

# ART AND VISUAL IMPAIRMENT: A CASE STUDY IN THE MODERN ART CENTRE IN LISBON

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## Art and Visual Impairment: a case study in the Modern Art Centre in Lisbon

### Objectives:

Demonstrate that people with visual impairment may also be a part of the public in art museums, and especially to see paintings.

### Starting point:

Experience in S. Paulo - Brazil allowed us to outline the strategy to work.

### Procedure:

Preparation | Implementation | Evaluation

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- Accessibility in Museums and Publics with Disabilities

↳ Tendency is to be interpreted only in the physical sense (lifts and ramps).  
Rarely are created different means of access to the museum in accordance with the characteristics of each disability.

We must distinguish between various kinds of disability:

What kinds of disabilities do we want to work with?

What are the specific needs of each one?

What suits for this public will serve the public without disabilities.

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### Three kinds of accessibilities:



#### Physical -

Guides on pavement | Signaling obstacles | Access for guide dogs

**Information** - may be more useful than the physical. Barrier that can easily contribute to the gross lack of social effectiveness.

Catalogs | Brochures | Materials manageable / audio | Tours | Courses

**Attitude** - positive towards inclusion. Museum professionals will have greater ease in finding solutions to meet people with disabilities, and overcome other barriers such as physical access or lack of financial resources. The legal restatements and financial support do not guarantee the effectiveness of inclusion (overall development).

If they feel welcome they will wish to come back.

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### Barrier Omission

(Ralph W. Smith)

- Lack of responses to the needs of people with disabilities.



When we exclude them indirectly we are contributing to acquire other kinds of disabilities because they do not have access to the knowledge and information they may just end up isolating themselves socially throughout their life's.

"Sometimes when I go to somewhere and leave there without understand anything it makes me feel frustrated and unwilling to go anywhere else".

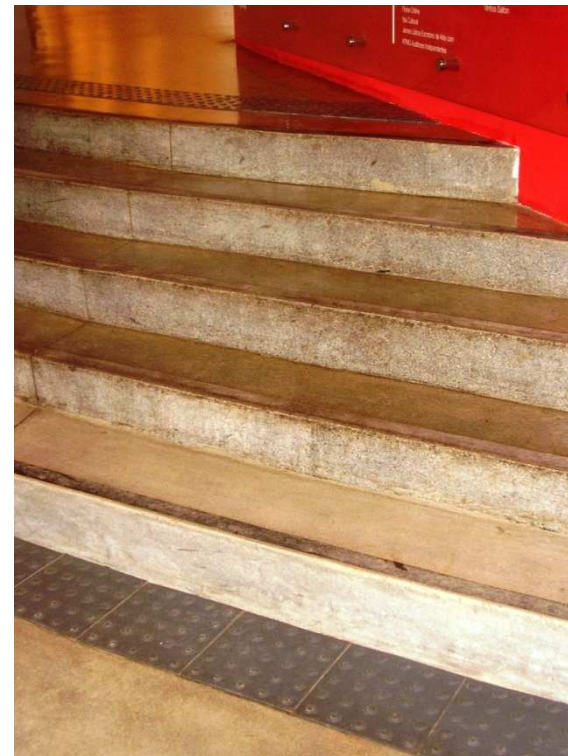
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### Physical Accessibility

#### Guides on pavement



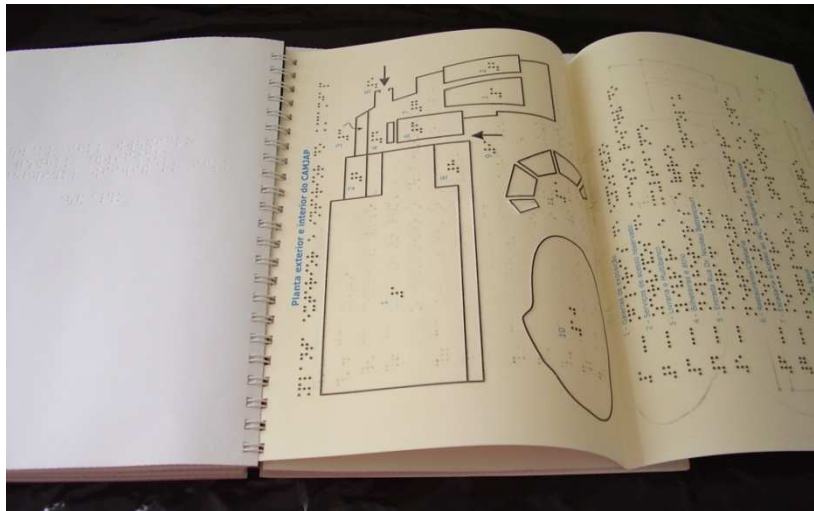
### Example: Modern Art Museum of S. Paulo



