

**INCLUSIVE
FILM -
FINAL
REPORT**

**HIJINX
WITH TRIONGL**

CONTENTS

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a red and white vertically striped long-sleeved shirt, stands in a public restroom. She is looking out a large window with a metal frame. The restroom has white sinks and a white paper towel dispenser. The background is bright and slightly out of focus.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this Seed funding research project into making screen work more inclusive, Hijinx have found that the desire in the screen industries to work more inclusively is very strong, while actual experience of doing so is very limited.

There is a clear market and need for products that will enable organisations, whether production companies, broadcasters or freelance teams, to adapt or enhance their practices to facilitate the inclusion of learning disabled and/or autistic (LD/A) actors.

Having undertaken initial market scoping and from interviews with screen companies, the project found that no such products currently exist. No linked-up or systematic approach is currently used and Hijinx are often held up as the reference point for successful inclusive practice.

Hijinx will therefore use the success of this Seed funding stage to apply for the larger Clwstwr development grant.



ABOUT HIJINX

Hijinx is one of Europe's leading inclusive theatre companies, working specifically with LD/A adults and specialising in collaborative work. Our mission is to improve the representation of LD/A people in the arts and their participation in wider society, through our own work and by encouraging other companies to adopt inclusive practices.

In the past two years we have also moved into screen work, creating short films and collaborations with other screen industry professionals and organisations. The greater reach of the screen industries means we can go even further in this mission, but there are many different potential barriers to inclusive working here compared to theatre. We want to discover ways of learning about, anticipating and overcoming them.

The heart of our work is always our LD/A artists, who constantly challenge perceptions of what theatre and film can be and how they should be made.



ABOUT TRIONGL

Triongl is a TV and Film production company established in 2017 by Nora Ostler Spiteri and Alec Spiteri. Fellow company director Gethin Scourfield joined in 2018 following a year as acting drama commissioning editor for S4C. Their combined credits include Keeping Faith, Hinterland and The Miniaturist.

Their miniseries Pili Pala (Butterfly Breath) premiered on S4C in September 2019 and was launched by All3media International at MIPCOM in Cannes.

Their music series 'Other Voices' (Lleisiau Eraill) produced alongside South Wind Blows in Ireland aired on S4C and RTE in 2020 and the 2021 edition formed part of digital festival Gwyl 2021. Their broad development slate includes several drama series and feature films.

'Where are all the disabled people on screen? We must increase representation or risk reinforcing damaging stereotypes.'

Caroline Casey, The Independent

PROJECT AIMS

There is a real acknowledgement that the screen industries are failing to accurately represent disabled, and especially learning disabled, people, both in terms of numbers on screen and authenticity of portrayal.

The overall aim of Hijinx's R&D project was to create long-lasting change by encouraging the screen industries to work more inclusively.

Building relationships and partnerships, increasing representation and reputation, advocating for change, increasing employment opportunities and developing inclusive practices are all central to reaching this overall aim and objective.

Specifically, the R&D project focused on three areas:

