

2/21/23 Alice Sheppard Moving Architecture:: Architecting Movement,

Prompt: Make a Creative Piece

Architecting movement.

Learning the labor of the terrain, the grass, the concrete, the gravel

I know this city. The bend of the land; it's an emotional topography

Our first partner is the floor

Push with a confident stroke; disability is an aesthetic value

a critical consciousness of how some bodies make other bodies feel.

Movement is not about moving from A to B, but about the intensity and pleasure of speed and movement.

In a wheelchair, there is tension between me and the world,

in my house, there is wheeled joy.

Bouncing off the furniture, finding disabled movement in a place where wheelchaired people shouldn't be-

Not tricks, but inherent disabled movements.

Not an attempt to mimic,

but to just be.

To not have to explain my existence, over and over again.

"Disability is to be hidden, disability is a shame"

There is freedom in the sculpted ramp ring:

I let go and flew into the joy of descent

The inhibitive and prohibitive design of the access ramp is deeply political, a design disaster--

Would you kiss your lover on that ramp?

Somewhere in the mix, the idea that a slope and wheels produce movement together was forgotten.

You can never explain yourself enough to undo the systems of oppression.

A critical consciousness of how some bodies make other bodies feel.

Disability is an aesthetic value

Dance on the ramp

Change the world's notions of disabled movement.

Description: I wrote this poem about Alice Sheppard's Moving Architecture: Architecting Movement session. Majority (at least 95%) of the lines in the poem are direct quotes from Alice Sheppard or people who were engaging in the chat feature on Zoom. I made this choice because I wanted to keep the poem as true as possible to the session. I felt that as someone who is not in a wheelchair, nor do I have someone in my life who uses a wheelchair, I did not want to speak on behalf of anyone who has experience with disability. Rather, I just wanted to collage their words together into this poem, and this was my way of trying to evoke the various thoughts and emotions that were shared during this session. Alice really made me think about the inequity of design in our modern day world and how movement in a wheelchair is an artform that stretches our abilities as humans. It should not be thought of as an attempt to try to be able-bodied, but it is its own unique movement that should be cherished, celebrated, and respected. Alice's experiences made me think about my previous work with design equity with co-living homes for elderly community members. In order to truly foster community, our physical spaces need to be accessible, and accessible spaces can and should be just as aesthetically beautiful as the rest of our spaces.