

Adult Access Programme at the National Gallery

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the Trustees of the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation for their generous support, which enables the National Gallery to provide enjoyable events for adult visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing or blind and partially sighted.

Our programme of Adult Access events for adults plays an important role in enabling the National Gallery to achieve its aim to be 'accessible to all' - ensuring that its great works of art can be enjoyed by the widest possible public.

During 2018, as a result of the generous support of the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation, the National Gallery has continued to provide programmes and facilities, which have enabled visitors with disabilities to enjoy its world-renowned collection, to visit its inspiring exhibitions and participate in its varied programme of events.



Educator Lesley Primo and a British Sign Language interpreter giving a BSL tour in Room 14

Access Provision at the National Gallery

The National Gallery has further increased the range of facilities and resources for visitors who are blind or have impaired vision or who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- Audio-guides with volume enhancement are provided both for exhibitions and for paintings in the permanent collection, and transcripts of audio-guides are also available
- Exhibition videos and films have subtitles and transcripts

- Large print transcripts of exhibition texts and labels
- Assistance dogs are welcome and water is provided for them
- Induction loops are provided at the Information Desks and in the Sainsbury Wing Lecture Theatre and the Sainsbury Wing Exhibition cinema
- Visitors with disabilities can bring an escort free of charge
- A National Gallery British Sign Language multi-media tour has been developed, featuring highlights from the collection, and including video clips with British Sign Language (BSL) commentaries and other visual elements, such as details of paintings and zoom functions. Visual support guides help users to locate the paintings in the tour, and the Gallery floor plan is included as a zoomable map with close ups of four areas to enable simple navigation (see link): <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/visiting/british-sign-language-tour>
- An audio-guide is now also available for blind and partially sighted visitors. This tour includes rich verbal descriptions of 23 key highlights from the collection, together with contextual and navigational information and prompts. Each stop provides a detailed and evocative description, to convey the emotion and initial impression that a sighted person would experience. This is followed by a deeper look at the symbolism and social context of the work, and the techniques used by the artist (see link): <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/visiting/audio-tours/audio-tour-for-blind-and-partially-sighted-visitors>

The Gallery's website includes information about access provision, with specific sections describing our facilities for blind and partially sighted visitors and for deaf or hard of hearing visitors. These sections include an audio introduction for blind and partially sighted visitors and a specially designed introductory film for deaf or hard of hearing visitors.

As a result of the support of the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation, over the past year the National Gallery has been able to provide an enjoyable and accessible programme of activities for deaf or hard of hearing visitors and blind or partially sighted visitors.

In the year from September 2017 to August 2018, the Gallery held 23 different events for deaf or hard of hearing visitors and blind or partially sighted visitors, attended by 744 people (including 284 people who attended a Stagertext event in the Sainsbury Wing Lecture Theatre). Further details are provided below.

Events for Deaf and Hard of Hearing visitors

Free talks in British Sign Language (BSL) were given on a monthly basis throughout the year, either by deaf lecturers or in spoken English with BSL interpretation, for visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing. Following BSL focus group research, these events have been developed to make them more social and interactive for participants, so that they now include a mixture of BSL-presented and BSL-interpreted discussions on the Gallery's paintings and special exhibitions, and BSL guided tours of the collection. The BSL interpreted events take place as part of the Gallery's Friday Late programme, and tickets are prioritised for BSL speakers and visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing.

All the BSL events are listed on the National Gallery website (see link): <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/whats-on/bsl-events>

The BSL events are regularly promoted on the Gallery's main Facebook and Twitter social channels. Facebook updates for BSL events are sent monthly and Twitter messages are sent out twice a month. The total reach of the BSL Facebook posts

increased significantly to 183,975, with 6,744 engagements ('likes'/'fans'), while the BSL Twitter posts also increased to 2,919 'likes' and 612 retweets.

BSL versions of our monthly newsletter are emailed quarterly to subscribers who have the BSL preference. We currently have 631 email subscribers with a BSL preference, and our BSL newsletter circulation list includes a variety of disability organisations, such as Shape, RNIB, British Deaf News and BL4D (Business Link for Deaf), so promoting our BSL events to a wider audience.