1

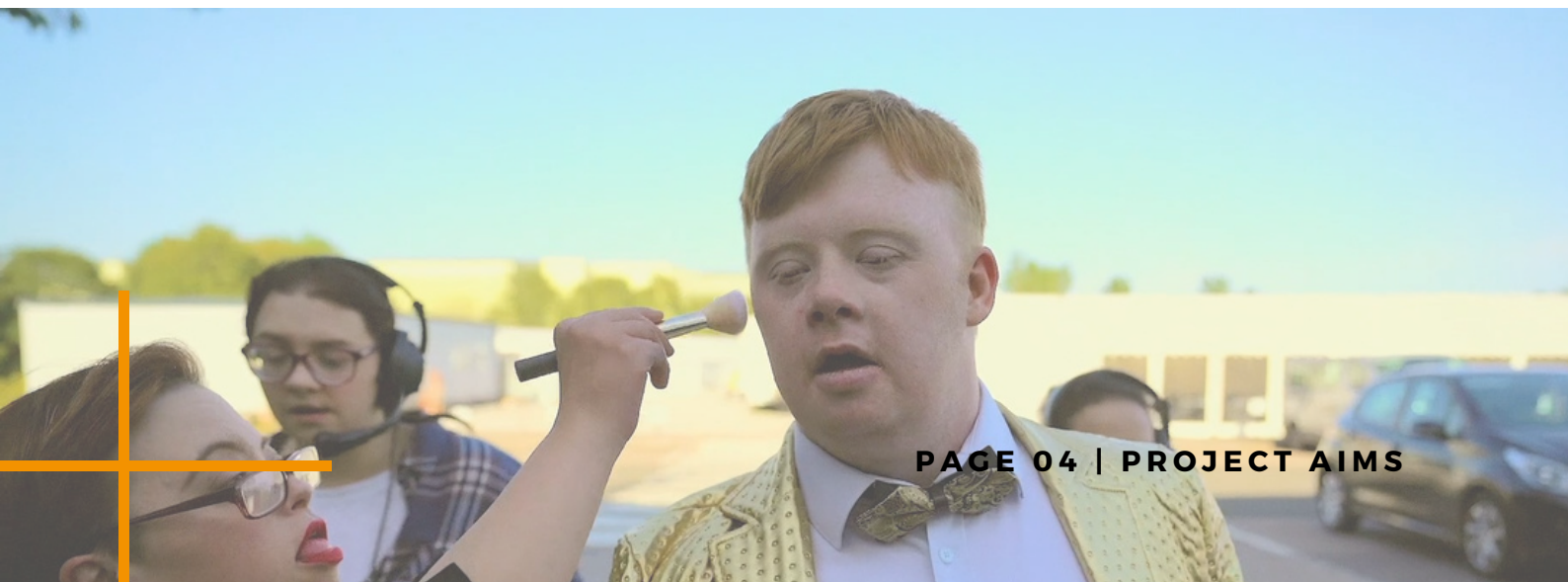
How could screen content be made in an authentically inclusive way for LD/A actors?

2

What new processes might be needed to create inclusive storytelling?

3

How might we create a compelling, financially self-sustaining, format to share our findings with the wider screen industries. To provide maximum impact towards long-lasting inclusive work



THE ORIGINAL PLAN

In the original application to Clwstwr, Hijinx had aimed to do the following:

1

Conduct research via face-to-face meetings, visits to see other companies in action and some desk-based exploration into different approaches to creating inclusive work

2

Gather these findings and apply them to development sessions for the feature project 'Being Normal' (co-production with Triongl, directed by Dylan Wyn Richards). These development sessions would be early-stage test beds for the different methods, including Hijinx's own, to explore how adaptable they might be to screen work

3

Review of these sessions and the different methods; reworking and amalgamating methods for further exploration, feeding back to the organisations already contacted to gain more insight

4

Further development sessions to test out these combined / tweaked methods before compiling final report

IMPACT OF COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic, and particularly its effect on clinically vulnerable people, forced us to change our plans several times in the following ways:

- Planning meetings with Triongl & Dylan Wyn Richards were held entirely over Zoom
- Research was entirely desk or Zoom-based, with no chance to see other companies in action as they developed or worked on their productions, since no productions, development sessions or workshops were going ahead
- The development sessions for Being Normal were transferred to Zoom, rather than a rehearsal room. This, as we discovered, had limited suitability to the development of this particular project (see later), and therefore on how useful this feature project was as a test bed for Clwstwr

We realised through discussions with Clwstwr producers Greg Mothersdale and Ruth McElroy that a third option, of looking at other existing projects as case studies, was the most viable alternative to replace the Being Normal sessions and to complete the Seed funding.

INITIAL RESEARCH & INTERVIEWS

Sita Thomas (Hijinx's Clwstwr Project Researcher) conducted research into the work of numerous established inclusive companies in theatre, television and film production, focusing on their missions, values, ethos and their approach to creating work.

The interviews, with these companies and others, were conducted on Zoom and were recorded for archive purposes. The below are selected summaries - please see Appendix 1 for verbatim transcripts of all the interviews.

Alex Usborne, Film & TV Producer, 104 Films (England)

Partnerships are very important between disabled and non-disabled producers to contribute to a change in the industry. Alex's approach is simple: remove fear of what is unknown to you. Jump in and learn with each other. Processes need to be bespoke: there is no 'one size fits all'. Listen to what is needed and facilitate spaces that are supportive of individual needs. Empower and hand over power.

