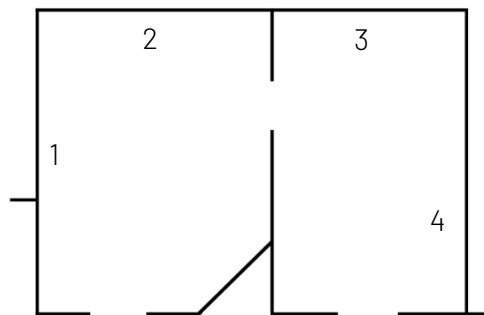


What can you do?

Megan Baker

“What can you do?” is a phrase usually accompanied with a shrug. Disabled people hear this phrase frequently – from apathetic and dismissive doctors, hostile government staff, and casually throughout our ableist society. In this exhibition, artist Megan Baker critiques this attitude through humorous text-based work in clear bold textiles. The no-nonsense attitude of the presented text creates an uncomfortable feeling for the viewer, encouraging reflection of unconscious bias and a shift of the burden of ableism from disabled people. Viewers should ask themselves “What *can* you do?”.

Megan Baker is an interdisciplinary artist based in Boorloo (Perth, Western Australia). Their practice explores identity and experience through video art, performance, textiles, sculpture and beyond. They have exhibited in group and solo exhibitions, prizes, and commissions, and were educated at Curtin University.



- 1 *What I hear (Please suffer quietly you don't contribute to society)*, 2021, recycled & found & gifted fabric, glue, staples. \$27.50
- 2 *What you think (Isn't it great to be a burden on the state)*, 2020, recycled & found & gifted fabric, glue, plastic, felt, staples. \$65
- 3 *What I see (Your worth is up for debate and you're so easy to negate)*, 2022, recycled & found & gifted fabric, glue, acrylic paint, thread. \$22.50
- 4 *What you say (Stop making everything about you being disabled)*, 2022, recycled & found & gifted fabric, glue, wool, plastic, thread, staples. \$65

Goolugatup Heathcote acknowledges the Bibbulmun as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we stand and pays respect to the Whadjuk people, and Elders past, present, future.

The 2 most common ways of defining disability are the social model of disability and the medical model of disability.

The social model of disability says that people are disabled by barriers in society, such as buildings not having a ramp or accessible toilets, or people's attitudes, like assuming people with disability can't do certain things.

Whereas **the medical model of disability** says people are disabled by their impairments or differences, and looks at what is 'wrong' with the person, not what the person needs.

Ableism is the discrimination against disabled people. It can exist on many levels:

- **Institutional:** This form of ableism affects institutions. An example is medical ableism, which is rooted in the idea that disability of any kind is a problem that needs fixing. When this is part of medical teaching and health policy, it affects the entire healthcare system and the well-being of patients.
- **Interpersonal:** This is ableism that takes place in social interactions and relationships. For example, a parent of a child with a disability might try to "cure" the disability rather than accept it.
- **Internal:** Internalized ableism is when a person consciously or unconsciously believes in the harmful messages they hear about disability and applies them to themselves. For example, a person may feel that disability accommodations are a privilege and not a right.

Some ways to begin practicing anti-ableism include:

- learning about disability — what it means and how it affects people
- learning about ableism, ableist stereotypes, and the history of disability rights activism
- listening to people with disabilities share their experiences
- challenging ableism as it happens, for example, by correcting a myth or stopping bullying
- giving people with disabilities a platform, or "passing the mic," instead of speaking for them
- advocating for accessibility and inclusivity