Down to the Struts

Season 6 Teaser

Host: Qudsiya Naqui

Transcript by Qudsiya Naqui

For more information:[www.downtothestruts.com](http://www.downtothestruts.com)

**[Gentle beats that give a space vibe play underneath the dialogue]**

Bhavna Mehta:

disability could be a form of immigration. And immigration could be a form of disability. when I think about disability as a kind of immigration, I think about how when you acquire a disability, or permanent disability or a chronic illness, or a catastrophic injury, it could be anything, like you travel to another country, you basically are entering a space where you have to learn another language, you have to figure out customs that are, local to that place, you have to navigate certain attitudes and certain rituals that that are completely foreign to you.

Qudsiya Naqui:

Hi, this is Qudsiya Naqui, the creator and host of Down to the Struts, the podcast about disability, design, and intersectionality, where we uncover the building blocks for a more just, inclusive, and accessible world. On February 7, 2023 we launch Season 6, bringing you six new conversations with disabled artists, scholars, and activists. San Diego-based visual artist Bhavna Mehta describes acquiring her disability as journeying to a new country—absorbing a new culture, language, and rituals. Learning how to inhabit the new borders of her body. Like all immigrants, Bhavna found help along the way to acclimate to her new world. In many ways, this podcast has offered me that support as I have navigated disability culture hand-in-hand with each one of my guests. Through their stories, I’ve learned to inhabit my own disabled body with greater confidence and fluency. Often, though, as Mustafa Rfat explains, entrenched ableism can take hold as we navigate new countries in our disabled bodies…

Mustafa Rfat:

if you are a refugee with disabilities, that's a different stories. There is a pause for you where the refugee agency is like, while we are going to help you find a doctor and probably help you apply for SSI. But after that, there is not much things that they can do for you. That's the moment where refugees with disabilities kind of fell in the crack and fell through the crack. And it's, it's almost impossible to leave and continue your journey.

Qudsiya Naqui:

But when we have access to the microphone, when we take up the keyboard, we can change the narrative and draw the borders of our own bodies. Andraea Lavant will tell us how.

Andreae Lavant:

disability is not a monolith. from a storytelling telling perspective, it's not just about it being that we need to see, like, literally see visually, ourselves, but it's the fact that our cultural experiences, that that perspective has impacts how, you know, we experience life, our family's, you know, culture and connection it has to do with, who is representing us how it's being represented, and not just in front of the camera, but who, , is, below the line, who is behind, the camera who is driving these narratives, and that needs to be us. We need to be, you know, the producers, the writers, we need to be the talent manager, and we need to, have places and spaces and all of that to ensure that the storytelling is the most authentic.

Qudsiya Naqui:

These are just some of the ideas that we’ll explore in Season 6. In the meantime, watch your podcast feeds for Episode 1, dropping on February 7. Be sure to subscribe to Down to the Struts on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Sticher, or wherever you love to listen. Join our Facebook group, Down to the Struts Podcast, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram at Down to the Struts. Want to see updates from me and news from the disability community in your inbox every month? Subscribe to our newsletter, Getting Down to It on Substack. I simply cannot wait to get back down to it with you in Season 6!