

# VISUAL ARTS RESOURCES

Web site links updated March 2011

## Tips for Creating a Visual Arts Access Checklist

Visual arts activities may involve exhibits, residencies, classes, workshops, lectures, and/or artist and teacher training. These activities may take place in a wide variety of locations including galleries, studios, classrooms and office spaces.

All programs should be accessible to artists, participants, and staff. While many organizations may claim accessibility, each facility and activity should be carefully evaluated in conjunction with a checklist and knowledgeable individuals **prior** to being opened to the public.

A Visual Arts Access Checklist may combine the following sections of *the Arts and Humanities Accessibility Checklist* (Step 6):

- **Exhibition** access includes the maximum height for display cases so that objects may be viewed comfortably by a person in a seated position or a person of short stature; audio describing paintings and artifacts for people who are partially sighted or blind; and open or closed captioning video displays.
- **Exhibition Labeling** provides guidance on print size, fonts and placement of labels.
- **Presentations and Programs** includes the full range of communication techniques to make programs accessible--including audio description and sign interpretation.
- **Print Materials** includes ways to make catalogues, publicity brochures, programs, and other print materials available to people who cannot use traditional print.
- **Food Service Areas** includes access requirements for bars and buffet tables; for example, at openings and receptions.
- **Gift Shops** includes the requirements for displaying merchandise so it is accessible to wheelchair users.
- **Assembly Areas** includes how to set up integrated and dispersed seating for lectures and other programs so wheelchair users sit within the regular seating area and have a choice of seating.

In addition, all organizations are strongly encouraged to complete the following sections of the Arts and Humanities Accessibility Checklist:

- **Policies and Practices;**
- **Employment;**
- **Checklist for Existing Facilities (with Addendum);**
- **Interior Signage;**
- **Emergency Evacuation;** and
- **Marketing and Publicity.**

## **Outdoor Settings**

### **[Draft Final Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas](#)**

On October 19, 2009 the U.S. Access Board released the Draft Final Accessibility Guidelines for Federal Outdoor Areas covered by the Architectural Barriers Act. It further defines accessibility considerations for outdoor recreation environments and provides needed guidance on minimum standards to design for the inclusion of people with disabilities in outdoor environments. The new guidelines address requirements for trails, outdoor constructed features and surfaces based on the materials used.

For visual arts activities that take place in outdoor settings, see the following publications which are available at online book retailers.

**The Accessibility Checklist: An Evaluation System for Buildings and Outdoor Settings: Users Guide** (1993) by Goltsman, Susan, Gilbert, Timothy A. and Steven D. Wohlford. A comprehensive checklist based on the ADA Guidelines, the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and California's Title 24 building codes for use in evaluating office buildings, parks and playgrounds, community centers, retail areas, recreational facilities, restaurants, banks, parking and site design, and transportation facilities.

**The Accessibility Checklist: An Evaluation System for Buildings and Outdoor Settings: Survey Forms** (1993) by Goltsman, Susan, Gilbert, Timothy A. and Steven D. Wohlford. Survey Forms. A comprehensive checklist based on the ADA Guidelines, the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and California's Title 24 building codes for use in evaluating office buildings, parks and playgrounds, community centers, retail areas, recreational facilities, restaurants, banks, parking and site design, and transportation facilities.

**Universal Access to Outdoor Recreation: A Design Guide** (1993) by PLAE, Inc. in conjunction with other public and private partners. This book provides the latest in universal design concepts and guidelines for outdoor environments, establishing a framework for determining the appropriate level of access in outdoor sites. It presents detailed design guidelines for the systems and elements necessary for ensuring accessibility to recreational trails, campsites, picnic areas, group meeting areas, and more. Examples demonstrate how the guidelines can be applied in typical outdoor settings to achieve a range of recreational opportunities for individuals of varying abilities.

## Visual Arts Resource Directory

### [Access to the Arts, Inc.](#)

Louisville, KY

Phone: (502) 367-9569

Email: [disacool@aol.com](mailto:disacool@aol.com)

**Description:** Access to the Arts, Inc. (A2A), works with people with disabilities and arts organizations to ensure accessibility to arts experiences. They provide tickets to events and peer escorts to encourage full participation in arts activities. Access to the Arts provides educational tools concerning disability and arts issues to individuals with disabilities, arts organizations, disability groups, and the general public.

### [Accessible Arts, Inc.](#)

Kansas City, KS

Phone: (913) 281-1133

**Description:** Accessible Arts, Inc. is a non-profit organization that champions the arts for children with disabilities. They are an advocate organization and believe in access to the arts for everyone. Accessible Arts offers programming focused on educating professionals and families about the need for access to the arts for children with disabilities and ways to meet those needs.

