

DECENTERING COLONIALISM AND ABLEISM IN ARTISTIC PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces the work of five young disabled artists, creative workers, and scholars of color, who the authors invited to be on a panel titled *Decentering Colonialism and Ableism in Artistic Practices* at the 3rd International Conference on Disability Studies, Arts, and Education. In this article, we focus on three intersecting and interconnected themes that were discussed during the panel: crip time/wisdom, colonialism, and care. The artists work against colonial knowledge through lived experiences and desires that resist ableist, white, and normative structures. The power of artmaking materializes ideas through their bodies, writings, performances, and images through multiple media and technologies that elucidate the disabled bodymind conditions. The authors acknowledge how differently the pandemic allowed care to be offered for disabled, queer, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), particularly considering how black and brown people often provide the networks of care. We argue that the intersecting themes of crip time, colonialism, and care are significant for human ethical values and social justice.

KEYWORDS

arts, disability, care,
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colonialism, ableism,
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We are moving from a model that gasps at our scars to one that wants to learn as much from them as possible. (Lakshmi Piepzn-Samarasinha, 2018, p. 234)

At the 3rd International Conference on Disability Studies, Arts, and Education, five young disabled artists, creative workers, and scholars of color were invited to present a panel titled *Decentering Colonialism and Ableism in Artistic Practices*. This paper aims to highlight the work of these artists and their experiences of crip time, especially during the pandemic, their heritage of colonialism, and the need for revisiting the notion of care as essential in labor. In the following paragraphs, we describe how these concepts are embodied in the five artists' and cultural workers' practices. Through their work, we argue that the interconnection and complexity of these views reflect the contemporary concerns of our planet, including ethical questions and injustices between people and other beings. These questions are topical for many people and many fields, including arts education.

The artists and cultural workers emphasized crip time as part of their disability politics. Crip time is an important practice and concept that addresses the ultimate question of what makes life livable, affordable, and survivable. As a subtle form of activism, living with crip time challenges normative thinking associated with a market-driven society (McRuer, 2006). Crip time resists "neoliberal capitalism to be the dominant economic and cultural system" (McRuer, 2006, p. 2). On the ground this can mean inconveniences that make disabled people late: the need for more sleep or inaccessible transportation are some of the reasons for a more expansive notion of time (Samuels, 2017) or as Ellen Samuels (2017) notes, it can mean something beautiful and forgiving. Margaret Price (2011) explains that it might mean a more flexible approach to work and life schedules, deadlines, and daily living. According to Alison Kafer (2013), with crip time philosophy, the clock is bent to meet disabled bodyminds¹ rather than bodyminds bending to the clock. Samuels (2017), however, reminds us that although crip time might be a liberatory notion and practice, it is nonetheless an experience of untimely loss and pain long before old age:

For *crip time is broken time*. It requires us to break in our bodies and minds to new rhythms, new patterns of thinking and feeling and moving

through the world. It forces us to take breaks, even when we don't want to, even when we want to keep going, to move ahead. It insists that we listen to our bodyminds so closely, so attentively, in a culture that tells us to divide the two and push the body away from us while also pushing it beyond its limits. Crip time means listening to the broken languages of our bodies, translating them, honoring their words. (para. 11)

Living with crip time is not an easy or neat lifestyle, but rather a complex entanglement of viewpoints. It is sick time all the time for people living with disabilities in a world of 9–5, 40-hour weeks (Samuels, 2017), where workers accumulate sick time by working without breaks with the assumption that taking sick time won't be necessary. This rhythm forces most disabled people who work to live out of sync with the daily working world.

