

# Documentary and (Dis)ability

A one-day symposium hosted by the Film Studies Programme  
at the University of Surrey

Friday September 20<sup>th</sup> 2013

The fourth in the series 'Documentary and ...' to be held at the University of Surrey will be on Documentary and Disability. The 'Documentary and ...' series seeks to explore the conjunction of the documentary project with the worlds it encounters and the practical and conceptual modifications these combinations bring.

Disability Studies have recently transformed debates on the representation of able and disabled bodies alike, demonstrating the ways in which this binary influences the construction and perception of reality. Documentary films such as Niko von Glasow's *NoBody's Perfect* have demonstrated the ways in which contemporary documentary can be used to experiment with and reflect on the myriad forms of representation of disabled bodies that proliferate in industrialised societies from high art to social marketing. At the same time, questions of ethics arise, especially with regards to authorship, stereotyping, mystification and the representation of subjectivity. Whose subjectivities and realities do these films portray? How do they address the balance between aesthetic experience and ethnographic verisimilitude?

We invite speakers and contributors working on the intersection of documentary film and non-fiction media with Disability Studies. The following topics are a guideline to potential paper proposals and are not meant to exclude other interpretations of the seminar's title *Documentary and (Dis)ability*:

- Defining disability through audiovisual media
- The visibility/audibility of ability and disability
- The history of documentary representations of disability
- The history of disabled documentarists
- Stereotypical and subversive portrayals of disability
- Disability, embodied space, and affect
- Animated documentary and disability
- Ethnography and disability
- Documentary ethics, authorship, and disability
- Subjectivity and the reception of documentary films on disability
- Voyeurism and the representation of disability in documentary/reality television

Please submit a proposal for a 20-minute presentation consisting of a 300-word paper abstract and a short biography to Helen Hughes ([h.hughes@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:h.hughes@surrey.ac.uk)) and Catalin Brylla ([cbrylla@yahoo.com](mailto:cbrylla@yahoo.com)) by Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

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