

# Keywords/Key Questions For Disability Studies

## The Future of Disability Studies

Thursday, October 1, 2015, 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Friday, October 2, 2015, 9:00 a.m. - 5:15 p.m.

James Room, Barnard College

This symposium will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Future of Disability Studies project, and the publication of *Keywords for Disability Studies* with an artists' panel and a daylong conference. On Thursday evening, artists Riva Lehrer, Park McArthur, and Sunaura Taylor will use the *Keywords* theme to discuss concepts and terms that have defined their artistic practice and identities as women with disabilities. On Friday, *Keywords* contributors and other major scholars of disability studies will discuss the big theoretical, social, and political questions facing the field of disability studies and the next chapter of disability rights activism.

*Throughout the symposium, quiet rest spaces will be available in 401C and 411A Barnard Hall. If you need a quiet moment to recharge, see Liz Bowen for a key.*

**Thursday, October 1, 6-8:30 p.m.**

6-7:30 p.m.

**Artists' Panel**

*Chair: David Serlin*

**Riva Lehrer**

**Sunauro Taylor**

**Park McArthur**

7:30-8:30 p.m.

**Reception**

*Sulzberger Parlor, 3rd floor, Barnard Hall*

**Friday, October 2, 9:00 a.m.-5:15 p.m.**

9-9:30 a.m.

**Breakfast**

9:30-10 a.m.

**Welcome and Introduction**

**To Keywords For Disability Studies**

**Rachel Adams**

**Benjamin Reiss**

**David Serlin**

10-11:15 a.m.

**Law, Justice, And Representation**

*Chair: Leonard Cassuto*

**Lennard Davis**

**Liz Emens**

**Faye Ginsburg**

**Rayna Rapp**

11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

## **Medicine, Technology, and Modernity**

*Chair: Sarah Chinn*

**G. Thomas Couser**

**Sayantani DasGupta**

**Janet Lyon**

12:45-2:30 p.m.

## **Light lunch buffet**

*Sulzberger Parlor, 3rd floor, Barnard Hall*

2:30-3:45 p.m.

## **Boundaries, Borders, and Definitions**

*Chair: Julia Rodas*

**Heather Love**

**David Mitchell**

**Katherine Ott**

4:00-5:15 p.m.

## **Where Have We Been and Where Are We Going?**

*Chair: Benjamin Reiss*

**James Berger**

**Christopher Baswell**

**Michael Ralph**

**Maya Sabatello**

**Joseph Straus**

Sponsors:

**Columbia Center for the Study of Social Difference**

**Columbia Institute for Research on**

**Women, Gender, and Sexuality**

**Barnard Center for Research on Women**

## Biographies

**Rachel Adams** is Professor of English at Columbia University, director of the Center for the Study of Social Difference, and director of the "The Future of Disability Studies" project. She is co-editor (with Benjamin Reiss and David Serlin) of *Keywords for Disability Studies* (NYU Press, 2015). She is also the author of *Raising Henry: A Memoir of Motherhood, Disability, and Discovery* (Yale University Press, 2013); *Continental Divides: Remapping the Cultures of North America* (University of Chicago Press, 2009); and *Sideshow U.S.A.: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination* (University of Chicago Press, 2001).

**Christopher Baswell** is the Olin Chair of English at Barnard College, and Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. He has also taught at the University of Geneva, Switzerland; UCLA; and the University of York, UK. He trained at Oberlin College; Oxford University; the Warburg Institute; and Yale University; he was the first wheelchair user to take a PhD at the latter institution. His early research was on the medieval reception of classical literature. In pursuing that study, Baswell was also the first wheelchair user to consult manuscripts at the Old Bodleian Library, the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, the Vatican, and the Staatsbibliothek Berlin. He is now at work on a long-term study of the cultural imaginary of disabled bodies in the European Middle Ages.