Time, labor, and care—what is considered worthwhile and for what reasons—are rethought in critical disability studies (CDS). The artists and cultural workers discussed in this article are working against ableism, colonial knowledge, neoliberalism, and Western capitalism in which their centralization has been and continues to be insuperable, with impacts on the bodymind and the land. Critical disability studies has only recently widened its view to consider people in the "global south" who have experienced disablement through the dehumanization of their "physical, emotional, psychic, economic and cultural life" (Meekosha, 2011, p. 672). Through theft and degradation, settler colonialism and patriarchy bifurcate the disablement of land with the disablement of Indigenous peoples by separating bodies from space and environment (Jaffee & John 2018), while white abled bodies and minds are upheld as the mark of citizenship (Goodley, 2014). As a result, disabled Indigenous peoples have been examined in recent United Nations forums:

to target increased global efforts for rights realization at the interstice of Indigeneity and disability, specifically by examining impairment created through processes of Indigenous dispossession, discrimination and racism, and developing responsive systems of health and welfare to advance the rights of Indigenous people living with disability. (Soldatic, Melboe, Kermit & Somers, 2018, p. 1451)

Jasbir Puar (2017) defines this chronic and oppressive disablement on a mass scale caused by settler colonialism *debility*, a term that will be discussed later in the article.²

As Tuck and Yang (2014) famously warned, decolonization is neither a metaphor nor a synonym for diversity. Several of the artists and cultural workers of the panel are first-generation United States citizens from colonized countries. Their work explores the connection between disability and colonial/patriarchal notions of time and care and how they are connected to labor. Decolonial ideology and solutions embedded in the disabled artists' creative work are highlighted by the need for affordable access to technology and healthcare and a commitment to care, crip time, and environmental and queer justice. The embodied form of these concepts in artworks signals the continuation of the shift in disability studies toward the body, illness, and impairment as valued or devalued in neoliberal and colonial societies (Mitchell & Snyder, 2018).

THE EMBODIMENT OF CRIP TIME, DECOLONIZATION, AND CARE

The artists and cultural workers who have immigrated, or had immigrated in the past, to the United States share a need to return to their origins which they interrogate in their work. Some panelists identify themselves as urban New Yorkers, which bring questions about ableist spaces, accessibility, and life rhythms that balance crip time with city life. Although each artist works with different conceptual notions and materials, they are entwined by the reclamation of their personhood in a capitalist, colonial system, the protection of the land from unrelenting extraction, and the respect for the intersection of multiple oppressed identities. They also share kinship in the way that the pandemic has played an important role in the development of their artwork over the past two years and the impact it has had on their psyches.

Thus, the lived experience of the panelists—Bani Amor, Pelenakeke Brown, Raisa Kabir, Yo-Yo Lin, and Alex Dolores Salerno³—positioned them to speak passionately and urgently about the interconnection between disability and colonialism. This linkage has only recently been introduced in disability studies and colonial studies (see the recent issue of *DSQ*, Volume 41, No. 4, 2021, editors Block et al.). The terminology

and language of both fields have been misused as pejorative metaphors (Grech, 2015; Jaffe & John, 2008; Tuck & Yang, 2017), and the pandemic is now one of several events that have illuminated these injustices, misrecognitions, and ableism brought to bear on BIPOC. The following sections introduce each artist, their artwork, and the philosophy that drives them to change how disability is perceived through the lens of colonialism. The authors then discuss how the artists' works are connected and engaged in the global concepts mentioned above, especially their attention to care and crip time/wisdom.

Bani Amor identifies as a genderqueer travel writer who explores the relationships between race, place, and power. They describe their life as “slo-mo in a time-lapsed world,” as they and others with disabilities negotiate a world always rushing forward. Amor remains on earth tenuously because their bodymind requires a slower pace. However, since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, they have noticed the rest of the world slowing down while “rest” and “care” have become go-to-words. In their presentation, *Care Matters: Writing in Crip Time + Space*, Amor called this change of life perspective “crip wisdom,” which conceives capitalistic productivity as a white practice. Because of the precarity of living disabled in an ableist world, Amor explains how invention, imagination, and revolution are necessities of survival in an inaccessible society where “[we] don't really have the luxury of expecting anyone to show up for us, that some skills we guarded along the way are both emergent and imagined as a surprise.” Amor continues:

So, what does *rest* even mean for me when lying down is excruciating, when sitting is torture, when standing and walking is often impossible, when my body is wholly opposed to nap, and serious mental illness and pain insomnia keeps sleep out of reach?

