

middelheim
museum

Beyond the visual

Ken Wilder

Aaron McPeake



Middleheim Museum

Symposium – *Being Well Surrounded*

Beyond the Visual: ***Sculpture and Embodied Perception***

Professor Ken Wilder

Rootstein Hopkins Chair of Design

University of the Arts London Professor of Aesthetics

Dr Aaron McPeake

Research Fellow, Chelsea College of Arts, University of the Arts London

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**HENRY MOORE
FOUNDATION**



Exhibition

Beyond the Visual

28 November 2025 - 19 April 2026

Sculpture Galleries and Study Gallery

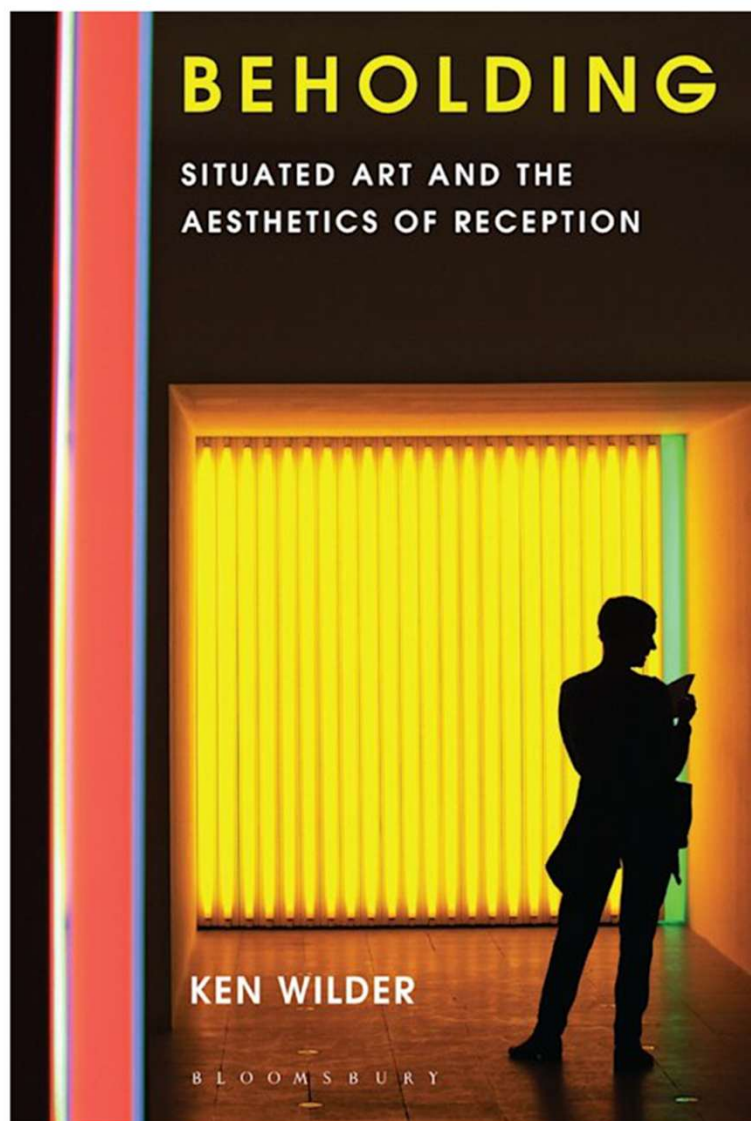
Henry Moore Institute, Leeds

Free Entry





**Grounding the project in existing research
and practice**









Gathering a multidisciplinary network



DisOrdinary Architecture Project

Henry Moore Institute

Shape Arts

Tate

VocalEyes

Wellcome Collection

Yorkshire Sculpture Park

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Beyond the Visual

Friday 21 October 2022, 10:00 – 18:00

● Past

Free

Symposium

British Sign Language interpreted

Auto-captioned

Hearing loop

Audio described

Relaxed



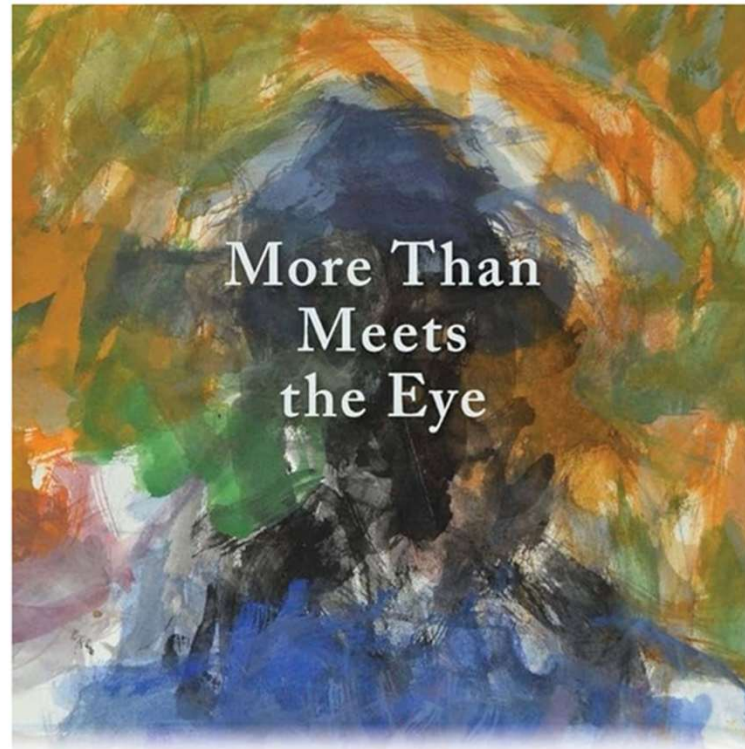
**The centrality of collaboration and
lived experience**