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## Physical Accessibility

### Tactile plans of the building



## Modern Art Centre - Lisbon



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### Information Accessibility

#### 1. Tables in large print and Braille:

- Type font Arial 16 and Braille Word

#### 2. Support Notebook (catalog) in Braille and large print:

- Permanence of the original images and high contrast
- Tactile Diagrams - pictures and plants raised

Additional  
elements of the visit

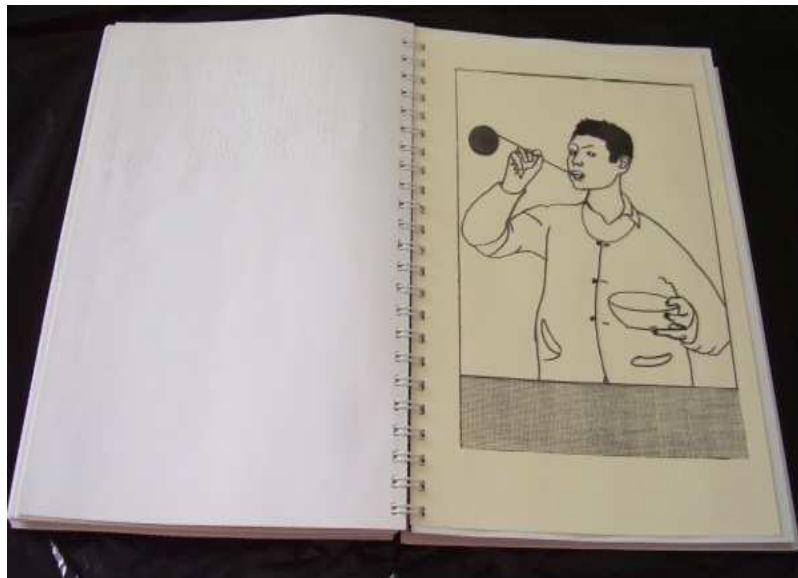


Swell Paper Machine

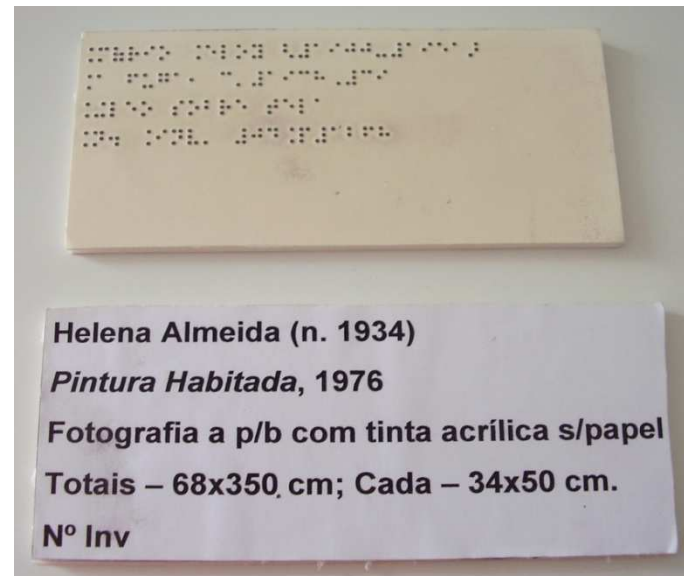


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### Example of the support notebook



### Example of the tables



Helena Almeida (n. 1934)

*Pintura Habitada*, 1976

Fotografia a p/b com tinta acrílica s/papel

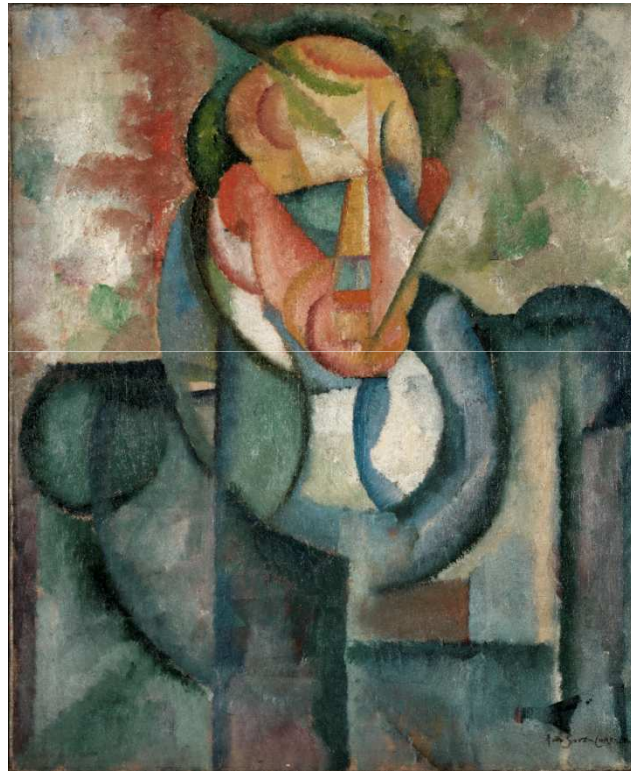
Totais – 68x350 cm; Cada – 34x50 cm.

