

Research residency: Crippling Cultural Work

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Project description

How do normative ideas around time and productivity shape the work of cultural institutions?

What if accessibility was the starting point for developing artistic programs?

What would cultural institutions be like if they were reimaged to center the needs of our bodyminds?

At present, disability and chronic illness are systemically underrepresented within the cultural sector, both in Rotterdam and more widely. The intention of the project 'Crippling* Cultural Work' is to contribute to a positive shift towards a less ableist field, by re-examining our own institutional practices and imagining alternatives.

We are inviting 4 disabled / chronically ill emerging cultural workers and artists to join a 7-month research residency with MaMA Rotterdam. The primary focus of the residency is to conduct independent research on a topic of choice, informed by the context of the residency program. The program will consist of a workshop and lecture series organised by MaMA in collaboration with guests. We will explore different themes in relation to normative work practices such as productivity, creativity and time. Each participant will translate their research into a tangible outcome such as a zine, an artwork, or a lecture. The residency will culminate in a public program in our exhibition space.

Throughout the residency, participants will also collaborate with MaMA to discuss accessibility challenges within the institution. Our aim is to foster reciprocal learning between MaMA and the participants, as together we contribute to an evolving understanding of accessibility.

This opportunity is open to Rotterdam-based creatives/artists/makers who identify as chronically ill, disabled and / or neurodivergent and have a strong interest in disability justice* and Critical Disability Studies*. We are keen to support emerging artists and cultural workers who are looking to build experience and learn from others within our sector. The project will run from June until December 2025 with a public program around October.

Vacancy details

We are looking for participants who:

- Identify as disabled, chronically ill and / or neurodivergent
- Live in Rotterdam
- Are makers, researchers or cultural workers
- Have a strong interest in disability justice and Critical Disability Studies
- Are enthusiastic about being part of a collaborative learning environment with other makers and the MaMA team

Participants are asked to:

- Conduct their own (artistic / practice led) research on a topic of their choice, informed by the residency themes
- Translate their research into a tangible outcome such as a zine, artwork or lecture that can be shared with the public
- Co-organize a public program, to share the research projects with a public
- Participate in group sessions (this can be workshops or meetings) on Monday and / or Thursday afternoon

MaMA offers:

- A project fee of 9000€ ex. VAT per participant (which translates to an hourly fee of 30€ and 300 hours over the course of the project)
- Workshops and individual coaching sessions
- Flexible working hours and work from home opportunities, with the exception of pre scheduled group sessions.
- Support from MaMA's staff in setting up the public program

Project outline:

- An average of 12 hours a week from June to December, with peaks in September and October
- June - August: Workshop program and research
- September - October: Production & Public Program
- November - December: Wrap-up and reflection
- The program is open to applications in English and Dutch. The main language of workshops and work sessions will be English.

Application procedure

How to apply:

You can apply in a format that is most accessible to you, including written text, voice notes, or video.

- 1) Please provide a short motivation statement (maximum 250 words), responding to the following question: What does accessibility mean to you, and why do you think it's important in the arts and cultural sector?
- 2) Please outline a short research proposal (maximum 250 words). This can be a rough sketch of your interests and can be changed during the program. What topic or theme, in relation to disability justice and/ or accessibility in the cultural sector, would you like to research during the residency?
- 3) Additionally, please share your CV. If you don't have a CV, please briefly summarize your work/study experience.

Please send your application to felicitas@thisismama.nl latest by 27 April at 23:59. Interviews will be held on 6 and 8 May.

Q&A sessions

If you have any questions about accessibility, payment, the residency program and more, please sign up for one of the following Q&A sessions. You will then be assigned a 15 minute slot to speak to the project team so you can ask all of your questions. If you can't make it to either of the Q&A sessions, you are welcome to send your questions via email.

The sessions will take place on 8 April and 17 April from 17:00 - 18:00.

To sign up, please send an email to felicitas@thisismama.nl.

Team

The project is chaired by MaMA employees with lived experience of chronic illness and disability. Although we cannot guarantee meeting everyone's access needs at all moments, we are committed to evolving and learning as an organisation.

Language and terminology

Identity first language

Throughout this text / vacancy we have used identity first language instead of person first language (e.g. "disabled person" rather than "person with a disability"), because it views disability as being a core component of identity. However, we acknowledge that language preference can vary for many reasons, and some people in the disability community prefer person-first language. We strive to ensure we respect the wishes of the people being represented in our projects.

Crippling

By crippling we mean to center the perspectives of disabled people in a way that acknowledges the range of bodyminds that exist in our world. It is used as a liberatory term that has been reclaimed by the disabled community. Crip theory, and derived methodologies, center “subjective experiences drawn from the lifeworlds of people with disabilities” (Hickman and Serlin 133).

Disability Justice & Critical Disability Studies

This project is informed by the disability justice movement– a framework created by Sins Invalid which is “led by disabled Black, Indigenous, and people of the global majority, and queer, trans, and nonbinary disabled people”(About Sins | Sins Invalid). Disability justice challenges ableism and intersectional systems of oppression to support the liberation of disabled people. As Patty Berne states: “A Disability Justice framework understands that all bodies are unique and essential, that all bodies have strengths and needs that must be met. We know that we are powerful not despite the complexities of our bodies, but because of them. We understand that all bodies are caught in these bindings of ability, race, gender, sexuality, class, nation state and imperialism, and that we cannot separate them” (5).

The residency program also draws on Critical Disability Studies. Critical Disability Studies (CDS) is an approach that views disability as a political, cultural, and historical experience. CDS is closely tied to disability justice, community-based scholarship, and grassroots organizing (FAQs | Critical Disability Studies Collective).

Works cited

About Sins | Sins Invalid. sinsinvalid.org/about-sins.

Berne, Patty. *Disability Justice – a Working Draft*. 2015.

FAQs | Critical Disability Studies Collective. cdsc.umn.edu/FAQs.

Hickman, Louise, and David Serlin. “Towards a Crip Methodology for Critical Disability Studies.” *Routledge eBooks*, 2018, pp. 131–41.

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