

LORD LEONARD AND LADY ESTELLE WOLFSON FOUNDATION

Access Programme, April 2022–March 2023



Participants in a British Sign Language workshop, February 2023

At the Wallace Collection, equality, diversity and inclusion are values that guide all of our work. Through our access programme — designed for people who may face barriers to participation in museums — we invite diverse audiences to engage with the Collection’s extraordinary artworks. As you will read in this report, the programme consists of events both onsite and online as well as digital resources. Among our offerings are ‘relaxed mornings,’ in which we offer particular groups exclusive access to the Collection or a special exhibition for a few dedicated hours. All of these relaxed, friendly events are delivered by our learning team and underpinned by robust learning pedagogy.

This year, we expanded our onsite offerings for blind and partially sighted adults and adults who are D/deaf, reconnecting with past participants and reaching new audiences. From April 2022 to March 2023, we delivered 15 events — including talks, tours and workshops — to 154 people.

We remain immensely grateful to the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation for your continued support, which makes these important programmes possible.

Programmes for D/deaf Adults

We delivered a total of eight events for adults who are D/deaf, including Deaf-led tours and creative workshops and tours with a lipspeaker (a hearing person who has been trained to speak in a manner that is easy to lipread, while providing sign-supported English).

BSL Tours and Creative Workshops

On 7 May 2022, Deaf guide Alan Murray led a tour in British Sign Language (BSL) of *The Emperor, The Artist and the Collector* (6 December 2021–17 July 2022), a special display of paintings by the eighteenth-century French artist Horace Vernet. On 13 September 2022, Deaf guide Edward Richards led a tour of the exhibition *Inspiring Walt Disney: The Animation of French Decorative Arts* (6 April–16 October 2022). Both sessions were followed by informal conversation and discussion.

If the Wallace hadn't offered these BSL and lip-speaking tours, I probably wouldn't have been motivated to attend the exhibition. It was good seeing the film clips illustrating the themes of the show. Edward's talk was, as always, insightful and enjoyable. – Participant, BSL tour

Deaf artist Rubbena Aurangzeb-Tariq facilitated several creative workshops that introduced a theme related to the Wallace Collection, and then invited participants to create their own artistic responses. In one session, participants explored hand gestures depicted in paintings throughout the galleries and then cast their hands in plaster. In other sessions, participants made drawings and paintings inspired by collection objects they had seen.

The words 'thank you,' are inadequate to convey my appreciation for the Wallace Collection BSL drawing classes. I have been given a skill and inspired to continue. Who knows, maybe one day I'll become an artist! The beginnings will always be remembered as a Wallace Collection event accessible in BSL.

– Participant, BSL workshop

Rubbena is fantastic at bringing the pictures and paintings alive with historical facts, observations and insights, and by asking questions of us all. – Participant, BSL workshop

Joining the group as Rubbena led the tour and painting session was a wonderful experience. For the first time, I understood how to use colours to create depth in a painting. Having the session delivered in sign language made it so easy to follow. I learned so much in one morning. – Participant, BSL workshop

This year we also re-established our partnership with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Women's Group, a community of women from across London, and facilitated their visits to the Collection.

Lipreading and Lipspeaking Tours

For those who are D/deaf and not BSL users, we delivered two tours with a professional lipreader, who provided communication support, one of the permanent collection and another of *Inspiring Walt Disney*. We delivered an additional tour with a lipspeaker.

Just to say how much I enjoyed yesterday's tour. Andrew Shingleton is a great lecturer; the pictures were very well chosen to comment on one another, and the talk was full of interest, with a perfect balance of context, stylistic analysis, and fascinating anecdotes. I find that I've retained most of the information, probably because the delivery was so good. The lipspeaker was excellent too, as she always is. . . . I hope you'll be doing more of these lipreading tours in future. – Participant, lipspeaker tour

Attendees of all our programmes for D/deaf adults enjoyed learning about the Wallace Collection, connecting with others and trying new things, whilst being in a D/deaf-led space. Their positive comments speak to the continued success of the programme.

Programmes for Blind and Partially Sighted Adults

This year, we delivered seven sessions for blind and partially sighted adults: a combination of online events, creative workshops and audio-described tours, all in a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere. In the lead-up to the Jubilee weekend, we delivered an online session focused on two objects with royal connections, a painted portrait of Queen Victoria by Thomas Sully and an inkstand made by the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory, thought to have been a gift from King Louis XV to his daughter.

