

*Crip**

curated by
Liza Sylvestre

**January 14–
March 12, 2022**

**Liz Barr
Shannon Finnegan
Emilie Gossiaux
Max Guy
Christopher Robert Jones
Carly Mandel
Darrin Martin
Alison O'Daniel
Berenice Olmedo
Carmen Papalia
and Heather Kai Smith
Brontez Purnell**



UIC GALLERY 400

“There is a specific demand placed on people who have been historically excluded from the art world—women, people of color, queer people—are often burdened with the demand or the curiosity of autobiographical content, when other artists with privilege don’t necessarily have to make work that comes from them or is tied to them.”

—Gregg Bordowitz,
artist, performer, writer, and activist

*Crip** references *Crip Theory*, a critical project developed by professor, writer, and theorist Robert McRuer through his book *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (2006). McRuer describes how our compulsion to attain the status of “normativity” relies on non-normal bodies and identities. The “non-normative” identity is continuously enforced through many factors including how they are imaged in popular culture, media, and art. Normativity is essentially held in place, and defined by, all of the things that “it is not.” Non-normative identities are shaped around and against normativity and are required to remain non-normative in order to preserve normative continuity. Where disability studies has theorized and constructed a somewhat singular disabled identity, the *Crip Theory* project has sought to utilize generative aspects of that identity while resisting its limitations, primarily to forge connections and networks across multiple identity distinctions. Similarly, the

artists in *Crip** take on and push against rigid identity categories by presenting complicated works that resist reduction.

The artists in *Crip** are attuned to the concepts that exist beyond the reach of simplified identity distinctions or interpretations. For example, Emilie Gossiaux's work is informed by her hearing loss and vision loss, but what drives her work is a broad interest and deep understanding of communication, interdependence, and the connection between sense and memory. Her sensory ability provides her with a unique vantage point but is not limiting and Gossiaux is not interested in producing work that can be reduced to simply imagining her specific sensory composition.

Alison O'Daniel's expansive project *The Tuba Thieves* utilizes O'Daniel's understanding of sound both through her access to it and through her awareness of its absence due to her hearing loss. Scene 55 *The Plants Are*

Protected beautifully relies on the generative space of translation. In fact, O'Daniel created her cinematic visuals based on sound scores produced by three different composers; the Deaf sound artist Christine Sun Kim produced the sound score for scene 55. Through O'Daniel's project, our attention is brought to the rich and liminal space formed between absence and presence.

The artists in this group show (in addition to those cited above, the artists include Liz Barr, Shannon Finnegan, Max Guy, Christopher Robert Jones, Carly Mandel, Darrin Martin, Berenice Olmedo, Carmen Papalia and Heather Kai Smith, and Brontez Purnell) utilize a new vocabulary to articulate variations of ability and experience. They delineate between the empowering and useful aspects of that identity that facilitate dialogue and the constraining or limiting aspects that inhibit it.

—Liza Sylvestre

INTERDEPENDENCE IS CENTRAL TO THE RADICAL RESTRUCTURING OF POWER

Carmen Papalia and Heather Kai Smith, *Interdependence is Central to the Radical Restructuring of Power*, 2021, risograph print on paper.

Related Programs

Justin Cooper, UIC Gallery 400 Streetside exhibition
February 4–July 2, 2022

Crip* symposium, co-presented by UIC Gallery 400 and
UIC Disability Cultural Center
March 3–4, 2022

Additional programs to be announced. Please check gallery400.uic.edu

UIC Gallery 400 is wheelchair accessible. Audio descriptions are available
in the exhibition. If you have specific access questions or needs,
please call 312-996-6114 or email gallery400@uic.edu.

Hours

UIC only:
Tuesday and Wednesday 10am–5pm

General Public:
Thursday and Friday 10am–5pm
Saturday 12–5pm

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Crippling the Arts is a University of Illinois 2021–23 collaboration across the Chicago (UIC) and Urbana Champaign (UIUC) campuses intended to transform arts exhibition sites, art education, and studio art practice through new ideas about disability. In addition to *Crip**, an exhibition on each campus, Crippling the Arts includes new community partnerships, teacher training, and artist residencies. The collaboration includes the Krannert Art Museum, Art Education, Art + Design at UIUC and Gallery 400, the Disability Cultural Center, Bodies of Work, Art, and Art Education at UIC.

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