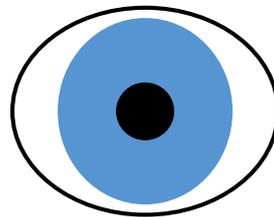


**In Touch
With
Art**



**An International Conference on
Art, Museums and Visual Impairment**

Conference Programme

**Wednesday 28th November and
Thursday 29th November 2007
V&A, London**

**By St Dunstan's, hosted by The V&A,
in partnership with Goldsmiths, University of London**



In Touch With Art aims to empower arts organisations to engage creatively with visually impaired people through the visual arts.

Art can open up rich and rewarding new learning experiences for visually impaired people. We need to find ways to communicate this, and ensure our galleries and museums are welcoming and stimulating places for people who may not view themselves as visitors or participants. Sighted and visually impaired people alike can benefit from the enhanced quality of life, and thinking and learning skills, that art can bring. Taking part in creative activities can improve sensory skills and self-confidence for everyone.

In Touch With Art is the first collaboration between St Dunstan's, The V&A and Goldsmiths, and brings together an international line up of artists, academics and staff from museum and galleries who are leading the field in this area.

Through talks, touch tours and case studies, In Touch With Art will:

- examine models of best practice for the interpretation of visual arts for visually impaired audiences
- investigate ways of teaching art to people with visual impairment
- explore experiences of practising artists with visual impairment
- identify how people with visual impairment can interact with art in gallery and museum environments
- explore the personal, professional, physical and psychological experiences of artists, educators, and visitors with visual impairment

In Touch With Art aims to demystify what visual impairment means and motivate and inspire you to think about different learning styles and ways of seeing. Join us to share knowledge, experience and contacts.

Wednesday 28th November

9.00am – 10.00am

Registration

10.00am – 10.20am

Welcome

Captain Michael Gordon-Lennox,
Chairman, St Dunstan's

Introduction to In Touch With Art

Robert Leader,
Chief Executive, St Dunstan's

Barry Ginley,
Disability and Access Officer, V&A

Professor Linda Pring,
Professor of Psychology, Goldsmiths,
University of London

As an organisation, working with visually impaired ex-service men and women, St Dunstan's is aware of the invaluable benefits that access to the arts can have for those with a visual impairment. In bringing together a wide range of experts from a range of fields we hope the sharing of knowledge and expertise will lead to greater understanding of the needs of those with a visual impairment and so allow for greater access to the arts in the future.

10.20am – 10.35am

In Touch With Art: Opening minds

Caro Howell,
Head of Education and Public Events,
Whitechapel Gallery, London

Caro Howell developed provision for visually impaired people at Tate Modern 1997–2003 including i-Map, an online art resource for blind and partially sighted people. Her work engages with issues of intellectual

access in relation to modern and contemporary art, particularly art which is non-figurative and/or non-narrative.

Exploring the themes and issues of In Touch With Art: what does 'visual impairment' mean? As our population ages, over 20% of people over 60 have a visual impairment – so what are the implications of this for museums and galleries, artists and educators? This conference is the opportunity to explore research, practice and experience of visual impairment and the visual arts.

Engaging audiences with art and ideas is central to the Whitechapel's mission. The gallery's commitment to inclusion embraces physical, attitudinal and intellectual access and within this, the needs of visually impaired people. The Whitechapel is currently undergoing a major expansion and it will reopen in 2009 with improved resources and programmes for disabled and visually impaired visitors.

10.35am – 11.15am

Personal Stories

John Everett,
Teacher, artist and co-author of 'What Colour is the Wind?'

Lynn Cox,
Multi-Media Artist and Disability Equality
Trainer

Sargy Mann,
Artist

John Everett developed the art department at the Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford and now creates multi-media installations.

He talks to two artists who are visually impaired about how their engagement with visual art has affected their lives and how their practice as artists has developed.

11.15am – 11.45am

Refreshments

11.45am – 1.00pm

Experience, Learning and Understanding – The Psychology of Art Education in Visual Impairment

Professor Linda Pring,
Professor of Psychology, Goldsmiths,
University of London

Dr Alison Eardley,
Research Scientist, Department of
Psychology, Birkbeck College,
University of London

Linda Pring will discuss her own and other's research regarding the psychological characteristics of visual impairment. She examines how people understand objects and raised line drawings through touch and how differences in learning styles can help us understand how best to present material for art education.

