

## The Wallace Collection Access Programme

Annual Report, April 2017 - March 2018<sup>1</sup>



**Image shows blind and partially sighted participants taking part in a life drawing class. Some people are using boards on their laps, some are using desktop easels, others are sitting on the floor. All are facing a model who is out of the photo.**

We are aware that we say this every year, but we really are being honest when we say that it has been another fantastic year for the Access Events and SEN programme at the Wallace Collection! We have continued to expand the programme, engage new audiences and support colleagues in other cultural organisations to implement and improve their offer of accessible events and activities.

From April 2017 - March 2018 we hosted a total of 40 adult events reaching 444 adults (up from 268 last year) and 34 SEN school workshops, reaching 634 pupils and teachers. In total this is 74 events which is a marked increase from last year.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that this report and its images have been slightly altered for digital publication. We thank the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation for the opportunity to share our SEN/Access work online.

Access events for D/deaf and hard of hearing visitors

This year we have again held eight events reaching 131 D/deaf and hard of hearing visitors by offering our range of communication support such as BSL, SSE and Lipspeaking and live subtitling at talks and lectures.

We have taken advantage of the exciting programme of temporary exhibitions and tried to ensure that they are accessible to all of our audiences. We had a wonderful response to our 'El Greco to Goya' exhibition talk with Deaf guide John Wilson with an incredible number of 28 participants many of whom had not visited the Wallace before. As our exhibition programme grows we intend to plan carefully to be sure that programmes can be enjoyed by all and that there is as diverse a range of opportunities to engage as possible.

Art Classes for BSL users

Our programme of practical art classes for our D/deaf visitors continues to grow. We are now running four throughout the year. We continue to work with Deaf artist as well as new artists to introduce new practices and thinking to participants and we have found that this has encouraged a younger audience. We have diversified our offer to include caricature, gilding, portraiture with a model and illustration. We have been delighted that our participants feel comfortable and supported at the Wallace to be encouraged to try out new ideas and learn new skills.

These classes continue to grow in popularity and are often oversubscribed. We have tried to accommodate as many participants as possible by keeping sessions flexible; having the practical art activities in the gallery spaces amongst the art works and by opening the temporary exhibition space, especially for BSL events. A total of 84 BSL users took part in these workshops over the course of the year, which is up from 62 last year.

Events for lipreaders

In October we hosted an event for lipreaders with guide Andrew Shingleton. Andrew and lipspeaker Lynne Dubin created a bespoke session to support this audience and feedback was very positive. We also allowed participants to vote on the theme of the next event to give them ownership of the programme and agency in programming. The next event will focus on our founders and Hertford House and will have both a lipspeaker and a lipspeaker with additional signs, to support the communication needs of a wider range of participants



'StageText' supported talks, tours and lectures on the public programme

We continue to work with the charity Stagertext, who have enabled us to make a proportion of our public programme's talks and lectures accessible to deaf and hard of hearing visitors through live subtitling. A speech-to-text-reporter transcribes the speech into live subtitles which can then be seen either on a tablet or on the lecture screen in the lecture theatre. Our IT department has improved the WiFi, so we are now able to provide tablet talks in almost all areas of the museum. Next year we plan to hold tablet talks in the new exhibition space which we have previously been unable to do. We have had 12 events in total this year ranging from lectures from external speakers to talks with curators and the Director in the galleries. In total 323 visitors attended these events (up from 278 last year) with up to a quarter coming from the deaf and hard of hearing community.

We continue to receive positive feedback from participants, particularly from older adults who have become deaf later in life and are unable to use BSL:

*"I can just relax and follow everything easily. I can linger to take a closer look at a painting and still be able to follow what the speaker is saying from a distance."*

*"I'm learning my 2nd education now and thoroughly enjoying it and grateful for places like Wallace Collection who set out days for hard of hearing people like myself who are unable to use BSL."*

Working with Ealing Deaf and Hard of Hearing Women's Group



Images show members of the Ealing Deaf Women's Group. (clock-wise)

A lady with brown hair is gilding a small box with gold leaf and a soft brush at a large table surrounded by different tools and materials. A lady wearing a hijab is painting a canvas tote bag with orange and turquoise patterns. A lady wearing a hijab with a gold pattern carefully gilds a little box with gold leaf.