**James Berger** is Senior Lecturer in American Studies and English at Yale University. He is author of *The Disarticulate: Language, Disability, and the Narratives of Modernity* (NYU Press, 2014); *After the End: Representations of Post-apocalypse* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999); and *Prior* (BlazeVOX, 2013), a book of poems. He is also editor of *Helen Keller's The Story of My Life: The Restored Edition* (Modern Library, 2004).

**Leonard Cassuto** is Professor of English at Fordham University. He is the author or editor of eight books on American literature and culture, among which are *The Cambridge History of the American Novel*

(Cambridge University Press, 2011), of which he was general editor, and *The Cambridge Companion to Baseball* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). His new book, published a few weeks ago, is *The Graduate School Mess: What Caused It and How We Can Fix It* (Harvard University Press, 2015).

**Sarah E. Chinn** is a Professor of English and chair of the English Department at Hunter College. She is the author of *Technology and the Logic of American Racism: A Cultural History of the Body as Evidence* (Continuum, 2000) and *Inventing Modern Adolescence: Children of Immigrants in Turn-of-the-Century America* (Rutgers University Press, 2009), as well as articles in disability studies, childhood studies, and 19th century US literatures and cultures. She recently completed a manuscript on representations of masculinity, race, and nation on the early American stage, and is working on a project on amputation as a trope for loss after the American Civil War.

**G. Thomas Couser** retired in 2011 from Hofstra University, where he was Professor of English and Founding Director of the Disability Studies Program. His books include *Recovering Bodies: Illness, Disability, and Life Writing* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1997); *Vulnerable Subjects: Ethics and Life Writing* (Cornell University Press, 2003); and *Signifying Bodies: Disability in Contemporary Life Writing* (University of Michigan Press, 2009). His most recent book is *Memoir: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

**Sayantani DasGupta**, MD MPH, is faculty at the Master's Program in Narrative Medicine, the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society and the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race at Columbia University. She is also Co-chair of the Columbia University Seminar in Narrative, Health and Social Justice. She is the coauthor of a book of Bengali folktales, the author of a medical memoir, and the co-editor of *Stories of Illness and Healing: Women Write Their Bodies* (Kent State University Press, 2007) and the scholarly collection *Globalization and Transnational Surrogacy in India: Outsourcing Life* (Lexington Books, 2014). Learn more about her work at [www.sayantanidasgupta.com](http://www.sayantanidasgupta.com).

**Lennard J. Davis** is Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago in the Departments of Disability and Human Development, English, and Medical Education. He is the author of *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (Verso, 1995); *Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions* (NYU Press, 2002); *Obsession: A History* (University of Chicago Press, 2009); and *The End of Normal: Identity in a Biocultural Era* (University of Michigan Press, 2014). He is the editor of the *Disability Studies Reader*, now in its fourth edition (Routledge, 2013), as well as *Shall I Say a Kiss: Courtship Letters of Deaf Couple, 1936–1938* (Gallaudet University Press, 1999). His *Enabling Acts: The Americans with Disabilities Act and How the U.S.'s Largest Minority Got Its Rights* was published in July 2015 by Beacon Press.

**Elizabeth F. Emens** is Isidor and Seville Sulzbacher Professor of Law at Columbia University. Her articles about disability law and theory include "Integrating Accommodation" (2008); "Intimate Discrimination: The State's Role in the Accidents of Sex and Love" (2009); and "Disabling Attitudes" (2012), reprinted in the *Disability Studies Reader*, 4th ed. (Routledge, 2013). She recently edited the volume *Disability and Equality Law* (Ashgate, 2013) with Michael A. Stein.

**Faye Ginsburg** is Founder and Codirector of the Council for the Study of Disability at New York University, where she is also David B. Kriser Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Center for Media, Culture and History. She is an award-winning author/editor of four books, all reflecting her long-standing interest in cultural activism. She is currently working with Rayna Rapp on research and writing on cultural innovation and cognitive difference.