Amor questions what rest means in an able-bodied world weary of the pandemic when rest means survival for those who live in crip time permanently. The irony of the recent overlapping of able-bodiedness with disabled bodies is not lost on Amor. The able-bodied world has had to make adjustments, such as working at home with Zoom communication, which was denied to disabled people not too long ago. Suddenly the notion of work has changed in practice and ideology in the Western world. People who

have joined a changed world temporarily are in a cultural time warp, unaware that disabled people, who comprise the largest minority, have always lived in this space.

The notion of time has changed world-wide as workers comply to or resist new constructs. Yet there is a new conversation among academics, artists, and educators about the stress of “able-culture” and the need to protect the mind and body from overwork that has mostly gone unquestioned (Bolt, 2015; Dolmage, 2017; Mingus, 2017; Titchkosky, 2011). For the panelists living in crip-time, the “new normal” was an opportunity to do virtually what they had been unable to do physically. Also not lost on Amor was the omnipresent mourning for gathering in person at the opening of virtual meetings and conferences. For Amor, virtual meetings were not only an opportunity to participate but also a promise for future accessible technology and decentralization of power. Still, Amor is not confident that they are heard or that the lesson has been learned. More recently, several states in the United States have returned to a resistance to teaching online during the so-called post-pandemic.

Pelenakeke Brown is an interdisciplinary artist, curator, and writer exploring the intersections between disability and Sāmoan cultural concepts using technology, writing, poetry, and performance. In 2016, during her time in New York, Brown turned to her Sāmoan history in New Zealand by requesting her medical files.



Figure 1.
Pelenakeke Brown, Installation, *Excavation: An Archival Project*, Denniston Hill, NY. Photo credit: Vladimir Radojicic.

She received 168 pages of a partial government file and found much more than her own medical history. *Excavation: An Archival Process* (2018) is an installation based on this process of rediscovering her past. In it she lies on the floor of the gallery with a raised fist in the air in front of a wall of medical files and a pile of files laying near her (see figure 1). As a disabled dancer and performer, she inquires how the way she moves destabilizes what is considered dance and movement. “I often think about the slow movement of dance or how you can slow down time, or what is the smallest movement that could also be dance from the floor, mainly just using my arms.” In response to her question, she wondered if typing on the keyboard with one hand might constitute movement. She noticed that many of the symbols on the keyboard are like the traditional female Malu tatau (tattoo), which helped her form a relationship between ancestral knowledge and crip wisdom.

So, I am really interested in how I can see the bar and the keyboard, and how I can look at relationships. In the keyboard that I originally started working on, it had “enter” and “return” on the same key, and for me that expressed a lot of Indigenous concepts.

“Enter” and “return” suggest the Māori notion of time as non-linear in which one walks into time facing backwards. This notion opens multiple meanings about the cycle of entering and returning and approaching and retreating in Indigenous time/space.

While in New York, Brown found personal stories about her mother in New Zealand. It was common government practice in New Zealand and Australia to document the lives of Indigenous peoples as a form of control and surveillance. The shock of learning about her family through these invasive files led her to conceive *Excavation: An Archival Process*. “In my process I am always thinking about relationships, investigating personal relationships, thinking about what is happening on a wider political scale, and thinking about power structures embedded in whatever I am investigating.” The Sāmoan concept of time and space influences how she performs personal history.

Raisa Kabir is an interdisciplinary artist and weaver who utilizes woven text/textiles, sound, video, and performance to materialize concepts concerning the cultural politics of cloth, labor, and



Figure 2. Raisa Kabir, *Installation/Performance, 2017, The Body is a Site of Production: Resist, Resist, Resist, The Tetley Gallery, Leeds, UK*. Image courtesy of the artist.

embodied geographies. She uses ancient loom technology to bind together “bodies of color, gendered bodies, disabled bodies, and migrant bodies” in specific types of labor. Her (un)weaving performances comment on power, production, disability, and the queer brown body as a living archive of collective trauma. In her performances she puts her body alongside cloth in institutional and public spaces to make visible the violence of labor on the marginalized body, the body that is perceived as unproductive. Weaving thus becomes an act of resistance to capitalist production, function, and commerce.