<https://youtu.be/wY2AVMhyCCE>

A theoretical context



More Than
Meets
the Eye

WHAT BLINDNESS BRINGS TO ART

GEORGINA KLEEGER



CURATING ACCESS

**DISABILITY ART ACTIVISM AND CREATIVE
ACCOMMODATION**

Edited by
Amanda Cachia

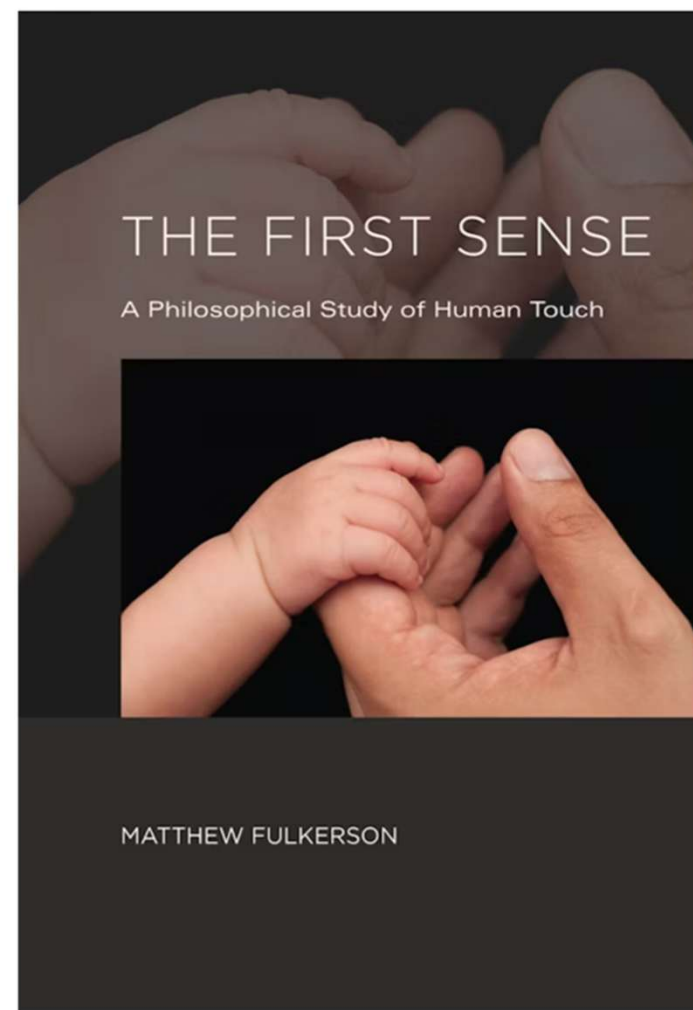
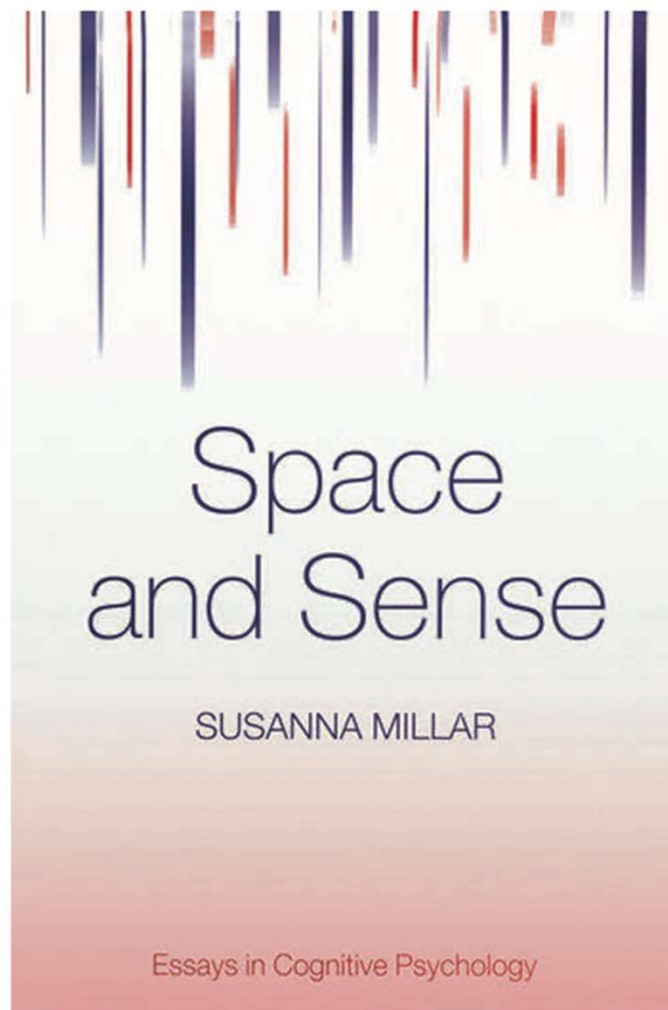
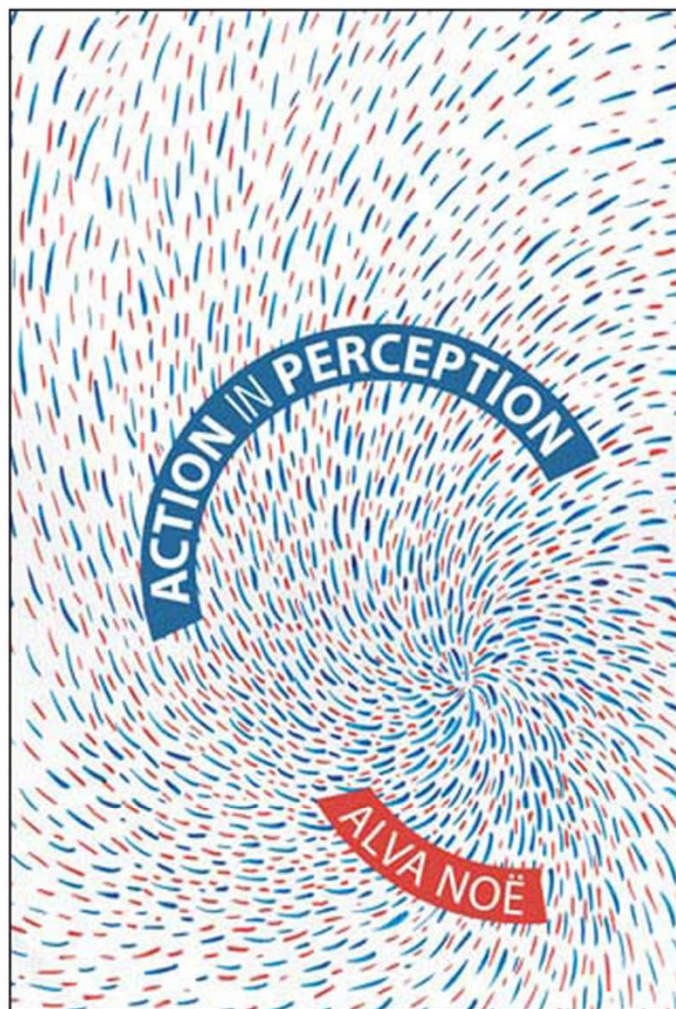