**Riva Lehrer** is an artist and writer who focuses on the socially challenged body. She has shown in venues including the United Nations, the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC, and the Smithsonian Museum. Recent awards include the 3Arts Fellowship at the University of Illinois, and the Carnegie Mellon Fellowship at Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges. Her work appears in publications including *Criptiques*, edited by Caitlin Wood

(Mayday, 2014); *Sex and Disability*, edited by Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow (Duke University Press, 2012); and *Lesbian Art in America*, by Harmony Hammond (Rizzoli, 2000), as well as documentaries including *The Paper Mirror* (2012) by Charissa King-O'Brien, on her collaboration with Alison Bechdel; and *Self Preservation: The Art of Riva Lehrer* (2005) by David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder. She is currently instructor in Medical Humanities at Northwestern University.

**Heather Love** is the R. Jean Brownlee Term Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Harvard University Press, 2009); the editor of a special issue of *GLQ* on Gayle Rubin ("Rethinking Sex," 2010); and the coeditor of a special issue of *New Literary History* ("Is There Life after Identity Politics?" 2000).

**Janet Lyon** is Associate Professor of English and Women's Studies and the Director of the Disability Studies minor at Pennsylvania State University. She is the author of *Manifestoes: Provocations of the Modern* (Cornell University Press, 1999). She is currently completing a book titled *Idiot Child on a Fire Escape: Modernism's Disability*. Her articles have appeared in such journals as *Modernism/modernity*, *ELH*, *Differences*, and *Yale Journal of Criticism*, and her chapters have appeared in many edited books. She is the coeditor of the *Journal of Modern Literature*.

**Park McArthur** is a visual artist working primarily in sound, sculpture, and text. Born in 1984 in North Carolina and currently living in New York, McArthur investigates the readymade in relation to living labor. Solo exhibitions include Lars Friedrich, Berlin (2014); Yale Union, Portland, Oregon (2014); and Essex Street, New York (2014). Group exhibitions include Ludwig Forum, Aachen (2015); Deborah Schamoni, Munich (2015); The Kitchen, New York (2013). Upcoming solo exhibitions include Chisenhale Gallery, London (2016) and The Jewish Museum, New York (2017). Her first book, co-edited with Jennifer Burris, entitled *Beverly Buchanan, 1978-1981* was published by Athénée Press in 2015. Burris and McArthur are organizing an exhibition of Buchanan's work for The Sackler Center for Feminist Art at The Brooklyn Museum, opening September 2016.

In addition to McArthur's visual art, she is part-time faculty at The New School and speaks widely on art and disability studies.

**David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder** are the authors of three books:

*Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (University of Michigan Press, 2001); *Cultural Locations of Disability* (University of Chicago Press, 2006); and *The Biopolitics of Disability: Neoliberalism, Ablenationalism, and Peripheral Embodiment* (University of Michigan Press, 2014). They are also coeditors of *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* (University of Michigan Press, 1997) and have cowritten more than thirty-five refereed journal essays on various aspects of disability culture, art, and history. They are currently at work on a new edited collection tentatively titled *The Matter of Disability: Biopolitics, Materiality, Crip Affects*.

**Katherine Ott** is a curator and historian at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in the Division of Medicine and Science. Ott is the author or co-editor of three books: *Fevered Lives: Tuberculosis in American Culture since 1870* (Harvard University Press, 1999); *Artificial Parts and Practical Lives: The Modern History of Prosthetics* (NYU Press, 2002); and *The Scrapbook in American Life* (Temple University Press, 2006) and is completing a monograph on interpreting objects.

**Michael Ralph** is Associate Professor in the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis and Director of the Metropolitan Studies Program at New York University. He is the author of *Forensics of Capital* (forthcoming). He has published in *Disability Studies Quarterly*, *Souls*, *Social Text*, *Public Culture*, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, the *Journal of the History of Sport*, and *Transforming Anthropology*. He is also the editor of *Transforming Anthropology*, the flagship journal of the Association of Black Anthropologists.