### [Alliance of Artists' Communities](#)

Providence, RI

Phone: (401) 351-4320

Email: [aac@artistcommunities.org](mailto:aac@artistcommunities.org)

**Description:** Alliance of Artists' Communities is the only national service organization for the field of artists' communities. Services include: networking to their members through conferences and regional meetings; conducting and publishing research; providing professional development to their members through consultations, workshops, and training seminars; providing information on artists communities to artists, students, and others through the publication of a Directory; and advocating on behalf of the field of artists' communities and creative environments.

### [American Association of Museums](#)

Washington, DC

Phone: (202) 289-1818

Email: [infocenter@aam-us.org](mailto:infocenter@aam-us.org)

**Description:** American Association of Museums (AAM) mission is to enhance the value of museums to their communities through leadership, advocacy, and service. AAM has been bringing museums together since 1906. They help to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community. AAM published *Everyone's Welcome: The Americans with Disabilities Act and Museums* (1998). The following publication is available at online book retailers.

### [Art Education for the Blind](#)

New York, NY

Phone: (212) 334-8720

Email: [artbeyondsight@aol.com](mailto:artbeyondsight@aol.com)

**Description:** Art Education for the Blind (AEB) mission is to make art, and visual culture accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired. Their goal is to provide and promote the tangible benefits of art education, museum visits, and art making for children and adults with sight loss. AEB creates accessible art and art education programs that many museums provide for their blind and visually impaired visitors. AEB instructors and staff provide general guidance, training for docents and staff, and referrals to museums on mainstreaming programming. AEB produced [Art History Through Touch and Sound](#), an eight-volume work that provides tactile education opportunities.

### [Art - Reach](#)

Philadelphia, PA

Phone: (215) 568-2216

Email: [info@art-reach.org](mailto:info@art-reach.org)

**Description:** Art-Reach is devoted to bringing arts and cultural opportunities to the full range of underserved audiences. Each year their programs and services enable over 15,000 people with disabilities or economic disadvantages to enjoy the beauty and richness of the arts. Art-Reach member agencies receive deeply discounted tickets to performing-arts events, museums, gardens and historic sites across the Philadelphia region. They also bring artists and arts programs directly to participating agencies and schools, provide participatory arts programs to serve disadvantaged audiences, and offer an online arts accessibility guide.

### [ARTability, Accessing Arizona's Arts](#)

Phoenix, AZ

Phone: (520) 631-6253

Email: [Artabilityaz@hotmail.com](mailto:Artabilityaz@hotmail.com)

**Description:** ARTability Accessing Arizona's Arts (ARTability) is an informal consortium dedicated to bridging the gap between Arizona's arts organizations and the disabled community. They take pride in creating an accessible environment in the arts for wheelchair users and individuals with loss of vision and/or hearing. ARTability acts as a bridge between arts organizations and the disability community by acting as a resource to arts and cultural organizations; providing technical assistance to organizations on accessibility; promoting accessible events; conducting customer service training for arts groups; distributing calendars of accessible programming; and by organizing, promoting and coordinating audio description, ASL, and other accessibility services.

### [Artists' Health Insurance Resource Center](#)

The Actors' Fund

National Headquarters

New York, NY

Phone: (212) 221-7300

Email: [info@actorfund.org](mailto:info@actorfund.org)

**Description:** The Artists' Health Insurance Resource Center is a comprehensive national resource of health insurance and health access information for artists, people in the entertainment industry, self-employed, low-income workers, the under-insured, and the uninsured who require medical care and many other groups.

### **Arts Access, Inc.**

Raleigh, NC

Phone: (919) 833-9919

Email: [info@artsacceessinc.org](mailto:info@artsacceessinc.org)

**Description:** Arts Access, Inc., is an organization whose fundamental goal is to encourage and enable persons with disabilities to have full access to arts programs and facilities, and participate fully in cultural and artistic activities. Arts Access provides trained audio describers to theaters at select performances so that patrons who are visually impaired can "see" a play. Arts Access, Inc., lends assistive listening system to local arts group for meetings and provides arts organizations with workshops, technical assistance, and consultations on how to develop accessibility plans for their programs and facilities.

### **Arts and Services for the Disabled**

Long Beach, CA

Phone: (562) 982-0247

Email: [info@artsandservices.com](mailto:info@artsandservices.com)

**Description:** The primary mission of Arts & Services for Disabled is to provide life-long learning, community service and career opportunities through the creative arts for people with disabilities in an environment of warmth, encouragement and respect.