rethinking
art's histories

Art, museums and touch

Fiona Candlin







This film features Hannah Thompson and Joe Rizzo-Naudi, both of whom are partially-blind, discussing the benefits of the W-ICAD model in a white-walled studio. Joe is a white man in his 30s, with brown hair tied in a small bun at the back of his head. He is wearing a black shirt, tucked into a pair of dark blue denim jeans. Hannah is a white middle-aged woman with long dark blond hair that is partially tied back. She wears glasses, and a black dress with a floral print, over the top of leggings.

The film includes clips of W-ICAD co-creators at work. Hannah is a Professor at Royal Holloway, University of London, and Joe is a writer, facilitator and researcher.

Welcome to W-ICAD

Beyond the Visual

Multisensory modes of beholding art

Edited by
Ken Wilder and Aaron McPeake

UCLPRESS

Challenging curatorial conventions and embedding access















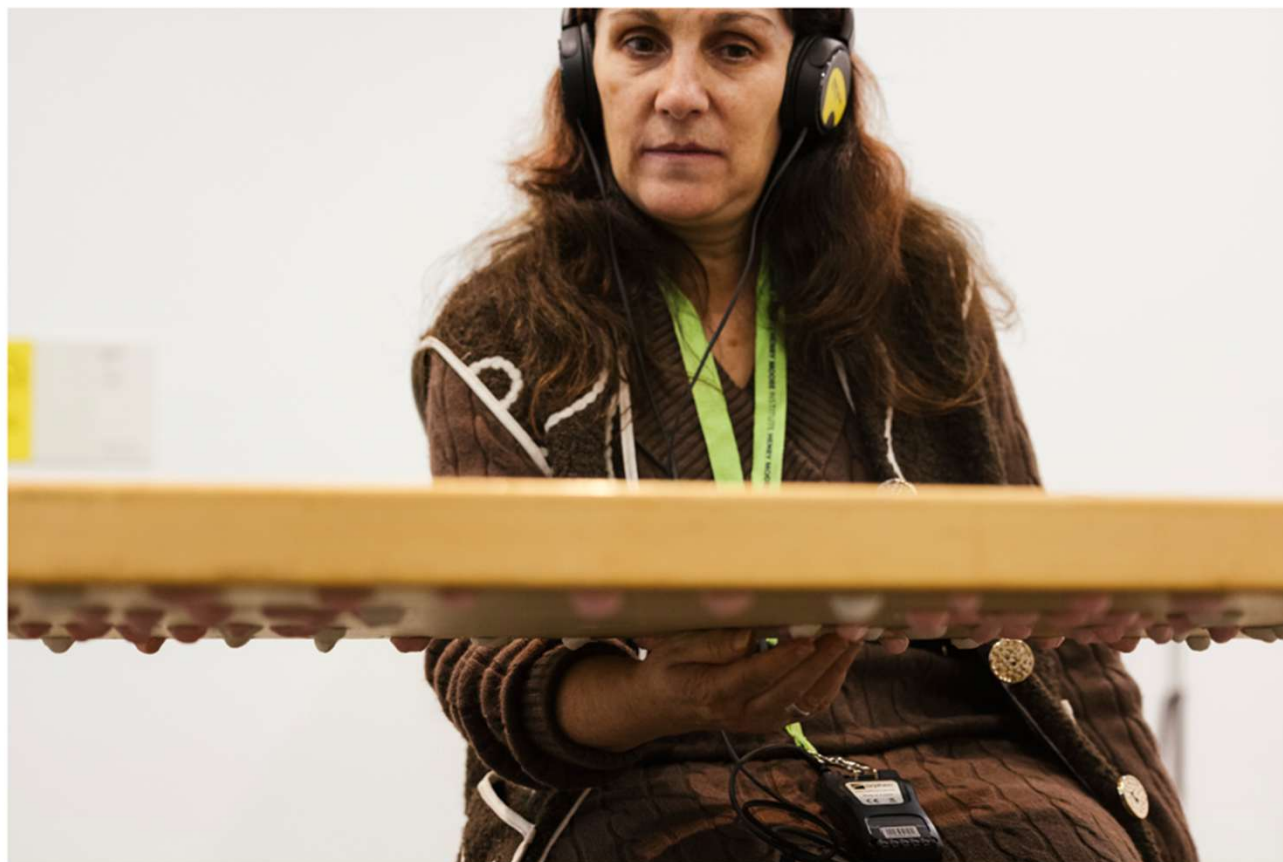








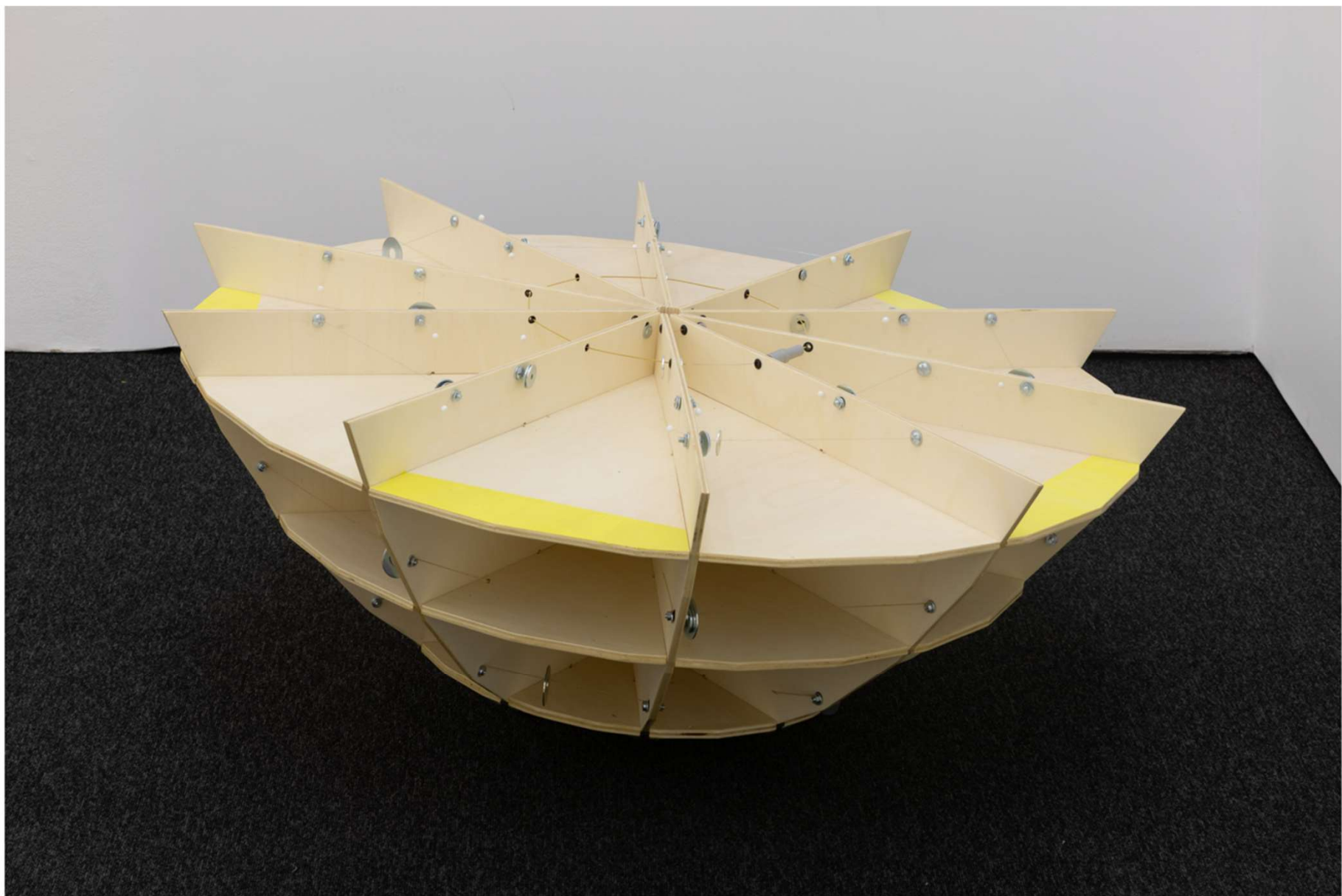












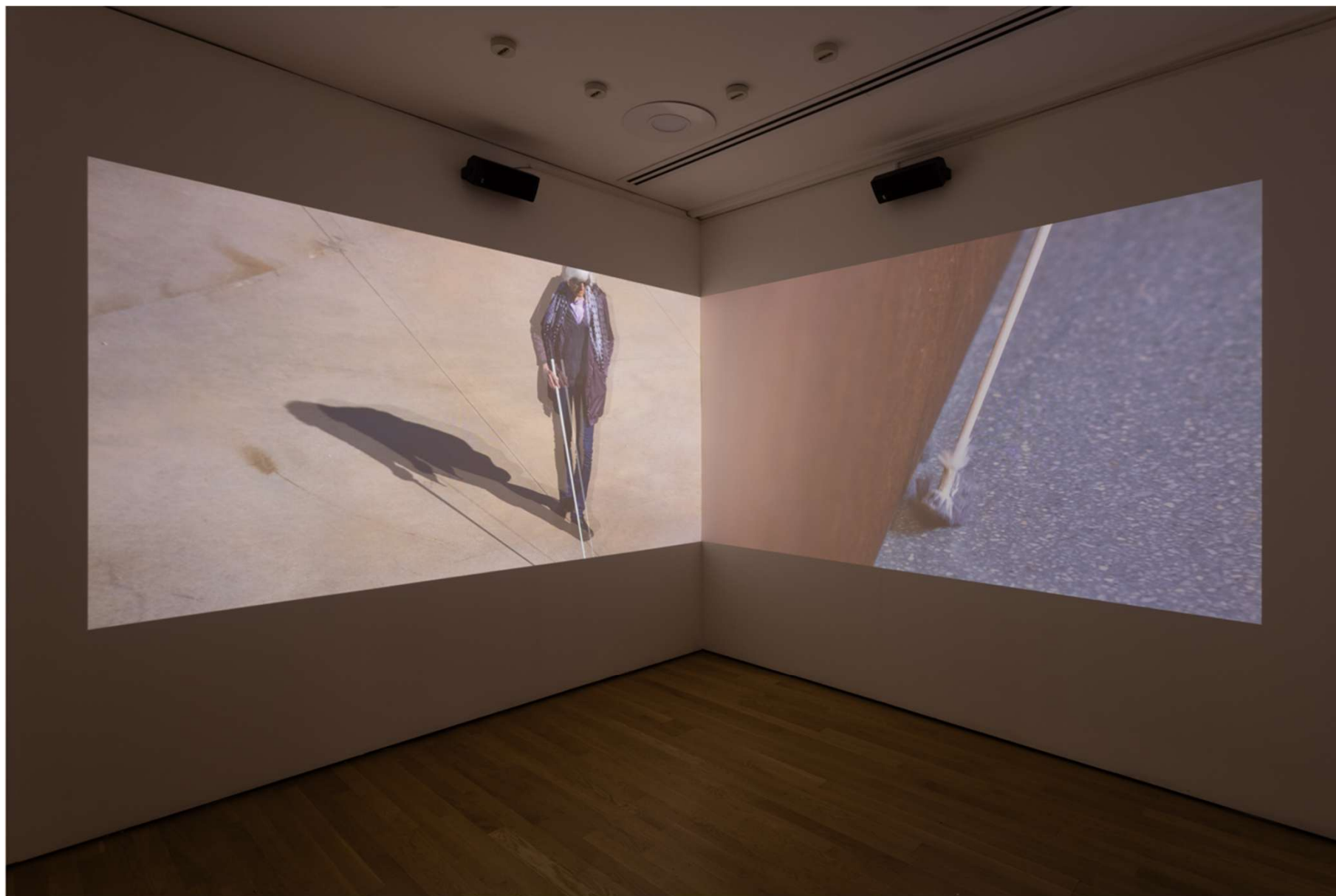
















Feedback

Over 41,000 people visited the exhibition

1371 people completed the survey form

Many stated that they had never experienced an exhibition like this before, finding the exhibition 'moving', 'playful' and 'joyful':