The Body is a Site of Production: Resist, Resist, Resist (figure 2) was a ten-hour performance in Leeds, UK in which Kabir built a loom and wove a structure that unraveled and ruptured. In many of her weavings the threads are intended to loosen from the structure, which then becomes a sculptural object.



Figure 3. Raisa Kabir, 2017, *Performance/Installation, You and I are More Alike*. 56 Artillery Lane-Raven Row, London. Image courtesy of the artist.

So, weaving is like making structures yourself, and I use weaving to resist that idea of reinscribing capitalism into structures, and how we can let loose and let free and resist the idea that things have to be linear and modular.

Kabir calls her non-functional weavings “the politics of refusing,” or a refusal to enter ableist spaces.

In *You and I are More Alike*, Kabir (figure 3) highlights the tension needed to create a loom. The two women of color in the performance can’t see each other so they breathe together, standing for two hours while Kabir wove between them.

The essence of it is that the people can’t see each other, but they can feel each other, to breathe in time in order for that loom to exist... that little tug back that you feel, that heaviness, might be connected to someone else’s experience and how we kind of move through life perhaps not knowing, but feeling, and how that’s in our bodies.

The performance is about care, story, history, geography, bodies as depositories of trauma, and shared ancestors.

Yo-Yo Lin is a Taiwanese American interdisciplinary artist who explores the possibilities of self-knowledge in the context of emerging, embodied technologies. She uses video, animation, live performance, and lush sound design

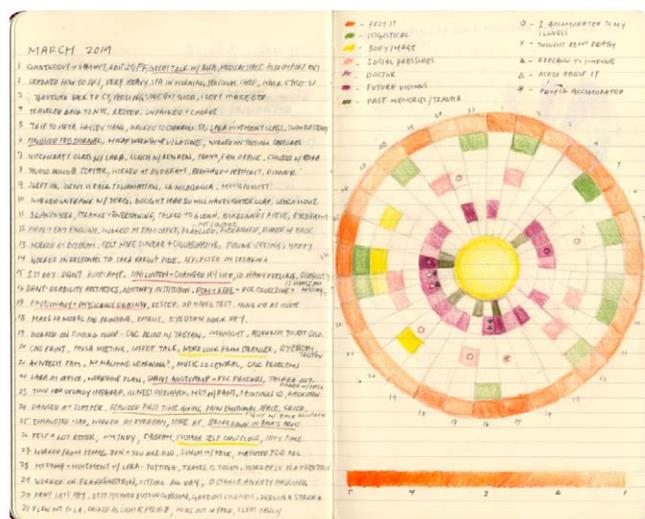


Figure 4. Yo-Yo Lin, 2018, *Resilience Journal*. Image courtesy of the artist.

to create meditative *memoryscapes*. Her recent body of work reveals and re-values the complex realities of living with chronic illness and intergenerational trauma. Lin explores multiple tools that will afford a “deepening of our relationship with ourselves.”

Lin started what she calls *soft data gathering* in 2018 with a journal that tracked seven dimensions of her illness present in daily life. On the right of her journal, in figure 4, she drew a circle with layers of her embodied experience. They represent the levels of intensity of chronic pain, issues such as asking for help, social pressure, the various ways people with disabilities believe they have failed in society, getting and receiving care, and past, present and future traumas.