Describe and Draw

Our audio-described life-drawing classes begin with a detailed verbal description of an object from the Collection, followed by a session in the studio with a live model. In the studio, the model's pose or gesture evokes the artwork discussed in the galleries. The artist, audio-describer and model work together to respond to the needs of participants, by adjusting light levels, for example, and providing a range of materials for participants to work with.



Participants at Describe and Draw

Everyone was friendly, helpful and encouraging. I enjoyed the history and the information on how the sculptures were made. The descriptions were excellent and it was great that we were able to ask questions to gain further insights.

– Participant, Describe and Draw

Thank you so much for the session on Saturday, which I really enjoyed. I liked trying something different with the clay and exploring another creative technique. I do so look forward to these sessions.

– Participant, Describe and Draw

It was so good to be back doing the class again. I enjoyed it as ever, and appreciate greatly that these classes exist for us. Dominic was a very good model and made each pose interesting to draw. Nicky is good too, bright and breezy and always helpful and full of ideas. It's hard to improve something that's so enjoyable.

– Participant, Describe and Draw

Describe in Clay

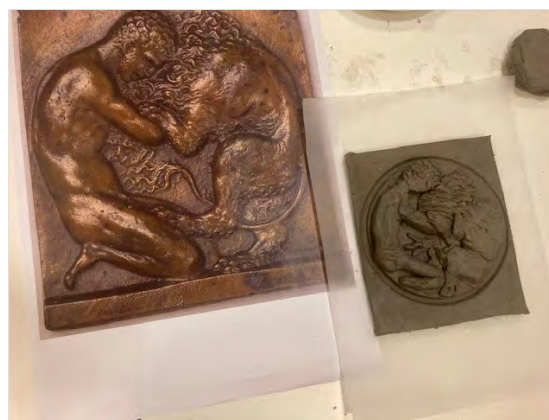
Following on the success of providing clay for blind and partially sighted adults to use in Describe and Draw, we offered a dedicated clay workshop in March 2023. An artist verbally

described a relief sculpture in the Collection — a bronze plaquette of Hercules wrestling the Nemean lion by Moderno — and afterwards participants created their own relief in clay.

Thank you for another event of something I have never done before, and the chance to see yet another part of this amazing collection. Once again, it was a very enjoyable and well-run session with you all. I loved working with clay.

– Participant, Describe in Clay

I'm looking forward to more clay work—after you converted me! – Participant, Describe in Clay



Participants and artworks at Describe in Clay, March 2023

Audio-Described Tours

Alongside creative workshops, we offered audio-described tours of the Collection. Participants enjoyed exclusive access to *Inspiring Walt Disney*. We also delivered an audio-described introduction to our armouries, followed by an opportunity to handle real and replica armour. Participants of this Describe and Touch event enjoyed connecting the armour they were holding with what was being described.



Audio-described introduction to *Inspiring Walt Disney*, August 2022



Describe and Touch, December 2022

Public Programmes

Alongside our dedicated access programme, we continue to work to make our general public programming accessible to D/deaf visitors. To this end, we provided live captions for our monthly Meet the Expert online talks. We also offered BSL interpretation for in-person tours of the Collection, and for two of our Hands on Armour drop-in sessions, which are designed for families.

We three had a great time trying on armour (never mind our age!) and it was very well presented. Thank you for arranging events for D/deaf people. – Participant, Hands on Armour

I very much enjoyed the BSL-interpreted tour on sculpture on Saturday. The speaker clearly knew her stuff. Also, the interpreting was first rate. I look forward to more live events at the Wallace. – Participant, BSL-interpreted tour

Feedback

To hear opinions and views on our current programme, we ran two focus groups in February and March 2023, one with blind and partially sighted adults, and one with adults who are D/deaf. The aim of each session was to determine whether there are better ways to engage with these audiences and to ensure that our programme continues to be relevant and accessible. The charity Blind Aid helped to recruit participants for the first focus group, which included a mix of individuals who had and had not previously visited the Collection. Similarly, we worked with a BSL interpreter and volunteer for Deaf Women Ealing, who recruited participants and provided BSL interpretation and communication support throughout the second focus group. We will use the findings from both groups to help shape next year's programme.

I just wanted to pass on my thanks to the Wallace Collection for the focus group this afternoon. I hope it was useful for you, it is great to know that you are serious about providing access improvements and not just box ticking, which unfortunately on occasion can be the case. – Participant, focus group



Participants in the focus group for blind and partially sighted people

Thank You

We remain profoundly grateful to the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation for your loyal support of our access programme, which enables us to share the Wallace Collection and our exciting exhibitions with a broad and diverse audience. Access is core to our mission and your generosity makes it possible. We hope to share the continued success of the programme with you in the months and years to come.