### **ArtsWORK Indiana**

Phone: (812) 855-6508

**Description:** ArtsWORK Indiana (AWI) is an informal, statewide group of people interested in improving arts-related professional opportunities and careers for people with disabilities. In 2009 AWI was the recipient of the recognized of National Accessibility Leadership award. The web site provides information, resources, employment, and internship opportunities, as well as an artist directory and discussion forums. AWI invites guest speakers to monthly meetings to address topics such as marketing, artwork sales, and funding opportunities.

### **Community Access to the Arts, Inc.**

Great Barrington, MA

Phone: (413) 528-5485

Email: [info@communityaccesstothearts.org](mailto:info@communityaccesstothearts.org)

**Description:** Community Access to the Arts (CATA) nurtures and celebrates the creativity of people with disabilities through shared experiences in the visual and performing arts. The program takes place in the healthcare, eldercare, educational, community. They serve 600 individuals with developmental, physical, emotional, and/or

mental disabilities representing 26 different human service and educational organizations, as well as individuals living at home.

### **Hospital Audiences, Inc.**

New York, NY

Phone: (212) 575-7676

Email: [hai@hospaud.org](mailto:hai@hospaud.org)

**Description:** Hospital Audiences, Inc. (HAI) has provided access to the arts to New Yorkers who are isolated from the cultural mainstream. HAI brings people with disabilities into cultural institutions for visual and performing arts experiences. Each year, HAI touches the lives of more than 350,000 people in the New York City community whose access to the arts has been limited by health, age or income. HAI provides cultural access through music, dance, theatre and the visual arts, reaching out to the elderly, mentally and physically disabled, seriously ill children at health and social service facilities, and youth in grades K – 12. Services include tickets to cultural events; arts workshops; on-site performances of music, theatre and dance; audio description for visually impaired theatre-goers; youth-leadership, conflict resolution, HIV and life skills workshops using role play techniques; and transportation for people with disabilities on three specially designed OMNI\*BUSES. HAI relies on the talent and creativity of hundreds of artists and performers, in partnership with government agencies, foundations, corporations and private individuals, to deliver arts services that improve the daily lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

### **Intermedia Arts**

Minneapolis, MN

Phone: (612) 871-4444

Email: [info@naao.net](mailto:info@naao.net)

**Description:** Intermedia Arts is a multidisciplinary, multicultural arts center. Intermedia Arts supports a broad spectrum of artists. They are a nationally recognized leader in empowering artists and community leaders to use arts-based approaches to solve community issues. Their leadership program, The Creative Community Leadership Institute, is one of only a few programs in the country to provide comprehensive, professional-level training and support for local community-engaged artists and community developers.

### **National Exhibits by Blind Artists**

Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Philadelphia, PA

Phone: (215) 925-3213

Email: [info@nebaart.org](mailto:info@nebaart.org)

**Description:** National Exhibits by Blind Artists believes that talented blind artists deserve the same recognition as writers, musicians and other sighted artists. Its primary objectives are to educate the public with the quality of work by blind artists; to create a demand in the professional field of art; and to further the careers of blind artists by introducing their work into the mainstream.

### [New York Foundation for the Arts](#)

Brooklyn, NY

Phone: (212) 366-6900 ext: 201

Email: [nmckee@nyfa.org](mailto:nmckee@nyfa.org)

**Description:** The New York Foundation for the Arts enables contemporary artists of all disciplines to create and share their works and provide the broader public with opportunities to experience and understand the arts. The Foundation accomplishes this by providing responsive leadership and advocacy, offering financial and informational support and building collaborative relationships with others who are committed to the arts in New York State and throughout the United States.

### [Survivors Art Foundation](#)

Westhampton, NY

Email: [safe@survivorsartfoundation.org](mailto:safe@survivorsartfoundation.org)

**Description:** Survivors Art Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to empowering visual, literary and performing artists with effective expressive outlets, via an online gallery, national exhibitions, outreach programs and publications. Their goal is to provide entertainment, education, exposure to the arts, and public awareness, while mainstreaming trauma survivors with physical and mental disabilities into the arts.

### [National Arts and Disability Center](#)

Los Angeles, CA

Phone: (310) 825-5054

Email: [bstoffmacher@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:bstoffmacher@mednet.ucla.edu)

**Description:** The mission of the National Arts and Disability Center (NADC) is to promote the inclusion of audiences and artists with disabilities in all facets of the arts community. The NADC is a university based organization that has two major focuses: careers in the arts for people with disabilities and making the arts accessible to people with disabilities. The NADC offers a [Directory of Artists with Disabilities in California](#), [Online Art Gallery](#), and a [Visual Art Centers for Persons with Disabilities Resource Directory](#).

