

Dr Sharon Lockyer

Stand-up Comedy as Disability Activism? Exploring the Creative Political Possibilities

Dr Sharon Lockyer delivered her talk – Stand-up Comedy as Disability Activism? – as part of Liverpool John Moores University's Liverpool Screen School Research Seminar.

Dr Sharon Lockyer (Brunel University)

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The mainstream live stand-up comedy landscape has been transformed in recent years with an increasing number of disabled comedians performing. Despite this, little research focusses on disabled comedians, their performances and their audiences.

This presentation rectifies the almost total neglect of this topic by critically analysing the new phenomenon of disabled comedians. Comedy is renowned for its ability to challenge and subvert assumptions and prejudices, to push the boundaries of orthodox opinion, and go beyond cultural conventions. Through a series of one-to-one semi-structured interviews with disabled comedians currently performing on the live comedy circuit and stand-up comedy audiences, together with analysis of disabled comedians' performances, the presentation examines the social and political implications of comedy performed by disabled comedians and its potential for producing creative political possibilities for disability activism.

Biography:

Dr Sharon Lockyer is the founding director of the Centre for Comedy Studies Research (CCSR) and a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Communications in the Department of Social and Political Sciences at Brunel University London, UK.

Her research interests include critical comedy studies, identity politics and comic media representations and the sociology of popular culture. She is editor of *Reading Little Britain: Comedy Matters on Contemporary Television* (I.B.Tauris 2010), co-editor of *Beyond a Joke: The Limits*



of Humour (Palgrave Macmillan 2005, 2009), *Controversial Images: Media Representations on the Edge* (Palgrave Macmillan 2013) and *Screening the Undead: Vampires and Zombies in Film and Television* (I.B.Tauris 2014) and has published in a range of academic journals. She is also the founding co-editor of the Palgrave Studies in Comedy book series.