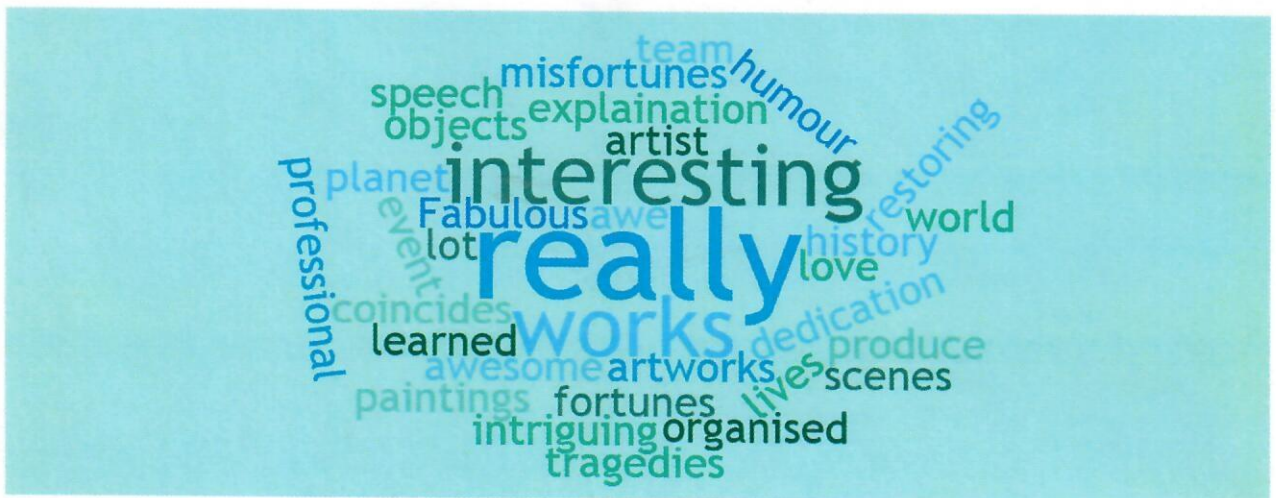
Feedback from BSL events

Feedback from participants in the BSL events was very appreciative, as illustrated by the following comments:

'How appreciative I am in this world at this present time with technology - how much work it takes to put together these Tours that you provide for the public, how your staff and the BSL organisation have experience and carefully think through with your whole team to gather us together to make another new experience in our daily lives.'

'The event was very interesting and I learned a lot about restoring paintings.'

'Really interesting and well organised talk on restoration of paintings, it was very informative...also as I study BSL it was extremely helpful to watch the interpreter.'



The above 'word cloud' diagram, pulled from the Gallery's evaluation framework, shows BSL participants' own description of what they experienced.

The Stagetext event with speech-to-text transcription was also warmly received:

'It was very good. I loved it. I wish I could take a picture of how many people attended, a lot of people turned up.'

'The talk was excellent - it's a brilliant idea and, as you can see, people from different ages and backgrounds are interested in attending.'

'It was good to be told to go near the front. The content was very good. I liked the way the speaker made comparisons between Degas and Japanese art throughout.'

BSL Events in 2017-18

The following BSL events took place between September 2017 and August 2018:

Gainsborough and his portraits

Friday 29 September 2017, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Join John Wilson on this tour to explore Gainsborough's portraits. This British Sign Language tour-interpreted into spoken English will explore the exhilarating portraits and landscapes and the turbulent life of the talented Thomas Gainsborough, highlighting the unpredictable changes of the 18th century that moulded Gainsborough and influenced some of his finest works.

Russell Aldersson (spoken English).

Van Eyck and the Pre-Raphaelites

Friday 27 October 2017, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Join Leslie Primo to discover how van Eyck's 'Arnolfini Portrait' inspired the Pre-Raphaelites and forged a radical new style of painting. BSL interpretation provided by Ali Pottinger.

BSL introduction to 'Monochrome: Painting in Black and White'

Friday 24 November 2017, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Serena Cant (Lecturer), Rob Chalk (Spoken Interpretation)

Explore the tradition of painting in black and white from its beginnings in the Middle Ages through the Renaissance and into the 21st century.

'It's not what it seems': Gallen-Kallela's Lake Keitele

Friday 26 January 2018, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

James Heard introduces the exhibition, *Lake Keitele: A Vision of Finland*, with British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation provided by Russell Aldersson.

'Drawn from Japan' – Degas and the impact of Japanese art

Monday, 19 February 2018, 1.00pm – 1.45pm

In this talk, in association with the Gallery's exhibition *Drawn in Colour – Degas from the Burrell*, art historian Karly Allen explores Degas's admiration for the aesthetics of Japanese art.

This free talk in the Sainsbury Wing Lecture Theatre was accompanied by speech-to-text transcription provided by Stagertext, to make the event inclusive and accessible for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The talk was attended by a capacity audience (both hearing and deaf or hard of hearing). The 330-seat Lecture Theatre was full, with an overflow of a dozen people viewing it on a screen outside the Lecture Theatre.

