What is Wrong With Disability Imagery?:
Towards a New Praxis of Social Documentary Photography

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Critical Appraisal and Portfolio of Evidence Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the University of Bolton for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the Basis of Practice

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Abstract

This critical appraisal presents the processes and outcomes of a coherent research programme carried out between June 2008 and June 2011 that interrogates the representation of disabled people through in-depth, practice-led case study and analysis, leading to the formulation of a praxis framework for presenting collaborative social documentary photography practices associated with disability. Through the systematic production of bodies of commissioned and personal projects, both successful and unsuccessful, an epistemology of practice is presented that constitutes an independent and original contribution to knowledge.

This practice-led research investigates claims that photographic images of disabled people often fail to represent individuals as empowered members of society because of societal references to stereotyped constructions of ‘otherness’ defined by negative signs of their disability. In order to question this, polemics from disability rights commentators who have referred to, but failed to engage fully with discourses surrounding photographic ontologies and professional practices, thereby constructing a binary line between disabled subjects and their image-makers, are challenged. The implication in their arguments is that photographers have been participating, knowingly or unknowingly, in disablist practices, contributing to the ‘othering’ of disabled people.

By taking an interdisciplinary approach, co-locating photography and disability studies’ theoretical frames within the trope of collaborative social documentary practice, orthodoxies surrounding representational outcomes are challenged by investing disabled people with the responsibility for the construction of their own images. Therefore, it contributes to the body of photographic theory concerning representations of the ‘other’ demonstrating that collaboration is a complex landscape of asymmetrical power structures on many levels – client, photographer, subject, audience – that are difficult to stabilise.

(Continued)

15 ‘C’ at Home
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By demonstrating synergy between academic theory and professional practice through publication, exhibition and critical discourse, this investigation informs and gives voice to disabled people themselves. Moreover, it adds to, and stimulates scholarly debate on a high-profile public matter by informing policy-makers, health professionals, commissioners and photographers on a controversial area of representation.

Parr & Badger argue, rather obviously, that the photobook’s ‘primary message is carried by photographs’ (2004:6), quoting Ralph Prins who argues that:

The photographs lose their own photographic character as things ‘in themselves’ and become parts, translated into printing ink, of a dramatic event called a book. (2004: 7)

Here, the photographs are provided as exemplars drawn from an extended series of contiguous projects, upon which the critical appraisal explores and interprets the challenges and outcomes of representing disabled people in photographic practice.

Many of the images have been used digitally online in the form of a photographic library, therefore in recognition of this, and to view the images in higher resolution, a web site can be viewed at:

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/PhD_Portfolio/
The aim of this investigation is to develop, through dialectical practice, new insights surrounding perceived problems associated with photographic disability imagery and develop a new praxis for social documentary photography. Building on previous bodies of work, new knowledge is created in a complex area under-explored in both photography’s and disability’s theoretical frames.

Smith and Dean highlight the ‘problematic nature of conventional definitions of research’ (2009: 2) as defined by the OECD, where they question assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge:

Research and experimental development (R&D) comprise creative work undertaken in a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications. (Frascati Manual, OECD, 2002)

The generalisability and transferability of knowledge, they argue, is implied in such a definition, which for creative practitioners is a given as they ‘increase the stock’ through practice rather than the verbal or numerical. However, they remind us of the unstable nature of knowledge, which is ‘fundamental to a postmodernist view of the world’ (2009: 3). As Carole Gray states:

In the role of ‘practitioner-researcher’ subjectivity, involvement, reflexivity is acknowledged; the interaction of the researcher with the research material is recognised. Knowledge is negotiated (intersubjective?), context bound, and is the result of personal construction. Research material may not necessarily be replicated, but can be made accessible, communicated and understood (Gray, 1996: 13; Gray and Malins, 2004: 21)

Working collaboratively with disabled people since 2006 prompted further investigation into the etiological basis for protestations in the liter-
nature concerning the exclusion of disabled people from participating in the construction of their own images. Significantly, Snyder and Mitchell (2006) describe cultural locations of disability where charities, learning disability institutions, sheltered workshops, documentary/medical/film and the academic community have excluded disabled people from participation in, as they put it, ‘the invention of culture itself’ and in which, ‘disabled people find themselves deposited, often against their will’ (2006: 3).

The cultural space under examination in this investigation is social documentary photography. Whilst there is an overall aim that provides focus, the processes described here concern reflexive practice (Schön, 1991) within a photography discourse (Rose, 2007) applying a number of methods appropriate to their context. Paradoxically, the investigation begins with evidence of impact rather than this being an anticipated outcome more traditionally aligned with a scientifically structured investigation. The evidence presented is that the techniques used in previous professional practice influenced government to commission the repopulation of their library of images of disabled people and are now used as best practice. What follows concerns the critical analysis and disaggregation of the issues generated by this commission and the subsequent generation of projects that explore and challenge the representation of disabled people as ‘other’ as a dialectical practice.

**Section One** sets the context for the study and concerns a major commission from the Office for Disability Issues (ODI), the outputs of which impacted on government practices. How the production of this body of work was informed by investigations into the terrains of disability, social documentary photography histories and theories, ethical issues and archival representations is discussed.

Reflecting on the outcomes from the ODI commission, **Section Two** presents how these findings informed further bodies of collaborative work with disabled individuals highlighting issues of unstable photographer/subject power asymmetries.

**Section Three** presents a concluding body of work with a group of young people with learning difficulties, investigating power relationships further by investing the subjects with the responsibility for determining the outcomes themselves.

The **Conclusions** section will summarise interpretations of theoretical perspectives and present a reformulated and localised social documentary collaborative framework developed through the process of praxis and reflection.

Finally, **Supporting Evidence** is provided verifying the commissions and collaborative projects on which this study is based.

The research process is presented in the diagram overleaf.
What is Wrong with Disability Imagery?

Research Question

Social Documentary Photography

Method

Sourcing Subjects (Who is Disabled?)

Case Studies

Disability Theories

ODI Commission

ODI Disability & Inclusion

Power Relationships

Reporting Ethics Management

Collaboration

Implement Collaborative Praxis

Stage 3

Confront Power Relationships

Identify Issues & reflect

Reporting Ethics Management

Collaboration

Ethics Management Collaboration

Working with Disabled People

Disability & Inclusion

Focus: Disability & Inclusion

Objectification

Invisibility

Polemics

Rethinking Social Documentary Photography

Social Documentary Photography

Stage 2

Identify Issues & reflect

Reporting Ethics Management

Collaboration

Ethics Management Collaboration

Working with Disabled People

Disability & Inclusion

Focus: Disability & Inclusion

Objectification

Invisibility

Polemics

Rethinking Social Documentary Photography

Social Documentary Photography

Stage 1

Positive Representational Viewpoints

Thesis

Outputs Government Publications & Online Conference Presentations

New Commissions NSASC IDDP

Study Schematic: Overview
In 2008, I had the opportunity to present a photobook and professional portfolio of work, my initial forays into the representation of disabled people, to members of the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) Communications Team. The ODI, Department of Work and Pensions, is a cross-government body that works collaboratively with departments, external groups and individuals ensuring that disabled people are involved in designing services, leading the government’s work on disability equality.

The ODI provides research and information materials for internal use, which requires the creation and maintenance of a library of ‘official’ images of disabled people for use in publications, exhibitions and online.

I was contacted some weeks later and invited to tender for a major commission to repopulate their image library. They wished to shift away from the existing focus on specific impairments, towards an approach that represented disabled people as multi-dimensional members of contemporary society, rather than the ‘other’. Government policy, in line with EU directives, stipulated that photographers are appointed through open tender every four years and those successful, included on the ‘approved’ register. I was not ‘approved’, but the team were impressed by my social documentary practice and I was subsequently commissioned to produce 280 images in under-represented categories.

Experience from previous involvement with the photographic representation of disabled people suggested that consideration should be given to the viability of a successful outcome based on the potential for asymmetry of intent with the ODI. The images were to ‘reflect the ethos of the organisation’, by being styled on concepts such as: ‘dynamic’, ‘inspiring’, modern’. Whilst such descriptors could be generically applied to any promotional material, the implication of positiveness deserved scrutiny. Furthermore, identifying ‘modern’ in a post-modern media landscape of image consumers adept at intertextual readings...
Fieldwork clashes during previous practice suggested that a cautious approach regarding assumptions concerning positive interpretations due to differing ideological viewpoints was required. An advocate, previously labelling the photography of disabled people as ‘voyeuristic’ stated that disabled people do not want to be seen in ‘authentic’ situations, arguing, “Are you going to photograph someone in a wheelchair trying to get on the last train in the pouring rain?” (Speake, 2008). The inference here being that the voyeur label referred to an accusation that a non-disabled photographer would be unable to remain objective when working with disabled people; in other words, there would be an unequal power relationship. From an ethical perspective, this may be a fair challenge concerning the notion of impartial gathering and analysis of data without personal experience as a disabled person. However, to the social documentary photographer, personal codes of conduct would reject the construction of artifice recording those things presented to the camera, ‘as they are’. Therefore, it was reasonable to argue that the ODI’s ethos-based descriptors and willingness to construct images, challenged the wisdom of accepting the terms of the brief and whether to do so would be supporting David Hevey’s argument that the ensuing engagement of the subjects would be for the benefit of the organisation, ‘in which disabled people are positioned to enflish the theories of their oppressors’ (Hevey, 1992: 53).

An alternative approach to the ‘reportage’ style requested was successfully negotiated on grounds that this implied an ‘outsider’ stance, where the photographer records contemporaneous events synchronously with an air of detachment. An argument was put forward that an alternative social documentary approach would be appropriately aligned with the ODI’s role to pursue their aim of ‘improving the life chances of disabled people’ (DoH, 2011) by involving disabled people in the creation of their own images, thereby having an influence over their subsequent representation in society. The resulting images would aim to contribute to social cohesion by rejecting ‘othering’, both in the attention given to disabled people as ordinary members of society and by distributing representations within styles and genres that are congruent with contemporary image consumption.

The ODI commission required the sourcing, and subsequent recruitment of over 30 subjects of various ages and cultural backgrounds. For logistical reasons, the practice location was chosen in and around the northwest of England and relationships with Bolton Council, disability support groups and individuals through personal contacts were established. Before this process could begin, understanding how to identify and source subjects required in-depth knowledge of disability issues, terminology and the contemporary sociopolitical landscape surrounding disability activism and rights. Firstly, it is important to understand the contemporary and historical photographic representation of disabled people and to critique the chosen social documentary approach.
In order to support a justification for the efficacy of the practice methods on which this study was constructed, dichotomies that underpin the history and practices surrounding social documentary genres are discussed.

Whilst documentary practices were, as Walker suggests, a straightforward area to work in up to the 1980s, where the notion of ‘straight’ photography was based upon the indexical nature of the image, ‘to embody a belief that finding is as valuable as making, recording as valuable as imagining’, the ensuing decades heralded a period of, ‘ambiguity, fictionalisation and an ironic relationship with its own history’ (1995: 245). Despite documentary’s historical struggle with objectivity verses subjectivity it had, according to Grundberg, maintained an ability to describe with a level of verisimilitude compared to other visual art forms (1999). However, Walker asks if documentary’s ‘infection’ with postmodernism would render ‘meaningless the very concept of the document, the fact’ (1995: 245).

In order to gauge the veracity of these observations today, there is a need to understand the basis for the rupture implied by postmodernism and whether documentary, or more specifically social documentary photography, is a valid paradigm for interrogating the representation of disability. We shall see that the concept of documentary photography is, rather than ontological, historically and culturally specific (Solomon-Godeau, 1991), and that underlying ambiguities concerning representation persist, especially in the case of disability. Susan Sontag suggests that if we accept what the camera records, photography implies, ‘that we know about the world’, but that this is, ‘the opposite of understanding, which starts from not accepting the world as it looks. Understanding is based on how something functions, not how it looks’ (Sontag, 2002: 23).

The term ‘documentary’ can be etymologically translated from the
Latin, documentum – an official paper, which as Clarke puts it is: ‘evidence not to be questioned, a truthful account backed by the authority of the law’ (1997). Perhaps the earliest record of social documentary photography in Britain can be traced to Thomas Annan (1868-77) who was commissioned by the Glasgow Improvement Trust to record the city’s slums in 1868, twenty-two years after Friedrich Engels published The Conditions of the English Working Class in 1845. According to Guadagnini (2010), Annan’s architectural views of Glasgow’s slums, devoid of people where their traces, blurring from long exposures, are not intended for social reform, but illustrate, ‘the Victorian obsession with cataloguing’. Nevertheless, he says, ‘the spectator is made aware at the same time of the sense of apprehension and oppression that accompanies the everyday existence of the occupants of these slums.’ (2010: 237) (see also McCorkell, nd).

The prevailing culture of scientific positivism in the nineteenth century, based on empiricism, believed in the truth-value of visual evidence (Sturken and Cartwright, 2009). Vested with indexical qualities, those objects and subjects normally invisible or inaccessible to the majority of the population were communicated through the medium of print, which are available today as ‘how-it-was-then’ visual documents of those things forever lost (Clarke, 1997). This is exemplified in the work of Paul Martin (1864-1942) who photographed the London working classes in a nostalgic and sympathetic manner, that is vested with, ‘its ability to record, not in the consciousness that he brought to bear’ (Flukinger, Schaaf and Meacham, 1978: 78).

Barthes describes the indexical nature of the photograph at the beginning of Camera Lucida, which as Krauss explains, is a reference to Pierce’s theories of the ‘sign’ as ‘index’, which he distinguishes from the ‘symbol’ and the ‘icon’ (Krauss, 2009). Barthes describes how his interest in photography took, ‘a more cultural turn’, when he happened on a photograph of Napoleon’s youngest brother, Jerome, taken in 1852. And I realized then, with amazement I have not been able to lessen since: “I am looking at the eyes that looked at the Emperor.” (Barthes, 1981: 3)

In the context of nineteenth century positivism, a photograph was assumed to have the same veracity as a fingerprint. It existed because of the direct contact between an object and the photographic image, ‘it points at its object, or is itself a trace of, or mark made by, that object,’ (Olin, 2009: 76). There was a belief that its referent and the image were indivisible and that such images are, as Barthes goes on to say, ‘a sort of umbilical cord [that] links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze’ (Barthes, 1981: 81). The photograph, he says, always carries its referent and there is a tautological element, in that they ‘belong to that class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot be separated without destroying them both’ (Barthes, 1981: 6).

Jacob Riis (1849-1914), a European immigrant to the USA, used photographs in a propagandist mission to represent the socially deprived in New York who were living in squalid conditions (Clarke 1997). Unlike Martin, he was less interested in photography’s aesthetic values than of collecting ethnographic evidence (Rosler, 2004b) using his photographs as ‘facts’ to promote social reform (Wells, 2009). He believed that the poor were not, as often accused, inept or lazy, but victims of modernisation and the modernising classes. A pioneer of flash photography, he would accompany the sanitary police on midnight visits to ‘put before the people’ the appalling conditions that coexistent New Yorkers experienced. He published How The Other Half Lives (Riis, 1890), which with the use of newly developed half-tone reproductions had a profound effect on contemporary print journalism (Lenman, 2005). However, Riis’s work has come under critical review in recent years concerning exploitation, objectivity and undertones of racism summed-up by Wells suggesting that:

A history of documentary could be structured around an account of the association between photographer and subject, and of the power relationships that are mediated between them. In the ostensible interest of revealing (and subsequently ameliorating) harsh conditions of life, photographers often rendered those they recorded into passive sufferers of poverty, rather than active agents in their own lives. (Wells, 2009: 778)

In contrast to Riis’s gritty realism, Lewis Hine (1874-1940), a sociologist working for New York’s Ethical Culture School and the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC), used photography in pursuance of legislative change within ethical frameworks that valued individual sub-
According to Conrath-Scholl:

that the documentary effect of the photograph can unquestionably go hand-in-hand with a situational ‘mis-en-scene’ without distorting reality. (2009: 15)

The basis of the criticisms may be focused on the breadth of subjects photographed by Sander, photographing disabled people such as a miner, an ex-serviceman and two midgets in a body of work that included an attorney, young farmers, musicians, a priest and a vagrant (Sander, 2009). A 1927 Rheinische Tagezeitung review of this body of work, People Of Our Time, suggested that:

By looking at all of these people captured individually, a sense of totality accrues, of the human types of the twentieth century and the face of our time. (cited in Conrath-Scholl, 2009: 15)

Sander’s photographs therefore are significant in the context of this study by the manner in which he demonstrates how such work is defined in its totality, documenting a specific cultural taxonomy at a particular time in history (Conrath-Scholl, 2009).

The twentieth century sees documentary photography practiced by leading photographers in America and Europe within a series of ideological positions including Roy Striker’s seminal government-sponsored Farm Security Administration project (FSA), initiated in 1935 by President Roosevelt. From 1937 Striker commissioned the likes of Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, Ben Shahn and Russell Lee to ‘gather photographic evidence of the agency’s good works’ (Marien, 2006: 278; see also Orvell, 2003). Britain’s Mass Observation project, initiated by Charles Madge, Tom Harrison and Humphrey Jennings in 1937, co-opted Humphrey Spender who went to Bolton to produce Worktown (Mulford, 1982; Spender, 1987; Lenman, 2005). In an interview with Jeremy Mulford in 1981, Spender says:

I want to stress that the photographers I continue to appreciate and admire most are those concerned with humanity – those who, in disclosing humanity and human behaviour, also disclose part of their own attitude towards humanity and human behaviour. And I am not referring only to those who happen to adopt my style of the ‘unobserved observer’. (Mulford, 1982: 21)
Much has been written about the history and significance of these movements, which is beyond the scope of this discourse, but it is important to reflect upon the continuing role they had to play in pursuing various political agendas constructed through methods of visual codification (and the iconic) in which the subject, as Clarke puts it, ‘is subsumed into a larger symbolic role and meaning’ (1997: 153). This, he says, is the myth of documentary photography. Moreover, Burgin (1982) says that we must challenge the notion that photographs contain an explicit set of signs and symbols to impart their meaning, but rather that meaning is located within the context of a cultural discourse. He asks us to be wary of the mood or feelings such images impart by understanding that the message(s) rely upon our ‘common knowledge of the typical representation of the prevailing social facts and values’ (Burgin, 1982: 41). To understand how this works he says, we must disbelieve any notion that objects are neutral in front of the camera.

Marien (2006) points out that the prominence of politically motivated social documentary in the 1930s was subsequently appropriated, not for social change, but as a visual ‘documentary’ style in the popular press, a theme that Hevey describes in 1980s charity posters using black and white ‘documentary’ style images to construct faux realism (Hevey, 1992).

The FSA photographers’ names, whose images were disseminated in newspapers and magazines, were felt to be unimportant at the time (Bull, 2010), subservient to the assumption of objectively, presenting ‘things as they are’, which according to Mary Panzer became an adopted motto of Dorothea Lange and later by Henri Cartier-Bresson in the introduction to The Decisive Moment (1952). Whilst Panzer is writing here about photojournalism, she highlights a wider ambiguity in the use of the ‘things as they are’ phrase:

to a history in which things appear not as they are, but as they were once seen through the subjective filter of photographer and journal. Photojournalism is a collaborative project, in which photographers, writers, editors and publishers creatively interpret and translate the chaos of life into a product that can be distributed to readers (2005: 10).

In Europe, the influential French Humanist movement (1920 to 1970) included key figures such as Kertész, Brassai, Robert Capa, Doisneau, Henri Cartier-Bresson and many others, inspiring American and European illustrated magazines between the 1930s and 1950s (Lenman, 2005). Whilst critics have labelled the movement’s tendency for the nostalgic, Lenman argues that notions of community spirit and human sensibility prevalent in their work are historically significant. Hamilton (1997) suggests that the influence of the French Humanist movement on social documentary photography at the end of the twentieth century is a result of the manner in which it developed, and subsequently diffused French identity by highlighting its representational ambiguity.

The point-of-view approach – a shift towards the personal – of American photographer Walker Evans demonstrates the ambiguity of documentary photography. Dismissed by Striker in 1937 for failing to follow his deadlines and guidelines, Evans subsequently distanced himself from the FSA work by differentiating the ‘documents’ as he put it, towards a more subjective ‘documentary’ approach, demonstrated by American Photographs exhibited in 1938 at MoMA (Clarke, 1997, Bull, 2010). In Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, published in 1941, he produces subtle, poetic images of sharecroppers and their possessions (Agee & Evans, 2006). However, Rosler calls this ‘victim photography’ where the subjects are both subjected to their situations and the camera itself (Rosler, 2004a). Clarke argues that this radical text led the way for Robert Frank’s The Americans in 1959, an unwelcome picture of post-war America, which with its choreographic assemblage of images ‘moves the documentary approach into a new photographic space of possible meanings and muted atmospheres’ (Clarke, 1997: 155; see also Bull, 2010: 111).

Post war documentary photographers, who were experiencing the decline of the illustrated picture magazine began to resist the impositions put upon them by picture editors by publishing photobooks and exhibiting in galleries (Marien, 2006). Symptomatic of the move of photographers to distance themselves from others’ agendas was manifested in the formation of the Magnum news agency in 1947, founded by Robert Capa, George Rodger, David Seymour, Bill Vandivert and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Magnum’s eclecticism, as Clarke puts it, celebrates, through pluralism, its members’ individual approach to documentary (Clarke, 1997).
Whilst documentary images have been displayed in gallery spaces from the beginnings of its history, their separation from art photography and photojournalism were, according to Lenman (2005), the result of an accepted understanding that their cultural and social agendas differed. FSA images were included in MoMA’s Family of Man exhibition in 1955 curated by Edward Steichen, which according to Stuart Bull (2010) represented a move of documentary images from the popular press to the gallery. The convergence of these three genres (social documentary, art and photojournalism), underpinned and challenged notions of the global family espoused by the Family of Man by photographers such as Eugene Richards (1941 - ), whose confrontational approach was unflinching (see Dorchester Days, 2000). British practitioners such as Chris Killip (1946 - ) also reinforced the move away from attempting to effect social change to an inward, interpretive approach. His book In Flagrante (1988) reflected the effects on the working classes in Newcastle upon Tyne of industrial decline, joining other photographers such as Paul Graham (1956 - ) in their reactions to Thatcherism between 1979-1990 (Marien, 2006).

The late twentieth century and early twenty-first sees social documentary occupied by practitioners assuming diverse, multilayered approaches, typified, for example, by the difficulties we have in attempting to categorise Martin Parr’s (1952 - ) oeuvre, which concentrates on presenting, “wry, satirical perceptions of human behaviour” (Marien, 2006: 412; see also Cost of Living 1989 and New Brighton, 1997). Photographer, filmmaker, curator, author, collector, Parr is perhaps the epitome of a practitioner who inhabits the intertextual nature of our multicultural, postmodern society, adept at assuming an ‘observer/observed’ role synchronously (see Auto Portrait, 2000). He made the claim of being a ‘promiscuous’ photographer at a Redeye event at Manchester Metropolitan University in 2007. In an example of the rupture between pre- and postmodern photographic cultures, he was subjected to a venomous attack by Phillip Jones Griffiths (1938-2008) when he applied in 1994 to join Magnum who accused him of being, “‘the dedicated enemy of everything I believe in and, I trust, Magnum still believes in” (Miller, 1999: 294-295). Parr was elected by one vote.

Returning to the opening theme of this section, we can see that the history of social documentary photography is one of a pluralistic struggle over the accurate representation of ‘things as they are’ where the ambiguities inherent in the act of choosing, framing and taking an image have to be seen contextually. As Clarke has argued:

> in many contexts the notion of a literal and objective record of ‘history’ is a limited illusion. It ignores the entire cultural and social background against which the image was taken, just as it renders the photographer a neutral, passive and invisible recorder of the scene. (Clarke, 1997: 146)

The notion of the passivity of the documentary image, devoid of any qualities imbued by the photographer, or that the act of taking the photograph has influenced the outcome is now generally accepted according to Emerling (2012). Documentary images he says

> are not ‘pictures’ but only structural elements of the ‘thing itself,’ which are never grasped or represented as such, only one part of the relation photographer–subject–image–viewer–discourse. (Emerling, 2012: 83)

However, it would appear that the perceived indexical qualities of the photographic image still have the power to persuade us to believe that such-and-such a person, place, or event must have existed, despite an acceptance that the image could have been manipulated or re-presented in some way (Banks, 2001). As Susan Sontag declares:

> A photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened. The picture may distort; but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what’s in the picture. (Sontag, 2002: 5)

The embodiment of postmodernism’s challenge to this is exemplified in Sultan & Mandel’s book, Evidence (2003), a collection of photographs found in government agencies and research institutions, decontextualised and re-presented as conceptual art. Phillips (2003) compares the narrative to Antonioni’s Blow-Up (1966), whose central character, David Bailey, becomes more removed from reality the further he enlarges a photograph of an imagined murder. Evidence disrupts our relationship with the photographic narrative with its lack of context and visual choreography.

> With twenty-four hour news, online media and asynchronous access to information, it is indeed understandable that, as Walker puts it, post-
If the documentary photograph wants us to accept it on the terms it is given, then it equally needs to be looked at in relation to the way it was taken. (Clarke, 1997: 165)

Social documentary photography therefore provides the framework to describe the approach presented in this study, with the inherent knowledge concerning the dialectic of its ambiguities, complicated also by the challenges of working with disabled people within the concomitant domain of disability politics. As we will see, working with disabled people and communities offers formidable challenges to the practitioner and prompts a reappraisal of the social documentary model itself.

Modernism has ‘infected’ social documentary (Walker, 1995), blurring any binary division between objectivity and subjectivity, reality and imagination. In effect, blurring modes of media themselves.

The proliferation of computer software, Rosler points out, has also blurred the line between the still and moving image, where the domestic image consumer, possessing the most rudimentary skills, is able to manipulate and republish others’ images, further adding to an entropic process that undermines the ‘things as they are’ trope that poses its own particular threat to documentary, since ‘post photographic’ practice at a minimum can be said to have abandoned any interest in indexicality and, perhaps just as importantly, in the privileged viewpoint of ‘witness’ – and therefore any embeddedness in a particular moment in time and place. (Rosler, 2004b: 211)

Whilst we may accept that photographic truth has no validity by challenging the belief by early practitioners that social documentary photography was truthful in a positivist sense – a representation of reality – there nevertheless remains an issue regarding unequal power relationships between photographer and subject. Rosler cites social documentary practitioners today who believe that in order to mitigate unequal power relationships, self-representation is essential, and, ‘those who use this method […] must add verbal texts of witness, testimony and confession’ (2004b: 227). With the widening division between rich and poor in the United States she says (and we include the UK here), she laments the declining attention society gives to those ‘on the wrong side’. She is, though, optimistic about postmodern society’s need for advocacy and interpretation through the practice of social documentary photography where practitioners continually negotiate the tensions between observation and opinion (2004b).

Making no claims of ‘unobserved observation’ or representations of truth in proposing the approach to the ODI commission, the intent in this research was to address the challenges inherent in decoding the complex set of systems that create meaning (Wells, 2009) by collaborating with those being photographed. Appropriately, a prescient comment by Clarke remained a touchstone throughout the practice:
In his polemical text *The Creatures Time Forgot*, David Hevey found a disregard of disability in the contemporary photographic literature, positing an argument that when photographers have ‘done’ the disabled in the past, they have, and continue to behave oppressively towards their subjects by categorising, controlling, objectifying and manipulating them (1992, 1997). Hevey’s stance is, according to Tom Shakespeare, unashamedly functionalist (Shakespeare, 1993: 98). But, in calling for photographers to represent the social oppression of disabled people, Hevey falls short in consummating his argument by offering a convincing model for photographic practices where the practitioner is able to reconcile perceived tensions between societal prejudices and an imagined, homogenized disability identity (Shakespeare, 2006).

