



Who values disabled dance artists?

InVisible Difference is a 3-year AHRC-funded project examining legal issues surrounding authorship and ownership in dance made and performed by differently-abled artists. It seeks to understand how disability may affect the choreographic process, and how intellectual property law can help or hinder this process.

Research Methods

Documentary Analysis: We have conducted a textual analysis of both regulatory instruments and online dialogues associated with disabled dance with the aim of identify standards and audience understandings and language respectively.

Expert Roundtables: We hosted an expert meeting in June 2013 and a by-invitation expert forum in November 2013 to explore key themes examined by the project.

Micro-Ethnographies: We have conducted field observations with two leading artists differently-abled choreographers/dancers, the purpose of which was to assist our understanding of how the creative process works and where and how the law interacts in that process.

Interviews: We have conducted semi-structured interviews with the three artists to gather data on, inter alia, their perception of ownership and reception of their work.

Findings to date

Many artists, including our participants, are not fully aware of the legal issues surrounding ownership of their work, but they are interested in the application of the law. Intellectual property law does not, sufficiently interact with or reflect the creative process, nor does it recognise how disability might affect the ownership of the finished work. The relationship between the work and the law varies with whether the artist works alone or as part of a wider team.

Where the input of the wider team is not peripheral, existing constructions of ownership are problematic. Public understanding of, and tools for assessing and speaking about, disabled dance are lacking, and are hindered by constructions of the body that are informed in no small part by the medical model.

Website: www.invisibledifference.org

Contact details: M.Pavis@exeter.ac.uk



@InVisDiff

InVisible
DIFFERENCE

DANCE – DISABILITY – LAW