for Biological Insurgents, or SBI (pronounced /spi/), an embryonic cell organization that seeks to overthrow institutions of compulsory gender, Mateik released mutinous biological agents in his work. Mateik's radical passion is partly inspired by his celebrated work with Paper Tiger Television, a well-established non-profit video collective. As Coordinating Director at PTTV Mateik advocated for alternative media production and distribution initiatives that worked to demystify and democratize media. His video works include Toilet Training: Law and Order and in the Bathroom (with the Sylvia Rivera Law Project), Operation Invert and P.Y.T. Mateik's writing and work has been published in FELIX: A Journal of Media Arts and Culture, LTTR, a new queer feminist art journal and GRIP: A BOOK OF MANIFESTOS. He has curated video programs for the Mix Experimental Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, the London Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, and the Center for Gay and Lesbian Studies at CUNY. Mateik is an MFA candidate at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Intergrated Electronic Arts program

- 1 - Coined by B. Ruby Rich, "New Queer Cinema" refers to seemingly simultaneous appearance on the independent film circuit of films dealing openly and even aggressively with queer culture, politics, and identity in the early nineties.
- 2 - The "supercrip" stereotype depicts a disabled person—a person with a mobility impairment who learns to walk, a dyslexic person who becomes a writer, for example—who, through astounding personal endeavor, manages to overcome their disability. While the message is a metaphor for the more general human struggle to overcome life's obstacles, to disability rights activists and disability studies scholars, the underlying logic of this message is that disabled people can never be happy as they are and must rise "above" their condition to "normality" to be accepted. This ideology smacks of the troublesome notion that there is something inherently wrong with people with impairments. The real problem, of course, lies in the social, legal and physical structures that turn impairments into disabilities. (Harnett, Allison, "Escaping the 'Evil Avenger' and the 'Supercrip': Images of Disability in Popular Television," Irish Communications Review Vol. 8 2000.)
- 3 - On July 14, 1933, the German government instituted the "Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Disease." The Third Reich labeled all persons with disease considered hereditary as "useless eaters."
- 4 - Battle for ownership of transport routes in South Africa.
- 5 - "Temps" is a colloquial term for able-bodied people in the disability community.
- 6 - Thalassemia is a rare blood disease and means "sea in the blood" in Greek.

Tonight's program groups films that explore intimacy and exposure, including works that speak to hidden histories of the body and multiple forms of visibility and invisibility.

PANELISTS

Sarah E. Chinn
Hunter College

& others to be announced

CRIP SHOTS

John Killacky

BEAUTEOUS: STEPHANIE

Giovanna Chesler

DOUBLE THE TROUBLE, TWICE THE FUN

Pratibha Parmar

Performative portraits of six artists with disabilities: Judy Smith, Greg Walloch, Chris Hewitt, John R. Killacky, Terry Galloway, and Bill Shannon.

John R. Killacky has served as a panelist, lecturer, and consultant for a broad range of arts and funding organizations. He has written numerous publications on the arts, and written and directed several award winning short films and videos. He won a 2004 Lambda Literary Award for co-editing the anthology "Queer Crips: Disabled Gay Men and Their Stories."

A young woman born with a cranio facial deformity, a cleft lip and palate, recounts the numerous surgeries she endured to transform her face. Her reflection challenges societal beauty standards which may have required these surgeries.

Giovanna Chesler is a filmmaker, cinematographer, and Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at UCSD. She is dedicated to producing documentary, experimental, and narrative film works which redefine women and women's experiences. *BeauteouS: Stephanie* is the first film in her *BeauteouS* trilogy: three portraits of three sisters and their relationships to beauty.

This video addresses disability and homosexuality as it affects both women and men in a remarkably nuanced and sensitive manner. Interviews with a wide range of disabled lesbian and gay people are intercut with dramatic recreations and performances.

Pratibha Parmar was born in Nairobi, Kenya and came with her family to live in England in 1967. Before she began to make films, she was a youth and community worker working in the Asian community with young women. She worked in the feminist publishing collective, Sheba Feminist Press in the mid 1980s. Pratibha is a Board member of Women in Film and Television (UK) and The Directors Guild of Great Britain.