Similarly, when Cassandra Phillips (2001) asks us to think why, in our image-saturated contemporary media landscape, there is an absence of disabled subjects marketing consumer goods such as beauty products or cars (unless a disabled person is extolling the virtues of the latest invalid scooter), she does not engage in a critique of photography’s obsession with the ‘other’ (see also Hevey, 1992). By asking us to ‘re-imagine’ the disabled body by involving disabled people in the construction of their own images, ‘in ways that values individual identity’ (Phillips, 2001: 195), she nevertheless offers the photography practitioner little by way of a theoretical framework within which to position practice.

Certainly, the history of photography evidences that some photographers have objectified and ‘othered’ disabled people in the past, therefore supporting commentators’ accusations that they are guilty of ableist practices (Hevey, 1992; Phillips, 2001; Evans, 2005). However, Ralph & Boxall (2005) found little evidence of Hevey’s ‘enfreakment’ in a study of UK university publicity material, although they found that the sector as a whole does not target disabled people at the same frequency as ethnic minorities, suggesting they are less ‘visible’.

Whilst society becomes more accepting of diversity, it would appear that more enlightened perceptions of disability nevertheless remain at the margins of popular consciousness today. In 2009, the ‘visual team’ at Abercrombie and Fitch in Savile Row, London, relegated Riam Dean to the stockroom until the ‘less revealing’ winter uniform arrived (covering up her false arm) before she could enter the store by the front door. Her disability was ‘unsavoury’ they said, but Abercrombie and Fitch lost their case in an employment tribunal. Riam is quoted as saying her decision caused her to, ‘question her worth as a human being’ (Anon., Sunday Times, 2009). Controversies surrounding the representation of disabled people continue to occur, such as a newspaper comment by Storme Toolis, an actor with cerebral palsy who has gained a part in the new ‘Inbetweeners’ film: “And I love to watch Glee, though I found it quite offensive that they chose to cast a normal actor in a wheelchair part. […] If it was a racial issue, if an actor was blacked up, it would never be accepted,” she says (Broomfield, 2011).

Beyond the scope of this study, but nevertheless important in regard to contemporary societal attitudes towards disabled people, Karen Quarmby draws our attention to shocking case studies of hate crimes, claiming that:

Despite the best intentions of the disability rights movement, disabled citizens are mostly not seen as ordinary people wanting to live ordinary lives […] And it doesn’t end, because such prejudices make it all too easy to create new, malicious stereotypes of disabled people, such as the scrounger, fuelling new hatred against them. [see the case of Kevin Davies] (Quarmby, 2011: 236)

A further example concerns the recent UK television programme, How to Look Good Naked … With A Difference (Channel 4, January 2010), which emphasised, objectified and ‘othered’ disabled women by documenting their makeover journeys to normalcy (Davies, 1995). Billed as, ‘courageous members of our society who just wanted to be heard regardless of their disabilities’, this example supports a view that through the asymmetrical power vested in the programme format, these disabled people were excluded from the process of constructing their own representation because, as Hevey insists, ‘they are read as socially dead and not having a role to play’ (Hevey, 1992: 54; see also Snyder & Mitchell, 2006: 3). Hevey believes that many disabled people have lived their lives believing that their existence depended entirely on the attendance of health care professionals, so it is not surprising that some have very easily ‘acquiesced to other people’s vision of them’ (1992: 48). In this case, the celebrity Gok Wan was the figure to whom they acquiesced. It is fair to admit that the programme format is equally applied to all aspirational subjects, disabled or non-disabled, prepared to have their individual identities re-modelled and re-presented, but it begs the question as to why these women needed their own ‘different’ programme. It would appear that not much has changed since Hevey wrote, The Creatures Time Forgot in that disabled people are still segregated as ‘other’.

Such examples resonate with Snyder and Mitchell’s (2006) description of an international disability research industry that has excluded disabled people from participation in, ‘the invention of culture itself’, since they find themselves entrapped by photography’s obsession with the ‘other’ (Snyder and Mitchell, 2006: 3), yet visually absent from the landscape.

Commentators such as Jessica Evans have argued that by emphasising physical or intellectual deviations, the disabled individual is defined and consequently there ensues an inevitable relationship between the body and a ‘state of mind’ (2005). Such images inevitably induce multiple interpretations and gazes argues Phillips (2001) and make false generalisations about disabled people whose status and views are invisible. This is at odds with a representation of the subject as an individual member of society, masking those things that we share as commonly held values – independence, choice, rights and inclusion (HM Government Human Rights Act, 1998; see also DoH, 2001 Valuing People).

Goffman (1990) reminds us about stigmatising or discrediting people felt not to be ‘ordinary’ where:

By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances. So we construct a stigma theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents. (Goffman, 1980: 15)
In the case of people with a physical and/or learning disability, their stigmas cannot be altered or hidden (Coleman, 1997), so forms of photographic representation serve to emphasise, put on show, ‘other-ness’, further stigmatising those who are disabled. Goffman calls this the ‘Gestalt of Disability’ (Goffman, 1990).

These observations posed a fundamental challenge for this study, because in attempting to understand the (mis)representation and marginalisation of disabled people from the contemporary photographic landscape by positioning the research in professional practice, there is a paradox; namely, if there is indeed a missing subject area – photographs of, rather than by disabled people – the investigative processes of ‘taking’ their images could contribute to ‘othering’ unless there is an equitable sharing of power.

In the next section, there is further reflection using research carried out in photographic archives as a way of partly understanding previous perceptions of disability imagery.

Disability and the Archive

Whilst Phillips’s (2001) observation that disabled people are absent from the contemporary photographic commercial landscape may be true, it is not entirely accurate in a general sense. We should not ignore the fact that photographers have in the past, created bodies of work involving disabled people as subjects. For example, Diane Arbus’s controversial 1971 Untitled series of ‘retarded people’ in US mental institutions (Arbus, 1995), Richard Avedon’s portraits of mental patients In the American West (Avedon, 2005), Lori Grinker’s Veterans of War essay (2005), Bernard Stehle’s work with disabled residents in a Philadelphia institution, Incurably Romantic (Stehle, 1985), the challenging tableau-vivants of Joel-Peter Witkin’s, The Bone House, (Witkin, 2000) and Nick Knight’s breast cancer images, One in Ten, shot within fashion photographic conventions (Knight, 2000) and so on.

Furthermore, the early photographic archive contains arrays of catalogued portraits that Tagg (1988) describes as ‘the body isolated’ where the subjects provide an ‘unreturnable gaze’, names and number boards providing their hierarchical status in the scheme of the world. It is therefore significant that people with disabilities, especially those delineated ‘intellectually incapable’ in the nineteenth century, were classified and codified alongside criminals and foreigners. Thus photography came to establish and delimit the terrain of the ‘other’, to define both the ‘generalised look’ – the typology – and the ‘contingent instance’ of defiance and social pathology (Sekula, 1992: 345).

Attempting to find some primary evidence of such labelling to verify this, a number of searches were conducted at the National Media Museum (NMeM) in Bradford. Other archives visited yielded little, supporting Phillips’s (2001) claims that disabled people are almost absent from the photographic landscape. For example, the National Coal Mining Museum for England in Wakefield was unable to find photographs of disabled miners, which seemed paradoxical, given the statistical data...
on accidents and disasters. More locally, the Spender Archive at Bolton Museum (Worktown 1937-1938) was also beneft of photographs of disabled people, which in the late 1930s is surprising, given the history of working-class malnutrition and industrial working conditions such as health and safety legislation. The only signifcant fndings came from the NMeM, which holds the UK’s national collection of photographs, including the Royal Photographic Society Collection and the Daily Herald Archive, but curators were hard-pressed to retrieve images specifcally catalogued under ‘disability’. The museum’s collection contains, amongst others, key photographs created by Dr Hugh Welch Diamond (1809-1886) of mental patients from Surrey County Asylum during his study of the diagnosis of conditions using physiognomy (Marien, 2006); Edweard Muybridge’s image set of a young boy with mobility impairments walking on all fours (1887); a copy of ‘Electro-Physiologie Photographique’, (1862) by Guillaume-Benjamin Duchenne de Boulogne, (1806-1875); and, a series of images of disabled people created by David Hevey as he attempted to address the revision of disability, ‘through workshop schema’ (Hevey, 1992: 119). Paradoxically, it is intriguing rather than disappointng to discover the paucity of images of disability, so attention was drawn towards the Daily Herald Archive, (cir.1912-1964), which consists of over 3 million photographs in their original fling cabinets spanning the newspaper’s life.

Six full-day sessions revealed a number of image fles labelled, for example: ‘Cripples-Children-Spastics’, ‘Medical-Deaf & Dumb’ and ‘Freaks-Siamese Twins’. The politically incorrect language, outdated by today’s standards, gives clues to the legacy underpinning the representation of disabled people, as mentioned above, aptly described by Snyder and Mitchell as, ‘bound to their own historical moment’s shortcomings, idiosyncrasies and obsessions’ (2006: 201). Three typical examples in school settings are selected here to support Snyder and Mitchell’s observation. The photographs in the archive are in the main captioned on the reverse with classifcation notes, or the actual newspaper article. A manila fle labelled ‘Freaks’ revealed the following image:

The caption on the reverse reads:

Frank Hayes, of Battersea, aged thirteen, weighs 16 stone, and is six feet tall. In spite of his size, he is a champion runner and swimmer, holds medals in several athletic events and is anchor for his tug-of-war team at Battersea Central School. He also plays cricket and football. They call him ‘Fatty’ at school but he does not allow any cheek. (Daily Herald, nd, circa 1950)

It could be argued that with contemporary concerns regarding childhood obesity in Western societies, the term ‘fatty’ could be contested, but signifcantly, we see Frank praised for his sporting achievements, ‘in spite of his size’.

The next two examples demonstrate how relatively recently, disabled people were segregated from mainstream society.
The caption becomes problematic when we consider the notion of an orchestra, which is a concept, as "handicapped" – the suggestion being that the music produced would be inferior because its members are disabled (Evans, 2005). It would be reasonable to refer to Hevey’s idea of the ‘eugenic image’ in this example because Bentry School was a special educational needs school, therefore by definition segregating disabled pupils from society (Hevey, 1992:30; see also Evans, 2005:278). Moreover, we can compare this image with Francis Galton’s series of composite portraits showing ‘Jewish Types’, created by superimposing pre-selected (pre-prejudiced) images that purport to emphasise their physical descriptors, thereby providing a visual reference or sign system to identify ‘jewishness’ (Wells, 2009). Whilst we apply our prior pre-visualised knowledge of disability typology, the recognition of the individual playing the saxophone as of short stature is transferred to the ensemble and they are labelled for life, adding to the catalogue of imagined disability.

The third example concerns a patronising representation of disabled people as ‘heroic’.
The caption for both reads:

For sheer guts, for pure indomitable fighting spirit, these boys of Hinwick Hall, Bedfordshire, take some beating. They are all cripples, suffering from an incurable muscular disease. But that doesn’t stop them from playing cricket – and playing it with all the zest of youngsters who can walk and run. Just look at Barry Walker (13), above, taking a swipe at a fast one in his wheel-chair. His bat may not be straight – but his heart is in the right place. On the left, the bowler, young Tom Cowell – in leg irons. He tosses them up with all the determination of Freddie Trueman. The games master, Mr Claybourne, introduced them to cricket. He knew all about their enthusiasm – but he was amazed by their skill. “It helps them overcome their disabilities,” he said. “It’s a tonic to me, too, to hear them laugh.” And it’s an example to us all! (Daily Herald, 1953)

These young men, segregated from society, as Hevey puts it, ‘are not at home, but in a home’ (Hevey, 1992: 64), are presented as rising above their positions in society (Phillips, 2001) by overcoming their impairments, but by aspiring to ‘normal’ attributes, their identities are denied.

In the case of Frank Hayes and the ‘Handicapped Orchestra’, the photographers have ‘picked-out’ and ‘pointed-to’ the subjects intrusively (Roberts, 2010), probably not questioning the right of informed consent and whether the subjects would be aware of the on-use of their images and the subsequent readings (Henderson, 2003). By conforming to what society deems to be ‘normal’ (or in this case mediated by the games master) the ‘incurable cripples’ playing cricket are segregated from that society and admired from a distance. Whilst we should not decry the good intentions of responding to their desire to engage in sports, the images are nevertheless visually coded and iconic, leading an arbitrary classification of ‘Disabled-Cripples-Sport’.

In order to investigate this further, it is important to understand how theoreticians have developed, and subsequently challenged models of disability. An in-depth analysis of disability theories and their history will not, by necessity, be articulated here, rather an attempt to corroborate observations during the production of the bodies of work made during this study (Barnes & Mercer, 2010). Key to this study are recent contestations concerning the validity of the social model of disability and how this relates to our understanding of disabled people’s status alongside non-disabled members of society (Barnes, 1998; Barnes & Mercer, 2003, 2010; Shakespeare, 2002, 2006). These arguments challenge the oppositional binary line of difference between the medical model and the social model, which has the potential of undermining our wider understanding of diversity (Shakespeare, 2006).

The first appearance of the term, the ‘social model of disability’ was published in 1983 by Mike Oliver, who developed the concept in order to devise a discursive space that deflected the attention of professionals and their interventions towards society and not on disabled people themselves (Oliver, 1983). This was built on Finkelstein’s view that there was a need to focus on disability from a completely different standpoint, defining “disability” not as an attribute of an individual but as an oppressive social relationship between people with physical impairments and society’ (Finkelstein, 1980: 15; 1993; see also Oliver, 2004). The prevalent medical model at this time, according to Humphrey

...posed an essentialist conception of impairment, elaborated complex typologies of diagnoses and treatments, and erased the experiences of disabled people from the medical map. The social model sequesters impairment from disability and vests control of the latter in disabled people themselves. Disabled people are ipso facto in a privileged ontological and epistemological position in relation to disability, insofar as they know when they encounter disabling societal barriers, and it is their experiential knowledge, which should
guide all debates on why society is disabling and how to erase disablists from the social map. (Humphrey, 2000: 65)

Whilst the social model shifts the attention away from individuals’ impairments towards society’s attitudes and barriers towards inclusion, it proved crucial at its inception in providing a focus for disabled people to pursue inclusion agendas through the, “de-naturalising forms of social oppression” (Shakespeare, 2006: 30). However, Shakespeare argues that it has created more problems than it has solved due to a rigidity of thinking in the 1980s and 90s, which, he says is still prevalent (2006).

He cites three difficulties with the model: firstly, that if disabled people share common experiences of oppression, it assumes that all impairments are similar as in the case of racism, where, for instance, people from different ethnic backgrounds share a common experience. This is clearly not the case as there are distinctly different arguments and needs from deaf people, those with learning difficulties and wheelchair users. Secondly, if oppression is about social attitudes and barriers, then medicine’s continued search for, ‘attempts to mitigate or cure medical problems may be regarded with intense suspicion’ (2006: 31). Thirdly, the social model ignores individual conditions and experiences; therefore, its final (successful) outcome means that in removing social barriers, surveying the number of disabled people on grounds of impairment is irrelevant. Paradoxically then, the potential success of the social model means that everyone is indeed treated equally, so disabled people will have encouraged environmental and health planners to ignore them.

Oliver (2004) was keen to emphasise that he never claimed that the social model of disability was a theory, rather it was (is) a practical tool for activism, defending himself and the concept’s supporters against its detractors accordingly. However, in defending his own position, Shakespeare nevertheless argues that the semantics surrounding the social model’s validity are overshadowed by its supporters’ claims for a rigid theoretical system. Advocates are, ‘trying to have it both ways’, by resisting criticism on the grounds that it is, ‘not a theory or an explanation or an idea’, but at the same time criticising other accounts (Shakespeare, 2006: 53).

Shakespeare is an advocate of plurality in offering an alternative approach to the ‘social-contextual’ approach, positioning himself as a critical realist ⁵, taking a non-reductionist holistic approach rather than focusing solely on impairment.

5: Critical Realism: Shakespeare explains that: Critical realists distinguish between ontology (what exists) and epistemology (our ideas about what exists). They believe that there are objects independent of knowledge: labels describe rather than constitute, disease. In other words, while different cultures have different views or beliefs or attitudes to disability, impairment has always existed and has its own experiential reality (Shakespeare, 2006: 54)
Initial confusion regarding the sourcing of disabled people for the ODI commission centred on discovering who was disabled, in that the term ‘disability’ raised a number of ontological and ethical issues (e.g. around compliance with the brief). However, earlier concerns that the photographic imaging of disabled people could contribute to their ‘othering’, demanded engagement with the theoretical debates regarding models of disability referred to above. In sourcing potential subjects, there is inevitably an encounter with the recognition of typologies of difference and a presumption that there is a disability label created by a non-disabled photographer identifying and selecting disabled subjects. Moreover, there was the subsequent potential for an asymmetry of power between the subjects and photographer generated through association with stereotyping, which as Hall puts it, ‘reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes difference’ (Hall, 1997: 258).

Another issue concerned potential rejection by disability activists, who refuse to work with non-disabled professionals alluded to earlier (Humphrey, 2000). However, Shakespeare questions the notion of a disability/non-disability divide citing those individuals who voluntarily do not identify with ‘being disabled’ and disability activism, although they have an impairment in the medical sense and experience oppression (Shakespeare, 2006). The suggestion that there is a single disability identity is therefore erroneous. For instance, Cooper, who identifies with disabled people and the social model does so through her physical size:

Disabled people are disabled not by the fact of their impairment, but by disabling prejudice and discrimination. Many survivors 6 call themselves disabled, however, if one experiences events that are disabling, is not that person or group then disabled? I consider the experience of being fat in a fat-hating culture to be disabling, which in addition to medicalisation and restricted civil rights, suggest to me that I am disabled. (Cooper, 1997: 39)

Who is Disabled?

6: Cooper is referring to discourses surrounding the definition of ‘disabled’ for survivors of the mental health system.
This argument is extendable, offering insights into broader aspects of difference, such as age discrimination, anorexia, ethnicity, and so on. Previous interactions with disabled people, carers and their support organisations had provided exposure to social model culture driving their determination to participate fully in society (Goodley, 2007). Shakespeare’s discourse on the issue (2006) widened the constituency, aligning the social documentary approach with his pluralist philosophy. In short, accepting subjects on the grounds of their ‘disabled person’ self-declaration, provided a defensible platform from which to approach organisations and individuals.

Susan Sontag suggests that the act of taking a photograph is an event in its own right and is essentially non-interventionist, separated from the encounter between the photographer and the event itself. The photographer, she says, has a choice between ignoring or interfering, suggesting a moral dilemma (Sontag, 2002: 11). The comfortably off photographer as flâneur, she goes on to say, has taken photographs of ‘social misery’:

hovering about the oppressed […] with a spectacularly good conscience […] in order to document a hidden reality, that is, a reality hidden from them. (2002: 55)

There is further evidence here that supports a social documentary approach involving a participant/photographer collaboration as opposed to ‘reportage’ as initially specified in the brief, thereby countering Sontag’s accusations.

However, it should be remembered that this commission was a larger event that involved a number of parties. Whilst responsibility for selecting subjects and generating the images lay with the photographer, editing and dissemination was ultimately going to be mediated by the ODI. It was therefore only in the loosest sense collaborative during the whole commissioning process (Panzer, 2005). This adds complexity to the general notion of collaborative production at the point of acquisition where there is the potential for tainting future relationships and undermining the over-arching study by being the conduit for others’ (mis)use of imagery when it enters the public domain, inflicting anxiety and harm on subjects (Pink, 2007). In other words, there would be little control over the images after they had been delivered to the ODI.

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Ethical Considerations

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Lisa Henderson, whose study of photographers’ strategies to obtain the picture they are seeking (professionally or avocationally), says that they work within a contradictory liminal space between determined
acquisition and informed consent (2003). Citing Goffman (1971), she suggests that photographers are adept at assuming ‘normal appearances’ and are aware of the threat they pose to privacy. The camera establishes the owner’s normal appearance as ‘the photographer’, giving her or him the right to stare, but they often downplay the threat they pose accepting, ‘a contradiction between consent to take and consent to use’ (Henderson, 2003: 285).

Reflecting on these views before commencing the sourcing process, negotiations with the ODI were initiated regarding authority and informed consent in the form of a model release form. Initially rejecting the ODI’s version, which was designed for professional models, a more accessible version that would be understood by the participants was successfully negotiated. Surprisingly, it took considerable persuasion to convince the ODI of the ethical and legal implications of informed consent when working with vulnerable subjects. The ODI would retain copyright in the images, but on grounds that the outputs of the commission would be used as exemplars for this PhD study, the practice was aligned with The University of Bolton ‘Code of Conduct for Ethical Standards for Research Involving Human Participants’ Framework (2006) and the ‘Research Ethics Checklist’ (RE1). In the subsequent stages of the study, an information sheet was devised and a new consent form created.

Given the acceptance of self-declaration, there was an overwhelming need to take an absolutist view in protecting the privacy and dignity of the subjects, including respect for cultural values. In order to build trust and encourage collaboration in the taking and subsequent selection of images before submitting to the ODI, key matters of control by the subjects in addition to voluntary informed consent were implemented. These included: the right to anonymity; the inviolable right to withdraw from the project at any stage; the approval of all images by subjects and/or stakeholders; the right to be informed of the outcomes; and, where possible, the supply of examples of online or printed outputs. It was also made clear that this was a paid commission, but that there would be no profiting from the on-use of the images.

So far, a number of issues concerning the domains of photographic practice and disability politics have been discussed, which provided a context for the execution of the ODI commission. In the next section, the substance of the commission will be presented, its outcomes and how an extensive network of participants was developed.
It was important to agree with the ODI that the commission would be forming an important role in this PhD study, using the outcomes as a resource to interrogate disability representation. Practical matters concerning permissions, therefore, centred on forming lasting relationships with a number of organisations and individuals, but more importantly being able to accelerate a relatively neophytic status regarding the domain of disability. In addition, there was a requirement to develop a practice framework that was acceptable to a broad constituency.

A critical conduit was achieved through Bolton Adult Disability Services, which approved a formal proposal for the overall study including the ODI commission, outlining the aims, ethical framework and responsibilities. A gatekeeper was appointed, who facilitated introductions and referrals to support organisations, day centres and individuals (see page 215). This cascaded to a broader network of individuals and eventually became self-generating. The planning stage was crucial in order to build trust, involving non-photographic pre-visits and presentations to explain both the ODI and subsequent research intentions.

During the commission there were, however, unexpected challenges in meeting the terms of the brief. Foreshadowing these, the addition of contractual ‘considerations’ that centred on the needs of disabled people were negotiated (especially those with learning difficulties and health problems), cultural attitudes towards photography, gatekeeping and photography in public spaces (see page 226). For instance, despite several attempts in the northwest and southeast, engaging people from black communities was unsuccessful. According to the ODI, such communities have a history of not participating in disability service provision owing to scepticism of authority’s intentions. On the other hand, concerns regarding aversion to photographic representation and male/female cultural boundaries in the Muslim community, Bolton Asian Elders were welcoming and happy to participate, as were other individuals of Asian origin. However, there were unwelcome re-
jections by a number of second and third-generation British Asian people who would not countenance picture taking.

Rejection was not confined to specific ethnic communities. As referred to earlier, a disabled advocate and facilitator of a disability group in Cheshire refused access to ‘her’ group but promised to ask them if they wanted to be involved. Her subsequent response was negative – no volunteers came forward – adding that she thought the work was abhorrent and ‘voyeuristic’ (she was referring to earlier MA work, which had been presented). Accusations centred on using the wrong language, lack of understanding surrounding the social model of disability and suggesting that a disability awareness course was needed. The ODI’s desire to produce positive imagery was ‘wrong’, she felt and a different (unspecified) approach was needed. Disabled people should be left alone in her view.

Despite the shock of the assault, the therapeutic value of the subsequent enforced self-evaluation was extremely valuable because it highlighted, uncomfortably, the dichotomy of social documentary practice discussed above – the plurality of positivist objective representation and postmodern subjectivity. An interpretation of the accusation was that the project was felt to be intrusive and objectifying by promoting representations of disabled people in positive roles that are mythologised, disavowing the reality of most individuals’ societal oppression. The intrusion, as John Roberts argues, shows photography’s capacity for exposing appearances and

is never far away from violent intrusion and therefore always imbricated in the relationship between those who have the power to ‘pick out’ and those who are ‘picked out’. Indeed, for recent critics of photographic naturalism, photography of the ‘other’ – as those who are submissively ‘picked out’ – presupposes the violation of the ‘other’, all others; the photographic document is held to be an unwarranted intrusion, an imposture, the work of white, male Western malfeasance even. (Roberts, 2010: 88)

This encounter supported earlier concerns regarding either participant rejection or acquiescence. Roberts assuages these concerns in some respects by further suggesting that violation always leads to the production of knowledge but whilst ostensive practices can ‘threaten the boundaries of decorum and autonomy’, it occupies a space, ‘marked by revelation, discovery, disclosure, and in the end – for those looking in on those who are looked at, picked out – justice’ (Roberts, 2010: 88). Roberts himself points to a link here with Barthes’s concept of the punctum from _Camera Lucida_:

that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)’ and in doing so it disturbs the _studium_ making it difficult to submit to the photograph’s denotative function. (Barthes, 1981:26)

The project was completed on time (although within a renegotiated timescale) and included over 120 subjects (plus additional individuals in group situations), in over 65 locations and situations. Accumulating approximately 9,000 images, an initial edit was conducted, images categorised and updated with metadata ready for final selection sessions in collaboration with the representative from the ODI. These took place at two key intervals throughout the period of the project to enable re-shoots to take place.

The images chosen by the ODI are presented in the next section in the categories stipulated in the contract (see page 225), followed by a critique of the outcomes, the editorial process and its challenges, citing a case example of a subject dissatisfied with the manner in which the ODI had presented his image. However, as will become clearer, there remained a number of unanswered concerns.

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7: The ‘studium’ is Barthes description of the cultural knowledge that is required to be attracted to a photograph (the first level of ‘study’). It exists as a Latin word he says, which means, “the application to a thing, taste for someone, a kind of general enthusiastic commitment.” “The ‘punctum’ of a photograph is a secondary element that helps us ‘break through’ (disturb) the ‘studium’ and engage in a second, deeper reading. He says it is, “that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me).” (Barthes, 1981:26)
Reflecting on the outcomes after the final sign-off and online publication of the images, a key issue emerged concerning power relationships between the photographer, participants and the ODI during the production of the work; for example, whether there had been influence and/or manipulation. First-hand experience, albeit subjective, suggested that a high degree of trust with the participants had been attained, but this could arguably have been misinterpreted during their self-presentation to the multitude of gazes involved: the photographer’s gaze, the camera’s gaze, the client’s gaze, the editorial gaze, and the viewers’ gazes. If there was a disjuncture, it would be located beyond the momentary site of taking the image and its subsequent audiencing (Pink, 2007 – see also Lutz & Collins, 1993). Some of these issues are illustrated by the following analysis of four of the images rejected by the ODI.

In Figure 4 we see a middle-aged man swimming backwards intently. His left arm is retracted against his body. The image was rejected for two reasons: firstly, the appearance of the white body compared to his head; and, secondly, the skimpy ‘Speedos’.

Figure 4
Swimming for Charity
Figure 5 shows two cheerful elderly individuals in a run-down industrial area, one a wheelchair user and the other in a carer role. The image was rejected because of the ‘flat cap’ stereotype of a typical northerner and consequently would not have universal appeal.

A young woman on her way to work is being assisted by a taxi driver in Figure 6. It was rejected on grounds that it did not meet the ethos of ‘independent living’.

Figure 7 shows a disabled man with physical impairments making tea in his adapted home. This image was accepted, but wrongly captioned as ‘a disabled man with learning difficulties making tea.’

