

## **Doing Dis/Ability and the Embodiment of Artificial Legs – Everyday Life Stories of German Prosthetic Users**

**Conference Theme:** *Bodies, Health and Technology*

**Session 1:** *Intimate Technologies: Embodying Artefacts, Remaking Bodies, Enacting Norms*

### **Abstract:**

At present there is a growing media and academic fascination with users of prosthetic limbs. This is mostly accompanied by vivid debates on the meanings of disability, bodily normality and the role of technology as a human enhancement strategy. Some scholars suggest that the current developments in high-tech prosthetics will blur the boundaries between man and machine. But: To which degree do these (new) images and interpretations – of impaired bodies, disability, technology, and identity – have their basis in the everyday life experience of prosthetic limb users? How do amputees integrate prosthetic limbs into their body image and sense of self? And how does materiality generate meanings of bodily impairment and dis/ability in the lives of prostheses users?

The proposed talk addresses these and other questions. The preliminary findings are part of my current PhD project. Using the example of prosthetic leg users in Germany my (ethnographic) research explores everyday constructions of dis/ability and the interactions between body and technology; what interests me the most is how assistive technology can influence ideas about the body, self and dis/ability. Theoretically, I draw on framework from Disability Studies, Medical Anthropology, and Science and Technology Studies.

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