

Disability Imagery: A Bastion of Social Change

Faith Perez, Renee Stronach, with students in DIS 450, Faculty Mentors: Liz DePoy and Stephen Gilson

Introduction: In the visual and material culture of the 21st century, image is power. This inquiry used thematic analysis to examine the meanings of disability imagery on a continuum from tragedy to an inevitable and celebrated part of human diversity and provocateur of social change. Five themes emerged: disability as tragic (exclusion, isolation, fear); disability as inspiration porn (disabled people are brave or special just for living); close but not quite (some positive imagery segregation and impairment are foregrounded); and celebration of disability as human diversity (the goal for change).

Tragedy



Million Dollar Baby

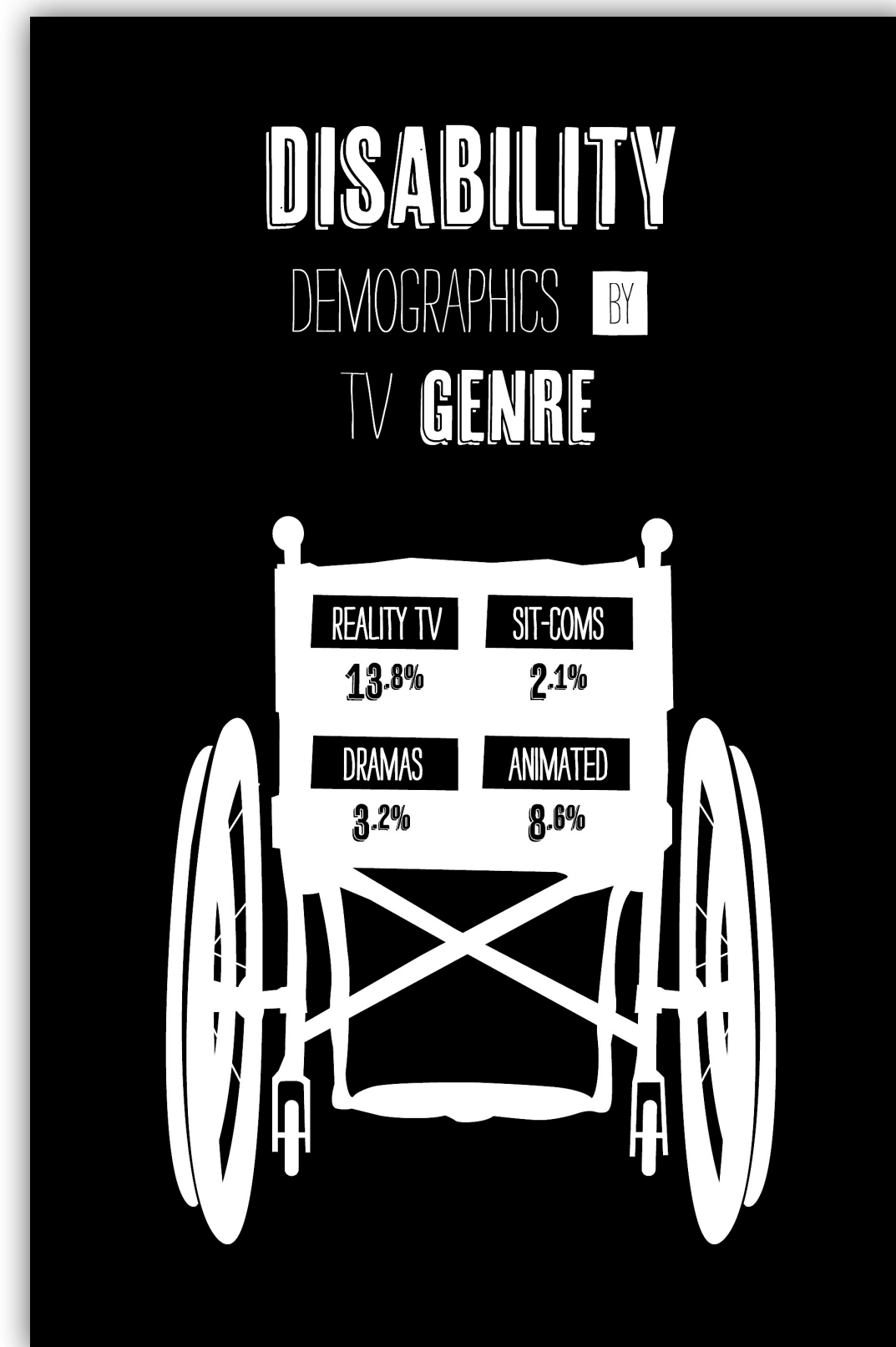
