

## You Don't Need Eyes to See, You Need Vision: Performative Pedagogy, Technology and Teaching Art to Students with Vision Impairment

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### Abstract

This paper links experiential learning and Performance Art with public pedagogy on sight/visual negation and contributes to knowledge by drawing together performance as pedagogy to demonstrate how teaching styles can accommodate those with vision impairment and adapt (performance) art to make it more accessible. In so doing it seeks to develop inclusion for students with a vision impairment. Intermeshing practice, teaching and research around issues of access, participation and education, it builds upon previous work exploring teaching strategies for the visually impaired within contemporary art practice (Axel and Levent, 2003; Hayhoe, 2008; Allan, 2014) and shares useful adaptations to help make learning about art more accessible for students with vision impairment. It also sheds light upon aspects of the question, 'What are the basics that an educator needs to know when designing art programs for persons with visual impairment?' (Axel and Levent, 2003: 51). This paper can be read as a benchmark for critical engagement in its attempt to combine performative pedagogy with an emphasis on technological means, access and visual impairment. While vision is favoured over other senses (Jonas, 1954) and with the increasing importance of digital and virtual realities as a major component of students' lives, never has there been a time in which the meanings of access are so broadened via technological mediation—that draw on all senses—to which artworks, as suggested, respond. Relying on all senses becomes an aspect of public pedagogy that is more inclusive.

**Keywords:** access, experiential learning, haptic, inclusion, occularcentricity, participation, performance art, technology

### Introduction

'You don't need eyes to see, you need vision' is a lyric taken from the Faithless song 'Reverence' (1996), which, as a teacher, I use to suggest that having vision impairment should not prohibit creativity, learning development, and personal goals and ambitions.

This paper addresses access within arts education by focusing on the concept of Visual Impairment and talks about my experience of teaching art to students with a vision impairment. Broadening access is inherent to my pedagogical approach and is a fundamental issue of inclusion in vision impairment communities. Whilst a scrutinisation of what it may mean to be blind or partially sighted in terms of arts education has received attention, most recently by academic researchers such as Julie Allan (2010; 2014) and Simon Hayhoe (2008), this paper extends their work by inserting into a definition of what may be regarded as more traditional Fine Art practices (painting, drawing, sculpture etc.) a consideration for the branch of contemporary Fine Art practice that embraces performative techniques, in other words, Performance Art (Hendricks, 2003 *et al.*).

The first section of this paper – *Important Realisations* – is a personal narrative that describes my coming to grips with new pedagogical approaches owing to the first presence of a student with a vision impairment in my Fine Art class. It explains how my initial reaction to being told of the student's presence in my session forced me to come across important realisations in relation to the nature of my teaching sessions up to that point, in terms of the activities I expected students to engage in and the nature of the teaching resources that I used to enable learning, as well as my visual presence as a teacher. In the next section, *Performative Pedagogy, Technology and Bluetooth Cinema*, I discuss key stages taking place in the teaching session and talk about various deployments of technology which lead to *Bluetooth Cinema*, the students' creative response to a task that I set them during the session. The final section, *Useful Adaptations*, draws upon my experience of teaching the student with vision impairment during the session and then in subsequent Fine Art teaching sessions that I have given where students with a vision impairment were present. The paper proposes some useful adjustments that can be made to teaching materials to enable learning amongst students with a vision impairment.

Discussion of the highlighted practical adaptations alongside emphasised examination of *Bluetooth Cinema* in the section prior is where key pedagogical interest lies; they represent principle learning outcomes that readers are encouraged to apply to their own pedagogic strategies where appropriate.

### 1. Important Realisations

In 2015, while working at Loughborough University, I designed a teaching session for students to work with digital technology in a creative way by using their mobile phones. The main learning point was to familiarise a group of first-year undergraduate level Fine Art students with core issues relating to the usage of the mobile phone within contemporary art practice with emphasis on equipping students with a range of approaches and contexts combining digital media and fine art techniques that they may utilise as part of their own working methodology.

