

Multi-sensory desks: An inclusively designed and curated exhibition focusing on visitors with sight loss

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People with sight loss often visit exhibitions and museums in the UK. Older people are increasingly likely to experience visual impairment and they are the fastest growing visitor group to these UK, and they favour their regional venues. Museums are beginning to incorporate open-accessible facilities, but multi-sensory approaches tend to be small additions rather than a central feature. This participatory design research project explores how the National Centre for Craft & Design (UK) can cost effectively design and curate non-permanent exhibitions that bring outstanding intellectual access to visitors. 12 multi-sensory desks were a central feature of the exhibition. Each desk contained handling objects; a trim phone (audio descriptors); exhibit labels; and magnifiers. Each desk was positioned near the original exhibit so the visitor could relate the contents of the desk to the context of the exhibit. These desks were meant for all visitors, preventing blind and partially sighted feeling different to others.

Bio:

Professor Chick is considered an early key contributor to the research and practice of design for sustainability in the UK and internationally. In recognition she has been invited to speak around the world at conferences and events organised by British Council China, Craft Council, Design Council, Design Museum, UNESCO and ICOGRADA. She is also a reviewer for publishers Berkshire, Berg, Bloomsbury Press, and MIT Press. Since joining the University of Lincoln in late 2011 she has been responsible for their REF 2014 Unit of Assessment 34 submission, and was Acting Head of School and Acting Deputy Head of School, for the newly constituted School of Architecture & Design (March 2014 - July 2016).