In each case, the subjects chose the locations and wanted to show their ‘everyday’, but as the reasons for the image rejections become clear, we can witness photography’s polysemous capacity to communicate multiple narratives. Roland Barthes (1981) theorises this as follows, seeing a photograph as the product of three practices: the Operator (photographer), the Spectator (all who look at the photograph including ourselves) and the Target (the person or thing being photographed). The ‘Target’ he says is the referent, ‘a kind of little simulacrum, any eidolon emitted by the object’ (1981: 9). However, in the case of the ODI commission, there were four practices: the client’s world-view (an editorial gaze), the photographer’s own interpretation (the photographer’s gaze), the assumptions and expectations of the subjects (the extra-diegetic gaze – looking out of the image – sometimes the unreturnable yet intersecting gazes) and unknown audiences (spectators’ gazes).

Prompted to be mindful of Shakespeare’s challenge to the social model of disability and Rosler’s defence of social documentary where photographers today need to negotiate continually the space between observation and subjectivity, it must be remembered that Barthes was writing about a photography that was about to undergo a fundamental shift in its perception, brought about by digital technologies and...
postmodernism's continual intertextual re-sculpting of distribution and consumption. 'It has already disappeared: I am, I don’t know why, one of its last witnesses (a witness of the inactual), and this book is its archaic trace', he writes in 1979 (Barthes, 1981: 94). The faded, yellowed photograph that he says will be thrown out when he dies becomes a metaphor for a post-photography that he cannot imagine – at the same time prophesying his own early death in the March of 1980. Geoffrey Batchen asks:

What are the identities, the political economies, the physical and conceptual forms of this phenomenon that continues unabated, even after all the obituaries have been written? (Batchen, 2009: 21)

It is beyond the aims of this commentary to enter into an ontological discourse regarding the impact of digitality on our perceptions of photography and especially the globalisation of images (Lister, 1995), for what is of concern are matters of practice and the relationships between images of disability and societal perceptions. The subjectivity verses objectivity debate is relevant today as never before especially because of digitality’s potential for image manipulation. But, detractors have presupposed that there was a pre-digital ‘straight’ age of social documentary photography, which is argued above, has not been the case. As Lev Manovich declares, ‘Digital technology does not subvert ‘normal’ photography because ‘normal’ photography never existed’ (2003: 245). From this position, there is an argument to support the view that Barthes’s theorising is still relevant today by recognising the misalignments in reading the rejected images above, although we need to be aware of its contradictions.

Considering the rejected image in more detail, the personal nature of the punctum, which takes the viewer (in this case the ODI editor) by surprise (Iversen, 2009), changes the intention of the swimming photograph. So, whilst the swimmer, keen to show his contribution to society by raising charity money by performing lengths of the pool, imagines a studium that we should all share, he could not envisage the personal thing, or things, that bothered, or ‘pricked’ the ODI editor. We may not notice his white body or swimming costume as anything else but normal. By projecting personal distaste onto anticipated audiences, the photograph becomes unacceptable to the ODI editor and the swimmer is rejected: ‘othered’ not for his disability, but for his choice of swimming attire and aversion to exposing his body to the sun.

The same goes for the flat-cap couple, who encounter the boarded-up factory as normal in their daily lives. They had been together for twenty years and their happiness was important to communicate. Admittedly, a more ‘positive’ background could have been selected (others were chosen), but the flat cap punctum helped disturb the studium of general pleasure for the ODI.

In the case of the young Asian woman who works for her local Council, she insisted her journey to work be documented. The identity card punctum, giving access to a physical building and a position of responsibility establishes the status of achievement and control over her future. She was a challenge to make photographs with at first because before learning the grammar of her uncoordinated movements, expressive manifestations of cerebral palsy could be misinterpreted. Flash photography would physically hurt as she recoiled from the suddenness of the light. However, being helped was counter to the cipher of positiveness and definitions of independence as inscribed in government policy. The discrepancy here is troubling because it ‘picked out’ her impairment as the cause of disability and the photograph laid bare the reality of her everyday experience, which was disavowed.

These observations demonstrate a flaw in Barthes’s punctum, explored in the second half of Camera Lucida (1981). Snared by the apparent simplicity of the punctum/studium split, observations can only be conjecture. The difficulty surrounds the act of releasing these puncta into the discourse, which ceases their private significance and become studia, thereby the continuum of feedback eventually dissipates into a studium of puncta. Here, the disclosure of the ODI editor’s punctum destroys the studium and an irreconcilable tension between the two ensues: the editorial gaze on a white body, ‘Speedos’, flat cap and taxi assistance reinforcing a stereotype-on-stereotype, which hides the image away from public view for fear that the images will be gazed at ‘negatively’ by the ODI’s public. As the taxi passenger gazed extra-diagetically through the camera’s gaze we ask ourselves if she was aware of the capacity for the visible signs of her disability infecting the studium, scrambling the message.
As for the final example, the mislabelling was upsetting for the man living independently, fully in control of his life and able to negotiate his future. Whilst the ODI acted swiftly, the individual was gracious and saw the opportunity to show others his everyday was more important than this re-categorisation. However, the official government apology only partly assuaged suspicions that this may not be an isolated case. This mislabelling provides an example of the re-imagining of disability photography that arguably contradicts the aims of the ODI’s brief. In categorising its image library of disabled people into topics as, for example, ‘disabled people using public transport’, the subjects are subclassified into an arbitrary and objectifying hierarchy. The implication, or the assumption, is that a photographic image has a commonly accepted meaning. Alan Sekula challenges this, arguing that a photograph’s, ‘primitive core of meaning, devoid of all cultural determination’ (Sekula, 1982: 87) is an impossibility, in that any meaningful encounter with the image must always be culturally mediated; or, in Barthes’ terms (1977: 33), that meaning is never simply denotative, but inevitably connotative.

Therefore, Hamilton’s argument that documentary photography is imbued with a double process of construction is relevant here. Where the choosing and framing of an image gives “testimony” on the one hand, the subsequent ‘selection, placing and framing, their connection with the content of the text, their captioning’ create the potential for a ‘complex representational construction’ in the eye of the viewer (Hamilton, 2011: 86).

Far from being a mere recitation of visual facts, social documentary turns out to be a mode of representation deeply coloured by ambiguities, and generally representative of the paradigm in which it has been constructed (Hamilton, 2011: 87).

This prompts us to be concerned not only with the nature of the ODI images as an archive, but also with how the images might be read – just as concern has been expressed about nineteenth century photographs of the criminal classes, the unemployed and the afflicted in the way that they then came to define the ‘criminal body’ and the ‘social body’. These photographs were, as Sekula puts it, ‘components not of lexical units, but rather are subject to the circumstantial character of all that is photographable’ (Sekula, 1992). By its very nature, then, the ODI commission was limiting and self-referential.

Therefore, photographing disabled people because they are disabled (and labelling them so) constructs a taxonomy that makes disability the default descriptor. As Scott puts it,

the photograph having-been-named absolves us from naming it ourselves. By putting the predicament into public words, the writer of the title takes away from us the responsibility of looking in order to see. (Scott, 1999: 88)

It can be argued that this is at odds with how non-disabled members of society would wish to be categorised under an equivalent ‘non-disabled’ label. So in effect, such labelling works to segregate disabled members of society.

In the next section, we will discover how, through further bodies of work, a new praxis framework was developed.
After the final sign-off, online publication and subsequent application in print of the images in early 2009, it was important to understand how to synthesise the instinctive and ongoing processes of 'reflection-in-action' that featured throughout the ODI work in order to develop the social documentary practice in situ (Schön, 1991).

As we have seen, the outputs from the ODI commission provided a cache of valuable evidence for this study, posing a number of key questions about the cultural location of those who view the images and their subsequent readings (multiple gazes). In other words, understanding the boundaries between the photographic cultures of policy-makers, service providers and participants and whether there has been an equitable coproduction of knowledge between the practitioner and the participants involved.

Through first-hand experience in the field, the reasons for subject participation in the ODI project was not necessarily easy to decipher for a number of reasons. Firstly, disabled people, who may have spent their whole lives depending on others, may see cooperation in such projects as a necessary component of receiving continued social support, acquiescing as part of the transaction (Hevey, 1992). Secondly, what could be described as 'benign' participation, is differentiated from acquiescence by ambivalence where there is no identifiable motive. Thirdly, an opportunity to become a celebrity – a phenomenon of post-modern social media engendered narcissism. Fourthly, an opportunity to express activist views towards government and society – ’look, we are just like you’, or ’look what life is like for us’, and so on. Finally, a genuine interest in exploring and participating in the construction of their own representation through photography.

These scenarios though, cannot simply be disaggregated and when generalised – acquiescence, ambivalence, celebrity, political, participative – are components, singly or in various combinations, of social
documentary’s ambiguous and pluralistic practices (Rosler, 2004a). Motivations for participating, therefore, are characteristics of participation shaping representational outcomes accordingly. However, within the frame of this study – to explore disability representation and ‘otherness’ – the key issue concerns the mitigation of asymmetrical power structures. Therefore, in order to investigate further it was important to limit the potential for asymmetry by divesting ‘official’ conduits for access and instead, turn attention towards building personal relationships and ensuring that participants had the freedom to actively ‘opt-in’ (Thomas, 2009). The underpinning professional approach here, in variance to Henderson’s findings (2003), is one of openness regarding the intended use of the photographs, and to share the risks involved, whilst offering to protect all parties’ interests by obtaining written ‘informed’ consent.

The strong relationships with a number disabled people so far, engendered enthusiasm for continuing with the study. In particular, members of Bolton Active Disability Group for Everyone (BADGE), who were delighted with the strong presence of Bolton people in the repopulated government library. A legacy of the ODI project was to present the participants with a print of their choice, which provided an opportunity to maintain contact. Subsequently, three case studies were initiated: a young couple who were in the process of planning their marriage, the young Asian woman discussed above and individuals disabled later in life, preferably involving older people. But as we shall see later, attempting to work with retired miners ended in abject failure.

Case Study 1: A Wedding and a Makeover

The young couple, both in their twenties had met via their congruent peer groups and the relationship had blossomed to the stage where they were living together when we were first introduced. Subject ‘A’, has cerebral palsy as a consequence of oxygen starvation during her birth and is a wheelchair user. She recounts growing up attending special schools and eventually completing a degree in social care, but to her frustration, unable to qualify as a social worker because her college couldn’t facilitate placements due to her mobility requirements. Her fiancé, subject ‘B’ is visually impaired because of a brain tumour as a teenager. In order to build trust and develop a relaxed relationship with the camera, they were photographed during their joint broadcast session for local market radio, karate lessons, tanning sessions and at home, using the visits to explore their ‘everyday’.

Figure 8
‘A’ at Home
At one visit, ‘B’ presented photographs of his post-operative brain surgery taken by his parents each day during his long recovery. We discussed his personal interests in being a DJ, computers, photography, general leisure activities and social relationships that shape his life. At another session, ‘A’ recounted how she had no photographs of her as a baby, putting this down to parental disavowal of her disability and the primacy her sibling attracted in the family hierarchy. It was clear that this couple were devoted to each other and were experiencing the excitement and emotions that all young people about to be married would exhibit.

It became evident that a high level of responsibility was being accrued as a result of the trust they were investing in me. They were enthusiastic about ongoing future co-operation and ‘A’ was very clear that she saw an opportunity to use the photographs as a way of pursuing political agendas, especially if it helped people understand why society only wanted to see the ‘body beautiful’ as she put it.

The wedding (8 November 2008)

As the wedding approached, permission to photograph the wedding day narrative as a social document was freely given with a view to engaging in a joint critique of both these and the ‘official’ images afterwards.

The most significant ambition for ‘A’ was to have a portrait of her and her groom standing. She explained that certain family members and friends had discouraged her from attempting to stand, which she interpreted as a strong message that she should lower her expectations to be seen as ‘normal’. Certainly, standing takes great physical effort and cannot be achieved without support. However, she was determined
to have at least one photograph of herself standing in a ‘classic’ wedding pose. At an opportune moment, we took the photograph, which she subsequently had enlarged with the express purpose of placing it alongside her sister’s wedding photograph at the family home. It was the ‘best’ photograph, she explained because the ‘official’ photographs looked down at them (a downward gaze). The other photographer was awkward and uncomfortable around her, she said, and wouldn’t get close (indirect eye-lines).

In this photograph, ‘A’ was hoping to project something of her ‘self’ resonating with Barthes’s personal reflection that

in front of the lens, I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am, and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art (1981: 13).

The makeover (27 May 2009)

Discussing the wedding photographs afterwards, ‘A’ saw a distinction between the ‘official’ photographs and the documentary images, prompting her to say that she had always wanted a studio experience – a ‘makeover’ shoot 9 – but attempts to find a company in the past had been unsuccessful. She had been refused on several occasions, companies citing access and health and safety restrictions, which under current regulations is arguably in contravention of ‘The Disability Discrimination Act’ (2005 amendment) 10. ‘A’s view was that they didn’t want to photograph a wheelchair user because it was too difficult and would take more time.

After further discussions, a studio experience for the couple was organised, approaching the event as a bricoleur 11, (Lévi-Strauss, 1962), drawing on personal contacts to facilitate the session and available resources. ‘A’ contacted a make-up artist familiar with the challenges working with ‘A’s cerebral palsy and we recruited a hairdresser colleague, himself a qualified photographer who regularly conducts makeover, to participate. A professionally equipped studio was ‘borrowed’ for an evening and we created and shot a number of scenarios that would be typical of advertising/promotional imagery using materials on hand in bricolage mode: ‘Country Girl’, ‘James Bond’, ‘Bikers’ and so on.

9: Companies offering such experiences include ‘Venture Photography’ (http://www.venturephotography.com/uk/), but in the context of this study, the studios in question are not identified for legal reasons. Those mentioned here are exemplars only and are not identified with the rejections mentioned by subject ‘A’. 10: ‘The Disability Discrimination Act’ (1995-2005) has been superseded by the 2010 ‘Equality Act’

11: In Levi-Strauss’s ‘The Savage Mind’, a ‘bricoleur’ is described has ‘… having no precise equivalent in English. He is a man who undertakes odd jobs and is a Jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself man, but, as the text makes clear, he is of a different standing from, for instance, the English ‘odd job man’ or handyman(1962: 17)

Figure 12
Standing Ambition

For image selection examples see: Makeover Edit page 284
After the event, preferred images were selected and expectations and outcomes discussed. ‘B’ declared that, the session had made ‘A’ ‘happy’ in that it fulfilled a long-held dream. After much discussion, two of the ‘best’ images were chosen: ‘A’ in evening wear in ‘Audrey Hepburn’ guise waiting to be photographed on set; and, a ‘Rock Chick/Biker’ tableau. These simulacra, fantasy images if you like, play with postmodernism’s desire to question modernism’s grand narratives and live with the contradictions between their indexicality – we were present in the studio, the subjects did exist – and a projection, as Elkins puts it, ‘of our desires about the world’ (2011: 47). The closed punctum/studium system is inadequate in attempting to decipher why these images were preferred by the subjects, according to Elkins, because ‘A’s’ wishes were vested in what she wants to believe the photograph projects and these meanings exist outside the image (2011). If there was an intention to disavow the visible signs of their disabilities, then the Hepburn image fails because the wheelchair is clearly in view. It fails in a spectacularly successful manner.

The next case study was prompted by the absence of images of disabled miners in the National Coal Mining Museum for England’s (NCM) photography collection. In some respects, this was an unexpected opportunity that offered to provide new insights into the cultural location of disability within industry-based communities.

The Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) was contacted for support, which was forthcoming. A facilitator was identified to source disabled miners and a series of initial meetings arranged in the Wigan and Leigh area of Lancashire. Firstly, subject ‘C’ was introduced who was keen to help, recounting his mining career and subsequent health issues. For reasons of confidentiality, these will not be documented, but what was clear was the positive memories of work, colleagues and stories of eight-day weeks (multiple shifts). Three visits were conducted where a series of photographs were taken at home and at the site of the local pithead, which is now just a concrete marker. The legacy of Thatcherism and pit closures permeated conversations with a determination that he ‘would do it all again’.
The next part did not go so well. Former miner ‘D’, agreed to take part and immediately after the initial meeting and signing a consent form, changed his mind. The next session was arranged with a group of three miners who were gathered to meet me. The facilitator from CISWO warned that they could talk all day, ‘digging coal’ as she put it. They had brought photographs and books about mining, but after explaining what the project was about, the mood swiftly changed. One of the group thought he had been misled, thinking the project was about mining photographs. The final attempt was with the remaining survivor of the 1979 Golborne disaster, disfigured from the fireball that ensued from the explosion. He agreed to take part because he trusted CISWO, but then, on the agreed appointment date, he failed to attend, nor did he respond to phone calls.

It became clear that the meaning of disability with this group was misaligned with their own identity as miners. Disability, it ensues, is a mark of heroism, of belonging and a price to pay. Subject ‘E’ at the first meeting talked about how his companions had treated him when he retired, “Miners are good,” he declared. “There is no disability down the mine,” ‘E’ proclaimed, “no blind people or cerebral palsy.” ‘E’ had only twenty percent lung capacity and cancer, his definition, self-defined to disavow disability culture.

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The final case study concerns the young Asian who had been involved from the beginning of the project. ‘H’ worked with disability groups and support agencies through her job at the Council and was keen to share her life history with me. Her doctors had told her parents that she would never walk or talk when diagnosed with cerebral palsy as a baby. She was told that she was stillborn and put aside after the birth, but a trainee nurse spotted life and gave her oxygen – too much as it turned out. Intensive physiotherapy and parents’ determined efforts ensued and she started to talk at six years old, “and hasn’t stopped since,” she says (Speake, 2008).

‘H’ fought hard throughout her school life to support her learning and eventually gained qualifications in business administration. She would ‘take everything in’ at college and then type it up at home in the evenings. College was an opportunity to be around able-bodied people, so when she had the opportunity of a placement at the Council and then invited to apply for a vacant position and was successful, she felt they had seen her capabilities and not her impairments.

The relationship with ‘H’ has been ongoing and enlightening. Initially cautious regarding cultural boundaries, the family was welcoming. On one occasion, ‘H’ recounted her visits to India, where she wanted photographs taken as part of the project. “I am not disabled in India,” she said, “the wheelchair is accepted and I don’t stand out like I sometimes do here.” (2008). One of the images from the ODI project, which had been framed for her, is now on her dressing table in India.

The photograph of ‘H’ sitting with ‘stumpy’, her African Grey parrot, which has no feet (a joke gift from her older brother), exemplifies how she can take ownership of her own image. As mentioned earlier, ‘H’ finds flash difficult, but here we were relaxed with ‘H’ choosing a more comfortable position on the floor. Months later, we spent an hour or so sitting in her room talking about photographs and how she had thought
through the difficulties some people might have seeing her image. They do not show her yelling at her siblings or arguing with her cousin just like any other person, she explained, just the cerebral palsy.

There is one photograph from this session of ‘H’ looking directly at us that Daniel Chandler identifies as an ‘extra-diegetic gaze’ (1998; see also Lutz & Collins, 1993; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) that refocused my attention to the theme of asymmetry of power. The situation could have been awkward given prior experience of working across cultural boundaries, but the family were in the next room, and embraced the trusting relationship between ‘H’ and me which had developed over time and included other members of her family.

The extra-diegetic gaze in this image – looking ‘out of frame’, directly at the spectator – is unreturnable (Tagg, 1988) and we are missing visual signs as to whom ‘H’ is addressing, unlike face-to-face interaction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). The reading of the image is privileged in that the photographer is the producer; the downward gaze is problematic here, but ‘H’ seems to be telling us something. Is it that she knows from experience that we will make a ‘good’ image; is she acquiescing; or, through this direct gaze is she in control? Kress & van Leeuwen argue that this is a participant gaze

that demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her [...] the viewer is asked to enter into a relation of social affinity with them. (1996: 122-123).

In the next section, we will examine how these case studies were used as a foundation for exploring and testing whether it is possible to engender an epistemology of practice where there are shared understandings and readings between photographer and subject in order to challenge accusations of the objectification and ‘othering’ of disabled people.
So far, there has been an exploration of social documentary’s pluralism within a postmodern discourse and how disability is itself a slippery concept, especially for a practitioner working within the trope of ‘professional collaboration’. The experience in this case shows that collaboration is a complex landscape of asymmetrical power structures on many levels – client, photographer, subject, audience – that are difficult to stabilise. Add to this the dialectic surrounding participation modalities and what emerges is a portfolio of variables that are difficult to manage.

This assessment confirmed that there was a need to address these asymmetries by investing disabled people with the responsibility for outcomes in order to advance an understanding of disability representation at the same time challenging those commentators who criticise photographic practitioners for objectifying disabled people. Moreover, there was a need to address criticisms regarding the exclusion of disabled people from the construction of their own identities and being used as research ‘subjects’ (Oliver, 1997; Snyder and Mitchell, 2006; Hollins, 2010).
In order to begin a period of assessment and reflection on the outcomes to date, it was decided to gather the views of participants and stakeholders. A consultation event was attended by thirty individuals representing: advocates, carers, Bolton Lads and Girls Club, New Openings (a network of individuals with learning difficulties), Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE), Bolton Council, Bolton Museum and Libraries and university students.

Attendees were given presentations on the ODI work and recent projects and encouraged to ask questions. Small groups were organised to consider the photographic work and discuss their own representation.

The initial question concerned their impressions of the ODI work and why certain images were selected and others rejected. Attendees were asked, ‘When you looked at the photographs, what did you see’?

A selection of comments included: ‘Just People’; ‘Living their own lives – disability doesn’t get people down’; ‘Happy – independent –
chatting – fun – freedom – to be!'; ‘Images showed confidence'; Im-
ages really portray everyday'; and, 'Every picture tells a story – they
make me want to get to know the person or story.'

Commenting on why certain images were rejected, several responses
included: 'What's wrong with showing intimacy with disabled people,
surely mum and daughter should be shown close'; 'Sometimes a little
help keeps you independent'; 'What you can't do, not what you can';
‘Based on the medical model of thinking'; 'They judged level of disabil-
ity by amount of support needed – not seeing it as her independence';
and, 'Made assumptions by what they see but how can you judge a
learning disability.'

Attendees were asked, 'What if you were in complete control of your
own image' and, 'Where and how would you like to be photographed?'
Collated themes emerged around being photographed with families
and loved ones; being in valued places such as work; photographs
which defied expectations of the individual, such as, 'As a bride, be-
cause people didn’t expect it of me'.

A few comments also expressed the ongoing conflict about the carer
identity, for example, ‘Important to not be portrayed as a carer and,
cared for, but as a couple'; 'Portrayed as mother and daughter first and
not carer and cared for.'

These responses, supported by observations made by disabled people
in this study show an awareness of how society might view their im-
ages, against their own representational desires to be ‘ordinary’. How-
ever, it would be incorrect to generalise from such an exercise given
the broad nature of the group involved, although all the responses
were from disabled people themselves or their carers. Some attend-
ees were clearly politically motivated using sophisticated language and
others were responding personally, which aligned with earlier observa-
tions concerning definitions and recognition of a disability status.

Two interesting comments foreshadowed the direction the project
took next:

    The only way you can make the three views of the photog-

raphy collate is by the photographed showing the photographer their innermost and utmost truth. This can only be
achieved by relationship bonding and paramount trust.

    Everything we do is stage-managed. Let’s have natural pic-
tures. Pictures in real-life situations.

Reflecting on these views, a practice framework was constructed for
the final stage of the study, which aimed to extend disabled people’s
control over the production and subsequent reading of their own im-
ages.
The final case study focuses on a project with the Independence Group at Bolton Lads and Girls Club (BLGC) 12 culminating in an exhibition curated and presented by the subjects themselves. The Independence Group 13 provides a focus for young disabled people who have learning difficulties in common. The photographic work up to this point had focussed on adults, purposely avoiding working with children for fear of adding layers of complexity due to societal concerns, such as child abuse through the misuse of imagery. Preliminary discussions with the group facilitator and Chief Executive resulted in full support for a project, which was designed and formally proposed. Permissions were approved conditional on joining the Club’s army of volunteers, completing basic training in safeguarding children, boundaries and obtaining an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

The project’s design referred loosely to participative photography methodologies practiced by exponents such as PhotoVoice, but unlike their methodology, the group would not be taking the images themselves. Whereas the PhotoVoice methodology aims to empower marginalised and minority communities worldwide through photography; providing training for self-advocacy and income-generation (Blackman, 2007), this study is situated in the liminal space between disabled people and their image makers in order to understand perceived difficulties with disability imagery itself. It is not participatory in the sense that PhotoVoice define the term. The differences are illustrated by the lack of attention given to the ontology of photography in their literature, or their questioning of representational issues beyond the processes of using photography as a technique. Blackman insists, that, ‘No picture of course, depicts ‘truth’ – a photo simply reflects reality’ (2007: 8) whilst criticising ‘outsider’ photojournalism. We should ask of course, ‘whose reality’? This superficial understanding of photographic ‘reality’ detracts from debates surrounding representations of the developing world by outsiders and the vital role that indigenous people need to play in self-advocacy by ignoring photography’s plurality.

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12: Bolton Lads and Girls Club, open seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year, was founded in 1889 and currently has 50 staff and approximately 400 volunteers for young people from 8-21 (http://boltonladsandgirlsclub.co.uk). It regularly attracts national awards for initiatives and projects and counts itself as the leading youth club in the country.

13: I was introduced to the group by an academic colleague who had recently completed a fundraising project with the club involving postgraduate students studying on the university MA programme where I teach.
The BLGC methodology was constructed to ensure equity amongst
the group who would see the project as ‘their’ photography project,
thereby mitigating negative aspects of acquiescence through the
unequal exertion of power. It thereby tried to overthrow the more tradi-
tional relationship where participants become subjects, ‘subjected’ to
the greater power of the photographer. Moreover, concomitant com-
munication challenges working with young people with learning dif-
ficulties were recognised and taken into account in achieving shared
understanding of the process, hence grounding the outcomes.

Drawing on the bodies of work so far completed as a guide, the meth-
odology was constructed as a series of flexible, but progressive stag-
es. No deadlines were set to allow the group to set the pace, although
its facilitator, ‘T’ – who had a long-term relationship with the individuals
– provided logistical support and prompts in order to provide moment-
um. The project consisted of five stages: Setting goals; Familiarisa-
tion; Location photography; Editing; and, Exhibition. The following de-
scribes and critiques the stages and outcomes, supporting the images
presented in the Portfolio of Evidence.

Setting goals
At the first meeting with the group in January 2010 at the Club, ‘chaired’
by ‘T’, photographs from the work to date were presented together
with explanations regarding the overall aims and objectives of the PhD
project. The group was encouraged to explain what they saw and how
they would want to be seen in photographs. Individual members were

Mindful of individuals’ capacity to give consent (DoH, 2005), informa-
tion sheets and consent forms were distributed with instructions for
carers to be involved where necessary. Given the authority and trust
that ‘T’ had with the group, members’ capacity to consent was con-

Familiarisation
Over the next few sessions, photographs were taken in the style
of Gillian Wearing’s conceptual ‘signs’ work 12, asking individuals to
write on cards who they would like to be, favourite places in the Club,
friends and favourite activities in order to build a relationship with the
photographer and the camera (see pages 288 - 291). It was important
to give control to the group in deciding the locations and activities and
to hold regular follow-up critiques where they would be encouraged
to ‘read’ their images and consider how others might see them. At a
further session, they were asked to write down those activities and
places that meant most to them and how they would like to be shown,
thereby setting the agenda for location photography sessions. These
initial sessions were challenging, attempting to focus attention on
the project without influencing the outcome. To maintain ownership,
agreement was made that all those opting to take part would support
each other on each shoot as a group, but that the ‘subject’ would direct
how they wanted to be photographed.

Location photography
Over the ensuing weeks, fourteen locations including: the club, a shopp-
ing precinct, football pitches, canoeing, wrestling, Amir Khan’s boxing
gym, the local train station and a tattoo parlour were organised and the
ensuing images reviewed by the group. Attendance inconsistencies
due to holidays, illness, distractions and carer/family priorities offered
their own challenges, but in the main, a core group of twelve were
dedicated participants (see pages 292 – 295).