Lin has been tracking these dimensions during the pandemic in order “to center illness in my own life that was on my own terms.” One of the motivations for this journal was that as a youngster she was taught not to talk about illness. She describes the process of journaling as “holding space” that replaces the medical narrative with her own language and insights. The soft data, which is embodied and often contradictory, is the antidote to hard data that does not represent the highly personal and embodied experience of chronic illness. Lin made her journal available to the public so that others might claim or recontextualize it according to their own experience. It can be downloaded at <https://www.yoyolin.com/shop/resilience-journal-downloadable-pdf>.

Lin has connective tissue disorder which causes creaking in her bones and joints. She uses this sonic aspect of her illness as texture in her audio-visual /sound performances (see figure 5).

I started putting these contact microphones on my body, these are round discs that talk to sound from any resonant body, like guitars, and so I would stick these on my body and move and create these sounds and use my body as an instrument.

Lin reflected on the visibility that performance requires of the disabled body. Rather than becoming more visible, performance allows her body to disappear, to become an instrument, the vehicle of sound and movement.

Alex Dolores Salerno is a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary artist informed by themes of care, interdependency, and queer-crip time, working primarily in sculpture, photography, and video. Using the bed as a site of collectivity and protest, they work to critique standards of productivity, notions of normative embodiment, and the commodification of rest. Salerno is autistic and, as an introduction, they shared with the audience their access needs in a virtual space.

I use stim-toys, and although it might be off-screen I like to show them anyway to normalize behavior that might fall outside of white supremacist constructs of professionalism. So today I’m using an orange and green chain

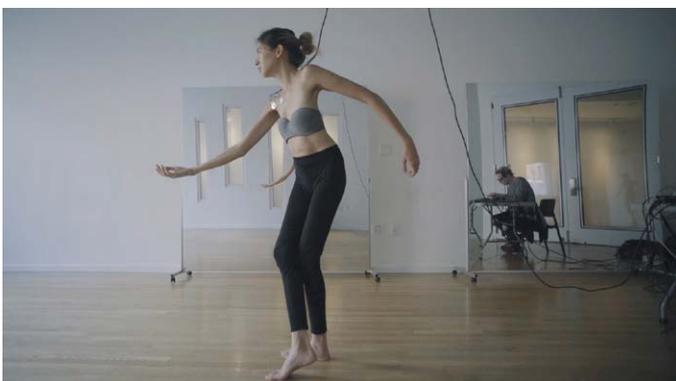


Figure 5.
Yo-Yo Lin, 2019, *The Walls of My Room are Curved*, rehearsal. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure 6.
Alex Dolores Salerno, 2020. *El Dio Acostado (The Sleeping God)*, video still. Image courtesy of the artist.

that's made of flexible interlocking plastic. And I'll also be reading from my notes as this is something I do as part of my access needs.

El Dio Acostado (The Sleeping God) is an 11-minute video⁴ narrated by Salerno's mother in English and Spanish with captions for accessibility. The video opens in Vilcabamba in southern Ecuador with a figure sleeping in a field of grass facing the Mandango mountain, which is said to resemble a sleeping god (or Inca) watching over the town. Salerno's mother told them about the scientists from the United States and Europe who visited Vilcabamba in the 1970s to investigate the high percentage of people living beyond 100 years. The results of these studies were published in *National Geographic*, and Vilcabamba became known as "the valley of longevity," which attracted curious tourists. "When I first visited Vilcabamba several years ago, it was extremely obvious how the valley of longevity has changed the culture and environment of the town and attracted people looking for adventure without integrating with the locals."

Rest is a subject that preoccupies Salerno. They use bedding "such as bed frames, memory foam, and pillowcases, to explore and critique standards of productivity and commodification of rest." Concurrent with the notion of rest is the notion of time, particularly for disabled people whose experience diverges from abled others. Salerno investigates how the mainstream conceptualization of time is a colonial construct in relationship to their Ecuadorian identity. Finding accessible and sustainable work as a person with mental and physical disabilities is prohibitive when "navigating capitalist constructs of time . . . and the ways our bodies and minds might be in conflict with the demand of productivity."