BSL introduction to 'Drawn in Colour: Degas from the Burrell'

Friday 23 February 2018, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Julien Domercq, Vivmar Curatorial Fellow, introduces the exhibition, *Drawn in Colour: Degas from the Burrell*, with British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation provided by Ali Pottinger.

The life and times of Rembrandt: 'Self portrait at the age of 63'

Friday 23 March 2018, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Many of the remarkable changes in fortune and family circumstances which made up Rembrandt's life story can be traced through a closer look at his paintings at the National Gallery. Join deaf lecturer Alan Murray and interpreter Rob Chalk in this Gallery session to explore these great works, spanning the highs of the 'Dutch Golden

age' to the lows of personal tragedy and financial hardship which pervaded his later years.

A new acquisition: Bellotto's 'The Fortress of Königstein from the North'

Friday 27 April 2018, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

The National Gallery's collection is always growing. In this talk Associate Curator Francesca Whitlum-Cooper will explain how the Gallery acquires new paintings and introduce the latest painting to be added to the collection. Once overlooked in favour of his more famous uncle, Canaletto, today Bernardo Bellotto is recognised as one of the most original artistic talents of the 18th century whose works are among the very greatest 18th-century view paintings. 'The Fortress of Königstein from the North' is undoubtedly one of his finest landscapes. Interpreter - Russell Aldersson

Exhibition introduction: Tacita Dean: Still life

Friday 25 May 2018, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Join Deaf lecturer John Wilson for this BSL talk with spoken English interpretation by Ali Pottinger. The exhibition spans six centuries of art, looking at still life from the perspective of a contemporary artist with works ranging from Dutch Still Life paintings to contemporary works by artists including Thomas Demand, Roni Horn, Wolfgang Tillmans as well as contemporary film works. It invites us into the themes of life, death, decay, chance, coincidence, stillness, solitude and the visual play and occasional trickery of representing the real world in paint. You'll be encouraged to look, look and then look again and asks us to consider 'what is still life?'

An introduction to The Credit Suisse Exhibition: Monet & Architecture

Friday 29 June 2018, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

A talk given by architect and deaf lecturer Martin Glover. Monet, a leading member of the Impressionists, is most often thought of as a landscape painter but this exceptional exhibition reveals how his depiction of architecture played a key role in his art, while also delivering an insight into the meaning and compositional construction of Monet's pictures – a dazzling architecture in its own right. Interpreter - Russell Aldersson

The life and work of Raphael

Friday 27 July 2018, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Lecturers: Peter Abraham and Alan Murray

Join deaf lecturer Alan Murray for a BSL talk in the Gallery exploring the life of Raphael and the rich collection of paintings by this artist in the National Gallery's collection, with spoken English interpretation by Peter Abraham.

How were paintings made?

Friday 31 August 2018, 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Lecturers: Rob Chalk and Katy Tarbard

'Grinding, pouncing and punching' sound more like instructions for an aggressive workout than a road map for creating a refined work of art, but surprisingly they can all be found in the instruction manuals of Renaissance painters. Join Katy Tarbard and BSL interpreter Rob Chalk to discover more about how paintings were made and what secrets the details below the surface reveal about the process involved in creating painted illusions of a three dimensional world.

Blind and partially sighted visitors

The Gallery has continued to offer a range of resources and events for blind and partially sighted visitors, to help them to experience and enjoy our paintings and exhibitions. Resources produced by the Gallery include:

Welcome packs

We provide both Braille information and large print versions of the Gallery's floorplan for blind and partially sighted visitors.

Braille newsletters

95 copies of a Braille newsletter are produced three times per year and distributed to the Gallery's Information desk for use by blind and partially sighted visitors. In addition, the Braille newsletter is sent to 52 people on our mailing list, and a large print newsletter is sent to 58 people on the mailing list. A large font e-newsletter is also sent out by email.

Descriptive Folders

Descriptive Folders are available at the Information Desk for use by blind and partially sighted visitors. Each folder focuses on two highlight paintings and includes descriptive text and interpretation of the paintings in either large print or Braille. In addition, the folders include photographic reproductions showing close-up sections of the painting for partially sighted visitors and tactile images for those who are blind.



A participant in an Art through Words session exploring a tactile image

'Art through Words' Events

As a result of the support of the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation, the Gallery has been able to continue its programme of Art through Words events, which provide enjoyable opportunities for blind and partially sighted visitors to experience and the Gallery's world-renowned collection. Sessions are free, with each session focusing on a specific painting in the collection. Participants are provided with high quality prints, including close-ups of interesting details, sensory devices and specially produced tactile reproductions of the painting, which they can take home following the session.