Alison Eardley explores how we imagine the world with and without vision. How can sounds, sights and textures be imagined without sight? She discusses the abilities and limitations of visually impaired and sighted people and how we develop mental maps of the space around us.

1.00pm – 2.10pm

Lunch

2.10pm – 3.25pm

Making and Using Tools for Learning

This practical session explores how research can be developed into tools, techniques and projects to create different ways in which visually impaired people can access and engage with visual arts.

Ian Hebborn,
Rehabilitation Officer, St Dunstan's
An overview of visual impairment and functional vision.

Loz Simpson,
Topografik UK
An innovative designer whose projects provide an experience of touch for everyone, together with practical educational resources.

Anne Hornsby,
Minds Eye Professional Description
Services
Exploring the potential of audio description for the visual arts.

Elaine Edwards,
T3 Systems Trainer & Demonstrator
Royal National College for the Blind
has developed a highly innovative multi-sensory device, the T3 Talking Tablet, which is creating new opportunities for visually impaired people.

3.25pm – 3.55pm

Refreshments

Wednesday 28th November

3.55pm – 4.55pm

A Series of Master Classes and Case Studies

Please select one of the following sessions that you would like to attend:

A. Ideas in Action

Chair: Caro Howell

Head of Education and Public Events, Whitechapel Gallery, London

Sue King,

Tactile Images, Maps and Signage Consultant, Royal National Institute for Blind People

Helen Forster,

Visual Arts Manager, Richard Attenborough Centre

Julie Watson,

Learning Officer, Laing Art Gallery, Tyne and Wear Museums

A panel of speakers describe their approaches to engaging with visually impaired audiences to offer creative learning opportunities and experiences and giving examples of projects and working practice. For example, recent Whitechapel projects have included artist Sally Booth working alongside a poet and visually impaired adults to explore the language of art and its poetic possibilities, in association with Vocal Eyes.

B. Does The Self Need an Image?

Uwe Herrmann,

Artist, art psychotherapist for the visually impaired, University of Fine Art, Berlin – Weissensee/State Training Centre for the Blind, Hanover

Professor Linda Pring,

Professor of Psychology, Goldsmiths, University of London

This workshop explores the role of sculpture-making in developing a sense of self through art therapy with visually impaired people. Reflecting on artwork by blind students, we will investigate the dynamic relationship between the visually impaired student, the art material and the sighted art therapist.

C. V&A Touch Tour

An opportunity to experience one of the V&A's Touch Tours, created for visually impaired people. Led by Elizabeth Hamilton.

D. The Art of Description Touch Tour

Rebecca McGinnis,

Educator in Access Co-ordination, at Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

This tour in the V&A introduces techniques such as description and tactile exploration which help to make works of art more accessible to visually impaired visitors.

E. St Dunstan's Tips and Techniques

Sarah Jarron,

Craft Workshop Supervisor, and the team from St. Dunstan's Craft Workshop

A practical session based on the working methods in use at St. Dunstan's Craft Workshop.

5.00pm

Conference closes

Edgar Degas began to lose vision in his thirties. He said that he was totally blind in one eye and had a central scotoma in the other eye. Treatment was ineffective. The diagnosis for his blindness was unknown, but it may have been caused by a familiar macular degeneration. Degas nevertheless created some of his best-known works while legally blind.

Claude Monet became legally blind from cataracts in the early twenties and had surgery. An increasing fuzziness and muddy colours are evident in his paintings up to the time of his surgery. Postoperatively, his vision improved to 20/30. After surgery, Monet found that tinted lenses gave him a more pleasant colour balance than clear lenses.

Camille Pissarro suffered from tear-sac infections that kept him inside, where he painted by looking out of windows.

Dale Chihuly, a well-known contemporary glass artist, has monocular vision which requires him to work collaboratively in the studio during the glass blowing stage.