Gethin Scourfield, Executive Producer, Triongl (Wales)

Gethin was candid about his lack of experience in inclusive casting but voiced an eagerness to learn. Despite his previous misgivings about film making practicalities not being conducive to inclusivity, he understood the need and voiced the desire for change. He was excited to talk through the entirety of the production process and consider at every stage how to build in inclusive practice. He felt that a template for a methodology of working would be a useful starting point. "You fall into an automatic way of making". It's time to break the old habits.

Petal Pilley, Director, Blue Teapot (Ireland)

Petal begins by co-creating and discovering important ideas and themes with LD/A actors. She then introduces a trusted writer and they work collaboratively with the actors to develop the script. The director needs to be a collaborator, too. Once, a director came with a lot of ego and was unflexible in their vision. This did not work. Building trust is key.

Sandra Johansson, Executive Director, Moomsteatern (Sweden)

Sandra brings in a writer who has a strong relationship with the group and the script is constructed with the actors. Experience has proven that it is necessary to create new models of working that are more conducive to excellence. Therefore shifting timings and schedules to suit the actors is fundamental.

Nick Llewellyn, Artistic Director, Access All Areas (England)

The law is the law. Reasonable adjustments are required to be made.

Dismantling the hierarchies of traditional theatre and film-making processes. People need to see themselves reflected. There is a failure in television and film, and this urgently needs to change.

Charli Ward, Academy Director, Mind the Gap (England)

It does not need to be revolutionary shifts in existing dominant approaches, rather a flexibility that encompasses everyone's differences. Support workers with specific skillsets connected to the artform are of great help.

KEY DISCOVERIES FROM INTERVIEWS

- Partnerships are very important. They help creation, professionalism and visibility
- Building trust with the actors is key
- The most effective scripts are constructed with the actors
- Co-creation is essential at every stage of the process, not just at scripting stage
- Traditional models of working aren't suitable; look to create new methods that achieve excellence and break existing habits
- But it doesn't need to be completely revolutionary, and sometimes can just be about flexibility of approach
- Film and TV are currently failing in their duty to be inclusive, and reasonable adjustments are potentially required by law
- Templates for methodologies would be very welcome by those (many) organisations with no experience of inclusive approaches. This would help to diminish fear of the unknown, & around practicalities of working inclusively
- Hijinx are held up as leading the way

This R&D project, and particularly the comments in the research interviews about Hijinx being at the forefront of good practice, prompted us to dig deeper into our own methodology. to question how that might be applied to film, and then how we could start working towards a product. This would form the starting point of our test sessions with Being Normal.

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THE HIJINX METHOD

Our theatre work requires a slow, patient approach. Projects take a minimum of 2 years to develop, but in some cases, processes have started in motion 5-10 years before reaching a stage. Our process allows for ideas to take shape and percolate without pressure, for relationships to form with collaborators over time, and for skills to be learnt by our teams as a project develops.

Our shows are devised because we believe this is the most effective approach to remain true to the adage of “nothing about us without us”. A devising process allows for our artists to be at the heart of the creating and telling of our stories. They are not presented with the script: they create the script. A devising process also allows for our productions to be developed to best suit the people in the room, playing to each individual’s strength.

Key to the success of our productions is that much of our work has already been done before we even start our creative process, through:

- 1 Academy Training:** Everything begins with our Academies. Here, our actors receive ongoing training from highly skilled tutors/practitioners in skills that are necessary in the making of our work (improvisation, ensemble, ability to be self-critical and take direction). When they reach our rehearsal rooms they are prepared and know what is expected of them
- 2 Hijinx Residencies:** We introduced Hijinx Residencies in 2013, a programme of week or two-week intensive training opportunities delivered by some of the most recognisable and respected theatre companies working in the UK

Once a collaborating partner has been identified from our residencies, or from our tutors, that we are interested in exploring a new production with, we use the following process:

- 1 Training:** The Director explores a skillset, methodology or loose concept over a number of months with our Academy actors. During this time we identify individuals from our Academies with an aptitude for the style of production, who then are invited to join us for the next stage
- 2 Working with the Director, R&D week 1:** A group of tutors and Hijinx actors are selected to take part in a week of intensive research. The group is small, usually 7-8 artists. At this time ideas might still be very loose, free enough for directions to change dependent on what the individuals in the room bring
- 3 Writing/Mulling over time:** over a few months, the director will review the videos of improvisations and transcribe those with potential. In the transcription we remain true to speech patterns of the actors so it is designed around the way in which each performer communicates
- 4 R&D week 2 & Scratch Performance:** The same group of artists that were involved in the first stage R&D join again, sometimes with a couple of personnel changes or additions. This week leads to a ticketed public sharing. Robust critique and feedback for the work is essential even at this early stage, and that can only be found by extending beyond our own network
- 5 Scripting:** During this time, usually a couple of months or more, videos are reviewed from stage 2 and the scratch performance. Improvisations are transcribed and edited into what becomes the script. Structure is put in place. The final cast and creative team are decided
- 6 Rehearsals:** We allow for slightly longer rehearsals, eg four weeks plus a production week for a piece that might be 80 minutes. At the beginning of rehearsals, we might not have the full script, but usually have something close. If scenes are missing, they are identified and prioritised to be improvised, and then added to the script. Usually, we have to drill and drill scenes to re-find the spark, and we might encourage a more improvisational approach to some scenes initially. Eventually things start to tighten up and we have a show

These are the practicalities which we have in place and try to adhere to in the making of our theatre, but there are also many more elements that are connected to our general ethos - these can be found in Appendix 3.

After the research stage our aim was to apply the Hijinx method, and others uncovered in the interviews, to the early development of feature film Being Normal.

'BEING NORMAL' DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Following planning meetings with Triongl and Hijinx, director Dylan Wyn Richards began these sessions over Zoom with actors from Hijinx's North Academy and West Academy, supported by Dan McGowan (Hijinx Head of Film).

The first few sessions were about getting to know the actors as individuals – their lives, experiences, thoughts on the world (politics, love, Covid lockdown etc). Dylan and Dan then met to discuss subjects that had struck a chord, and the actors who seemed most attuned to Dylan's broad ideas at this stage. We felt that this best replicated Hijinx's method in a film/Covid-lockdown sense.



This was followed by longer sessions where the actors were put in smaller groups. The dynamics in the different pairs and trios yielded lots of exciting results that Dylan was keen to explore further within his loose story framework. This would have been the ideal place to begin testing some of the Clwstwr research findings.

However, when Dylan began some mild improvisations it quickly became clear that doing so over Zoom would yield very weak results. The lack of physical proximity made any real connections in an acting sense very difficult. We had gone as far as we could with Zoom.

'The Hijinx actors were producing some wonderful ideas but we couldn't apply them practically over Zoom. The feature film isn't supposed to be set over Zoom - we missed all the nuances and character-building. It was a good start but became frustrating for us all.'

Dylan Wyn Richards - director, Being Normal

CASE STUDIES

In late 2020/early 2021, Hijinx were involved in two other projects that were deemed suitable alternatives for use in the Clwstwr Seed project, taking the place of the development sessions for Being Normal. A third project, not linked to Hijinx but which had been in the international spotlight, provided a third case study. These would all be examined to assess different approaches to creating inclusive work and/or representation of LD/A characters.

- 1** 'Music', the feature film by SIA which attracted a lot of controversy for its portrayal of autism and its approach to creating the work
- 2** Hidden/Craith Series 3, in which the production company Severn Screen had been working with Hijinx towards casting a major character from our stable of LD/A actors
- 3** Glitch, a new Hijinx short film developed under Covid-19 lockdown and using a similar approach to Hijinx's theatre work (albeit mainly over Zoom)

CASE STUDY 1 - 'MUSIC'

- **Project Name:** Music
- **Project Type:** Feature film
- **Producers:** Hanway Films, Atlantic Films, Pineapple Lasagne Productions, Landay Entertainment, Crush Films (principle producers SIA and Vincent Landay)

'Music' is a feature film co-written, co-produced and directed by SIA. The eponymous character of the film has autism and is played by Maddie Ziegler, who does not have autism. According to SIA, she had initially tried to make the film with a non-verbal autistic person, but when this actor found the process 'too stressful' SIA turned to her frequent collaborator.