In each session, a specially trained educator provides a highly descriptive verbal narrative of the painting, and participants then visit the painting in the Gallery. All the events are listed in Braille and large print newsletters and on the National Gallery website: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/whats-on/art-through-words>

The Art through Words events take place monthly, and sessions from September 2017 through to August 2018 are shown below:

Garofalo: An Allegory of Love

Saturday 30 September 2017, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Nardo di Cione: Saint John the Baptist, Saint John the Evangelist (?) and Saint James

Saturday 28 October 2017, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Caspar David Friedrich: Winter Landscape

Saturday 25 November 2017, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Catena: Saint Jerome in his Study

Saturday 27 January 2018, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Monet: The Petit Bras of the Seine at Argenteuil

Saturday 24 February 2018, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Bellotto: The Fortress of Königstein from the North

Saturday 31 March 2018, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Titian: The Aldobrandini Madonna

Saturday 28 April 2018, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Chardin: The House of Cards

Saturday 26 May 2018, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Ter Brugghen: The Concert

Saturday 30 June 2018, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Pintoricchio: Penelope with the Suitors

Saturday 28 July 2018, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Vuillard: The Terrace at Vasouy, The Lunch

Saturday 25 August 2018, 11.30am - 12.45pm

Feedback from Art through Words sessions

Feedback from the Art through Words sessions showed that the programme continues to be valued and enjoyed by the participants:

'I have been coming to the Gallery for 4 years. Art Through Words is absolutely fantastic and good that the Gallery put on these sessions and the staff and assistants are good. '

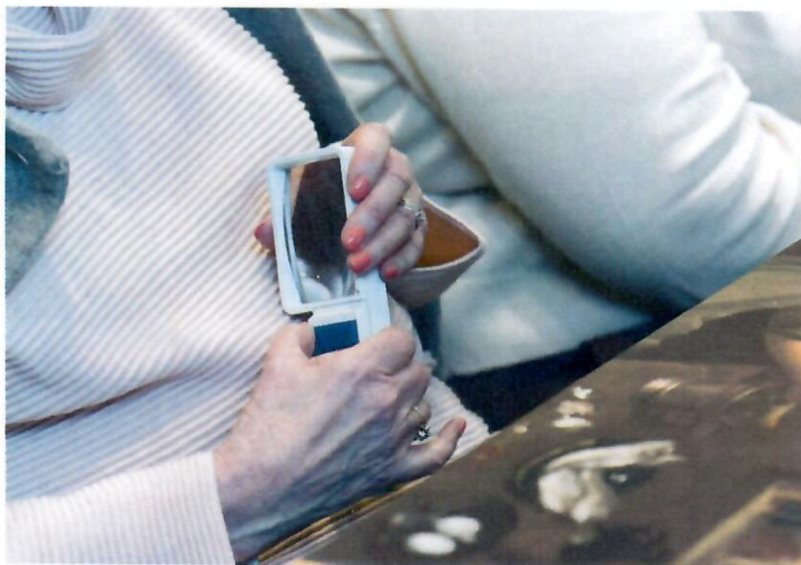
'The staff are friendly and helpful and are always happy to help. It is nice to receive a copy of the print to take home and also like the opportunity to go up to see the painting in the Gallery.'

Further Developments

This year the Gallery has purchased specialist daylight lamps and magnifiers to assist attendees at our Art through Words sessions.

We have also enriched the events by including more sensory experiences with the addition of soundscapes, produced by our in-house AV Department, and the acquisition of a small 'Scent Library', to help participants to conceptualise the paintings and the environments and objects which they portray.

The Gallery has also developed 'Access to Art' programmes for adults with learning disabilities and impairments or recovering from long-term illnesses. These in depth sessions in partnership with charities and health and social care organisations aim to build the skills and confidence of participants, working together with an artist and Gallery experts.



Participant in an Art through Words session using a magnifier with light

Our thanks to The Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation

We are extremely grateful to the Trustees of the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation for their generous support for the National Gallery's Adult Access Programme.

Your support enables the National Gallery to provide rewarding opportunities for visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing and blind or partially sighted to experience and enjoy the Gallery's great works of art.

Participants in the BSL and Art through Words programmes also benefit from the opportunities for social interaction and intellectual stimulation provided by the programmes, as well as the chance to learn about masterpieces in the National Gallery collection.

Thank you for your continuing help and support.