

## Performing Fat Activism in Australia: An Autoethnographic Exploration

**Authors :** Jenny Lee

**Abstract :** Fat Studies is emerging as an interdisciplinary area of study, intersecting with Gender Studies, Sociology, Human Development and the Creative Arts. A focus on weight loss, and, therefore, fat hatred, has resulted in a form of discriminatory institutional practice that impacts women in the Western world. This focus is sanctioned by a large dieting industry, medical associations, the media, and at times, government initiatives. This paper will discuss the emergence of the so-called 'Obesity Epidemic' in Australia and the Western world and the stereotypes that thin equals healthy and fat equals unhealthy. This paper will argue that, for those with a health focus, 'Health at every size' is a more effective principle, which involves striving for healthy living, without a focus on weight loss. This discussion will contextualise an autoethnographic exploration of how fat acceptance and Health at Every Size can be encouraged through fat activism and fat political art. As part of this paper, a selection of the recent performance, writing and art in Australia will be presented, including Aquaporko, the fat femme synchronised swim team and VaVaBoomBah, the Melbourne fat burlesque performances.

**Keywords :** activism, fat, health, obesity, performance

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