'Music' faced a strong backlash against the casting decision and the portrayal of autism. The backlash intensified when the film itself was released in early 2021.

'Music' was a critical failure, with an overall score of 3.7/10 on review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes. Critics attacked the film primarily for its inauthentic casting and representation of autism.

'a cringe-worthy drama... [that] reduces disability to mannerisms that look indistinguishable from mockery'
The New York Times

'abject stereotypes... [the film manages to] both underestimate autistic people and infantilise them'
Clem Barstow, The Guardian

The debate that was sparked by this film garnered international media attention. Thousands of people tweeted their dismay, anger and frustration concerning the casting choice and representation.

This performance is a caricature of autistic body language. It's unsettling, and insincere. And it is deeply reminiscent of the exaggerated mannerisms non-autistic people often employ when bullying autistic & developmentally disabled people for the ways we move.



The Autisticats
@autisticats 12 Feb 2021

Graeae Theatre
@graeae 20 Nov 2020



Yet again, the matter of authentic representation of disabled characters rears its head. The debate rages on and criticism from disabled artists is sidelined as bitterness, jealousy and uninformed. This is sadly not new, our voices are used to being shouted down.

The Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), The Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint, and CommunicationFIRST all called on SIA to cancel the film due to its apparent restraint advocacy, while the National Autism Society said they were 'concerned by the suggestion that an autistic person wouldn't be able to cope in the role of the autistic lead character'.

KEY DISCOVERIES FROM CASE STUDY 1

- Learning disabled and/or autistic characters should be played by actors who are learning disabled and/or autistic. Not including these actors results reinforces harmful stereotypes
- Assumptions about someone's ability should not be made – treat each person individually
- If your plan isn't working, don't change the person you're working with – change the plan

CASE STUDY 2 - 'HIDDEN/CRAITH'

- **Project Name:** Hidden / Craith
- **Project Type:** Creating and casting the role of 'Glyn' in Series 3 of the critically acclaimed Wales-based crime drama for BBC/S4C
- **Producers:** Hannah Thomas and Ed Talfan - Severn Screen

Severn Screen approached Hijinx as they knew that one of this series leads would be a character with a learning disability and/or autism. They wanted to create and cast the role authentically.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT

There was a story outline set, but they wanted to tailor the role of Glyn to the actor eventually cast. Had Covid not struck, the plan had been to meet a long-list of Hijinx actors across Wales fit the casting. Instead, all sessions were held over Zoom.

In early summer 2020, producers met a long list of actors in smaller groups from their Hijinx Academy. After getting to know them a pared-down list of actors was drawn up, and they were sent two scenes from the script to prepare.

Next the actors were asked to attend in groups of three. Followed by meetings with the writer, Caryl Lewis. Caryl prepared questions for each actor about their lives and story ideas linked to the script wanting to gain more insight and begin tailoring the character.

SHORTLISTING

The long list was whittled down to 12. Over the following weeks Zoom sessions were held, with Hannah Thomas, Ed Talfan, director Chris Forster and lead actors Sian Reese Williams and Sion Alun Davies.

This gave the wider creative team a chance to meet the actors and feed into the process, and expose the actors to more of the people influencing the project.

The dynamic with the neurotypical actor playing Glyn's brother, Sion, would be of great importance, so the producers wanted to cast the two roles simultaneously. For this, they mixed their three shortlisted Sion actors with the final eight Hijinx actors, to see who sparked off whom the best.

'Working with Hijinx made the casting process a dream. We'd definitely do it again - in a heartbeat. Speaking personally, having met so many of the Hijinx actors, I'd be really keen to cast learning disabled and/or autistic people in our other productions - the experience has been illuminating and entirely positive'
Hannah Thomas, producer, Severn Screen

CASTING THE ROLE

The neurotypical actor was chosen swiftly, but the producers were torn between the final two Hijinx actors. With Hijinx's support, Justin Melliush was chosen due to his 'look' onscreen alongside the actor playing Sion, and his track record in terms of stamina and dealing with demanding schedules.

