

## **PODIUM 3.6 - 2:15-2:30 [10-min presentation followed by 5-min Q&A]**

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### **Exploring Multiplicity: Multimodal Methods, Lifeworlds & the Limits of Narrative**

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The notion that a biomedical worldview produces a certain kind of “epistemological narrowing” (Squier 2007) is by now commonplace amongst STS scholars. This concern of narrowing is ultimately both epistemic and ontological and motivates what has been called a narrative turn in a range of critical methodologies. But what if a different kind of narrowing likewise occurs within research practices that rely upon verbal speech communication? In this paper, we explore the limits of narrativity, focusing on a three year-long study contrasting historical, biological, and experiential narratives of first episode psychosis. We draw on critical disability studies, feminist STS, and multimodality in ethnography to discuss how complex study themes, marked by contradiction and simultaneity, can be constrained in their explication despite a reflexive, dialogical research frame. We go on to describe a collaborative visual arts-based workshop developed within the project in response to these themes, exploring the ways in which diagnostic practices and therapeutic interventions in the clinic were sociomaterial accomplishments that shaped the lifeworlds of those living with experiences labelled as psychotic. In particular, we discuss how, when experiences of psychosis were unspeakable by way of linear narrative, these experiences were reflected with greater depth and nuance through multimedia and visual art works created within this novel group setting. Multisensory modes of study spoke to partial truths, truths in the telling, and multiplicity in realities—lived experiences that were “uncontainable by words.” We conclude with reflections on these findings for critical qualitative methodologies in medical education research.