



Jaco Meyer

Title: Music and Art for the Visually Impaired

Visually impaired people are part of a marginalised group in art galleries as they are unable to view the artworks like 'sighted visitors' and touching the art is not permitted. A visually impaired person will probably be guided by a sighted person in the average art gallery. Conceptual artist, Willem Boshoff, started with a project called "Blind Alphabet" in 1990 in which he sculpts wooden artworks for visually impaired people. The setup and layout of the artworks are 'blind-friendly' and each sculpture is accompanied by a comprehensive explanation in Braille. In this way, the roles are reversed among visitors because sighted visitors become marginalised – and to some extent intimidated – by the works and the Braille. Sighted visitors who have the courage to pick up and touch the sculptures will need assistance from a blind person to understand the Braille.

The conceptual aspect of this body of works evolved to become more inclusive when the MTN Foundation commissioned me to compose music for each sculpture and add a voice-over of the Braille text so that sighted people can also access these works. This paper will cover the role of music and sound in supporting the previously marginalised and moving towards inclusivity.