The whole casting process took 6-7 months. Although Covid was partly to blame for this length, the producers were also keen to make the casting process work the best they could.

PRE-PRODUCTION AND FILMING

Prior to filming the producers ensured that Justin had time with the actor playing his brother. He could also visit the set being built in Margam Castle and meet the crew/production team. He was given the script a few weeks ahead of filming to allow time to digest it. Hijinx arranged for a creative enabler to accompany Justin,

helping him to access anything that was confusing, or if he felt stressed / overwhelmed. The producers also emailed the crew ahead of Justin's first day, reminding them he would be there and that at times he might need a little more space and time.



'The auditions for Hidden was mind-blowing... If I talk to [the director and I don't] understand, I will get one of my carers like the Hijinx staff to help me. It's a good thing. It would have been nice to have [the schedule] earlier.'

Justin Melluish, 'Glyn' in Hidden / Craith Series 3

KEY DISCOVERIES FROM CASE STUDY 2

- Commitment to the process from the producers and senior creatives from early stage was essential to process's success and the character's authenticity
- Introductory set visits help LD/A actors know what to expect ahead of filming
- Giving the whole process enough time and not rushing the actors or the casting decisions resulted in a richer experience for all involved and more authenticity
- Hijinx actors sometimes found that auditioning over Zoom brought different types of stress, it is not a substitute for in-person auditions
- Real value in having a creative enabler on set to support LD/A actor (and therefore wider production team) to work as effectively as possible
- Having the schedule in plenty of time, along with the script, is extremely helpful

In November 2020, Hijinx began work on a short film script. The plan was to use the Hijinx method as far as possible and create a film that was 'Covid lockdown-friendly'.

CASE STUDY 3 - 'GLITCH'

- **Project Name:** Glitch
- **Project Type:** Short film created over Zoom using a close approximation of the Hijinx method.
- **Producers:** Hijinx (sponsored by Bad Wolf, supported by Morrisons Foundation, Rayne Foundation, Boom Cymru / Gorilla)

DEVELOPMENT

We chose eight Cardiff-based Hijinx actors to develop the project through a series of Zoom sessions. With the actors, we explored what sort of scary films they liked and why, and what everyone might find scary in real life. The main themes were Covid, life under lockdown and being isolated. Using the actors' real-life experiences as the basis we embarked on several improvisations, which we recorded and watched back between sessions.

From here we followed a condensed version of the Hijinx method: transcribing useful scenes, re-working them, and further improvisations as the story coalesced. The recorded improvisations then provided the backbone of the script, particularly in the more dialogue-heavy scenes. The script was set and the cast chosen from amongst those who had helped develop the project.

As with our theatre work, the actors were involved from the outset; their ideas helped generate all aspects of the story and script; their voices were maintained throughout using the transcribed improvisations; there was time to explore and reflect during the course of the 2.5 months that development sessions were held.

'[The development sessions] were exciting. I found them easy to do because I have a big imagination and creativity. That's the main thing that film making means to me... [Creating a script together] makes it much easier to learn. If the lines aren't mine I get confused.' -

Tom Powell, lead actor on 'Glitch'

THE SHOOT

We deliberately engaged most of the crew from people new to Hijinx but with a few familiar faces to help put the actors at ease. These new faces helped to spread the idea of inclusive practice further and gave our actors more experience of different working styles and approaches.

The shoot was planned so that each day was shorter than the norm in film and TV, but probably a little longer than we would usually advocate for inclusive work; this was mainly due to budget constraints.

'It was fun, Tom was a great collaborator, it was lovely getting the chance to work with him and the Hijinx team... Tom would ask me questions about what I was doing, and it was nice getting the opportunity to explain my thinking, and that he was getting something out of it.'

Ryan Eddleston, Director of Photography on Glitch

KEY DISCOVERIES FROM CASE STUDY 3

- Allowing more time on set is of great value. It allows the LD/A actors a greater chance to shine and not feel rushed and/or exhausted
- Because the story of this film centred around a Zoom call, then Zoom was a suitable (although still not perfect) medium on which to develop the project – unlike 'Being Normal'
- Having a mix of new and familiar people on set was of benefit to the actors – the familiar faces helped them feel at ease, the new faces kept things fresh
- Those crew members new to Hijinx / inclusive working spoke very positively of the experience

"Glitch" shows that transferring our theatre method to a short film, at least, is very doable. But this is partly because we already had funding & support from Morrisons, Rayne and Bad Wolf. The question now is what products can we create to bring this sort of approach to the wider industry and its many strands?