12 Gillian Wearing completed ‘Signs’ in 1992 and 1993 by photographing 600 people
in the street. She approached them with a blank sheet and a marker pen and let them
write whatever they felt. (McCann, 1998)
Editing
In November 2010, it was decided to end the photo-shoots and plan the exhibition. The whole group were assembled and the images from each shoot presented for the ‘subject’ to choose the best two they would like in the exhibition. The session was facilitated and every member was invited to contribute to the decision-making process, accommodating those less confident in standing up in front of the group. One individual came up to the front, sat by the photographer as a visual amanuensis and whispered his choices. The difficulty was not succumbing to the temptation to intervene, or influence their choices, especially when certain selections were ‘problematic’ (this is discussed later). Nevertheless, one of the photographer’s PhD advisors and two postgraduate students were invited to witness the event, so any temptations to ‘lead’ individuals were monitored.

Exhibition
Twenty-five images were selected and a venue organised for March 2011. Apart from the practicalities in sourcing a suitable location, the time gap would prove valuable in creating space for the group to look forward to the event as the date approached, whilst at the same time providing time to forget their choices temporarily, thereby refreshing their readings of the chosen images.

Archival quality frames were commissioned, prints produced by a professional company, exhibition panels sourced and a date set in March 2011. It proved logistically difficult to include the whole group in hanging the prints due to a narrow time window, but the order followed the outcomes from the editing session.

Sixty invites were sent to carers, family, friends, BLGC executives, other guests and the press for the opening night. We agreed that a key part of the opening event was to involve each member in explaining to guests what their images meant to them, providing interpretation and closure. The following captions are the subjects’ own words.
Figure 21a: Aaron
Me and my coaches remind me of the ‘Three Musketeers’

Figure 21b: Aaron

Figure 22a: Cassie
It shows me and my friends together

Figure 22b: Cassie
Figure 23a: Amy
Because it’s got a computer
and shows an interest in your
future

Figure 23b: Amy

Figure 24: Haroon
I have some friends who are
bouncers – tough guys!

Figure 25: Carrie Anne
Two best friends chatting
Figure 26: Brian
The Army is my world

Figure 27: Rachel
I am Miss Confident

Figure 28a: Christopher
Terry's Boss!

Figure 28b: Christopher
Figure 29a: Matthew
Because I like it – it’s good!

Figure 29b: Matthew
I didn’t want to get hit by the ball!

Figure 30a: Michael
Because I love trains

Figure 30b: Michael
I was thinking about the smell of the train and the station. I was thinking it was going to blow its horn and it did.
Figure 31a: Naeem
Amir Kahn is my hero

Figure 31b: Naeem

Figure 32: William
Mr Smoothy

Figure 33: Peter
My main interest is tattooing and I want to be a tattoo artist
Figure 34a: Shaun
I like skeletons, striking poses and food is important to me.

Figure 34b: Shaun
I like skeletons, striking poses and food is important to me.

Figure 35a: Stephen
Having fun – that’s what I like doing.

Figure 35b: Stephen
The subject as spectator’s gaze
Before the guests arrived, the images chosen by the group were subjected to reflection as an attempt to rationalise a number of concerns. It is fair to say that the majority of the images on display would have risked curatorial rejection, looking instead for an overall narrative and visual rhythm that created a cohesive whole. For example, in Figure 36 below, the image of the subject presenting a tray of food to camera with feasted face and posed smile is less than flattering, but the subject explained that food was one of the most important things in his life and he likes posing!

By handing power over to the group, we had a different display with its own cohesive, unique narrative – these young people were not disabled in the sense of the social model – the images chosen were examples of accepting photography ‘in-the-moment’, ‘picked-out’ and ‘pointed-to’ by themselves in opposition to Roberts’s arguments regarding intrusiveness (2010). They were establishing their presence in society by letting others look-in on their everyday and not look-at their disabilities and stating the obvious.

On the opening night, a guest asked how we ‘got’ the pictures, and why there were no captions. The response was that the subjects were the captions, they provided closure by explaining what the photographs meant – by handing the decision-making process over to them, they created meaning in the photographs.

Figure 37 was also concerning because of connotations concerning the representation of autism; the symbolism of the fence as a barrier separating the individual from others, in a world where communication is different. When asked to explain why he chose this image, the answer was obvious, "I didn’t want to get hit by the ball."
The mother of one of the group wanted a copy of her daughter swinging over a river, “It shows how far she has come,” she said, adding that her daughter had ambitions for the future, but remembering the traumas of her illness and subsequent rehabilitation, people used to stare and ask, “What is wrong with your eye?” “There is nothing wrong, she just had two brain tumours and is a person, not ‘disabled’!” she told the starer in a shop (personal conversation April 2011) (see Garland-Thompson on staring, 2009). When we met to hand over the print, she was aghast at her daughter’s odd socks and bruised legs, unnoticed at the exhibition. Gone was the representation of achievement for her, grounded by a mother’s punctum and family politics of the everyday. Her daughter couldn’t see what her mother sees.
This research set out to investigate photographers’ ‘othering’ of disabled people by challenging arguments surrounding their objectified representation through dialectical practice. By recognising theoretical arguments and opinion from critics of disability photography, the practical challenges of working with disabled people and the pluralism of social documentary photography, a praxis framework that involves disabled people in the construction of their own images has emerged.

Shakespeare’s advocacy of an holistic approach to disability theory rejects the social model’s reductionist philosophy that homogenises disabled people who, it infers, share common oppression due to impairment (Shakespeare, 2006). Similarly, postmodern discourses have questioned the relevance of social documentary photography, an argument rejected by Rosler (2004b) who is optimistic about society’s continued need for advocacy and interpretation where practitioners strive to negotiate the tensions between observation and opinion. The acceptance of pluralism in both disability and social documentary practices therefore focuses attention on the cultural locations of disability (Snyder & Mitchell, 2006), which by its very nature rejects metanarrative approaches and accepts unpredictability. Therefore, by focusing attention on localised experiences, I am able to propose guiding principles that will inform professionals working within the domain of disability photography.

The ODI commission demonstrated that power relationships between the client, photographer, subjects and audience are continually shifting during the stages of production and that once images enter the public domain their readings are unpredictable. The ODI keeps close control of their library, but nevertheless recontextualised images by parties remote from their production is possible leading to subject mis-representation despite their anonymisation. Whereas a structured approach was implemented with agreed targets – style, location, topic and so on – we have seen that there were subjective editorial decisions made.

Conclusion
on top of already subjective social documentary practices during the final stages. This questions notions of equal collaborative relationships between all parties involved as argued by Panzer (2005), leading to scepticism when the term is used in photographic practice. Experience emerging from this investigation shows that the notion of collaboration is too ill-defined to describe the photographer/subject relationship when working with disabled people.

During Stage two of the research, a recursive process of reflection-in-action enabled the further investigation of power relationships in the bodies of work instigated after the ODI commission, spending a longer time with those subjects who had ‘opted-in’. It was critical to create the environment for subjects to choose to participate in order to mitigate acquiescence, which had been a concern throughout the ODI project, although it would be naïve to ignore the possibility of this occurring. Moreover, acquiescence, whilst undesirable, must be set against ambivalence, narcissistic, political or participative ‘interest’ modalities of taking part. In order to ‘work with’ such motives, emphasis was placed on developing personal relationships and mutual trust through an extended familiarisation period and the ongoing review and critique of images made.

During the ODI project considerable time and effort had been spent working through mediators, some of whom had their own protective stance towards disabled people as described in the account of the advocate from Cheshire discussed earlier. I would argue that whilst such protective behaviour is probably a result of prior negative experiences, such a stance is itself ‘othering’, denying disabled people the opportunity to make their own choices. In the context of photography generally, the risks associated with mis-representation and dubious on-use of imagery applies to all members of society, so in order to involve disabled people in their own image-making, gate-keeping access challenges notions of inclusion. During stage two, gate-keepers were avoided, whilst ensuring that strict ethical guidelines set out in the consent form were prioritised.

Other challenges during stages one and two concerned the specifics of working with people with particular impairment and health needs, allowing for additional planning, time allocation and cancelled arrangements. The grounded evidence gained from the case studies carried out during stage two, were used to reflect upon, and reformulate, experience in order to design the approach to stage three, where the framework for praxis was tested successfully.

Identifying who is disabled within a complex disability culture where carers, gatekeepers and individuals’ health and impairments construct the disabled body - institutionally, socially, physically and psychologically - may explain disability activists’ protestations about their representations (Hevey, 1997) where photographers have failed to recognise the additional time and considerations needed. In institutional and societal settings, the desire to represent disabled people in a positive light is fraught with difficulties by denying disabled people from participating in the construction of culture themselves (Snyder & Mitchell, 2006). For the practitioner, such descriptors are a prime examples of Barthes’s tri-dimensional theory of the Operator (photographer), the Spectator (all who look at the photograph including ourselves) and the Target (the person or thing being photographed) complicated by additional agents such as the Commissioner and the Editor (Barthes, 1981). Finally, the subjects themselves are not as we have seen an homogenous ‘other’ sharing common motives - acquiescent, benign, celebrity (narcissistic), participative, political - for having their photograph taken.

Preceding practice, the notion of informed consent residing within an ethical framework, whilst protective of both the photographer and subject, must underpin the hand-over or sharing of power and responsibility. The right to withdraw should be inviolate, but experience in this investigation demonstrates that if enough time is given to familiarisation by both parties, goal sharing founded on trust strengthens opt-in motivation and leads to shared readings of outcomes.

Photographers, clients and stakeholders must appreciate that there can be considerable challenges working with disabled people who may have health, communication and/or mobility impairments that mean shorter image acquisition sessions, curtailment or restaging. Included, is the involvement and management of carers and health and other professionals when required.

A unique set of protocols, both environmental and technical need to
be created and communicated in addition to good practice risk assessments prior to sessions. These include the use of flash photography (photo-sensitive epilepsy, cerebral palsy and so on), recognition of medication, nutrition and hydration needs, and the physical, such as concentration, fatigue and toileting.

I argue that to mitigate criticisms that disabled people have been objectified and ‘othered’ in photography, a process of ‘opt-in participatory action’ is required. This will engender a participant/photographer relationship where the resulting photographic representation is read with shared understanding. The framework below is non-linear, indivisible and interdependent.

As we have seen, this framework has been arrived at through a progressive process of commissions and collaborative projects that has led, through dialectical practice, to successful outcomes and as such addresses earlier accusations that photographers have objectified and ‘othered’ disabled people. The key challenges presented during the practice-based commissions and personal work were confronted and reconciled in order to recognise, rather than assume, a collaborative relationship with disabled people that would test the ability to even-out asymmetries of power.

It has achieved this, uniquely, by engaging with the challenges of working with disabled people within an interdisciplinary theory/practice frame – disability, photography, collaborative, professional – by encouraging inclusivity and hence shared responsibility for the outcomes.

This research should inform reflective photographers generally for working with disabled people as well as academics, policy-makers, health professionals, and commissioners on a controversial area of practice.

The specific points emerging from this investigation can be summarised as follows:

• Unique insights into the photographic representation of disabled people have been achieved through an interdisciplinary approach, co-locating disability’s and photography’s theoretical frames within a practice-led investigation.

• Collaboration with disabled people is a complex landscape of asymmetrical power structures that can be stabilised by engendering a culture of opt-in participatory action.

• In order to achieve inclusivity, the relationship between photographer and subject is paramount requiring considerable investment in building and sustaining trust.

• The multivocal reading and subsequent on-use of imagery is volatile and needs careful management. For example, notions of ‘positiveness’ are culturally-bound and fragile.

• Advocates, disability rights activists and researchers need to engage in epistemological and ontological discourses surrounding photography in order to fully understand their own and society’s relationship with images of disabled people.

• Commissioners need to appreciate that photographers working with disabled people will be presented with unique challenges that require careful planning and management.

• This investigation has presented the views of a substantial number of disabled people themselves regarding how empowering they have found the engagement with their own representation.

Finally, the influencing factors that underpin the praxis framework is presented in the diagram overleaf.
Praxis Framework for Photography with Disabled People

Areas for Further Research

Whilst this investigation has developed my own approach to working with disabled people, I would argue that the contextually bound and localised outcomes demonstrate that solving problems in situ has generated understandings and meanings that are capable of influencing social change that extends beyond these boundaries. Areas for further investigation could include:

- Expanding the case-study approach used in Section 2 on a more longitudinal basis, revisiting the subjects over time, generating further bodies of work that explore their representation at key life stages.
- Consultation programmes with the general public, commissioners, health-care professionals and policy-makers in order to calibrate the findings from this investigation and develop further understandings of the gaze.
- Further projects with individuals and groups exploring their motivations for participation.
- Using photography as advocacy in matters such as hate crime on disabled people.
- Further in-depth archive research in the National Media Museum and other collections to investigate and present the history of the photographic representation of disabled people.
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Facilitating organisations
Asian Elders Resource Centre
Bolton Active Disability Group for Everyone (BADGE)
Bolton Community College
Bolton Council: Adult Disability Services
Bolton Lads and Girls Club
Bolton Library
Bolton Museum and Archive Service
Bolton Sensory Centre
Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO)
Disability Stockport
Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE)
Hearing Dogs for Deaf People
The National Coal Mining Museum for England
The National Media Museum
New Horizons Bolton
The University of Bolton
Special Olympics
Individuals in the northwest
INFORMATION SHEET

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Introduction

This research study is about the representation of disability in photography.

The study will be conducted by Terry Speake, who is a member of staff at the University of Bolton in the School of Arts, Media and Education.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to explore how disabled people view photographs of themselves and in turn, how society responds to such images. The aim is to show how disabled people, as ordinary members of society, share the same values as everyone else - namely, choice, inclusion and human rights.

The study will last for at least three years and involve working in collaboration with a photographer and university lecturer Terry Speake, to show aspects of the everyday lives of the subjects involved.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to participate in the study because you have identified yourself as having a disability.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Terry Speake will meet you to discuss how you would like to be represented in photographs. From your suggestions, he will take photographs of you carrying out activities and events that are important to you as an individual member of society. This will take place over a long period and it is hoped to build a collection of photographs covering many aspects of your life. You will be involved in choosing selections of photographs from the many that will be taken and encouraged to discuss with Terry, your family and friends how you see yourself represented.

Informed Consent

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The study does not involve putting you at physical risk because you will be in control of the situations in which the photographs are being taken. However, your participation in the research does involve giving up your time for Terry to take photographs, but it is hoped that sessions will be conducted during your normal daily routines.

When you see the photographs of yourself, there will probably be some you like and some you don’t. Terry will be very interested in why you like some and not others.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The benefits of taking part are many.

Firstly, we hope you will enjoy taking part and having a say about how you would like to be seen by society.

Secondly, we hope you will enjoy the prospect of some of the photographs being shown at exhibitions, in publications and be involved in how you present yourself to the world.

Thirdly, the study will contribute to the research interests of the University and its partners. Finally, you will be contributing to academic knowledge about issues surrounding photographs of disabled people, which could show other disabled people, the general public, institutions and even government, issues surrounding society’s reaction to such images.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected about you will be kept confidential and you will not be identified by name, nor will details about your address or other contact details be made public. Your anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material gathered.

Information generated by the study will be retained in accordance with the University’s policy on Data Protection. The information generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of a research project.

For the purposes of secure ownership, the copyright in the photographs will be retained by Terry Speake in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The main output for the results of the study will be a PhD thesis. In addition to this, exhibitions of the photographic work will be staged throughout the study in order to update the professional and academic communities of the findings.

It is hoped to publish findings in academic journals, at conferences and in professional publications of standing. A final publication (format to be agreed, but likely to be a printed book) is planned, which, after consultation with all parties involved, will provide a long-term legacy for the study.
Will I be debriefed at the end of the research?
You will be kept informed of the results of the study at key stages and be invited to attend the final presentation to academics and interested parties.

Who has reviewed the study?
This study has been approved by the School of Arts, Media and Education Research Ethics Committee, University of Bolton.

Criminal Records Check
Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau documentation confirming Terry Speake’s eligibility to work with children and vulnerable adults is available for inspection.

Contact details
Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you require any further information or have any questions, please contact the following people:

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January 2010

INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

PhD study: The Representation of Disability in Photography
Researcher: Terry Speake

Name:

1 I have had the attached Information Sheet explained to me and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2 I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give reasons.

3 I am aware of, and consent to Terry Speake taking photographs of me in various situations, which will be agreed by me beforehand.

4 I am aware of, and consent to Terry Speake taking notes and/or tape recordings during the course of discussions.

5 I agree with the publication of the photographs and/or research results in academic journals, relevant magazines, a book, conferences, exhibitions and in Terry Speake’s PhD thesis. Publication by other parties will be agreed by me beforehand.

6 I agree for the results of the research to be used for teaching students.

7 I consent that I would like to be involved in this research project.

Signed:

Date:

This study has been approved by the University of Bolton School of Arts, Media and Education Research Ethics Committee, Bolton Adult Disability Services and Bolton Lads and Girls Club.
Model Release Form

I hereby consent to the use of photographs of myself or my child (delete as applicable), taken by members of the Office for Disability Issues or by agents/representatives authorised on behalf of the Office for Disability Issues in Government publicity material.

I agree that the photographs taken of me and any reproductions shall be deemed to represent an imaginary person, and further agree that the Office for Disability Issues or any person authorised by or acting on their behalf may use the photographs or any reproductions of them for any advertising/marketing purposes or for the purposes of illustrating any wording, and agree that no such wording shall be considered to be attributed to me personally unless my name is used. The photographs may be used in official Government publications and publicity material including, but not limited to, Annual Reports, internal newsletters, press releases, leaflets, advertisements, web site and the on-line photo library, with any reasonable retouching or alteration.

I hereby release and discharge the Office for Disability Issues and their agents, representatives, and assignees from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of the photographs, including without limitation any and all claims for invasion of privacy, right of publicity, and defamation.

I have read this model release form carefully and fully understand its meanings and implications. This release shall be binding upon me, my heirs, legal representatives, and assigns.

No modification of this agreement shall be of any effect unless it is made in writing and signed by all of the parties to the agreement.

Signed: ................................................

Name (printed): ................................................

Address: ................................................
SECTION 1

FORM OF AGREEMENT

This Agreement is made between

The SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS of The Adelphi, 1-11
John Adam Street London WC2N 8HT ("the Authority") and

Terry Speake Photography

having his main or registered office at:

92 Grange Road Bramhall Stockport SK7 3Q8 ("the Contractor")

together referred to as ("the Parties").

Whereas:

The Contractor has agreed to provide Photographic Service (the Services) on the
terms and conditions set out in this Agreement.

It is agreed that:

1. This Form of Agreement (Section 1) together with the attached Sections 2 to 5
   (inclusive) are the documents which collectively form "the Contract" (as defined
   in Section 2).

   For: The Contractor
   By: 
   Full Name: Terry Speake
   Title: Terry Speake Photography
   Date: 3 September 2008

   For: The Authority
   By: 
   Full Name: Malcolm Taylor
   Title: Senior Procurement Manager
   Date: 3/9/08
SECTION 3

1. INTRODUCTION

The Office for Disability Issues was set up in December 2005 and is the focal point within government to coordinate disability policy across departments. Its specific role is to take forward and ensure implementation of a report called ‘Improving the life chances of disabled people’ which was published by the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit in January 2005. It sets out an ambitious programme of action that is required to ensure that disabled people can participate and be included in society.

One key role of the Office for Disability Issues is to act as an exemplar for the rest of government in the way in which it does business, by ensuring that its activities are fully inclusive and accessible.

2. SCOPE

We need to produce approximately 280 additional stock photographic images to enhance our image Library: [http://odi.smugmug.com/]. These images will accurately illustrate disabled people participating in a wide range of activities. The images will include both visibly and not visibly disabled people, only 5% of disabled people are wheelchair users and this should be represented in the variety of disabled people photographed.

The supplier will be responsible for delivering all aspects of the project from the consultation stage to completion. The supplier will be able to manage all aspects of the project in partnership with the representative from the CDI Communication Team.

The supplier will be responsible for managing essential phases of this project including, but not be limited to:

1. Delivering photo shoots, considering all the creative elements including Art Direction.
2. Sourcing suitable locations, activities, disabled people or disabled models for the photo shoots ensuring all the groups are represented and a wide variety of images are captured.
3. Ensuring the best possible resolution images that meet this design brief and in keeping with guidelines.
4. Managing contact sheets, including the capture and supply of appropriate metadata or other relevant information, and ensuring that forms are linked correctly with participants’ imagery (either by taking a head shot or recording the associated digital number).

5. Supplying images on a disk, in an appropriate file and format size, that are suitable for uploading onto our online delivery mechanism. We will require the images to be of quality 300 dpi.

3. SPECIFICATION

Photographs are central to the creative expression of the Office for Disability Issues and as such the style and approach is crucial. Please see current stock of images held on [http://odi.smugmug.com/].

To reflect the ethos of the organisation, the style should be:

- Dynamic
- Inspiring
- Modern

Most shots will be taken in a reportage style. The emphasis of this style is to show people in authentic situations. However, there will be some instances when shots will have to be staged, and the supplier will be expected to maintain continuity of the reportage prospective.

Specifically we require approximately 10 images to represent each of the 14 subject groups listed below, with a minimum of two models per subject.

- Older disabled people (especially from black and ethnic minorities and older men)
- Disabled people using public transport (including coaches, taxis and community transport)
- Disabled people from black and ethnic minorities using private transport
- Disabled people from black and ethnic minorities in a bar, café or restaurant
- Disabled people in suitable housing (also showing adaptations and equipment)
- Disabled parents
- Disabled people in secondary school or college (especially males)
- Men in independent living situations (see independent living folder on smugmug)
- Images of specific impairment groups including people with visual impairments, people with mobility impairments, people with hearing impairments, people with learning difficulties and people with long-term health conditions
- Images of carers
- Disabled people taking part in sports activities
- Disabled people using assistance dogs (not just guide dogs)
- Disabled people in travel situations (plane, airports, hotels)
- Disabled people in museums, galleries and places of interest

Subject to any additional needs being identified whilst on location, we expect that the themes listed above should be covered.
4. CONSIDERATIONS

- **Working with disabled people.** The contractor will be working with disabled people as photographic subjects rather than using professional models. There are many benefits to this approach, however, working with disabled people (especially those with learning difficulties, complex physical and health issues and/or the very young/old) can lead to last-minute cancellations and 'no-shows' by photographic subjects or the photographic subject withdrawing his/her consent after signing the consent form. In addition, photographic sessions could be curtailed early due to subjects' attention span and/or state of contentment/health on a particular day, necessitating further sessions.

  Whilst satisfying the outputs for the brief, it is recognised that subjects' dignity, rights to privacy and wellbeing will take precedence, thereby maintaining high standards of conduct in pursuance of image capture.

- **Working with BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) communities.** It is accepted that in some faiths or cultures, photography is not encouraged and can only be used for legal documents such as passports. Anecdotal evidence suggests that not all BME communities readily participate in disability service provision, which could create additional challenges sourcing and encouraging disabled people to be photographed. In addition, there are gender issues in some communities concerning males photographing women.

- **Charities, Local Authorities and Support Groups.** These will be key conduits for sourcing subjects, which could add additional gate-keeping layers during the planning phases involving multiple permission stages and editorial involvement (additional sign-off stages). In certain situations such gatekeepers may decide at a later date, not to give permission for particular images to be included in the final collection. This is particularly the case where photographs have been acquired on their property.

- **Photographing in public.** Whilst there is legal freedom to take photographs in public spaces, certain locations such as private open spaces, shopping centres and travel interchanges require the permission of the owner. It is expected that the contractor will, with support from the ODI where necessary, negotiate such access. However, it is recognised that such access permission can involve protracted clearance procedures and is not automatic.

5. PRESENTATION OF FINAL COLLECTION

Suppliers are requested to deliver the final collection of images on computer disc in an appropriate file and format size, suitable for upload onto our online delivery mechanism. We will require the images to be quality 300 dpi. The proposed completion date for the work is 31.10.2008.

6. LOCATIONS

There are a variety of locations and activities listed in the specification, and if possible, it will be the supplier's responsibility to source locations in similar geographical locations to minimise unnecessary time and expenditure.

7. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Suppliers and their representatives must be able to provide a valid Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check disclosure.

8. SUSTAINABILITY

The Department for Work and Pensions is committed to minimising environmental damage by reducing consumption of natural resources and investing in, and using alternatives. We require our suppliers help meet this objective. Please indicate in your response how you propose to support our sustainability objective, specifically and directly in meeting the requirements within this invitation to tender.

9. COPYRIGHT

The Office for Disability will own the full rights to the images.
Response to the Department of Work and Pensions:
Marketing and Publicity Framework

Provision of Photography Library Images for the Office for Disability Issues
by Terry Speake BA DA(Manc) MA ARPS FHEA

ODI Tender

Provision of Photography Library Images for the Office for Disability Issues

Estimate of costs involved the provision of Photographic Library Images for the Office for Disability Issues

Introduction
This document has been prepared in response to the Invitation to Tender – reference CCT 2343, in the form of a provisional estimate for delivering the digital images as listed in the Specification.

The deadline stipulated is the 25th July 2008, which is believed to be impracticable given the scope of work, including planning. In addition, what is presented here is contingent upon a number of undetermined variables in the ability to provide the images. This is due in part, to the short timescale, but more importantly, experience has shown that working with disabled people and their concomitant communities, institutions and private care providers creates a number of unique challenges during the production stages. Therefore, it is difficult to apply a fixed price ‘rate card’ commercial quotation for the tender at this stage prior to a full project evaluation and subsequent reviews.

For these reasons, it is proposed that the project is broken down into manageable stages allowing both parties to reassess progress whilst providing suitable breakout points for the work to be reviewed. Should the details provided below meet the compliance criteria, a discussion is requested regarding the phasing of the work in order to agree the maximum number of images that can be produced to meet priorities. Subsequently, all parties would agree a work plan and a more accurate price calculated.

Provisional estimate (commercially sensitive)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 days shooting @ X per day</td>
<td>£00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 days planning @ X per day</td>
<td>£00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel costs</td>
<td>£00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency fees</td>
<td>£00,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 days archiving/editing/metatada/delivery @ X per day</td>
<td>£00,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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Terry Speake is a social documentary photographer whose current practice is dominated by a longitudinal programme of photographic work focusing on the representation of disabled people in photography. As part of ongoing professional development, Terry has recently been awarded PhD scholarship to develop this body of work, which is being carried out in collaboration with The National Media Museum in Bradford.

In addition to his photographic practice, Terry lectures on the MA Photography programme at the University of Bolton, which has a fifty-year history of photography education. Bolton is acknowledged by many to be the birthplace of British social documentary photography when, between 1937-1938 Humphrey Spender carried out his seminal work for the Mass-Observation project.

Terry has an MA (with Distinction) in International Photojournalism, Documentary and Travel Photography; is an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society; and, can provide an Enhanced Disclosure CRB Clearance notice (although the ODI may wish to submit a new application).

Relevant experience in the field

The pilot phase for Terry's current practice consisted of a body work with Mersey Care NHS Trust, which involved life story photo documentary essays involving a group of eight disabled people living in their own homes in Merseyside. The resulting body of photographic work, ‘Getting on With It’ was submitted as evidence to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (Learning Disability); presented to the British Institute of Human Rights; used as an example of best practice by the Health Care Commission; presented to ‘People First’ Merseyside and, exhibited publicly as part of the ‘Extraordinary Journeys Festival’, Liverpool’s Capital of Culture programme.

Prior to this, Terry has worked with individuals with complex multiple disabilities, using photography as an advocacy tool to substitute for conventional channels of communication in critical health and social care situations.