### [National Endowment for the Arts](#)

Office of Accessibility

Washington, DC

Phone: (202) 682-5532

**Description:** The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) works with grantees and other Federal and state agencies to make the arts fully accessible to people with disabilities, older adults, veterans and people living in institutions. The NEA provides grants to: accessible arts projects, promote arts education, and support cultural activities. The NEA partners with local, state, regional and federal arts organizations to make arts programs more available to all people with and without disabilities.

### [VSA](#)

Washington, DC

Phone: (202) 628-2800



Email: [info@vsarts.org](mailto:info@vsarts.org)

**Description:** VSA is nonprofit organization where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. Programs are implemented through a network by State affiliates in over 60 countries worldwide. VSA has produced many publications, including [\*Putting Creativity to Work: Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities \(2000\)\*](#). The organization also offers award programs to cultural institutions in the area of arts access, as well as to emerging artists with disabilities in playwriting, music, and the visual arts. Specific focus is placed on training and research in the area of arts and learning for people with disabilities. Online resources include an [Artist Registry](#), touring exhibitions and artist's resources. Contact VSA arts to learn more about the affiliate located in your area.

## Visual Arts Programs

The following programs exemplify accessible practices in the visual arts.

### [Crocker Art Museum](#)

Sacramento, CA

Phone: (916) 264-5423

Email: [cam@crockerartmuseum.org](mailto:cam@crockerartmuseum.org)

**Description:** The Crocker Art Museum is a national historic landmark. As part of the museum's ArtAccess program to ensure the museum is barrier free, it offers professional development for staff and training for docents focused on increasing accessibility for people with disabilities. They offer touch tours for people with disabilities and tactile opportunities and samples of various art media and tools that can be touched by visitors.

### [Dayton Art Institute](#)

Dayton, OH

Phone: (937) 223-5277

Email: [info@daytonartinstitute.org](mailto:info@daytonartinstitute.org)

**Description:** The Dayton Art Institute for Access Art offers an accessible online museum tour of the institute's permanent collection presented through a variety of internet technologies for people of diverse abilities. Access Art provides all visitors with an informative and absorbing experience equal to or better than what they might offer in the museum's galleries. The museum is wheelchair accessible, they offer touch tours for sculpture exhibits, sign language for hearing impaired individuals (must be requested in advance), and "SMART" a cell phone-like device that visually impaired persons can use to hear an audio description of an art piece.

### [Legion of Honor Museum \(The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco\)](#)

San Francisco, CA

Phone: (415) 750-7645

Email: [contact@famsf.org](mailto:contact@famsf.org)

**Description:** At the Legion of Honor Museum, visitors with disabilities can prearrange tours with experienced Access Docents. Sensory tours offer visitors who are blind the opportunity to touch approximately ten of the museum's works on exhibition. For popular



exhibits, Access Days are designated for times when the museum is less crowded. The annual Access Advisors' Open House affirms day-to-day accessibility at the Museum and supports disability culture. Artist and teachers lead semiannual workshops for art lovers, teachers, and group leaders. Access features include a large print edition of the museum floor plan; large print editions of the label text for most temporary exhibitions; free audio tours to permanent collection and temporary exhibitions for visitors who are visually impaired. Assistive listening devices are provided in the Gould Theater and are available for Docent Tours made by appointment. With advanced notice, sign language interpretation can be arranged. Other materials in alternate formats are also available on request. The museum is accessible to wheelchair users, and has several wheelchairs to borrow on a first-come-first-served basis. The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco was the 2002 winner of the AAM Accessibility Award.

### [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)

New York, NY

Phone: (212) 535-7710

Email: [access@metmuseum.org](mailto:access@metmuseum.org)

**Description:** The Metropolitan Museum of Art is committed to making its collections, programs, information, premises, and services accessible to and inclusive of all audiences. For visitors with visual impairments, there are touch tours, verbal imaging tours, large print labels for some special exhibitions, Large print and Braille information. Touch and Explore is an offsite program bringing art education to schools with visually impaired children, using raw materials and reproductions. A range of programs, including gallery talks, lectures, and family programs, are Sign Language interpreted on a regular basis. Lectures with Real Time captioning are also offered regularly. Discoveries are a weekend family program for people of all ages with developmental disabilities. Offsite Discoveries takes art and hands-on art activities to group homes for adults with developmental disabilities. The Metropolitan Museum of Art won the 2003 Museum Accessibility Award from the American Association of Museums for its "Picture This!" workshop, a museum program designed for people with visual impairments. The workshops focus on part of the permanent collection or a special exhibition and include a wide range of accessible and engaging elements, such as descriptive guided tours, handling artworks and artists' materials, tactile pictures and art activities. In 2003, the museum published the *Children's Book Art and Alphabet: A Tactile Experience* which includes Braille, large print, tactile pictures and color reproductions of works of art from the museum's collections. This publication is available at online book retailers.