Following on from our photography project last summer this year we consulted with the group about what form they would like their project to take. After meeting with the organisers and participants we found that what was valued most was being challenged, learning a new skill and creating something that could be kept or gifted, something that could be personalised and allow the women of the group to express their individuality. The outcome was that over three days the group worked with different artists to learn different skills such as textile printing, paper craft, gilding and jewellery making, using the *Gilded Interiors* exhibition and *El Greco to Goya* exhibition as inspiration. One session was also delivered as an Outreach Session at the centre in Ealing for those women who are unable to travel to central London. The group leader commented on the sense of accomplishment in the group and the enjoyment found in trying out new techniques.

*"Thank you so much for all the expertise, materials, running around, taxi organising, tea and biscuits and fruit etc on Wednesday as well as last Wednesday....I got a text from a very pleased Julie, that she had mastered the paper heart decoration and her paper tree"*

*decorations are on display at home. We all had a go with something, as well as being challenged - in many ways!!" – Group leader*



**Image of two women with long brown hair standing in front of a table demonstrating gilding. On the left artist Boudewien Westra demonstrates how to gild with gold leaf to a group from The Ealing Deaf and Hard of Hearing Women's Group. ON the right the group leader interprets the artist's word in to British Sign Language.**

## Events for blind and partially sighted visitors

Over the course of the year we ran nine events (up from six last year) for blind and partially sighted visitors, attended by 155 adults and 11 children (up from 87 adults and 10 children last year).

### *Sensations*



Image on left: four blind and partially sighted participants touch a large carved wooden cabinet in the Smoking Room gallery with latex gloves.

Image on the right: A large group of visitors, some sitting on stools, are exploring a painting by Velazquez with audio-describer Jos Clarke.

Our Sensations sessions take the form of an audio-described tour of the Museum, followed by a creative element. Our wonderful audio describers Bridget Crowley and Jos Clarke bring our paintings and objects to life through their own personal insights and descriptions. This year we had two events where curators joined the group. Participants enjoyed learning about the process of gilding with an audio-described demonstration from Conservator Jon Slight and more recently were given the opportunity of object handling in our Smoking Room during our 'Beware the Ides of March' session, with the support of two members of the curatorial team. To accommodate new groups wishing to visit the Wallace programme we have trained up another member of our freelance team, Julie Barlow, to provide audio-described tours. This means that new groups who are unfamiliar with the Wallace can visit outside of the Sensations programme.

### Hand down the experience

Following our cooperation with the Bowes museum on the Spanish exhibition, we set up a special collaboration to support colleagues at the Bowes Museum in County Durham to develop their own accessible events for blind or partially sighted visitors. Guides travelled to the Wallace to observe sessions and take back learning to the Bowes. We were delighted to hear that they have since started running tours for this audience.

*"We hosted a blind and partially sighted group on Monday and they had a great time, as did we- it was a pleasure to use the new skills we've learned from you."*

- Rosie Bradford, Groups and Events Co-ordinator, The Bowes Museum

### Life Drawing Classes for blind and partially sighted participants

In June last year we introduced life drawing classes to the programme. This was in response to requests from our BPS visitors and was developed with participants. We have since held three workshops reaching a total of 41 participants. This is a new audience for the Wallace and each class has been oversubscribed. The feedback has been very positive and participants often comment on how supported they feel at the Wallace and the atmosphere created by the artists and staff. Careful evaluation has meant that we are able to tailor sessions to the needs of the group and make adaptations so that everyone can enjoy the class. We continue to improve the format and content of the class to meet the needs of the audience.

### Participant feedback:

*"Really multi-sensory and empathetic style of class, tutor, museum staff and model. Flexibility to improvise and positive feedback was given."*

*"I think the facilities, materials and support we receive is top notch and I enjoy the sketching most of all, especially the longer poses."*



Images show examples of work produced in accessible life drawing sessions. Image on the left shows a reclining figure with charcoal, bright yellow chalk and masking tape on white paper. Image on the right shows four small sculpted figures made with modelling clay and wire. They are abstract, simplified female forms.

Family Day in partnership with RNIB and Wigmore Hall

This year we took inspiration from our Gilded Interiors exhibition and worked with artist Marc Woodhead and musicians from Wigmore Hall to create a piece of live music using recordings from the museum and digital technology to tell the story of the objects in the exhibition. The children and their families then performed their piece in Wigmore Hall with props and settings they had made together throughout the day.

