

NARRATIVES ON ABILITY

Presentation by Gerardine Wurzburg



When:

Thursday, November 7th, 2013
4:00 - 6:00 PM

Where:

Nat Taylor Cinema:
North Ross 102

Gerardine (Gerry) Wurzburg is an Academy Award winning documentary producer with an Honorary Doctorate from Syracuse University. Her most recent feature documentary film *Wretches & Jabberers*, is a global exploration of autism, www.wretchesandjabberers.org, which she researched and filmed in Japan, Finland, Sri Lanka and the United States. She is currently working on a project entitled *Straitjacket*, a research and writing project focused on individuals who have lived in mental institutions and are now living in the community.

At age 8 Larry Bissonette was placed in a mental institution in the United States. With limited speech, he was assumed to be 'mentally retarded'. Thus began 20+ years of confinement with physical and chemical restraints. With deinstitutionalization, Larry returned to his community and began an arduous struggle to prove his competence. Larry is a talented artist, and types to communicate. His insights provide a lens to re-examine attitudes and standards by which people are labeled intellectually disabled. In her lecture, Wurzburg will relate her experience with Larry and other "self-advocates", in Sri Lanka, Japan, Finland and North America, as they challenge our understanding of competence. These men and women are featured in Wurzburg's documentary feature *Wretches & Jabberers*.

Sponsored by Cinema and Media Studies, Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LA&PS), Anthropology Department (LA&PS), Centre for Refugee Studies, York Institute for Health Research, and Critical Disability Studies.