- The exhibition was different to anything I've experienced - being able to touch the artwork and feel what the artist felt was really moving.
- I loved being able to use my touch, smell and hearing to experience the art. It was such a special experience to be able to use all my senses, and not just my sight. It helped me feel more connected to the pieces. I felt joyful.
- Everyone was so engaged with the artwork in a way I had never seen. There was an abounding playful energy and I sensed more joy in the space.
- A really beautiful way to engage with sculpture - I've never been to anything like this before. It was also playful. Really loved the way it's been curated too - I hope that there will be more accessible exhibitions like this in the future!
- [The exhibition] demonstrated that accessibility can be aesthetically pleasing from a multisensory point of view.

The majority of surveys completed mentioned how welcoming and knowledgeable the docents and front of house team were:

- The staff were so friendly and helpful. Also having an exhibition that forefronts accessibility through art is very important for other institutions. I also work at a gallery and found it very enlightening.
- The two women working there I spoke to were really lovely and engaging. Loved my free digestive :) the exhibition itself was really incredible. I took a leaflet which I gave to a friend. Never got to touch art in a gallery before, what an experience.

Many commented on the audio descriptions:

- The audio guide was amazing and really helped me engage with the artworks in new ways.
- I don't normally like audio guides ... but this guide was exceptional and meant that I spent a lot longer than normal engaging with the sculptures.

Many visitors referenced their own lived experience. Others stated how it made them think about blindness in a new way:

- As a partially sighted artist myself, it was amazing to stumble upon this exhibition ... I am exhibiting my own work elsewhere over the next few weeks and unfortunately experiencing self doubt about it so this has really given me a boost of confidence!
- The beyond the visual exhibition was fantastic. I came with a friend who is visually impaired and we both enjoyed the interactivity and tactility of the work.
- It really made me think about how art can exclude those who are blind. I hadn't thought about this before and it's really challenged my perceptions.
- I really liked that the exhibit was made with disabled people and blind and visually impaired people and not made about them but with them!
- Brilliant exhibition that encourages active participation from the audience and helps us to understand the experience of the visually impaired community, in turn being inclusive and open to all.