My teaching philosophy emphasises experiential learning (Kolb 1991; Schön 2001): 1) the usage of collaborative learning processes and co-learning and 2) reproducing real life in the classroom by incorporating realia. 'Realia' refers to objects from real life used to improve students' understanding of real life situations and is a term used within the discourse of foreign language teaching (British Council 2017; Harmer 2007; Platt *et al.*). Following from the field of practice-as-research and practice-based methodologies, I believe that one of the most profound ways to gain knowledge and enact personal development is through practical exploration in real-life situations. Bringing in real-life discussions/objects/situations into teaching sessions as primary source material facilitates kinaesthetic learning experiences. It not only stimulates the mind, it encourages creativity by inviting students to engage different senses in varying sensorial encounters. As teachers, we are encouraged to make our teaching visual to engage students without realising that we may be alienating some students – teaching needs to use all the senses / provide possibilities that provoke kinaesthetic learning.

Teaching activities in my classes are not displaced from the students' own life experiences; there is often heavy student engagement in digital technologies. Mobile phone technology is part of most people's everyday culture and most students use their phones all the time. Indeed, it has been pointed out that this form of technology operates as 'appendages' to their bodies (Berk, 2009:3). This technology, as a form of virtual realia, is a means of introducing them to intermedial art practice; it is a way of 'getting them in' so to speak and to encourage those students who are more traditional in their approach to view the mobile phone as an entire multimedia studio in their pockets.

In anticipation of the session, I designed teaching activities to be undertaken that would enable students to be able to do the following: 1) understand and describe what constitutes effective mobile phone technology usage within the field of contemporary fine art practice; 2) use critical language and critical thinking in relation to the practices, key concepts and theories of mobile phone usage within fine art practice; 3) identify a range of critical and theoretical contexts relevant to their individual emerging practices; and 4) use methods relating to practice to understand and show the operations of working with a mobile phone as a digital media tool. Encouraging students to combine different disciplines to create something new by crossing boundaries and thinking across them by producing creative artworks that lie formally and conceptually between established media, my encouragement of digital technology within the classroom as not only a pedagogic tool but a means in which to engage in digital realia to create artwork was part of practice-as-research produced as part of a Loughborough University Teaching Innovation Award (2015-2016) that I was given to develop blended learning strategies with a focus on technology. This research formed part of a project entitled *Technoparticipation* which explored the use of digital realia in the classroom (Campbell, 2017).

A month prior to the session, I was informed that a student would be present who had a visual impairment. This, as far as I was aware, was a first for me, and so I started reading literature written by teachers who have taught students with sight loss, so that I could learn from their experience. Jolting my unconscious conscious, I soon realised **how visual** my teaching materials had been up to that point. I also came upon important realisations related to my visual presence as a teacher and how I communicate. These related to how blind/partially students may not see how I punctuate what I am saying in class with my body e.g. emphasising aspects of what I am saying with hand gestures. I have had to rethink how I use facial expressions to hopefully connect with my student audience. Students with a

vision impairment may not be able to understand what is happening in the classroom in terms of bodily nuance e.g. people's frowns or smiles, or nodding with what I (as the lecturer) am saying.

I wanted to make sure the student with a vision impairment I was about to teach did not feel disadvantaged or made to feel different amongst the other (fully-sighted) students. Whilst consideration of the student with a vision impairment in terms of their learning experience was paramount, I needed to be careful of a potential 'othering' of this person and recognised that visual impairment varies amongst people who have different learning styles etc. in line with the words of Ann Bostock (1988): 'Children with impaired vision need to be assessed as individuals with unique special needs. They are not a homogenous group with common learning characteristics' (1988:4). Indeed, it has been noted that the visually impaired student can feel a sense of social difference in the classroom e.g., Anthony Best (1991) talks about the different kinds of equipment that visually impaired students use that their sighted peers wouldn't (magnifiers, Braille-reading equipment etc.) as only going to underline their difference to others. Monika Jamieson (1977) attempts to 'elucidate questions about classroom life when blind or partially sighted children are taught alongside those with normal vision' and considers what she refers to as the 'practical and philosophical dilemmas associated with implementing integration' (1977:19).