Through this work, Terry has developed a unique understanding of, and ability to work with, disabled people.

Alignment with Office for Disability Issues’ aims and objectives

Terry Speake’s practice is fully aligned with the ODI’s role to pursue the implementation of ‘improving the life chances of disabled people’ by involving disabled people in the creation of their own images and having an influence over their subsequent representation in society. The resulting images will aim to contribute to social cohesion by rejecting ‘othering’, both in the attention given to disabled people as ordinary members of society and by distributing representations within styles and genres that are congruent with contemporary image consumption.

Therefore, this tender creates an exciting opportunity to bring Terry’s expertise in the area of disability imaging and to exploit the in-depth knowledge he has gained to date by producing this new body of contemporary contextualised work. In support of this, Terry will be able to call on his network of contacts in the fields of disability advocacy, health care and social service provision to identify appropriate subjects.

Delivery

Terry Speake will assume overall project management and art direction responsibilities for this project as the sole supplier.

Experience suggests that certain situations are challenging to manage even after a full project assessment has been completed. The following case studies are presented to demonstrate, in the context of the project’s scoping headings, some examples of the challenges presented by the requirement. Four general areas include:

1. The challenges working with disabled people as photographic subjects as opposed to professional models, especially those with learning difficulties, complex physical and health issues and/or the very young/old;
2. Access to disabled people where they are being supported by health care professionals in the public and private sectors;
3. Obtaining model release forms when there are doubts regarding competency to give informed consent; and,
4. Photographing subjects in non-public spaces, such as restaurants, supermarkets, travel interchanges etc.

Examples are:

1. The challenges working with disabled people

During the acquisition of images for the recent work for Mersey Care involving subjects with learning difficulties, last minute cancellations and changes of venue were regular occurrences due to subjects’ psychological disposition and/or health condition at the time. A period of as-
similation and ‘getting to know’ the subjects was key to successful sessions, which required additional time and patience, especially in the run-up period.

**Case study: Stephen**

Stephen lives in his own flat supported by live-in staff. He is epileptic, diagnosed with Tuberous Sclerosis and has been in special schools throughout his early years. Stephen has been violent and aggressive in the past and has a long history of being difficult to ‘place’ due to his problems. Now he lives in his own flat with supportive staff and has achieved a great deal personally. However, Stephen can be unpredictable. He loves 1960s music and plane spotting at Manchester Airport.

Upon his request, a shoot was arranged at the airport, only to be cancelled an hour before because he ‘didn’t want to be photographed’. Two days later, a phone call to say he wanted to be photographed buying a second-hand CD from a local Liverpool shop that afternoon meant a seventy-mile round trip and a very difficult session where Stephen grimaced in front of the camera. However, time and patience shown through interest in his music and a creative solution that avoided ‘posing’ proved successful. I never did get the airport shot!

**2 Access to subjects**

There are a number of sub-headings, such as gate-keeping by carers, NHS procedures, private care facilities etc, that require long run-up times and patient negotiation.

**Case study: Bolton Social Services**

During the planning phase of the current body of work, formal application was made to the management team at Bolton Adult Disability Services. This involved a number of meetings, a written proposal and subsequent interview, the whole process taking in excess of three months. Support and access has now been formalised and strict monitoring systems put in place.

**3 Informed consent**

In many cases, subjects are vulnerable, especially those with learning difficulties, the young and aged. Assuming that subjects are competent to give consent for their images to be used in marketing, publications, training etc, is problematic. As a matter of good practice, model release forms will be used, however, there have been occasions, where despite such precautions, images have had to be withdrawn.

**Case study: Penny**

Penny, who has personality disorders and learning difficulties, gave full consent to her photographers and associated written narrative (verbatim quote) being used for exhibitions and publications. Despite having a copy of a resulting photobook, a phone call from a worried exhibition curator when Penny caused disruption at a venue meant the immediate withdrawal of the captions associated with her images. Despite documentary evidence, which was collaborated with Penny and her carers, she nevertheless denied the content of the captions in question.

In all cases, subjects should have the right to withdraw their images, despite signing a model release form.

**4 Photographing in private locations**

It is legal in the UK to photograph buildings and people in public spaces, despite a growing concern by the general public that photographers are either terrorists or paedophiles. There have been many incidents reported in the press recently of over-jealous police, community support officers and private security personnel preventing photographers from shooting in public spaces, despite the fact they have no legal right to do so. The guidelines from the NUJ and other professional bodies are not to argue, but state your legal rights. This may however be the curtailment of a shoot that day.

Shopping centres and public transport systems are not public spaces, so permission to photograph in such places is mandatory. This requires forward planning and sometimes, protracted negotiation. British Transport Police, for example, have now banned train spotters and the Metropolitan Police have recently issued a poster asking the public to report ‘suspicious photographers’!

**Case study: Tony**

One of Tony’s favourite shopping places is Wilkinson’s, where he buys his household and personal goods. The particular store was located within a shopping mall. In order to obtain permission, a written request was submitted three weeks before the planned shoot, but this only gained access to the store. To avoid being ejected by the mall’s security staff on the day, a pre-visit was conducted to obtain clearance. Despite this, different personnel on the day led to confusion and it took several phone calls before the shoot could commence. The one-hour shoot took over three and when we were in the store, we had to avoid photographing the general public and staff.

**Contingencies**

These brief examples serve to demonstrate Terry Speake’s considerable experience negotiating with such challenges and in the vast majority of instances he has been able achieve compliant outcomes. However, there is a cost in time and resources when things go awry, despite forward planning and providing comprehensive information as to the on-use of the images. The most important issue to consider is that there is often a ‘communication triangle’, where one is negotiating with three or more parties at a time.

Whilst it is understood that this tender specifies that the photographer will be expected to plan and site manage such situations, the above examples serve to demonstrate that additional time needs to be factored in both in the planning phase and during shoots together with the expectation of some failed sessions.

**Technical**

The images will be acquired using industry standard digital cameras and shot in RAW format for subsequent conversion (captured typically 15-24MB file size, 240dpi). The files will be up-scaled to an agreed maximum size and resolution (300dpi), in a file format to be agreed.

Unless otherwise specified, files will not be post-processed (eg: colour grading, sharpening).

Keyword templates and IPTC metadata requirements will be followed as requested.

The RAW data will be held on file, backed-up on external hard disc and output to archival quality DVD discs for delivery.
**Specification: style and approach**

The stylistic approach is specified as ‘reportage’, which implies photographic practices allied to photojournalism and documentary genres. Within these genres, there are many approaches, which have been tailored by photographers to meet the culture of a particular publisher or, in certain cases, highly personal accounts that ‘give witness’, providing ‘testimony’ to events.

This is not the case here because we will by necessity be artificially engineering the situations specified in the tender and ‘reportage’ suggests covering real events. Therefore, it is proposed that the photographic style will reside in a culture of contemporary social documentary practices that will strive to show real disabled people in real situations (for examples see: http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/Getting_On01/).

The key word in the Specification is ‘authentic’, which will be interpreted as follows:

1. A documentary style that is strong in narrative form;
2. Images will have immediacy, capturing moments in ‘real time’;
3. Whilst subjects may ‘present themselves to camera’, their images will focus on their environmental situations, thereby providing authenticity;
4. Significantly, subjects will be disabled people;
5. Locations will be compliant with the Scope, but where possible also have relevance to the disabled subject;
6. Compositions will be dynamic, reflecting ranges of contemporary photographic styles (unusual cropping, unusual lighting, selective focus, unusual POVs), whilst meeting the brief; and,
7. Representing disabled people as ‘ordinary’ members of society, doing ordinary things, which for some individuals may be extraordinary, thereby presenting inspirational messages. However, this should avoid cliché and be non-political from an activism perspective. The aim will be ‘reportage’, not propaganda.

**Sustainability**

Within the four priority areas identified by the UK Government, Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly and the Northern Ireland Administration, the provision of the photographic service will as far as practicable adhere to sustainable practices. These will be:

**Priority area 1: Sustainable consumption and production**

The outputs for the provision of this tender concerns the production of digital images, which by its very nature involves production workflows within binary computer code. This tender stipulates that the final supply of images is to be supplied on computer disc. In contrast with analogue photography where the production of negatives and prints involves the use of toxic chemicals and non-biodegradable materials, digital photographic production in this case will be therefore be relatively gentle in environmental impact. As such, the production processes employed will consume low levels of non-recyclable materials. Where paper and packaging is utilised, recyclable materials will be sourced.

However, computer and camera manufacturers have been criticised for lagging behind in environmental programmes such as recyclability and toxic materials. The production of the images for this tender will utilise professional grade Nikon camera equipment and Apple computer hardware. Given the status of such brands as industry standard equipment, it will be difficult to make alternative choices on grounds of sustainability. All communications between stakeholders and suppliers will be via email or telephone, obviating the requirement for postage and multiple site visits.

**Priority area 2: Climate change and energy**

The delivery of the photographic service will strive to create a low carbon footprint by scheduling the photographic sessions in clusters of geographic locations.

The identification of subjects and locations will, as far as the needs of the tender are concerned, be scheduled in order to minimise travel (eg: multiple visits to same locations). Where long distances are required, an assessment of the carbon impact of travel choice will be made at the time (eg: public transport or own vehicle).

The execution of the photographic service will be entirely on location in public spaces, or in subjects’ places of work/homes. Lighting will be provided by natural daylight, or on-camera flash lighting. Portable studio lights will be avoided. It is not envisaged that studio space will be hired involving the use of fixed lighting equipment, heating or air conditioning.

**Priority area 3: Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement**

It is difficult to envisage situations during the delivery of this tender where direct negative impacts on natural resources will occur. It is not planned to build sets, damage natural locations, or pollute the environment by discarding waste materials in unauthorised locations. In addition, there are no plans to shoot in bio- and/or environmentally sensitive locations.

Where possible, positive messages regarding the responsible use of natural resources will be promoted including air quality, biodiversity, landscape protection, land use, marine, environments, water quality and forestry.

**Priority area 4: Sustainable communities**

At the heart of this proposal is the representation of disabled people as ‘ordinary’ members of society, sharing those things common to all: independence, choice, rights and inclusion (Department of Health, Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century, Cm 5086, 2001). The methodological approach in providing the images will be firmly placed in the rubric of contemporary social documentary, portraying disabled people as individuals fully participating in society.

The author’s work described previously is currently focused on practices concerned with the representation of disability in photographic media and how societal interpretations of such images are, and have been, subject to ‘othering’. Key to this enquiry is the inclusion of disabled people in the making and influencing of their own images. This attempts to promote active participation leading to community cohesion through the ‘ordinary’ representation of disabled people, thereby encouraging fairness, tolerance and a strong sense of local culture.

**Legal considerations**

The subjects involved in this project may involve vulnerable participants, highlighting issues of informed consent and dignity. It will be assumed that this is the base line for proceeding with the project.
Consent: Consent Forms (model release) stating the extent, nature and usage of the photographs within the framework of the project will be signed by the participants and the author before photographic sessions are concluded. The content of the Consent Forms will be agreed between the Office for Disability Issues and the author beforehand. Capacity to give consent will be assumed unless told otherwise.

Authority: To facilitate full understanding and appreciation of the consent process, the author will require written authority from the Office for Disability Issues in the form of an Information Sheet on official notepaper outlining the reasons for, and projected use of the images. In addition, there may be instances where the Office for Disability Issues will be called upon to facilitate introductions and/or provide contact information from national databases.

Confidentiality: All subjects will remain anonymous in the public domain and be referred to by first name or pseudonym as required. Other identifiers such as addresses and telephone numbers, which will be required for administrative purposes, will be omitted in written or visual material associated with the final Library images in order to protect the subjects’ privacy. Right to withdraw: Subjects will have the right to withdraw their image(s) at any stage during the project. However, it must be understood that after their images have been included in the Library and subsequently used, these rights will not exist.

Copyright
Copyright will be assigned to the Office For Disability Issues in perpetuity on the understanding that the images will not be on-sold for profit to commercial organisations, such as photo libraries.

The assignment is conditional on the author receiving an irrevocable, perpetual licence back of the copyright, which is non-exclusive and royalty free for the following purposes:

1. To be used as examples in personal portfolios of work;
2. To be presented as examples during the processes of academic research – eg: Terry Speake’s PhD study - Self, Identity and Otherness: Exploring the Dialectic Surrounding the Representation of Disability in Photography;
3. To be presented in academic presentations, journal publications and/or conference papers (fully cited, ODI); and,
4. For submission in national and international competitions (with specific ODI permission and that competition organisers have no claim over copyright).

Terry Speake, 30 June 2008

Email Correspondence: ODI

From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: Getting paid
Date: 1 July 2008 14:23:48 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake
Cc: Collett Fay WWEG ODI

Hi Terry
Good to talk to you earlier and attached is the brief as discussed. You’ll see that the job requires project management (ie, sourcing subject matter either through a model agency or using their own contact network of disabled people, plus finding a variety of good locations) as well as taking the photography and then getting it over to us to use.

Would be grateful if we can have a chat tomorrow. No worries if the timescale is too short but would be good to understand what you do feel is reasonable and how we can work together to progress this.

Speak soon,
Clare
<<DWV MARKETING AND PUBLICITY FRAMEWORK.doc>>

Clare Jefferis
Communications Team
Office for Disability Issues
The Adelphi
1-11 John Adam Street
London WC2N 6HT 020 7712 2879
www.officefordisability.gov.uk - making equality a reality
www.direct.gov.uk/disability - public services all in one place
Please consider the environment before printing this email.

From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: Getting for photography work
Date: 25 June 2008 16:25:42 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake
Cc: Collett Fay WWEG ODI

Hi Terry
Good to talk to you earlier and attached is the brief as discussed. You’ll see that the job requires project management (ie, sourcing subject matter either through a model agency or using their own contact network of disabled people, plus finding a variety of good locations) as well as taking the photography and then getting it over to us to use.

Would be grateful if we can have a chat tomorrow. No worries if the timescale is too short but would be good to understand what you do feel is reasonable and how we can work together to progress this.

Speak soon,
Clare
<<DWV MARKETING AND PUBLICITY FRAMEWORK.doc>>
reaps a positive result for all of us.  
Kind regards,
Clare

From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: RE: Hope you are better
Date: 24 July 2008 10:32:12 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake

Hi Terry
I am feeling much better thanks as the antibiotics have now kicked in!

Think I’m very run down so trying to take it easy. Apologies for not making it up to Manchester on Tuesday. It would be good to meet up early next week. How are you fixed? Obviously Monday is out but I am free:

Tuesday 29th - after 11.30am (though could probably get out this meeting to be free all day)
Wednesday 30th - Free all day
Thursday 31st - Free after 2pm
Friday 1st - Free all day

I am happy to come and see you, though if you’re feeling better then there’s the option of you coming to London. Let me know what would be convenient.

Best wishes and glad you are on the mend.

Clare

-----Original Message-----
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 24 July 2008 08:01
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: Hope you are better

Hi Clare
I have left it a couple of days to email because I thought I should leave you in peace whilst you are suffering from a throat infection. Neither of us are doing that well on the health front at the moment are we? If it is any help, I am feeling much better and have been phasing myself back into the swim. Fingers crossed no more medication and at this rate, nature will take care of itself. … As far as your bug is concerned, I really hope it is a short affair and you feel better soon.

On the positive front, just to let you know that I have been quietly working away setting up my contacts for the August (and beyond) shoots. For example, I have a detailed planning meeting on Monday with Bolton Disability Services, a conference call that day with the Mersey Care Chief Exec (to discuss a reprise of the work with some of the subjects you have already seen), a number of individual advocates working on specific subjects’ availability, access to disabled students when they enrol in September and hopefully final approval to work with the Special Olympics Team at the end of August. So far, very promising indeed …

I have prepared a list of housekeeping issues we need to address, such as the consent/model release situation and other legal-type processes. In particular, we are going to need high-level support for access to certain venues such as airports, which I will explain.

So, when you feel able meet, let’s see if we can arrange a mutually convenient date to discuss the way forward.

Kind regards

Terry

-----Original Message-----
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 24 July 2008 14:54:13 GMT+01:00
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: RE: Hope you are better

Tuesday and Wednesday are now looking difficult! I will go back to my diary and see when is the best time for me.

Talk soon,

Clare

-----Original Message-----
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 24 July 2008 10:50
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: Re: Hope you are better

Hi Clare
Good to hear from you and also good to hear the wonders of antibiotics are working. Just think, before 1948 - no antibiotics … we would probably be dead from toothache!

I am going to be very cheeky here and wonder if you coming ‘up north’ would be the better option for me. I am much, much better, but still getting quite tired. As I said, I am off the medication, but without
going into too much detail, I am told that my renal system will be irritated and over-active for a couple of months yet, so I am trying to reduce long travel if I can. I am getting about OK and the shoots during August and onwards will not be affected I assure you.

I could clear Tuesday and Wednesday if that would suit you.

Kindest regards

Terry

From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: RE: Agenda and workplan
Date: 30 July 2008 11:34:24 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake

Hi Terry

Got a chance to have a read of your agenda - thanks for this. The most important aspect for me is planning and priorities - realistically what can you deliver and when! I have attached an agenda which incorporates your points and adds mine in.

I arrive at Manchester Piccadilly at 11.46 tomorrow. Look forward to seeing you then.

Best wishes,

Clare

-----Original Message-----
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 28 July 2008 07:33
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: Agenda and workplan

Hi Clare

Hope you had a good weekend and recharged your batteries. It was too hot and sweltering for me, but I am feeling much better.

Attached is the first go at an agenda for Thursday, plus a simple table so we can start prioritising.

Looking forward to our session Thursday ...

Best wishes

Terry

From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: RE: Model Release: Accessibility
Date: 1 August 2008 10:52:36 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake

Hi Terry

Only had a first class ticket so had to rough it with the ordinary people on the way back! Got home around 8:15pm so not too bad. Thanks for lunch and the meeting yesterday - think it was very useful.

Happy for you to input into the Model Release form to ensure it is fully accessible for everyone - I’ll take a look at the Mersey Care one when I get a moment.

Glad to hear you have lots of meetings set up - the subjects sound fantastic so let’s hope the meetings reap positive results.

Happy for you to contact Eleanor as you already have a relationship with her and I’ve got a lot to do!

Have a good weekend.

Best wishes,

Clare

-----Original Message-----
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 03 August 2008 18:44
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: EQ2025 kick-back (read first)

Hi

Don’t worry about Eleanor... She can be very opinionated! Yes, happy to chat today - in a meeting from 1-3.30 but apart from that am free.

Clare

-----Original Message-----
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 03 August 2008 18:44
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: EQ2025 kick-back (read first)

Hi Clare

We need to talk on Monday about the reaction I received from Eleanor after asking for help sourcing some subjects. After a telephone conversation (which was very positive), I sent her the list of categories and asked if she could offer any help in certain areas,
such as with ethnic groups. However, there seem to be a number of very sensitive issues, some of which I don’t personally agree with, but nevertheless, I don’t want to alienate EQ2025.

For instance, Eleanor thinks we should be paying disabled people for using their images (don’t get me going on this, I have a robust defence) and that as ethnic groups are already stigmatised compared to their white counterparts, they would not like to be seen as disabled people on a government web site.

Eleanor was giving her views and is going to consult with her colleagues. I am sure our good relationship is intact - I just seem to have been in some crossfire ...

Another point she made was that she received several grumbles about the photography at the meeting, although she loves the images. Sounds to me to be a lack of briefing ...

I will send you a starter spreadsheet later. As far as Mon/Tue/Wed is concerned, I have meetings and possible shoots all day every day ...

Best
Terry

From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI >
Subject: Addition to contract
Date: 12 August 2008 17:39:12 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake

Hi Terry
I’ve only come up with two considerations to add to the contract - are there any more? Probably haven’t worded it quite right but it’s a starting point and one that I’m hoping our procurement team will be able to put into ‘contract speak’.

Would be grateful for your input and any additions.

Kind regards,
Clare

PS Latest photos look brilliant!

From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: RE: Latest Sessions
Date: 15 August 2008 16:45:22 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake

Fantastic stuff!

Have a lovely weekend. Talk next week.

Clare

---Original Message---
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 15 August 2008 16:29
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: Latest Sessions

Hi Clare

Here is Pablo at home. I am going to catch up with Pablo on his travels when I get back from holiday. He uses just about every kind of public transport ...

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/Pablo1308/

Here is David M, who you have seen before. He lost his wife recently from diabetes complications, so now live son his own. He is quite a local hero in that he raises charity money by swimming - I will arrange to shoot this in September

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/David1308/

Peter L works in Social Services and has a degenerative macular condition. It was tricky to shoot because of a busy office, but his aids are evident. However, there were private phone numbers in the background of many of the shots, so I will have to have another go at some time.

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/PeterL1308/

Don’t ask me where these two popped up from, but with the flat cap and urban blight, Shirley’s happy disposition is in total contrast with the gritty landscape.

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/Cafe1408/

I had a major cancellation today with the Asian Elders, wasting a day’s shoot but hope to resurrect it next week. I am meeting a group of blind people tomorrow (Sat) having a meal in a pub/restaurant, as
well as meeting the young couple getting married in November. The Special Olympics Trails are still on for Monday and I am meeting an Asian lady on Tuesday who works in the Town Hall. She had cerebral palsy and is full of life ... she is really up for the long-term study and happy to be used for the library.

Have a good weekend and I will keep you posted as I progress through next week ...

Best
Terry

From: Wilkinson Martine DWP COMMS CT
Subject: MAQ2134 CCT2343/2622
Date: 1 September 2008 09:09:09 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake

Dear Terry,

REF MAQ2134 - CCT2343/2622 - ODI PHOTOS
I sent 2 hard copies of this contract to you on 20th August 2008 by post. I urgently require you to sign and return them to me. I have attached a copy of the contract, just in case you have not received the originals. Could you please return 2 signed copies as soon as possible. Please can you drop me a quick email to let me know when I can expect the signed contracts returning or if you have any queries about the contract.

Kind Regards Martine

From: Taylor Malcolm DWP COMMS CT
Subject: PHOTO SHOOT - CCT2622
Date: 2 September 2008 11:24:09 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake
Cc: Collett Fay WWEG ODI; Wilkinson Martine DWP COMMS CT

Terry, thanks for your call earlier.

The terms and conditions of the project contract conform to the overall Photographic Services framework agreement terms and conditions. As such around 50 photographers and photographic agencies have signed up these terms and conditions. These cannot be changed during the term of the framework.

As we are contracting with yourself off-framework we still have to comply with these DWP terms and conditions. I have not had any instance in the past where we as DWP have had to enforce any of these conditions and so, assuming you will provide a professional service to the DWP, I feel you should be able to take the risk for this project. If you feel you cannot do so then maybe it will be best to cancel the arrangement with yourself and go out to re-tender against the framework.

Please let Martine and myself know how you wish to proceed. Thank you for your support on this project.

Regards Malcolm Taylor

Terry, thanks for your response.

Our frameworks are in place for a period of three years with an option to extend for one year. The photographic services framework contracts started on 24th April 2006 and will terminate on 23rd April 2009, with an option to extend for one year. The approved suppliers on this framework were selected through a lengthy and rigorous open tender process. They have no guarantee on the volume or value of work from the DWP during the term of the framework and neither can we guarantee you any additional work beyond this one-off special project.

During the term of the framework we cannot legally under EU laws add any new photographic services suppliers to the framework and are in fact at risk of being sued by the framework suppliers and by the EU Courts of Law if we go off framework, as we are doing with yourself. So we are the ones taking the risk in this project.

We are likely to be commencing the framework re-let process within the next few months and so you would be able to apply through the open tender process along with other organisations to be evaluated for selection.

As stated yesterday we cannot make changes to existing terms and conditions.

Due partly to your illness the actual work for this project has been delayed considerably and so I would appreciate it if you can confirm by tomorrow if you are prepared to complete it under the contact terms stated otherwise we will discuss with our Customer about the commencement of a re-tender process.

Thank you.
Malcolm Taylor
Senior Procurement Manager

---Original Message---
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 03 September 2008 07:56
To: Taylor Malcolm DWP COMMS CT
Cc: Collett Fay WWEG ODI; Wilkinson Martine DWP COMMS CT
Subject: Re: PHOTO SHOOT - CCT2622

Dear Malcolm

So far, I have invested considerable time and effort in good faith on this project and I am committed to providing high standards of service. The prospect of withdrawing is not on my agenda at the moment and I am keen to conclude the contract arrangements.

However, I do feel that the open-ended indemnity clauses are disproportionate to the value of the contract on offer. The fact that others have signed-up to the framework is erroneous in my view because from my standpoint it seems unfair that the Department is claiming the right to be awarded damages over and above that which a court of law would award. Whilst I have indemnity insurance, which covers legal costs, this is not open-ended. As you say, the risk as a sole trader is all mine, so the contract appears to me to be somewhat one-sided in the Department’s favour.

However, my concerns would be assuaged if this was not a one-off commission. With the prospect of further work on an ongoing basis, my risks would be spread. What would it take as far as compliance conditions are concerned to be accepted on the framework?

I will be online for a brief period mid-morning after an appointment and then out for the rest of the day, but contactable by mobile.

Regards

Terry

From: Terry Speake
Subject: PHOTO SHOOT - CCT2622
Date: 4 September 2008 10:23:54 GMT+01:00
To: Taylor Malcolm DWP COMMS CT
Cc: Collett Fay WWEG ODI Wilkinson Martine DWP COMMS CT

Dear Malcolm

I have had a very productive conversation with Fay Collett this morning focusing in part on how we can collaborate in mitigating potential risks by ensuring that model release forms meet government protocols, especially regarding accessibility for disabled subjects.

I am now happy to sign the contract and will be posting both copies to you at the earliest opportunity as requested.

Kind regards

Terry

From: Wilkinson Martine DWP COMMS CT
Sent: Thu 04-Sep-08 10:35
To: Speake, Terry
Cc: Taylor Malcolm DWP COMMS CT
Subject: RE: PHOTO SHOOT - CCT2622

Dear Terry,

Many Thanks for your reply regarding CCT2622. When I receive the two contracts, they will be counter signed by Malcolm Taylor and one copy will be returned to you.

I hope the project goes well and I look forward to seeing the results.

Kind Regards
Martine

Martine Wilkinson
Procurement Manager
Communications Category Team

From: Hogg Simon WWEG ODI
Subject: Image format
Date: 15 September 2008 15:39:20 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake
Cc: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI

Hi Terry. I’ve been talking to Clare about the image gallery, and she mentioned that it would probably be best if I contacted you to talk about the best format in which to get the photos. I’m not sure there is any point us taking RAW images, since we’d just end up flooded with DVDs. I think a TIFF and JPEG of each image would be sufficient. However, she also mentioned you had some questions about how we’d like the images processed, so let me know when is a good time to talk and I’ll give you a call.

Regards

Simon

From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: RE: Buses with some BAME
Date: 15 September 2008 15:53:05 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake

Hi Terry

Lovely weekend thanks. Photos look good, and glad you made some more contacts. I have to do an update for my line manager about pro-
gress on all my projects. Could you please let me know before close of play tomorrow how many images we have selected for this first phase so I can report this back to him.

As I left rather hurriedly on Friday it would be good to continue discussions around the next phase and what you have left to arrange. I will call you towards the end of the week.

Best wishes,

Clare

-----Original Message-----
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 14 September 2008 18:38
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: Buses with some BAME

Hi Clare
Hope you had a good weekend, thinking of me standing in chilly Bolton all day Sunday (not ...).

Some images are posted here:

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/Buses1409/

The event was of course very 'staged' but perhaps one of two of what I came back with will be OK. The Asian lady has a facial disfigurement that she really does not want shown photographically, so I picked only a couple where she is turning away from camera (she signed the model release though ...). One slight issue is that the organisation, BADGE, gave out yellow T-shirts, so although I took many pictures of the lady from 197 onwards, some not posted here clearly displayed 'BADGE' before I asked her to zip up her jacket. BTW, she is of Jamaican descent (Mum and Dad Jamaican) - cool or what!

