

## DISCRIMINATION

“DISCRIMINATION” – takes a confronting and satirical look at how modern-day media depicts people with disabilities and in doing so, often inadvertently, reinforces limiting preconceptions of the sector by the wider public. It will do this by marrying recent research with the style of Propaganda posters of World War 2, Maoist China, the Cold War etc to explore broad perceptions of people with disabilities as 'victims', 'heroes' and 'villains'.



This will be achieved through defamiliarisation of these notions by using the style and design of Propaganda posters that were widely used in the two World Wars, Maoist China, the Cold War etc.

Current media portrayal tends towards the ‘victim’, ‘hero’ and ‘victim models’ (*“Images and stories in the media can deeply influence public opinion and establish societal norms. Persons with disabilities are seldom covered in the media, and when they are featured, they are often negatively stereotyped and not appropriately represented. It is not uncommon to see persons with disabilities treated as objects of pity, charity or medical treatment that have to overcome a tragic and disabling condition or conversely, presented as superheroes who have accomplished great feats, so as to inspire the non-disabled.” United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*).

Similarly, traditional Propaganda posters reflect these elements – enlistment posters to go fight for the “victims” of war, hero posters (e.g. Workers of China’s Great Leap Forward), and villain posters (“Cold War era ‘reds under the bed’; threat to norms etc).

I propose to use the Propaganda style and these three models to explore contemporary perceptions – disability as “victim” [well-meant but patronising, perception of weakness, needing extra support], “hero” [also well meant but can be patronising, idealises all disabled people as inspirational, hero status often thru conforming to normal society, one-sided portrayal of majority of average disabled person], “villain” [e.g. demonising of those with mental health issues by National Rifle Association in US to justify mass shootings, movie portraits of villains in mental health terms – “The Joker”]

*[continued on page 2]*

Each model will consist of 3 posters, will be designed and produced by myself using Propaganda style, contemporary images and messages in photo collage / print pixelation style, I shall be using original cut out and paste lino graphic techniques for design / typography, combined with PhotoShop where necessary.

Ultimately the proposal is to question mainstream media portrayals and to encourage people – both disabled or not – to look beyond the popular messages and for their own opinions – to be more ‘discriminating’ in their outlook as opposed to ‘discriminatory.’