

Autistic Identity and Culture

Autism post DX support

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#AutisticCultureShift

Artistic director:
Flow Observatorium

Champion: Mental Health Autism
Nottingham University

Artist: Whatever that may mean

Autistic person:

Who am I?

I am Autistic & human

I feel I have skills not deficits

And these skills have been perfect
for my careers as an artist and
palaeontologist

2013 was my DX

How much Post DX support do you think I've had from official sources

- A. None
- B. Some
- C. Lots and lots

2013 was my DX

How much Post DX support do you think I've had from autistic people

- A. Lots and lots
- B. Some
- C. None

2013 was my DX

How much do you think MH support differed pre and post DX

- A. Lots and lots
- B. Some
- C. None

As Autistic people:

We cannot inherit a fixed,
unmoving view of life and of art
from the past generation.

Asger Jorn

as human we should

To break and be able to grow
together again in a better way:
that is the difficult art.

Asger Jorn

Definitions:

So do autistic people
have their own identity
and culture ?

And if they do do they
own it?

Definitions:

Culture

Characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time

Definitions:

Culture

The set of values, conventions or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic i.e. Goth culture

Definitions:

Culture

The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an institution or organisation i.e. Corporate Culture

Definitions:

Identity

Identity is the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and expressions that make a personality or group.

Shared Characteristics

Language
Knowledge
Patterns of behaviour
Social constructs
Identity
Habits
Creativity

Shared Characteristics

create a

Unique Narrative informed
owned & shared by the
particular group of people
who created it & so retains an
innate implied authenticity

Definitions:

Autism Culture

Is not Autistic led

Autistic people seem
replaced & excluded from
evolving this narrative

Definitions:

Autistic Culture

Is Autistic led

Involves Autistic people
informing evolving and
owning their narratives

"NeuroDiversity isn't
a political stance or
a movement it's a
living fact"

Steve Silberman

"Neurodiversity is all of us

In the same way that
biodiversity is the variety &
variability of life on this
planet

Diversity of culture within
society should be decided
by the many not the few
and should be for the many
not the few

When accepted & enabled
Autistic people are able to
not only play an equal role
in society but often an
extraordinary and
necessary one

If you want to see work that is different commission people who view the world differently but you then have to think differently about how you work with them.

“Identity is the crisis
can't you see”

?

Challenges to our identity

Is an identity positive or negative?

Is it imposed or self-identified?

Challenges to our identity

Systemic attitudes to autistic people can't change unless autistic people are recognised as a part of the system & not apart from the system

Challenges to our identity

- 1: From the system to autistic people
- 2: To the system from autistic people

Challenges to our identity

- 1: From the system to autistic people

Language and attitudes

Challenges to our identity

1: From the system to autistic people

Language engender attitudes
Attitudes engender language

Challenges to our identity

I don't live 'with autism'

Challenges to our identity

I don't live 'with autism'

I live with my wife and cats

Challenges to our identity

I don't fight 'with autism'

Challenges to our identity

I don't fight 'with autism'

I fight poor attitudes to me

Challenges to our identity

I don't live 'on' the spectrum

Challenges to our identity
I don't live 'on' the spectrum
I live in a house

Challenges to our identity
Don't do things for autism

Challenges to our identity
Don't do things for autism
Do things for autistic people

Challenges to our identity

I don't have mild autism

Challenges to our identity

"You don't speak for all
autistic people"

Challenges to our identity

What's your special gift?

Challenges to our identity

What's your special gift?

"Surviving"

Challenges to our identity

#EndAutismNow

Autism free brain
Preventing autism
Autism deficits

Challenges to our identity

Others deciding what's in the
autistic person's best interest
vs understanding what
interests autistic people

Challenges to our identity

Words used by the autism and wider community that degrade or dehumanise us

“Your not like my child”
“We’re all a little bit autistic”

Challenges:

3: Internal challenges

Challenges:

Do I belong?

Challenges:

Do I belong?

If you don't actively include
us then your actively
excluding us

Challenges:

Do I belong?

They say masking gives you
mental health issues &
being made to feel you don't
belong pushes you further

Challenges:

You know it's not up to
autistic people to justify why
we should be included its up
to others to justify why we
are not included

Challenges:

Don't try to make us conform
to another cultures measures
standards or identity

You will damage us

Challenges:

Autistic people need asking
what they need because if you
assume or guess

You will damage us

Challenges:

Autistic people need involving
on their terms because if you
apply your rules

You will damage us

Challenges:

Autistic people need talking
with not for because if you don't
learn authentically from us

You will damage us

Hopes:

That organisations
will involve autistic
people
and not just include
autistic people

Hopes:

That society will learn to
accept and respect the
autistic voice identity and
narrative & that we are
'experts by experience' in
being autistic

Hopes:

That we autistic people will
be given the space to
cultivate, grow and nurture
our own narrative & identity

We need to create a positive
social chain reaction

You can help initiate this

We need a Cultural climate
change

You can bring this about

Pants to awareness

Understanding & acceptance
are needed

We're an innate part of the
human landscape

Autistic Artists:

We are sparks that must
glow as brightly as possible.

Asger Jorn

DEMOCRACY STREET



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Autism

I am not the word
or the letters
& the spaces in-between
or the person in your
imagination
U think I should have been

I am human