Interestingly, the severely disabled girl with the brown poncho-like sweater gave her consent by blinking her eye (her carer signed a form). I'm not sure we will use the images, but is shows how people really want to take part.

The real achievement for the day was that the visually impaired lady towards the end (24 onwards) is a member of the disabled parents network, so I have opened up a whole new set of opportunities. She also has contacts with a visually impaired sports team ...

Finally, the Area Manager from Arriva and the Disability Access Coordinator from GMPTE (Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive), want me to speak to them about the research - a productive day indeed ...

Now back to preparing for the Exam Board at Uni tomorrow ...

Best

Terry

-----Original Message-----
From: Hogg Simon WWEG ODI
Subject: RE: Image format
Date: 16 September 2008 15:02:22 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake

Hi Terry. Just gave you a call, but got your answer machine, hence this email.

I think the safest thing is to take the files as per camera output-- it gives us greater flexibility. I’m not sure precisely how many pics we are receiving-- has Clare agreed the ones we are taking? And do you know roughly how many DVDs the images would fill at 300 dpi? Also what sort of sharpening and adjustments do you usually do?

Sorry if this is a bit random. Give me a call if you want to talk about this.

Regards

Simon

-----Original Message-----
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 15 September 2008 22:01
To: Hogg Simon WWEG ODI
Subject: Re: Image format

Hi Simon

Thanks for getting in touch.

I always shoot RAW and then batch process into TIFF/JPEG for print etc, so that’s OK.

Normally, I am asked not to sharpen because designers will want to sharpen at the final scaled size, as well as only very minimal curves/levels adjustment. All I would consider is pulling the RAW exposure back into line to make an acceptable histogram.

If you are happy with the files as per camera output, to 300ppi and
not resized, then I think all I need to know is about sharpening and adjustments. If however, you want me to meet a file size, then I’ll chat with you later ...

When I have all the images together and ready to compile, I will give you a call to confirm everything.

Best wishes

Terry

From:  Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject:  Contacts with black communities
Date:  25 September 2008 11:10:41 GMT+01:00
To:  clenton1; Dave; steve.scott
Cc:  Terry Speake

Hello

Please could I ask for your help? I am commissioning photographer, Terry Speake, to take some photos for our inhouse photolibrary. He is having real difficulty finding disabled black communities that will participate in this project and I wondered whether any of you had any contacts within your areas that he could tap into. Terry is based in Stockport, Cheshire.

I would be grateful if you could contact any groups you may know to see if they would be willing to help.

With best wishes,

Clare

From:  Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject:  Bits
Date:  25 September 2008 11:32:25 GMT+01:00
To:  Terry Speake

Hi

Thanks for the productive meeting yesterday.

I’ve got a steer on the schools issue. Ideally, we would like to illustrate disabled students integrating with non-disabled students so therefore photographing disabled students in mainstream schools would be preferable. However, if this is proving difficult I am happy for you to visit a special disabled school, though can we try to photograph visible and non-visible disabilities so it doesn’t look like a special school if you get my point. The ODI’s remit is all about disability equality so we want to show disabled and non-disabled people integrating as much as possible.

Also, I’ve been having a think on ditching the specific impairments category and am happy to do this. The category is very ambiguous as we discussed yesterday so yes, let’s put these photos in some other appropriate categories.

Letterhead attached for you to insert blurb and send to Nikon.

Think that’s everything.

Best wishes,

Clare

From:  Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject:  FW: Contacts with black communities
Date:  25 September 2008 12:25:55 GMT+01:00
To:  Terry Speake

Hi,

Asian not black… but do you want to get in touch with them? I know you mentioned about getting an introduction so I can ask Clenton if he could get in contact first if that would be preferable to you.

Clare

-----Original Message-----
From: CLENTON FARQUHARSON
Sent: 25 September 2008 12:16
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: Re: Contacts with black communities

Hi Clare,

You could try this contact person I know at the Asian Peoples Disability Alliance.

Address:  Suite 1, 4th Floor, Alperton House, Bridgewater Road, Alperton, HA0 1EH

Contact person name: Zeenat Jeewa

From:  Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject:  RE: Planning update
Date:  30 September 2008 10:12:35 GMT+01:00
To:  Terry Speake

Thanks for the update - will chase the payment for you and ask Fay to update you. Dare I say… it looks like it’s finally coming together.

Clare
Hi Clare

Just so you can enjoy your holiday without thinking about the photo library shoots, I have planned the following this week and next (so far):

- Tomorrow (Tuesday) Joanna and Jenny’s adaptations (the first carer I shot), after I drop in via the Sensory Centre and see when I can shoot some visually impaired in an art class and PC training session (probably next week)

- Wed - meeting with blind guy who might do the taxi and some transport situations ...

- Thursday - shoot student at Bolton uni and chase up the other one that came forward. I had another meeting on Friday with the DID(7) lady, but have decided it is too risky ...

- Friday - Hearing dog reshoot (at home, not at work!)

- Monday 6th - planning meeting at Liverpool John Lennon Airport - shoot mid October

- Monday 13th - other hearing dog reshoot (this time with a trainer!)

I had a txt from Anis, who is having blood transfusions as I write, but he says he will be able to take up the Asian Elders location with me next week (BAME private transport etc)

Found a contact in a secondary School an hour away that just might let me in to shoot disabled pupils - will be chasing this up - might take some time if it goes to the parents though.

I will have the Hotel, other disabled parent and places of interest set up for when you get back. Hopefully by then, Anisa will be well after her op and I can set up the café and restaurant shoots with her and her friends.

Still working on finding models for Bramhall Hall, although I have an elderly subject (arthritis disability) who lives in the grounds of another stately home (Arley Hall) an hour away. She is happy to be photographed ...

Still waiting for actual date from Bolton Adult Services for the library, galley, museum shoot, but will be pushing on this.

Where did September go!!!!

Have a great holiday.

Terry

---Original Message---
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 29 September 2008 22:23
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: Planning update

Hi Clare

Just so you can enjoy your holiday without thinking about the photo library shoots, I have planned the following this week and next (so far):

- Tomorrow (Tuesday) Joanna and Jenny’s adaptations (the first carer I shot), after I drop in via the Sensory Centre and see when I can shoot some visually impaired in an art class and PC training session (probably next week)

- Wed - meeting with blind guy who might do the taxi and some transport situations ...

- Thursday - shoot student at Bolton uni and chase up the other one that came forward. I had another meeting on Friday with the DID(7) lady, but have decided it is too risky ...

- Friday - Hearing dog reshoot (at home, not at work!)

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I will have the Hotel, other disabled parent and places of interest set up for when you get back. Hopefully by then, Anisa will be well after her op and I can set up the café and restaurant shoots with her and her friends.

Still working on finding models for Bramhall Hall, although I have an elderly subject (arthritis disability) who lives in the grounds of another stately home (Arley Hall) an hour away. She is happy to be photographed ...

Still waiting for actual date from Bolton Adult Services for the library, galley, museum shoot, but will be pushing on this.

Where did September go!!!!

Have a great holiday.

Terry

From: Zeenat Jeewa
Subject: Re: Photography for the ODI
Date: 5 October 2008 14:30:05 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake
Cc: Michael Jeewa ; Mahesh Amin

Dear Terry,

Thank you for your email, and apologies for delay in responding. We have been in the middle of an office move & unfortunately have not had telephones or broadband use for the last week.

We would be delighted for you to come along to our Day centre & offices to discuss in more detail of how we can assist you in your research and study into Disability and Photography.

Our Day Centre is open between Monday & Thursday each week, so please let me know which dates of available you have in the next couple of weeks to come along to visit us. Thursdays are a particularly more busy day in terms of activities, so maybe that would be better for you to see our Organisation at work and our range of service users.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

with best regards

Zeenat
Asian Peoples’ Disability Alliance

From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: RE: October Update
Date: 10 October 2008 11:21:15 GMT+01:00
To: Terry Speake

Hi Terry

Bit of a disaster on the holiday front... Lost my purse at Liverpool Street Station en route to airport so couldn’t go away as had no cards or money! Was very pissed off and Ryan Air were rubbish. Anyway,
a week on I’m over it and have just booked a holiday to Thailand, going to meet up with a friend out there. That now means that I am away from the 14-29 October. In my absence Fay will be your contact.

Thanks for the update - looks like you’ve been busy and lots lined up. We need to have a catch up before I go so we can work out where we are with everything. I am writing to procurement today for an extension on the contract. I wanted to wait to see how much you had secured before going to them but I think it’s worth us doing anyway, just so we’ve got it covered.

Let’s chat soon.

Kind regards,

Clare

-----Original Message-----
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 08 October 2008 22:24
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: October Update

Hi Clare

Hope you had a great holiday. As for here, it has been a battle against the weather and the usual delays, but the following are in the can:

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/CoopersSwim810  (OK, I know you don’t like white bodies, but Dad has a serious heart condition and Gran has Alzheimer’s - see below for another shoot with the family)

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/HearingDogs310/  (I won this time with lightning fast Sidney - cute pictures don’t you think?)

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/Pablo210/  (I went back to Pablo’s house to see if I could get better shots of the adaptations - we need to have a think what we are looking for here. I’m not sure what they say)

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/JennysHouse610/  (this was the postponed shoot with Joanna and Jenny. Dad was there this time, so I captured some more carers images. However, the adaptations were a bit underwhelming, except I am really happy with the two night-time shots of the sensory bedroom and the sling sequence)

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/Mike210/  (this is Mike, who has heart problems, diabetic, arthritic. He is studying here for a teaching qualification)

http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/Dianne510/  (this is Dr Dianne, also arthritic, but also has renal impairment. She is obviously very self-conscious, but I thought one or two shots were OK for ‘places of interest’. They wanted £100 per hour to shoot in the gardens, but I got them to waive it, unlike the National Trust, who won’t budge on a facilities fee. I dodged the torrential rain for this, although you wouldn’t know it)

Shoots organised, but not yet shot include:


Friday 17th: Cooper family in the park

Monday 20th: IT class with visually impaired learners

Sometime to be confirmed in next 2 weeks: Library, Museum and Gallery - only waiting for names of service users to attend - I have the permissions sorted from the Council.

Sometime before the end of the month: Richard and Kelly at Liverpool John Lennon Airport (this has been approved after two visits and numerous emails, but we are waiting for final checks and resource allocation from them - the organiser is away for the next two weeks!)

I haven’t sorted a hotel shoot yet, but it is at the top of the list ... probably a Holiday Inn, which has been adapted.

BAME: Anisa is out of hospital and back at work limited hours, so will get in touch with me when fit enough to do the café shoots. Anis on the other hand is very ill and out of the picture for a while, which has repercussions on model release forms and further shoots. However, I have located another contact who thinks he can help identify Asians for the personal transport, café/bar etc shoots. He is getting back to me within the next week. If the worse happens, the North London Centre is very happy for me to use their facilities and service users ... I will have to go down if necessary, but I can’t this month.

We need to formalise the overrun as we last discussed because the contract stipulates 14 days before the scheduled end. As I have formally notified you within the ‘considerations’ clauses and that I have made progress on planning, I am hoping that procurement will issue an amendment. My understanding is that as you are the main
contact, this will have to go through you.

Finally, I have been spending quite a bit of time sorting the Model Release Forms. They are nearly all there, but I still don’t have Shirley or the Thai Chi man, but have their contact details, which are being chased up.

Let’s chat on the phone about the loose ends. Also, I need to explain the difficulties I am working with when shooting on College premises and the data protection act ...

Best

Terry

---Original Message-----
From:    Armbrust Stefanie WWEG ODI
Sent:    27 August 2008 17:40
To:      Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: images needed

Hi Clare,
For Directgov I need images of
• adapted housing
• equipment for use about the home (eg stair lifts, hoists, kettle tip-pers etc)
• personal equipment
• wheelchairs/wheelchair users
• scooters/scooter users
• motoring stuff (cars, parking etc, including Blue Badge images)
• blind people

Public transport:
• buses
• coaches
• trains
• community transport
• air travel (airport, various disabilities, eg blind, mobility)

Not much, is it!
Stef :-)

---Original Message-----
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 23 October 2008 21:12
To: Collett Fay WWEG ODI
Subject: Re: images needed

Hi Fay
Thanks for sending this. Do you have an idea of how many images per category?

There is some duplication with what we have been doing and I need to get a handle on the style they are after. The current work is located within social documentary, but I detect that the Directgov needs might be different?

Please could I have a think about this over the weekend?

Best wishes

Terry
Hi Terry
Hope you’ve had a good week and are feeling better.
Thanks for the shoots. I’ve done my selection. These are not the numbers of the photos (as detailed on the index) I just opened up the first one and did it in that order. Does that make sense?
Jokers: 2, 4, 7, 11, 14, 20, 23, 29
Simon on train: 1, 6, 8, 15, 17, 24, 25, 29, 31, 33, 39
Library: 3, 5, 11, 13, 15, 23, 36, 38, 40, 48, 49, 52, 55
Look forward to receiving the tiffs.
Have a great weekend.
Clare

---Original Message---
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 11 February 2009 20:41
To: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: I’m still here ...

Hi Clare
Hope you are keeping well.

After many failed attempts, some hotel shots for you to look at. Some usable ones I think ...
http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/Hotel1102/

Have you had any further thoughts on a meeting? January has gone and February is marching on ...

I am getting quite a lot of interest in the research from various bodies, so things are looking very good. Here is a link for the university article, the substance of the research would form the core of any presentation when I come down to see you:
http://data.bolton.ac.uk/university/researchandenterprise/newsletter/issue1/pageE.htm

Let me know which ones you want me to burn.

Best wishes
Terry

Hi Pablo
Terry Speake phoned me this morning to let me know that some of the captions attributed to the photos in our photolibrary are incorrect. I can only apologise for this - it was an error on the ODI’s part and it has now been rectified.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for being involved in this project. These photos portray positive representation of disabled people and assist us in the Government’s vision of achieving disability equality by 2025.

I apologise for any inconvenience caused.

With kind regards, Clare

---Original Message---
From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: Apologies
Date: 28 January 2009 17:40:57 GMT
To: Pablo Mortby
Cc: Terry Speake Collett Fay WWEG ODI

Hi Pablo
Terry Speake phoned me this morning to let me know that some of the captions attributed to the photos in our photolibrary are incorrect. I can only apologise for this - it was an error on the ODI’s part and it has now been rectified.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for being involved in this project. These photos portray positive representation of disabled people and assist us in the Government’s vision of achieving disability equality by 2025.

I apologise for any inconvenience caused.

With kind regards, Clare

---Original Message---
From: Jefferis Clare WWEG ODI
Subject: RE: I’m still here ...
Date: 12 February 2009 10:54:43 GMT
To: Terry Speake

Hi Terry
Thanks for these - they look good. Like Simon’s bandana! Apologies for not coming back to you yet on meeting dates - other priorities have taken me away from sorting this out. Will be in touch very soon with photo choices and a date.

Clare
some time and she will be in touch soon

Regards

Fay

---Original Message---
From: Terry Speake
Sent: 08 March 2010 16:20
To: Collett Fay WWG ODI
Subject: Disability and Photography Research

Hi Fay
I hope things are well with you.

I have reached a stage in my PhD research when I am writing up evaluations on some of the practice-based and theoretical work. I would really like to have a chat with you to bring you up to date and also gather some specific and general responses from the ODI’s perspective. I had been hoping to have a meeting with Claire before she left, but events transpired against us.

I appreciate that you will be very busy and other priorities take precedence, but if you would be able to spare some time to chat, I would be most grateful. At the moment, Mondays and Fridays are the best for me.

Kind regards

Terry

Feedback
From: Chan Catherine WWG ODI
Subject: Feedback from ODI
Date: 26 March 2010 11:49:40 GMT
To: Terry Speake

Dear Terry,
Hope you’re well. Further to our chat, I’ve asked the team for some feedback on your images.

Use of images The images have been used by government departments in a wide range of publications e.g. annual reports, corporate brochures etc. On some days we receive no requests for images; on other days we receive as many as five requests. As a rough estimate, we get about 50 enquiries per month.

How the images fit into our wider work As you’re aware, the image gallery is part of the ‘Images of Disability’ initiative. This started off as an initiative to increase the number of disabled people featured in government advertising. However it has developed and now covers a much broader remit of spreading good practice on disability communications. It aims to help government communicators to produce accessible communications, involve disabled people in their work, and to represent disabled people positively.

The website was revamped recently (www.odi.gov.uk/iod) and we are planning a series of one-day roadshows to deliver this material to government communicators. The roadshows will feature a mix of strategic and tactical information.

The image gallery is one of the key sections on the Images of Disability website and we point it out during the roadshows. Anecdotally, government communicators are generally very enthusiastic about the image gallery (especially as it’s free!) For us, there’s a challenge to educate delegates that images of disabled people does not necessarily mean photos of people in wheelchairs.

Development In terms of development, you’ll be aware that we are increasing the number of images on the image gallery. We now have the photos and we’re in the process of switching to a new system to display the new images. The new images will broaden the range of situations e.g. more disabled people at work, more sporting images to chime with the 2012 Games etc.

Hope this is all helpful, Catherine
Mr Ian Cooper,
39 Doyle Road,
Hunger Hill,
Bolton.
BL3 4SA.

Tel: 07900 264033
email: badgeforbolton@yahoo.co.uk

Dear Terry,
On behalf of BADGE and all its members I have been asked to thank you for the wonderful photographic work you did with some of our members as part of the project you are doing for O.D.I.

Those that took part are more than happy with the results of this work and we as a group are more than proud to see many BADGE members on the current yearly Calendar produced by the Office of Disability Issues. As well as us as a group it is also pleasing to see so many disabled people featured also from the town of Bolton.

It is clear to us that you were the key to this. We thank you for your time, work and involvement and look forward to working with you again in the future. All our very best wishes to you.

Yours Sincerely,

Ian Cooper,
Secretary,
Bolton Active Disability Group for Everyone.
National Skills Academy for Social Care

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"The confidence and skills that I have gained from this course have had a huge impact on my career and the quality of care delivered."

Karen Norton, Support Worker
In November 2009, an invitation to stage a two-week exhibition of positive images of disabled people in the Bolton Central Library to be opened by the Lord Mayor on the International Day of Disabled People (see: http://www.terryspeake.co.uk/PhD_Porfolio) came from Bolton Council. Initially, I declined the invitation on grounds that the Council wanted to select the images themselves with a view to aligning the choice with a policy that disabled people should be shown in a positive light. I defended a position that the images were part of an extended study involving disabled people themselves and that any intervention from a policy standpoint would undermine the aims of the research.

After extended discussions, images from the research project that had a social context of the ‘everyday’ were selected by myself, influenced by the sense of reciprocal trust that had developed with the subjects. Echoing earlier concerns regarding ‘whose positive’ the negotiations are an example of Hevey’s stance on how this would be benefit institutions rather than disabled people themselves (1992).
The thumbnails opposite are those chosen by participants ‘A’ and ‘B’. A full set of digital contacts were supplied shortly after the studio session with no instructions regarding the criteria for selection in order to maintain a photographer/client relationship.

When asked the reasons for their choices, A’s responses varied including: ‘I just like it’ (128); ‘I like the shots that cut-off my legs’ (182, 201, 218); ‘I always do that with my little finger’ (146); ‘I like [B’s] smile’ (163); and ‘I look better in ordinary clothes sitting down’. ‘A’ discussed her recent wedding photograph standing up with her husband and how much she tried to persuade friends and family that this is what society expects. She liked B’s poses with arms folded although his Mother still didn’t like to see his scars in those images.

Image 230 was a point of dispute in that ‘B’ liked it, but ‘A’ didn’t saying that it is, ‘all arse!’. Both participants liked the fun of the ‘James Bond/Moneypenny’ images and especially the ‘Rock Chick/Biker’ fantasy.

After further discussion, I asked them to choose the best two. Image 91 was chosen because there were no signs of disability, just two young people dressing up. However, the clear favourite was of ‘A’ in what we named the ‘Audrey Hepburn’ pose (246) and in contrast to (91), included the wheelchair, perhaps demonstrating that in this exercise, we see the person first.
Bolton Lads and Girls Club: Early Choices

Matthew Peers 18-20

Games: Sports, Trafford Centre

Early Choices
1. Bolton Lads & Girls Club
2. Arrisons, Play Football
3. Go to the Pub

Gavin Smith 15

I like playing with my mum and daughter. I was a soccer player and leaving in my early years. I like going out and doing things with my family. I like going to the pub and doing things with my mates.

- football
- friend
- gym
- football

Am next to black

- friend
- gym
- friend
- football

Outing

- cinema
- bowling
Bolton Lads and Girls Club: Familiarisation Exercise
Bolton Lads and Girls Club: Editing Sessions

Bolton Lads and Girls Club: Maintaining Interest
Bolton Lads and Girls Club: Group Support
Sample Conference Presentations

February 2011
What is Wrong with Disability Imagery: an un-returnable gaze
The People’s Museum, Manchester, Public Lecture

September 2010
The Client, the Photographer and his Audience(s): interpreting positive constructions of disabled people in photography
Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive Staff Seminar

June 2010
Selective Interpretations of Disability: an extra-diegetic gaze
School of Arts Media and Education Annual Research Conference

January 2010
The Client, the Photographer and his Audience(s): interpreting positive constructions of disabled people in photography
Present Difference: The Cultural Production of Disability, Manchester Metropolitan University (International Conference)

September 2009
The Client, the Photographer and his Audience(s): interpreting positive constructions of disabled people in photography
University of Bolton Research and Innovation Conference

September 2009
Picturing Ordinariness with Disabled People
University of Bolton – Arts and Health Symposium

March 2009
Self, Identity and Otherness
School of Arts Media and Education Annual Research Conference

March 2008
What is Wrong with Disability Imagery?
School of Arts Media and Education Annual Research Conference
University of Bolton Research and Innovation Conference

February 2008
Towards a New Praxis of Social Documentary Photography: what is wrong with disability Imagery?
Cultural Locations of Disability: Situating a Cultural Disability Studies, University of Leeds
Cultural Locations of Disability: 
Situating a Cultural Disability Studies

A One-Day Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Conference 
20 February 2008
Leeds Humanities Research Institute, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT
Towards a new praxis of social documentary photography: what is wrong with disability imagery?

Abstract

This paper aims to explore the perceived problems associated with photographic disability imagery as discussed by commentators such as David Hevey and others who have previously argued that there is an apparent aversion to represent individuals with a disability as empowered; that society continues to hide them away as was the case physically up to the late twentieth century - a form of visual apartheid.

However, individuals with a disability do appear in contemporary photographic genres enabling us to deconstruct the punctum-like effect their images produce in the dialectic (Barthes, 1981). The ensuing shock of seeing Joel-Peter Witkin’s tableaux, Diane Arbus’s ‘Untitled’ series or Nick Knight’s breast cancer images shot within fashion photographic conventions disturbs the ‘studium’ and we are able to engage in a deeper, critical reading.

Collectively, they offer us the opportunity to engage with the dialectic concerning representations of disability in photographic media, suggesting that photographs can only represent disabled individuals as part of a wider narrative account located within a cultural discourse.
Introduction

Reviewing the paucity of relevant literature and bodies of work on the photographic representation of disability, there would appear to be a missing genre, under-represented in contemporary critical discourse. In his 1997 polemical essay ‘The Enfreakment of Photography’, David Hevey too found a disregard of disability in the photographic literature, positing an argument that when photographers have ‘done’ the disabled in the past, they have, and continue to behave oppressively towards the subjects by categorising, controlling and manipulating them within paradigmatic approaches. Commentators such as Jessica Evans argue that by emphasising physical or intellectual deviations, the disabled individual is defined and consequently there ensues an inevitable relationship between the body and a ‘state of mind’ (Evans, 2005). Such images inevitably induce multiple interpretations and gazes (Phillips, 2001) and make false generalisations about disabled people whose status and views are invisible. This is at odds with a representation of the subject as an individual member of society masking those things that we share as commonly held values – independence, choice, rights and inclusion.

Whilst society becomes more accepting of diversity, more enlightened perceptions of disability nevertheless remain at the margins of popular consciousness. Consequently, disability rights campaigners have made case for the re-evaluation of disability imagery in a society pre-occupied with self-image, increasingly interested in makeovers in its unrealistic desire for perfection. It argues that we need to develop a new consciousness that allows us to accept disability, ‘in ways that value individual identity’ (Phillips, 2001:195). But, in attempting to re-image disability, to (re)present disabled people in a non-oppressive manner, Cassandra Phillips warns that we raise critical questions about self and other. She goes on to argue, “As long as persons with disabilities are constructed as helpless and excluded from their own image making, they will continue to struggle with issues surrounding individual identity and self worth” (Phillips, 2001:208).

Whilst disability imagery per se may be subservient to a wider cultural discourse surrounding the conceptualising and subsequent construction of disability, there are resonances with the photographic representation of suffering. Susan Moeller (1999), argues that in our image-driven society we are satiated with graphic images (of conflict and disaster), obsessed with what the media feeds us, but seem to care less and less about the world around us. Reminding us of memorable photographs from Werner Bischof (the Indian famine), Don McCullin (Biafra) and Eugene Smith (Minamata mercury poisoning), Susan Sontag (2003) warns that once we have seen images of suffering, we can’t get enough of them. We become transfixed and anaesthetised she says, but photographs on their own cannot provide an explanation for what is presented, depersonalising our relationship with the world …
Paul Taylor presents a contemporary take on this phenomenon by suggesting that the outcry over the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse pictures provoked such a sense of public unease because the ritualised, pornographic nature of the images resonated with the West’s unhealthy relationship with the mediated image. It exposed the dark side of our image addiction and made us feel queasily uncomfortable. He points us to Baudrillard’s consistent attention to the way the media, excessively explicit, is now de-symbolised. (Taylor, 2007:2-3)

This would explain a paradox situated at the epicentre of the ensuing discourse highlighted by Phillips (2001), who asks us to think why, in the image-saturated contemporary media landscape, is there an absence of disabled subjects marketing consumer goods such as beauty products or cars?

To agree with arguments surrounding the apparent aversion to representing disabled people as empowered individuals, coupled with a noticeable absence from other forms of contemporary photographic culture, leads us to subsequently argue that society continues to hide them away as was the case physically up to the late twentieth century. This is a form of visual apartheid.

However, we should not fall into the trap of ‘missing the point’. Disability images do occasionally appear in the contemporary photographic catalogue enabling us to deconstruct the punctum-like effect their images produce in the dialectic (Barthes, 1980). Collectively, they offer us, through case studies, the opportunity to engage in a wider investigation that explores notions surrounding the construction of disability and its representation, developing the ensuing discourse towards a suggestion that photographs can only represent disabled people as part of a wider narrative account.
The Case of Paul’s Legs

In late 2006 I produced a body of work for Mersey Care NHS Trust exploring the advocacy value of photographs for a young man, Paul, sadly no longer with us, who had multiple physical and learning difficulties. The aim was to explore the effectiveness of image-based mediation in both social and critical medical situations through a photographic ‘Health Action Plan’. To the social documentarian, engaging with notions of representation within photographic culture in this context presents challenges surrounding the veracity of the photographic image and its ability to communicate universal shared meanings. In this case, to act as a ‘voice’ for an individual who was unable to communicate in conventional ways.

(SLIDES: Six Images from the Health Action Plan)

This project has subsequently led to the inception of a further body of work involving a group of individuals with learning difficulties in an attempt to arrive at photographic representations of ‘ordinariness’. What I am presenting here are initial thoughts and ‘work in progress’.

The following photograph, taken in response to a request from Paul’s parents to photograph his scoliotic body, presents a starting point to explore the veracity of the photographic image to provide a stable meaning.