These facts are taken from the book 'Art Beyond Sight: A Resource Guide to Art, Creativity, and Visual Impairment' Published by Art Education for the Blind.

Thursday 29th November

9.00am – 10.00am

Registration

10.00am – 10.20am

Fuel for Thought

Caro Howell,
Head of Education and Public Events,
Whitechapel Gallery, London

The conference chair refreshes issues from day one and sets the scene for day two.

10.20am – 11.20am

Teaching and Inspiring

John Everett,
Teacher, artist and co-author of 'What Colour is the Wind?' former Head of Creative Arts, Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford

Pádraig Naughton,
Director of Arts and Disability, Ireland, and highly respected visually impaired tactile and visual artist, teacher and writer

Stephen Webber,
Co-Founder and former Project Coordinator of the organisation Art Through Touch, artist and teacher

Three speakers with different approaches discuss their methods and experiences of teaching visual arts to visually impaired artists.

11.20am – 11.50am

Refreshments

11.50am – 1.00pm

Engaging and Enjoying

Marcus Weisen,
Policy Adviser, Inclusion and Communities, Museums Libraries and Archives Council

Marcus Horley,
Curator of Access Projects, Tate Modern

Barry Ginley,
Disability and Access Officer, V&A

Cyrille Gouyette,
Access Manager, Disabilities and Young People, Louvre, Paris

Understanding the experiences and barriers visually impaired people face in museums and galleries is fundamental to change – how can the sector build relationships and develop commitment to these audiences?

1.00pm – 2.15pm

Lunch

2.15pm – 3.15pm

A Series of Master Classes and Case Studies

Please select one of the following sessions that you would like to attend:

F. The Creative Mind's Eye

Chair: Lesley-Anne Alexander,
Chief Executive, Royal National Institute of Blind People

Mark Ware,
Artist

Loz Simpson,
Topografik UK

Two artists talk about past projects and current work:

Mark Ware reflects on his work as a commercial designer and creative artist, and how this has been affected by the experience of a stroke and sensory impairment. Mark's work includes scriptwriting, photography, environmental sculpture, performance, film and digital animations.

Loz Simpson discusses good practice in the creation of tactile interpretations of visual art. Topografik has produced tactile installations for institutions ranging from the Tower of London to Kew Palace.

G. V&A Touch Tour

A second opportunity to experience one of the V&A's Touch Tours, created for visually impaired people.

H. The Art of Description Touch Tour

A second opportunity for a V&A tour with Rebecca McGinnis, Educator in Access Co-ordination, at Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

I. Look - and Do Touch

Sue King,

Tactile Images, Maps and Signage Consultant, Royal National Institute of Blind People

This will be a hands-on workshop exploring the difference between visual and tactile recognition and will showcase a variety of different approaches to the provision of tactile images in museums and art galleries.

J. Talking Tactile Technology and the Arts

Royal National College for the Blind

Sighted people have full access to all the splendours of works of art over countless generations of artists, is it right however to deny to those without sight all access to the ideals, concepts and backgrounds to artists and their work?

This workshop explores the opportunities to deliver visual material by non visual means i.e. sound & touch through the medium of Talking Tactiles, which offers huge advances in the possibilities of creating autonomous access to these concepts.

3.15pm – 3.45pm

Refreshments

3.45pm – 4.40pm

The View From America

Rebecca McGinnis,

Educator in Access Co-ordination, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Joan Pursley,

Editorial Director, Art Education for The Blind, New York

In Touch With Art is linked with the Art Beyond Sight initiative in the USA and the September 2007 'Art Beyond Sight: Multimodal Approaches to Learning, Creativity and Communication' conference in which experts from a variety of disciplines explore multi-sensory learning and ignite creative thinking on making art accessible to people with visual impairment.

Thursday 29th November

4.40pm – 4.55pm

Changing Perceptions

Caro Howell,
Head of Education and Public Events,
Whitechapel Gallery, London

The Conference Chair summarises
issues raised and thoughts to take away.

5.00pm

Conference closes

Additional programmes and booking
forms are available for download from
www.st-dunstons.org.uk or can be sent
to you on request from Helen Charlton
at **sam**

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