

Mediation Culture Inclusion (MCI)

Art museums and visual disabilities: equal opportunities in the cultural life of Southern Switzerland



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What are we talking about?

A project at the crossroads of research, education and outreach on universal access to the cultural and artistic world through co-design and user-driven innovation.

Can visually impaired persons enjoy visual artworks?

Why did we do it?

... in order to develop, validate and promote easily scalable solutions capable of supporting art museums in effectively opening up to people with visual impairments.

Our fields of intervention:

Communication

- › Establishing a strong human relationship with the target audience.
- › Encouraging inclusive graphic and orientation design (**for All**).
- › Digital accessibility as a must.

Enjoyment of works of art

- › Describe the artworks (**and master the art of storytelling**).
- › Getting (**very**) close. **And touching!**
- › Multi-sensory experiences (**from soundscapes to mise-en-scène**).

Orientation and mobility

- › Universal design in architecture is a tough compromise (physically accompany visually impaired visitors is strongly encouraged. **And very welcome!**).

Conclusions and recommendations

Making artworks accessible is fairly straightforward and easily sustainable, but there is no workaround, **personal relationship is key**, so is a **thoughtful selection** of the artworks to be made accessible.

- › Educational collaborations between University, NGO/NPOs and cultural institutions as a driver for long term awareness and outreach activities.

› Project results and the best practices are pooled into an open operational kit available online promoted nationwide.

- Storytelling tools & visual documentation.
- Intended for museum operators and social and cultural mediators.
- Solutions selected for their effectiveness, i.e. ability to respect both the specific needs of people with visual disabilities and those of museum institutions (**implementation & scalability**).

→ **Low cost & limited technical complexity**.

How did we get it done?

Through a reflective and collaborative process (empirical research and grounded theory) involving communities of practice (cultural mediators, social workers, designers and educators) and people with blindness or low vision

→ **See some pics!**



Design for All

- › From universal design (**one-size-fits-all**) to inclusive design (**one-size-fits-one**).
 - › Measures and best practices were investigated, co-designed, tested and validated in real life settings toward real and practical needs (**individual ≠ museum**).
 - › Geographical focus: Ticino (Southern Switzerland)
- **Regional network of 7 art museums.**

More insights on our experience?

Join us for Session 402

The Museum before the disability
(2. April, 18.30-20.30, Assembly Hall),
"Close your eyes and open your mind."
A practice-based experiment
of cultural mediation for visually
impaired people".

www.mci.supsi.ch/en
Designed & built to be accessible to blind and partially sighted people.



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Partners
m.a.x. museo, Chiasso
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Museo Comunale d'Arte Moderna / Museo Castello San Martino, Ascona
Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana, Lugano
Museo Vincenzo Vela, Ligornetto
Pinacoteca cantonale Giovanni Zuest, Rancate
Museo d'arte Mendrisio, Mendrisio
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