Although some specific suggestions of assistance to the regular classroom teacher have been offered, some caution must be exercised, so that the child does not become *so special* that he becomes the 'classroom pet'. If this occasion occurs because we have attempted to do too many special things for him, we have defeated the very purpose of an integrated program (1977:70-11)

Although I recognised the student's difference in terms of having one less sense than everyone else in the room, anticipating the session, the presence of this student really made me think about *how* such a student may learn and how I should not take the visual aspects I incorporate into my teaching for granted. In planning for the session by adapting materials and activities that I use as staples in my teaching practice, I designed an inclusive learning environment that made usage of performative pedagogy to uncover the possibilities of engaging students through varying sensorial encounters by how they interacted with the mobile phone technology. The session also emphasised how I do in fact embody non-visual aspects into my teaching and encourage experiential learning. Indeed, the link between experiential learning and the visually-impaired student has been recognised and promoted as suggested by Bill Ray Gearheart;

The concepts of 'learning by doing' and 'teaching by unifying experiences' are certainly not new concepts to regular classroom teachers. The concepts, however, are particularly important to the student with impaired vision because he may not have the same experiential background as other students of the same age. Whenever possible allow the visually impaired child to experience 'doing it' rather than just verbally explaining the process (1976:63)

This is profound in terms of my own subject discipline and specific interest in Performance Art, a form of art that prioritises process over end-product i.e. the production of a concrete object' e.g. in the work of Jackson Pollock and Yves Klein who set precedents for art making in terms of the importance of *process*. Links can be made with those with vision impairment;

it is important that the child [and I would extend this term to 'adult'] has the experience of carrying out the process involved in an art project whilst de-emphasizing the end-product. By completing the process, in whatever medium, the student can achieve the same objectives as his peers' (ibid.)

## **2. Performative Pedagogy, Technology and Bluetooth Cinema**

In her analysis of the film work *SOTCHI 255* (2010) directed by Jean-Claude Taki, which was shot using different mobile phones, Sarah Atkinson in *Beyond the Screen: Emerging Cinema and Engaging Audiences* (2014) refers to mobile phone technology in respect of 'respective and distinctive textural aesthetics' (2014: 63). Adopting a flipped classroom and blended learning approach to learning, a week prior the teaching session, I invited students to draw upon their existing knowledge of mobile phone technology and post up ideas and comments using the social media application Textwall. Textwall is a free and anonymous messaging application which allows students to post anonymous messages onto an online 'wall' sent to a private number by SMS. In a pedagogic setting, I have found Textwall to be an

effective means of encouraging students (who do not wish to be identified or are too nervous to put up their hands to ask a question/share an idea) to participate in discussion with the group. More specifically, I asked them to respond to what they think Atkinson may mean by 'respective and textural aesthetics' with regards to mobile phone technology. I wanted students to particularly think through these ideas in relation to the following terms: 1) 'audience'; 2) 'interactivity'; and 3) 'participation'. This was to allow students the possibility to start mapping possible threads of practice/theory based on the 'possibilities' of mobile phone technology in relation to a previous seminar concerning relational art and public engagement in *Relational Aesthetics* (Bourriaud, 1998). I also encouraged students to generate short sound recordings on their mobile phones; voice recording their ideas, a strategy that the visually impaired student told me they found helpful for communicating. Fostering collegiality and shared collaborative learning experiences between myself and the students, I also set up a reading group prior to the seminar which took place in both physical and online/virtual social discussion spaces to discuss selected passages from Atkinson's book (2014). Exploiting analogue and digital learning processes as pedagogic strategy, to elicit key concepts and ideas even further in the physical classroom as initiated by the Textwall responses, students brainstormed and mind mapped ideas using a post-it note discussion and then converted these into a Wordle.net image to help build their critical vocabulary of key concepts. The post-it 'visualisation' helped students put their ideas into concrete terms & visualise how they would look on Wordle.net. Their learning process started with 'analogue' media like post-its/pen & paper before it was translated digitally (Figure 1).