Dan McGowan (director)



OVERALL DISCOVERIES

FROM RESEARCH, INTERVIEWS, 'BEING NORMAL'
& CASE STUDIES

CREATIVE & PRODUCTION

- Stereotyping - stereotypical story arcs and character traits should be avoided
- Casting process - inaccessible processes do not enable people to do their best work
- Filming process - non-inclusive methods lead to unsuccessful working environments
- Language - the importance of using inclusive language, e.g.: "Describing someone as low-functioning and making assumptions about their abilities based on how they communicate is ableist" (Alaina Leary)
- The power of collective advocacy: working together, positive activism to promote social change
- Zoom has limitations for LD/A actors when developing work and/or auditioning, while still being useful in certain ways
- Production companies / broadcasters should not think that by making one project inclusively means they've 'done' it – it needs to be ongoing and across the board

MARKETING & COMMERCIALISATION

There is a severe lack of representation of learning-disabled and autistic people in roles across the television and film industries; not only actors, but also directors, writers, producers, casting directors, crew and production team, indeed all of the roles that contribute to the process.

5.2%

In TV, for example, disabled people as a whole only make up **5.2%** of all on-screen contributions across all genres and programme types, despite comprising **18%** of the population
source: **Diamond XChange - The Fourth Cut.**

Off-screen contributions are only **5.8%** despite disabled people comprising **17%** of the national workforce estimate.

source: **Diamond XChange - The Fourth Cut.**

5.8%

It is worth noting that separate figures for LD/A people do not currently exist.

Diamond XChange is the ongoing monitoring project led by the Creative Diversity Network. All the major UK broadcasters have signed up to it, reporting back annually on thousands of productions across all programme types and genres. Their current drive is to 'double down' on disability, an initiative that all the partners have signed up to (BBC, C4, Sky, Viacom, S4C) in an effort to improve the percentage numbers listed above.

In film, the BFI's Diversity Standards report (published January 2020) states that:


'only 5% of screen workers consider themselves to be D/deaf and/or disabled. Even without research, industry is clear that film is nowhere near representative of the UK population and has a lot of work to do to change this.'

... and goes on to conclude:

'Film must draw on people from every background if it is to tell the widest range of stories and create a rich and representative screen culture. Research demonstrates that employing people from a broader variety of backgrounds boosts business performance.'

The fact that these initiatives, reports, recommendations and organisations exist proves that there is an appetite, and indeed a strong desire and need, to improve levels of representation and the authenticity of the representation.

The market is assuredly there.

A portrait of Jack Thorne, a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a red t-shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

There have been 59 actors who've received Oscar nominations for playing characters with disabilities. Only one was disabled. Imagine how much better those stories would have been if authored by disabled performers. Personally I think it'd have been revolutionary.



Jack Thorne
@jackthorne · 25 Nov 2020

HIJINX'S UNIQUE POSITION

We've already started the work, through this Seed-funded research. Even as it stands, this Clwstwr project has the potential to become a notable milestone in the journey towards authentic inclusion, one that demonstrates the need for alternative approaches to creating screen content - not just within the UK but also internationally.

There is an appetite from people that we have worked with, and others becoming aware of the project, to invest time and resources in this work – there is a huge opportunity for change that needs to be harnessed, and we already have the connections to do so.

Other inclusive organisations don't have a particular set method of approaching their work, and often cite Hijinx as an example that they follow.

'[Hijinx] have such a deep engagement with the process. It is the depth of the engagement with the creative individual which Hijinx do which enables them to kind of structure things in that in that way'.

Alex Usborne, Film & TV Producer, 104 Films



CONCLUSION

This project has already been of huge benefit to Hijinx. At the very least, it has allowed us, and encouraged us, to explore our own practice and examine how and why it works, and to get this approach written down for future use. It has allowed us to reach out to other companies in the screen industries and reconnect with those in theatre/film who work like us and have similar aims.