Public engagement









Legacy



Stop 1

Introduction to Beyond the Visual



Aaron McPeake, artist and curator of *Beyond the Visual*, gives an introduction to the exhibition and its audio guide.

Listen & view transcript

Stop 2, track 1

Barry Flanagan, 'Elephant' 1981



Joseph Rizzo Naudi, a blind writer, gives an introduction to the bronze sculpture *Elephant*, made in 1981 by Barry Flanagan.

Listen & view transcript

Stop 2, track 2

Barry Flanagan, 'Elephant' 1981 (audio description)



Audio description of Barry Flanagan's bronze sculpture *Elephant*, made in 1981.

Listen & view transcript

Stop 3, track 1

Henry Moore and Ch...

Joseph Rizzo Naudi gives an introduction to the sculpture...

Listen & view transcript







Why One UK Museum Is Decentring the Visual

An exhibition by blind and partially blind artists suggests that 'disability gain' can enhance the museum-going experience for everyone

E

BY ELLEN MARA DE WACHTER IN OPINION | 24 NOV 25



Art

Sunday 14 December 2025

Beyond the Visual reveals what the eye can't see

Britain's first major sculpture exhibition by blind artists and curators invites visitors to touch and feel. It is revelatory – and revolutionary



Photographs of exhibition by Joanne Crawford and Rob Harris