Coffee is a world-wide commodity, one of the most traded throughout the world and, for Salerno, a symbol of work culture. Particularly during the 19th century, Indigenous peoples in the South, immigrants, and enslaved African people were displaced from the land and exploited as the overwhelming economic benefit of coffee production progressed. This colonial agricultural system of cultivating of one crop continues to have destructive effects on the land, such as "erosion, mudslides, disease, deforestation, and increased dependence on fertilizers, chemicals that result in run off in local water."



Figure 7.
Alex Dolores Salerno, 2021. EXTRAHERE.
Image courtesy of the artist.

During the pandemic, Salerno reflected on the new slower pace, and the effect that the pre-pandemic tempo of work had on their bodymind. As a form of meditation and investigation into this slowed-down time/space, Salerno began stringing coffee beans on a continuous thread.

This work began pretty instinctively. It continued to reveal itself to me as it progressed over several months. Bit by bit I put the threaded beans around an industrial spool used for electrical wires.

EXTRAHERE, the title of figure 7, is Latin for to drag out, draw forth, extract, or remove, a metaphor for capitalism's demand to work far more than a body is capable. EXTRAHERE reveals the covert program of capitalist production of coffee, which hides behind the benign trope of "social

currency and work culture hospitality.” Disability aesthetics is embedded in EXTRAHERE in its refusal of urgency, grind culture, and “coffee as fuel for work.” It also has personal meaning for Salerno as a neurodivergent person who struggles with “autistic burn-out.”

A DISCUSSION WITH THE ARTISTS: THE DEBILITATING EFFECTS OF RACISM, COLONIALISM, AND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

Disability is not a fixed state or attribute but exists in relation to assemblages of capacity and debility, modulated across historical time, geopolitical space, institutional mandates, and discursive regimes. (Puar, 2017, p. xiv)

Disability justice emerged through the work of queer feminists and people of color. The term was coined by the original members of Sins Invalid in contrast to overwhelmingly white-dominated, single focused, disability studies (Piepzna-Samarashina, 2018). The single focused issues of disability studies belied the relationship between systems of oppression and exploitation in which “[t]he histories of white supremacy and ableism are inextricably entwined, both forged in the crucible of colonial conquest and capitalist domination” (Sins Invalid, 2019, p. 18). Jasbir Puar’s (2017) distinction between disability and debility clarifies the disparity between identity empowerment of the former and the eroding of a people under colonial rule of the latter. Although disability/debility overlap and coexist, debility affords an overdue disruption of the disability category and the binary of ability and disability. In contrast to disability, debility is central to economies, violence, and exploitation, “those bodies that are sustained in a perpetual state of debilitation precisely through foreclosing the social, cultural, and political translation to disability” (p. xiv). In other words, debility is the result of racial capitalism and colonial imperialism, and rather than existing as an identity, debility lives on a mass scale, or what Puar (2017) calls “a massification” (p. xvii). Debility usually ends in a short life, or “slow death” (Berlant, 2007),⁴ from structural inequality and lack of resources such as clean water, healthy food, safe labor, and health care.

Care work, according to Piepzna-Samarashina (2018), is the point in which “disability justice and queer femme emotional labor intersect” (p.

24). The subject of collective care is a means of survival for BIPOC who are either neglected or abused by the industrial medical complex. In current politics, educators are forming networks of care as university faculty become more exploited and disposable. For the disabled, non-binary, queer, or women of color, teaching in the university is even more precarious. In this special issue, Acevedo, Yoshizaki-Gibbons, Aboustan, and Pearson disclose their lived experiences as disabled female/non-binary educators of color who perform “unpaid, invisible care labor” (p. 27) as a means of surviving in the academy. Following the legacy of bell hooks (2006) and Mia Mingus (2017), they call *accessible kinship* the practice of “forging an ethic of love” (p. 27).