The image, (SLIDE: Terry Speake: Paul’s Legs, 2006) has become the site of multiple gazes, provoking diverging emotional responses from pathos to shock. To help understand why the image of Paul’s legs is subject to concurrent multiple interpretations, we can turn to Roland Barthes’ discursive encounter with photographic theory in Camera Lucida. Barthes distinguishes between two strata when we read a photograph: the ‘studium’ is the cultural knowledge required to be attracted to a photograph, “… the application to a thing, taste for someone, a kind of general enthusiastic commitment”. This, he says, is something we can all agree upon. The ‘punctum’ on the other hand is a secondary element that ‘breaks through’ (disturbs) the studium and enables us to enter into a deeper reading. He says it is, “… that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me).” (Barthes, 1980:26). Whereas the studium relates to a set of cultural codes where we can ultimately arrive at a
signified meaning, the punctum is to the individual viewer, without explanation.

In order to explore the multiple readings this image produces, we must first disbelieve any notion that objects are neutral in front of the camera. Graham Clarke reminds us that the photographer’s choice of camera-angle, lighting and framing is subjective and therefore ambiguous suggesting that we need to read photographs as …

… the site of a series of simultaneous complexities and ambiguities, in which is situated not so much a mirror of the world as our way with that world … (Clarke, 1977:28-29)

John Tagg warns us that, “The indexical nature of the photograph - the causative link between (the) pre-photographic referent and the sign” is highly complex and irreversible and, “can guarantee nothing at the level of meaning.” (Tagg, 1988:3)

This counters a positivist view of photography (in this case within the framework of a health care investigation) as being inherently ‘truthful’ about what is presented. John Berger likens this to viewing an X-ray image, which he says can tell the “‘utter truth’ about whether the bones are broken or not,” but not, “the ‘utter truth’ about man’s experience of hunger, or for that matter, his experience of a feast.” (Berger, 1982:98)

The image of Paul’s legs is powerful in its capacity to provoke an emotional response, but weak in its ability to provide a narrative account. Roland Barthes’ assertion that photographs are essentially tautological (Barthes, 1980:5) in that they, “… belong to that class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot be separated without destroying them both.” (Barthes, 1980:6), enables us to engage with the argument that the photographic representation of individuals with a disability suffers from an irreconcilable tension between the ‘studium’ and the ‘punctum’; that photographs of disabled subjects are marginalised by society’s current appetite for ever-increasing levels of visual stimulation consumed from other media forms such as advertising, news coverage and television reality programmes. Therefore, images of disability will struggle to represent individuals with a disability as empowered members of society because in isolation they cannot be separated from references to societal constructions of ‘otherness’.
**Contemporary practitioners**

The work of photographers such as Diane Arbus and Joel Peter Witkin have attracted considerable controversy, but others have looked empathetically on their subjects, telling their stories through portraiture, documentary, or in the case of Nick Knight, mainstream fashion photography.

**Diane Arbus**

Towards the latter part of her life, shortly before committing suicide in 1971, Diane Arbus photographed patients (‘Untitled’ 1970-71) in a mental institution whom she called ‘retardees’ to add to her inventory of the dispossessed, the socially marginal - giants, dwarves, transvestites etc, that she focussed on throughout her career (Orvell 2003). Sontag (1977) describes her total body of work as consisting of:

… assorted monsters and borderline cases – most of them ugly, wearing grotesque and unflattering clothing; in dismal or barren surroundings … Arbus’s work does not invite the viewers to identify with the pariahs and miserable looking people she photographed … she seems to have enrolled in one of art photography’s most vigorous enterprises – concentrating on victims, on the unfortunate – but without the compassionate purpose that such a project is expected to serve. (Sontag, 1977, p 32)

Born into a privileged New York family, she is often accused of exploiting her subjects but opinions are divided on whether she was fundamentally empathetic. Geoff Dyer compares her ‘stark frontality and frankness in her method’ with Paul Stand and Walker Evans ‘surreptitious strategies’ (Dyer, 2005:42) implying a degree of honesty in her interventions.

Miles Orvell warns about over-generalising Arbus’s subject matter as an homogeneous group of ‘freaks’ claiming that she did in fact show empathy to the unfortunate, the socially marginal. It was those who thought of themselves as beautiful or important that she had little sympathy with (Orvell, 2003, p 125).
Her photograph of three Down’s Syndrome people (SLIDE: Diane Arbus: Untitled 6, 1970-71), presents a number of challenges in understanding what she was trying to achieve and whether the view that Arbus oppressed her subjects is supported. At a first level of iconic analysis, we have some clues as to the situation. The three figures are presented to the camera, but do not look at the lens. There is a gift and card on the ground by the figure on the right, which suggests a party or cultural event taking place (is she the birthday girl?). She appears to be amused by the one in the middle who is about to perform some sort of physical feat, whilst the left-hand member of the ensemble looks on with uncomfortable intent. So, the photograph could denote three Down’s Syndrome females participating in a party trick.

At second level of analysis we can bring prior knowledge, that they were standing in the grounds of an institution – as Hevey puts it, ‘they are not at home but in a home’. The wide-open space with woodland beyond is void of other people, which connotes isolation or segregation. Therefore we have, in this photograph, a statement about how society dealt with people with learning difficulties in the early 1970s, which is corroborated by historical records and by Arbus’s journals.

Delving further into the analysis, at a third level, we are able to investigate how individuals with a disability are perceived as ‘other’. In order to dissociate and segregate, we identify the ‘other’, selecting, typifying and categorising visual variants. The act of recognition relies upon practices of stereotyping by reducing the complexities of their human condition to a few simple characteristics (Hall, 1997). The image relies upon our ability to recognise the facial characteristics and body language of the subjects as being of the learning disability ‘type’.

Synthesising Saussure’s signifier (the object) and the signified (what it represents) we form a sign - at the first descriptive level, how the image denotes a group of learning disabled individuals paraded, one might say eugenically, for our inspection (Hall, 1997) and then at a wider level how this connotes the language of institutional paternalism at the level of myth (Barthes, 1972).

Burgin (1982) offers a deconstructionist approach, challenging the notion that photographs contain an explicit set of signs and symbols to impart their meaning, but rather that meaning is located within the context of a cultural discourse. He asks us to be wary of the mood or feelings such images impart by understanding that the message(s) rely upon our, “... common knowledge of the typical representation of the prevailing social facts and values.” (Burgin, 1982:41).

Barthes argues that, “… the power of authentication exceeds the power of representation” and whilst the photograph may not be a copy of reality, it nevertheless is, “… an emanation of past reality: a magic, not an art.” (Barthes, 1980:88). However, Tagg (1988) would argue that the meanings in the photograph are governed by its intended use. He opposes Barthes notion of the photograph as a ‘magical emanation’, but as a product of a mechanical device that has been used for a specific purpose, requiring a
history outside the artefact itself, unable to deliver evidence that the object or event actually existed. What we are reading does not lie within the photograph, rather we are tuning into a conversation between the creator of the image and her audience. In the case of ‘Untitled’, we have nothing by way of authentication save for our pre-disposed contemporary cultural values, which make us feel uneasy about what is presented.

**Joel Peter-Witkin**

The nineteenth century photographic archive contains arrays of catalogued portraits that Tagg (1988) describes as *the body isolated* where the subjects provide an *unreturnable gaze*, names and number boards providing their hierarchical status in the scheme of the world. It is therefore significant that people with disabilities, especially those delineated ‘intellectually incapable’, were classified and codified alongside criminals and foreigners. Photography came to establish and delimit the terrain of the ‘other’, to define both the ‘generalised look’ as Allan Sekula puts it – the typology – and the ‘contingent instance’ of defiance and social pathology. (Sekula, 1992:345)

[SLIDE] Joel-Peter Witkin’s spectacular multiple-media tableaux vivants involve body parts from the morgue, dead animals, objects d’art, abled and disabled subjects, the end resulting in images that are often painful to look at (Orvell 2003). He distresses his images with roughened edges, scratches and stains complete the illusion. Missing limbs are the subject here, but Witkin’s study of his anonymous subject, abandoned at birth after her mother attempted to abort her, imposes a contradictory narrative to the nightmare of her story. Witkin places her truncated body in an urn, transforming her into an eighteenth century garden sculpture. Parry asserts that Witkin is celebrating her beauty in this image and that this amounted to, “… the most attention she ever received.” (Parry, 2001:96).

Witkin is a photographer and relies upon the fact that the viewer will be interacting with his images within the context of photographic culture.
People believe in what they see (Strauss, 2003:53). We are drawn into wanting to know more about the subjects. Is she real? How does she live? Can she provide for herself? Is she being exploited?

In resisting being sidetracked into an ethical disposition regarding accusations of exploitation, this example is given to explore the boundaries of the discourse. If, as we have heard, disabled activists are against the oppressive nature of disability imagery then Witkin must serve as an extreme case in their argument.

**Nick Knight**

Knight, Director of the ShowStudio web site, has in the past addressed issues of difference such as size (eg: Ann-Sofie Back) and age in fashion photography. His series of photographs, ‘One in Ten’ [SLIDE] depicts a group of women who have had mastectomies or reconstructive surgery, using the mystery of the veil as an erotic device to represent the subjects as strong, sexual beings.

The veil is used by Knight as a metaphor for the camera, where the woman can see us, but we cannot see her, reversing the power relationship. Malek Alloula suggests that the veil is, “… not only an embarrassing enigma for a photographer, but an outright attack on him.” (cited in Ewing, 1994:249).

Knight says that the breast is almost a secondary feature of his images, although its unsettling nature prompts us to ask what our reaction would be if she hadn’t had surgery. Knight uses the interplay between the literal and metaphorical veil as a ‘mask’ to draw our attention to something that may be spoken about in hushed voices and hidden away. In this instance, we cannot feel uncomfortable about consummating the returnable gaze because the visual effrontery precedes our reaction. The emphasis is on the impenetrability of the subject’s pose.

Knight develops the notion of the gaze and disability in his photographs for Dazed and Confused magazine in 1998.
Mary Price (1994) introduces a sociological perspective through the writings of Erving Goffman, which is useful in interpreting Knight’s methodological approach here [SLIDE]. Goffman describes the female ‘cانتینج pose’ (cited in Price, 1994:13), with her head and eyes lowered compared to ours and we are challenged to stare, not at the missing arm, but how the dress fits perfectly. The pose suggests shyness or modesty, but the classical conditioning that expects symmetry is subverted by the beauty of this Venus de Milo. Her ‘difference’ is subjugated by the codes of the fashion industry with its pre-occupation with unattainable super-beauty, synthetically altered with Photoshop – but not the missing arm. The result is a dichotomy of meaning – the unattainable presented through retouched imagery, which communicates aspirational desire, ruptured by a fascination with the non-traditional ‘other’. This is not an image of disability, but one that invites us into her world.

Richard Avedon

To the contrasting methodological approaches of Knight and Witkin, the former within the conventions of commercial production and the latter as artist, we must add a Richard Avedon’s portrait. The themes of the un-returnable gaze and missing limbs continue in his ‘In The American West’ body of work. [SLIDE] The North Dakota dryland farmer inhabits Avedon’s signature white background. His technique, which involved bathing his subjects in diffused, featureless light, either outside in the sun or simulated in the studio, creates an uneasy isolation from reality (Morris, 2002).

Richard Avedon. Alfred Lester, dryland farmer, In the American West (1982)

Avedon makes no attempt to attenuate the effects of ageing and unlike
the Knight photograph, the clothes do not fit here. We are not sure how, with one arm, he carries out his work, but the well-worn shirt cuff and gnarled hand is the punctum. Whilst we contemplate the harshness of his existence, he stares at us. We get the sense that he has walked in front of the camera from the field and in an instant, when Avedon has his shot, he will be back, toiling away with his one arm. We read beyond what is presented and engage with the stark realities of his life. His disability defines him as someone just getting on with it …

What is wrong with disability imagery?
A consistent theme in this short discourse and potentially constraining, depriving us of deeper readings of these representations of disability, is the focus on the single image.

In *Another Way of Telling*, John Berger contemplates the ambiguity of a photograph that arises out of an inherent discontinuity between the taking of the image and the ‘moment of looking’. Without a reading beyond the ‘disconnected instant’, which only words can provide, he says, we cannot ascertain certainty (Berger, 1982:89-91).

Clive Scott interprets Berger’s insistence that there can be no meaning without a story by explaining …

… that photography cannot, like language ‘look out of’ its subject, adopt his/her/its perspective; it can only ‘look in’; and that it cannot, like language, ‘look into’ its subject in a penetrative way … unless the photograph is part of a narrative. (Scott, 1999:259)

Here lies a potential clue to the protestations surrounding images of disability. Encapsulated, flattened onto the two-dimensional photographic surface, their stories are silenced either in isolation, or within institutional structures. The tautological nature of photographs means that we cannot separate the laminations between the image as signifier and its referent, in this case the representation of ‘otherness’ (Barthes, 1980:6), so it would appear that the representation of people with a disability is fraught
In agreeing with Hevey and others that disabled people are almost entirely absent from mainstream photographic genres, their discourses provide possible causes, but offer no alternative strategies. Hevey has attempted to devise a ‘post-tragedy’ form of disability representation where he redresses the ‘victim’ approach. He works with his disabled subjects to articulate internalised negativity and explore societal stereotyping, but it is not based on a premise of ‘positive’ representation, rather a revisualising of the signs of the ‘flaw’ involving both subjective and objective namings of the disability (Hevey, 1992). Hevey’s polemical stance is, according to Tom Shakespeare, unashamedly functionalist but in calling for photographers to represent the social oppression of disabled people (Shakespeare, 1993:98), he fails to consummate his argument by offering a convincing blueprint for radically new photographic practices.

Conclusion
We have looked at a small number of practitioners working in photographic genres such as art, fashion and portraiture photography and how representations of disability appear incomplete. We will now return to the underlying theme within context in which the focus for this brief enquiry is located, that of social documentary photography. It is here that Snyder and Mitchell’s call to consider disability in its cultural contexts, advocating, ‘a more complex understanding of disability experience’ may inspire the formulation of new perspectives.

The photographic project, ‘Getting On With It’, is an attempt at the construction of ‘ordinariness’, and the ability of the photographic image to act as a conduit to wider narratives.

I must emphasise that what I am presenting in this paper is ‘work in progress’. The pilot phase of the research has consisted of a series of photo stories of eight participants living in the community. The collaborative process provided a vehicle for the subjects to tell their own stories. Whilst emotionally straining in parts, it nevertheless lets us into their lives and provides a conduit for communicating their stories in ways that have been previously denied. The presentation of these narratives, both visually and textually is an attempt to not only add to the taxonomy of social documentary, but interfere with the punctum-like effect of displaying ‘otherness’, warts and all. If the limits of this process provides at least, an historical record of a group of individuals with a learning difficulties located at the beginning of the twenty-first century, then as a photographer, I can claim closure. However, this is an exploratory phase of a longitudinal ethnographic study progressing over the next three years, exploring notions of self and identity.

[SLIDES: Images of ‘Getting On With It’]
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Cultural Locations of Disability: Presentation

Towards a New Praxis of Social Documentary Photography:

What is Wrong with Disability Imagery?

Terry Speake BA, BA (Hons) MA ARPS
Diane Arbus
1923 - 1971

Untitled No 6 (1970-71)

Joel-Peter Witkin
1939 -

Abundance (1997)

Nick Knight

One in Ten (2001)

Dazed and Confused No 46 (1998)

Richard Avedon
1923 - 2004
Penny: I have spent a lot of my life in institutions. The boys blew their noses and spit in my food at school. They thought it was funny when I ate it. I was only thirteen when my Dad died. It was a sad time for me. I am always afraid of being alone, but now I live here and I love it. When I came out of hospital the last time, they said I would be back in three months. That was eleven years ago.

Jason: The first time I was ill with schizophrenia was when I was fifteen. I got into trouble with the police. I was a street kid then and people didn’t used to listen to me. All I ask is to be treated with respect. This is a lovely house. It is a private landlord and he is a lovely landlord as well.

Getting On With It
Terry Speake
Keith: Paul is my brother and I help my parents look after him. I work at Church House and the supermarket. I play golf, snooker, go running and horse riding and can give you directions anywhere. I ring the bell at Church and put the numbers out for the hymns. I also go to the local day centre and help with the youth club. My hero is Gerrard at Liverpool FC, my favourite team. One day I want to swim with dolphins.

Andrew: Until I was seventeen I had been in special schools and then, after two years of struggle, I came here. This is my own flat and I have some control over my life at last. I open the door and invite people in, choose what I want to wear, do my housework, and watch Formula One motor racing. I have the whole set of Thunderbirds DVDs. The people round here all say hello when I go shopping or walk Suki in the park.

Gemma: I am deaf. Before I came here to my own flat, I used to have a social worker who couldn’t sign and I got very frustrated because no-one would listen to me. I am learning maths for the first time and would like to be a cook one day. Barbara at Mersey Care helped me become a British Sign Language teacher and I have been teaching the staff at Olive Mount.
Stephen: The most important thing to me is the privacy I have in my own home. I am proud of my own flat. I have epilepsy and have learned how to 'zap' the attacks before I start. I was the highest achiever last year in my college class. I used to have no control over my life, but that is in the past.

Tony: What's the point? Before I lived here, I had been in residential places with no privacy - just a small room and anyone could come in. What's the point if you don't have privacy? When, I misbehaved, they took my TV aerial away - what's the point? All I wanted was a window to look out of so I could see who was knocking at my door. I play football, work at the garden centre and have a girl friend.

Tony: This photograph reminds me of my Mum. I was thinking about my Mum in the picture. She was good to me. She gave me loads of records - loads of them. She used to call me Chicken.
Jason: This picture reminds me of my Dad. It was his favourite picture. He wouldn’t part with it when he was alive. It was taken at the children’s home in Southport. There are good memories from that time. For most of my life I have been pushed aside, but I’ve proved everyone wrong. I’ve got my own life now ...

Paul: The family liked this candid shot because of its spontaneity. It is about the right to family life and that your Mum and Dad know how to look after you. There is no disability in this picture ...
Abstract

In this paper, I aim to explore the construction of ‘positive’ images of disabled people as potentially fictional narratives created and presented within a paradigm of social documentary photographic culture.

A recent commission from The Office for Disability Issues to repopulate their photographic library, requested a move the away from the current focus on specific impairments, towards a social documentary approach, attempting to represent disabled people as multi-dimensional, ordinary members of contemporary society, rather than ‘other’. The veracity of the resulting photographic images to achieve this would require the interpretation of words such as ‘dynamic’, ‘inspiring’ and ‘modern’ to describe the creative approach, subsequently challenging this practitioner’s ability to arrive at a consensus of agreement between client, subject and audience.

The outputs from the commission have provided a cache of valuable evidence for a longitudinal research study exploring the representation of disabled people in photography. The findings so far pose a number of key questions concerning the cultural locations of those who view the images and their subsequent readings (a multitude of gazes). In other words, understanding the boundaries between the photographic cultures of policy-makers, service providers, carers and participants and whether there has been an unequal co-production of knowledge between myself, the visual ethnographer, and the participants involved.
In front of the lens, I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art (Barthes, 1980).

Whilst commentators such as David Hevey (1992, 1997) have explored the representation of disability in photography, critiquing institutions and key practitioners for their oppressive treatment of disabled people, I am presenting today a contemporary case study from this practitioner’s perspective. In part, to temper the polemic by presenting the challenges facing photographers working with disabled subjects.

This case study resides within a longitudinal study investigating the signification of the stigmatised body as represented in mainstream photographic culture and to ask whether there can be commonly accepted representations of disabled people as ordinary members of society. I am developing, in collaboration with disabled people, a new praxis of social documentary photography that challenges current orthodoxies surrounding notions of ‘otherness’.

David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder’s (2006) description of an international disability research industry that has excluded disabled people from participation in, as they put it, ‘the invention of culture itself’ provides a broad context for my paper, which attempts to explore the representation of disabled people within photographic culture, where they find themselves entrapped within photography’s obsession with the ‘other’ (Snyder and Mitchell, 2006:3), but visually absent from the landscape.

[SLIDE] Cassandra Phillips (2001), asks us to think why, in our image-saturated contemporary media landscape, is there an absence of disabled subjects marketing consumer goods such as beauty products or cars (unless a disabled person is extolling the virtues of the latest invalid scooter)?

The commercial landscape is one location, but what is perplexing is the scarcity of disabled people in photographic archives and the wider contemporary photographic landscape. For example, initial archival research at the NCMM (2009 was the 25th anniversary of the miners’ strike), there are no photographs of disabled miners.

Similarly, at the NMM, curators will be hard pressed to retrieve images specifically catalogued under ‘disability’.

On a local level, the Spender Archive at Bolton Museum, one of the most important collections of Mass Observation (Worktown 1937-1938), mirrors the FSA (1935) – Dorothea Lange etc … has no photographs of disabled people – the late 1930s, mill workers, history of malnutrition and child labour in the 19th century?

[SLIDE] Whilst not focused on photography per se, the 2009 case of Cerrie Burnell (which we saw yesterday), a BBC children’s presenter, raises some intriguing questions and highlights a paradox at the centre of this investigation.

[SLIDE] Immediately she appeared on screen, there was a flurry of complaints asking for her to be taken off because her disability might scare children.
Charities and parents came to her defence, but it would appear that initially, images of a disabled person as an ‘ordinary’ member of society were problematic for some because they were defined by references to stereotyped constructions of disability, in this case, the signification of the stigmatised body (Hall, 1997). Perhaps images of this disabled celebrity were marginalised by society’s current appetite for ever-increasing levels of visual stimulation consumed from other media forms such as news coverage and television reality programmes (Taylor, 2007). Cerrie Burnell was in the wrong place – not a contestant in ‘Britain’s Top Model’, nor the subject of a documentary series such as freaky eaters.

Burnell’s case is not isolated. Recently, the ‘visual team’ at Abercrombie and Fitch in Savile Row relegated Riam Dean to the stockroom until the ‘less revealing’ winter uniform arrived (covering up her false arm) before she could enter the store by the front door. Her disability was ‘unsavoury’ they said, but Abercrombie and Fitch lost their case in an employment tribunal (not under the DDA). Riam is quoted as saying their decision caused her to ‘question her worth as a human being’ (Anon, Sunday Times, 2009).

Goffman (1963) reminds us about stigmatising or discrediting people felt not to be ‘ordinary’ where: (SLIDE)

By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances. So we construct a stigma theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents. (Goffman 1963: 15)

Coleman reminds us that stigmas cannot always be altered or hidden (1997) [I will mention ‘invisible disabilities later’], so forms of photographic representation serve to emphasise, put on show, ‘otherness’, further stigmatising those who are disabled.

Goffman calls this the ‘Gestalt of Disability’.
Photographic culture

In attempting to understand the absence of disabled people from the contemporary photographic landscape there lies at the root of this investigation a challenge: if there is indeed a missing genre – photographs of, rather than by disabled people – it implies in itself an ideological viewpoint of ‘otherness’; in other words, a self-reflecting sign (Taylor, 2007).

In pursuit of an answer to this paradox, I have been working collaboratively with disabled people over the last four plus years in my photographic practice, accepting, just over twelve months ago, a major commission from the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) (Department of Work and Pensions) to repopulate their image library. The resulting photographic images were to be the product of a methodological approach involving the interpretation of the ODI’s ‘reportage style’ brief using descriptors such as ‘dynamic’, ‘inspiring’ and ‘modern’, subsequently challenging this practitioner’s desire (indeed ability) to arrive at a consensus between client, subject and audience - an encounter with the multivocality of the photographic image and its ability to achieve commonly accepted meanings. In other words, understanding the boundaries between the photographic cultures of policy-makers, service providers, carers and participants and asking whether there has been an equal co-production of knowledge between myself, the visual ethnographer, the client and the participants involved - a kind of dysfunctional Foucauldian love triangle.

Contextual issues

Photographing a disabled person, because they are disabled and labelling them so, immediately constructs a taxonomy that puts the disability as the default descriptor. It can be argued that this is at odds with how non-disabled members of society would wish to be categorised, and at the same time segregates disabled members.

David Hevey’s argument that by concentrating on photographing the disability, we are turning disabled people into freaks and therefore perpetuating a cycle of segregation is interesting, but not useful in this situation. I am a social documentary photographer interested in people, not disability.

However, in the case of the ODI, which categorises its image library of disabled people into ‘subject matter’ such as, ‘disabled people using public transport’, ‘BAME in restaurant/café’ etc, the subjects are nevertheless sub-classified into an arbitrary and objectifying hierarchy (arbitrary in structuralist terms).

The implication here is an assumption that there is a commonly accepted meaning in a photographic image. Alan Sekula reminds us of the photograph’s imagined ‘primitive core of meaning, devoid of all cultural determination’ (Sekula, 1982: 87), that Roland Barthes (1980) refers to as the denotative function of the photograph (Barthes distinguishes a second level of culturally determined meaning, as the level of connotation). In the real world, Sekula argues that no such separation is possible. Any meaningful encounter with a photograph he says, happens at the level of connotation.

Susan Sontag (2002) argues that photographs are ‘memento mori’. At the moment of recording, we take part in a subject’s mortality and acknowledge the mutability of things.

To information professionals (those who exert control), the ability of the photograph to give information is inestimable she says,
But in the situations most people use photographs, their value as information is of the same order as fiction’ (Sontag, 2002: 22).

If we accept what the camera records, photography implies, ‘that we know about the world’ Sontag goes on to argue that this is, ‘the opposite of understanding, which starts from not accepting the world as it looks. Understanding is based on how something functions, not how it looks’ (Sontag, 2002). (SLIDE)

The omnipresence of photographs has an incalculable effect on our ethical sensibility. By furnishing this already crowded world with a duplicate set of images, photography makes us feel the world is more available that it really is. (Sontag, 2002: 24)

Will the copies become the ‘real’, further marginalising disabled people? (discussion about simulacra)

This prompts us to ask how the ODI images will be read and perhaps more importantly, the nature of the images as an archive (for Government use only). Such a collection of photographs takes its place amongst those archives that have been created since the beginning of photography itself. Fox Talbot recognised the indexical nature of his photographs of his ‘Articles of China’ (1844) that acted as an inventory in case they were stolen, creating a ‘body of possessions’. Nineteenth century photographs of the criminal classes, the unemployed, ‘Jewish types’ and the afflicted defined both the ‘criminal body’ and invented the ‘social body’. However, these photographs were, as Sekula puts it, ‘component not of lexical units, but rather are subject to the circumstantial character of all that is photographable’ (Sekula, 1989).

When we are being photographed, Roland Barthes (1980) considers a photograph to be an object of three practices: the Operator (photographer), the Spectator (ourselves as subject) and the Target (the audience). In the case of the ODI commission, I was confronted with four practices – the client’s world-view (an editorial gaze), my own interpretation (the photographer’s gaze), the assumptions and expectations of the subjects (the extra-diegetic gaze – looking out of the image) and unknown audiences (the unreturnable and intersecting gazes).

Apart from the personal (I am the photographer - a creator of connotative arbitrariness), there are also variable cultural codes involved. [SLIDE, SLIDE]

Child/Asian Lady

Given some of the evidence we have seen so far, answering the brief was going to be problematic, especially trying to arrive at a consensus of meaning between all parties.

[SLIDE] THE BRIEF

To complicate the process of sourcing, recruiting and selecting collaborating subjects, definitions the contestability of the term ‘disability’ raised compliance and ethical issues. An in-depth investigation into the ontology of disability is beyond the scope of this paper but whilst the social model is sometimes contested (Shakespeare, 2002; Goodley, 2007), the approach was nevertheless located within ideological viewpoints adopted by those commentators supporting the social model of disability. The selection of subjects was therefore based on their own adoption of disability, whether visual, invisible or intellectual. Lennard Davis’ mention of the porosity of the normal abnormal space is quite pertinent given that the main constituency was in the Bolton area, a culturally diverse area of the north west where ethnicity, gender and disability criss-cross in complex multicultural patterns.