**Fig. 1** *Post-it note wall*

The student with a vision impairment told me that they enjoyed the haptic nature of using the post-it notes in terms of the kinaesthetic aspect of 'holding' and 'sticking together' ideas in a directly physical way. This, the student mentioned, made learning more tangible, rather than solely imagining how the ideas visualised themselves on a computer screen/on the wall. Following these activities, seminar-style teaching took place involving student presentation of reading material and debate thereafter, including a further presentation by me as seminar tutor to add greater detail to the students' initial Textwall and post-it note display ideas. This presentation armed students with the language they needed to describe aspects of the subject and set important contextual and theoretical frameworks in place for them to situate forthcoming practice that they were to then produce as part of the session. Designed to punctuate students' understanding of core issues relating to participative and performative modes of contemporary art practice and how mobile phone technology could be used as a tool, the task that I then set students was to generate an artwork combining mobile phone technology and instructions. By them doing so I wanted to help students theorise, articulate and demonstrate how to use technology in creative ways to engage different senses. This enabled them to articulate ideas and concepts succinctly through knowledge gained from their doing of practice, an embodied knowledge that can only be achieved by doing; *through action*. Prior the session, I invited those students planning on attending to bring a mobile phone device with a camera/video recording facility. The task invited students to make a short performative artwork using their mobile phones and lasting a maximum of twenty minutes. I encouraged students to think about their phone's properties/hardware/software.

As the group of 12 students begun to experiment with their phones and think about the task at hand together, they prioritised the relative ease of use of the mobile phone as there was nothing particularly sophisticated or technical for them to have to get to grips with and as a group made the collective

decision to generate a set of short films which would include different sets of instructions relating to activities that the viewer would be invited to enact. Using their mobile phones in the style of *camera-stylo*, a term derived by Alexandre Astruc in 1947; using a camera *like a pen*, the students came to realise that experience in filmmaking was not essential and their creativity was only limited by the sophistication of the editing facility on their phones. The students enjoyed trying out various editing techniques using footage filmed on their phones; they liked the fact that their film works were recorded and edited entirely on the same mobile phone. While most students had designed short films where instructions were given using visual language i.e., text on screen, many of the students without visual impairments chose to work with the student who had a visual impairment and produced audio recordings, taking inspiration from that student's phone, an [Alto 2](#) that was specifically designed for blind and partially sighted people where every feature and function is spoken. They also adopted a strategy with regards to the specific environment that they would create. Students decided that they would invite visitors to enter a room with the lights turned on and then, once the students had given the visitors a mobile phone each to listen to a sound recording, turn the lights out. Alternatively, students would blindfold visitors. This was an exciting usage of 'visual negation' as a strategy, offering the advantage to the person with the vision impairment. I acknowledge that this may have limitations. It is worth noting the views of Arielle Silverman, a researcher in social science and rehabilitation from the University of Colorado, who in 'Simulating Blindness, Blind Darts, 'Be My Eyes' App', a January 2015 edition of BBC Radio 4's *In Touch* suggests that experiencing blindness temporarily can be counter-productive. Simulating blindness has been deployed 'to educate people what blindness is like' and that these 'misrepresent what blindness is actually like [...] people are only thrust into a few minutes not the dynamics of experiencing blindness over a lifetime' (Silverman, 2015). Sue Blagden and John Everett (1992) also express concerns:

To become suddenly blind is emotionally very traumatic, and the process of adjustment can be lengthy. Individuals are vulnerable, confused, no longer able to recognize the facial expressions of close friends. They depend on others to get around, and often find themselves stuck in the 'communication gap', not able to read print, and not yet having learned Braille (1992:4)

Having made their films, the students circulated around Loughborough University campus and then around Loughborough town centre, attempting to elicit the participation of passers-by in their 'mobile cinema' (Atkinson: 2014:61). Students shared their recordings via Bluetooth technology under the banner of what they called *Bluetooth Cinema* (Figure 2).



**Fig. 2** *Bluetooth Cinema*

In *Bluetooth Cinema*, students approached members of the public in the street and asked them 'Would you like to see a film?' If they agreed, the students would attempt to send a recording that they had made via Bluetooth. If they were successful, before the recording was played, the participant would then be blindfolded. Often it was not always possible to send via Bluetooth, some members of the public had the latest version of the Apple iPhone, which did not allow for Bluetooth file sharing. For people who had an Apple iPhone, students would send their recordings via MMS or simply just let the audience member watch the recording on the students' own phone. Both solutions slightly altered the experience; sending via MMS would mean that students would incur a charge for sending and audience

