



CHALLENGING WHEELCHAIR STEREOTYPES

Using Art For Activism

Read or listen to the article. Think about what lessons you learn from this story about art and activism.

Sara Hendren is an artist who lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She has been interested in fighting for social justice for people with disabilities for about seven years. Hendren uses her strengths as an artist and designer to fight for causes she believes in.

In 2010, Hendren started thinking about the universal icon for wheelchair accessibility. She noticed that the icon, which can be seen in a number of different places, showed a stereotyped version of people with physical disabilities. The person in the wheelchair icon looks stiff and still, as if he or she doesn't have any power. Hendren wanted to design an icon that showed how someone in a wheelchair could have agency and control. She wanted to show that the person was separate from the chair, and that someone with a physical disability is still active and in charge of his or her own life.

The new design Hendren came up with looked like this: Her goal was to stick with a simple design but give the person in it a bit more power. Hendren turned her design into stickers. She and others in her community started an activist movement to cover up wheelchair icons on local signs with these stickers. What do you think about the message they wanted to communicate? What do you think about their activism?



You can read more about Sara Hendren, see more of her images, and comment on her work at <http://sarahendren.net>.