### [Museum of Fine Arts Boston](#)

Boston, MA

Phone: (617) 267-9300

Email: [access@mfa.org](mailto:access@mfa.org)

**Description:** Museum of Fine Arts Boston (MFA) offers a program called, "Explorations" which is an interactive, multidisciplinary evening workshop on the first Wednesday of the month for adults with disabilities. The workshop focuses on cognitive disabilities and disabilities that may affect verbal communication. This program is always multi-sensory and does not require one to be verbal. This program is led by a

facilitator with experience in both art and theatre and one or more musicians. “Beyond the Screen” offers self-guiding materials for visitors who are blind or have low vision. Another program, “A Feeling for Form” provides access for visitors of all ages who are blind or have low vision through tactile exploration of selected sculpture and furniture, and through verbal description, tactile diagrams, and objects for artworks that cannot be touched. Trained Museum volunteers and Access staff lead these tours. The program, “A Hand's Reach to Art” provides access to MFA programs and events for visitors who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Throughout the year, a selection of gallery tours, performances, and demonstrations are presented in American Sign Language (ASL) or are sign-language interpreted.

### **Museum of Modern Art**

Programs for Visitors with Disabilities

New York, NY

Phone: (212) 708-9864

Email: [accessprograms@moma.org](mailto:accessprograms@moma.org)

**Description:** Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) has received multiple awards for its accessibility efforts; in 2010 they received the Innovations in Alzheimer’s Disease Caregiving Legacy Award from The Family Caregiver Alliance and The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, the Community Leadership Award from the Alzheimer’s Association New York City Chapter, the Excellence in Published Resources Award from the American Association of Museums, the Best of the Web award from Museums and the Web for the Meet Me website, and First Prize in the American Association of Museums’ Museum Publication Design Competition for the Meet Me book; in 2007, they received the Ruth Green Advocacy Award from the League for the Hard of Hearing, and in 2000, they won the Access Innovation in the Arts Award, presented by VSA Arts and the MetLife Foundation. MOMA offers courses for blind and partially sighted visitors featuring the work of influential modern and contemporary artists. Classes include touch tours, tactile diagrams, enlarged color reproductions, and hands-on activities. These courses are offered to children as well as adults.

### **Philadelphia Museum of Art**

Philadelphia, PA

Phone: (215) 763-8100

Email: [accessprog@philamuseum.org](mailto:accessprog@philamuseum.org)

**Description:** The Philadelphia Museum of Art offers both guided and self-guided tours for people with disabilities, hands-on touchable interpretation of paintings, and outreaches to groups who can no longer visit the museum due to aging or disability. The Philadelphia Museum of Art is the home of “Form in Art,” an awarding-winning program for blind and visually impaired adults. “Form in Art” combines classes in sculpture and the study of art history for blind and partially sighted people. Individuals who can no longer visit the Museum due to age-related limitations or disabilities can still experience the excitement of a lively conversation about works of art. Art Talk links ten to fifteen participants in their homes with a Museum or Park House Guide on a free conference call through a regular phone line, providing an ideal way for art lovers to connect. A booklet is sent to the visitor to view objects as they listen and discuss them.

## **Smithsonian Accessibility Program**

Washington, DC

Phone: (202) 786-2942

Email: [ziebarth@SI.EDU](mailto:ziebarth@SI.EDU)

Description: The Smithsonian publishes [\*Smithsonian Guidelines Universal Design Exhibits\*](#). The Guidelines are geared toward the designer. The Guidelines offer information on label design and text size, tactile experiences, lighting, and other universal design topics.

The Smithsonian's Accessibility Program strives to make all visitors feel welcome by providing consistent, effortless access to the Institution's programs, collections, and facilities. This program, which serves as a role model for museums throughout this country and around the world, is founded on the belief that all Smithsonian visitors and staff are valued, and that access should be integrated, independent, and dignified. As part of its mission, the Smithsonian Accessibility Program seeks to expand its national outreach to the museum community, diffusing resources, technical information, policies and practices, and replicable programs. The program provides consultation on a range of issues, including accessibility guidelines for exhibition design, considerations for accessible programming, and more.

### **See also:**

The [\*\*National Arts and Disability Center\*\*](#) to search for additional resources and information related to the Visual Arts.