A network of mutual care is primary in the life and work of the five artists and cultural workers. In a few of their emails, automatic messages advise the sender that they are on crip time and therefore might not respond to mainstream expectations. Able-body-minded time is not an option, and thus a network of care keeps them connected and working. At the close of the panel, the artists shared their common experiences of care, crip time, and crip wisdom: how the slowing down of time and spatial distancing during the pandemic afforded them (for most) a better position within the mainstream. Virtual collaborative spaces for Yo-Yo Lin are a means of survival, a respite from the exhaustion of negotiating New York City, “and I don’t realize it until I’m crashing and burning at the end of the day or on the week-end.” Bani Kabir lives in crip time full time “in an enabled space as a construct.” For able-body-minded others joining crip time, the pandemic was a break from life, a time warp, and “a culture shock of what it might be like to really acquiesce to time.” The pandemic was a productive time for Kabir because virtual work means accessible work. In contrast, Pelenakeke Brown’s work was canceled because of the pandemic, so she returned to New Zealand and took a time-intensive job as an artistic director for a dance company. She was injured as a result of working 40 to 60-hour weeks. “As Bani was saying, people were finally coming into crip time, but I somehow was doing this terrible, capitalist thing... the structure wasn’t really changed so I ended up being incredibly burnt out.” Brown continued:

Since then, I haven’t made any new work, and if it weren’t for Yo-Yo, I probably wouldn’t be making any new work because I’m just so

exhausted. And so, I had a different experience because I kind of went into a structure after being kind of an outsider, and I tried to change it, and it just wasn't really a full change.

Brown and Lin started a collaborative movement practice with a group called *Rotations* "that deepens the understanding of disability artistry and access." The group was an artistic and social refuge for disabled movers, dancers, and artists around the world in a collaborative virtual space.

Alex Dolores Salerno's primary purpose is to expose how the precarity and insecurity of work culture performs as a tool of white supremacy, the intentional and overwhelming debilitation caused by global injustice and colonialism (Puar, 2017), and how that impacts their personal and professional life. Historically, the distinction between disabled and non-disabled bodyminds have dramatically shifted as hyper-capitalism and neoliberalism changed the labor market (Puar, 2017), leading to the irreconcilable discrepancies among geographical locations (environmental racism) and social positions.

Salerno reviewed Sin Invalid's (2019) ten principles of disability justice, with attention to "the perspectives of those who are most impacted by the systems we fight against" (p. 23) and a commitment to cross-movement organizing that challenges white disability communities (Sins Invalid, 2019). Since the pandemic, Kabir has witnessed these principles in the decentralization of capital resources, "where people want to co-work, collaboratively work, and so we can really kind of decentralize the resources and share that, because for me as a writer we languish alone." Kabir is mostly in front of the computer in their home office, so the emergence of collaborative, anti-competitive models from BIPOC writing communities have been necessary to avoid the feeling of alienation and, instead, produce for Kabir a mindset of kinship.

CONCLUSION

My goal here is to examine how disability is produced, how certain bodies and populations come into biopolitical being through having greater risk to become disabled than others. (Puar, 2017, p. xix)

The audience of this panel witnessed how artists with strong, lived experiences and desires refuse ableist, white, colonial, and normative structures by using the power of artmaking to materialize ideas through their bodies, writings, performances, images, videos, embodied technologies, sculpture, photography, animation, sound, textiles and other materials and technologies. The art practices elucidated the disabled bodymind conditions of the artists, and the ableist conditions and lack of resources that have circumscribed their lives.

Care and crip time/wisdom were two important discussion points. The panelists made clear that crip wisdom means more than recovering from an accomplishment in their work only to return to capitalist expectations of productivity. Slower pace, as Bani Amor says, means slower labor, slower scholarship, slower higher education. Indigenous non-linearity of time and space, as Pelenakeke Brown described, shares similar features with crip wisdom.

