

Access Needs

Thembi Soddell

I have a range of complex physical and mental health issues that can have a significant but fluctuating impact on my daily functioning and ability to participate in events.

This includes multiple chemical sensitivities, meaning many chemicals (including those that occur in nature) at levels that are safe for others can trigger a broad spectrum of symptoms from mild to severe, depending on the day and level of exposure.

Two of particular note are fragrances and moulds. If possible, **please make in person meetings and events fragrance-free** where possible i.e request that attendees do not wear fragrances such as perfumes, colognes, essential oils etc, and **please do not hold them in environments with mould, water damage, or studios where people are using chemicals**. If these are unavoidable, please let me know beforehand. Same goes for exhibition spaces.

Accommodation also needs to be mould and air-freshener free and have windows that open - the more fresh air the better. Heavy pollution from traffic and smoke are also to be avoided where possible.

The fluctuating nature of my conditions make last minute requests problematic. **At least two weeks notice for information requests, deadlines for installs, press info etc** would be appreciated. Specific deadlines are preferred - i.e. a specific date such as May 28 rather than late May or ASAP.

I am also high risk for COVID complications, so **please ensure all people attending in-person meetings/installations wear an N95 or P2 rated mask** and do not attend when unwell. I am also prone to sensory overload, meaning I may only be able to spend limited time around bright lights, loud sounds, crowds and strong smells.

Other things to note:

- **I cannot do heavy lifting**
- **I cannot work long days and need the option of plenty of breaks**
- **On some days I have trouble walking long distances**, other days are fine
- **It can be difficult travel on the same day as work** (meaning accommodation is always appreciated where possible and I'm happy to discuss online or distant delivery options)

I do have some flexibility on all of these issues due to the fluctuating nature of my condition, so always feel free to chat through the options.

Also note that **my pronouns are they/them/theirs** and ensure people working with me know this. This includes using these pronouns and correcting those who get it wrong even when I am not around.

If you would like to learn more about accomodating people with a range of disabilities (including those that are invisible), I also recommend Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's book *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*.

Thank you for your assistance in making your projects and events more accessible for both myself and other.