Nº Inv

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*Portrait of a  
Man*

Amadeo  
Souza-  
Cardoso  
(1887-1918)



Oil on canvas  
61x49,5cm

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### Example of a Tactile Diagram: *Portrait of a Man* by Amadeo Souza-Cardoso

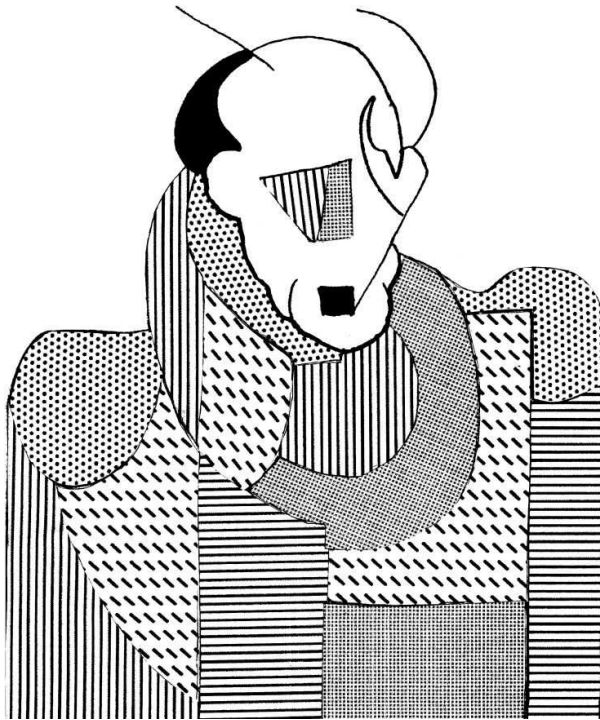


### How to make the tactile diagram:

1. From the printout of the artwork image, the main composition lines were drawn on vellum to define the geometric shapes. The image drawn on the vellum was scanned and printed on a white sheet.

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### Example of a Tactile Diagram: *Portrait of a Man* by Amadeo Souza-Cardoso



### How to make the tactile diagram:

2. The various types of reliefs were picked up: horizontal stripes, vertical, "V" shaped, dotted thick and broad, full relief. For each geometric shape was selected one type of relief for the tactile sense to be perceived by their variation. Thus, there was concern not to place side by side the same relief.

3. Obtained the final image, it was scanned and pulled out all the unwanted spots and black spots. Next was print on a sheet of swell paper and next passed through the machine in order to get relief.

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### Example of a Tactile Diagram: *Portrait of a Man* by Amadeo Souza-Cardoso



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### Essencial information to the tactile diagram: 1. Visual description

The painting shows a portrait of a bald man, standing straight at the viewer, an half body. The author developed the composition of the figure through geometric shapes. Thus, the trunk, head and upper limbs are drawn up by combining several circular shapes, triangular and rectangular. For example, on the left side we have the right eye in triangular and square shaped mouth.

### Essencial information to the tactile diagram: 2. Tactile diagram description

The image in relief of "Portrait of a Man" is composed by different textures. Each texture corresponds to a geometric shape based on geometric shapes which are presented in the original work and which together form the picture. Thus, for example, the reader will find the eye in a triangular shape filled with vertical lines, the nose-shaped rectangular and square shaped mouth filled by a full surface. The trunk of the man is represented by different textures.

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*Inhabited  
Painting* (1976)

Helena  
Almeida (1934)



Black & white photo with acrylic paint on paper  
Overall measurements - 68x350 cm  
Each photograph - 34x50 cm



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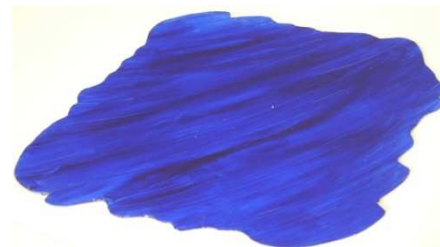
**Example of a prototype: Inhabited  
Painting by Helena Almeida**





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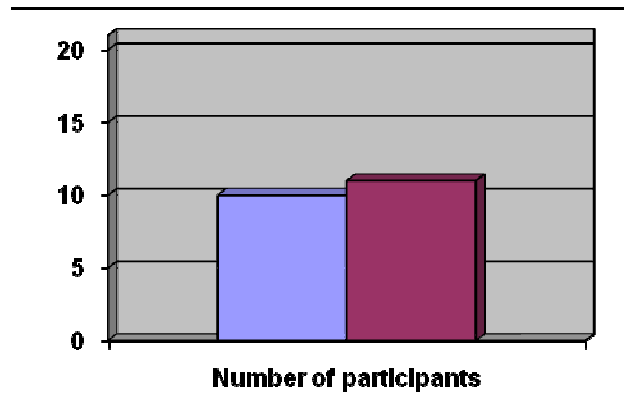
### Access to the collection:

- **Design Prototype**

- Low cost
- Monetization of human resources
- Associated with the visitor's body as a means of perception
- Creativity is one of the most important elements to take into account

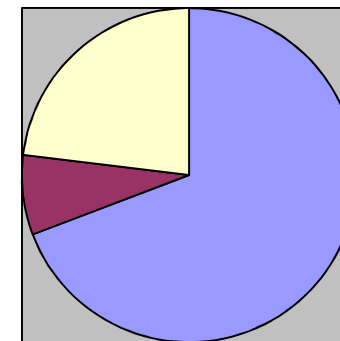
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### Relationship between the participants and museums



■ It was the 1st time they visited a museum  
■ Had visited museums

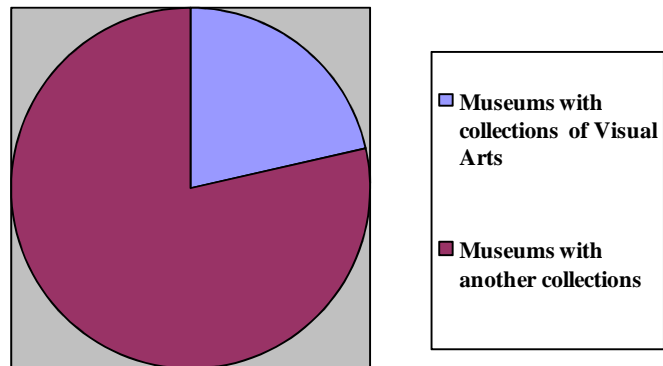
### Way that provided the carry out of the visits



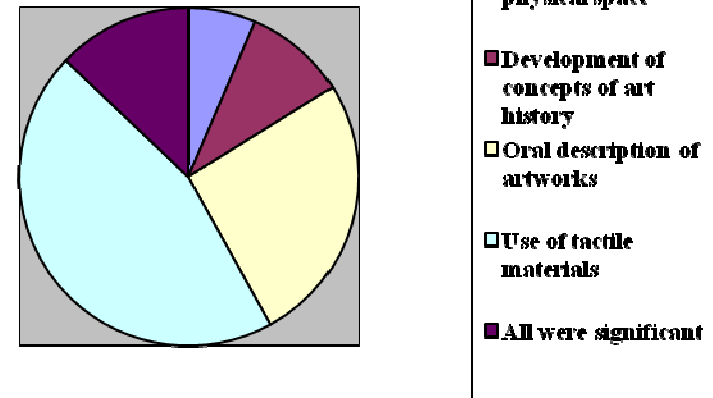
■ Visits provided through an association or school  
■ Visits provided individually  
■ Visits provided by relatives or friends

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Distribution by type of museums already visited by people with visual impairments



Steps considered most important for the perception of artworks





## Art and Visual Impairment: a case study in the Modern Art Centre in Lisbon

Museums:

New  
challenges

New  
directions

- Abolition of social barriers
- Inclusive proposals more contained and well defined  
"(...) seems like each generation of museums employees do an experiment with the disabled population, states that it was funny and don't repeat it again (...)"
- Focusing on individual differences and interests, forgetting the quantitative factors that often explain the policies undertaken to create programs at museums  
"(...) only after ensuring the quality of reception of the public of all ages will it be possible to dedicate to the quality of the public with special needs."
- Presence of an effective coordinator specializing in accessibility, to ensure: monitoring and evaluation of the entire process involved in inclusion, mediation of contacts; systematization of resources and materials.

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Museums:

New  
challenges

New  
directions



Museums should take into account the particularities of each can contribute to increased quality of life in society.

Quantitative and qualitative benefits:



Will increase the number of visitors: |  
people with disabilities and their  
companions

Enhances and complements  
the information received  
during the visit and  
performance

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People with  
visual  
impairment



Potential  
public

"(...) The explicit way as the pictures have been explained made me feel more excited about the painting during the visit (...)"

"(...) I'll leave here feeling more grown up (...)"

"The description of the paintings (...), the description of the faces expressions of the painted figures, the details of the representations as the design of the nails in his hands. For me I find extraordinary that it could be done, although for those who can see this it may not seem so extraordinary. "

"(...) I hope this investigation helps the museum to organize more exhibitions like this (...)"

"(...) I would like to say that they really liked the visited and they have already asked me if they could go again ..." (statement of an employee of the institution that accompanied the participants during the visit to the Modern Art Centre).