A key issue concerns the interpretation of the ‘dynamic’, ‘inspiring’, ‘modern’ descriptors, which suggest positive representations. However, initial fieldwork skirmishes put any assumptions about positive interpretations under examination
within political discourses. One advocate accused me (ODI) of being ‘voyeuristic’ and that disabled people do not want to be seen in ‘authentic’ situations … “Are you going to photograph someone trying to get on the last train in the pouring rain!” (I have a problem with the language and the contradictions inherent in the attack). I assume that the ‘voyeur’ label referred to the (imagined) desire of a non-disabled photographer to remain objective and distant when working with disabled people. From a research perspective, this may be a responsible, ethically sound proposition, which implies that the notion of impartial gathering and analysis of data without reference to personal values is contentious. (This issue has been debated in the literature (Oliver, 1997; Barnes, 2001, 2003 – emancipatory research).

[SLIDE: Most organisations did not take this view]

Well, yes actually, as a social documentarian, I am not prone to posing or constructing artifice, but to see and record those things presented to me. In fact, I get close and personal (Robert Capa – if your photographs aren’t good enough, you’re not close enough). Making photographs, the artefacts, is the easy bit.

Nevertheless, guessing that the ODI would reject such images, this made me question the wisdom of accepting the terms of the brief.

Snyder and Mitchell warn us of using terms such as ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ to evaluate a representation of disability in that such descriptors are located culturally and historically: [SLIDE]

The ideological moorings of our own era’s representational strategies can quickly become dated. Representations are inevitably bound to their own historical moment’s shortcomings, idiosyncrasies and obsessions. (Snyder and Mitchell, 2006:201)

An example found in the Daily Herald Archive and the National Media Museum filed under ‘Freaks’ is: [SLIDE]

Frank Hayes, of Battersea, aged thirteen, weighs 16 stone, and is six feet tall. In spite of his size he is a champion runner and swimmer, holds medals in several athletic events and is anchor for his tug-of-war team at Battersea Central School. He also plays cricket and football. They call him ‘Fatty’ at school but he does not allow any cheek. (Daily Herald, n.d., Circa 1950)

We must be wary of judging such photographs and remember, as Victor Burgin (1982) has argued, that we must challenge the notion that photographs contain an explicit set of signs and symbols to impart their meaning, but rather that meaning is located within the context of a cultural discourse. Burgin asks us to be wary of the mood or feelings such images impart by understanding that the message(s) rely upon our, ‘common knowledge of the typical representation of the prevailing social facts and values.’ (Burgin, 1982:41). To understand how this works he says, we must disbelieve any notion that objects are neutral in front of the camera.
Finally, identifying ‘modern’ in a post-modern media landscape of image consumers adept at intertextual readings stretched my imagination. The contract stated:

Most shots will be taken in reportage style. The emphasis is to show people in authentic situations. However, there will be some instances where shots will have to be staged …

I negotiated an alternative approach to the ‘reportage’ style demanded (it was contradictory), embedding the work within a genre of social documentary, suggesting that this aligned with the ODI’s role to pursue the implementation of ‘improving the life chances of disabled people’ by, I argued, involving disabled people in the creation of their own images and having an influence over their subsequent representation in society. The resulting images would aim to contribute to social cohesion by rejecting ‘othering’, both in the attention given to disabled people as ordinary members of society and by distributing representations within styles and genres that are congruent with contemporary image consumption.

Considering the images - each image was a negotiation

Subjects quite rightly stipulated how they wanted to be represented, often as a result of highly personal issues. One subject was keen not to be seen walking because the public might think he is claiming disability benefits illegally. One subject would not be photographed in a hotel because she had never stayed in one etc …

[SLIDE] SHOW EXAMPLES

[SLIDE] What are we looking at?

[SLIDE] Representations

- The object/subject and its representation are linked indexically in a photograph
- There are internal and external narratives (studiums and punctums)
- Materiality: distinguishing between the form of an image and the content of that image
- The photograph in my pocket is not the photograph in your pocket (after Chris Stein/Debby Harry)

[SLIDES – rejections]

[SLIDE – Anisa]

The image of Anisa provides a case example to demonstrate to the potential for irreconcilable tensions between the expectations of three parties.
ODI: this does not fit with policy on independent living - she is being helped

Photographer: the documentary aesthetic (ID card punctum)

Subject: a statement about independence - going to work (the pre-narrative)

The unknown audience: multiple readings - the disjointed image

[SLIDE]

Photography cannot, like language ‘look out of’ its subject, adopt his/her/its perspective; it can only ‘look in’; and that it cannot, like language, ‘look into’ its subject in a penetrative way […] unless the photograph is part of a narrative.

(Scott, 1999:259)

Success/failure

Barthes says that no picture contains information in itself. Or, contradictorily, it contains so much information that a verbal message is needed to fix its meaning.

[SLIDE] Pablo was insulted when one of his images was categorised as ‘A man with learning disability making tea’

[SLIDE] Anisa and Stumpy

Non-fictional narrative development?

[SLIDES] The makeover …

Outcomes

Empowerment

1 The process of photographic practice within a collaborative framework involved the subjects in their own image making (within the confined of the brief), which enabled participants to influence control over their own representations. They formed a strong relationship of trust with myself enrolling in a process, or journey, over the period of the project. This resulted in exposure to new forms of reflective experiences through the processes of image review – a learning experience within photographic culture adding to participants’ life skills.

2 During the time period of the study, the actual processes of involvement have significant experiential value. The photographic sessions as ‘events’, meant that they were being treated as individuals worthy of attention.

3 The final outcomes of the ODI commission empowered the subjects involved by creating a long-term, personal legacy in that their images are being used by government.

BADGE were gushing with compliments because Bolton people featured predominantly in the ODI’s annual report.

The ODI have been delighted with the applications they can put the images to

Bolton Council upset that they couldn’t use the image in their own publications – The Spender archive
References


Barnes, C (2001) 'Emancipatory' Disability Research: project or process? Public Lecture at City Chambers, Glasgow

Barnes, C (1992) *Qualitative Research: valuable or irrelevant?* Disability, Handicap and Society, 7 (2) 115:124


One armed presenter is scaring children

The case of Cerrie Burnell
Please show your support in removing Cerrie Burnell from our television screens.
My son is terrified of this lady. He thinks she is going to chop his arm off and is very afraid of her. We are not narrow minded and have explained why she only has one arm but he does not understand and this is totally understandable as he is only 4.
He refuses to watch his favourite tv shows now and is very upset by this lady.

Negative signs

Riam Dean vs Abercrombie and Fitch

Uncomfortable visibility
Why, in the image-saturated contemporary media landscape, is there an absence of disabled people marketing consumer goods such as beauty products or cars (that is, unless, a disabled person is extolling the virtues of the latest invalid scooter)?


Uncomfortable visibility

In front of the lens, I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art.
(Barthes, 1980:13)


What is Wrong with Disability Imagery?
Towards a new genre of social documentary photography

Present Difference 2013
The Client, the Photographer and his Audience(s):
Interpreting positive constructions of disabled people in photography

Terry Spokes
School of Arts, Media and Education - University of Bolton

Present Difference: Presentation

Difference
2010

The Client, the Photographer and his Audience(s):
Interpreting positive constructions of disabled people in photography

Terry Spokes
School of Arts, Media and Education - University of Bolton

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Uncomfortable visibility
Why, in the image-saturated contemporary media landscape, is there an absence of disabled people marketing consumer goods such as beauty products or cars (that is, unless, a disabled person is extolling the virtues of the latest invalid scooter)?

Illusions of reality

The omnipresence of photographs has an incalculable effect on our ethical sensibility. By furnishing this already crowded world with a duplicate set of images, photography makes us feel the world is more available than it really is. (Sontag, 2002: 24)


Illusions of reality

In the situations most people use photographs, their value as information is of the same order as fiction. (Sontag, 2002: 22)


The stigmatised body

By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his life chances. So we construct a stigma theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents. (Goffman 1963: 15)


Office for Disability Issues Commission

Repopulating the image library

Cultural meaning

The photograph is imagined to have a primitive core of meaning, devoid of all cultural determination. It is this uninvested analogue that Barthes refers to as the denotative function of the photograph. He distinguishes a second level of invested, culturally determined meaning, a level of connotation. In the real world no such separation is possible. Any meaningful encounter with a photograph must necessarily occur at the level of connotation.


Illusions of reality

The correspondence of photographs has an incalculable effect on our ethical sensibility. By furnishing this already crowded world with a duplicate set of images, photography makes us feel the world is more available than it really is.

(Sontag, 2002: 24)
The Brief

Commission to produce 280 images for their online library:
14 categories of 20 images each: older disabled, public transport; BAME in restaurants/private transport; non-independent living; adapted housing; school/college...

To reflect the ethos of the organisation (ODI), the style should be dynamic, inspiring, modern

Most shots will be taken in reportage style. The emphasis is to show people in authentic situations.

Supporting/Facilitating organisations

Bolton Adult Disability Services
The University of Bolton
Bolton Active Disability Group for Everything (BADGE)
The National Media Museum
Asian Elders Initiative
Individuals in the northwest
Historical locations

The ideological moorings of our own era’s representational strategies can easily become dated. Representations are inevitably bound to their own historical moment’s shortcoming, idiosyncrasies and obsessions.


Daily Herald Archive, National Media Museum: ‘Freaks’

The Library Images
A (very) small selection
Places of Interest

What are we looking at?

Intertextual readings

Representations

The object/subject and its representation are linked indexically in a photograph.

There are internal and external narratives (<headline and punctum>

Meant to distinguish between the form of an image and the content of that image.

The photograph in my pocket is not the photograph in your pocket.

(after Chris Ware/Debby Harry)

Assistance Dogs

Places of Interest
Photography cannot, like language "look out of" its subject, adopt its/his/her/its perspectives; it can only "look in"; and that it cannot, like language, "look into" its subject in a penetrative way... unless the photograph is part of a narrative.

Scott, C (1999) The Spoken Image
London: Reaktion Books

A man with a learning disability making tea

Anisa & Stumpy

Subjective trust (self-presentation to the photographer's/camera's gaze) beyond the moment of taking an image to its content and audiencing (Pink, 2007)

Power relations between the ethnographer, the photographic subjects, gatekeepers, institutions etc - the potential for the unequal co-production of knowledge

Negotiating the boundary between ethnographic and fictional texts (documentary vs fictional narratives) - cultural locations

Representations

- Option does not fit with policy on independent living - she is being helped
- Photographer: the documentary aesthetic (ID card punctum)
- Subject: a statement about independence - going to work (the pre-narrative)
- The unknown audience: multiple readings - the disjointed image

Reflective accounts

Subjective, muttself-presentation to the photographer's/camera's gaze beyond the moment of taking an image to its content and audiencing (Pink, 2007)

Power relations between the ethnographer, the photographic subjects, gatekeepers, institutions etc - the potential for the unequal co-production of knowledge

Negotiating the boundary between ethnographic and fictional texts (documentary vs fictional narratives) - cultural locations
Non-fictional narrative?
Images of Disability: the significance of the obvious

Terry Speake
School of Arts, Media and Education

To investigate claims that photographs of disabled people often fail to represent individuals as empowered members of society because of societal references to stereotyped constructions of 'otherness' defined by negative signs of disability.

To develop a framework (praxis) for social documentary photography focusing on genres and practices associated with the representation of disability.

What is Wrong with Disability Imagery?

Whereas many research projects aim to have impact, this longitudinal study began by influencing government (Office for Disability Issues).

The influencing was based on previous practice and relying on instinct – the avocational role of a photographic practitioner.

The investigation aims to interrogate disability rights polemics by grounding perceived issues in practice and attempting to articulate both the process and outcome.

Impact

Whereas many research projects aim to have impact, this longitudinal study began by influencing government (Office for Disability Issues).

The influencing was based on previous practice and relying on instinct – the avocational role of a photographic practitioner.

The investigation aims to interrogate disability rights polemics by grounding perceived issues in practice and attempting to articulate both the process and outcome.

Re-imaging disability

The disability rights movement makes a case for the re-evaluation of disability in a society preoccupied with self-image and an idealistic desire to reach unattainable perfection.

They argue that we need to develop a new consciousness that allows us to accept disability, in ways that value individual identity (Phillips, 2001).

In the case in question, these arguments are too simplistic and do not, in my view, engage with the strategic status of photography and its obsession with the 'other' (Phillips, 2001).
What is written about a person or an event is frankly an interpretation, as are handmade visual statements, like paintings and drawings. Photographed images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as persons of it. The nature of reality that anyone can capture or create is at stake. (In Plato’s Cave: 4)

Photographs impart knowledge about the world that gives power to the viewer, but having that power over something is the first step from being estranged from it [La Grange, A (2005) Basic Critical Theory for Photographers Oxford: Focal Press: 3]


Despite the best intentions of the disability rights movement, disabled citizens are mostly not seen as ordinary people wanting to live ordinary lives [...]. And it doesn’t end, because such prejudices make it all too easy to create new, malicious stereotypes of disabled people, such as scroungers, fuelling new hatreds against them (see the case of Kevin Davies) (236)

We all grow old and infirm, and die [...]. Disability therefore is part of our human condition and can never be set apart (239)

Barthes asserts that photographs are tautological (Barthes, 1980). In this domain, images of disabled people cannot be delaminated from society’s stereotyped constructions of disability. An argument follows that their images are inevitably subsumed by society’s current appetite for ever-increasing levels of visual stimulation consumed from other media forms such as news, documentaries and reality television (studium of punctums – Taylor, 2001) and as such the subjects are negatively defined by the visual signs of their disabilities (see ‘Embarrassing Bodies’, ‘Born to Be Different’: Channel 4)

Therefore, the photographic representation of disabled people suffers from an irreconcilable tension between the ‘punctum’ and the ‘studium’.
Consistently applied, the social model created entailments which generated problems both on the political and conceptual levels (31). If disabled people share a common experience of oppression, regardless of impairment – just as black people share a common experience of racism, regardless of ethnic origins – then to organize or analyse on the basis of impairments becomes redundant (31). What counts as impairment is a social judgement [...], the meaning of impairment is a cultural issue, related to values and attitudes of the wider society (31).

Re-evaluating the social model of disability

Who qualifies for people? (71)
Physical impairments vs learning disability
Someone with a visual impairment is not disabled on the telephone. Dyslexia is not a problem unless society demands literacy of all its citizens.
dDeaf people – alternative language

Previous projects

Office for Disability Issues (ODI)
Skills Academy for Social Care
Bolton Council

Interrogating the perceived problem

Worked with disabled people for over five years
Left with a number of unanswered questions:
- was there a common reason to participate?
- did the subjects acquiesce (positive or negative impact)?
- was there collaboration?
- was I being manipulated/tactically employed?
- were there shared readings (client, subject, photographer)?
- was I violating the subjects as ‘other’?

Accusations

Photography’s capacity for scouring and exposing identity, the self, appears as it is argued, to render that far away from violent intrusion, and therefore always indebted in the relationship between those who have the power to ‘pick out’ and those who are picked out (88).

But if the photographic document is in a position to violate in the interests of power, this violation is not unidirectionally negative, for violation is always the precursor to the production of knowledge (88) Gravitated in personal experience of antagonistic advocates.
Reflexive accounts

Acquiescence and the extra-diagetic gaze: Subjective trust (self-presentation to the photographer’s/camera’s gaze) beyond the moment of taking an image to its content and audiencing (Pink, 2007)

Who’s positive view? Or, the potential for the unequal co-production of knowledge (power relations between the photographer, the photographic subjects, gatekeepers, institutions etc – Foucault)

The myth of photographic truth: Negotiating the boundary between ethnographic and fictional texts (documentary vs fictional narratives) and their concomitant cultural locations

Reinterpretations of meaning (the archive) – ‘pointing to’ after the image has been taken

Practice-based investigations

The story of Carlene and Simon

The makeover

Ongoing dialogue and interventions with ODI subjects

Working with young people with learning difficulties

The method

Source subjects with little or no political agenda

Hand the decision-making (power) over to the subjects – role reversal

Bring skills (funding, practice, research) to the project

Share and critique collaboratively during production

Confront and manage ethical challenges (consent, culture ...)

Allow the subjects to present the work themselves

Aims

Subjects wanted to have an exhibition

They wanted to show they had everyday lives and not disabled lives

Subjects chose where they wanted to be photographed (what they would be doing)

The whole group supported each photo session

The group chose the final images for the exhibition (25 images printed and framed to gallery standards)

Over sixty parents, carers, friends, guests attended the exhibition opening

Subjects provided ‘closure’ by interpreting their own images to the audience

Bolton Lads and Girls Club

The Independence Group
Challenges
Expectations, understanding
Attention span (boredom)
Group dynamics (falling out)
Health
Dropping in/out (continuity)
Third party interference
"Leading" the group (standing back)

Exhibition opening

Bolton Lads and Girls Club
Exhibition opening

Amy

My coaches remind me of The Three Musketeers

Amy

It's got a computer and shows an interest in your future

Amy's Mum: She's got odd socks on!

Amy
Cassie

It shows me and my friends together

Christopher

Christopher

Terry's Boss!

Haroon

I have some friends who are bouncers – tough!

Matthew
I like it – it’s good!

Two best friends chatting

I love trains and the rush of the wind as they go past

Amir Khan is my hero
Brian
The Army is my world

Peter
My main interest is tattooing and I want to be a tattoo artist

Rachel
I am Miss Confident

Sean
I like skeletons
Steven

Having fun – that’s what I like doing!

William

Mr Smoothy

Problematic images

(but not for the subjects)

In front of the lens, I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art. (13)

Bathes, R (1980)

Camera Lucida

New York: Hill & Wang

When we are being photographed ...

In front of the lens, I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art. (13)

Bathes, R (1980)

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Having fun – that’s what I like doing!
Photography cannot, like language, "look out of" its subject, adopt
its/his/her/its perspective; it can only "look in", and that it cannot, like
language, "look into" its subject in a penetrative way [...] unless
the photograph is part of a narrative. (259)

Scott, C (1999)
The Spoken Image
London: Reaktion Books

Camera Lucida is indeed a swan song for an artefact on the brink of
fundamental change (152)

Fried, M (2009)
Barthes’s Punctum in Photography
Degree Zero ed. Batchen, G,
Massachusettes: MIT Press

Barthes’ swan song

These are personal statements about the aspirations and experiences
that are common to all young people; therefore the "pointing to" (or
variation is reversed or at least mitigated)

By looking for those things that are "pointed out" we are overlooking
the obvious

What they demonstrate is that it is natural to use photographs to
make their presence felt in society as consumers and producers

(Peter [interviewed]: Disabled people with invisible disabilities are
visible – and those with visible disabilities are invisible)

The significance of the obvious

Epilogue

On the opening night, a VIP guest asked me, "These pictures are
wonderful. How did you get them to do that?"

How should you reply?
Photographer References

Diane Arbus
Untitled
(1969 – 1971)
Richard Avedon
In the American West
Alfred Lester, Dryland Farmer
Charbonneau, North Dakota
(17 August 1982)

Richard Avedon
In the American West
Marie Larsen, Patient
State Hospital, Las Vegas
New Mexico
(4 January 1980)

Lori Grinker
Veterans of War
Ha Thi Mach at the Vat Duc
Center for Rehabilitation in Ba Vi, near Hanoi (1989)

Lori Grinker
Veterans of War
Otis and other former child soldiers reenact drills at the
Don Bosco Center for Boys in Monrovia, Liberia
(1996)
Bernard F Stehle
Incurably Romantic
Gina and Earl
(1985)

Joel-Peter Witkin
The Bone House
Abundance, Prague
(1997)

Nick Knight
One in Ten
(2000)
David Hevey
Disability, Sexuality and Personal Relationships, commissioned by the Camerawork Gallery (c 1992)

August Sander
Midgets (1906–1914)

August Sander
Disabled Miner (1927–28)

August Sander
Disabled Ex-Serviceman (1928)
Sample Notebook Entries
30 SEPTEMBER 2008

MICHELLE TEM CONVERSATION

PRESENTED PHD 101 TO FORUM NO ONE KEEN

- QUITE THE OPPOSITE, THOUGHT IT WAS 'IMPERVIOUS'
- TOOK ANY COMMENT ON SUBJECTS OUTSIDE ORBIT DIFFERENT
- I AM USING THE WRONG LANGUAGE - DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY
- SHOULD GO ON A DIVERSITY COURSE
- 'ODI'S POSITIVE' (MATHS) 'WRONG' IN SOME FASHION
- LEARNING DISABILITIES & DIFFICULTIES (CEDD BY LD COMMUNITY)
- HAVE TO CHANGE MY WHOLE APPROACH

ZEENAT JEENA

ASIAN PEOPLE'S DISABILITY ALLIANCE

LOUISE WINN

PENTH parc manufacture

BOLTON 338716

MARY LEMMET

CAL" FAMILY BOLTON

CARLENE & SIMON

BOLTON

BRIAN TITE

INSPIRATIONAL BOOKS

CONSIDER IN OTHERS

WE CAN'T SAY 'DISABLED', I WANT A PHYSICALLY IMPAIRED

SUFFER A WOUND OF CURBING / COMING AROUND

DIS-IDENTIFICATION

PEOPLE ARE 'TOXIC' ON AND AGAIN, IN AND ABOUT

PHD PHASE TWO

14

21 JANUARY 2010

BOLTON LADS & GIRLS CLUB

FIRST MEETING

MET APPROX 12 MEMBERS, CAME TO BE SHOWN OF QUETS AND EXPLAINED REASONS BEHIND THE STUDY: THEORETICAL SUPPORT

A MIXED GROUP WITH SOME COLD ANSWERS, ESPECIALLY WHO WANTED INVESTIGATIVE & ASKED GOOD QUESTIONS

RATHER ACT TO UNDERSTAND DEAFNESS (D) WELL

THOUGHT: SHORT ATTENTION SPANN, SO MUST ORGANISE SHORT PROJECTS WITH OUTCOMES

THIS IS GOING TO BE AMOUNTING AS FAR AS SUSTAINABILITY IS CONCERNED & ALSO BRINGS UP MANY ISSUES SUCH AS EXPLOITATION - ALSO, SEPARATING THE GROUP INTO 'NORMAL' SITUATION
MEETING WITH DAVE SINGLETON & IAN - WED 10TH

IAN & I HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT NEXT YEAR'S FUND-RAISING PROJECT
- A CALENDAR?

HOW DOES THIS FIT INTO PHO?

TO DO:
PRINT, Etc... CAROLE'S FOLLOW-UP
CHATE UP ANN SINCLAIR

COMM: PETER RACE
  - PETER WATKINS
  - JOANNA GIBBONS
  - SUE MCNEIL

EMAIL: IAN COOPER BE-RE-STEADING PHOTOS
KEEP IN TOUCH WITH DAVIES DAVIES

ALL ELEVEN

21 JANUARY, BSC

FIRST REAL SESSION WITH PICTURE TAKING, REMIND GROUP OF LAST WEEK (SOME NEW MEMBERS)
- HANDED-OUT CONSENT FORMS
ASKED EACH ATTENDEE TO HOLD A CARD WITH NAME & ON OTHER SIDE WHO THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE CASSIE A BIT RETICENT & HELD UP A BLANK SHEET
- HARDEN TODE.-UP & PERFORM WELL
- SWANN WHO HAD BEEN A BIT AWKWARD, PUT UP TO CAMERA & UNDERSTOOD HOW TO 'POSE' WITH V. FUNNY VORING!

NEXT TIME: CHOOSE WHERE IN THE ROOM TO HAVE PHOTO TAKEN AND ALSO MAKE A STATEMENT?
SHOW PICTURES (PRINT) & ASK FOR FEEDBACK

THURSDAY 26 JAN 2010
BSC

ARRIVED LATE DUE TO TRAFFIC - SOME NEW GATES

TRIED TO ENJOY GROUP BY PHUMA PHUMA PHUMA & ASKED THEM TO THINK WHERE THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED

SPOKE TO THERESE RE: TAKING GROUP TO SPOT-THOUGH PHUMA TO STAY WHAT THEY WERE THINKING - 2ND LEVEL LEADERSHIP?
- IDENTIFICATION CULTURE?

RAHAR STOPPED ME ON THE WAY OUT WITH PHOTO OF HER & PLACE PHOTO IF I COULD MAKE AN ALBUM OF THEM BOTH

NEXT MEETING IN 2 WKS:
THESE TO GATHER CURRENT PHOTOS & WRITE DOWN WHERE TO TAKE NEXT SHOTS

THURSDAY 11 FEB, BSC

SHOTS AROUND THE CLUB

THESE ORGANISED INDEPENDENT TRAIN AROUND THEM TO SEE WHERE THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED

SUBJECTS WERE DISTRACTED & ACTIVITY LEVELS SO HIGH IT WAS DIFFICULT TO WORK WITH THEM

ALSO, AGENDA SUCH AS WHO WAS FRIENDS WITH WHO OFFERED FASCINATION DIMENSION

A REAL CHALLENGING SITUATION BUT MADE RELATIVE PHOTOGRAPHS
Monday 15 Feb 2010

LEAH, MINDY & BILL 10:30
Catherine & Ann Sinclair
- Presented photo to Catherine
- Said very few visible disabled
  in vicinity.
- Also some disabilities not
directly related to Minerva
- Suctioning issue: ADES & gauze
  in own home
- Home visits considered essential
- Asked to identify 2/3
- AS asked from 2nd P.A. in
  March - N staff number etc.

Thursday 18 Feb 2010

BLGE: took contacts back
to participants & asked them
to choose best shot
- Also used Canon 40D to
  mop-up those not available last
  week (Michael etc.)

Thursday 25 Feb 2010

Title points: Chelsey Bay, participants
back & shot them holding photos
- Recorded way they chose
  the frames - involved whole
  group
- Keen to get on with other
  activities (boxing etc)
- Asked group about next session
  - Exhibition
  - Classy Photographer & 1 شمال
  about exhibition

* Not sure about viability of
  this group - all learning disabled
  will be difficult to engage -
  However, this could be the
  beginning

Peter Rowe, 4 June 2010

Met P.M. & Sunny chat
on 18/6

Peter now not able to make
me get used to it. Am
- Like a far / not tireless

Discussed what have been
looking at & finding (common
pattern)
- P.R. People with invisible
  disabilities are seen as
  'ordinary'. Those with visible
  disabilities are 'invisible'.
Peter liked this & said he
would try & develop the idea
- Has to use a reward to get time
car now
- Happy to be photographed now
- Talked about new thoughts of
  magic - puzzles came to hope
to solve access issues - went
over the road to stress field

Discuss the encounter with
Nicole & how she 'rescued' the
field in Stick'iput
- Peter discussed how one in
  Stick'iput knows, at a really
  level how many disabled people
  there are - they have them
  on who claims benefits -
  this is an underestimate
- Discuss how this is going to
  be important this up & how
  many people never finish their
  jobs
- Call back to arrange another
  photo shoot
June 2010: Writing 101Bat

425

- Showed picture of cutting machine
- Shot of Ronnie in studio

Ronnie Deaity Foreman

- Visited Cut the Park & tried to find pit head marker
  DC said the one we found was far away. Ronnie thought it was more.
- Granddaughter & great-uncle barn exceeded to be held by Ronnie. - Try again.
- Spoked Pigeon with fence. 'Nai' in pillar: suggested it was lost. Yes! but where
  like the photographer. They said it was a plan to go.

Two things to do:
- Print WC
- Write
- More ink
- More notes

[Page 2]

Ideas:

- Shutter by line
- Studio love away

Father & two stuck together
- Don't want to see photos together. Not really
- This due to one's nature of relationship. [Faded]
- Cassie - want to be seen with friends.
- Cheeks & eyebrows at the end.
- Auburn positive exercise

18:1 Many left some of the choices. Be careful!

Thoughts: Sexual function evoked & autism - what did Martin see?