Inspiration porn



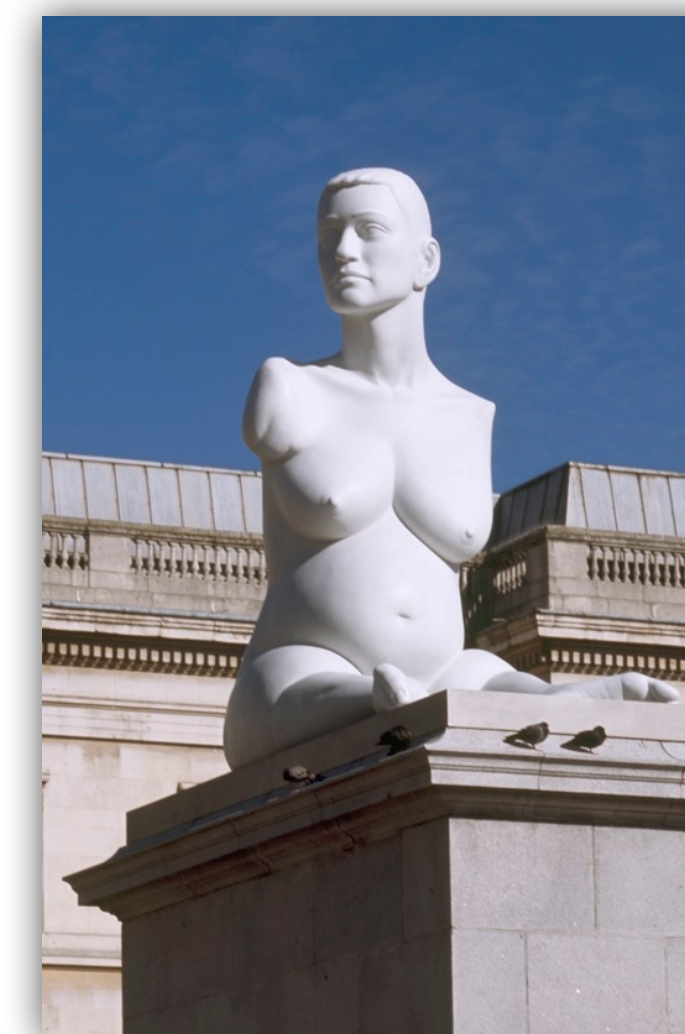
Asher Nash



Close but not quite



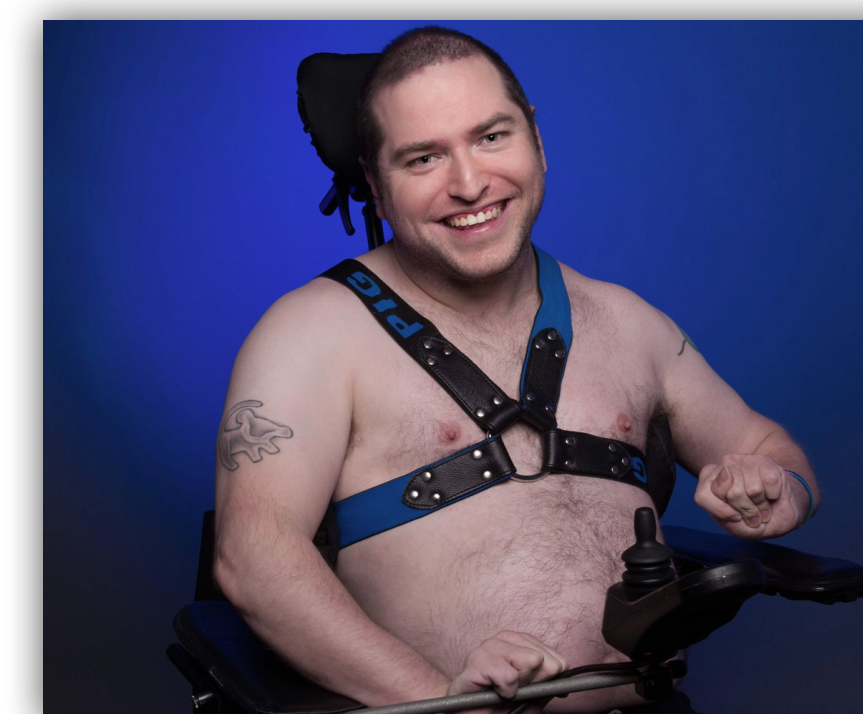
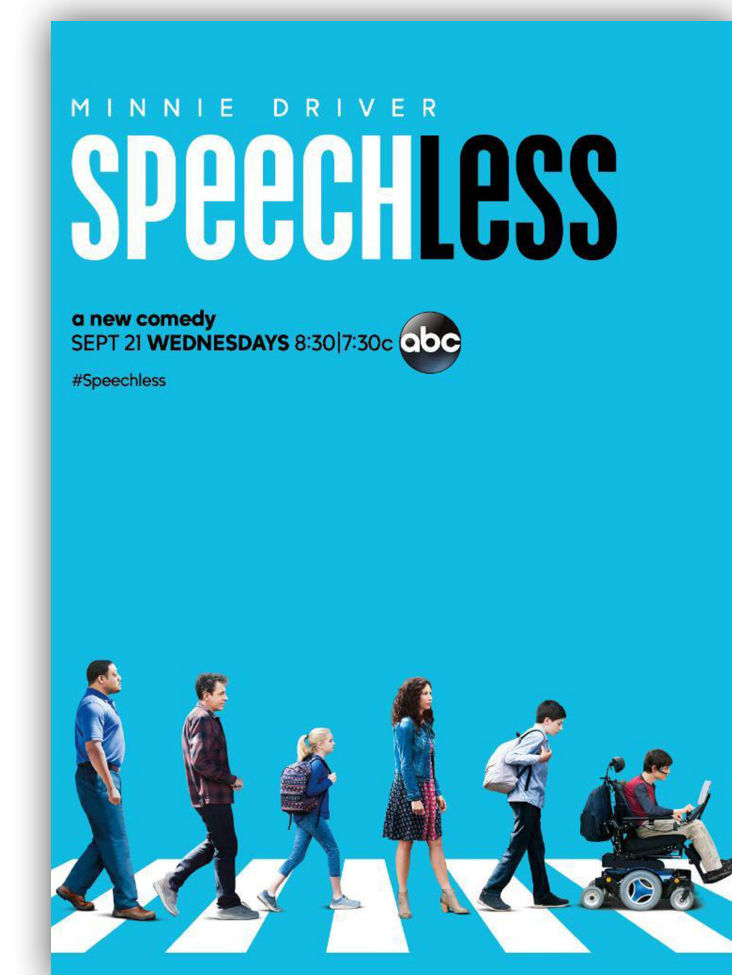
Celebration of disability as human diversity



Alison Lapper



Fashion



#disabledandcute



Disability as sport

Locus of social change-imagery that integrates disability into the fabric of human activity, contexts, beauty, messiness, daily life.