More significantly, the project has shown the power of Hijinx leading by example and working collaboratively with other partners to share and build skills, experience, and confidence. During our research it quickly became clear that Hijinx is leading the industry towards positive change. Through years of dedicated work, we have unprecedented expertise that is recognised internationally. Interviewees referred to Hijinx's work when thinking about good practices, even deferring their responses to questions to Hijinx

Over the last 12-18 months we have seen a gradual shift towards more diverse roles being cast for productions.

45 actors were submitted for 319 roles in 2020-21, an average of 25.5 a month. 123 auditions came from those submissions, an average of 10 a month and 11 jobs were secured.

This is a substantial increase, and we are encouraged by this shift, even though we know from experience and our research that the processes put in place for auditions and submissions are still not appropriate to enable maximum access for learning disabled artists.

However, it is an additional argument for the continuation of this project, so that when productions **do** cast inclusively, they are equipped to offer positive, creative and fulfilling experiences.

Clwstwr's own recent report '**Driving economic growth through audiovisual activity**' shows that Cardiff, where Hijinx are based, is perfectly placed to act as a catalyst for change across the sector. By focusing this work here, the potential impact for the wider UK sector could be significant.

"Cardiff now has the third largest film and TV cluster in the UK, after London and Manchester. Better still, by many measures South Wales has been the best performing media cluster outside London,"

The investment required to further this work takes time and commitment, with buy-in at all stages and levels of each production. But the benefits of in working in this way go far beyond simply being inclusive:

- The creative work is stronger, stories are bolder and more nuanced
- Production teams are energised, connected and open in completely different ways
- Above all, stories that have for so long been ignored, are given space to flourish

The potential benefits are vast, while the risks of marginalisation and exclusion, should it not proceed, are equally significant and worrying.

NEXT STEPS

This Seed stage was about the creation of work – script, story and character development - and casting.

While it's clear that there is huge value in creating products to assist in the making of inclusive work in just these areas, the screen industries are made up of so many other elements.

Our Seed project has shown that inclusivity is needed at, and is affected by, all stages of production, from script development to shooting to post-production and even the marketing.

The next steps would therefore be to apply to Clwstwr for the main development fund. This would be towards the creation of a suite of commercial products:

- **Bespoke communications training** – for all departments and at all levels, from camera crew to senior producers, line producers to make-up department, production companies and broadcasters. These would provide all members of a production with the confidence to communicate to a high standard with a range of different people, fostering a welcoming and accessible environment for the duration of a production.
- **Consultancy** – Hijinx joins existing productions in a consultancy capacity. This could also include peer mentoring, meetings with Hijinx actors and visits to the development of our productions from a learning point of view. Through this process Hijinx would be able to advise and support productions on changes that can be made to support working more inclusively.
- **Digital guide/toolkit** – a reference kit with practical application, including brief films to illustrate ideas. For large productions this could be used in tandem with bespoke communications training to provide the team with appropriate tools and awareness. More broadly it could become part of the expected training within the industry. Initial training would be supported with specific guides and tools relevant to areas of productions, e.g. how to run inclusive auditions.
- **Advocacy network** - this could include the creation of conferences and information sharing events for producers to come and learn more about how to work inclusively, providing the how to support their expressed commitments to work inclusively. Establishing a peer-to-peer network could provide a safe space to discuss this area of work, sharing best practice. This would be supported by the creation of a dedicated online resource.
- **Creative enablers Agency / Register** - productions companies could book creative enablers through Hijinx to support anyone working with them to access that work effectively. Creative Enablers would be trained by Hijinx and matched to potential jobs. This would provide additional income stream for Hijinx and a valuable resource to the sector.

Each of these potential products would need to be developed, tested, and refined through working with a wider network of partners to be ready to market to industry, in a commercially viable and attractive manner.

The above will form the basis of our application to the next level of Clwstwr funding in May 2021.

Appendix Information

Appendix 1 Sita Thomas's research report

Appendix 2 Interview transcripts with Case Study participants

Appendix 3 Further recommendations on creating inclusive work, following Hijinx's Method

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**HIJINX
INCLUSIVE FILM
CLWSTWR SEED
FUNDED PROJECT
APRIL 2021**