In her journals, Yo-Yo Lin used the word "care" to emphasize the need for interdependency among disabled people of color. But the panelists were also critical of the way "care" becomes a slogan that offers comfort and solutions in the "new normal" of the pandemic world. Care is a complex word, as María Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) writes: "care remains ambivalent in significance and ontology" (p. 1) because it is used in so many ways, for different purposes, from everyday practices to multiple care labor, to being identified as someone who needs to be taken care of. Ideally, care is philosophically and ethically embodied in a person, a community, a network, a system that "watches your back" when you're in need. Bani Amor described how care is a lifetime necessity for disabled people of color disenfranchised from the medical industrial complex. On the other hand, white non-disabled people have the luxury to forget to care, for example, when the pandemic is over. Care inevitably exists asymmetrically, as disabled people of color need to be both care givers and care receivers because they can't trust the healthcare system. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (2018) wondered what it meant to ask for help with autonomy and dignity when it is "so deeply raced and classed and gendered?" (p. 32). Over the past decade, she writes, "Black and brown queer people" have started "networks of care" (p. 32).

It's about our attempts to get what we need to love and live, interdependently, in the world and in our homes, without primarily relying on the state or, often, our biological families—the two sources disabled and sick people have most often been forced to rely on for care, sometimes, well, often, with abuse and lack of control (p. 33).

Words that signify help and healing, such as resting, laying down, taking downtime, napping, and so on, are in danger of becoming ableist language when used as urgent but nevertheless temporary means of comfort, while misrecognizing the life-long needs of disabled bodyminds. Slower pace that enables accessibility is a necessity for survival, not a method of recovery. In Raisa Kabir's work, care is visible in shared stories, histories, geographies, and ancestry embedded in our bodies, often without our conscious awareness.

Indigenous knowing of human connectivity to the cosmos suggests that we live in a non-linear cycle of time as one entity with our more-than-human others. This type of knowledge is clearly not historically appreciated, valued, or even recognized in Western educational models. Pelenakeke Brown's performance and installation defer to crip wisdom, wisdom from the body, necessary for living and building on ancestral knowledge—both embodied and culturally learned traditions.

The artists presented a perspective from the ground regarding the relationship between labor, disability, race, and societal and economic productivity. Interdependency, need of care and nurture have been devalued as signs of inefficiency that leads to the loss of capital and resources, or simply perceived as waste. Jacques Rancière (1989) re-envisioned the relationship between the value of life and labor by deconstructing the traditional categories of worker and thinker. Workers are often represented as a homogeneous group of manual laborers, and thinkers as a bourgeoisie class with time on their hands. Rancière disrupted the binary of the hard-working laborer and the bourgeoisie thinker by envisioning artists as rupturing this artificial boundary. Raisa Kabir's performances demonstrate resistance to the capitalist and commercial ideologies of labor that marginalize unproductive bodies, bodies of color, gendered bodies, disabled bodies, and migrant bodies. Alex Dolores Salernos's methods critique assumed standards of capitalist productivity inherently constructed with normative

and ableist assumptions about the body. By creating collaborative virtual working spaces, the creative movers, dancers, artists and cultural workers of this panel performed real and imagined realms for speculative disability futures.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 We use the terminology *bodymind* to emphasize the inseparability of the two. Mind and body have been separated to ill-effect by the medical industrial complex, and the use of the new term attempts to resist such reductive characterizations of humanity. See Price (2014). The bodymind problem and the possibilities of pain. *Special Issue: New Conversations in Feminist Disability Studies*, 30(1).
- 2 See the exhibition *Air, River, Sea, Soil: A History of an Exploited Land*, at Access in the Making (AIM) Lab at Concordia University. “The stories shown in this exhibition span a rich diversity of everyday experiences to rethink disability and access within the specific histories and localities of the Southwest Asian/North African (S.W.A.N.A.) region” <https://aimlabgallery.accessinthemaking.ca/statement.php>.
- 3 The artists presented in alphabetical order; this article will follow the same format.
- 4 Lauren Berlant (2007) refers to slow death as “the physical wearing out of a population and the deterioration of people in that population that is very nearly a defining condition of their experience and historical existence . . . under the global, national regimes of capitalist structural subordination and governmentality” (p. 754).