members could not save or edit the recording as they wished at a later date if they were to experience it only by the student's device. Rather than feeling 'defeated' by Apple, or that technological constraints impacting on their work's future were due to the commercial decisions of Apple (not to include Bluetooth file-sharing in this way), the students accepted that everything has its own life span and aspects of *Bluetooth Cinema* were a declaration of changing technologies. Students then concentrated on generating an immersive encounter where participants had to prioritise the importance of listening (maybe in ways beyond normal listening levels), as they could no longer rely on the power of sight. Once blindfolded and having listened to the recording, the participant was instructed to enact something that was super 'bodily', e.g. trying to balance a pineapple on top of their heads or attempting to move an After Eight mint from the top of their foreheads into their mouths without the mint falling onto the floor. The participants who took part in the activity told the students that even though they had found the activities playful and humorous in nature, often resulting in laughter, by having their sight impeded with the blindfold, it forced them to acknowledge other senses and the physicality of their bodies.

In a feedback discussion with students, what emerged as key in their learning related to how vision can often be taken for granted and that our cognitive understanding of the world (as made explicit in the case of the student who had a visual impairment) is derived not just through our eyes (through vision) but also *through our bodies* (we make sense of the world through our ears, through our noses etc.). Most importantly, the student who had a visual impairment was appreciative that I had adjusted my teaching style to accommodate him, and that I had embedded acts of visual negation into the content of my class, and by doing so this underlined to myself and the students who did not have visual impairments **just how visual** the subject discipline of Fine Art can be and how this needs to be challenged. We reflected upon norms within our subject discipline, Fine Art, relating to the dominance of visuality over other senses (Jay, 1993; Crary, 2000) and emphasised consideration of what it may mean to live in a society described as 'ocularcentric' or 'dominated' by vision (1993:3). I encouraged students to consult the work of Hans Jonas (1954) who suggests 'tactility has been purposefully forgotten in our culture in favour of the nobility of sight' (1954:507) and use this text as a catalyst to explore the current territory of contemporary art and performance practice by which practitioners have not only made works that go beyond pure visual sensation and incorporate or are wholly dedicated to non-visual aspects, often prioritising the haptic, orality, sound elements and other sensory components (Coles, 1984; Marks, 2002; Paterson, 2007), they have deployed acts exploring visual impairment and blindness as informing their work's content and reception. By doing so, they generate public pedagogy of what it may mean to experience interrupted/removal of all sight (Campbell *et al.*, 2016). For example, *Sight (Un)Specific* was a curatorial project that I facilitated at Metal Chalkwell, Southend-on-Sea in November 2016 and included performance artworks by Rory Flynn, Adrian Lee and Carali McCall. McCall and Flynn's work both examined the tension between visual and physical bodily deprivation through the act of drawing/markings space (Figure 3).



**Fig. 3** *Drawing Forces* by Rory Flynn, as performed at *Sight (Un)Specific* curated by Lee Campbell, Metal Chalkwell, Southend-on-Sea (2016)

One could also cite Polish artist Artur Zmijewski's work *Blindly* (2014) as it explores what it means to imagine and represent without relying on the sense of sight.

### 3. Useful Adaptations

I have since worked with other students with a vision impairment. Here are some useful adaptations that I have discovered to make teaching art more accessible for students with vision impairment.

#### Before a teaching session

- **Learning materials:** Make sure any resources are available for the student in their preferred reading format, for example large print, Braille or an accessible digital version. You may need to replace images with written descriptions. Enlarge colour reproductions of paintings, drawings, 2D artworks to be discussed in class. Supply the student with (enlarged text) visual material (Waterfield and West, 2008:9).
- **Physical environment:** Make sure that the classroom does not present any physical obstacles (Equality Challenge Unit, 2009). Check that the classroom is safe and accessible – are walkways clear? Is the lighting suitable? If the student uses electronic devices, do they need to sit close to a power source?
- **Lesson plan:** Rehearse the running order of the session and its related content, paying attention to visual elements used in terms of teaching materials and the need for the student to ‘see’ what’s going on to be able to learn. Put on a blindfold to mentally prepare and identify with students with a vision impairment. When explaining visual artworks, it is important to use visual language (art and design terminology related to pictorial, sculptural, and graphic representation) – the vocabulary of shape, line, tone, colour, texture, volume, space, weight, balance, rhythm. I also discovered that it is important to express not only what you see in a piece of artwork, but how it makes you feel too.