**Rayna Rapp** is Professor and Associate Chair of the Department of Anthropology at New York University. She is the author of the award-winning book *Testing Women, Testing the Fetus: The Social Impact of Amniocentesis in America* (Routledge, 2000) and coeditor, with Faye Ginsburg, of *Conceiving the New World Order* (University



of California Press, 1995), as well as numerous articles and reviews. Her current research with Faye Ginsburg focuses on cultural innovation in special education in New York City.

**Benjamin Reiss** is Professor of English at Emory University and Founding Director of the Emory Disability Studies Initiative. He is the author of *The Showman and the Slave: Race, Death, and Memory in Barnum's America* (Harvard University Press, 2001) and *Theaters of Madness: Insane Asylums and Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), and co-editor of *Keywords for Disability Studies* (NYU Press, 2015). He is currently a John Simon Guggenheim Fellow; his book *Thoreau's Bed: How Sleep Became a Problem in the Modern World* is under contract with Basic Books.

**Julia Miele Rodas** is Associate Professor of English at Bronx Community College / CUNY (City University of New York). With David Bolt and Elizabeth Donaldson, she is co-editor of *The Madwoman and the Blindman: Jane Eyre, Discourse, Disability* (Ohio State University Press, 2012) and of the *Literary Disability Studies* book series (Palgrave Macmillan). She is currently working on a book—*Autistic Disturbances*—that theorizes the role of autistic rhetoric and aesthetic in literature.

**Maya Sabatello** is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Bioethics at Columbia University's Department of Psychiatry. She is a lawyer with a PhD in political science, and post-doctorate training in medical ethics and in research on ethical, legal, and social implications of psychiatric, neurologic, and behavioral genetics. Previously, Dr. Sabatello litigated cases of medical malpractice and has worked as a legal adviser to national and international nongovernmental organizations to promote health-related human rights. As a Permanent Representative for a nongovernmental organization at the United Nations, she participated in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Her research is interdisciplinary and cross-cultural and focuses on law, society, and disability; assisted reproduction; and genomics, especially as relating to families, children and adolescents.

**David Serlin** is Associate Professor of Communication and Science Studies at the University of California, San Diego. He is the author or editor of several books, including *Replaceable You: Engineering the Body in Postwar America* (University of Chicago Press, 2004); *Imagining Illness: Public Health and Visual Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010); and *Window Shopping with Helen Keller: Architecture and Disability in Modern Culture* (forthcoming).

**Joseph Straus** is Distinguished Professor of Music at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He is the author of numerous books and articles on topics in twentieth-century music, including *Twelve-Tone Music in America* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), *Introduction to PostTonal Theory* (3rd ed., Pearson, 2004), *Stravinsky's Late Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), *The Music of Ruth Crawford Seeger* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), and *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Harvard University Press, 1990). His most recent publications, including *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music* (Oxford University Press, 2011) and "Autism as Culture" (*Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard Davis), are among the first to bring to musicology the insights of Disability studies, and vice versa. He is a former President of the Society for Music Theory, from which he has received two Outstanding Publication Awards.

**Sunaura Taylor** is an artist, writer, and activist. Taylor's artworks have been exhibited at venues across the country, including the CUE Art Foundation, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Berkeley Art Museum. She is the recipient of numerous awards including a Joan Mitchell Foundation MFA Grant and an Animals and Culture Grant. Her written work has been printed in various edited collections as well as in publications such as the *Monthly Review*, *Yes! Magazine*, *American Quarterly* and *Qui Parle*. Taylor worked with philosopher Judith Butler on Astra Taylor's film *Examined Life* (Zeitgeist, 2008). Taylor holds an MFA in art practice from the University of California, Berkeley. Her book *Beasts of Burden*, which explores the intersections of animal ethics and disability studies, is forthcoming from The New Press. She is currently a PhD student in American Studies in the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at NYU.