

Tendings and Eco-poetic Disability Culture: Bodymindspirits of the Future

Workshop Leader(s): Petra Kupperts and Stephanie Heit

Contact: petra@umich.edu

This workshop offers an artful space for engagement and resource-sharing, bringing contemporary art-based approaches to bear on sitedness, on our bodies' interaction with the built environment, on being in space with others, on being interdependent and in caring relations with the world.

Wheelchair user Petra Kupperts and mental health system survivor Stephanie Heit will lead disability culture exercises from the Tendings curriculum, developed with a wide range of other allies in travels across the US and beyond. Tendings are everyday collaborative eco-poetic practices that combine experiential anatomy, disability culture, eco-specific investigations, somatic exercises, and writing. We will go on a disability culture exploration of Davis's campus, drifting indoors and out, explore the walls, floors, doors, air, scents, textures and pathways that surround and support us. Let's insert ourselves, our differences, our breath. This practice nourishes activist interdependent energies and pools resources for community building and stewardship of self and the environment.

Tendings' inspirations include speculative fiction collections like Walidah Imarisha and adrienne maree brown's *Octavia's Brood* and Djibril al-Ayad and Kathryn Allan's *Accessing the Future*, as well the strategies of Sara Ahmed's *Killjoy Survival Kit* and adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy*. Petra will share a glimpse from *Ice Bar*, her 2018 speculative short story collection, as a starting point for embodied exercises that will allow us to find interdependent spatial travels. All are welcome, finding disability and other access for all is part of the creative process (and if you already know of accommodations you need, please contact us in advance).

Structure for 4-hour workshop:

Set up

3 different drifting exercises/performance-scores, each with free-writes afterwards. The workshop will end in a sharing circle.

Qualifications to lead:

Both artists have had long histories of leading workshops internationally, and have lead multiple Tendings events in the past two years, including as a masterclass weekend for Movement Research in NYC.

Bibliography:

Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*. (Durham: Duke UP, 2017)

Djibril al-Ayad and Kathryn Allan (eds). *Accessing the Future: A Disability-Themed Anthology of Speculative Fiction*. (Futurefire.net, July 2015)

adrienne maree brown: *Emergent Strategy*. (Chico: AK Press, 2017)

Walidah Imarisha and adrienne maree brown (eds): *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements* (Chico: AK Press, 2015)

Petra Kuppers: *Ice Bar*. New York (Spuyten Duyvil, 2018)

Bios:

Petra Kuppers is a disability culture activist, a community performance artist, and a Professor at the University of Michigan. She leads The Olimpias, an international performance research collective. Her *Disability Culture and Community Performance: Find a Strange and Twisted Shape* (2011) explores The Olimpias' arts-based research methods. Her *Theatre & Disability* (2017) offers a snapshot of the field, and *Studying Disability Arts and Culture: An Introduction* (2014) offers practical exercises for classrooms and studios. Her previous books engaged community performance, medical performances, and somatics, and her current research focuses on speculative modes in eco-performance and creative writing.

Stephanie Heit is an artist living with bipolar disorder who engages with herself and the world through multiple creative practices: movement as a dancer and massage therapist and words as a poet and teacher. She is a member of the Olimpias, an international disability performance collective. She received a MFA in Writing and Poetics from Naropa University. Her book, *The Color She Gave Gravity*, was a Nightboat Poetry Prize finalist and appeared with *The Operating System* in 2017. Her work has appeared in *Midwestern Gothic*, *Streetnotes*, *QDA: A Queer Disability Anthology*, *Nerve Lantern*, *Spoon Knife Anthology*, and *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*.