*“It was amaaazing! The girls learnt so much and (they) was even singing the final song in the bath last night! Thank you so much for granting this wonderful opportunity and please pass on our deepest thanks”*



Image shows a child with glasses kneeling on the stage at Wigmore Hall playing the xylophone.

Events for visitors with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

In 2017, four Special Needs Schools; College Park School, QEII Jubilee School, St Ann’s School and Cambridge School, alongside two cultural institutions; The Wallace Collection and The Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith, came together to organise and deliver an Arts festival that placed inclusion firmly at its core. This three year project is part-funded by the John Lyons Charity.

An initial meeting was organised with the partner schools at The Wallace Collection, this was where the year one theme of *The Grand Tour* was developed. This theme then informed the creative practice that followed. The planning meeting was attended by members of the partner schools’ senior leadership team and creative arts teachers.

Partner schools organised subsequent visits for teachers to examine the collection and to map entry points for their students, this supported the CPD element of the festival. This helped to embed The Wallace Collection centrally within the festival, both via the student’s experience, where they visited The Wallace Collection and via our outreach provision. Students looked at objects and paintings that linked to the theme of the Grand Tour, including paintings of Venice, and some of our masterworks from Spain, Italy in France. They created work and were involved in drama workshops over the course of several months before the festival premiered in May and June 2017 with a sensory story at QEII Jubilee school and a special performance at the Lyric.

Case studies were developed and allowed us to show definitive progress anchored within the young person’s experiences under the headings of Enjoyment, Engagement and Enthusiasm.

The case studies proved particularly useful as they were situated within the young person’s needs, defining what Enjoyment, Engagement and Enthusiasm would look like specifically for the young people that we focused on.



Image shows adults and children under a bright yellow canopy on a sunny day.

The findings of the case studies suggested that:

1. The activities demonstrated were enjoyable, engaging and that the students were enthusiastic
2. High quality arts and cultural events significantly supported and facilitated these activities
3. The benefits were felt beyond the initial festival

The success of the 2017 festival is informing the 2018 festival. This year the topic chosen is 'A Hero's Quest' and pupils are coming to the Wallace Collection to learn about Greek myths and legends. These sessions have been going incredibly well with all students looking forward to the culmination of the festival in May 2018.

The Wallace Collection's involvement in the festival has meant that in 2017-18 we delivered 34 SEN school workshops, reaching 634 pupils and teachers, double the number of the previous year.



Sensory Story at QEII Jubilee School, May 2017

Image shows a group of adults and children in a dark space. There are colourful lights and a Rubens painting is shown on a big screen in the background.

#### Adult SEN

Over the course of the year we also ran 8 workshops for adult SEN groups, both in the museum and out in the community at day centres, reaching a total of 101 participants. All of the groups were new to the Wallace and we were able to offer a range of activities to engage with the collection from clothed life drawing to textile printing.

*"We all had an absolutely fantastic time. I haven't seen the young people work so hard and focus solely to their drawings. It was a pleasure to work with you" - Group leader*

Below: Image on the left shows a group of adults from Tower Project (day centre for adults with LD) creating a 'swagger pose' in front of the Laughing Cavalier painting in the Great Gallery during their Printed Portraits session. Image on the right shows a member of a day centre wearing a black shawl over her head and holding up a large fan



## Coming up

- Throughout May we will be working with a young Deaf student to create and develop a 'Teen Tour' to be delivered in British Sign Language. We aim to invite young Deaf people and deaf groups to inspire the next generation of Deaf guides and educators in museums and galleries. The public tour will be held at 1pm on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June
- We will continue to develop and improve our life drawing and practical art class offer for blind and partially sighted visitors. In the October we plan to run a two-part portraiture workshop with artist Marc Woodhead.
- Early next year we plan on training our Young Curators to give an audio-described tour. Our Young Curators are students from St. Vincent's Primary School aged 8 - 10 years.

## Thank you

We hope that this report has given a good impression of how extremely grateful we are with the funds, and how we always aim to use it to improve the programme year on year, grow it and share our new experiences with colleagues. Thank you so very much for continuing to support our work. It means that we can use all our precious time developing the sessions and courses without worrying about the continued existence or relevance of everything we produce. Being able to do this since 2015 has meant that we are now in a place to experiment and expand continuously, placing us at a vital position in the sector.