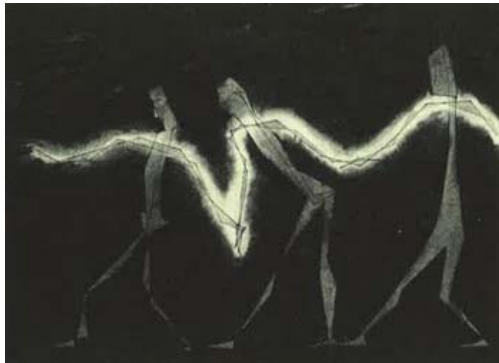
#### During a teaching session

- **Verbal descriptions:** It’s important to announce verbally any visual elements that occur throughout the teaching session, for example saying that you are moving onto the next slide in your presentation, describing an image or referring to a student by their name rather than pointing. Verbal descriptions help build images in students’ minds, increase their observational skills and expand their critical thinking, vocabulary and visual awareness, for the benefit of sighted students too. They also force sighted people to spend that extra time necessary to ‘see’ things otherwise missed. Encourage blind students to teach the skill of verbal description to the sighted. But, as Dr Emma Kennedy, Education Adviser (Academic Practice) suggests (in personal communication with me in June 2017), ‘don’t default to putting the burden onto disabled students. Do your homework and be grateful if the student can help.’
- **Inclusive activities:** Set up a supportive space by providing a stimulating environment, both visually and tactually, where learning can take place through students’ entire bodies and not just their eyes. This can be achieved by using a range of teaching activities that deploy sensory feedback for the benefit of both students with a vision impairment and their sighted peers. Generate teaching activities/materials that draw on all senses – touch, smell, sound etc. As Linda Wilson (2004) suggests, ‘The more senses a resource affects, the more useful it will be.’ (2014:161). Indeed, in the context of learning art, Elisabeth Salzhauer Axel and Nina Sobol Levent (2003) state, ‘The more senses that are involved, the more accessible the art becomes, and the more the students will gain’ (2003:370).

Here are some practical examples of adaptations that can be made during class time to include blind and partially sighted students and some teaching activities that draw on all senses:

- **Tactile diagrams and relief sculptures:** introduce students to a wide variety of textures by creating artworks with a certain linear quality that demand to be touched. Drawing on plaster or clay tile, on aluminium foil and with tape will help students build their tactile exploration skills as they feel the line while applying the tape. Transform flat paintings into relief sculptures.
- **Strike a pose:** invite students to re-enact an artwork by posing as figures, for example taking the pose of an Alberto Giacometti sculpture with their bodies. This will help them develop a stronger understanding of their own body language and emotions. To teach landscapes in terms of foreground and background (a tricky concept for students with no vision), encourage students to physically moving around in a space so they can get better understanding of spatial

awareness/composition in real terms/ develop a stronger understanding of body language. Look at paintings for inspiration on playing around with spatial composition in painting. Choreograph students' bodies so that they may understand how space operates in certain paintings in physical terms. Have a look at kinetic paintings for inspiration (Figures 4-5).



**Fig. 4** A kinetic art painting by John Levering



**Fig. 5** VI students enact the painting

- **Soundscapes** - incorporate sound in creative ways – make accompanying ‘soundscapes’ to paintings by using sound compositions and period music for paintings that depict historical scenes. Invite students to make their own instruments.
- **Art-making tools** - use wax crayons labelled in Braille to identify colours – encourage students to use their fingers as locators and feelers for starting and ending forms such as tree branches, circles etc. Wrap soft foam or putty around paint brushes to improve grip.
- **Blind drawing** - encourage both sighted and non/partially sighted students to draw the contour of a subject without looking at the paper. The technique was introduced by Kimon Nicolaïdes in *The Natural Way to Draw* (1941) and is exemplified in the work of artists Felicity Hayward and Ian Sklarsky.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have related visuality (and lack of) to my subject discipline and my teaching practice. I have highlighted how an experience within my teaching relating to the presence of a visually impaired student helped me reflect upon how I was using visual material at the time, as well as reassess my visual presence as a teacher. In the presence of blind/partially sighted students, whereas in the past I may have been (quite subconsciously) expressive with my body, importance is now placed on me being vocally expressive. The situation with the first presence of the visually impaired student forced me to take stock of other senses and how I accentuate the tone of my voice.

Academics are often encouraged to think about different ways of being inclusive and are given recommendations/suggestions for adjustments. Heavy workloads may mean that academics do not have the time to fully implement such recommendations. I educated myself because this experience did not only force me to think about my teaching materials and visual presence as a teacher, but also visual art as my subject discipline. I hope to use my experience to encourage others to do the same and



engage in similar reflective processes with the view to acting upon any important realisations in the future.

By using the techniques/activities/adaptations, derived from my own experience, hopefully teachers can help make sure that students with a vision impairment do not feel singled out, potentially 'othered' (Blagden & Everett, 1992) but comfortable in engaging in a shared learning experience. This paper has identified a paradoxical situation; the problem of (accommodating) inclusion and, at the same time, recognising difference. As educators, we must ensure access, meet needs without othering or homogenising disabled students. Aligned with the ideas of Bostock (1988) who suggests that teachers working with visually-impaired students should, 'provide as many opportunities as possible for concrete learning through direct experience' (1988:17), by inviting students to do something *super-bodily together*, I aim for any visually impaired students in attendance to not feel singled out or 'othered' but engaged in a shared learning experience with others that does not accentuate their difference but is structurally engineered so that learning can take place *through our bodies and not just our eyes*. To reiterate a previous point, knowledge acquisition is not exclusively derived from *what we see*.

This paper has linked experiential learning and Performance Art with public pedagogy on sight/visual negation. Extending teaching practice discussed here, I have since carried out a full literature review on this topic finding very little across the disciplines (Performance Art and vision impairment) and have identified a gap to explore. Using performance practice-as-research, I currently explore the question: How can acts exploring visual negation be used to generate public pedagogy and what may it bring to the experience of removal of sight? The aim of my current research is to increase understanding of visual impairment and strive towards the production of a cross-modal arts manifesto for blind and partially sighted people. This is to improve the breadth and depth of knowledge about human culture in relation to increasing understanding of visual impairment by engaging blind, partially sighted and fully sighted people as co-producers in a series of practical experiments that promote experiential learning through a deployment of performative pedagogies.

In August 2017, I undertook a one-week residency at The Brady Arts Centre in Tower Hamlets, London, developed through the [Open Lab scheme](#) at the Barbican and Guildhall School of Music & Drama. There I invited participants - both with and without a visual impairment - to undergo a series of practical experiments in performance art. On one day of the residency, artist/tutor Gemma Shaw led a workshop exploring sound as one of the contributing senses to the manifesto. At the start of her workshop, Gemma told the group that when she first began teaching art to people who had a visual impairment, she learnt the importance of giving clear (vocal) instructions. Indeed, since the 1960s and '70s artists such as Sol Lewitt and Yoko Ono have made artworks that involve giving the audience a set of instructions for them to carry out. Yet, as Gemma pointed out, these instructions are often in written form, leading to potential barriers for people with sight loss. Gemma's workshop addressed this issue by encouraging participants to make audio-based instructional artworks using their mobile phones. Gemma invited participants to work in pairs. Person A waits while Person B, with their mobile phone, goes to a table laden with materials, and selects a card with a shape that Person A will be instructed to make. Person B then records instructions on their mobile phone about the shape and which of the materials that they wish Person A to use. Gemma underlined the importance of Person B not identifying the material by colour when recording their instructions, as colours lose importance; instead she suggested that Person B focused on the tactility of the element involved, e.g. 'pick up the smallest reel of tape, pick up the thinnest reel, etc., 'the tape with the most texture on it etc.' Person A (some requested to use blindfolds to heighten the other senses) then listened to the recorded instructions and made the shape onto the floor using the tape. The pair then swapped roles, and Person A instructed Person B.

Both *Bluetooth Cinema* and Gemma's workshop added to the rich contextual history of artists using mobile phone technology to generate artworks, such as Tim Etchells' *Surrender Control* (2001) which consists of a series of (written) SMS instructions, and both prioritised the importance of sound over the visual.

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